

Encounter Christ...Grow in faith...Love as Christ loved...Tell the Story***Epiphany 101***

Although it isn't completely absent, one of the things the Narrative Lectionary de-emphasizes compared to the more traditional lectionary is the cycle of the church year. This especially affects Epiphany. The Narrative Lectionary maintains the Advent/Christmas season, Lent/Easter, and at least the day of Pentecost.

But if we didn't have our Epiphany service at Grace every year, we could easily miss the fact that it is the Epiphany season. I like Epiphany – it's often called the season of light. It coincides with the lengthening days and the march toward spring.

But it's probably really called the season of light because Epiphany means "manifestation." It means seeing something clearly that you didn't see before. Light is shed on something that once was a bit murky. To quote Oprah Winfrey, an epiphany is an "aha" moment.

The day of Epiphany is January 6th – it's the 12th day of Christmas. The season of Epiphany goes until Lent, so sometimes Epiphany is very short and other years, like this one, it's pretty long.

There are four readings that nearly always get read during Epiphany when the traditional lectionary is used. They are like clues to a mystery – clues that help us identify just who Jesus is. The readings are:

The Visit of the Magi – this is always the reading appointed for the day of Epiphany. In Latin cultures Epiphany is called "Three Kings Day." Interesting tidbit – the Bible doesn't say how many Magi there were. The visit of the Magi and the gifts they brought are a manifestation of Jesus as king not only to Jews, but to Gentiles as well. We don't know really where the Magi came from, except "the East," but they weren't Jewish. The Magi brought myrrh, which was later used to anoint Jesus' body for burial, so the visit of the Magi might also be a manifestation of the suffering to come. The danger of his mission is brought to light by Herod's role in this story.



The Baptism of Jesus – this is where Jesus is manifested as God's son, come to us as a human being. We read this at the service at Grace.

The Presentation of Jesus – this is where Jesus is brought to the Temple by his parents. Old Simeon and the old prophet Anna, both recognized and lifted up Jesus as the promised Messiah. We read this one from Luke this year.

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Transfiguration – this is where Jesus’ identity is further revealed to his disciples on a mountaintop.

This is also the point in the gospel story where Jesus turns his face to Jerusalem, and the full weight of his mission begins to be manifest. This is always the last Sunday before Lent.

Now, in this post-resurrection world we live in, Jesus is made manifest through us...the church. Sometimes the church makes Jesus shine through. Other times, the church puts forth a totally distorted manifestation of Jesus. How do we grow in our own ability to see Jesus, so that we might manifest Jesus to the world? I believe that is at the heart of the challenge the church faces today. We can’t manifest Jesus to the world until we ourselves have been transformed by his manifestation to us. Next month, we’ll look at some ways to help us grow in that regard.

Christ’s peace,

Pastor Kris

Church for the Sake of the World

A good question was asked at Bethlehem’s annual meeting. Two years ago during Lent we filled pig banks for ELCA World Hunger. The question was “what was the outcome of that donation—how did our pig farmer do?”



The Global Barnyard is a clever way to help us imagine what our gifts might do. So if we assume our money went to buy a pig (and I don’t remember if that was how the project worked) there’s no way to know which family in what country might have gotten a pig with our money...or anything else. But ELCA World Hunger does send out stories and reports on where their money goes and what it does several times a year.

I’ve put some flyers, a poster, and a magazine in the alcove so you can see the work our gifts to ELCA World Hunger do.

Lent Project

For the last several years, we’ve done some sort of project during Lent. The pig banks were one of those. Most years it’s been raising money or collecting in kind donations. What would you like to see us do this year? If you have ideas, talk to Pastor Kris.

February Calendar

January 29	9:00 am—Sunday School—In—Worship; Third grade Bibles
February 5	9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion
	9:45—Sunday school
February 12	9:00 am—Worship
February 19	9:00 am—Worship
	9:45 am—Sunday school
February 26	9:00 am—Worship
February 28	6:30 pm—Women’s Bible study

February Helpers

Cleaners—Todd/Luetkenhaus families
Lectors—McKinley/Hartshorn
Ushers—Todd/Luetkenhaus

Contact Information

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