



Epiphany

Chasing Daylight

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2, NIV).

Photographers the world over rejoice at the start and end of each day, for brief periods of warm, soft light known as *"the Golden Hour"* or *"the Magic Hour"* ensure that the crafting of images is bathed in the greatest light available each day. These fleeting moments are sometimes referred to as *"chasing daylight,"* a fleeting attempt to capture and record daily life at its most magical moment. Chasing daylight serves as an apt metaphor to describe the climax of the Cycle of Light, the period of the liturgical year commencing with Advent, reaching a crescendo with Christmas, and concluding with Epiphany, the season to witness the light of Christ having not only entered the world through a newborn, but now dwelling within our souls and in all places on earth.

During Epiphany, the light of Jesus, a dawning available for all, is personalised and lived out in selfless hospitality for one's neighbour. We seek to chase daylight on behalf of another.

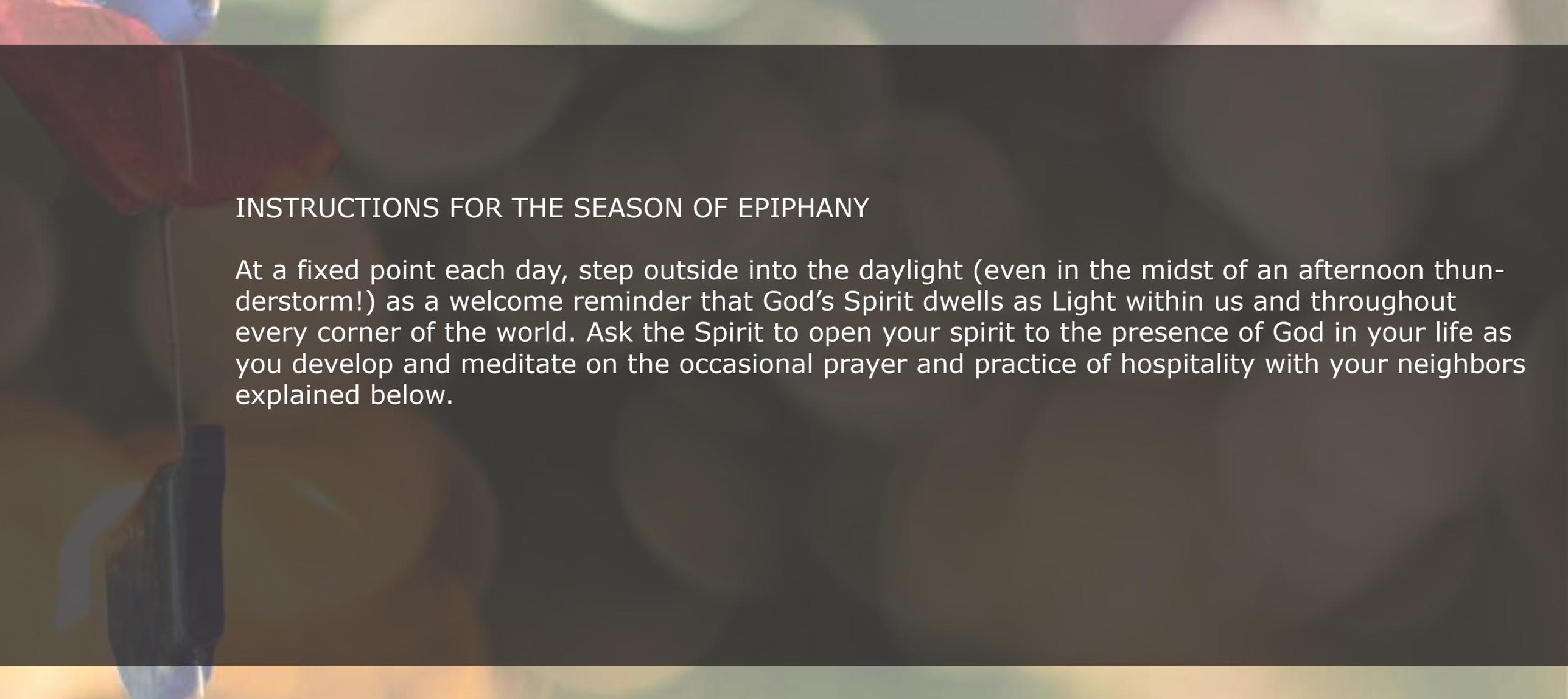
WHAT IS THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY?

And you thought Christmas was long gone. Epiphany is the celebration of the manifestation of Christ to the world as represented by the Magi in Matthew 2. As the hinge point between the joy of Christmas, Christ has made a home among us in our world, and the preparation of Lent, an invitation to walk with Jesus unto His death, Epiphany transitions us to manifest the person of Christ within our hearts and outwards into our world.

Robert Webber writes, *"Now I am to be a manifestation of Christ. My part is to respond, to say yes to the calling, to commit my life to be a center through which the Epiphany could be extended beyond the crib to the world of my everyday experience"* (Ancient-Future Time).

Manifestation invokes the idea of 'making public' that which embodies us. In other words, we, the Church of Jesus, make known that which we hold within us most deeply. Simply put, we live to make the person of Christ known in a gracious, irresistible, warm, loving manner to all we meet.

Welcome, 3rd Place, to the season of Epiphany.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY

At a fixed point each day, step outside into the daylight (even in the midst of an afternoon thunderstorm!) as a welcome reminder that God's Spirit dwells as Light within us and throughout every corner of the world. Ask the Spirit to open your spirit to the presence of God in your life as you develop and meditate on the occasional prayer and practice of hospitality with your neighbors explained below.

CHASING DAYLIGHT WITHIN US: DEVELOPING OCCASIONAL PRAYERS

Occasional prayers are invocations developed to bring the reality of the Kingdom into the messiness of our daily lives. Rather than seeking to remove a soul from participation in the restoration of our world, instead we seek to open ourselves to the always-present, constant work of the Spirit right in our midst. Celtic Christ-followers practiced this discipline with particular specificity, seeking God's presence during exams, meals, nap time, harvest, Sabbath, play, work, etc. For example, here is a prayer developed for entering the doorway of your workplace each morning:

Christ, in our coming, and in our leaving, be the Door and the Keeper for us, and for all who work within this place, this day and every day, forever and always. Amen.

(Common Prayer: A Liturgy For Ordinary Radicals)

Our internal discipline is simple this month: Develop a short occasional prayer that pertains to a regular piece of your life. Invite the Spirit to engage your heart in a fresh way with a regular part of your life. Upload these prayers to our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/3rd-place/106922436029623>).

CHASING DAYLIGHT THROUGH US: THE PRACTICE OF HOSPITALITY

"Hospitality evangelism is the kind of manifestation that may draw a stranger to the gospel into the very heart of Christ" (Robert Webber in Ancient-Future Time).

Standing in stark contrast to the isolation and disconnection of our individualistic lives, hospitality can become a practice that welcomes the alienated (family, friend, neighbor, stranger) into our lives, opening ultimately into the very heart of God. Epiphany is a particular season where we seek to chase the daylight we see within the neighbors God has placed within our proximity. A few suggestions in how to practice hospitality:

- Consider whether you can invite someone with you wherever you go.
- Who is near you? How can you draw them into the heart of Christ?
- Practice hosting others in the spaces most dear to you.
- Discipline yourself to evangelize through service, not merely with words.

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