

*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge
January 10, 2021*

**One service 9:30 a.m., MANY WORSHIP OPTIONS:
In-church, in-pavilion, drive-in and online**

The First Sunday after the Epiphany



The Light that Pierces the Darkness

The season of Epiphany is about light coming into the world, light which pierced the darkness of the world then; light which still pierces the night of our world. This light is the light of Christ.

(continued next page)

On Epiphany Day (Jan. 6) this light is revealed to the Magi, Gentile astronomers. These mysterious visitors from the East anticipate the light of the Gospel going into all the world. Many centuries earlier God told Abraham that through his offspring all the people of the earth would be blessed. Jesus is the culmination of that promise.

In the Gospel appointed for the First Sunday after the Epiphany, the learned teachers in the Temple get a glimpse of the light of Christ. In the same Gospel, Mary herself has an epiphany when Jesus gently reminds her that He must be about *His* Father's business or (in some translations) in His Father's house. Jesus' words must have brought back and illuminated the message delivered by the angel prior to His birth: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest."

There is a mystery how Jesus grew to understand His person and vocation. There is no mystery, however, that this understanding came and developed early on. Indeed, by aged 12, it was already emerging as we see in today's Gospel.

The One by whom and for whom all things were made "day by day like us He grew." It seems likely His self-awareness of vocation developed through reading and studying the Hebrew scriptures, through prayer and the instruction He received at the hand of Mary and Joseph.

The Spirit of Wisdom manifested in Jesus is now available to His believing people. For example, in his epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." In this instance, he was speaking, of the 'mind' of humility, but no doubt it extends beyond that.

In Colossians 2:9,10, St. Paul writes: "For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. **And ye are complete in him.**" Believers are complete in the sense they don't need any additions to the Gospel of Christ (Paul's point here), but also they are complete in wisdom and understanding. All the resources that belong to Christ are now available to them. They want for nothing.

The wisdom of God in Christ is specifically prayed for in our Confirmation service. Before laying his hands on the candidates, the Bishop says in one of the loveliest prayers in the Prayer Book:

"Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly [spiritual] strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever."

Today, whatever challenges or perplexities you face, remember that you don't face them alone. You have "the mind of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:16). Seek wisdom and understanding from Him. Let Him direct your path. (VHM)

THE COLLECT FOR EPIPHANY 1

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE COLLECT FOR 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.*

THE EPISTLE – Roman 12:1-5 (J.B. Phillips)

We have seen God's mercy and wisdom: how shall we respond?

12 ¹⁻² With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

³⁻⁸ As your spiritual teacher I give this piece of advice to each one of you. Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all. For just as you have many members in one physical body and those members differ in their functions, so we, though many in number, compose one body in Christ and are all members of one another. Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching; and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let the man who is called to give, give freely; let the man who wields authority think of his responsibility; and let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows act cheerfully.

NOTE: God is not only Lord of nations and their rulers. He is Lord over the life of every one of us. It is important that each member of the Body of Christ conform His life to what is "good, and acceptable, and perfect" in God's sight. And this is done not only for His own sake, but also because in the body of Christ the life of each affects the life of all, just as the life of the whole body affects each member. (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL (H.C.) – St. Luke 2:41-52 (J.B. Phillips)

Twelve years later: the boy Jesus goes with his parents to Jerusalem

⁴¹⁻⁴⁸ Every year at the Passover festival Jesus' parents used to go to Jerusalem. When he was twelve years old they went up to the city as usual for the festival.

When it was over they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, without his parents' knowledge. They went a day's journey assuming that he was somewhere in their company, and then they began to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. They failed to find him, however, and turned back to the city, looking for him as they went. Three days later, they found him—in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All those who heard him were astonished at his powers of comprehension and at the answers that he gave. When Joseph and Mary saw him, they could hardly believe their eyes, and his mother said to him, "Why have you treated us like this, my son? Here have your father and I been very worried, looking for you everywhere!"

⁴⁹ And Jesus replied, "But why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

⁵⁰⁻⁵² But they did not understand his reply. Then he went home with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. And his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And as Jesus continued to grow in body and mind, he grew also in the love of God and of those who knew him.

NOTE: This story is a part of the picture backdrop for the mighty events which St Luke is going to narrate in His Gospel and the Book of Acts. On the one hand, "the doctors" are discovering in the boy Jesus one whom they cannot but respect; on the other, the holy Child is submissive to Him who is Lord of all. (William Sydnor)

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 60:1-9, 10-20 (RSV)

A new day for God's people

60 Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For 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.

³ And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

⁴ Lift 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.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice;
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A 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.
⁷ All 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.
⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?
⁹ For 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.

God the Glory of Zion

¹⁹ The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;
but the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
²⁰ Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

NOTE: This glorious poetry is a pictorial description of the teaching of the Epiphany. "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (v.3). (Williams Sydnor)

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

9:30 a.m.

This Sunday's Focus

The Light that Pierces the Darkness

The Rector will be this week's preacher.

Sunday Worship Options

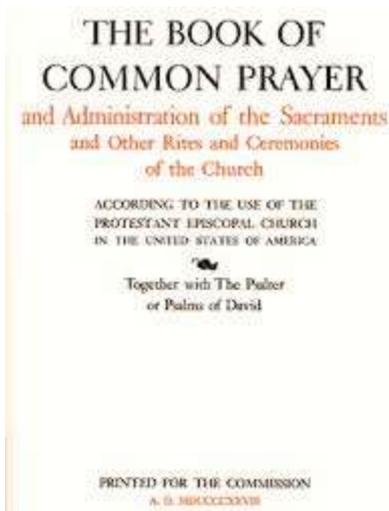
1. In-church. Those who wish to worship in the church are asked to seat in designated areas to ensure social distancing.
2. Drive-in. Those choosing this option are asked to remain in their automobile and listen to the service via their car radio (FM 98.1). Holy Communion will be delivered to cars in plastic bags.
3. In-pavilion. As the weather becomes warmer, a speaker has been set up in the church pavilion. Those choosing this option should space themselves out. Dogs are welcomed if kept quiet and under control.
4. Online. Services will continue to be live-streamed 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.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The annual Parish Meeting will be held Sunday, Jan. 17, following the 9:30 a.m. service. All St. Luke’s members and friends are urged to attend.





NEED A PRAYER BOOK?

The Book of Common Prayer is a treasury of religious devotion. While in no way replacing the Bible, it turns the Bible into prayer, teaching God’s people to think and pray biblically and Christianly. If you don’t have one of your own or would like to share this treasure with a friend, call the church office [(706) 632-8245] to secure a copy of a new paperback edition.

These books are being mailed free to anyone in St. Luke’s online congregation who requests one. Voluntary donations to assist with our online

ministry are appreciated.

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.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2021

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 2021.

Name _____

Address _____

Amount _____

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him to store, as God has prospered him.

REMEMBER THE NEEDY

EVERY TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH



Please bring one or more item for the needy -- paper, soap products, tinned and dried food, etc. Leave in Narthex. Items will be distributed through North Georgia Community Action Agency



NEW SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2021 IS AVAILABLE

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2021. Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

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