



This Sunday at St. Luke's
January 5, 2025

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)
10 a.m. – Holy Communion with Organ and Hymns

The Eve of the Epiphany
or the
Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles



**The Unfolding of
God's Plan**

The Greek word *epiphaneia*, which gives its name to this season, means “showing,” and in the Gospel for Epiphany we have the story of the infant Christ being shown to the Wise Men. In this story there is also an explanation of the secondary title of the day – “The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.”

But there is a deeper meaning in the scriptures read on this day. That meaning has to do with the unfolding of God's plan to bring rescue to the world, to undo the sin of Adam. In the case of the Wise Men this unfolding has to the revelation of Him born King of the Jews to a band

of Persian astrologers, presumably Gentiles. They anticipate people from all races and places coming into the family of God which began in earnest following Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension through the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

In the Epistle, Paul speaks about this unfolding or unveiling of God's plan. The mystery (secret), which had not been fully revealed to those in times past, was that God was putting together a world-wide family made up of Jews and Gentiles. In the words of the hymn writer John Oxenham:

*In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north;
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide world.*

As we begin 2025, may we determine to do our part to make Jesus known to all and welcome all and sundry into Christ's household of faith in Blue Ridge.

COLLECT FOR THE EPIPHANY

O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COLLECT FOR NEW YEAR'S

O Eternal Lord God, who has brought thy servants to the beginning of another year: Pardon, we humbly beseech thee, our transgressions in past, and graciously abide with us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (Proposed Book of Common Prayer, Church of England, 1928)

THE EPISTLE – Ephesians 3:1-12 (J.B. Phillips)

God has made me minister to you gentiles

3 It is in this great cause that I, Paul, have become Christ's prisoner for you Gentiles. ²⁻⁶For you must have heard how God gave me grace to become your minister, and how he allowed me to understand his secret by giving me a direct Revelation. (What I have written briefly of this above will explain to you my knowledge of the mystery of Christ.) This secret was hidden to past generations of mankind, but it has now, by the spirit, been made plain to God's consecrated messengers and prophets. It is simply this: that the Gentiles, who were previously excluded from God's agreements, are to be equal heirs with his chosen people, equal members and equal partners in God's promise given by Christ through the Gospel.

⁷⁻¹³And I was made a minister of that Gospel by the grace he gave me, and by the power with which he equipped me. Yes, to me, less than the least of all Christians, has God given this grace, to enable me to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of

Christ, and to make plain to all men the meaning of that secret which he who created everything in Christ has kept hidden from the creation until now. The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which he centred in Jesus, our Lord. It is in this same Jesus, because we have faith in him, that we dare, even with confidence, to approach God. In view of these tremendous issues, I beg you not to lose heart because I am now suffering for my part in bringing you the Gospel. Indeed, you should be honoured.

NOTE: The great, central conviction of Ephesians is that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ by the gospel" (v.6).

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 2:1-12 (J.B. Phillips)

Herod, suspicious of the new-born king, takes vindictive precautions

2¹⁻² Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea, in the days when Herod was king of the province. Not long after his birth there arrived from the east a party of astrologers making for Jerusalem and enquiring as they went, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and we have come here to pay homage to him."

3-6 When King Herod heard about this he was deeply perturbed, as indeed were all the other people living in Jerusalem. So he summoned all the Jewish scribes and chief priests together and asked where "Christ" should be born. Their reply was: "In Bethlehem, in Judea, for this is what the prophet (Micah) wrote about the matter—'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel'."

7-8 Then Herod invited the wise men to meet him privately and found out from them the exact time when the star appeared. Then he sent them off to Bethlehem saying, "When you get there, search for this little child with the utmost care. And when you have found him come back and tell me—so that I may go and worship him too."

9-10 The wise men listened to the king and then went on their way to Bethlehem. And now the star, which they had seen in the east, went in front of them as they travelled until at last it shone immediately above the place where the little child lay. The sight of the star filled them with indescribable joy.

11-12 So they went into the house and saw the little child with his mother Mary. And they fell on their knees and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts—gold, incense and myrrh. Then, since they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by a different route.

NOTE: The story of the Magi sets forth the Epiphany message in picture pageantry – Christ is revealed to these foreigners as their Saviour and their King. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 60:1-9 (RSV)

The ingathering of the dispersed

- 60** ¹Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- ²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
- ³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
- ⁴Lift up your eyes round about, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far,
and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.
- ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice;^[a]
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Mid'ian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.
- ⁷All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you,
the rams of Nebai'oth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will glorify my glorious house.
- ⁸Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?
- ⁹For the coastlands shall wait for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your sons from far,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the LORD your God,

and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has glorified you.

NOTE: The prophet assures the Babylonian exiles that God will save and restore His people. This will be witnessed by the nations, which will therefore come and worship the Saviour God. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Preacher: The Rector

Options

In-church.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on You Tube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.



those greens.

Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Pricella Cashman for providing lovely apple-studded wreaths for the doors of the church and Anna Bradley for greening the Advent wreath and later Teresia Wankel for refreshing



JOIN THE CHOIR!



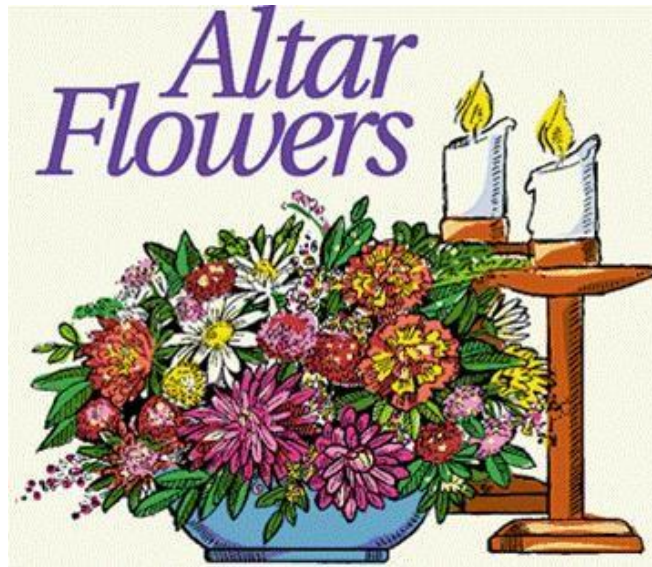
For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



The Anglican Relief
and Development Fund

OUR MISSION

St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2025.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2025

As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2025

Name

Address

Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; (706) 632-8245;
www.stlukesblueridge.org; stlukes@tds.net.