



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 22, 2023



### Jesus Appears as the Light in the Darkness

Dark places remain covered in the shadow of sin and unbelief. Now there are, however, bright places, too, and there you find God's children. Jesus shines his light by preaching repentance and the good news of the nearing kingdom, and he invites us to follow him to a life illumined by him. Following him means living in the joy of freedom and walking in the light of love for God and brother.

### The Propers

*The Propers are those portions of the service that change (i.e. are "proper" to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means "regular order") portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord's Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.*

#### **First Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      Isaiah 8:19 – 9:4

Man cannot find his way through the darkness of the world except by inquiring of God. No spirit, no man, no other message brings light to those living in darkness. To the law and to the testimony! There you find the Word, the great light for those living in darkness.

#### **Second Lesson**<sup>1</sup>                      1 John 2:3-11

Jesus, our Morning Star, has already come, and the light of his dawn is beginning to break over the world, and the time for deeds of darkness is fading fast. There are still places of deep darkness, but that is not the place to find God's children. They will be found walking in the light and shedding their own light on the darkness around them by living in love for God and brother.

#### **Gospel of the Day**<sup>1</sup>                      Matthew 4:12-23

The light of the world appeared and began to cast its beams. Fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, the bulk of Christ's ministry took place in Galilee of the Gentiles which had been so oppressed. Galileans were the first to see the light of God's day breaking over the world. From that time on, Jesus began to preach, and we hear the first public words of Jesus Christ: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. With those words the Holy Spirit describes Jesus shining his light into the shadowed nooks and crannies of the world. From fishing boats to synagogues, from workmen to lame men, Christ cast a beacon of light into the darkened world around him with his three-fold ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. The kingdom of heaven drew near and called God's children to follow the light and live in the light.

#### **Psalm of the Day**                      Psalm 27 C

"The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation" The faithful Christian has a confidence rooted in the trustworthy deliverance of his Lord.

#### **Gospel Acclamation**                      Isaiah 9:2

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

#### **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, you sent your Son to proclaim your kingdom and teach with authority. Anoint us with the power of your Spirit that we too may bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Hymn of the Day

904 “O Christ, Our True and Only Light” (Johann Heermann, 1585-1647)

## Church Year Season <sup>1</sup>

### Epiphany

The twelve days of Christmas culminate at the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord on January 6th. The season of Epiphany highlights the appearance of the Son of God as the Savior of the whole world— both Jew and Gentile. God revealed the mystery of his person and his mission through the words and works of the Father, through the anointing and empowering of the Spirit, and through the preaching and miracles of Christ. This season of the Savior’s appearance is bracketed by two white Sundays: The Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration of Our Lord. Since he had come hidden in flesh, recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God required revelation. From John’s Baptism to the Father’s booming voice, God revealed the truth about Jesus to the world: this son of Mary is the Son of God, come as the Christ. The Father’s testimony about Jesus bookends the season. From the glory of his baptism at the beginning of his ministry to the glory of his transfiguration at its culmination, the voice of the Father declares what flesh had hidden from the world: This is my Son!

## Minor Festivals

St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor (January 24)

Timothy was raised by a Jewish mother who believed in Christ and by a Greek father. We first encounter Timothy in Acts 16, when he meets Paul and joins Paul in his mission work.

## Minor Festivals

Conversion of St. Paul (January 25)

God’s act of bringing Saul, a persecutor of Christians, to faith in Christ (cf. Acts 9) teaches us that faith is given to us by God as a gift.

## Minor Festivals

St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor (January 26)

Titus heard the Gospel preached by Paul, and God used that experience to bring Titus to faith in Jesus. Titus then became a steadfast worker in the mission field with Paul.

## Colors & Symbolism

Season of Epiphany: Green

Green is the color of vegetation; therefore it symbolizes life. It represents the new life that Christ gives us in baptism, as well as the spiritual growth we experience during the season as we study the Lord’s ministry.

## Nain Paraments

### Epiphany

**Superfrontal:** The Greek symbol at the center of the superfrontal is the *Chi-Rho*. Chi (X) and Rho (P) are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16)..... Next to the *Chi-Rho* are the letters *Alpha* (A) and *Omega* (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13)..... The vines and vegetation branching out from the *Chi-Rho* represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5)..... The blue wave at the bottom of the symbol represents both Holy Baptism (1 Peter 3:21) and the living water of the Word of Christ (John 7:37-38). The blue wave is intertwined with a vine of thorns, reminded us of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross to pay the price for our sins (John 19:2;30) and that believers are baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection for their forgiveness and eternal salvation (Romans 6:3-4).

**Lectern antependium:** The circle surrounding the center of the Latin cross (†) symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him. The Greek letters ΙΧΘΥC (pronounced: *Ichthus*) form both the word for fish and an acronym for the phrase, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.” A simple drawing of a fish was used in the ancient Church in days of persecution. It symbolized Jesus Christ and also served as a code by which Christians identified themselves to one another as Christ’s followers. It also recalls Holy Baptism and is thus a symbol of Christian regeneration (John 3:5).

**Pulpit antependium:** The Anchor Cross symbolizes the sure and steadfast hope Christians have in Jesus (Hebrews 6:19). The two fish remind us that Christians are followers of Jesus (see the description above), those who are brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19). During Epiphany the Church celebrates the many ways that Christ made himself known as true God to the world. One of these ways was his miracles. The two fish thus also remind us of Jesus miraculously feeding the 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two small fish (Matthew 14:13-21).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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