

Sermon Notes: January 5, 2025

Focus: Epiphany

[Lectionary](#)

On page 1, I want to make relevant connections to our day-to-day life and starting at the bottom of page 1, I'd like to do some work defining terms:

Epiphany in 2025

Welcoming the Outsider:

In a time of division—whether political, cultural, or social—the Magi symbolize the response to God's light that draws all people to see Jesus. How can we, as a church, welcome those who feel like outsiders?

Global Connection:

Just as the magi traveled great distances, Epiphany challenges us to think globally. How is Christ's light shining in places of war, climate crisis, or inequality? Are we being called to be part of that light?

Hope in Dark Times:

As we step into 2025, a world still grappling with challenges—economic uncertainty, division, and fear—the star of Epiphany is the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5).

The Epiphany Season

In the Epiphany Season, we will talk about Jesus' identity through key moments in his early ministry:

- Christ' baptism: The heavens open, revealing him as God's beloved Son.
- Jesus' miracles: Signs of God's power and compassion.
- His teachings: Illuminating a new way of life centered on love, justice, and mercy.

It's also a season of manifestation—Christ is revealing himself to the world and our enlightening lives today.

Definitional terms: What is Epiphany?

A Day: Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 or the closest Sunday, marking the magi's journey to Jesus.

A Season: Epiphany leads us from Christmas to Lent. The season sharpens our focus on Jesus' identity and mission to be a light for all people.

A Symbol of Inclusion: The magi were outsiders drawn to Jesus—a reminder for us to consider who is and who is not part of an Epiphany community.

An Aha Moment: Epiphany is more than a sudden insight; it's an invitation to see how God is revealed through Christ—then, now, and always.

The Magi's Visit – The Epiphany in Matthew

Matthew is the only Gospel to recount the magi's journey. Every detail is intentional and deeply symbolic.

Their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—reveal the identity and mission of Jesus:

Gold: Where do we honor Christ as King? How do we give him our best?

A gift for a king.

Jesus is born as the true King, but his kingdom is one of love and justice, not earthly power.

Frankincense: How can we deepen our prayer lives, offering our worship to God?

A priestly gift.

This incense, used in temple worship, points to Jesus as the great high priest, interceding for all humanity.

Myrrh: What sacrifices are we called to make for the sake of others? In a culture of self-focus, this gift calls us to humility and service.

An anointing oil.

This burial spice foreshadows Jesus' sacrificial death and ultimate victory over sin and death.

The Star – A Light for All Nations

The magi followed a star, which Matthew connects to prophecy in the Old Testament. The star signifies both the fulfillment of prophecy and the universal scope of Christ's mission.

Numbers 24:17:

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."

The Messiah – Anointed for All

Messiah means "anointed one," referring to someone chosen by God to bring justice, peace, and salvation. Jesus redefines this role—not as a conquering king, but as a servant who brings reconciliation for all people.

Closing Thoughts

The magi's story reminds us that the Gospel is for everyone. Their gifts call us to offer our hearts and lives to Jesus. The star invites us to follow God's light, even when the path is uncertain. In 2025, may we live as people of Epiphany—welcoming the outsider, bringing hope to the hurting, and reflecting Christ's light in a weary world.

I hope you have a light-filled Epiphany Day
and happy Epiphany Season. **Todd**