

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

January 5, 2022

HELLO 2022

With eyes open wide in anticipation of brilliant colors and energizing fragrances, I prepare to meet the brand spanking New Year with expectations of being astonished daily.

This first week...

The Serenity
of falling snow and love blanketing
the earth as far as we can see
brings a sense of peace.

Genuine Beauty
of our sanctuary adorned with
tall tree, lights, wreaths, and nativity
astounds upon entering.

Harmonizing
voices of trained singers faithfully
lift to meet God as one
amazes and transforms.

Gratitude and Love
fill our bags as we prepare to join
the magi with eyes wide open
on this journey of Epiphany.

Breathing as one
we answer the call and join the
incredible sway of dancers
bringing gifts to the Christ child!

Coming of the Magi ***Matthew 2:1-15 & 19***

CEB

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ² They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.”

³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him.

⁴ He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ *You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers
of Judah,
because from you will come one who
governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel.”* [a]

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared.

Continued

Coming of the Magi (continued)

⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” ⁹ When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Escape to Egypt

¹³ When the magi had departed, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod will soon search for the child in order to kill him.” ¹⁴ Joseph got up and, during the night, took the child and his mother to Egypt. ¹⁵ He stayed there until Herod died. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I have called my son out of Egypt. ^[b]

Return from Egypt

¹⁹ After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ²⁰ “Get up,” the angel said, “and take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead.

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Paying Homage

Just as the star guided the Magi to pay homage to the Christ Child, so it feels like everything is pointing for us to make an even greater effort to stay connected to one another.

Life is more worthwhile when we share our struggles and doubts and witness to our faith. We have heard from many of you how thankful you are that the Spirit’s presence has brought calm when overcome with fright. How being with others, or upon hearing their voices are ways of sharing God’s love. We may lift the phone to make a call, writing a note, and/or attending worship and small groups.

My prayer for all of us is for an extra bit of courage, as we enter year 2022, proceeding as one with a sense of wonder and awe, astonished for the breath that unites us with our loving God.

God’s Light and Love to you this New Year!

Marta

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