

**We Can Fail to See Jesus among Us, Just as Did Those Who Failed to Recognize Him in the First Century**

"It can be tempting for us to think that John's words—"the world did not recognize him when he came"—are addressed to 'others,' that the spiritual blindness he describes applies only to 'those out there' who are not believers, those who have not 'seen the light' like we have," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday. "After all," he continued, "we have prepared for his coming. We have anticipated his coming. We have longed for his arrival.



In "Adoration of the Magi" by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), the three kings, about whom we will hear in the Gospel lesson this Sunday, are represented with much imagination and variety, in their lavish clothing, with their precious jewels, and with the beautiful goblets and caskets that they bear as gifts. It is telling here that Dürer was also an expert goldsmith. © Web Gallery of Art

"We have images in our minds now of how things are supposed to be, of how *he* is supposed to be among us. Surely our spiritual vision is spot on, right? . . .

"Christmas, it seems, offers us both an irony and a challenge. The *irony* of Christmas is that as the Light comes to the world, the world does not see the Light. The *challenge* of Christmas—and all that follows for us—is to let that Light shine forth in our lives so strongly and so brightly, that the world cannot help but see it.

"As we come to the Lord's Table this morning, it is apparent to me that the words of the collect for today—"Grant that this light, kindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives"—are true of each of you. The Light of God's Incarnate Word has been kindled in *your* hearts. It is shining unmistakably on *your* faces. The light of Christmas is shining forth through *you*."

**With Epiphany This Sunday and in the Season Following, the Light of Christ and the Manifestations of His Divinity Are Themes**

The manifestation of Christ which was of greatest interest to Charles Wesley is that of the transformed Christian, as we will see when we sing Wesley's *Celebrate Immanuel's Name* as the processional hymn this Sunday, including: "God is in our flesh revealed; Heav'n and earth in Jesus join. Mortal with immortal filled, and human with divine. . . . Father, manifest Thy Son; breathe the true incarnate Word. In our in-most souls make known the presence of the Lord. Let the Spirit of our Head through ev'ry member flow; By our Lord inhabited, we then Immanuel know. Then He doth His Name express; (p. 2→)

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

**6:00 p.m.: This Sunday: Choral Evensong, then Epiphany party, including three kings bearing cake, and white elephant exchange**

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 7:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

**Readings, 01/06, 10 a.m.:** Is. 60:1-9; Ps. 72:1-2, 10-17; Eph. 3:1-12; Mt. 2:1-12. **01/06, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 96 (sung); Is. 49:1-7; Rev. 21:22-27. **1/13:** Is. 42:1-9; Ps. 89:20-29; Acts 10:34-38; Luke 3:15-22.

**Prayer Emphases:** Malawi; Int'l. Foursquare Gospel Church; Hollywood, CA, Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Dr. Gary Stratman; Sunday School teachers and Christian Education workers; parishioners on Amber Street.

**(Hymn, and Epiphany story, cont'd.)** God in us we truly prove, Filled with all the life of grace and all the pow'r of love." In contrast, Carl P. Daw's *Sing of God Made Manifest*, which will be our recessional hymn, is a recitation of the events in the earthly life of Christ which are featured this Sunday and during the season after Epiphany, including: "Sing of God made manifest in a child robust and blest, to whose home in Bethlehem where a star had guided them, Magi came and gifts unbound, signs mysterious and profound: myrrh and frankincense and gold grave and God and King foretold. Sing of God made manifest when at Jordan John confessed, . . . when Christ came as wedding guest . . . on the cloud-capped mountain's crest, . . . glimpse of glory, pledge of grace . . ."