

**Epiphanies
Sunday, January 2, 2022
Maple Grove UMC
Rev. Patricia Wagner**

Matthew 2: 1- 12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the East came to Jerusalem,² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Its been cloudy most of this last week
we haven't been able to see the stars
in the night sky.

It made me think about the Magi
Surely on their journey of many months,
they would have had nights when the
star they followed disappeared.

They would have had to stay encouraged
by the stories they'd saved up
of other holy awakenings
other epiphanies.

They did not turn back though,
because
the light of that star showed them
something new,
something older than the known world
Something beyond this world,
and yet part of it.

Once they had seen the light
they had to follow it.
For all the other lights were lesser ones

Then once they had seen the child

they would bow down for no other.

I read a first person account this week
of a man who was raised without a faith tradition
considered those who did to be
incurious dupes,

He started on his own quest,
exploring one practice after another,
until it was evident that the only way
that fed his mind and soothed his soul,
that sought him
was the path where he met the Christ

Especially in season full of clouds
when the stars in our sky grow faint,
It may be easier to live our lives by lesser lights
to have faith in more practical and provable truths.

But like the Magi, like this fellow,
once we have seen the star,
once we know this one called Jesus,
we find that we cannot cease to look for him,
that light in him that reveals
what came before and is beyond
and yet here with and within us.

We find evidence of God in our holy texts,
but epiphanies come, too,
in encounters with other human beings
especially those who, like Jesus,
live without the securities to which we are accustomed.

Doug Davis has a story of an Epiphany to tell you.

- Patricia Wagner