

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President

January Devotion

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:9-11

Epiphany comes from two Greek words that can be translated as “to shine upon,” “to reveal,” or “to appear, manifest.” What makes Epiphany so special is this: it is the time when God chose to reveal Himself, not just to a chosen few, but to all nations.

God is revealing Himself as One, who will not only judge all in the end, but who also has a plan for our lives. Because He loves us, and because He knew that we needed forgiveness and salvation, this one God sent His only Son to save us.

Do we grasp what's happening at the Epiphany? God will get His way with you or without you. In many ways, we're not always so different from the first Epiphany people. You've had incredible spiritual blessings here, years of Bible teaching and preaching in our church family. But we have the old sinful nature working down inside us. We're not better than the Jerusalem folks who

didn't care much when the Wise Men arrived all excited about the newborn king.

We've just crossed into a new year. That fact should fill us with two thoughts especially: First, to thank God for all His kindness in the past. Second, each new year can remind you that time is ticking away. You're coming that much closer to the end of all things, or to the end of your personal life, whichever comes first.

How do you plan to spend 2026 in your life as God's child? The Wise Men had to travel hundreds of miles to get to Christ. You don't have to do anything like that. You've got cars. You've got alarm clocks to wake you up plenty in time for church. You see, you've got Bethlehem right here in your church, whenever the saving news of Jesus is sounded. He is your Lord and Savior—crucified on the cross for your sins and bodily raised on the third day for your forgiveness, life and salvation. Whenever the Holy Sacraments are offered as Jesus gave

them to us, be at your congregation to receive His good gifts. In Word and Sacrament, you have the Christ Child—giving Himself to you for the free pardon of your sins.

Set before you this year the attitude of the Wise Men: what a privilege it is to worship the newborn King! What joy that He wipes your slate clean by His pardoning and forgiving blood. What wonder that He makes you to be His child through the redeeming waters of your Baptism.

What grace He sets before you at His table so that you might be fed now and eternally. What a privilege to give back to Him a percentage of what He first blesses you with in life. What a privilege you have to share in word and deed this light of Christ with others that surround in life. Respond to the “star of wonder, star of night” with this joyful attitude!

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