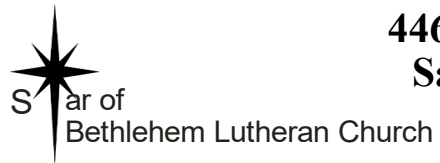
The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous small white stars. A prominent, bright white star with four points is centered in the upper half of the image. Below the text, the silhouettes of three men in traditional robes and crowns are shown walking from left to right. They are followed by two camels, also in silhouette, which are carrying loads. The scene is set against a dark horizon line.

*After Jesus was born
Wise Men from
the east came*

Matthew 2:1



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Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, January 7, 2024 10:00 a.m.

The Epiphany of our Lord

Theme of the day: The Eastern Church celebrates January 6th as the Nativity of our Lord. For the West, the Epiphany of our Lord is the continued celebration of the birth of the Savior of Nations. So bright is the dawning of the Son, so great is the fullness of his glory, that his light not only fills the dark streets of Bethlehem, but the ends of the earth. Jew and Gentile alike gather to worship him who is born ruler of Judah and Shepherd of all Israel.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

OPENING HYMN: # 372 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

♪ **As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright,
so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.**

**As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
thee, whom heav’n and earth adore,
so may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.**

**As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin’s alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heav’nly King.**

**Holy Jesus, ev’ry day keep us in the narrow way;
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.**

Please stand for last verse:

**In the heav’nly country bright need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down.
There forever may we sing alleluias to our King!**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.** (*spoken*)

M: God invites us to come into his presence to worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Prayer and Praise

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **♪ Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **♪ Christ, have mercy.**

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **♪ Lord, have mercy.**

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C: **♪ Amen.**

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious;
his name is worthy of praise.

**♪ O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.
Almighty God, merciful Father,
you crown our life with your love.
You take away our sin; you comfort our spirit;
you make us pure and holy in your sight.
You did not spare your only Son, but gave him up for us all.
O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.**

**O Son of God, eternal Word of the Father,
you came to live with us;
you made your Father known;
you washed us from our sins in your own blood.
You are the King of glory; you are the Lord!
O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Lord God, by the leading of a star, you once made known to the nations your one and only Son. Guide us, also, who know him now by faith to come at last to the perfect joy of your heavenly glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C:  Amen.

Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON: Romans 11:13-15,28-32

¹³I am speaking to you Gentiles. For as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I am going to speak highly of my ministry. ¹⁴Perhaps I may make my own people jealous, and so save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, what does their acceptance mean other than the dead coming to life?

²⁸In regard to the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But, in regard to election, they are especially dear for the sake of the patriarchs, ²⁹because God's gracious gifts and call are not regretted. ³⁰For just as you were once disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy due to their disobedience, ³¹so also now they have become disobedient, so that by the mercy shown to you they may be shown mercy too. ³²For God imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may show mercy to all.

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 72

Refrain



Let the peo - ple praise you, O God.



Let all the peo - ple praise you.

Psalm tone



**Endow the King with your justice, O God,*
the royal Son with your righteousness.**

**He will defend the afflicted among the people*
and save the children of the needy.**

**He will endure as long as the sun,*
as long as the moon, through all generations.**

**He will be like rain falling on a mown field,*
like showers watering the earth.**

Refrain

**All kings will bow down to him,*
and all nations will serve him.**

**All nations will be blessed through him,*
and they will call him blessed.**

**Praise be to the LORD God, who alone does marvelous deeds.*
May the whole earth be filled with his glory.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,**

as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen. *Refrain*

VERSE OF THE DAY:

M: Alleluia. Alleluia. Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. Alleluia. (*Matthew 2:2*)

C: ♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
 These words are written that we may believe
 that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ²“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He gathered together all the people’s chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet:

⁶You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel.”

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.”

⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. ¹¹After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

HYMN: # 373 “Brightest and Best” (*sung to ‘Morning Star’*)

♪ **Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.**

**Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
maker and monarch and Savior of all.**

**Shall we not yield him in costly devotion
rarest of fragrances, tribute divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?**

**Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favor secure.
Richer by far is the heart’s adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.**

**Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.**

SERMON: Numbers 24:15-17a

¹⁵**Balaam took up his oracle and said:
The declaration of Balaam son of Beor,
the declaration of the man whose eye is open,
¹⁶the declaration of the one who hears the words of God,
who receives knowledge from the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
who is falling down, but his eyes are wide open:
¹⁷I see him, but not now.
I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob.
A scepter will rise up out of Israel.**

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Mary's son, in the fullness of time you came into our world to save us from sin and death:

C: **You ushered in the day of grace so long foretold.**

M: Beloved Son of the Father, revered by the Magi, baptized by John, you came preaching and teaching, healing and comforting, forgiving and encouraging:

C: **You brought the light of life to those walking in darkness, and the joy of salvation to those doomed to death.**

M: Prince of Peace, shine like a beacon for us and the people of our world. Let the good news of salvation be heard in the remotest corners of the earth. Open our own lips to speak your name to those around us who still live without faith or hope:

C: Arouse us and our missionaries to flood the world with the light of your gospel.

M: Lord of the Church, let your peace rule our hearts that we may use our gifts to serve you and each other in willing gratitude and joy. Watch over our loved ones near and far, that they may remember your love and rejoice in your salvation. Strengthen the faith of the sick and the disheartened. Give hope to those in despair and comfort those who mourn:

C: Be gracious to all and lead us to reflect your love in everything we say and do.

M: Finally, bring us and all your believers to the heavenly home where we will stand in the full light of your glory and with all your saints and angels sing the everlasting song of triumph.

C: Amen.

C: 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.

Holy Communion, will be celebrated in today's service. The Bible teaches us that Jesus offers us his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins in the Lord's Supper. The Bible also instructs us that receiving the Lord's Supper together is a public expression of our complete "oneness," or unity of faith.

Because the Lord's Supper is an expression of our unity in faith, we invite to the Lord's Supper only those who have expressed that unity with us through membership in our congregation or one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), or our sister church body, the ELS.

If you are a guest from another Christian church, we kindly ask that you simply refrain from participation in our celebration of the Lord's Supper today. We don't want to be presumptuous and put you in the position of declaring your agreement with our beliefs before you have had a chance to learn more.

THE HOLY SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **♪ And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **♪ We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **♪ It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. In the past he spoke to us through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, who is the radiance of his glory.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

**♪ Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glory.
You are my God, and I will exalt you.
I will give you thanks, for you have become my salvation.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glory.**

The Words of Institution

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

C: **♪ Amen.**

**♪ O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world
grant us your peace. Amen.**

HYMN: # 370 “How Lovely Shines the Morning Star”

♪ **How lovely shines the Morning Star!**
The nations see and hail afar
the light in Judah shining.
O David’s Son of Jacob’s race,
my Bridegroom and my King of grace,
for you my heart is pining.
Lowly, holy, great and glorious, O victorious
Prince of graces, filling all the heav’nly places.

O highest joy by mortals won,
true Son of God and Mary’s Son, the highborn King of ages!
In your blest body let me be, e’en as the branch is in the tree,
your life my life supplying.
Sighing, crying for the savor of your favor
resting never till I rest in you forever.

O mighty Father, in your Son you loved me ere you had begun
this ancient world’s foundation.
Your Son has made a friend of me,
and when in spirit him I see, I joy in tribulation.
What bliss is this! He is living, to me giving
life forever; nothing me from him can sever.

Oh, joy to know that you, my friend,
are Lord, beginning without end,
the first and last, eternal!
And you at length—O glorious grace—
will take me to that holy place, the home of joys supernal.
Amen, amen! Come and meet me,
quickly greet me! With deep yearning,
Lord, I look for your returning.

Lift up the voice and strike the string,
let all glad sounds of music ring
in God’s high praises blended.
Christ will be with me all the way, today, tomorrow, ev’ry day
till trav’ling days are ended.
Sing out, ring out triumph glorious,
O victorious chosen nation;
praise the God of your salvation.

Thanksgiving

Please stand.

♪ **Thank the Lord and sing his praise.
Tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice
and proudly bear his name.
He renews his promises and leads
his people forth in joy
With shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Prayer of Thanks

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♪ **Amen.**

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: ♪ **Amen. Amen. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: # 344 "What Child Is This"

♪ **What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping,
whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

Why lies he in such mean estate
where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWERS for today's service were given to the glory of God by the Lyons in observation of Epiphany.

PRAYERS: Remember to pray for: Shawn Lozano, John Velasques, little Elias, Dennis Douglas, Bob Ward, George Caravana, Molly Webb (and brother, Jim), Helen Marten, Doug Ward, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Roberta Gowin, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Louise Perry, Rylan Downs, Sam Daugherty, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Judy Washburn, Marlene Washburn, and Rich Olerich.

STAR CHURCH DIRECTORY: Please update your personal information as it changes (either online or blue sheets in narthex).

To view and use the directory online, go to:

members.instantchurchdirectory.com

Follow the prompts under "Sign In" to "Create a login now."

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*** You will need to use your e-mail address as listed in our directory to create a log-in the first time you use the directory online and via the mobile app.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday **English as a Second Language, 6:00-7:30 p.m.**
Thursday **Bible Class, 10:00 a.m.**
 ESL, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday **Bible Class & Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.**
 Worship, 10:00 a.m.
 Fellowship Lunch & Voters' Meeting

Arise, shine,



for your light has come!

Isaiah 60:1

PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

(cf. page 156 in the front of Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal)

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

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