

# *The Disciple*

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104 ELM AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 1344  
LOUISA, VA 23093

540-848-6441  
LOUISACHRISTIANCHURCH.ORG  
LCCPASTORV@GMAILCOM

## *Thoughts on Epiphany*

Many of us were introduced to Epiphany through the familiar silhouetted-image of Three Wise Men bearing gifts as they followed the Great Star by night. In some cultures, Epiphany is known as the Day of the Kings (Dia de los Reyes). It is also known as Twelfth Day or Twelfth Night, reflecting an old custom of giving a gift for each of the days from December 25 to January 6 for the 12 days of Christmas. The day has special meaning for a number of reasons. Several branches of Christianity celebrate the birth of the Christ Child on January 6th or January 7th.

The word epiphany means appearance or manifestation. Popular usage likens epiphany to words such as "EUREKA" or "AHA!" Use of this word by some English speakers conjures images of having a light bulb turned on, or of being able to see something that was once hidden from view. The texts for the Sundays after the Epiphany dramatize the many ways that we people came to understand who Jesus was, through his baptism, the miracle at the wedding, or through that declaration in his hometown synagogue! But, this ever-widening circle of revelation began 'outside the circle' of Judaism, so to speak, with the Magi.

### ***Who were the Magi?***

Many versions of the Bible refer to them as the Wise Men. We often forget that these Magi or Wise Men were non-Jews. Older sources suggest that they were priestly descendants of one of the tribes of the Medes known for their knowledge of the stars (astronomy) and their ability to interpret dreams.



*Arise,  
Shine;  
for your  
Light has  
come and  
the Glory of  
the Lord has  
risen upon  
you.*

*Isaiah 60:1*

### ***What can we learn from the Wise Men?***

1. The Wise Men began their journey because of their beliefs. It was a common belief that when a world leader like a king was born that a special stellar phenomenon would appear in the sky. The Magi saw something that convinced them that they had seen the long-awaited sign. Historians tell us that the Jews, the Romans, and the Persians were all watching the skies about that time, looking for signs of the birth of an extraordinary king. The Wise Men saw the star and began their journey.

***May God give us all inspiration for this year's journey.***

2. The Wise Men were willing to follow what they had seen into unknown territory. Their journey took them outside their country and their comfort zone. The Wise Men risked the consequences of disobeying Herod, who was known to behave as a madman when provoked and returned to their country by another way.

***The Christian journey is often an off-road excursion.***

3. The Wise Men were committed to the journey -- wherever the star might lead. The Wise Men set out to find a newborn King by following a star and ended up in finding a baby born to young, relatively poor parents! Not exactly what they expected and not exactly what befit their dignity as priests.

***In this coming year, may we look to heaven for guidance and comfort and may we accept God's blessings in whatever forms we find them, just as the Wise Men accepted that their long, expensive journey led them to a baby born to young, inexperienced parents who lived on the poor side of town.***

4. The Wise Men brought gifts. They did the thing that people in the East or in Africa or in India would do when visiting royalty. They brought gifts.

- *Gold was the kind of gift that you brought to a king.*
- *Frankincense was the kind of gift that you would bring to a priest.*
- *Myrrh was given to someone who was about to die.*

***On this Epiphany, think of the gift that you will offer to God in the coming year. The gift of time? The gift of your talents? Your service in the community? Your witness and testimony? The gift of undying love and devotion?***

Their greatest gift comes to us in the form of a realization. The Wise Men were the first Gentiles to recognize that Jesus belongs to everyone. Good news is for everyone, not just a select few.

***Star of wonder  
Star of light  
Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading  
Still proceeding  
Guide us to thy perfect light.***

# EPIPHANY

## Prayers of Praise

Submitted by members of our community and congregation....we practice counting our blessings and giving glory to God. Contact Sheryl at saseyart@gmail.com or text her at 540-223-5800 with your own praises to include.

- \* God grace to help us to adapt, change and align up to the challenge with adapting, changing, aligning.
- \* Our leadership who have led with humble confidence- a servant leadership.
- \* For God's love among us as we have respected each other's differences, forgiven each other and have loved each other.
- \* For Christ uniting us into one people and teaching us to live for Him. For the sacrifices of love, prayer, time, energy and finances God has shown us through each other.



## In Search of....

*(A unique type of Prayer List)*

Are you looking for a prayer? Do you have a need? Do you know of someone that needs prayer or something more tangible? This is the space for us to ask for help from our community. Names will be kept confidential and we will utilize the pastor and other angels to deliver answers to the needs requested. Please send your requests to saseyart@gmail.com or text Sheryl at 540-223-5800 or let Pastor Vincent know of your need.

See below for an example of what this space could look like...

***Prayer Request for recovery from hip replacement surgery***

***Need — LCC needs individuals willing to serve on the technical team (video, audio, social media, etc)***

***Prayer Request for the doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. May they have continued strength and good health as they care for others.***





Disembodied voices, misbehaving electronic devices and shadowing figures are just a few of the experiences people are reporting to have during their increased time of isolation. Molly Fitzpatrick believes that the invisibility of the Coronavirus sparks our imaginations to perceive "malevolent spirits as they creep upon unsuspecting victims".

The book of Ephesians attempts to open our eyes to see the realities of the unseen world. Oh the riches of God's mercy and grace that awaits those in Christ Jesus in the Heavenly realms. The spiritual realms are not just future oriented, they are also present realities. A reality that is often sensed when we are seeking, feel alone, isolated or just

in need of prayer. Join us as we embark to discover the realities of the unseen world and the riches of God's loving kindness that awaits us.

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:7-8 NIV

Resource: Molly Fitzpatrick, "Quarantining With a Ghost? It's Scary." The New York Times (5-14-20)



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**Sunday Mornings**

**LIVE**

**On Facebook**

Each Sunday morning you can view the 11:00 am Worship Service as it is happening LIVE on Facebook.

Simply login to your Facebook account and go to the Louisa Christian Church page.

You can still view the service anytime by following the link on our website, [LouisaChristianChurch.org](http://LouisaChristianChurch.org). Each week's sermon is posted under Worship Resources along with the worship handouts and the newsletter.

