

An Advent Lutheran Church Jubilee 2026 Celebration Devotion



EPIPHANY – Born to BEAR the Light

By Pastor Debra Loudin-McCann

(Former Director of Music Ministries at Advent and ministerial daughter of the congregation.)

The light you shine does not vanish into the distance.

*It moves through other lives, rests in small kindnesses,
learns new shapes.*

*And one day, often when you are not looking for it,
it comes back to you as warmth, as help, as hope, as a
reminder that nothing given in love is ever lost.*

~ Rivers in the Ocean

Epiphany is a peculiar kind of Holy Day/Feast Day of the liturgical Church calendar. It's a mashup of Light, Baptism, The Three Kings/Magi/Wise Men, The Twelfth Day of Christmas, and the New Year. Depending on the lectionary cycle we hear about the arrival of the visitors from the East bearing gifts to reveal and acknowledge the holiness of the babe in the manger or the Baptism of Jesus with descending dove and the voice of God declaring Jesus as the Beloved Son. Both are seen as "*epiphanies*" - revelations and signs *showing forth* or *making known* an important truth. The epiphany here is that **Jesus is The Son of God and The Light of The World**. In both stories Light is part of the epiphany, a strong symbolic image. The Wise Men follow the star. At Jesus' baptism "... *the Heavens opened*" so there must have been a flood of Heavenly Light.

I love the portion of our Lutheran Baptismal Liturgy where the newly baptized is handed a lighted candle and hears the words "*Let YOUR Light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to our Father in Heaven.*" This is the passing of the Light of Christ, that same light we passed to one another on Christmas Eve. *Christ came to us to **BE** the Light of God's Love*, come into the world as a flesh and blood, vulnerable human so that we might trust by faith that God understands how impossibly beautiful, difficult, and dangerous it is to be us, from the inside out. Epiphany reminds us that on Baptism *we are blessed, entrusted with, and called to **BEAR** that Christ Light* into the dark places of life, by Living and Loving like Christ, by giving of our Time, Talent, and Treasure to bring forth the *Kingdom of God*.

Advent Lutheran has a blessed history of generous, faithful service to the community. Over the years we have served by welcoming immigrants, sheltering by building houses, giving a cup of water in Jesus' name by building wells, helping to heal by building clinics, visiting the sick and imprisoned. Think of all the various ministries and programs which we have shared, spreading from Arlington, throughout

Texas, to Mexico, Sierra Leone, and into all the world – Mission Arlington, Casas por Cristo, NTNL Companion Church ELCSL, Lutheran World Hunger, Lutheran World Relief and Disaster Response, The Lord's Pantry ... and the list goes on. ***THIS, Beloved Community, this is how we shine the Light of Christ into the darkness of human pain, suffering, violence, hatred, poverty, injustice and all manner of human need and brokenness.*** WE are Mary Theotokos bearing the Light Incarnate, and WE are born to walk wet in the grace of our baptism, soaked in God's Love to BEAR The Light, shining it on the paths of righteousness so we may all walk together Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly with God.

I want to walk as a Child of the Light. I want to follow Jesus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

In Him there is no darkness at all; the night and the day are both alike.

The Lamb is the Light of the City of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus. I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus. Clear sun of righteousness shine on my path and show me the way to The Father.

—Kathleen Thomerson, ELW hymn # 815

Let us pray ... Everlasting God, radiance of all faithful people, You revealed the Incarnation of your Son by the leading of a brilliant star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives. Shine the light of justice in our hearts and over all lands. Accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service and bring us at last to full vision of your glory, through your Son Jesus Christ, The Light of the World.

AMEN



When those first few drops of water touched your face, you were born anew.

Your name was sung in Heaven, and God smiled down on you.

You are God's child, chosen and precious in His sight.

And you were born as one called to bear The Light.

Ancient words were spoken, promises were made, a tiny stole, a servant's yoke upon you gently laid.

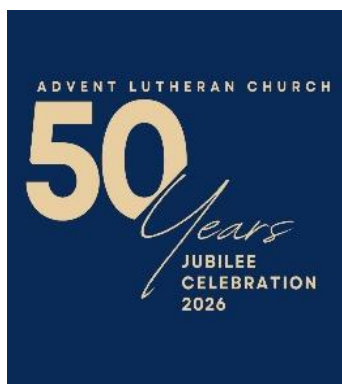
The cross marked on your forehead, the people say Amen! And God has come in Love once again.

You are God's Child, chosen, and precious in His sight,

born of Word and Water, you shine with holy Light.

Now go in Peace, Serve the Lord ... Bear the Light

~ Debra Loudin-McCann, 1995



(The above is from a song written for the confirmation of my son Evan McCann at Advent Lutheran Church, sung there at several confirmation services including the confirmations of Todd and Carly McCann and at the baptism and confirmation of my youngest son Aaron McCann.)