

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Second Sunday of Christmas – January 2nd, 2022

Prelude: “I Heard the Bells of Christmas Day” – by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to Talbot Street today as we celebrate the Second Sunday of Christmas celebrating the visit of the magi.

We are meeting in-person at St. Andrew’s at 11 am each Sunday for 2022 (as you feel comfortable with the changing COVID situation). Our Sunday morning Zoom meeting will gather at 9:30 am, the service will be at 10 am.

We are preparing for our Annual Meetings. Proposed dates are St. Andrew’s on Sunday January 16th, St. Luke’s on January 23rd, and Talbot Street on January 30th. For South Buxton folks, please email me your reports to southbuxtonpc@gmail.com, and for Talbot Street folks, email your reports to Tracey at secretary4tsuc@gmail.com. As we get a little closer to these dates, we will determine whether the Annual Meetings will be in-person, electronic (including telephone) or reschedule to a later date.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Talbotstreet.ca and Southbuxton.ca

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, readings by Annette Skillings and the slides by Tracey Major. You make all the difference. Thank you!

Call to Worship:

Eric: A star shining brightly in the East, discovered by those who have eyes to see the unusual and the challenging.

Sung Response: “Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel”

People: A journey into unknown territory, taken by those who have courage and curiosity.

Sung Response: “Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel”

Eric: An encounter with an evil, commanding presence, evil that was faced, yet resisted with care.

Sung Response: “Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel”

People: The Holy One recognized, despite humble origin, the glory of the gifts, given to God’s Chosen Child.

Sung Response: “Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel”

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Opening Prayer:

People: God of life, starlight is our night companion – a gift of wonder – that helped direct ancient ones on their journey, and helps us reflect upon our own. Amen.

Hymn: VU 91 “The First Noel” (Video) (Video)

- 1 The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 2 They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 3 And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.
- 6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1 - 12 “The Magi Comes Seeking”- by Tim and Judy Jackson

Far from Jerusalem, high in the eastern mountains of Persia, strangers were watching the skies. They were magi – people so wise they seemed to possess magic. The magi gathered wisdom and knowledge from every place. They were always reading, watching, listening, and wondering about the meaning of things. One night they saw a new star. At least it looked like a star. But it did not act like one. Instead of staying in one place, it went its own way, wandering like a planet. It was not on any of their star charts.

“What is it?” they wondered. “What does it mean? A star like that must tell of something important, like the birth of some great person.” They decided to follow it.

“We want to know the truth,” they said to one another. “How will we know unless we follow the light? The Creator of the Stars will show us the way.”

The magi followed that star all the way to Jerusalem. At home, they were used to dealing with kings and important people, so they went first to the palace of King Herod. Herod ruled the lands around Jerusalem, even though it was the Romans who really held the power. The magi told Herod about the star they had seen. They wondered if he knew anything about the birth of a new king.

“A new king?” Herod’s eyes narrowed. What if these strangers were right? Fear took hold of him – fear of losing his power. Herod did not want to know the truth. He just wanted information he could use. So he lied.

“Go and find this king,” he said. “When you do, be sure to come back and tell me so I can go and bow down to him.” But the magi were wise enough not to trust Herod.

The star led them to Bethlehem. When they found Jesus, they were overjoyed. They gave him the gifts they had brought with them. Gold, because it does not tarnish, and a true king values things that last. Frankincense, for prayer, because a true king seeks wisdom through being still and listening for God. Myrrh, for healing and to anoint the dead, because a true king seeks to heal rather than harm. And a true king knows that death must come before new life.

After they had given their gifts, the magi went home by a different route. When they did not return, Herod flew into a rage. His advisors tried to calm him, but he would not listen. All he wanted was to seek out and destroy Jesus. He caused great harm to innocent people. But in spite of his efforts to hold on to power, in the end he died alone and afraid.

On their way home, the magi talked about the star. How it caught them by surprise, roaming freely around the world. How it scattered its gift of light far and wide. How it broke open a story about one people, and made it a story for all people.

Message: “Pilgrims on the Road”

This week, on January 6th, starts Epiphany. Epiphanies are known as sudden realizations and intuitive new understandings of ordinary occurrences. So today we are focusing on the magi’s journey and the precious gifts they brought to the Christ child. May we discover similarities between their journey and our own faith journeys. Today’s story is about the light of Christ and the journey to find it. The travelers bring gifts to someone they feel is very special – even God-sent.

The story of the magi’s visit is only found in the gospel of Matthew. For Matthew there are no shepherds or angels to celebrate the birth, like in Luke’s birth story. But more importantly, Matthew shares about these educated foreigners who travel a great distance to discover what the “star sign” might reveal. The magi

somehow know about the coming of a “ruler of the Jews”. So they stop at the local Welcoming Centre and seek help from the region’s reigning ruler – Herod.

Herod sees this situation as a potential threat to his power. Herod was frightened, “and all Jerusalem with him.” We may assume that Herod was frightened through doubts about the security of his position. He was a Jewish ruler in occupied territory. Since Herod’s insecurities could easily have negative repercussions on the people under his control, it’s no surprise that all Jerusalem trembled as well.

The magi understand this child as a divine gift, a future ruler of some sort, to be worshipped and honoured. So they stop at Herod’s palace to confer with Herod and his advisors. After being set on the right path, they continue on their way. The star guides them to the home of the child. We can assume, given the distance travelled, the child is no longer a newborn, and the wise ones find him, along with his mother, in his own home.

The term “epiphany,” comes from the Greek meaning “appear, reveal, shine, give light.” The gift of the light from the star, leads the wise ones to discover the birth of a new hope, a gift to the world, an infant who would himself be called “the light of the world.”

The magi bring gifts to honour the child and are given the gift of revelation in a dream. Their trip home did not include a stop in Jerusalem; their journey home took a different path.

Epiphany is more than celebrating the wise ones’ visit to the Christ - Jesus. The magi have made it their life ambitions to seek the light, by checking out the stars. Their journey to Jerusalem from the Far East would tell us that they knew this star was different – that this star needed a pilgrimage of discovery - That they had to travel to see the worth of this special star. This may also encourage us to think about our pilgrimages of discovery. What pilgrimage might we take that may encounter an epiphany? There is no better time to reflect on this than right now as we start a New Year. What might we do differently? What might we finally commit to do, that we have let slide these past few years?

On this first Sunday of a new year, we consider the magi’s story and their pilgrimage to see the Christ child. A warning is revealed in a dream; instead of returning to Herod, the magi leave for their own country by another road. Have you had any dreams that suggest you need to go a different way? What better time to change that at the first of a New Year.

This is the time of the year to make New Year resolutions, a tradition that has its roots in religious customs. The ancient Babylonians and Romans began the new year by making promises to their gods. In Judaism, the new year culminated in the day of atonement in which one reflects on past transgressions and asks God for forgiveness. In our modern culture, we often make promises to ourselves: I promise to lose weight, eat better, get exercise, or quit some unhealthy habits such as overspending, smoking, or drinking; typically, however, our resolutions falter.

While we have trouble keeping promises we make, God will always keep the promises God makes. God promises to bring new understandings if we keep our eyes, ears, and hearts open. We are entering 2022. God beckons us to a pilgrimage of discovery. The road ahead, while perhaps different, unknown, and maybe challenging leads to sacred encounters. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: B 206 “We Three Kings of Orient Are” – Video

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.
*O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.
*O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, voices raising,
Worshipping God on high.
*O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone cold tomb.
*O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Glorious now behold Him arise;
King and God and sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Sounds through the earth and skies.
*O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We live in the wonderful reality of God's promise, in the birth of Jesus the Christ. We live in new ways as we too are Pilgrims on the Road. Let us give thanks to God as we share our gifts and make our offerings.

Offertory: VU 541 "Praise God From Whom..."

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Offertory Prayer:

People: As the magi brought gold, so we bring these gifts. As the magi brought frankincense, so we bring our prayers. As the magi brought myrrh, so we bring our lives to you, O God. Bless these gifts in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 "Listen To Your Children Praying"

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: God of compassion, we bring our prayers to you for all the precious gifts we receive: moments of beauty; love from family and friends; food from the earth; encounters that cultivate hope. Receive our gratitude for all this and more. *Silence for reflection*

People: We bring our prayers to you for all those we have concern for: lives burdened by loss or heartache; those struggling with illness or pain; countries devastated by violence or conflict; all those carrying hidden sorrows. Grant strength and healing. *Silence for reflection*

Eric: We bring our prayers to you for all those who, like the magi, are searching for something: some for new meaning; some for the right path; some for community; some for your presence. Grant a kind and guiding light. *Silence for reflection*

People: We bring these prayers to you, along with all those which remain unspoken, trusting that you have received them all with mercy and grace.

Eric: As we pray together Jesus' prayer...

Our Father, Who art in heaven,

*Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

Blessing:

Eric: May God be a guiding star, as you go out into the world, lighting the path before you, now and forever more.

O Star of Wonder:

Refrain: O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: “Fantasy on Angels We Have Heard” – Christie Coatsworth

Prayers: - Please include these people in your prayers this week.

We have offered prayer for these people each Sunday morning just before the Zoom Service. It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as “In the Spirit We Are One”.

Cancer:	Tom	
	Louise	Louise' Granddaughter - Blake
	Betty	Ingrid
	Alison	Brenda
	Nancy	Jim
	Brian	Jack
	Zoe	Becky
	Barry/ Marsha	Francine
	Adrein	Gary
	Melissa	Karen
	Lloyd	Jim
	Flo	Sherie & Will
	George	Hunter – Doctor
	Jenny	Janet / Tracey
	Shawna	Sarah
	Ethan – Brian Surgery	Donna
	Jeannie	Michelle
	Larry	