



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 18, 2026



Identity Revealed: Jesus Is the Lamb of God

For centuries the priests of Israel offered sacrifices to God because of their sins. Over and over, blood flowed, testifying that the penalty of sin was death. But over and over, a substitute stood in the place of the sinner. Countless animals died under the priestly knife as generations of the faithful brought lamb after lamb to the temple. All of those sacrifices pointed ahead to one particular Lamb whom God would sacrifice to actually remove once and for all. He is Jesus, the Lamb of God who would die to take away the sin of the world. In the great act that would remove our condemnation, Jesus, the Promised Messiah, took our sins, stood in our place, and died as our substitute. This was the fulfillment of the entire sacrificial system. Every lamb and goat and bird pointed ahead to Jesus' death on the cross as the full payment for sin.

First Reading ¹

Isaiah 49:1-6

Listen to the message meant for all nations: The Messiah is a weapon in the hand of God. God concealed him like an arrow in a quiver: the Messiah would come with his glory hidden in flesh. That meant the Servant would suffer, but in that suffering God would display his splendor. Jesus struggled with the cup he was to drink, but trusted in God's promised reward (v 4). God would use the Servant to restore Israel and shine the light of his love on all the Gentiles, too. The salvation won by the Lamb would be brought to the ends of the earth. When Simeon laid eyes on the Christ-child, he remembered these words and could depart in peace, because he knew that God had now kept his promise.

Second Reading

Colossians 2:6-15

The Lamb of God needed to be flesh and blood, so that he could be sacrificed. And because that Lamb was the Son of God, it is a sacrifice valuable enough to forgive us all our sins.

Gospel ¹

John 1:29-41

As the last and greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist rightly summarizes the totality of God's plan of salvation by pointing to Jesus and calling him the Lamb of God. Though not an Old Testament title, John's name for Christ is the perfect sum of the sacrificial system. Christ is the fulfillment of all the sacrificial victims of the Old Testament, from Yom Kippur's goat to the Passover Lamb and every sin and guilt offering in between. They are all fulfilled in the Son of God made flesh that he might stand in our place, that he might take the burden of sins off the world and onto his shoulders, and that he might die in our stead. Seeing the Lamb of God leads believers like John and Andrew to bring his salvation to the ends of the earth.

Psalm of the Day ⁴

Psalm 40 A

"LORD, Come to My Aid"

The Church sings Psalm 40 in services that commemorate Christ's willing submission to the law and to death when he came into the world to be our Savior. It is a prayer for help in the midst of trouble. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 40 is a beautiful prayer psalm. In this psalm Christ himself laments his sufferings and calls for rescue from death. It also clearly prophesies that Christ alone does the will of God and fulfills the law, just as it is written about him in the Scriptures. He abolishes the old law of sacrifices by fulfilling it. Christ alone does everything for us; nothing is accomplished for our salvation by our own works or sacrifices."

Gospel Acclamation

1 John 2:2

"Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." God's holiness demands punishment for mankind's sin. God, therefore, out of love, sent his Son to suffer in the place of all sinners. Jesus died for the sins of every person. However, the gift of forgiveness through Christ's death is only received through faith, to those who believe.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you gave your one and only Son to be the light of the world. Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and believed to the ends of the earth; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

375 "Arise and Shine in Splendor" (Martin Opitz, 1597-1639)

Church Year Season ²

Epiphany

The readings during the Epiphany season carry forward the emphasis in the readings for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the theme of Jesus revealing himself to us as God and Savior. At the same time the readings present us with a real conundrum. The conundrum is that he hides the manifestations of his deity, so that his glory remains a secret and a mystery, even while he is revealing it. All the riddles are present in the readings for the Feast of the Epiphany. The theme present in all of the Epiphany readings is: he shows his hidden glory to those he calls. You may notice that in many of the Epiphany season readings appropriation is much easier than application. There is a good reason for that: in Christmas and Epiphany our attention is on getting to know Jesus, who he is and how he works; thus there is not so much emphasis on our response beyond the response of faith, which itself is always seen as his work and not ours.

Colors & Symbolism

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.

Minor Festivals

Confession of St. Peter (January 18)

Later in his earthly ministry, Jesus tested his disciples about their knowledge of his identity as true God. After asking them, "Who do people say the Son of Man is," (Matthew 16:13) he asked the disciples directly, "But what about you... who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15). The Apostle St. Peter spoke up for the rest: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus called Simon Peter "blessed" because he had received this knowledge from the Heavenly Father and through faith. We remember Peter's confession and rejoice in the Holy Spirit that through his Word he has made Peter's confession our own.

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 ΙΧΘΥΣ (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).

¹ Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year A". Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year B". Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year C". Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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