



Jesus Appears as the Light in the Darkness

The Third Sunday After Epiphany

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

January 22, 2023

SERIES THEME: JESUS APPEARS

The Gospels tell only a little about Jesus' life as an infant. Then, St. Luke briefly discusses the desire of the boy Jesus to be in the temple. Then, Scripture falls silent, telling us nothing about almost two decades of Jesus' life. For most of Jesus' adult life, he lived quietly in Galilee, practicing the carpentry he had learned from his adoptive father, Joseph. Jesus had no followers. Jesus was not famous. But at the exact time God the Father had appointed, Jesus left that obscurity behind. The word epiphany means "appearance." In the Season of Epiphany, we watch Jesus begin his public ministry. Jesus makes his first appearances. And in those appearances, it quickly becomes clear that this is more than a random carpenter's son. As Jesus appears, we see exactly who he is and what he came to do.

THEME OF THE DAY: JESUS APPEARS AS THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The prophet Isaiah vividly described humanity as "people walking in darkness." We are completely enveloped by sin and suffering and death. Worse, when we honestly assess the content of our minds and hearts, we find darkness there too. However, the prophet also foretold that within this deep darkness, a light would shine. The light would be so brilliant that it would be impossible to miss. As Jesus began his teaching and preaching ministry, that prophecy was fulfilled. Today Jesus continues to shine his light by preaching repentance and the good news of the nearing kingdom. He invites us to live a life that is illuminated by him. He calls us to walk in the light of love for God and for the brothers and sisters around us. Our Savior is the Light of the world, and so we shine his reflected light onto everyone around us.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Cori Humann

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 381 The People Who in Darkness Walked

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father,

we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.

We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.

We have done those things that we should not have done,

and we have not done those things that we should have done.

Have mercy on us, Lord!

Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,

according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Glory Be to God

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



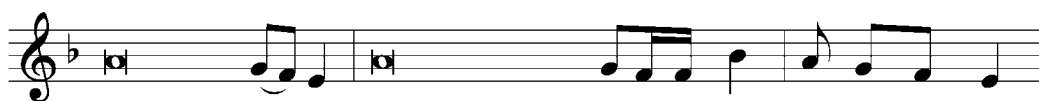
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



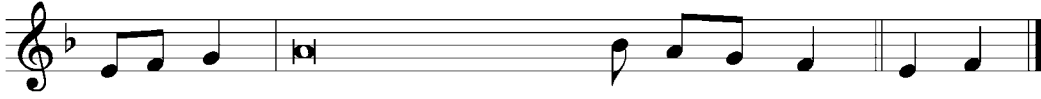
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

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.

Be seated

First Reading

Isaiah 8:19—9:4

The prophet foretold that the people walking in darkness would see a great light.

The Darkness Turns to Light

¹⁹When they tell you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists, who whisper and mutter," shouldn't a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! If people do not speak according to this word, there will be no

dawn for them. ²¹ They will pass through the land, distressed and starving, but when this takes place and they are starving, they will be frustrated, and they will curse their king and their God. They will turn their faces upward, ²² and then they will look down to the ground, but I tell you, they will see only distress, darkness, and the gloom that brings anguish. They will be banished into thick darkness.

¹ Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for the land that was in anguish. In former times, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will cause it to be glorious, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles.

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

³ You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.

They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time,
like the celebration when people divide the plunder.

⁴ For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them.

You have broken the bar on their shoulders and

the rod of their oppressor,
as you did in the day of Midian.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 27- In Front of Hymnal: The LORD Is My Light

Second Reading

1 John 2:3–11

God's children are found walking in the light of Christ and reflecting that light by living in love for God and one another.

Love and Hatred for Fellow Believers

³ This is how we know that we have known him: if we keep his commands. ⁴ The one who says, "I know him," but does not keep his commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ If anyone keeps God's word, the love of God is truly made complete in him. This is how we know that we are in him: ⁶ The one who says he remains in him should walk as Jesus walked.

⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one that you have had since the beginning. The old command is the message you heard. ⁸ At the same time, the command I am writing is new—it is true in Jesus and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. ⁹ The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and nothing causes him to

¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
and on those dwelling in the region and the shadow of death a light has dawned.^[a]
¹⁷ From that time, Jesus began to preach: "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near."

"Come, Follow Me"

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. ¹⁹ He said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

²⁰ They immediately left their nets and followed him. ²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

²³ Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 904 O Christ, Our True and Only Light

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.

Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.

Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.

Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.

Preserve our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.

Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.

Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity, *[especially . . . here name the person and the cause of the petition]*. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death draws near.

Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors, *[especially . . . here name the person]*. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.

Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 713 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

sts. 1, Ref

Lord's 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 and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 813 He Will Hold Me Fast

The Congregation is invited to listen to the Choir sing the hymn.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Joint Mission Festival Service

Our Joint Mission Festival Service will be on February 5th. At 12:00 there will be a potluck meal at Bethel. Grace members are invited to bring finger foods. Following the meal our guest preacher, Pastor Joel Prange, will give a presentation on his home mission in Dickinson, North Dakota.

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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 18, Sunday School 6, Worship 56 in person, Facebook Reached 33, Audio/YouTube 25. Offerings: Home 3,466.00, WELS 285.00, NELHS 75.00, Trinity 100.00, **To God be the glory!**

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