

Lay Preachers' Bulletin

Lectionary Notes - January 2026

January's lectionary notes have been provided by The Ven. Noel Wygiera, Archdeacon of Rocky Mountain and Incumbent - St. Luke, Red Deer.

January 4 - Epiphany of the Lord

Propers - BAS page 279

Gospel: [Matthew 2:1-2](#)

The passage in Matthew 2:1-12, which narrates the visit of the Magi (the "Wise Men") to the infant Jesus, is the scriptural cornerstone of the Feast of the Epiphany. Celebrated on January 6th (or the preceding Sunday), the term "Epiphany" comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, meaning "manifestation" or "revelation." This passage is significant because it marks the first time Jesus is revealed to the world beyond Israel.

1. The Manifestation to the Gentiles

The most profound theological significance of Matthew 2:1-12 is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. While the shepherds in Luke's Gospel represented the Jewish people, the Magi—foreigners from the East—represent all the nations of the earth.

Universal Mission: It signifies that Jesus did not come solely as a "local" King of the Jews, but as the Saviour for all of humanity.

Inclusivity: The Magi are "outsiders" who recognize the light of God, emphasizing that God's grace transcends national, cultural, and religious boundaries.

2. The Symbolism of the Three Gifts

The gifts presented by the Magi are not just luxury items; they are deeply symbolic of Jesus' identity and mission:

Gold: Represents Kingship. It acknowledges Jesus as the "King of Kings."

Frankincense: Represents Divinity and priesthood. Incense was used in temple worship to carry prayers to God; offering it to Jesus acknowledges him as God in the flesh.

Myrrh: Represents Humanity and Death. Myrrh was an embalming spice, foreshadowing Jesus' suffering and sacrificial death on the cross.

3. Nature and Scripture in Harmony

Matthew 2:1-12 shows a unique bridge between natural revelation and holy scripture.

The Star: The Magi are led by nature (the star), showing that God meets people where they are (even in their secular vocations like astrology).

The Word: The star brings them to Jerusalem, but it is the Jewish Scriptures (quoting the prophet Micah) that identify Bethlehem as the specific birthplace. This signifies that while nature can point toward God, it is completed and clarified by His Word.

January 11 - Baptism of the Lord

Propers - BAS page 348

Gospel: [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

The passage in Matthew 3:13–17, which recounts the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, serves as the central scriptural foundation for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This feast marks a pivotal transition in the liturgical calendar, concluding the Christmas season and inaugurating Jesus' public ministry.

The significance of this event can be understood through several theological and liturgical layers:

1. The Revelation of the Trinity (Theophany)

The Baptism is one of the few moments in Scripture where all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are simultaneously manifested:

The Son: Jesus is physically present in the waters of the Jordan.

The Holy Spirit: Descends upon Jesus "like a dove."

The Father: A voice from heaven declares, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This "Theophany" (divine appearance) confirms Jesus' identity and his unique relationship with the Father before he begins his work on earth.

2. To "Fulfill All Righteousness"

In verse 15, Jesus tells a hesitant John that his baptism is necessary to "fulfill all righteousness." Since Jesus was without sin, he did not need a baptism of repentance. However, by submitting to it, he:

Identified with humanity: He stood in line with sinners, showing total solidarity with the people he came to save.

Obeyed God's Plan: He signaled his commitment to follow the Father's redemptive will perfectly.

Sanctified the Waters: Theologically, for parts of the Church, it is said that Jesus did not go into the water to be purified by it; rather, he entered the water to purify it for us, establishing the foundation for the Christian Sacrament of Baptism.

3. The Inauguration of Public Ministry

Liturgically, the feast acts as a "bridge." For thirty years, Jesus lived a "hidden life" in Nazareth. Matthew 3:13–17 serves as his public commissioning. Immediately after this event, Jesus is led into the desert to be tempted and then begins his preaching. The Father's public approval acts as a "seal" of authority on the ministry that follows.

4. Connection to Our Own Baptism

The feast invites believers to reflect on their own baptismal identity. Just as the heavens opened for Jesus, the Church teaches that in baptism, the heavens are opened for the believer. We are invited to share in Christ's status as "beloved" children of God and to take up our own mission in the world.

January 18 - Epiphany 2

Propers - BAS page 349

Gospel: [John 1:29-42](#)

The Second Sunday after Epiphany (specifically in Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary) marks a crucial turning point in the liturgical calendar. After celebrating the Baptism of the Lord on the first Sunday, the church shifts its focus from Jesus' private identity to his public manifestation and the beginning of his ministry.

John 1:29–42 is significant because it provides the "Epiphany" (the showing or revelation) of Jesus to his first followers through three distinct movements: Identity, Invitation, and Mission.

1. The Proclamation of Identity: "The Lamb of God"

This passage contains some of the most profound titles for Jesus in the New Testament. John the Baptist serves as the ultimate "witness," pointing away from himself and toward Jesus.

The Sacrificial Lamb: By calling Jesus the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), John connects Jesus to the Passover lamb and the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah. This identifies Jesus not just as a teacher, but as the one who will redeem humanity through sacrifice.

The Bearer of the Spirit: John testifies that he saw the Spirit descend like a dove and remain on Jesus. In the Epiphany season, this confirms that Jesus is the "Anointed One" (Messiah), set apart by God.

2. The Divine Invitation: "Come and See"

A major theme of this Sunday is the transition from observing Jesus to following him. This is illustrated in the dialogue between Jesus and the two disciples:

The Question:

Jesus' first words in the Gospel of John are a question: "What are you looking for?" (John 1:38). This challenges the listeners (and followers of Jesus now) to examine their own spiritual desires.

The Answer:

When they ask where he is staying, Jesus does not give an address; he gives an invitation: "Come and see." This highlights that faith in the Epiphany season is meant to be experiential rather than just intellectual. You don't just learn about the "Light of the World"; you walk in it.

3. The Chain of Witness: "We Have Found the Messiah"

The significance of this text also lies in how an Epiphany is never meant to be private. It creates a "ripple effect" of discipleship:

Andrew to Simon: After "abiding" with Jesus for a day, Andrew immediately finds his brother, Simon Peter, and tells him, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41).

Transformation of Identity: When Jesus meets Simon, he renames him "Cephas" (Peter). This signifies that encountering the revealed Christ doesn't just change what you see—it changes who you are.

January 25 - Epiphany 3

Propers - BAS page 276

Gospel: [Matthew 4:12-23](#)

This passage is foundational to the season of Epiphany, which celebrates the "manifestation" or revealing of Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. The significance of this reading lies in three main movements: the dawning of light, the call to radical discipleship, and the enactment of God's Kingdom.

1. The Fulfillment of Prophecy: Light in the Darkness

The passage begins with Jesus withdrawing to Galilee after the arrest of John the Baptist. Matthew framed this move not as a retreat, but as a deliberate fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1–2.

Geographic Significance: By moving to Capernaum in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali—often called "Galilee of the Gentiles"—Jesus is revealed as a light not just for the elite or the "inner circle," but for those living in the "shadow of death" and on the margins of society.

The Epiphany Connection: This is the heart of the Epiphany season. The "great light" that the magi followed in the first week of January is now physically present in a fishing village, beginning his work among common people.

2. The Proclamation: "The Kingdom is Near"

Jesus adopts the same message as John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt 4:17).

Repentance as Turning: In this context, "repent" (*metanoeo*) means more than feeling sorry; it signifies a total change of direction.

The Immediacy: The significance on this specific Sunday is the reminder that the Kingdom isn't just a future hope; it "has come near" because Jesus himself is present.

3. The Call of the Disciples

The calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John is the centerpiece of the reading.

"Immediately": Matthew emphasizes that they left their nets and their families immediately. This highlights the compelling authority of Jesus' voice.

Fishers of People: Jesus reclaims their everyday skills for a divine purpose. This teaches that discipleship involves a "re-purposing" of one's life rather than just an addition to it.

Key Theme: Discipleship is a response to a person (Jesus), not just a set of ideas. The Sunday service often focuses on how we, like the fishermen, are called to drop our "nets"—the things that tie us down—to follow him.

On this Sunday, the Church is asked to move from observing Jesus (at his birth and baptism) to following him. It marks the transition from Jesus being a "sign" to Jesus being a "leader" who demands a response.
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