Celebrate Your Epiphany Moments: Finding God in the Everyday

Each year on January 6, Christians celebrate Epiphany, the day that commemorates the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem. The Bible says, “The star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him” (Matthew 2:9-10, ESV).

Did you read that? When the magi saw Jesus, they fell down and worshiped Him. They brought with them precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These presents to honor the child who they recognized as a king: appointed NOT by people or family name, but by God. Once they arrived at the manger, the wise men had an Epiphany (a sudden insight into the true nature of something) when they realized they were in the presence of God.

As I prepared this short devotion I ran across this thought by St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) who noted “For by gold the power of a king is signified, by frankincense the honor of God, by myrrh the burial of the body; and accordingly they offered Him gold as King, frankincense as God, myrrh as Man.” This became my Epiphany. I have read the Matthew account for decades, but only today did I make the gold (King), frankincense (God), and myrrh (Man) connection.

A New Light
Have you ever realized that something you may have known for a long time, suddenly becomes much more meaningful than you have ever acknowledged? At that moment you had an epiphany. Here are a few thoughts from others about Epiphany…

- *There's nothing better when something comes and hits you and you think 'YES'!* (J.K. Rowling, author of Harry Potter)
- *If you look throughout human history, the central epiphany of every religious tradition always occurs in the wilderness.* (John F. Kennedy)
- *Without the quest, there can be no epiphany.* (Constantine Scaros, author)
- *Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies.* (John Milton, poet)
- *Small things start us in new ways of thinking.* (V. S. Napaul, writer)

Epiphany Moments: God in the Everyday
At this time of the year, life can get a little lonely or dreary. The Christmas trees have been taken down, lights packed away, and wrapping paper trashed. Children have played with their new toys until they do not seem new anymore and the New Year has come and gone.

But the joy of Christmas is not over! We can choose to seek and recognize the mercy of God. Continue to open your hearts for it is here you may experience those everyday epiphany moments.

Blessings and Happy New Year,

*Cynthia*
Happy New Year! What will this year hold? Looking back would you have expected 2022 to turn out the way it did? Joys, grief, surprises, disappointments- And yet we are still here- God walking beside us every step of the way.

We continue to celebrate life together at Rockfish- offering opportunities to get to know one another, to provide resources and service to the community, to celebrate life together and support one another when we need it. Lynne Hess and her Congregational Life team have created soups and casseroles that are ready to share when such a time comes. Made with love and given in care.

Lee and I plan to have small group “come to the table” events at our home - so look for sign ups. You know I love a party. Sign ups will be for 6 folks at a time. Our house is rather small and this would allow for easy conversation. Jan 23- first one// Feb 13 - second one //March 20- third one

On Jan 22 we will be having a “fair” after church where we will showcase all that is going on in the church so everyone can find their “spot” in our community. Please consider joining a committee. We have a lot of fun serving together! Great way to expand your social circle in the church.

Thursday Community Children’s choir continues each week at 530- come and see! So much fun. The energy is palpable.

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12- that we all have gifts to share! “4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work”

And speaking of gifts - wow- so much talent here! From painting to felting to cooking to wood working the talents here are amazing. Let’s take a Sunday to bring in our hobbies and share with one another what makes us happy. Look for that date too!

Can’t wait to see what this year will bring~ May the Lord continue to allow Rockfish to participate in His Holy plan. What a gift that is. Happy 2023!

*Pastor Inger*

A very special thank you for the generous Christmas bonus I received. I absolutely love ministering here and it makes me joyful to feel appreciated. Happy New Year! *Inger*
OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

To kick off 2023, Adult Sunday School begins a six-week study called “Prepare the Way for the Lord,” by Adam Hamilton, a 'sequel' to our Advent study, before we turn to a Lenten study to be announced in February. Join us at 9 on Sunday mornings in the Adult classroom downstairs.

During January, the Education Ministry Team will also be considering opportunities for growth during 2023. If you have ideas or requested topics, please email me at sluscomb5@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Luscomb, Chair
Christian Education Ministry Team

Care Bears

Thank you to all those who supported our Care Bears ministry this holiday season! Through your generosity, we were able to provide Christmas gifts to a total of 59 children at Rockfish River and Tye River elementary schools. The coordinators at the schools expressed their appreciation for our support and said that our gifts helped make for a Merry Christmas for these children.

Helping Thy Neighbor

Dana Ogilvie has been volunteering with International Neighbors in Charlottesville to help deliver food from a Charlottesville food pantry to refugees who do not have transportation to pick up food for their families. She thought some people in the congregation might be interested in volunteering. Volunteering involves going to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry (behind Albemarle High School) at 3:30 on Thursdays to pick up the food and then delivering to 1 or 2 families. It does involve some lifting of groceries. She has delivered to refugees from the Congo and Afghanistan. One family of 9 was living in an extended stay hotel. Katie Thach at International Neighbors is the volunteer coordinator. If anyone is interested in helping, they can email her at katie.thach@internationalneighbors.org

Volunteering could be once a month or even as a substitute helper. You can join Dana as an assistant one Thursday to see what it involves.

Feel free to contact Dana at aftonogilvie@yahoo.com

Mark your calendars for our annual congregational meeting 1/22/23 following the 10:00 service to vote on Inger's terms of call (salary and benefits), a report from the treasurers regarding the Session approved 2023 budget, and a report from Sue Fulton regarding the annual average attendance.
Music Ministry Announcement

Congratulations and thank you! We met and exceeded our 'Give-a-Chime' campaign goal of $3,345.00. I am pleased to report that 52 donors gave $4,525.00. This will enable us to purchase:

- 3 octave set of chimes
- 24 notebook music stands (adults and children)
- foam pads and covers for chime tables
- 2 collections of hymns (selections easy to difficult)

The remaining funds will be placed in an account that will continue to support the hand chime music ministry.

Once the chimes and supplies arrive, we will host a chime-party to introduce our congregation to ringing and plan our spring music ministry.

Exciting times…

Mission Ministry

Head Start Christmas Party (the first in two years) was held on 4 Dec. and Santa made a very popular appearance! Twenty-eight children plus their parents attended. There were games, refreshments, and gifts.

Under the leadership of Wendy Culberson, the Care Bear Program was very successful, and 59 children received Christmas gifts. The congregation purchased or donated money for all these gifts and a surplus is now available for the 2023 program. Thanks to all who contributed!

CEDEPCA, an organization of the Presbyterian Church, will sponsor an adult mission trip to Guatemala in April and our congregation is invited to participate. There are flyers in the Narthex offering more information.

We are also seeking more members for our group. If interested in assisting, please attend our next meeting at 4 PM on 9 January or contact Bill Iverson.
Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Thankful Session Elders had devotions and Inger opened the meeting in prayer. Prayers were asked for Lizelle Jacobs on the passing of Magda Brink.

CLERK’S REPORT:
Approve minutes of Stated Meeting 11/15/22.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE: Elder Mac Lumpkin presented a positive Stewardship Committee Report. He also brought the following amended motion: The Stewardship Committee recommends that Session approve and adopt the 2023 budget with one additional $900 for dental insurance for Rev. Manchester. Session approved this.

MINISTRY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS/MOTIONS:

- Elder Kate Humphrey Chambers (Worship Ministry Team) brought a motion to revert to one service on 1/22/23 to have our annual congregational meeting to vote on Rev. Inger Manchester’s terms of call, hear a report from the treasurers regarding the Session approved 2023 budget and hear from the Clerk of Session regarding weekly annual average attendance. Session approved this. She also reported that she is stepping down as chair of the Worship Ministry Team to care for elderly parents but will remain as Session Liaison. Elder Mary Hopkins will serve as the new Chair.
- Elder Bill Iverson (Mission Ministry Team) reported (1) RPC delivered 30 Thanksgiving food baskets that fed 104 people, (2) RPC provided Christmas gifts to 59 children at the two elementary schools in Nelson County through our Care Bear program. Hats and mittens created by Anna Walker Scott were also included, (3) Ann Mische who organized the successful Head Start Christmas Party on 12/4/22 that was attended by 28 children, and (4) Rick Winter who helped organize Christmas Food baskets for 10 Wood Ministry clients.
- Elder Ken Engebretson (Facilities Management Team) reported that four batteries supplying backup power to the fire alarm system were replaced after the ‘low battery’ alert buzzed during worship in early December.

CELEBRATION AND GRATITUDE:
We give thanks for:
- the busy Advent season we have all enjoyed. Sermons have been very thoughtful and inspiring and the music was glorious. Praising God through music enhanced our worship.
- the families who lit the Advent wreath with their children.
- the generosity of RPC in funding the Give-A-Chime campaign.
- Bob Clemenson (wife Barbara) who is joyfully home from being at UVa Hospital receiving 2 stents in one major artery. (Sally Bryant)
- the beautiful life of Magda Brink who recently passed. Our prayers are with Lizelle Jacobs and all who knew and loved Magda.
- the generosity of RPC to host the December Master Gardener gathering.

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 6:30 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting: Tuesday, 1/17/23 at 7:00 PM, Zoom or Fellowship Hall. Elder Bill Iverson will have Devotions and Opening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fulton, Clerk
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