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*The Rev. Kathryn Boswell, Rector*

*Warden:*

*New after Annual Meeting*

*Vestry:*

*New after Annual Meeting*

*Charlie Colbert*

*Lynn Howe*

*Karen Morgan*

*Romi Sebald*

*Helen Harris*



*St. Philip's Church*

*Rector's  
Message*



Rev. Kathryn Boswell  
Rector

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# CommonLife

Jan-Feb. 2019    Volume 21 & 22    Issue 1 & 2

## *Welcoming the weary, dedicated to discipleship*

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, when I was on my hands and knees between two pews cleaning up the salty boot-print of one of my beloved parishioners, I had an epiphany. Which was entirely appropriate, since after all, we are entering the season of Epiphany, beginning with the Feast of the Magi on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. The Magi, of course, were the strangers from the Far East who saw a bright new star in the sky and followed it all the way to the town of Bethlehem, bearing gifts for the Christ Child. Like the new star in the sky, the word “epiphany” means a flash of understanding, some sudden enlightenment – what we might call a “light bulb” moment. Aha!

My epiphany was not related to the story of the Christ Child, however. Rather, I was reminded of an event much later in his life: in fact on the very last day of his life. I remembered how Jesus, gathering his good friends for one last meal together on that night, got up from the table and scandalized every one of them by kneeling to wash their dirty feet like a slave. Peter, in particular, objected strongly. But Jesus lovingly insisted, telling Peter, “If I don’t wash your feet, you have no part of me.” Later, when he had finished and returned to the table, Jesus drove his point home. “I have given you a pattern to follow,” he told them. “Just as I, your Lord and Master, have humbly served you, so you should also serve one another.”

The Church is a funny sort of community. Unlike every other human community, our unity is not based on having the same background or ancestry or skin color or political persuasion, the same tastes in music or art or literature. We are as different as we can be, called as we are from every corner of this immense world of ours. Our belonging is based only and purely and absolutely on that One who



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**TO:**

wrapped a towel around his waist and knelt down to wash dirty feet. We are, in fact, a community of servants. We are brought together most closely when we live according to his pattern, giving up our preferences and our privileges for the honor of serving one another in humility as our Lord serves us.

The world considers this pattern that Jesus gave us the very height of foolishness. Isn’t it a stupid thing to go around considering the needs of people we barely know above our own very real needs and desires? And after all, look where He ended up – on a cross, those so-called friends of His deserting him at the last, running off in a panic on their newly-washed feet. But we know what happened next – we know that just a few days after His death and burial, He was fully alive and cooking breakfast for those same faithless friends, grilling fish for them over a charcoal fire. “Do you love me?” He asked Peter after they had eaten. “Yes, Lord, you know I love you. You know everything about me.” “Well then,” Jesus said, “Remember the pattern I gave you. Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Love one another in the same way as I have loved you.”

The Church is not like any other earthly community. It costs us nothing to belong, and yet it asks nothing less than everything of us in return. We are adopted children of the King and heirs of the Kingdom, and yet the only way to be great is to be the slave of all. That is the strange and un-earthly pattern our Lord set for us. But, as he told us, it is the one real way to live, and live abundantly.

I am honored to make the floor shiny for you when you sit in your pew next week. You are honored when you lay aside what you wanted to do, or spend what you had saved up, in service to that sister in the next pew, or that brother down the street from you, or that child on the other side of the world. If it weren’t for Jesus, none of us would be part of this strange community. But what a joy it is that we are!

With much love from your servant in Christ,  
 Kathryn+



February 2019

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Common Cents 10-Noon
3 The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  The Mass 10:00 am	4	5 10 am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	6 10:30 am Maplewood Nursing Home service Canton  Evening Study “Walk in Love” 6pm	7 Common Cents 10-2pm	8	9 Common Cents 10-Noon  10am Vestry Mtg.
10 The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany  Mass 10:00 am  Coffee Hour	11	12 10 am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	13 Women’s Guild Mtg. Noon  	14 Common Cents 10-2pm	15	16 Common Cents 10-Noon  10:00 am Daughters of the King
17 The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany  The Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour	18	19 10 am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	20	21 Common Cents 10-2pm	22	23 Common Cents 10-Noon
24 The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany Mass 10:00 am  Coffee Hour	25	26 Common Cents 10-2pm	27 Community Dinner 5-6:30pm  	28 Common Cents 10-2pm		



January 2019

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Year C Office Lectionary Year 1		1 New Year's Day Feast of the Holy Name	2 10:30 am Maplewood Nursing Home service in Canton	3	4	5
6 The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ  Mass 10:00 am  Coffee Hour	7	8 10 am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	9  Women's Guild @ noon	10 Common Cents 10-2pm	11	12 Common Cents 10-Noon  8:30-4:30pm Parish Leadership Conference Malone
13 The First Sunday after the Epiphany The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ  Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour	14	15 10am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	16  Evening Study "Walk in Love" 6pm	17 Common Cents 10-2pm	18	19 Common Cents 10-Noon  10 am Vestry  11am Daughters of the King
20 The Second Sunday after the Epiphany Mass 10:00 am	21	22 10am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	23 Community Dinner 5-6:30pm 	24 Common Cents 10-2pm	25	26 Common Cents 10-Noon
27 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany  Annual Meeting Lunch following  Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour	28	29 10am Bible Study  Common Cents 10-2pm	30	31 Common Cents 10-2pm		

A Hymn for the New Year

Another year is dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee;  
Another year of leaning  
Upon Thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting,  
Of quiet, happy rest;  
Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face;  
Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise;  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence all the days;  
Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.  
Another year is dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be  
On earth, or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee.

Christmas is past, but don't forget.....

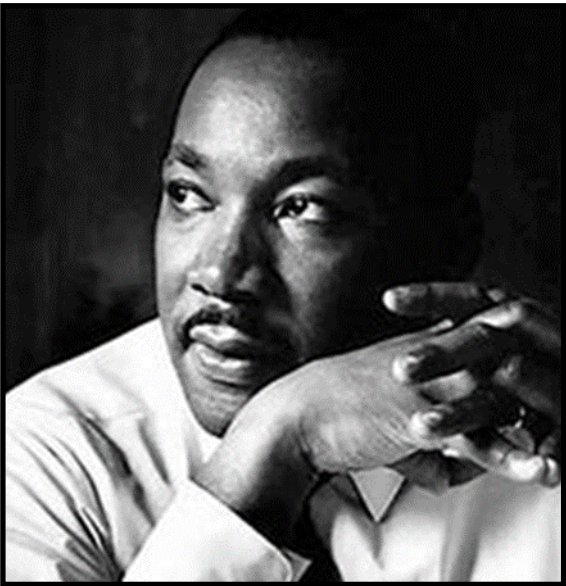
If you look for me at Christmas,  
you won't need a special star –  
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,  
I'm right there where you are.  
You may not be aware of Me  
amid the celebrations –  
You'll have to look beyond the stores  
and all the decorations.  
But if you take a moment  
from your list of things to do  
And listen to your heart, you'll find  
I'm waiting there for you.  
You're the one I want to be with,  
you're the reason that I came,  
And you'll find Me in the stillness  
as I'm whispering your name.  
Love,  
Jesus





Martin Luther King Day is 21 January 2019

An excerpt from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. 's “I have a dream” speech, delivered 28 August 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.



“...even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, *down* in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.”



Community  
Dinners  
every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday  
at St. Philip’s

Delicious, home-cooked food  
Good company  
No dishes to wash (unless you want to)  
What’s not to love?

Delicious, home-cooked food  
Good company  
No dishes to wash (unless you want to)  
What’s not to love?

January 23rd

Beef Stroganoff  
Egg noodles  
Green beans  
Dinner rolls  
Pies and cakes

February 27th

White Chili  
Cornbread  
Tossed green salad  
Brownies

<b>January Birthdays</b>	
Lizzy Bassity	January 6th
Karen Morgan	January 6th
Robert Weaver	January 11th
Charles Morgan	January 12th
Christopher Theodore	January 28th
<b>February Birthdays</b>	
Linda Dafoe	February 10th
Stacey Ledger	February 10th
Albert Layo	February 10th
Nancy Levison	February 17th
Lynn Howe	February 20th
Michael Harris	February 24th
<b>March Birthdays</b>	
Felix Levison	March 1st
Lance Rowley	March 6th

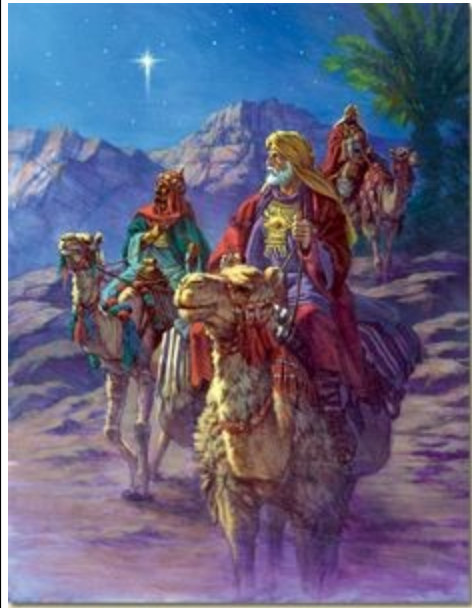
<b>February Anniversaries</b>	
Larry & Carol Cavallaro	February 1st
Scott and Linda Dafoe	February 7th
Andrew & Susan Smith	February 24th

## The Coming of the Wise Men

by Adam Hamilton, from *Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph*

I love the story of the Magi – the wise men who came from the east – in Matthew’s telling of the Christmas story. Among other things, Matthew may have been wanting us to see that Jesus was not simply the Jewish Messiah but the *world’s* savior and king.

Most likely, the Magi came from Persia. By the way, *magi* is the root of our word “magician.” These magi probably were not magicians in the way we think of that term. They were likely part of the priestly class within the Zoroastrian religion—respected court advisors, scholars, sages, devout believers in God, and scientists of a sort. They studied the stars and looked to them for signs of God’s plans and world events. They were astrologers in a time when astrologers were not simply creators of horoscopes but students of the stars. Zoroastrianism originated in Persia (modern-day Iran) possibly in the late seventh or the early sixth century before Christ.



The prophet Zoroaster was to Zoroastrianism what Moses was to Judaism. Both religions shared a belief in one good and all-powerful God, in a host of other theological ideas, and in common ethical imperatives. Yet they were as different from one another as, say, Judaism is from Islam.

This is why I find the visit of the Magi so remarkable. According to Matthew, God chose to invite a group of foreigners, priests of a different religion, to share in the joy of Jesus’ birth. And God used them to provide what would prove to be much-needed help for the Holy Family as they would soon be forced to flee Herod’s murderous paranoia, as refugees to Egypt.

In response to their sighting of the star and their deduction that a king of the Jews had been born, these wise men traveled twelve hundred miles across the ancient highways from Persia to Judea in order to see the child, bring him gifts, and pay him homage.

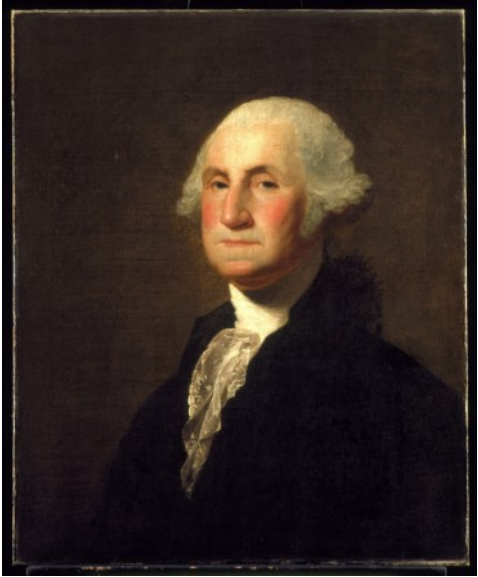
Imagine what Joseph must have been thinking when an entourage of court officials and priests from the far east showed up at his door. What must have been going through his mind as he watched the wise men, one by one, open their extravagant gifts and bow before Joseph’s infant son, hailing him as the one “born king of the Jews”?

Right here at the beginning of the gospel story, we find God doing something that really messes with our theology—he reaches out to, and uses, people of other faiths to accomplish his purposes.

I wonder if part of this story’s lesson is to teach us to treat those of other faiths the way God honored the Magi or the way the Zoroastrian priests did Joseph and Mary as they brought their gifts to the newborn King. God’s perspective on those who are not of our “tribe” may just be different from our own, and learning these lessons might be key to experiencing the “peace on earth” proclaimed by the angels in the Christmas story.

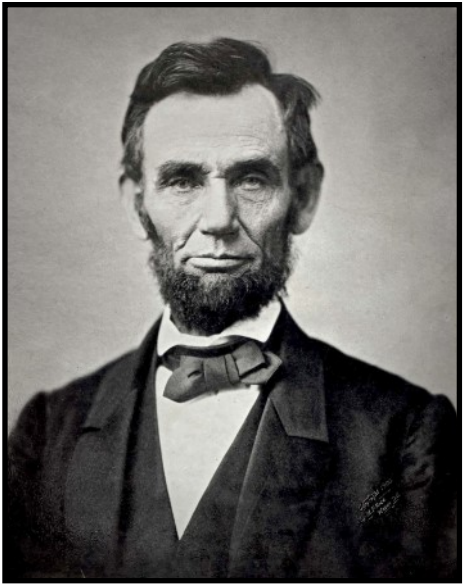


## President’s Day is 18 February 2019



“The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations And Religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges”

(From George Washington to Joshua Holmes, 2 December 1783)



“Our defense is in the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty as a heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere.  
*Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism around your own doors.*”  
(From a speech by Abraham Lincoln at Edwardsville, Illinois, 11 September 1858)



## The Great Homecoming

by the Rev. Kathryn Boswell

A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a Journey, and such a long journey:  
The way deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.  
T.S. Eliot *The Journey of the Magi*



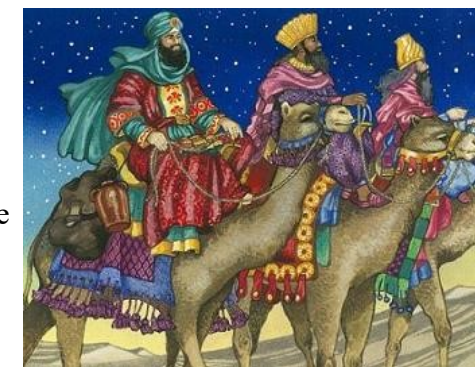
Perhaps more than any other season, Christmas draws people into story, story that captures the imagination and awakens deep longings. As members of Jesus Christ, the story of the Nativity takes hold of our hearts as well as our minds. We get teary watching the ragged, childish renderings of angel and shepherd and wise man in the Christmas Eve pageant: not only because we are charmed by mere “cuteness,” but because there is something fundamentally true and real and solid behind the glittered wings and cardboard crowns that strikes a chord in our hearts. And many of the Christmas cards that we give and receive – ranging from trite and tacky to lush and elegant – draw us into the luminous center of the story, the lamplit circle of the Holy Family in its makeshift stable/birthing center.

For that one golden and earth-shattering night, that stable or cave or whatever served as shelter to the beasts in Bethlehem at that time, was transformed –so the story goes – into a place of homecoming. Mary and Joseph, outcasts in their own hometown, made of that stable a home in their time of need, a home earthy and dung-scented, warmed by the bodies and breath of donkeys and cattle and sheep. In that place the Son of God, tiny and utterly vulnerable, first came home to live among the creatures that he loved with an eternal Love. And the purpose of the coming of the Child was to give us a home. At his birth, the angels cried out, “Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that shall be for all the people! For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” And this is the one who promised his disciples, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” The story of Christmas is the story of the Great Homecoming.

And although the world around us has done its very best to shout the story of this season with counter-narratives of glorified covetousness and sappy sentimentalism, the brilliance of the true story shines through the pinprick holes of every other story. We are not supposed to wish one another Merry Christmas; Happy Holidays must suffice. And yet the yearning theme of homecoming permeates the generic façade. Movies like “The Santa Clause” try to establish a human mythology to satisfy people’s longings, but the theme of that movie, as of so many others, is the longing for home, the crying need for a place of love and safety and belonging. The sadness of the child-protagonist moves people, because they too feel that primal need for home, for a place to belong, for a father’s love.

Even the foundation for the culture of covetousness and materialism that seems to have consumed Christmas like a media-hype amoeba has at its heart the message of homecoming. For that one day of the year people – our neighbors, our family, our friends – spend their hearts out in the tragic and fruitless attempt to make their family into the image of the family they long for, to make of their home, for that one day, a place of security, a place they belong, the place they somehow sense it is supposed to be. And when the tinsel illusion comes crashing down on December 26<sup>th</sup>, to be put out by the curb with the crumpled wrapping paper and bedraggled tree, they tuck the pang of longing away in the attic of their hearts, just as they stuff the baubles and stockings and candle-holders back into boxes for another year, waiting for another chance to find a home.

We live in a generation of orphans. There are some, like Dickens’s Artful Dodger, who have built a shell around themselves to take the place of the home they have despaired of finding. They pride themselves on their self-sufficiency; they can live by their wits; even the humanist mythology of “peace on earth and goodwill toward men” bounces off the shell with a hollow clang. They have no use for the sentimentality of that homeward pull. Their integrity lies in believing that they thrive out in the cold, that they have outgrown the need for the journey home.



For others, the longing for home is so painful that the celebration of Christmas becomes an unwelcome reawakening. The all-pervasive merchandising of the generic holiday season, which hits the stores and the media a little earlier each year (or so it seems) is the beginning of a dreaded period where the gaudy sparkle and glitter of the season is matched by an inner darkness, and the traditional proclamations of Cheer and Peace ring taunting and false, like the lingering scent of food to a starving man.

Into every story of homelessness, the old familiar Christmas story still shines with the pure light of the Star that led the Magi on their long journey west, away from all that they had known to the coming of the One who knows the way Home. Through the tired sameness of seasonal melodies the voice of the Angels still cuts through with startling clarity, heralding the Birth of the One who came to us, homeless and helpless, so that we could at last find our way to the Father.

It is perhaps the strangeness of the story that we have to share with those in the world around us for whom the old familiar narrative no longer awakens hope. And it is a very strange story, no matter how many times we tell it, the story of the King who left his home and his fortune to be born, a poor, homeless child, in the midst of his stubborn and rebellious subjects. As adopted children who once were homeless ourselves, we should let Christmas be a reminder to us to reach out to those who still face “such a long journey/ The way deep and the weather sharp.” We need to find ways to share the gift of Home with those who have written the Journey off as a hopeless fantasy. In all that we do in our celebration of Christmas, we must tell the story of the Child who came to bring us close to the heart of the Father, who made the long journey away from his home so that he could bring us home at last. +