

## NEXT STEP: STUDY &amp; SHARE

## READINGS

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

*All kings shall bow down before him. (v11)*

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, the radiance of all faithful people, you brought the nations to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, & show yourself to all the world through him who is the true light & the bright morning star, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

## SERMON TEXT- Matthew 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, & have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, & all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests & scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>'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.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men & learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go & search diligently for the child; & when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go & pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; & there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; & they knelt down & paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, & myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## LISTENING TO . . .

**GOD- Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit**

1. Compare this Gospel story to that of Jesus' presentation in the Temple, (*Luke 2:29-32*); Compare both today's Old Testament & Psalm readings with Simeon's allusions (*Isaiah 42:6, 52:10; Psalm 98:2, Isaiah 42:6*). What do we learn about Jesus' ministry & purpose? See *Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 10:1-48; Romans 11:1-36; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 2:10-14, 3:11-15*;
2. Compare Matthew's dream episodes. What do you notice? See *1:20, 2:12, 13, 19, 22, 27:19*; see also *Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28-32*; remember St. Joseph's namesake: see *Genesis 37:5-20, 40:1-23, 41:1-36, 42:1-17*

**EACH OTHER- Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ**

3. Changing gears for a moment- How does *Psalm 72* square with *Psalm 146:3-4* (also *Psalms 20:7, 33:16-17, 118:8-9, 147:10-11*)? How does treating *Psalm 72* as a prayer help? How does *Psalm 72* help you pray for governmental leaders- **regardless of party affiliation**? See *2 Timothy 2:1-2*
4. Of all the congregations near you, why do you worship & give offerings at a particular one? In fact, the more you humbly & meekly do these things the better that congregation gets (almost miraculously). Conversely the less you do these things the worse the congregation gets (almost demonically). Who do you think is the beneficiary (or victim) of the behavior? *Small Catechism: Creed, 3<sup>rd</sup> art.* <available bookofconcord.org>

**NEIGHBORS- Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters**

5. How does King Herod's evil next step (*Matthew 2:13-18*; cf. *Revelation 12:1-6*) illustrate Lord Acton's remark "Power tends to corrupt, & absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men...?"
6. What is God's light doing to the darkness? What leads new people to find Jesus, the light of the world, in your congregation? See *John 3:19, 8:12, 12:46; Galatians 5:13-14; Psalm 119:105; SC: Creed, 3<sup>rd</sup> art.*

Festival of Our Lord's Epiphany

01.03.21

Series: Remembrance

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Another Way

*Keeping our eyes on Jesus leads us down another way, a narrow way,  
away from the avenues of power*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: Having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they  
left for their own country by another road. (v19)

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-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

We have observed his star at its rising,  
and have come to worship him. (*Matthew 2:2*)

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