



Your Pastor's Ponderings

Happy New Year and Happy Epiphany! In the days, we greet the opportunities to start anew and greet the Lord, just as the wise men do in a few days. So how shall we understand the magi's actions before Jesus? We are told that "they knelt down and paid him homage." What does it mean to pay homage to someone? The word "homage" was birthed in the fourteenth century to describe a feudal ceremony whereby someone acknowledged themselves as subordinate to another—a peasant publicly paying homage to a local lord, for example. As the European feudal system dissolved, the meaning of "homage" evolved into a general expression of respect or act of obeisance. Though paying homage to someone has its roots in a public ceremony, the vernacular use of "homage" does not inherently imply a practiced communal rite.

Is there action a public or private act? The immediate setting seems to imply private action, for the magi follow the rising star to a nondescript house in Bethlehem. Behind the concealed comfort of these house walls, the magi take to their knees before the infant Jesus as a gesture of humble obedience; yet, what appears to be private is in fact front and center for the world to behold. Indeed, the bright starlight reveals to us that this commonplace home has become the stage for the entire cosmos!

As the magi enter the place housing the Christ-child, they take us with them. The star serves as the spotlight for us to see and to experience the flesh-taking God who enters humanity for the salvation of all creation. When these foreigners fall before Jesus, our knees also begin to buckle as we too are overwhelmed by the revelation of God's work. And on our knees we have no choice but to pay homage to Jesus, for only there "you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (Isaiah 60:5).

In the coming weeks of Epiphany, we will have our own opportunities to kneel before the Lord and pay him homage. We pay this homage through the lives we live and the faith practices that we employ in our daily routines. In the coming weeks, Pastor Will will also be delivering a weekly sermon series on the characteristics of a Disciple.

God calls each one of us to pursue a life of discipleship. A disciple is one who is named, claimed, and sent by God, in baptism and in our everyday vocations. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God calls us to share the light of Christ by gathering in, welcoming, and bringing others into the community of faith. Together, as the renewed community of Christ, we are called to reach out again to all the world, by witnessing to the love and grace of God in every way.

As such we are each called, like the wise men, to live a life of homage and discipleship. Come to worship this month and see exactly what are the characteristics of a disciple and how through living them in our lives we can pay homage to our Lord, like the magi did on the first Epiphany.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Will



Epiphany of Our Lord

On Sunday January 3, 2010 @ 2pm. The Old Mt. Union Church will be celebrating the Epiphany of Our Lord and the Rev. Larry Hoover will be the guest pastor.

The Epiphany of Our Lord – Community Candlelight Service

All are invited to an Epiphany service of Carols and Hymns, Scripture Readings, and a traditional ceremony of Light at Grace Lutheran Church in Stoystown. The service will be on January 6th, 2010 at 7pm.



Joint Council Reminder

The Joint Council will meet on Tuesday, January 5th at Messiah (with St. Paul’s hosting) @7pm. We will be electing new officers.

Note to newly elected Council members: unless otherwise scheduled, the Joint Council and congregational council meets on the First Tuesday of every month at 7pm at alternating locations.



Adult Choir @M

Will resume on Wednesdays at 7pm. @ Messiah



Where Did You See God this week!

Please share your stories with Pastor Will about where you saw God this week by email, bulletin insert, writing a letter, leaving a message on the voice mail, or in person. **Please continue share with me where you see God in your lives.**

Example: I saw God in

I saw God _____



Pastor Will is praying for families in our directory because we all need God’s care in our lives. Please note people in this list are not sick

or ill but are simply being prayed for this week as a way to remember the people of our parish throughout the year.



There’s Wisdom in the Word

We continue our Book of Faith exploration of People of Faith. This month we examine the life of a king: King David – a young man chosen by God to rise from obscurity to power. Yet, David is no model of perfection and as such, we learn how even a divinely favored person can make mistakes and experience consequence for his actions.

Our Bible study meets on the last Tuesday of the month. This month we meet on Tuesday, January 26th at 7pm @Messiah lounge.



GOD’S WORK. OUR HANDS—
The Allegheny Synod Sr. High Event

Mark your calendars. The Sr. High Event will be held on the weekend of February 26th – 28th. The theme is God’s work., Our hands. As part of the theme, the youth will spend Saturday morning with their small groups at a local service agency where they will learn about the mission of the agency and use their hands to serve.

There will be large group gatherings and worship. Small groups will be led by college students, evening worship by Bishop Pile and there will be a dance on Saturday night.

The cost of the event is \$150.00. Our youth group fund will pay \$65.00 toward this cost. This means that each youth must pay \$85.00. Please make checks out to the New Centerville Lutheran Youth Group. The event will be held at Toftrees Resort in State College. Registration forms will be going out in the mail soon to eligible youth. **The deadline to register is January 31st.** If you don’t receive a form but are interested in attending please let Pastor Will know as soon as possible. (814-926-2215).



“Food Bags” Thank You- to everyone for their donations, of cookies, monetary gifts, helping to pack and to deliver them, because we were able to deliver 26 and made a Happy Holiday with your support.



Confirmation- Schedule for January

Our first class of the winter / spring term will be held on Sunday, January 10th at 5pm- at Mt. Zion Calvary Lutheran Church in Bakersville. Please note the location change as we will be having class at Mt. Zion for the remainder of the term.

Schedule for January:

Jan. 10th – 5pm: Class resumes @ MZ

Jan. 17th – 5pm: Class @ MZ

Jan. 24th – 5pm: Class @MZ

Jan. 31st – 5pm: Class @ MZ



SNOW CAMP is Coming – Keep the Date Open

Attention! Confirmation students and any interested Jr/Sr High Youth (grade 6-12) of the Parish. Snow Camp will be held at Camp Sequanota on the weekend of February 5th thru 7th. Our topic for the Weekend will be: Why is there Suffering?

Of course, there will be games, snow activities, sledding, free time, and other fun events.

The deadline to register and return forms is January 10th. The cost to each youth is \$20. (Remainder of the cost will be picked up by the parish youth account.) Youth may invite a friend to come with them. Cost for friends is \$35, plus they must complete a registration packet as well.

Registration packets were mailed to confirmation youth and other potential youth.



On the Horizon: Worship Happenings in January

January 3rd – Sunday of the Word made Flesh

Today we hear the Christmas story from John’s Gospel – how God became flesh and lived among us. In the babe born in a manger (the word made flesh), God risked everything for the sake of the world, to bring light into the darkness. This is our hope – that even the darkness of sin seen in the cross is overcome by the light of grace and truth.

January 10th – Baptism of Our Lord Sunday

On this day, we hear again the story of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan. Hearing that, we cannot help but recall our own baptismal beginnings. As such, we recall and celebrate our own adoption as daughters and sons when we pass through the waters to become children of God and disciples. On this Sunday, Pastor Will is beginning a sermon series throughout Epiphany on the characteristics of a disciple and how we live for God.

January 17th – A Disciple serves Sunday

As we hear the story of the wedding at Cana, we are reminded how Jesus served others. On this day, he serves others by turning water into wine so that the guests can continue to celebrate a joyous occasion. A disciples seeks to serve as Christ served.

January 24th – A Disciple trusts Sunday

On this day, we hear Jesus read Isaiah’s scroll in the temple of his hometown and proclaim that the promises of God have come true. At last God's promise has come to pass; in Jesus, dreams have come true.

For most people, however, dreams, wishes, and desires are complicated. Our vision for our lives and world is limited by our human imagination. So our dreams and wishes for ourselves are often different from *Jesus’* dreams for us. A disciple is called to trust in God’s word and promise. A disciple entrusts life, family, church and community to God.

January 31st – A Disciple learns Sunday

On this day, Paul reminds us that God gives us many gifts through the Holy Spirit, but the purpose behind all of them is love, the kind of love that God showed us in Jesus Christ. A disciple learns to love God by seeking to learn more about God.