

treated the request for information about the city of His birth with less interest than Herod. Perhaps they didn't take the Magi seriously (who follows a star, anyway?) The Jewish leadership's rejection of Jesus was foretold by Isaiah and (as Paul told us) the Gentiles have become heirs of the kingdom. This meant that the Magi were the most significant people to visit Jesus, and the only leaders to see Him until He came to the temple at the age of 12. The light had come to the darkness but the darkness could not comprehend Him.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Ⓟ Heavenly Father, Eternal God, You alone are forever, the power, the kingdom and the glory. To You only belongs authority over all the Earth and universe, over all forces and energies, over the sun and stars, and over all intelligence and knowledge. We give You thanks and praise you for all Your being.

We thank You for the leading of a star by which You brought the Magi from the East to the Light of the Gentiles. In the same way we ask that You would lead the nations of the Earth to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, and grant wisdom to all our rulers that they would serve Christ in love and respect. Prosper and bless Your Word and the preaching of the Gospel, that multitudes will come to faith in Jesus Christ and that He will be salvation to the ends of the Earth. Endue all ministers, missionaries and Christian workers with heavenly power and grace, that their labor will be abundantly and fruitfully blessed. Grant all who hear Your Word; the faith to believe it, the strength to obey it, and the courage to profess it in word and deed. Overthrow all powers of darkness that bind people in the chains of superstition and ignorance, and all forces of denial and unbelief that assault the mind.

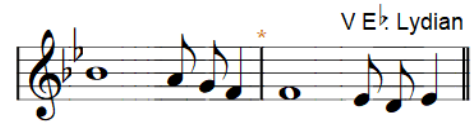
Look on all who gather here before You. Lead us to bring to Your Son the treasure of our time and talent and likewise yield to His service the whole of our lives, conforming our minds, our wills and our hearts to His obedience. For our sick we pray that You would look on them in mercy and show them the way out of all their trials. Comfort the aged the lonely and the forsaken. Shepherd the young, console the sorrowing, and heal the broken-hearted.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.) Forgive us all our sins and grant us newness of life in Jesus Christ, in Whose name we bring these and all our petitions.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY

Chant Tone



**ENTRANCE PRAYER:** Dear heavenly Father, in the darkness of this world's spiritual night, You created a special star to guide the Magi to Your Son. For that event, which is the revelation of Your glory, we give You humble thanks. For predicting this event through Your prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before it took place, we praise and adore You. For guiding Gentiles to the birthplace of Your Son Jesus and for accepting their worship as fellow heirs and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, we give You thanks. For making it possible for us to become Your children through Christ, we are eternally grateful. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

**JANUARY 6TH IS THE HISTORICAL DATE OF THE VISIT OF THE MAGI, A DAY WE CALL EPIPHANY.** We don't have much information about these people, the Magi. We are given very little data about them in Scripture. We have made a number of assumptions over the years, most of which are probably wrong. They are a mystery, even to the facts surrounding their ability to follow a star. The Jewish Leaders and the High Priest weren't even curious why Herod wanted to know the place of the birth of the "King of the Jews." They missed out on the ability to celebrate His appearance in the world. The Magi were the first of the most important people to worship the Savior and they were Gentiles. We thank you for joining us in worship today. We are the next of the most important Gentiles to worship our Savior.

**THEME OF THE DAY:**

Visit of the Magi

**INTROIT**—(Antiphon: Psalm 45:17;) Psalm 45:6-8a

Today, our Lessons are as old as the Church. We seem to have known the date of the Magi visit from the first. The church celebrated this date long before Christmas. This Introit however was added in 2008. Psalm 45 was written by the sons of Korah. It speaks of the Messiah as a Prince, (who is therefore visited by the king.)

**COLLECT**

This Collect is also from the ancient church. In it we commend God for leading "the nations" (Gentiles) to the Savior, by the miracle of a star. We ask to be lead in that miracle of faith to that wonder of Heaven.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**—Isaiah 60:1-6

Zion was to be glorified by the coming of her Savior. Jesus is the light that leads everyone. Kings would come to the brightness of His dawn, of His Epiphany. Great multitudes of Gentiles came from all over the world to bring their gold and incense to praise the Lord. There is a manner in which this prophecy from Isaiah can be a prophecy of the Magi, because perhaps the Magi used these verses to follow the star to Jesus. It is, a much larger prophecy concerning the acceptance of those who see-the-light, (John used the imagery of Jesus as the "Light") and are drawn to Him for salvation. Salvation is described as starting with the kings and working down to the people.

**GRADUAL**—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

The Gradual was added to our worship in 1982. Psalm 117 (a two verse Psalm) is a general song of praise for all God has done for us. Psalm 96 was sung as the Ark was moved into Jerusalem. It looks beyond that event to the reign of the Christ and especially when the Gentiles will join in the celebration of the kingdom.

**EPISTLE LESSON**—Ephesians 3:1-12

Paul was reflecting on his life as a messenger of the mystery of Christ. The mystery is that Jesus Christ, the Godman was born into the world to be the Savior of all who would believe. It is God's universal plan that everyone, Jew and Gentile who believe in Him would have salvation. It is significant that we remember that Paul became the ambassador to the Gentiles by God's call. He often lamented the rejection of the Gospel by the chosen people.

**GOSPEL LESSON**—Matthew 2:1-12

The salvation of the world in the form of a Child is concealed and yet well known. Jesus was a Child both hated and loved. The leadership from among His own people knew the place where He was to be born, but they