

## THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY

Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6th, which is the Twelfth Day.

Epiphany Day is 6 January and means "showing forth", "manifestation," or "revelation." Epiphany Day itself commemorates the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem to worship the Messiah and bring Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, who by so doing "reveal" Jesus to the world as Lord and King. ([Matthew 2:1-12](#)). Since the earliest days of the church, these wise men have been considered to be representatives of all the peoples of the earth. By means of a miraculous star, God showed them that Jesus was born to be not only the King of the Jews, but the Lord and Savior of all nations.

The Sundays of the season are called Sundays after the Epiphany. The Season after the Epiphany lasts until the day before Lent, which is Tuesday, 21 February 2012.

In the Epiphany and the weeks after it, we celebrate Him, not as on His field of battle, or in His solitary retreat, but as a glorious King. We see Jesus as the object of our worship. The Epiphany and Season after the Epiphany celebrates the many ways through signs, miracles, and preaching that Jesus revealed Himself to the world as Christ, God Incarnate, and King of kings.

Epiphany and the Season after the Epiphany commemorates three incidents that manifested the mission and divinity of Christ: the visit of the Wise Men ([Matthew 2:1-12](#)), the baptism of Jesus ([Mark 1:9-11](#)), and the miracle at Cana ([John 2:1-11](#)).

Epiphany themes have to do with how Christ is revealed and recognized. The Baptism of our Lord is the first Sunday after the Epiphany. This important festival is the observance of Jesus' baptism at the hands of John the Baptist ([Mark 1:9-11](#)). The words of the Father and the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove as Jesus came out of the waters revealed Him to be God's true Son.

The Transfiguration of our Lord, the last Sunday after the Epiphany, is a celebration of the moment that Christ, in the company of Moses and Elijah, literally shined His glorious divine nature on Peter, James, and John, leaving them dazed and awestruck ([Luke 9:28-36](#)). This event, the greatest of Christ's epiphanies until His triumphant resurrection from the grave on Easter, serves as the dramatic conclusion of the season.

Changes to mark the season: Return to "normal" service music and prayers. The color of the season: White, the color of purity, holiness, and joy is the traditional liturgical color for Epiphany, the first Sunday after the Epiphany (the Baptism of our Lord), and the last Sunday after the Epiphany (the Transfiguration of our Lord). For the other Sundays of the season, green is normally used. Green represents the new life that Christ gives us in baptism, as well as the spiritual growth we experience during the season as we study the Lord's ministry of teaching, healing, and miracles.

Spiritual focuses include discovering Christ's presence in our life and on showing Christ to others through our lives. Epiphany is the time to reflect on how we grow into the likeness of Christ and on how our faith shapes our daily lives.

### **An Epiphany Prayer**

Lord Jesus may your light shine our way, as it once guided the steps of the Wise Men.

May we be led into your presence and worship you, the Savior of the world.

May we find new ways of holding the Light of your love so that it may be a Light of revelation for all people.

We give thanks to you for your love, and ask for your continued Presence with us. *Amen.*

**HAPPY EPIPHANY SEASON**