

The Jefferson Spirit

Sundays at 9:00AM
& 10:30AM

Pastor Mark Jarema

January 5, 2025



Following the Light

Epiphany Sunday, celebrated on or near January 6, marks the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world, symbolized by the visit of the Magi in Matthew 2:1-12. It commemorates the moment when the light of Christ was made known not only to the Jewish people but to the Gentiles, represented by the wise men from the East. This day reminds us that Jesus is the Savior for all people, and it invites us to reflect on our own journey of faith—seeking Him, offering our gifts, and being transformed by His presence. Epiphany is a celebration of God's universal love and the call to share His light with the world.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV)

The Magi Visit the Messiah

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

6 “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Epiphany Sunday

Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 in Western Christianity because it traditionally marks the twelfth day after Christmas, concluding the Christmas season. This date has deep historical and theological roots:

Historical Reasons:

Ancient Christian Calendars:

In the early church, January 6 was one of the first dates used to celebrate the birth and baptism of Jesus, even before December 25 was widely recognized as Christmas Day.

Over time, December 25 became established as the date to celebrate Christ’s birth, while January 6 was reserved for Epiphany, focusing on other manifestations of Jesus’ divine identity.

Western and Eastern Traditions:

In the Western Church, Epiphany primarily commemorates the visit of the Magi, emphasizing Jesus’ revelation to the Gentiles.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, January 6 is often associated with the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, celebrating the revelation of the Trinity.



Theological Significance:

"Manifestation" of Christ:

The word "Epiphany" means "manifestation" or "appearance." January 6 represents the culmination of the Christmas story, focusing on Jesus being revealed to the world beyond the Jewish community.

The Magi, as Gentiles, symbolize the universality of Christ's mission.

Twelve Days of Christmas:

January 6 is the twelfth day after Christmas Day, completing the "Twelve Days of Christmas." This tradition aligns with the idea of a full, festive season marking Christ's birth and the subsequent revelation of His mission.

Practical Observance:

When January 6 does not fall on a Sunday, many churches move the observance of Epiphany to the closest Sunday to ensure the congregation can celebrate it in worship.

In summary, January 6 is a historically and symbolically significant date that ties the birth of Jesus to His manifestation as Savior for all people, making it a fitting end to the Christmas season and the start of the season of Epiphany.

Interesting facts about the three Magi, also known as the wise men, based on historical, biblical, and traditional interpretations:

1. Their Number Isn't Specified in the Bible

The Bible (Matthew 2:1-12) does not explicitly state how many Magi visited Jesus. The assumption of three comes from the three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Some traditions suggest there could have been more Magi.

2. They Were Likely Astrologers or Scholars

The term "Magi" refers to a class of learned men, possibly astrologers or priests from the Persian Empire (modern-day Iran) or Babylon.

They were skilled in interpreting celestial events, which explains why they were drawn to the star of Bethlehem.

3. They Represent the Gentiles

The Magi's visit is significant because it represents the inclusion of Gentiles in the salvation brought by Jesus. They were not Jewish but recognized and worshipped Jesus as the Messiah.

4. Their Names and Origins are Based on Tradition

Christian tradition names the Magi as Caspar (or Gaspar), Melchior, and Balthazar, though these names do not appear in the Bible.

Each name is traditionally associated with different regions:

Caspar: Thought to come from India or Arabia.

Melchior: From Persia.

Balthazar: From Babylon or Africa (often depicted with darker skin in art).

5. The Gifts Have Symbolic Meanings

Gold: Represents Jesus' kingship.

Frankincense: Symbolizes His divinity and role as the High Priest.

Myrrh: A burial spice, foreshadowing His death and sacrifice

6. Their Journey Was Likely Long and Dangerous

Scholars estimate their journey could have taken months or even up to two years. They traveled hundreds of miles, possibly following trade routes through harsh deserts and mountains.

7. The Star Could Have Been a Natural Phenomenon

The "star" that guided them has been the subject of much speculation:

It might have been a conjunction of planets (e.g., Jupiter and Saturn).

It could have been a supernova or a comet.

Some believe it was a miraculous event specifically orchestrated by God.

8. They Avoided King Herod

After worshipping Jesus, the Magi were warned in a dream to avoid returning to King Herod, who sought to kill the child. Their obedience highlights their faith and wisdom.

9. They Were Revered in Early Christian Art and Worship

By the 6th century, the Magi were commonly depicted in Christian art, especially in nativity scenes. They are often shown wearing royal attire and bringing their gifts.

10. Their Relics Are Claimed to Be in Cologne, Germany

According to medieval legend, the relics of the Magi were brought to Cologne Cathedral, where they remain enshrined to this day. The story, though unverifiable, adds to the mystique surrounding their legacy.



Order of Worship

Welcome

Opening Prayer

*Call to Worship:

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you!

**People: The darkness shall not overcome us,
for the Lord is our everlasting light.**

Leader: Lift your eyes and look around,
the nations gather, drawn to the light of Christ.

**People: We come to worship the King,
bringing the gifts of our hearts and lives.**

Leader: Let the light of the star guide us,
as we follow the One who leads us to peace.

**All: Come, let us worship the Christ child,
our Savior, our King, our Light!**

Children's Message

***Angels from the realms of glory, p.220 UMC Hymnal**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon: Following the Light

Offertory

*Doxology - p.95 UMC Hymnal

Thou didst leave thy throne, p.2100 in the black book

The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor:

"Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven."

Congregation:

"Glory to God. Amen."

Pastor:

"The Lord be with you."

Congregation:

"And also with you."

Pastor:

"Lift up your hearts."

Congregation:

"We lift them up to the Lord."

Pastor:

"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

Congregation:

"It is right to give our thanks and praise."

Pastor:

"It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. We give you thanks for your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our sin and suffering, offering us new life and hope."

"On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: 'Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us."

Communion

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***Good Christian men rejoice, p.224 UMC Hymnal**

*Sending Forth

Postlude

Wishing you many blessings as you celebrate your special day!


January 1 - Don Perkins
January 4 - Doris Branch
January 10 - Jayden Branch
January 16 – Howard Graham
January 19 – Marlene Taulton
January 25 – Rachel Moler

Upcoming Events:

January 5 - Holy Communion
January 5 - Souper Bowl Can Food Drive starts
January 9 - 7pm Administrative Council Meeting
January 12 - 10am January Birthday Celebration
January 26 - Free book giveaway of Pastor Mark's newest book—*The Savior's 24 Hours: From the Last Supper to the Resurrection*
February 2 - Holy Communion
February 8 - 3-5 Paint Day - Come join us for another afternoon of fellowship and painting.
February 9 - 10am February Birthday Celebration
February 9 - 11am Methodism 101 with Pastor Katie - RSVP to Pastor Mark or Lisa Pearre by February 2nd.
February 16 - 10am Potluck after church
February 22 - Community Movie Night

Prayer Requests:

The Family of Kathy Simmons on her passing
The Family of Rick Blumenauer on his passing
Dean Harper on his health issues
Donnie Pogue is having Moh's surgery performed to remove spots on his face
Debra Rippeon on her continued health issues
Steve Souder who was diagnosed with kidney cancer and recovering from surgery
Deborah & Ronald Fulk with their health issues
Rita Mahoney who was diagnosed with bone cancer
Joann's sister, Joyce Hope, who had a hip replacement

	<p>Join us on Saturday, February 8th from 3-5 as we paint "Bee Mine" picture for Valentine's Day. Payment of \$25.00 is due by February 2nd to Annaliese Moats or Jessica Trimble.</p>
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