



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor

Kelly Tyrrell, Church Administrator

Mark W. Miller, Director of Music Ministries

Sara Lugn, Stephen Ministry Leader

www.fcclincoln.org

info@fcclincoln.org

Week of January 2, 2022



Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning. If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

O Lord our King, if to have an epiphany is to grasp on to some piece of reality through a sudden awareness - we have an epiphany through you everyday. We come to realize that the world you want for us includes loving everyone, even those who live in far off places with ways and traditions different from our own. We suddenly understand that true power comes from serving others and allowing others to serve us. Like the Magi, grown men who fall on their knees to a mere child, when we live in this humble way, we are doing it right! God, bless us through Christmastide that we may hold on to this feeling all the year through. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

Many: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us!

One: Like sages from afar, come and behold your Christ!

Many: Let us fall on our knees in his honor! Let us lift our voices in praise of his name!



Even if you are worshipping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men 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.' ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They 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."'

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then 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.' ⁹ When 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. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On 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. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reflection

Meditation for Epiphany

“The Hidden Gifts of the Magi”

They have a place in most nativity sets, usually standing somewhere behind the holy family. Some nativity sets even include one camel, mine does, and so does ours here in the sanctuary at FCC. Familiar hymns like “We Three Kings” further promotes the idea that the Magi who came to praise the newborn King were royalty themselves. Most of what we know about the Magi, mentioned only in the Gospel of Matthew, comes from tradition. The author of Matthew actually said very little about them.

For those who initially heard this story, they would have thought of a “magus” as one who had been given this title by those in lands further east, like the Babylonians (Chaldeans), Medes, or Persians. A Magus was an individual considered to be a wise man, teacher, priest, physician, seer, astrologer, interpreter of dreams, a soothsayer, or sorcerer. They were not royalty and there is no evidence to support the idea that there were three of them. Perhaps it is because they brought three gifts that tradition decided there were three, but the author of Matthew only provides the plural “Magoi.” So, why does their appearance bring such wonder and mystery even today?

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, in her book *Light of the World*, suggests that the author of Matthew was making several points about the birth of Jesus with the arrival of the Magi. Our reading today does not begin with the Magi but with King Herod. The author deliberately contrasts the king propped up by the Roman Empire who uses violence and intimidation to rule with the new king in the “line of David,” who would bring a reign of peace and love. As Levine points out, “The Evangelist brilliantly depicts the challenge to King Herod in the opening verses when the Magi...enter Jerusalem and ask, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews?’ (2:2)”

For us, on this second Sunday of Christmas, our focus is on the mysterious Magi. Levine points out that the real focus for this text was the question they asked: “Where is the newborn

king of the Jews?” The Magi were the vehicle used to raise this important question and, according to Levine, this story was used by the author to make several specific points.

1. This question denied Herod’s earthly reign and asserted that God sent a child who would usher in the reign of God.
2. The author laid the foundation for the assertion that those holding earthly authority were working in opposition to the heavenly reign of God. The servant leadership of Jesus would become the mark of authority for God’s reign.
3. The author of Matthew wanted to start the move of power from Jerusalem to the world beyond.
4. The Evangelist wants to point out that the Gospel message wasn’t meant for those in power or intellectuals, but the Good News is for all who believe and welcome God into their lives like small children.
5. Finally, the Magi open us up to a far-reaching respect. The Magi were probably priests of Zoroastrianism. Not only did they represent another perspective and belief system, but they were Gentiles. Their arrival on the scene invites us to be aware that the birth of Jesus is global Good News encompassing all types of people.

While the Magi are definitely intriguing characters in the birth narrative of Matthew, their presence invites us deeper into the story of God’s entering our world through the birth of Emmanuel. Their presence in the story reminds us that this is a radical tale of God’s active presence in our world and it is meant for all people throughout time. This message still rings true through the ages and continues to stir our imagination. Just as they came to “pay him homage,” we still come eager to praise him and bring him honor today.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

January 2, 2022

In Our Church Family:

- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Our sympathy to Vic Burgess, upon the passing of his sister Patty O'Leary
- Harold & Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Jessica Vocasek

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Greg Ogren, prayers for healing, still ill after surgeries and treatments, son of LaVonne Ogren
- Mark Carpenter, with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Lorie Chrastel, Mark Carpenter's fiancée, prayers for recovery from a stroke
- Roger Christianson, with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson
- Mother of John Swanson, prayers for health as she is ill with COVID-19
- Emily Carpenter, aunt of Carpenters & Pickels is in hospice due to Covid in May
- Gerald Deterding, prayers for healing from cancer and pneumonia, father of William Deterding

Friends:

- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, prayers for diagnosis of glioblastoma, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser
- Cedric Gibb, healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart
- Jim Bottolfsen, for stage 3 lung cancer, friend of the Vocaseks
- Carson Mousel, 13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockmeyer
- Jamin and Hailey, for the safe delivery of their baby girl, from Tony Flack
- Kristen Lanford, prayers for Sarah Sims and prayers for herself to get through this tough winter season

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE

In the Nebraska Region:

- Trinity Chapel and Rev. Brandon Proffit

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Fiona Kendall serving in Italy

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

We Three Kings of Orient Are

Words & Music: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1857

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never
over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising gladly raising,
worshiping God Most High.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
sounds through the earth and skies.

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!