

**Where Two or Three are Gathered**  
**Resources for Small Communities**  
**Program Committee for Worship of the ELCIC**  
**Rev. Sean Bell**

**Introduction to Epiphany Sunday and the Season AFTER Epiphany**

The season of Epiphany is a day... and the rest of the Sundays are called the Sundays after Epiphany.

The festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord on January 6, celebrating the visit of the Magi who followed the star to honour the Christ child. This service emphasizes themes of light, revelation, and God's universal love, as the gospel of Matthew highlights Jesus' manifestation to the nations. Traditionally, this service includes prayers for global missions, the proclamation of Christ as the light of the world, and hymns such as "*Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning*" (ELW 303) or "*The First Noel*" (ELW 300). Epiphany offers an opportunity to bless homes for the new year and to reflect on the guiding light of Christ in our lives. (For a house/sanctuary/office blessing, see resources below.)

Consider moving the Epiphany service onto Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>.

The weeks that follow explore Jesus' identity and mission, beginning with his baptism and continuing through his early ministry as he calls disciples, performs miracles, and preaches transformative teachings. Central to this season are themes of inclusion, justice, and renewal, woven through Paul's letters to the Corinthians and gospel accounts of Jesus' actions. The season culminates with the Transfiguration, a glimpse of Christ's divine glory and a foreshadowing of his journey to the cross.

Epiphany invites us into a journey of discovery, reminding us that Jesus is the light for all nations. It calls us to live out our baptismal identity, follow Christ in faith and love, and reflect his light in the world. As we move from the brightness of Christmas into the promise of Lent, Epiphany offers a time to see Christ revealed in our midst and to carry his light into every corner of creation.

OUTLINE of this document:

- 1: Sundays after Epiphany, Prayer of the Day, and Readings.
  - 2: House Blessing Printout
  - 3: Candlemas Idea
-

# Monday, January 6, 2025

## Epiphany of Our Lord, Year C

(Consider replacing 'Christmas 2' with these Epiphany readings on January 5th)

### Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

- Isaiah 60:1-6
- Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
- Ephesians 3:1-12
- Matthew 2:1-12

### Hymns to think about:

- ELW: 308, LBW 76 – “O morning star, how fair and bright!”
  - ELW 300, LBW 56 – “The First Noel
- 

# Sunday, January 12, 2025

## Baptism of Our Lord / Lectionary 1, Year C

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

- First Reading - Isaiah 43:1-7
- Psalm - Psalm 29
- Second Reading - Acts 8:14-17
- Gospel - Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### Hymns to think about:

- ELW 304 “Christ, when for us you were baptized.”

- ELW 455 “Crashing waters at creation.”
  - WOV 647, ELW 305 “When Jesus came to Jordan.”
- 

## Sunday, January 19, 2025

### Second Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 2, Year C

#### Prayer of the Day

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

- First Reading - Isaiah 62:1-5
- Psalm - Psalm 36:5-10
- Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- Gospel - John 2:1-11

#### Hymns to think about:

- ELW 310, LBW 90 “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise.”
  - WOV 648, ELW 319 “Jesus, Come! For We Invite You.”
- 

## Sunday, January 26, 2025

### Third Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 3, Year C

#### Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

- First Reading - Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
- Psalm - Psalm 19
- Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

- Gospel - Luke 4:14-21

**Hymns to think about:**

- ELW 715 “Christ Be Our Light.”
  - WOV 650, ELW 866 “We are Marching in the Light of God.”
- 

## **Sunday, February 2, 2025**

### **Presentation of Our Lord**

#### **(Consider “Candlemas” outline below)**

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

- First Reading - Malachi 3:1-4
- Psalm - Psalm 84
- Psalm (alternate) - Psalm 24:7-10
- Second Reading - Hebrews 2:14-18
- Gospel - Luke 2:22-40

**Hymns to think about (listed in the CandleMas below).**

---

## **Sunday, February 9, 2025**

### **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 5, Year C**

**Prayer of the Day**

Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

- First Reading - Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]
- Psalm - Psalm 138
- Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

- Gospel - Luke 5:1-11

**Hymns to think about:**

- WOV 753, ELW 574 “Here I Am, Lord.”
  - ELW 507, LBW 237 “O God of Light.”
- 

## **Sunday, February 16, 2025**

### **Sixth Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 6, Year C**

**Prayer of the Day**

Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

- First Reading - Jeremiah 17:5-10
- Psalm - Psalm 1
- Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
- Gospel – Luke 6:17-26

**Hymns to think about:**

- WOV 165, ELW 574 “Here I Am, Lord.”
- ELW 798 “Will You Come and Follow Me.”

## **Sunday, February 23, 2025**

### **Seventh Sunday after Epiphany / Lectionary 7, Year C**

**Prayer of the Day**

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

- First Reading - Genesis 45:3-11, 15
- Psalm - Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
- Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
- Gospel - Luke 6:27-38

**Hymns to think about:**

- WOV 479, ELW 479 “We Come to the Hungry Feast.”
  - LBW 316, ELW 754 “Jesus, the Very Thought of You.”
-

# Candlemas Service Outline (OPTION)

## The Presentation of Our Lord - February 2, 2024

More thoughts and details (and downloads) here:

<https://www.lutheranforum.com/blog/reintroducing-candlemas>

Here is a simple option to add to Sunday morning (Smaller communities have an easier time lighting all the candles at the same time):

### Gathering

#### 1. Procession of Light

- Assemble in a dimmed space; distribute candles to the congregation.
- Begin with a liturgical greeting:  
*Leader:* "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!"  
*Assembly:* "Thanks be to God, the light of Christ!"

#### 2. Blessing of the Candles

- Place all the candles to be blessed on the altar or a central table.
- Use a blessing prayer from *ELW Occasional Services for the Assembly* (pp. 165–167) or a custom prayer, such as:  
*"O God, source of all light, bless these candles. May they remind us of Christ, the light of the world. As these candles shine in our worship, may your light shine in our hearts and through our lives. Amen."*

#### 3. Lighting the Assembly Candles

- Light a central candle (e.g., the Paschal Candle) and share the light with the congregation. Hold the candles throughout the service if that makes sense to do, or you can find a place to put them down. After the service the candles can be taken home as a physical reminder of the light that is with us always.

### Word

#### 1. Opening Hymn

- *"Jesus, the Light of the World" (ACS 914) or "When Jesus Came to Jordan" (ELW 305)*

## **2. Prayer of the Day**

- *"Almighty and ever-living God, as your only Son was presented this day in the temple, show us the light of your salvation, that we may reflect your glory to the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen."*

## **3. Readings** (Candles can remain lit as you hear the word proclaimed)

- First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4
- Psalm: Psalm 84 (*"How lovely is your dwelling place"*)
- Second Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18
- Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

## **4. Homily**

- Focus on Jesus as the light for revelation and the call to be bearers of that light in the world.

## **Ritual of Light**

### **1. Candle Procession** (*Replacement for the Prayers of the people, or addition too*).

- Invite the congregation to process around the worship space with their lit candles, singing a hymn such as *"This Little Light of Mine"* or *"Shine, Jesus, Shine."* It's the movement of the light that represents the movement of our prayers and the movement of the Spirit among us.

## **Meal (if Eucharist is included)**

### **1. Offering and Setting the Table**

- Candles can remain lit as a visual connection between the Word and the Meal.

### **2. Great Thanksgiving and Communion**

## **Sending**



### 1. **Blessing**

*"May Christ, the light of the world, shine brightly in you. Go in peace, and let your light shine for all to see. Amen."*

### 2. **Closing Hymn**

- *"Go, My Children, with My Blessing" (ELW 543) or "Christ, Be Our Light" (ELW 715)*

### 3. **Extinguishing the Candles**

- Encourage worshipers to take their candles home as a reminder of their calling to shine Christ's light in their daily lives.

---

## **3: House Blessing (On Epiphany or during the season after Epiphany):**

Here is a video that explains what a house blessing might be for you:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5GsB0ljumw&t=216s&ab\\_channel=LutherCollegeChaplaincy-Regina](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5GsB0ljumw&t=216s&ab_channel=LutherCollegeChaplaincy-Regina)

(It was Covid when I made this which is why I was all alone...) This was from when I was the Chaplain at Luther College (U of R Campus).

The handout is available below if you want to print and hand this out. Give small pieces of chalk out as well. People can bless their own houses... or worship spaces... or office spaces... or anywhere really.

I use this every year at the beginning of the Epiphany service just before the opening hymn.

Peace!

Rev. Sean Bell

# House Blessing 2025

*Take chalk and prepare to mark on the lintel of your front door. As you read below, you will draw each large letter, number, and symbol from the left column while reading the words to the right. The final drawing on the door will look like this:*

20 + C + M + B + 25

*Gather at the front door.*

“The three Wise Men,

- C** Casper,  
**M** Melchoir,  
**B** and Balthasar, followed the star of God’s Son who became human  
**20** two thousand  
**24** twenty five years ago.  
**+ +** May Christ bless this place,  
**+ +** and remain with us through the new year.  
Amen”

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Christ, God’s incarnation, is present in the love and care we manifest to each other in our ordinary daily lives together.

Let us pray, (pause)

God of heaven and earth, you revealed your love born in Christ to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this space and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We pray this through Christ our Saviour.

AMEN.

# House Blessing 2025

*Take chalk and prepare to mark on the lintel of your front door. As you read below, you will draw each large letter, number, and symbol from the left column while reading the words to the right. The final drawing on the door will look like this:*

20 + C + M + B + 25

*Gather at the front door.*

“The three Wise Men,

- C** Casper,  
**M** Melchoir,  
**B** and Balthasar, followed the star of God’s Son who became human  
**20** two thousand  
**21** twenty five years ago.  
**+ +** May Christ bless this place,  
**+ +** and remain with us through the new year.  
Amen”

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Christ, God’s incarnation, is present in the love and care we manifest to each other in our ordinary daily lives together.

Let us pray, (pause)

God of heaven and earth, you revealed your love born in Christ to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this space and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We pray this through Christ our Saviour.

AMEN.