

Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



First Sunday after Epiphany - Baptism of Our Lord - 1/8/2023

SERIES THEME

JESUS APPEARS

The Gospels tell only a little about Jesus' life as an infant. Then, St. Luke briefly discusses the desire of the boy Jesus to be in the temple. Then, Scripture falls silent, telling us nothing about almost two decades of Jesus' life. For most of Jesus' adult life, he lived quietly in Galilee, practicing the carpentry he had learned from his adoptive father, Joseph. Jesus had no followers. Jesus was not famous. But at the exact time God the Father had appointed, Jesus left that obscurity behind. The word epiphany means "appearance." In the Season of Epiphany, we watch Jesus begin his public ministry. Jesus makes his first appearances. And in those appearances, it quickly becomes clear that this is more than a random carpenter's son. As Jesus appears, we see exactly who he is and what he came to do.

Our worship for three weeks will follow this pattern:

Jesus Appears as the Anointed One

Jesus Appears as the Lamb of God

Jesus Appears as the Light in the Darkness

THEME OF THE DAY

JESUS APPEARS AS THE ANNOINTED ONE

"Christ" is not Jesus' last name, of course. It is a title. The Greek word "Christ" and the Hebrew word "Messiah" both mean the same thing—"The Anointed One." Anointing was the practice of pouring liquid (typically oil) over the head of someone to signify selection for some special task. However, when the Lord anointed heroes to do his saving work, what he poured over them was his Spirit.

For centuries people of faith had patiently waited for the promised Messiah, the servant of God who would bring the salvation we so desperately need. The time had come for Jesus to be revealed as the fulfillment of that divine promise. So, Christ our Lord came to the Jordan River to be baptized, that he might be recognized by John and revealed to Israel. At his baptism Jesus was anointed—marked as God's special servant and empowered by the Spirit of the Lord.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 42:1-7 – The Lord promises to put his Spirit on the Messiah, empowering the Anointed One to free us from our sins. We see this promise fulfilled when Jesus is baptized.

SECOND READING

*** Acts 10:34-38 – As Peter told others how God had anointed Jesus, through that good news the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Peter's listeners.

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:13-17 – In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3 - non Communion - keep learning Gloria

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

384 - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Psalm of the Day:

45

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

377 - To Jordan's River Came Our Lord

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

374:1,2,4,5 - The Star Proclaims the King Is Here (if unused previous week)

or

685 - Through Simple Water Drawn and Poured

Closing Hymn:

950 - Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

385 - Christ Begins

379 - Christ, Your Footprints - new tune for Supplement hymn

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

385 should have cantor intro, or cong on refrain only at first, or prior learning of some sort

Baptism hymns such as 647 or 682 (both new tunes needing intro) and 679 are also options for this day.

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Second Sunday after Epiphany - 1/15/2023

SERIES THEME

JESUS APPEARS

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THEME OF THE DAY

JESUS APPEARS AS THE LAMB OF GOD

For centuries the priests of Israel offered sacrifices to God for sin. Over and over blood flowed, testifying that the penalty of sin was death. But over and over a substitute stood in the place of the sinner. Countless animals died under the priestly knife as generations of the faithful brought lamb after lamb to the temple.

This week we see the Lamb that God himself was bringing to the temple. This was the Lamb that God himself would sacrifice. In the great act that would remove our condemnation, the Messiah took our sins, stood in our place, and died as the substitute for sinful mankind. This was the fulfillment of the entire sacrificial system. Every lamb and goat and bird pointed to God's Lamb who takes away our sin.

The heart that sees his Savior willingly becoming the Lamb cannot help but take this news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 49:1-6 – The Servant of the Lord would suffer, but in that suffering God would display his splendor to the entire world.

SECOND READING

Colossians 2:6-15 – The Lamb of God needed to be flesh and blood, so that he could be sacrificed. And because that Lamb was the Son of God, it is a sacrifice valuable enough to forgive us all our sins.

GOSPEL

*** John 1:29-41 – As the last and greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist succinctly summarizes God's plan of salvation by pointing to Jesus and calling him the Lamb of God.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3 - Target date for assembly singing the entire
Gloria

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

380 - Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

Psalm of the Day:

40

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

375 - Arise and Shine in Splendor

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*525 - The Lamb and

*530 Praise Be to Christ

or

*629 O God from God

Closing Hymn:

929 - May the Peace of God

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Though categorized in Lent, 403 Lamb of God would work well with preaching on the gospel. If we weren't learning Setting 3 right now, this hymn could serve as an Agnus

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

781 Lord, as the Day Begins clearly references "take away our sins" - new melody needs intro

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Third Sunday after Epiphany - 1/22/2023

SERIES THEME

JESUS APPEARS

The Gospels tell only a little about Jesus' life as an infant. Then, St. Luke briefly discusses the desire of the boy Jesus to be in the temple. Then, Scripture falls silent, telling us nothing about almost two decades of Jesus' life. For most of Jesus' adult life, he lived quietly in Galilee, practicing the carpentry he had learned from his adoptive father, Joseph. Jesus had no followers. Jesus was not famous. But at the exact time God the Father had appointed, Jesus left that obscurity behind. The word epiphany means "appearance." In the Season of Epiphany, we watch Jesus begin his public ministry. Jesus makes his first appearances. And in those appearances, it quickly becomes clear that this is more than a random carpenter's son. As Jesus appears, we see exactly who he is and what he came to do.

THEME OF THE DAY

JESUS APPEARS AS THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The prophet Isaiah vividly described humanity as "people walking in darkness." We are completely enveloped by sin and suffering and death. Worse, when we honestly assess the content of our minds and hearts, we find darkness there too. However, the prophet also foretold that within this deep darkness, a light would shine. The light would be so brilliant that it would be impossible to miss. As Jesus began his teaching and preaching ministry, that prophecy was fulfilled.

Today Jesus continues to shine his light by preaching repentance and the good news of the nearing kingdom. He invites us to live a life that is illuminated by him. He calls us to walk in the light of love for God and for the brothers and sisters around us. Our Savior is the Light of the world, and so we shine his reflected light onto everyone around us.

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 8:19-9:4 – The prophet foretold that the people walking in darkness would see a great light.

SECOND READING

1 John 2:3-11 – God's children are found walking in the light of Christ and reflecting that light by living in love for God and one another.

GOSPEL

Matthew 4:12-23 – As Jesus began his preaching ministry in a world filled with unbelief, the prophecy was fulfilled. A brilliant light shined through the darkness.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3 - Final time for assembly to sing the entire Gloria; then next Sunday move to a different setting since Setting 3 has been in play for quite a while.

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

381 - The People Who In Darkness Walked

Psalm of the Day:

27

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

904 - O Christ, Our True and Only Light

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

515 - Christ Is the World's Light

Closing Hymn:

528:1,6 - Christ, the Word of God Incarnate

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

382 - The People Who Walked in Darkness - new hymn that needs intro

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

382 The People Who Walked in Darkness - if this is chosen, prob not also use 381

27D We Are Singing could be used as an opening or closing hymn in addition to the appointed psalm of the day