

## *Epiphany Sunday* January 5, 2025

The Epiphany (Manifestation) of the Lord, an even more ancient celebration among Christians than Christmas, originally focused on the nativity, incarnation, and baptism of Christ. (from the UM Book of Worship #295)

Prelude Laurie Knapp  
*(As the Prelude begins, prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)*

Greetings, Announcements & Prayer

\*Call To Worship  
Light the candle; hitch up the star.  
**Welcome your neighbor. Embrace the stranger.**  
Move from a whisper to a shout.  
**Spread the Good News around.**  
From mountaintop to sandy shore,  
**Jesus Christ is the Light of the World!**

\*Opening Hymn TFWS 2236  
*“Gather Us In”*

\*Opening Prayer  
**Everlasting God, the radiance of faithful souls,**  
**You brought the nations to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the nations; through him who is the true light and the bright and morning star, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.**

\*Psalter Reading 795-796  
Psalm 72:1-17 (*Response 1*)

\*Affirmation of Faith 881  
*“The Apostles’ Creed”*

\*Gloria Patri 70  
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Passing of the Peace: *Let us greet one another with words of love and peace.*

“Let the Children Come!”  
*(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children’s Church.)*

Anthem Choir  
*“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”*

Scripture Lessons Page 654 (O.T.)  
Pages 7-8 (N.T.)  
Isaiah 60:1-6  
Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon Tom Geddens  
*“Disturbing the Peace”*

\*Hymn of Invitation 431  
*“Let There Be Peace on Earth”*

Epiphany Prayer 255  
The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**  
**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings  
Offertory Laurie Knapp  
\*Doxology 95

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*Closing Hymn 254  
*“We Three Kings”*

\*Dismissal With Benediction  
\*Benediction Response Choir  
*“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”*

\*Please Stand As You Are Able

### *Leading in Worship Today*

Guest Speaker: *Tom Geddens*                      AV Director: *Marie Stiles*  
Pianist: *Laurie Knapp*                              AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*  
Time Together: *Jack Stevens; Pam Turner*

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME** in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

*A Gift to Trinity is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of George L. Hardee, by his family.*

**“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...**

Hilda Edwards Patsy Shuler Marilyn Lloyd Tom Lloyd Ruth Frady Libby Strickland  
Kathy Aiello Diane Muszynski Latson Lewis English Pearcy Ray Frady Hannah Glanz  
Kaye Floyd

**Shut-Ins:** Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor

**Family and Friends:** **Kathleen Varnadore** (*Ted & Ruth Frady's neighbor*); **Paul Frenzel** (*friend of Chris Derrick*); **Sissy Henry** (*former member of Trinity*); **Sean & Tucker Smith** (*cousins of Darlene Kelley*); **Sonny Hardee** (*brother of Lynn Martin*); **Colby Martin** (*son of Donna Muszynski*); **Sonya & Wayne Dooley** (*daughter and son-in-law of Joyce Robinson*); **Lynne Powell** (*friend of the Ballentines and Branhams*); **Bobby Johnson** (*friend of Billy Pearson*); **Rev. Donna Eidson** (*former pastor of Trinity*); **Ima Thibodeaux** (*friend of Christopher McCroskey*); **Keith Jordan** (*nephew of John & Kay Jordan*); **Deanne Summer** (*partner of Martha Cooke*); **Ann Cultum** (*friend of Bob Strickland*); **Malcolm Skipper** (*grandfather of Matthew Skipper*); **Bryan Collard** (*brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis*); **Charlyn McNeill, Michael McNeill** (*sister & brother of Mary Sue Lewis*); **Missy Abrams** (*stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams*); **Mary Davis** (*daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland*); **Chuck Hardee** (*cousin of Lynn Martin*); **Bruce Beatty, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd** (*friends of Lynn Martin*); **Pearl Geddens** (*mother of Tom Geddens*); **Ross Deal** (*grandson of Mary Kamoroff*); **Nancy Wilson** (*friend of Jeanette Hornsby*); **David Turner** (*brother of Pam Turner*); **Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon** (*friends of Tommy Gleaton*); **Ron & Janet Walker** (*friends of Tommy & Chris Gleaton*); **Merit Takach** (*friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson*); **James Boggs** (*father of Claire Boggs*); **Bill Areheart** (*friend of Bonnie Ramsey*); **Robert Bradley** (*Business Associate of Simon Ross*); **Monnie Tiller** (*friend of Chris Derrick*); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (*stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey*); **Haidee Baehr** (*friends of Ruth Frady*); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (*cousins of Gale Frady*); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (*friends of Gale Frady*); **Janet Beck** (*friend of Jo Ann Heiting*); **Adam Lavender** (*son of Phil Lavender*)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

In-Person Attendance 12/29 SS: 8 Worship: 22

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 12/29 \$ 922.50

**OUR SERVICE ...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

01/06 Exercise Class Starts Back, 10:30 a.m.  
01/08 T.a.G., 7 p.m.  
01/09 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.  
01/10 Office Closed  
01/11 FH Reserved

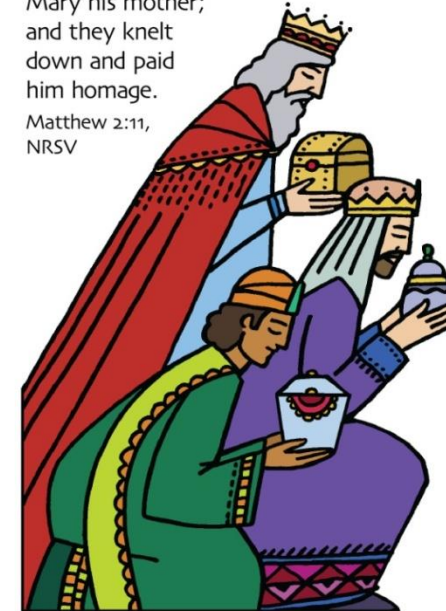


ion  
ley  
y  
Elrod

Jesus Christ

Empire and

On entering the house,  
they saw the child with  
Mary his mother;  
and they knelt  
down and paid  
him homage.  
Matthew 2:11,  
NRSV



1201 Mohawk Drive  
West Columbia, SC 29169  
Telephone: 803.794.7777  
E-mail: [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com)  
Website: [www.trinityumcwc.org](http://www.trinityumcwc.org)

## “Disturbing the Peace”

By Tom Geddens

(The Gospel Lesson is Matthew 2: 1-12)

This is the Word of God for the people of God! Let us pray: Father God, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

It has been pointed out from this pulpit many times before that although nearly all of our artwork associated with Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ- the paintings, the Christmas cards, the Nativity scenes, and the movies, both on TV and on the big screen- depict three magi visiting the Child Jesus, Matthew never tells us just how many magi there were. The [enduringword.com](http://enduringword.com) is a web site that I love to consult when trying to interpret Scripture. They theorized that it was probably, as they put it, “a great company” of magi who were seeking the newborn King of the Jews.

But there is one particular verse out of the twelve that I just read that I wish to focus on this morning. Back before Christmas, in our Sunday School class, Dan Greshel, who always does such an amazing job every year of writing the narrative for the Choir’s always-superb Christmas Cantata, was telling us that each year that he sits down to write the narrative and he reads the two Nativity Stories given to us in the Gospels, that he discovers something new in the Nativity Story.

I experienced that myself some time ago when I re-read Matthew 2: 3, which describes Herod’s reaction after the magi announced that Christ had been born: “When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.”

Now, I don’t know how many times I had read that before and simply thought, “Oh, yes: Herod did not like that.” And then one day, Matthew’s line, “and all Jerusalem with him,” seemed to strike me between the eyes! It’s funny how God’s Living Word can do that to you.

I thought, “Surely Matthew is just using hyperbole. That’s a writer’s privilege so long as he doesn’t get carried away!” I thought to myself that surely Matthew did not mean that every single person in Jerusalem, or even a majority, was upset to hear that the Messiah had been born. After all, these same Jewish people had been eagerly anticipating the Messiah’s coming. Now that they hear that He is here, they’re upset? That didn’t make sense to me. Then I wondered if by “all of Jerusalem,” Matthew meant just those in Herod’s palace. You know: His servants, his sycophants, his inner circle. Their lives depended on keeping Herod happy, so that would make sense.

Some of the commentary that I have read regarding that verse, however, suggests that it could very well have been that everyone in Jerusalem was upset once they heard that their king was troubled to hear that Jesus had been born. After all, Herod the Great had a not-so-great reputation. He had a nasty reputation. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that Herod was often paranoid about his throne being usurped. He had those whom he suspected executed, including, incredibly enough, three of his own sons. So it is quite possible that all of Jerusalem was bracing themselves when they heard that Herod was disturbed. They knew that if Herod was upset, the blood would begin to flow.

I find it fitting that just the news of Jesus’ birth had caused such a great commotion. We call Jesus “the Prince of Peace,” but so often He was disturbing the peace, even when He was just an innocent Child! Much later as an adult, when Jesus healed people on the Sabbath, the priests got angry at Him. “You can’t heal on the Sabbath!” they said. But Jesus set them straight by reminding them that the Sabbath was created for everyday people, and not everyday people for the Sabbath. He was disturbing the peace. When our Lord and Savior dined with people who were ostracized from polite society, the religious leaders asked His disciples, “Why does your Rabbi dine with sinners?” Jesus pointed out that it was not the healthy who need a physician but the sick. Again, Jesus was disturbing the peace. And when Jesus chased the moneychangers out of the Temple, the Prince of Peace was once again disturbing the peace.

Jesus came preaching a message of love and redemption. He spread God's peace. But the peace that He disturbed was not God's peace, but the shallow peace enjoyed by the Establishment. It was the peace of those who had hardened their hearts against Him. In this respect, not much has changed since the First Century A.D. This should not surprise us. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 10: 22: "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." And later, during the Last Supper, in John 15: 18, He told them, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you."

Yes, Jesus caused quite a commotion when He was born, and He causes a commotion still nearly 2,000 years after His crucifixion. Was He truly 100% Man and 100% God? Or was He only 100% man? Was He the Son of God? Did He truly die for all of our sins? Was He resurrected? And is He the only path to God?

Towards the end of today's Gospel reading, Matthew tells us in Matthew 2: 11, that after the magi found the Child Jesus with His family and before they presented their gifts to Him, they "fell down and worshipped Him." I am reminded of what New Testament scholar and educator John Gresham Machen wrote in his 1923 book, "Christianity and Liberalism." Mr. Machen pointed out that it is not enough to look to Jesus as the example of our faith, but more importantly, as the object of our faith. And as longtime pastor Dr. David Jeremiah pointed out in an interview that I watched: "Jesus is the bridge between us and God. There is no option B."

As we enter the New Year, we can look forward to new joys and new blessings gracing our lives. But as with all the years before, the New Year will also bring its share of challenges and sorrows to us all. But by putting our trust in God and our faith in His Only Begotten Son Jesus, we can gain strength when we feel weak, courage when we are afraid, wisdom when we are confused, patience when we get frustrated, and we can react with kindness when we are tempted by the Devil to lash out. God and His Son Jesus bless us with hope and perseverance during the tough times. Remembering that we serve a risen Savior will raise us up, too, when the world threatens to hold us down.

I want to finish this sermon with two quotes. Regarding Jesus disturbing the peace of those who do not believe in Him, I want to read what longtime pastor and author Timothy Keller posted on his Twitter account before he went on to be with the Lord: "If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that He said; if He didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what He said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like His teaching but whether or not He rose from the dead."

And then the last quote is taken from what Steven McNeal wrote for the "Upper Room" this past Christmas. I think that he brilliantly sums up the real peace, God's peace, that Jesus gives you when you believe in Him. Mr. McNeal wrote, "During Christmas we can get so caught up in looking for the perfect gift for others that we miss the perfect gift given to us by God. Salvation through Jesus means that we are eternally loved by God. From this gift of love, we are inspired to love one another. Such a gift is free for all to take, and once accepted, it is life-changing."

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.