



January 2019

Greetings,

Welcome to the year 2019! We are officially in the season of Christmas, which lasts until Epiphany, December 6th. Epiphany ends at Ash Wednesday.

Christians recognized early the importance of epiphany, which means “manifestation” or “revelation”. The celebration of Epiphany even pre-dates Christmas. This ancient feast has been known throughout the ages by various names; The Feast of Kings, Twelfth Night, The Last Day of Christmas.

During Advent we anticipated the coming of Christ, during the Christmas Season we celebrated his human birth. It is only as Epiphany arrives that we celebrate the fullness of the Incarnation.

We celebrate the manifestation of God to everyone! All history has been preparation for this feast when we recognize, accept, and proclaim the wonderment of God-Made-Flesh. Christ has come—Christ is here, within us, around us. We proclaim the gospel message of justice and love to all! We celebrate Emmanuel—God with us!

This year, Epiphany falls on a Sunday. We will celebrate with a King Cake and a special Pot Luck party at Second Table.

Blessings,

Vicar Kim+

JANUARY 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
The Twelve Days of Christmas 				National Science Fiction Day 		1 Chambers Altar Guild
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM 2nd Table EPIPHANY			 	 OCC 6-7:30 PM	Beth Mincer 	Team 2 Deacon Mark Altar Guild
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Epiphany 1 Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM 2nd Table Reports for Annual Meeting DUE TODAY	 National Clean off your desk day			 OCC 6-7:30 PM	Week of Christian Unity Begins	Debbie Maruca Team 3 Mincer Altar Guild
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Epiphany 2 Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Annual Meeting	Martin Luther King Day ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK 			 OCC 6-7:30 PM	Week of Christian Unity Ends	Team 4 Hughes Altar Guild
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Epiphany 3 Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Adult Bible Study	 Ann Chambers 	 Emily Roberts		 OCC 6-7:30 PM	SAVE THE DATE - FEB. 3RD Candlemas 9:30 AM Bishop Barker's Annual Visit Reception New Members Blessing of the Throats - St. Blaise's Day	

PRAYER REQUESTS * PRAYER CHAIN

You may make prayer request additions, deletions, and modifications via Deacon Mark Kowalski at kowalskimjk@gmail.com.

PRAY FOR Judith, Lynn & Jim, Debbie, Lesley, Gary, Keith, Stephanie, Benji, Patrick;

PRAY FOR immigrants, victims of violence and war, victims of gun violence, victims of sex trafficking; people with HIV/AIDS; members of the armed forces, especially those deployed overseas and/or in war zones and their loved ones back home; people dealing with natural disasters and those in recovery.

PRAY FOR: Presiding Bishop, The Most Rev Michael Curry; Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Scott Barker, our sister parish Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue NE; St Martin de Tours, Copperas Cove TX; the South High School Teen Parent Program; The Friends of Tamar Ministry and The Suitcase Project; Magdalene Omaha.

PRAY FOR: immigrants, the poor and the hungry; the unemployed; the uninsured and underinsured; prisoners and their families; the homeless and near-homeless; immigrants; shelters and food pantries; visitors and newcomers to St Martin of Tours.

PRAY FOR the growth of this baptismal community and for peace in the world and in our hearts.

PRAY FOR those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

ALL ARE INVITED TO RECEIVE



All worshipping at St. Martin of Tours who seek God and are drawn to Christ are welcome to receive Holy Communion at God's altar.

If you prefer to receive a blessing, please fold your arms across your chest.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Deacon Mark Kowalski has graciously volunteered to take charge of the weekly Prayers of the People, If you have a request, please let Mark know or send it to kowalskimjk@gmail.com.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Please submit articles or items for the Newsletter by the 15th of the preceding month.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

The Annual Meeting of the Parish of St. Martin of Tours will be held on **Sunday, January 20, 2019** following the Holy Eucharist. A potluck meal will precede the meeting. All organizational reports for the annual booklet must be submitted to Vicar Kim by **January 13, 2019**.

BIBLE STUDY

David Rose will re-start the Bible Study in January. We will continue the study of Genesis. The Bible Study will meet after Second Table in the Chapel.



EPIPHANY

On **Sunday, January 6th** we will celebrate Epiphany with a special Potluck lunch at Second Table. We will then travel to Council Bluffs to see Gary's nieces Christmas Tree extravaganza. Please let Gary know if you plan to attend this special event.



ANNUAL VISITATION OF THE BISHOP

The Bishop Diocesan, The Right Reverend J. Scott Barker, will visit the parish of St. Martin of Tours on **February 3, 2019**. We will celebrate the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, Candlemas, the Blessing of Throats (St Blaise) and the Reception of Conner Mowery to the Episcopal Church. Please plan to attend this very special and important event.

THANK YOU

St. Martin of Tours church has had a busy and productive year so far in South Omaha. But of course, we can always do more. Please consider inviting a friend to worship with us. Please prayerfully consider your pledge to St. Martins and what it means to do God's work in this community. Many people give a gift through their will. Would you consider leaving a gift to St. Martin's? Most especially, thank you for your faithful witness.



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HOW THE WISE MEN FOUND THE BABY JESUS AND HOW YOU CAN

Epiphany festival has a long and fascinating history worthy of study for its own sake. But more importantly celebrating Epiphany can help us appreciate more fully the meaning of Christ's birth and help us rediscover what worshipping Christ means.

The coming of Jesus showed the world in a sad light. We would never know how wicked is the human heart but for what men did to Christ. The crucifixion showed that God loved the world, but it also showed the world hated God! So the birth of Christ revealed men. "There was no room for them in the inn" when Jesus was born. Herod planned to murder the Baby Jesus, and all Jerusalem was troubled when they heard that the long awaited King of the Jews was born.

Most of the world knew little and cared less when a virgin gave birth to the Son of God. A few shepherds, Simeon, and Anna the prophetess loved and worshiped the Baby Jesus. And with them, casting sacred and holy light on the dark picture of wicked, godless men despising the Light of the world, are the Wise Men from the East.

Who were the Wise Men? Scripture simply reads, "...wise men from the east." We may assume that they cross the desert from the great land, Babylonia or Assyria. Many years before Babylon had been influenced by Daniel in the Old Testament. He had been the most important minister and wise man in the reign of several greater emperors. The book of Daniel was written there, and most of it in the Chaldaic or Syriac language.

We naturally believe that these Wise Men were spiritually minded, saved men that were acquainted with the book of Daniel and from that, knew about the holy city of Jerusalem and about the promised "King of the Jews." Tradition says that there were three Wise Men, but the Bible never says how many. Most of us get the idea from the novel *Ben Hur*, but then again the novel is not inspired. Maybe there were three because of the three gifts, though in Matthew we are not told. Yet we know that these Wise Men knew that the Savior was to be born and so came to worship him. At probably an enormous expense and trouble, they traveled from the east to see the baby Jesus to worship Him and to offer gifts. Most likely they rode camels. It most likely many weeks to make the journey. Let us recall that it took Ezra four months to come from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:9), so these men may have taken that much time.

So now the Star. The Wise Men said about Jesus, "...we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Matt. 2:2) And later the same star appeared to them again at Jerusalem and went before them was (Matt. 2:9).until it stood over where the Baby Jesus. God had prepared a star. The appearance of the angels was a miracle. The birth of the Savior Himself, with no human father, was the greatest miracle of all. Why should God not work a miracle and prepare a star especially for the occasion, or move it out of its course in the heavens to signal the birth of His Son. It is best that we take the facts as mentioned in the Bible with unquestioning faith like the Wise Men had. They were men of keen minds but with simple and childlike hearts they accepted the supernatural token and went to see the King of the Jews. And yet how did these men of the East know that there was to be a King of the Jews? I wonder if God revealed to them supernaturally the facts, but I gather not.

It is God's plan that men should learn through the revealed Word. God uses signs and dreams and wonders and impressions and leading by the Holy Spirit, but he uses them to back up his teaching of the Word. We know that from Scripture it is God's plan that men should hear the Word of God from other men, or read the Word of God as men have written it down.

Why did they come to Jerusalem to inquire about where the Savior was to be born? Yes Jesus was not born in Jerusalem but the Wise Men followed what light they had. They acted in faith on the Scriptures that were given them, the book of Daniel. God must have intended for the Babylonian people and their descendants to especially learn a lesson from Daniel. But remember Daniel does not tell where Jesus will be born. It mentions the holy city but not Bethlehem. Micah the prophet tells us that the Savior will be born in Bethlehem. So they came from the East to Jerusalem. They could go no until they got further light from the Torah. It led them to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem, then to Bethlehem and to the Savior.

What can we learn from this story: The Bible always leads men to Christ when they follow it. Whether Old Testament or New, the Bible is a signboard pointing to our Savior, Jesus Christ. These Wise Men did not come to cuddle a baby, to toss him in the air, to tickle Him. Instead they came to give gifts fitting for royalty. By their faith, they gave the things that would best show that which was due Jesus. They gave him GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, and MYRRH. Gold was fit for a king; frankincense is a type of prayer and praise offer to Christ as God; and myrrh is bitter spice which reminds us of those with which the women used to wrap Christ's body for burial. We as Christians should offer gifts to God too at Christmas that is offering ourselves to Him, but all year our offerings given out of loving hearts, should be a of humble submission to him as Lord, Savior, and Son of God.

These men from the east were wise indeed. They had spiritual wisdom revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. They knew this baby Jesus some way must suffer for man's sins and, dying as the Lamb of God, would take away the sins of the world. I believe that even though this was clear in their minds, God put the essence of it into their believing hearts.

So what can we go away with all that has been written here: Read Matthew's story of the visitation of the Wise Men again and share this with others so that it will lead them to find Christ if they have not found Him. If they do not know him and love him, I trust that sharing the story with them, they will find him at any cost, and then finding him that they will give Him all the devotion and love of their hearts. Trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior this Epiphany season, love Him with all your heart, and claim Him openly as Savior as did the Wise Men of the East!

[Gary Johnson](#)