

A Service of Lessons and Carols for Epiphany



St. Peter's Episcopal Church
St. Louis, Missouri
Sunday, January 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.



EPIPHANY celebrates the appearance of God's glory in the world through the birth of Jesus, our Emmanuel ("God with us"), and the revelation of the incarnation to the Gentiles, and the whole world. It has been marked since the 3rd century with a Feast Day on January 6 and celebrated in both East and West in a rich variety of ways. In the Western Church, the emphasis has been on the nativity itself and the acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty over all through the visit of the Magi bringing their gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh. The revelation of his true nature is echoed by the words of the prophet Simeon, the *Nunc Dimittis*, at the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (observed as a feast in the Episcopal Church on February 2).

The Greek word epiphany means literally "sudden appearance" and refers above all to the manifestation of God. This is the moment we see that Jesus is so much more than a good human being, a wise teacher, and a moral example. In fact he is the Word become flesh. It is in this sense that Simeon declares him to be "salvation" and "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Later Jesus calls himself "the light of the World." Thus the symbolism of light pervades both this season and this Service of Lessons and Carols for Epiphany.

This service is in three sections: 1) The Word Made Flesh, 2) The King of the Nations, and 3) Light to the World.

Christ calls us out of darkness and into light, so that we may recognize his effect on all creation. In this service, we pray that our eyes may be opened to see his glory; for all are made in the image and likeness of God.

This service and this description are adapted from an order of service held at St. John's College, Cambridge, England.

The cover art is The Star of Bethlehem (1890) by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR EPIPHANY

Sunday, January 11, 2026
5:00 p.m.

Music Before the Service

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, BuxWV 223
(“How bright appears the Morning star;” *Hymn 496*)

Dieterich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

ORDER OF SERVICE

The service begins with the Church in darkness.

The Officiant reads the First Lesson from the entrance to the Church in the narthex.

FIRST LESSON John 1: 1-14

IN THE BEGINNING was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

MOTET

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM, et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, iacentem in praesepio:
O beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum. Alleluia.

O GREAT MYSTERY and wondrous thing
that the animals behold the new-born Lord lying in a manger.
O Blessed Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia.

Words: *Matin Responsories on Christmas Day*
Music: Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

The People stand and sing the hymn. The Procession enters the Church.

HYMN 82: "Of the Father's love begotten"

Divinum Mysterium

BIDDING PRAYER

Officiant Dear People of God, we are gathered to celebrate with joy the appearance of God's glory in the world through the birth of Jesus, who is Emmanuel, God with us; to reflect upon the visit of the Magi bringing homage to their King at his birth; and to hear the prophetic words of Anna and Simeon revealing the Christ child as a light to lighten all people.

As we rejoice in this, the Word made flesh, who called us out of darkness into light, so we pray that his love and faithfulness may be known in all the world.

We pray for the unity and mission of Christ's Church, and for all who minister the gospel of Christ; we pray for the world, that we may have reverence for the natural order and respect for every person, made in the image and likeness of God; and we pray for those who stand in need, for the lonely, the fearful, the sick and the bereaved, and for all who have no one to pray for them.

May God our Father take us and use us in his service; may he open our eyes to see his glory and equip us to bless his people, now and at all times. *Amen.*

Believing the promises of God, let us pray with confidence as our Savior has taught us:

All 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,
 for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The People sit.

CAROL

SHEPHERDS, called by angels,
called by love and angels;
no place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.

Sages, searching for stars,
searching for love in heaven;
no place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.

His love will hold me,
his love will cherish me,
love with cradle me.

Lead me, lead me to see him,
sages and shepherds and angels;
no place for me but a stable.
My Lord has come.

MY LORD HAS COME
Words and Music: *Will Todd (b. 1970)*

The People stand.

I. The Word Made Flesh

Officiant The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined.

Officiant Arise, shine, for your light has come:

People And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

COLLECT

ALMIGHTY GOD, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

The People sit.

CAROL

OSLEEP thou heaven-born treasure thou,
Sleep sound, thou dearest child;
White angel wings shall fan thy brow
With breezes soft and mild.

We shepherds poor are here to sing
A simple lullay to our king.
Lullaby, lullaby, sleep, sleep softly, lullaby.

See Mary has with mother's love
A bed for thee outspread,
While Joseph stoops and watches at thy head,
The lambkins in the stall so nigh,
That thou mayest sleep, have hushed their cry.
Lullay, lullaby, sleep, sleep softly, lullaby.

THE SHEPHERDS' CRADLE SONG

Words: *tr. A. Foxton Ferguson (1866–1920)*

Music: *Karl Leuner, 1817, arr. Charles Macpherson (1870–1927)*

SECOND LESSON Matthew 1: 18–23

NOW THE BIRTH of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

CAROL

WHEN THOU WAST BORN in wintertime,
the Savior of mankind to be,
Came men of ev'ry sort and clime:
to worship Thee.

The Three Wise Men who from afar
drew near the wond'rous Babe to see,
And in their wisdom found Thy star:
these worshipp'd Thee.

And those who waited in Thy courts,
who sought from earthly things to flee,
Who serv'd by pray'r and quiet thoughts:
these worshipp'd Thee.

And shepherds who say watching then,
their flocks about the hills dispersed,
Unlearn'd, unletter'd, humble men:
These found Thee first.

IN WINTERTIME
Words: *Betty Askwith (1909-1995)*
Music: *Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989)*

THIRD LESSON Luke 2: 8-20

IN THAT REGION there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

CAROL

ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story

Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the Infant Light:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Sages, leave your contemplations;
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations;
Ye have seen his natal star:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Though an infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to him;
Every knee shall then bow down:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Words: *James Montgomery (1771-1854)*

Music: *French traditional,*
arr. *Reginal Jacques (1894-1969)*

The People stand and sing the hymn.

HYMN 127: "Earth has many a noble city"

Stuttgart

II. The King of the Nations

Officiant At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow; in heaven, on earth and under the earth: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Officiant Nations shall come to your light:
People And kings to your dawning brightness.

COLLECT

ALMIGHTY FATHER, by the leading of a star you revealed your only-begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: In your mercy grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The People sit.

CAROL

There was a star in David's land,
In David's land appeared,
And in King Herod's chamber
So bright it did shine there.

The wise men they soon spied it
And told the king anigh,
That a prince's babe was born that night
No king shall e'er destroy.

If this be the truth, King Herod said,
That thou hast told to me,
The roasted cock that lies in the dish
Shall crow full senses three.

Oh, the cock soon thrusten'd and feather'd well
By the works of God's own hand,
And he did crow full senses three
In the dish where he did stand.

KING HEROD AND THE COCK
Words: *English traditional*
Music: *William Walton (1902–1983)*

FOURTH LESSON Matthew 2: 1-12

IN THE TIME OF KING HEROD, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘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.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 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.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CAROL

An offering will be collected during the singing of this carol.

NIIGHT HAS COME to Bethlehem,
The family is asleep,
Exhausted by the wonders seen,
The news outrageous, deep.
“That I may come and worship him.”

Ox and ass have closed their eyes,
Their ears now hear no sound.
Shepherds have gone back to their flocks,
The mouse still noses around.
“That I may come and worship him.”

Kings have left for their distant lands,
Fractious camels moan.
At a desert spring they make their farewells.
“It’s a mighty way to home!”
“That I may come and worship him.”

Later that night their heads are filled
With a dream-drenched holy ray.
“Do not return to Herod the king,
Go back another way.”
“That I may come and worship him.”
And so our Christ is saved from death
His mission to complete
To change the world by selfless love.
Satan’s legions to beat.

THE MAGI’S DREAM
Words: Robert Tear (1939–2011)
Music: James Whitbourn (b. 1963)

FIFTH LESSON Matthew 2: 13–18

NOW AFTER THEY HAD LEFT, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, 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 wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: “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.”

CAROL

LULLY, LULLA, *thou little tiny child*
By by, lully lullay.

O sisters too,
How may we do,
 For to preserve this day
This poor youngling
For whom we do sing
 By by, lully, lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
 Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might,
In his own sight,
 All young children to slay.

That woe is me,
Poor Child for Thee!
 And ever morn and day,
For thy parting
Neither say nor sing
 By, by, lully, lullay.

THE COVENTRY CAROL

Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, 15th century

The People stand and sing the hymn.

HYMN: "From the eastern mountains"

1 From the east - ern moun - tains press-ing on they come,
2 There their Lord and Sa - vior as an in - fant lay,
3 Thou who in a man - ger once hast low - ly lain,
4 Gath - er in the out - casts, all who've gone a - stray,
5 On - ward through the dark - ness of the lone - ly night,

wise men in their wis - dom, to his hum - ble home;
won-drous light that led them on - ward on their way,
who dost now in glo - ry o'er all king - doms reign,
throw thy ra - diance o'er them, guide them on their way;
shin - ing still be - fore them with thy kind - ly light,

stirred by deep de - vo - tion, hast - ing from a - far,
ev - er now to light - en na - tions from a - far,
ga - ther in the peo - ples, who in lands a - far
those who ne - ver knew thee, those who've wan - dered far,
un - til eve - ry na - tion, wheth - er bond or free,

ev - er jour ney on - ward, guid - ed by a star.
as they jour - ney home - ward by that guid - ing star.
ne'er have seen the bright - ness of thy guid - ing star.
lead them by the bright - ness of thy guid - ing star.
'neath thy star - lit ban - ner, Je - sus, fol - lows thee.

Words: Godfrey Thring, alt.
Music: King's Weston, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

III. Light to the World

Officiant But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth.

Officiant And the Lord, whom you seek:
People Shall suddenly come to his temple.

COLLECT

ALMIGHTY AND EVER-LIVING GOD, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was presented in the Temple in substance of our flesh, and was acclaimed the glory of Israel and the light of the nations: Grant that in him we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, and in the world may reflect his glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The People sit.

ANTHEM

CHRISTUS EST STELLA MATUTINA
qui nocte saecum transacta lucem vitae, luce,
sans promitit, et pandit aeternum.

Christ is the Morning Star,
who when the night of this world is past,
he gives to his saints the promise of the light of life,
and opens everlasting day.

PRAYER OF THE VENERABLE BEDE

Words: *Found on the wall of Galilee Chapel, Durham Cathedral*

Music: *Richard Proulx (1937–2010)*

SIXTH LESSON Luke 2: 21-32

AFTER EIGHT DAYS HAD PASSED, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

NUNC DIMITTIS

LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
According to thy word;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
 which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
 and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen.

Words: *Luke 2:29-32; Gloria Patri*

Music: *Service in F*

George Dyson (1883-1964)

THE GREETING

The People stand.

COLLECT

ALMIGHTY GOD, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

BLESSING

MAY CHRIST, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. *Amen.*

The People stand and sing the hymn.

HYMN 573: "Father eternal, ruler of creation"

Langham

At the conclusion of the hymn the People remain standing as the Procession departs.

Bearing in mind that the organ music after the service, like the liturgy that precedes it, is an offering to God's glory, the Congregation is asked to be seated or depart quietly.

Music After the Service

Divinum mysterium

Richard Purvis

("Of the Father's love begotten;" Hymn 82)

(1913-1994)

<i>Officiant</i>	The Rev. Dr. Nathan Haydon
<i>Musicians</i>	The St. Peter's Singers
	David Sinden, Organist & Choirmaster
	Joseph Arndt, Assistant Organist
<i>Lectors</i>	DeWayne Trainer, Bud Wilson, Andrea Osman, Brig Buettner, Ann Babington
<i>Crucifer</i>	Sandy Peters
<i>Usher</i>	Mike Newport

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