Sermon Notes: Epiphany Sunday

**“God Revealed in Our Lives”**

 **Matthew 2:1-12**

In the Church calendar, Christmas is not just one day, but a season of twelve days that lasts from sunset on Christmas Eve (Dec. 24) through Epiphany on January 6.

**Understanding Epiphany**

* Epiphany means "manifestation" or "revelation."
* Commemorates three key manifestations of Jesus

 1) The Magi's visit (Gentiles recognizing Jesus)

  2) Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River

  3) Jesus' first miracle at Cana

* Highlights that Jesus is not only the Jewish Messiah but the Savior for all humanity.

Who are the Magi (Wise Men)? Astrological expertise/ Priestly elite class in Persia/ Zoroastrian.

* The Magi's journey to find and honor the newborn king.
* Despite being Gentiles and from a different religion, they were drawn to Jesus.

**Key Points**

1. God's Universal Invitation

   - God invites all people to salvation, transcending cultural and religious boundaries.

 - This Messiah will be a surprising one, turning upside down many of the expectations of his fellow Jews, as he welcomed “ritually unclean”

   - Jesus draws all people to himself, demonstrating that no one is beyond God's embrace.

 - “*if anyone is in Christ that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!*” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

 - As we head to Epiphany, which commemorates how a star led the Magi to the baby Jesus, light is also the central image in Epiphany.

 - The symbol of an acolyte is carrying the light of Christ’s Spirit with them as they move in and out of the service. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The light represents Jesus coming into our world and into our lives.

 - As God opened new world and new hope, by embracing all people, we need to open our mind by listening to God who continue to work in us, through us and for us

2) The Magi’s Response of God’s invitation

   - The Magi traveled over 1200 miles, facing risks and hardships.

   - Their commitment exemplifies the lengths to which people will go to seek and honor Jesus.

 -Humility in Worship: The Magi, despite their elite status, humbled themselves before a humble child.

   - Worship involves recognizing the greatness of God and responding with humility.

3) Understanding True Humility

   - **“True humility isn’t thinking less of yourself; but it is thinking of yourself less.”** Humility is not self-deprecation but seeing oneself as God sees us (C.S. Lewis).

   - It fosters empathy, understanding, and openness to others' perspectives.

 - The Power of Listening: A humble person listens and values others’ opinions, fostering community and understanding.

**Call to Action**

* Reflect on how we can be a light in our community.
* Open ourselves to God’s new promises with humility.

- Engage with the Wesley Covenant Prayer as a commitment to live in service and surrender to God.

**A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (UMH #607)**

I am no longer my own by yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

exalted for you or brought low for you. Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.