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The Liturgical Calendar & The Season of Epiphany Lesson 1

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Online Bible Study

6:30 pm

Streaming at stmatthewame.org/streaming

YouTube - @stmatthew336 Facebook Live - @stmatthewamechurch

Zoom Meeting ID 973 678 1217, Passcode 6781293

Call-In 929-205-6099, Meeting ID 973 678 1217



Wishing you and your family a **Blessed New Year**

Robin Choo

I. 2026 Bible Study Commitment

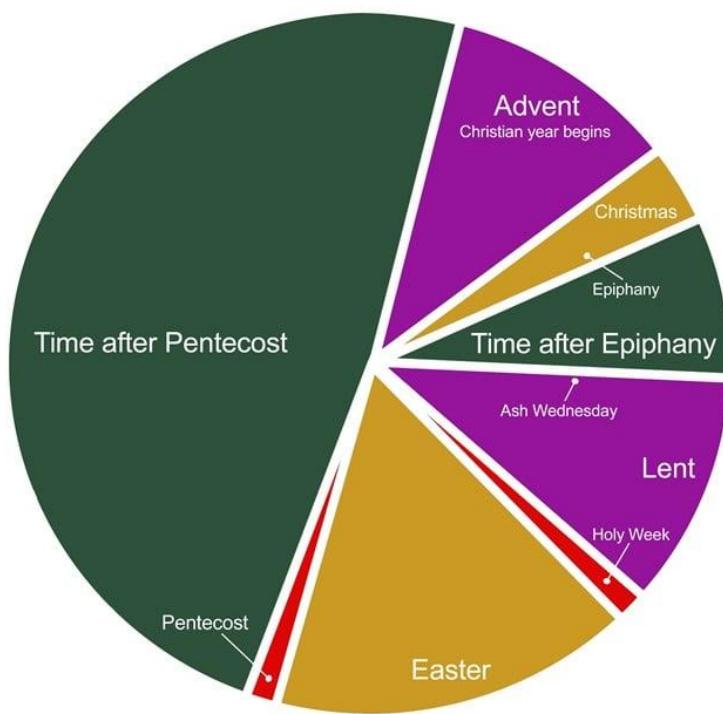
- A. All are being asked to commit to attending at least one of these sessions:
 - Sunday Church School for Youth (After 9 am worship. Classes for all ages)
 - Sunday Church School for Younger Adults ("The Tribe." After 9 am worship. Ages 18-40ish.)
 - Sunday Church School for Adults (After 9 am worship)
 - Pastor's Bible Study (Tuesday at 6:30 pm online)
 - Men's Bible Study (Saturday at 8 am online)
 - Women's Bible Study (2nd Saturday at 9 am online)
 - ASK Study of Women in the Bible (4th Saturday at 9 am online)
- B. We cannot know or understand the Word of God unless we take the time to study the Word of God. There is no other way.
 1. Worship attendance and Sunday sermon listening time are not study times.

II. New Calendar Year: Understanding Where We Are on the Christian Liturgical Calendar

- A. The world has a calendar/seasons, so does the church. It is called the liturgical calendar.
- B. The liturgical calendar follows the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- C. The Cycle/Seasons:
 1. **Advent** – the four Sundays before Christmas
 2. **Christmas** – a season that lasts 12 days
 3. **Epiphany** – January 6 – Ash Wednesday
 - a. **The Baptism of the Lord** – the Sunday after Epiphany
 4. **Lent** – Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday
 - a. **Ash Wednesday** – 40 days excluding Sundays
 - b. **Palm Sunday** – The Sunday before Resurrection Sunday
 - c. **Holy Week** – The week between Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday

- d. **Maundy Thursday** – Thursday of Holy Week
- e. **Good Friday** – Friday of Holy Week
- 5. **Resurrection Sunday** (Easter)
 - a. **Ascension Day** – 40 days after Resurrection Sunday
- 6. **Pentecost** – 7 weeks after Resurrection Sunday
 - a. **Trinity Sunday** – the first Sunday after Pentecost
 - b. **Christ the King Sunday** – the last Sunday before Advent

The Christian Year



Colors of the Christian Year

The colors express visually what is happening in the life of the church. Each color symbolizes the nature of the season or festival being celebrated.

- Advent – purple or blue
- Christmas – gold or white
- Ordinary Time – green
- Lent – purple
- Holy Week – red
- Easter – gold or white
- Pentecost – red
- Ordinary Time – green

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III. Epiphany: What It Is and What It Means

Ἐπιφάνεια
epiphaneia / appearance

Erasmian Pronunciation

LOGOS

Epiphany:

ə'pifənē/ (noun)

- the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12).
- the festival commemorating the Epiphany on January 6.
- a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being.

A. “to reveal,” “to make manifest,” “a showing forth,” “a sudden revelation or insight,” “manifestation,” “appearance.”

B. Celebrated the day after the 12th day of Christmas (January 5) “Twelfth Night”

C. Sometimes known as “Three King’s Day.” Potential issues:

1. They were not kings.
2. They were Magi, probably Gentiles (possibly priests, astrologers, or learned scholars (“wise men”) from Eastern lands)
3. The impact of imagery



D. Proof of their existence?

Daniel 2:1-25 NIV

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. ²So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, ³he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.” ⁴Then the astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.” ⁵The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. ⁶But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.” ⁷Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.” ⁸Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: ⁹If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.” ¹⁰The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. ¹¹What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.” ¹²This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

¹⁴When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. ¹⁵He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. ¹⁶At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. ¹⁷Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ¹⁸He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰and said: “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. ²¹He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. ²²He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

E. Associated celebration

1. The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22)

Matthew 3:13-17 NIV

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. ¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:9-11 NIV

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Luke 3:21-22 NIV

²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

2. I digress...

Luke 3:23 NIV

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

IV. The Main Text: Matthew 2:1-12 NIV

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” ⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” ⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to

Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

A. Observations/Lessons/Points to Think About

1. How is Jesus Christ revealed to you in this text?
2. The Magi:
 - a. We don't know where they came from
 - b. We don't know how many there were
 - c. They probably were not Jews, but could have been.
 - d. They were not kings.
 - e. How did they know that the star they saw indicated that the Messiah had been born?

Numbers 24:17 NIV? – Balaam's Prophecy

17 “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the people of Sheth.

3. They went looking for the Savior, as opposed to waiting for the Savior to come and find them.
4. God reveals himself to those who seek him.
5. Jesus' birth disturbed Herod and the people of Jerusalem.
 - Appointed “King of the Jews” by Mark Antony in 40 BC. Not anointed or elected, but selected.
 - Ruthless leader. Had several of his own children and at least one wife killed.
 - Mistreated those around him out of suspicion, fear, and jealousy
 - Ordered the killing of the baby boys in Bethlehem
 - Involved in many forms of pagan religion while claiming to worship God
6. Can you trust that God is guiding you?
7. Sometimes, you have to change direction and go another way.

V. Next Week – Another Epiphany-Related Text

Do You Have Any Spiritual Goals for 2026?

Click here: <https://forms.gle/6ijRJLqcHqRf1TrU6>

26 THINGS TO STOP DOING IN 2026 (According to the Stoics)

1. Stop complaining.
2. Stop saying yes when you want to say no.
3. Stop worrying about things outside of your control.
4. Stop taking things personally.
5. Stop avoiding discomfort.
6. Stop hanging out with the wrong crowd.
7. Stop believing every thought and emotion.
8. Stop reacting to every emotion.
9. Stop wasting the morning.
10. Stop wanting more possessions.
11. Stop giving away your time.
12. Stop acting only for yourself.
13. Stop suffering imagined troubles.
14. Stop allowing distractions in.
15. Stop talking more than you listen.
16. Stop trying to control everything.
17. Stop tying your wellbeing to results.
18. Stop expecting more from others than from yourself.
19. Stop choosing the easy option.
20. Stop doing the inessential things.
21. Stop comparing yourself to others.
22. Stop trying to do everything on your own. Ask for help.
23. Stop looking for “the third thing.”
24. Stop seeking fame.
25. Stop fearing death.
26. Stop thinking you are going to live forever.