

Reflections on Epiphany

The Gospel narrative of the Three Wise Men, Matthew 2:1-12, invite us to reflect and learn important lessons as we strive to find God's guidance for this New Year. I want to share with you an article that read few days ago written by a Methodist clergy, Safiyah Fosua. I invite you read it with an open heart and you will find guidance for our journey in 2014.

Many of us were introduced to Epiphany through the familiar silhouetted-image of Three Wise Men bearing gifts as they followed the Great Star by night.

In some cultures, Epiphany is known as the Day of the Kings (*Dia de los Reyes*). It is also known as Twelfth Day or Twelfth Night, reflecting an old custom of giving a gift for each of the days from Dec 25 to Jan 6 for the 12 days of Christmas. The day has special meaning for a number of reasons.

Several branches of Christianity celebrate the birth of the Christ Child on Jan 6 or Jan 7.

The word epiphany means appearance or manifestation. Popular usage likens epiphany to words such as eureka or aha! Use of this word by some English speakers conjures up images of having a light bulb turned on, or of being able to see something that was once hidden from view.

The texts for the Sundays after the Epiphany dramatize the many ways that we people came to understand who Jesus was, through His baptism, the miracle at the wedding, or through that bodacious declaration in His hometown synagogue! But, this ever-widening circle of revelation began "outside the circle" of Judaism, so to speak, with the Magi.

Who were the Magi?

Many versions of the Bible refer to them as the Wise Men. We often forget that these Magi or Wise Men were non-Jews. Older sources suggest that they were priestly descendants of one of the tribes of the Medes known for their knowledge of the stars (astronomy) and their ability to interpret dreams.

What can we learn from the Wise Men?

First, the Wise Men began their journey because of their beliefs. It was a common belief that when a world leader like a king was born that a special stellar phenomenon would appear in the sky. The Magi saw something that convinced them that they had seen the long-awaited sign. Historians tell us that the Jews, the Romans, and the Persians were all watching the skies about that time, looking for signs of the birth of an extraordinary king.

Second, the Wise Men were willing to follow what they had seen into unknown territory.

Their journey took them outside their country and their comfort zone. The Wise Men risked the consequences of disobeying Herod, who was known to behave as a madman when provoked and returned to their country by another way.

Third, the Wise Men were committed to the journey – wherever the star might lead.

The Wise Men set out to find a newborn King by following a star and ended up in finding a baby born to young, relatively poor parents! Not exactly what they expected and not exactly, what befit their dignity as priests.

In this coming year, may we look to heaven for guidance and comfort and may we accept God's blessings in whatever forms we find them, just as the Wise Men accepted that their long, expensive journey led them to a baby born to young, inexperienced parents who lived on the poor side of town.

Finally, the Wise Men brought gifts. They did the thing that people in the East or in Africa or in India would do when visiting royalty. They brought gifts.

On This Twelfth Day, or Three Kings Day, otherwise known as Epiphany, think of the gift that you will offer to God in the coming year. The gift of time? The gift of your talents? Your service in the community? Your witness and testimony? The gift of undying love and devotion?

LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY

JANUARY 5

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

JANUARY 12

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43;

JANUARY 19

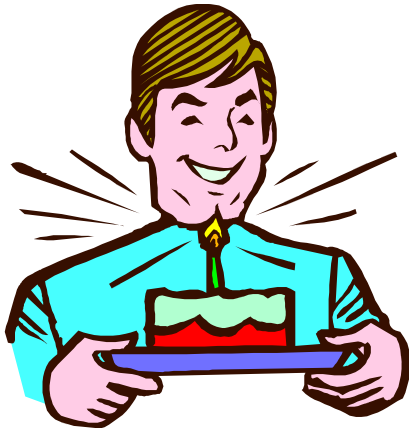
Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11
I Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:19-42

JANUARY 26

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1,4-9
I Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23



HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY TO:



MaryJean Barnes	4
Brian Martinson	5
Tara Stamer	7
Ryan Woods	8
Nereida Woodfield	14
Julie Smith (Henel)	15
Claudette Hart	19
Donna Mugavero	26
Michael Curtin	30

.....and many, many more!!!!



ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

WHEN? Wednesday, January 8

TIME? 10:00 A. M

WHERE? Aldersgate Hall

All officers that were elected at the Annual Church Conference on October 22nd are also members of the Administrative Council and are urged to attend this first meeting of the New Year.

These meetings are held every other month and the business of the church will be conducted. If you need transportation, please contact Bob Carhart, Chairman of the Administrative Council.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In the last few issues of the Messenger, the calendar has shown the Board of Trustee meeting on the first Monday of each month as being cancelled. The only one that was cancelled was the one in September and that was because Labor Day fell on the same date as the Trustee meeting. They have continued to meet at 7:00 p.m. on the first Monday of October, November and December. It is very important that all members of the Trustees attend each meeting because without a majority of the members present, they cannot have a meeting. If a meeting is cancelled it will be decided at a Trustee meeting or telephone calls will be made to every member. Those serving on the Board of Trustees are as follows:

- 2014 – Tom Henel, Don Beyer, Joe Stamer*
- 2015 - Carolyn Franz*
- 3016 – Gertrude Baldwin Bob Losyk, Michael Curtin*

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Lorraine Carhart and Louise Beyer would like to thank everyone who worked hard to make our Fair 2013 a success!

I would like to thank all those who came on Thursday and Friday to help set up our tables and all those who came to work on the tables, in the kitchen, white elephant room and all those who sat and had lunch while at the Fair. Lastly, our cashier, Ruth Schulte. A thanks also goes those who made the potato salad, and to all those who baked for the Bake Table.

I want to especially thank MaryJane Koslosky and Kathy Curtin for taking charge of the kitchen and had their crew work so smoothly throughout the day.

Also I would like to thank Mary Lou Forster Resch for helping me plan the layout for the tables at the Fair this year which worked out very well. We changed the format slightly because we were fortunate to have 10 vendors this year. She also made several signs and pasted them outside on our fence. She also thought of serving waffles with ice cream (and purchased everything needed) which proved to be very successful.

With economy as such, we did make more profit than we have in the past few years, so I would say that Fair 2013 was a great success!

The figures for each table are listed separately.

Lorraine Carhart



2013 FAIR TOTALS

KITCHEN	1,056.05
CHRISTMAS TABLE	34.85
NEW TABLE	199.75
BAKE TABLE	361.50
WHITE ELEPHANT	<u>111.80</u>
TOTAL PROFIT	1,763.95



BITS AND PIECES

Once again, Marie Dziamba will be one of the lucky ones, escaping the cold winter weather and spending a few months with family Texas. She will make the trip out there with son, Michael, who has business in Texas and will return with daughter, Diane, who will spend a few weeks there. We will miss Marie but know she will have a wonderful time!!

This year, for Christmas, some of Doris Henel's family spent the day with in-laws so they will be celebrating the holiday on another date. When everyone is starting to take down their Christmas decorations, they will be opening presents and eating a turkey dinner at the Henel home on January 4th.

Gertrude and Nancy Jane Baldwin entertained her family, Walter, Sue and Bob, Jayne and Otts Schnellenberger and Carolyn Franz on Christmas Eve, and Steven and Sue Zahorbenski and children on the Friday after Christmas. They spread it out a little and celebrated Otts's continued recovery from a serious illness.

We know it was a sad Christmas for Nancy Martinson and her family with the sudden death of her husband, Howard, on December 21, 2013. Our hearts and prayers are with them.



We were very sad to hear of the sudden death of Howard Martinson at his home on December 21, 2013.

Howard was a member of our church for over 60 years and, while he lived in our area, he never missed a Sunday service. His father Gus sang in our church choir and he was also there every Thursday for choir rehearsal and Sunday to join with the rest of the choir in beautiful music. The Martinson family was always an important part of our church.

Howard and his wife, Nancy, moved to Whiting in 2003 and were happy there, but there was never any doubt that his church was still, and would always be, the United Methodist Church of Linden, even though we didn't see him often after he moved. Don was born in Bayonne N. J. He and his family moved to Linden in 1936. When he and Nancy married, they purchased a home in Colonia and lived there for 48 years until the move to Whiting.

Howard served during the Korean War for 4 years.

He was a past Master of Cornerstone Lodge #229 F&AM and a member of Lafayette Lodge of Rahway.

Howard is survived by his wife of 58 years, Elizabeth Nancy Graham Martinson, and two sons, Brian Francis and his wife, Kathryn, and Keith John and wife,

Patricia. He also leaves four beloved grandchildren, Christopher, Matthew, Douglas and Courtney Martinson Nasatka and her husband, John.

He was predeceased by his son, David Graham Martinson, brother, Donald Martinson, and his parents, Viola and Gustav Martinson.

The funeral service was held at Werson Funeral Home on December 27, 2013. Interment was at Rosedale Memorial Park, Linden. Viewing was on Thursday, December 26th at the Werson Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory can be made to the Center for Hope Hospice: 1900 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076. They would be much appreciated.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, family and friends. He will be missed by all.

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PEOPLE MUST BE MORE CAREFUL!!

Late in the day on Christmas Day, Don Beyer was going past the church and saw that the two front doors of the sanctuary were wide open. Our Christmas Eve service was held on the evening before at 7 p.m. and obviously no one made sure the doors were closed. Don went in the building and checked everything – no one was there – and closed and locked the doors. For two days those doors stood open and we are lucky no one entered the building and did damage or took anything. And what a waste of heat!!

PLEASE don't let this happen again. When you leave any of our church buildings, check to make sure lights are off and doors are locked!!

JANUARY 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch.	2 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch	3 5:30-Champion Youth	4 9:30-1:30 Fencing School
5 9:30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Worship Service	6 7pm-BOARD OF TRUSTEES 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	7 10:30-Bible Study 12 Noon-United Meth. Women-Aldersgate Hall 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	8 10 AM – Administrative Council Meeting in Aldersgate Hall 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch	9 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	10 5:30-Champion Youth	11 9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School
12 9:30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Worship	13 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	14 10:30-Bible Study 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	15 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	16 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School	17 5:30-Champion Youth	18 9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School
19 9:30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Worship	20 4:30 to 9:30 PM Fencing School	21 10:30-Bible Study 4:30 to 9:30 PM Fencing School	22 4:30 to 9:30 Fencing School	23 4:30 to 9:30 Fencing School	24 5:30-Champion Youth	25 9:30 to 1:30 Fencing School
26 9:30 – Choir Rehearsal 10:30- Worship	27 4:30 to 9:30 PM Fencing School	28 10:30-Bible Study 4:30 to 9:30 PM Fencing School	29 4:30 to 9:30pm Fencing School	30 4:30 to 9:30 Fencing School	31 5:30-Champion Youth	