

Meditation and Reflection for the Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12

Fellow disciples of the United Methodist Church of Linden,

Christmas greetings! As we prepare to welcome 2015, let us consider the experience of the three wise men as they traveled to find “the child who has been born King of the Jews” (v .2) guided by a bright star. I want to share with you a meditation and reflection on this matter written by Fr. Tommy Lane.

We imagine ourselves in the presence of baby Jesus, and Mary and Joseph. We are surprised to see men of eastern appearance come. They see baby Jesus and fall on their knees. They offer him homage and give him presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh; gold because Jesus is king, frankincense since Jesus is divine and myrrh prefiguring his Passion. They tell us about the star and about Herod who knew nothing about Jesus’ birth. After their stay they set out on their return journey eastwards but not via Jerusalem since they want to avoid Herod. After their departure we spend time with baby Jesus. Baby Jesus, we do not have gold, frankincense and myrrh to give you but we can give you our love. Let our love be your manger. For a moment now let us love baby Jesus.....

Baby Jesus, even while you were only a little baby you experienced both acceptance from the wise men and rejection from Herod. The wise men and Herod had two opposing attitudes, searching for God and being closed to God. Baby Jesus, we see that the wise men were blessed in their search for you by finding you. We are searching for you too, we want to come ever closer to you. Help us to draw ever closer to you and if we are closed to you like Herod, help us to open so that we can find you. Let us ask Jesus to help us in drawing closer to him.....

Baby Jesus, not only had the wise men and Herod different attitudes to you, they also had different attitudes to life. The wise men were generous, Herod was selfish wanting to hold on to his throne. The magi gave you gifts; Herod killed all boys under two years of age. The wise men were willing to put energy and goodness into life, Herod wanted to get all he could from life. The magi who sacrificed to put into life were happy, Herod who took all he could from life was unhappy. Baby Jesus, help us to foster a healthy attitude towards life, giving and caring, instead of grasping, and being selfish and possessive. Let us pray now asking Jesus to help us develop ever more wholesome attitudes towards life.....

The magi were blessed. They were given the guidance of a star. In the darkness of this world we have all been given help on our journey to God; the beauty of nature, the Word of God in Sacred Scripture, Spirit-filled witnessing and preaching, the faith of others and our own faith. For a moment let us thank God for giving us stars to lead us to him.....

When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, it seems they no longer had the guidance of the star, otherwise they would not have had to ask Herod for advice. Sometimes we too feel as if we’re in the dark, like the magi. Sometimes what or whom we relied on is not there any more. Sometimes we see only darkness around us. But we know that you are there, Jesus, and that eternal life awaits us even if sometimes in this world there is no star for us. Lord, in our moments of darkness without a star, help us not to give up but to keep searching, hoping and praying because that would be the best way forward. Let us pray now for strength to remain steadfast when there is no guiding star.....

I hope and pray that you and your loves will be blessed with God’s guidance and provision in 2015.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Dr. Ricardo Ramos-Diaz

LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY

January 4

Isaiah 60:16; Psalm 72:1-7:10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

January 11

Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

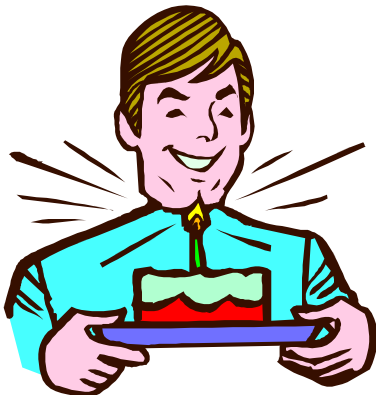
January 18

I Samuel 3:1-10,11-20; Psalm 139,1-6,13-18
I Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:45-51

January 25

Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 62:5-12
I Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

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HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY

<i>MaryJean Barnes</i>	4
<i>Brian Martinson</i>	5
<i>Tara Stamer</i>	7
<i>Ryan Woods</i>	8
<i>Nereida Woodfield</i>	11
<i>Julie Smith (Henel)</i>	15
<i>Claudette Harty</i>	19
<i>Donna Mugavero</i>	26
<i>Michael Curtin</i>	30

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

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ANOTHER FAIR IS BEHIND US!

With many thanks to Lorraine Carhart, Bob Carhart and Louise Beyer we had another successful Fair. The room looked lovely with all the tables filled with delicious homemade Baked Goods, Christmas and New Items and Almost New tables. In addition we had the huge White Elephant tables in the gym and many people carried out bags filled with things some people didn't want any longer but some had just the right place for them. Louise Beyer baked so many beautiful and delicious baked goods and many others contributed to the table.. Our kitchen chaired by MaryJane Koslosky and sister, Kathy Curtin, with great help from our new organist/director Bill Jensen served the always delicious food with the special addition of waffles and ice cream. Even with her walker, Doris Stamer, and Kathryn Gmitter, with lots of help, from others, kept things under control at the White Elephant tables in the gym. We couldn't have served food without waiters; Tom Henel and Brook Beyer with others filling in as needed. And who else but Ruth Schulte could keep good track of the money collected. A special thank you to all those who worked behind the tables and filled in wherever necessary.

We had 10 tables rented out to vendors and they all want to come back next year. That's a good sign! Thanks to all for helping make a lovely day!

BAKE TABLE	299.51
NEW TABLE	85.25
KITCHEN & Money for Kitchen	718.85
CHRISTMAS	34.50
ALMOST NEW	156.50
WHITE ELEPHANT	276.75
VENDORS	<u>250.00</u>
PROFIT	1,821.36

The help and support from all our members and friends was really appreciated!



We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Ethel Bethea who died on November 5, 2014. Services were held on Saturday, Nov, 15th at Union Gospel Tabernacle Church, in Newark. The viewing was Friday and Saturday, Nov. 14th and Nov. 15th. Interment was at Fairmount Cemetery in Newark. She is survived by her sister, Glennie Mae Allen, 8 grandchildren. 23 great-grandchildren including a special great-granddaughter, Tiara Sha'Monique Riley who cared for her.

Ethel was 104 years old and although she moved away to be near family, she still remained a member of our church although we knew she was attending another church but never removed her membership here. We kept in contact with her through the Messenger and many telephone calls from Gay Kulberda who then kept us up-to-date.

Ethel was a loving and caring person and many words of wisdom came from her when she heard members disagreeing. Her calming voice and the love of the Lord came through everything she said and we were always very moved. We are better people because of Ethel and those that were fortunate to meet her will never forget her. We will always love you, Ethel, and never forget your happy face

Lois Jamison Jones, 88, died on Nov. 12, 2014 at Marriot Leisure Park in Lakewood, N. J. where she and her husband moved when they left Linden 15 years ago.

Lois and Bob attended our church occasionally and always visited our fairs and rummage sales. A graveside service was held on Friday, Nov. 14th at Rosedale Cemetery, Linden. We extend our sympathy to their family and friends.

We were saddened to hear recently of the death of Michael Perona, 80, father of Debbie Stamer on Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at Morristown Medical Center. He had not been well in recent years and the last months have been very difficult for him. Funeral services took place on Monday, Dec. 8th at Vanderhoven Chapel in Hazelwood Cemetery, Clark, N.J. Visitation was on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 pm to 9 p.m. at Lehrer-Gibilisco Funeral Home in Rahway.

The Perona family has lived in Rahway for 53 years. He was the owner, operator of Shorty's Auto Body for 39 years, retiring in 1999. He was a former member of the Rahway Italian-American Club, member of Rahway Honorary PBA and the Auto Body Distributors of Irvington N.J.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Barbara (Pierce) Perona, daughters, Debbie and her husband Joseph Stamer and Barbara and her husband, Lorenzo Domingo, a son Michael and his wife, Heather Perona. He is also survived by 6 grandchildren, Lauren, Megan, Ashley, Carl, Michael and Katherine.

We will miss seeing Mr. and Mrs. Perona together at special events at our church. They were always very supportive of things their children and grand-children were involved in. We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends who will all miss him.

We wish to extend our sympathy to Marie Dziamba on the death of her sister-in-law Olga Dziamba Hawrylak, 92, on November 26, 2014. She was a long-time resident of Linden employed by General Motors and was predeceased by husband Michael, and survived by daughter, Katherine Daria Hawrylak.

BITS AND PIECES

Congratulations to Matt Henel and Jaimie Van Salisbury who closed on a home in Brick recently and have been busy painting and setting up furniture. They are also making plans for their wedding in August 2015.

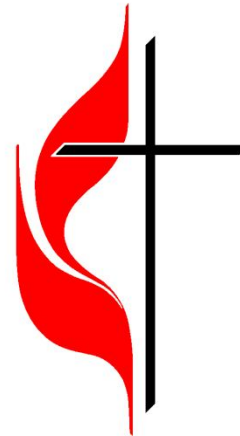
A reminder that all those nominated and elected to office at our Charge Conference this year, are appointed as of January 1, 2015. Please check the calendar for the schedule of meetings and plan to attend.

Rev. Ramos was invited by Bishop. Rev. Rogas of Boliva to participate in their Annual Conference. He left on Monday, December 8th and will return Wednesday, December 17th. Those attending our Bible Study have been told that there will be no gathering on December 9th and December 16th. Please check with the minister if there will be a Bible Study December 23rd.

PEOPLE ON OUR PRAYER LIST AND STILL NEEDING OUR PRAYERS

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| Leona Parker | Ethel Steiniger |
| Janet Pavlinic | Stamer Family |
| Perona Family | Robin Mower |
| Norman Carhart | Carol Jones |
| Otts Schnellenberger | Mycroft Laryea |
| NancyJane Baldwin | Vivienne Merrill |
| Jack Valdez | Karen Brinckmann |
| Horsch Family | Dan Ajuka |
| Gertrude Kiely | Kathy Allison |
| Ewaldo Kozar | Shernelle Pond |

Marie Dziamba, who has served Thanksgiving Dinner to her family ever since her marriage, spent this past holiday at the home of her son, Michael and daughter-in-law Pat, and enjoyed being served. A new tradition has been started!



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

On Tuesday, December 9th the members of the United Methodist Women gathered at the home of Kathryn Gmitter for a lovely Christmas luncheon.

For many years they had a covered dish luncheon at the church for the occasion and invited other women from the church. Last year they decided to go out to a local restaurant which was a very nice change. This year they were very pleased to accept the invitation from Kathryn.

The food was delicious, conversation was lively and plans for the future were discussed. We thank Kathryn for a lovely afternoon!



SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Did you forget that our flowers for Sundays usually come from our members who want to give them in memory or honor of loved ones? It is simple to do – just notify Ida Peralta (she sings in the choir), give her written information of the one you want to remember and enclose \$20. That will fill 2 urns and you can take them home after the day they are in the sanctuary or send them to a shut-in. She will take care of everything and they will be listed in the church bulletin.



A REMINDER TO EVERYONE!!

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY: December 21

*Church Sanctuary – 10:30 a.m.
Bring your Christmas envelope. You should receive the Christmas letter in the mail with the special offering envelope. If you do not receive it, please check the box of offering envelopes that you received in the mail for the whole year, and you will see a special Christmas offering envelope in that box. You can also use that.
The Christmas poinsettias will beautify our altar. Those that donated them can take them home after the Christmas Eve service on Wednesday evening or the following Sunday.*

CHRISTMAS EVE – December 24

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE – 7:00 p.m.

Last year the service time was changed from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Many of our members, including those that live a distance away, do not like to travel at night. It is a beautiful service and our sanctuary looks so lovely with the poinsettias decorating our altar. We look forward to seeing you all. Even if you do not attend church on Sunday, we urge you to attend this service in preparation for Christmas, the next day!

THE ANGEL TREE

At the rear of the sanctuary, on the table, stands our beautiful Angel Tree decorated with glass angels that change color when the switch is on. You can take one and replace it with a paper that says in memory or honor of a loved one. You list the name and add your name and put it on the tree. The cost is \$7.00 and money raised will be turned over to the Methodist Homes. Please speak to Carolyn Franz if you have any questions and put the money in a box on the table.

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URGENT!!TRANSPORTATION NEEDED

Unfortunately some of our members that transported members to church can no longer drive because of health problems. We appreciate all they did when they were able and willing to help out their fellow members and thank them. Now not only the passengers need rides, but the people who transported them also need help. The main problem is getting to church on Sunday mornings. If you can help, and we determine there are people nearby you that can take advantage of your offer, we will notify you. Please contact Doris Stamer, 908-925-0469, Nurture Chairperson, if you can help. This is an urgent need - we have always been a caring church and we count on your support with this problem. Please call Doris Stamer when you read this article.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Members 2015: Election: 1/5/15 – 7:00 PM

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
C.Ettel	G.Baldwin	B.Carhart
C.Franz	B.Losyk	J.Valdez
	M.Curtin	

MEMBERS ATTEND THE MEETING!!!

JANUARY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 4:30-9:30- Fencing School	2 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth	3 9:30- 1:30 Fencing School
4 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	5 7 PM – BOARD OF TRUSTEES 4:30-9:30- Fencing School	6 10:30- Bible Study <u>NO U.M.W.</u> 4:30 -9:30 Fencing Sch.	7 NO FENCING SCH.	9 4:30-9:30- Fencing School	0 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth	10 9:30-1:30 – Fencing School in gym
11 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30 Worship Service	12 4:30-9:30- Fencing School	13 4:30-9:30-Fencing School 10:30-11:30 BIBLE STUDY	14 10:30 – CHURCH COUNCIL NO FENCING SCHOOL	15 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	16 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth	17 9:30-1:30 Fencing School in gym
18 9:30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30-Worship Ser. HUMAN RELATIONS DAY	19 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	20 10:30-Bible Study 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	21 NO FENCING SCH.	22 4:30-Fencing School	23 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth	24 9:30-1:30 Fencing School
25 9:30-Choir Rehearsal 10:30-Sunday School 10:30-Worship Ser.	26 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	27 10:30 Bible Study 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	28 NO FENCING SCHOOL	29 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	30 5:30-8:30 Champion Youth	31 Fencing School 9:30-1:30 PM

DID YOU ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA YET ?
CALL DORIS STAMER,
908-925-0469 – \$7.50