

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Epiphany of Our Lord, January 4, 2026

Traditional Worship

Austin Campus 9:00 AM, Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM* (*Livestreamed)

“Fear Doesn’t Stop Us”

Gather

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: In the dark of morning

C: The stars still shine

P: In the depth of winter

C: The birds still climb

P: At the start of the year, tender and new

C: God is here, God is near

P: Do not rest in your fear

C: God is here

P: So like the stars and the birds

C: Let us worship holy God

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Ever-loving God

C: We long for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy.

However, we know that is not how the world works.

Even just days after Christmas,

we find ourselves face to face with fear once again.

Forgive us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks.

Forgive us when our own fear prevents us from following your call.

Forgive us when fear is louder than love.

Show us how to turn our fear into action.

**Show us how to live like the magi who searched for you
in a fearful world.**

With hope we pray, amen.

P: Family of Faith,
Whether you are brave and courageous or fearful and timid,
God's love for you knows no end.
So join me in these words of forgiveness:

C: **Whether fear inspires us to action,
Or stops us dead in our tracks,
God's love for us is boundless.
We are seen. We are surrounded with grace.
We are sent to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

SHARING THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

OPENING HYMN: RISE, SHINE, YOU PEOPLE (vv. 1,3)

#665



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
2 See how he sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
3 Come, cel - e - brate; your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,
4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent the Son to save us.



our hu - man sto - ry; God in him is cen - tered. He comes to
he brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing. All men and
your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark - ness hurl - ing. To all the
Tell of the Son, who life and free - dom gave us. Tell how the



us, by death and sin sur - round - ed, with grace un - bound - ed.
wom - en, who by guilt are driv - en, now are for - giv - en.
world go out and tell the sto - ry of Je - sus' glo - ry.
Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry na - tion God's new cre - a - tion.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Word

WELCOMING THE CHILDREN

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 60:1-6

- ¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
- ² For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.
- ³ Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 2:1-12, 16-18

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.

¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.


C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: WE'VE SEEN GOD'S FACE (vv. 1,3,4)

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Traditional Polish carol



Like the ma - gi from the east we tra - vel in - to the un - known
If we find our path has led us to King Her - od's den of fear
We will trust that star to guide us to the place where we were called
When new threats de - rail our jour - ney from the path we planned to take

5




Step by step - we make the jour - ney, called - by God - to seek the - throne
Still we'll keep our fo - cus fixed on chas - ing down - that star so clear
Find - ing God em - bod - ied in the humb - lest dwell - ing place of all
We won't let fear - par - a - lyze - us, no we won't stay locked in place

10



O - ver moun - tains, through the des - erts Seek - ing Christ we fol - low e - ver
Though the ty - rants rage and threat - en Noth - ing weak - ens our pro - fess - ion
As King Her - od sends his sol - diers Time stands still while we be - hold him
Stay - ing nim - ble, we'll move for - ward Keep - ing safe by cross - ing bor - ders

14



'Til at last we reach the place Where we hope to see God's face
It is God's voice we have heard Fear will not have the last word
Here's where we were called to be God's in - car - nate love to see
Move a - round the fear with grace For we know we've seen God's face

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

A: Insisting on hope on this Epiphany day, let us confess our faith.

C: We have seen the valley

We have seen a sky without stars

We have seen the longest night

And still we believe

We believe in a with-us God

We believe in the hope of tomorrow

We believe that good news is louder than fear

We believe this good news is for all people

So even when our knees shake

Even when our voice trembles

Even when fear is all around us

We will hold on to that good news

We will reach for each other

We will look for God in our midst

We will sing songs of joy

We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born

We have seen the longest night

And we have seen unimaginable love

So still we believe, Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH *(after each petition...)*

A: God of hope,

C: hear our prayer.

M e a l

OFFERING: *THREE KINGS OF ORIENT* (arr. John Rutter)

Epiphany Chorale, Joe Codispoti, soloist



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
- 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE 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.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

If you are unable to attend worship due to health concerns, please contact the church office to be included on the homebound list.

Christ welcomes you to the meal of grace! All who desire to receive Christ's nourishment and grace may join us at the Lord's Table. (9:00) Please come to the table by the center aisle and return to your seat by the front or side aisle. Communion is by intinction; dip the bread in the red wine or white grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available upon request. (10:30) Please come to the table by the diagonal aisle and return to your seat by the center or a front aisle. Communion is by intinction; dip the wafer in the red wine or white grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available at the front of the center aisle.

STAR WORDS

For those viewing the service online, here is the link to the randomizer wheel that will generate your Star Word: <https://wheelrandom.com/cpp-3m2>

COMMUNION HYMN: THE FIRST NOEL

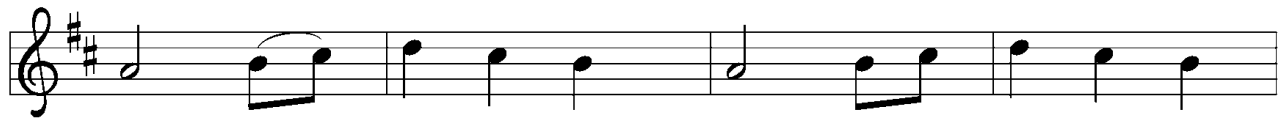
#300



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .
5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
in . . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
earth it gave . . . great light, and . . so it con -
king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
did both stop . . . and stay right . . o - ver the
there in his . . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and

Refrain



night that was so deep.
tin-ued both day and night.
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
place where Je - sus lay.
myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

Send

CLOSING HYMN: AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD (vv. 1-3)

#302



- 1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid - ing star be - hold;
- 2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,
- 3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,
- 4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - 'ry day keep us in the nar - row way;
- 5 In the heav'n - ly coun - try bright need they no cre - a - ted light;



as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright;
there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heav'n and earth a - dore;
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
and when earth - ly things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last
thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;



so, most gra - cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led by thee.
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.
all our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n - ly king.
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.
there for - ev - er may we sing al - le - lu - ias to our king.

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

BENEDICTION

P: In a fearful world, may we look for God's spirit.

May we reach for each other's hands.

May we choose courage whenever we can.

And in all things, may we remember that good news is louder than fear.

In the name of the one who calls, ✠ the one who sends,

and the one who journeys with— go in peace and do not be afraid.

C: Thanks be to God.

Serving in Worship

Austin Campus 9:00 AM

Presiding Minister: Pastor Karl Biermann
Pianist: John Benjamin
Lay Reader: Jim Lehman

Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM

Presiding Minister: Pastor Corey Wagonfield
Assisting Minister: Sandy Houpt
Organist: John Benjamin
Sound: Todd Armstrong
Stream Team: Landon Henderson, Alex Wasser