Pastoral Letter

You Were Asking…

During the last week we celebrated Epiphany. It is a season of many questions. One of those questions is what does Epiphany mean? Epiphany means revelation. It means a showing, a direction for our search. What you may not have thought about is that everyone is searching. The shepherds were searching and now the magi are searching. You have no need of academic credentials or specific life experiences in order to have the right search. Now what you may not have known is that there were two groups. First there was the magi. They are what we call “three searchers”. They agreed to take a long journey to another country in search of the Christ. You know them as Jaspar, Melchior and Balthszar. But did you know there was a second group of wise men? They are the ones Herod called in. Basically he said, we have a problem and I need you to solve it. Their conclusion to his question was, you will find the baby, “In Bethlehem of Judea”. That’s it! They skipped the road trip. They never left the room or their minds. One author says, “They gave lip service and head service”. They remained aloof from engaging the journey. They had no intention of this new information having any effect on their lives. In short, they decided it was easier to just talk about it and not do anything about it.

Then we have the magi. They took all the risks, including a difficult journey in terrible weather with awful risks to search out the Christ child.

Here comes the point. You and I are asked to choose between two kinds of wise people. One group chooses to play it safe and the others are willing to take a risk. One group talks and others take action. Which group do you want to be part of? Now before you make a decision, you need to know the value of the church community. No one should take risky journeys alone. We need each other for encouragement, support, affirmation, love and acceptance. There are no qualifications required to engage in the journey. We are all on a journey to encounter the Christ every day. We anticipate great joy in those holy moments. We understand that the journey may have good times and bad. We are fully aware that we may not have all the tools in this moment for the full journey ahead. But we also know that we are surrounded by people who hear us ask questions and understand the true wisdom and insight only comes from asking questions.

The season of Epiphany is a good time to search out spiritual direction. Each week I look forward to you joining us on Livestream at 10am. I anticipate a few of you may want to join our Bible studies on Wednesday at 7pm and Thursday at 1:30 pm via zoom. I even consider it a possibility that a few of you may need to have a phone conversation, do a zoom call or go for a walk in the snow. All these possibilities are coming soon. Meanwhile may we continue to ask important questions that lead to new insights and awareness of our journey with Christ.

On January 19th, your parish council will gather together to ask important questions. I ask your prayerful support of the council as they consider the budget for 2021. Pray for the council that they may search God’s will for this parish and our broader community in the coming year.

Indeed it’s true that for the foreseeable future, our worship service will be Livestreamed at 10am. There are 10 participants in a weekly service. Although there is significant planning during the week, there is often a “pre to live” meeting before we Livestream the service. Therefore, it’s most convenient for all participants to Livestream at 10am instead of 9:30.

You were asking… Presently we are planning the Vestry meeting for January 31st. It is most likely going to happen via zoom. You will receive a code a week prior to the meeting. There will be full explanation in an email with all of the details and information one full week before vestry. You will receive the vestry report by email by January 20th at noon. The zoom call is being set up by Tim Goodison. He has an account that allows 1000 participants. I seriously doubt we will need that many. If the government permits and the Diocese sanctions, we may be able to have a few people in the room with social distance and masks. The vast majority will join the meeting by zoom. Now you are probably asking, how do we vote? There is a feature in zoom called “polling”. This is the technical method to vote where people can send their vote on motions. A full explanation will be sent to you by email one week before the meeting. Another option is to phone into the zoom call. These numbers will also be available one week before the meeting. Let me say that things are a little fluid right now but I knew that many of you were asking about our intentions at this time so this is our best explanation today.

Blessings

Stephen