



# LWML CNH CHRISTIAN LIFE LINE

## JANUARY 2021

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### Season of Light / New Beginnings

AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore be led by Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare At thy cradle, rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy.  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to Three our heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past, Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light;  
Thou its light its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;  
There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King.

LSB 397; Text/Music: Public Domain

In this hymn, we sing in the first verse – *As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold. As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward beaming bright* – this is the star that led the wise men from the East to look for the one who was born King of the Jews. In Matthew 2:2b we read: *For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.*

According to the dictionary, the word *Epiphany* means “a festival, observed on January 6, commemorating the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi.” We know that the wise men followed a star for as long as two years from the time they first saw it in the east, a bright light that God had provided to guide them, which led them to our Savior and King. They never gave up hope of finding the Christ Child.

I recall driving in the mountains when the fog rolled in. Nothing could be seen except for the taillights of the vehicle ahead of me. I knew God would guide me and when I reached the top of the peak, the light came out of the sky shining brightly. There was beauty around me that, until now, I had not been able to see.

We are told that the Magi were Gentiles traveling a great distance to find this young child who would ultimately become the Savior of the world through His death and resurrection. Christ wants all to know

Him and will let nothing stand in His way of drawing people to Him. Those who are drawn to Him learn that Christ is that Light that does not go dim but continues to shine brightly. *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*" (John 1:9)

The wise men offered treasures from their own countries that provided foresight into this blessed Babe's future:

- gold, a gift for a king, paying tribute to the Son of the Most Powerful;
- frankincense, symbolic of prayers of petition and thanks rising to God, as well as Jesus' stature as a spiritual leader and teacher; and
- myrrh for a Man who would give His life for the benefit of others, for myrrh was used in embalming dead bodies.

Only the finest and best would be good enough for this Child who was born King of the Jews, true God and true Man, the Light of this world.

God wants only the very best for us as well. It is amazing how God can take what seems, in our human eyes, a rough negative situation, and turn it into blessings of hope, joy, and beauty. And why are we so surprised at that? A new year, new beginnings await us in 2021. We are His children and know to trust our Abba Father. But we don't always "see" with clear eyes. Let us look at Lamentations 3:19-26, particularly focusing on verses 22 and 23: *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is His faithfulness.*

Oh, how very true! It has nothing to do with any one of us. It is because of the Lord's great love for us – a love we can never understand, never even fathom. We have no such love to compare with His. And we are not consumed, His Word says. He loves us so much that He has an unconditional love for us! His compassion for us is tender and loving, so much so that it is new every morning – not just if He feels like it that day, but every day – especially of the year to come. He has a plan for each of us each and every day – that's exciting to me!

And so, when we have doubts, questions, or are down-hearted – especially going into this new year – let us remember to *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding* (Proverbs 3:5).

*Dear Father in heaven, thank You for sending Your Son into the world as both True Man and True God. Please open our eyes to see that Light of Jesus and continue to seek to know Him and serve Him. Help us to keep Epiphany foremost in our hearts and minds so that others will see this Light and come to know Jesus as their Savior. Because Your Word is truth, oh God; because You have compassion and faithfulness; and because of Your love for each of us, You hear and answer our prayers, dear Lord! To this end, may we keep a strong faith and remain close to You so that we may one day be taken from this vale of tears to a new beginning in the heavenly mansions You have prepared for us. In Your Son's most precious name we pray. Amen.*

Scripture references are from the ESV.

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