

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy...Amen.

Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas Season, the 12th day of Christmas if you will... With a story that often gets muddled in the minds of Christmas stories and Christmas carols, placing the 3 wise men or the 3 kings with Jesus on the night he was born...

However, the gospel of Matthew tells a different story... A story about the Magi, which is often poorly translated as wise men... and which is even more confused of as kings...

But the Magi were something unique to antiquity.... And a more proper translation of Magi would actually be... astrologers...

As they were well versed in the natural ways of creation and they used their teachings to interpret signs that happened in nature, and what they meant for the world... And hence, we get the term "wise men" because they were wise to the natural world.

The Magi were also gentiles and they came from the East, meaning they were not Jewish and that they were foreigners... And being foreigners and having a long way to travel, entails a long journey... A journey that took weeks and possibly even months...

And so, begins this unique passage for Epiphany... Where we hear about foreign astrologers, not familiar with Hebrew Scripture... Who are late for the actual birth of Christ...

But who set out all because they saw a star, and decided to follow that star only to discover the Word of God made flesh...

Which is a pretty accurate description of what Epiphany is meant to entail... As Epiphany is all about discovery... And the Greek translation for epiphany means manifestation...

And when referring to Epiphany in Scripture, it means the manifestation of the baby Jesus to all of the world...

Which could only be possible, if Jesus was made known to all people, not just those of Jewish faith and the local population.

And so, we need the unique background of the Magi to make all of this possible, bringing the good news of Christ to all the nations...

Which was only made possible because of a star... For the star led to the divine revelation of God living among us...

And once the Magi saw this, once they fulfilled what they had set out for... The star is no longer mentioned...

In fact, we are told that they left for their own country by way of another road...

Because the Magi no longer needed the star to guide them, for they had seen the true light of Christ... and it became a part of them...

Christ's light lived in them, guided them, and radiated from them...

Which reminds me of a song that I used to sing at church as a kid... This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine...

For we have all been filled with Christ's light... Uniting with Christ in our baptismal waters... Christ's light lives in every one of you...

Which comes full circle to today, as I had mentioned at the start of the service, today is one of those unique days in the church year...

Where churches can either celebrate Epiphany or the Baptism of our Lord...

Because it is here, in baptism, where Epiphany manifests in us...

In baptism we receive the light of Christ... Light, like the Magi first received on the night of Epiphany so many years ago.

In baptism we receive the light of Christ... and to portray this we use a candle... A candle that is lit from the Christ candle, and it is here where we hear these words...

Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life...

Because the light of Christ reveals who you are...

You are a child of God who was claimed and washed in the waters of baptism...

Baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...

Because it was at Christ's baptism where the Triune God appears as one in Scripture...

At Christ's baptism, we see God the Son, in the person of Jesus being baptized in the river...

We see God the Spirit, in the form of a dove, descending upon Jesus...

And we hear God the Father, speaking from above, saying this is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased...

And all who have been baptized since, become children of God and God's beloved...

Embodying the light of Christ, and being sent out as beacons of Christ's light... Sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

This is an epiphany... And we are called to share God's love with the world... Love of course that radiates from your very being...

And so, as we celebrate Epiphany today...

You are invited to hear the most beautiful reminder... that you are called to share your light with the world... To let it shine, let it shine, let it shine...

Amen.