

The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector: Epiphany and Evangelism

The Epiphany of our Lord to the Gentiles, it could be said, began with the recognition of a star in the East by the wise men who came on a journey to Jerusalem to enquire where Jesus, the King of the Jews, had been born (*St. Matthew 2:1-2*). King Herod and all the leaders and people of Jerusalem were shaken by the news that a king of the Jews had just been born. This was a surprise event to King Herod who tried to eradicate every possible competitor and heir to the kingdom of which he was the current ruler by permission of the Roman Empire. His plan was to kill the King of the Jews as soon as possible. Therefore, he gathered all the chief priests and scribes of Israel to find out from them where the Christ (Messiah) was prophesied to be born. The answer they gave

was Bethlehem, as prophesied in *Micah 5:2*. King Herod told the wise men to find the Child and return to inform him so that he, too, might go and worship Him (*St. Matthew 2:8*). But this declared intention was no doubt a pretended one, for he really had a murderous purpose to kill the Lord Jesus Christ. After



the wise men, warned by an angel, had returned home another way and the holy family had fled to Egypt because of an angelic warning to Joseph in a dream (*St. Matthew 2:12-17*). King Herod ordered the massacre of innocent children two years old and under. The manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles and to the world came at a very high

cost. Herod's attempt to murder Christ soon after His birth is symbolically alluded to in *Revelation 12:4* and predicted in *Jeremiah 31:15*.

We can learn a number of important truths from the Epiphany as it is described in *St. Matthew 2*. Firstly, God the Father, through the Spirit, draws whom He wills to worship and come to know His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He drew the Magi through their observance of this magnificent star in the East, the star associated with Christ's birth. He led them to make the long journey from their distant home to Jerusalem and Bethlehem in Judea. Through this brilliant star, He led them to the exact place where our Lord Jesus lay. Let us, too, allow ourselves to be drawn by God's Spirit into a deeper worship, a more intimate meeting with the Lord Jesus

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Epiphany and Evangelism

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Christ, to be empowered by Him for mission and ministry to others.

From the time that our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission to His apostles (*St. Matthew 28:18-20*), the mission of bearing witness to Christ among all nations was officially inaugurated. The Festival of the Epiphany has enormous significance for all Christians today. Through the Bible, in our worship, in the prayers and readings of our Prayer Book, and in the offering of our lives to God, there is a sacred meeting between God and all of us. This meeting takes place by means of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the perfect offering for our sins. Sunday by Sunday, day by day, this meeting with God is the vehicle of the Epiphany in our lives as Christ reveals His will, infuses His grace into us, roots us more firmly in the love of God, and instills in us a profound awareness of that love.

As bearers of the Gospel, as witnesses to Christ, we both experience the transforming power of Christ's Epiphany to the world and proclaim that Epiphany by our thoughts, words, and deeds to the world. As we practice our proclamation and exemplify in our lives the call and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, so we must be aware of the different

ways in which we can communicate the Epiphany of Christ to others.

The first and most important way is through loving God with all our being, loving our neighbor, and loving our fellow-Christian as Christ loves each one of us. As this love is showed in diverse ways in each Christian's life, it becomes like the star which the Magi followed from the East and guided them to where the Lord Jesus lay. This guiding star of the love of Christ in our lives can and will lead others to find the Lord Jesus Christ and bring Him all their worship.

A second way of sharing the Epiphany of Christ with others is by speaking the word of God from the Bible to them. How many a time I have been refreshed and re-directed through Scripture verses that people have shared with me! The Bible as God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has the power to transform people's lives and bring them a revelation of God, an epiphany. These two ways, showing His love and speaking the Word, are like the offering of gold to the Lord Jesus.

A third way of imparting the presence of God is through praying for and with people with whom we come in contact. Prayer in this sense opens a person to the life-giving grace and power of God so that his life can change

for the better and he can come to know God. This prayer is like the frankincense offering, akin to the incense offering of ancient Israel.

A fourth way of reaching out to others with the grace and the Gospel of Christ is to be interested in them, to deny ourselves for the sake of the others in whose salvation we wish to be instrumental. How can we best serve people who do not yet know Christ? Perhaps we should fast for their salvation or deny ourselves some pleasure in our lives for their sake. This would be like offering to Christ the myrrh of self-denial. This self-denial might entail reaching out across boundaries that we have never crossed—barriers of culture, language, gender, race, or class.

What we must be sure of is this: If our lives do not reflect the Lord Jesus Christ's love in action, our witness to Him is impaired and less effective, for it is by our love for one another, that we are known to be Christ's disciples (*St. John 13:35*).

How does Christ want you to use the treasures of grace He has given you to bring others to know Him and to worship Him?

— *The Reverend Christopher Parrish*

Christ for the World We Sing!

Christ for the world we sing!
The world to Christ we bring,
 With loving zeal;
The poor and them that mourn,
 The faint and overborne,
 Sin sick and sorrow worn,
 Whom Christ doth heal.

Christ for the world we sing!
The world to Christ we bring,
 With fervent prayer;
 The wayward and the lost,
 By restless passions tossed,
 Redeemed at countless cost,
 From dark despair.

Christ for the world we sing!
The world to Christ we bring,
 With one accord;
 With us the work to share,
 With us reproach to dare,
 With us the cross to bear,
 For Christ our Lord.

Christ for the world we sing!
The world to Christ we bring,
 With joyful song;
The newborn souls, whose days,
 Reclaimed from error's ways,
 Inspired with hope and praise,
 To Christ belong.



– *Samuel Wolcott*, 1869

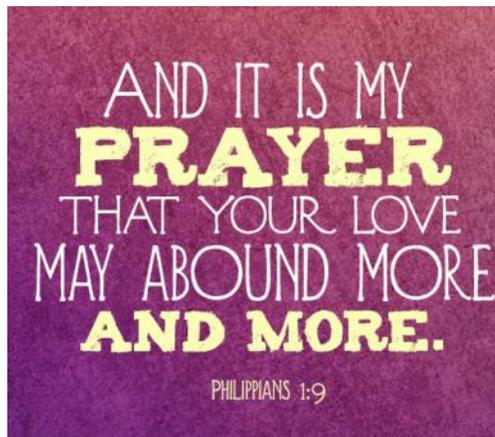
Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop
Foley Beach;
Bishop
Bill Ilgenfritz;
Canon
Michael Penfield,
our Vicar-General;
Father Chris Parrish;
Deacon Peter Vogel; and
Deacon Linda Bracken;
also all those who serve
as Thy ministers in gov-
erning our nation and
state, particularly:
President Donald Trump;
and
Governor Jerry Brown;
as well as all those who
are any ways afflicted, or
distressed, in mind, body,
or estate; especially those

for whom our prayers are
desired:

the soldiers, sailors,
marines, airmen,
police officers,
firefighters, and pilots
who protect us every day;
our persecuted Christian
brothers and sisters
throughout the world;
all refugees;
Scott Guinn;
Meghan;
Tony Brown;
Kim Vogel;
Jim and Edna Davis;



Estelle Wilson;
Julia McNeely;
Joya de Rossett;
Sharon De Souza;
Debbie;
Scott;
Brittany;
Chuck;
Don Cottam;
James and Tanya Theiler;
Christian McKagan
and his parents;
Lois Martins;
Dale Quinn;
Lisa;

Ben;
Marion;
Max;
Bishop Richard Boyce;
Dorian;
Kate Ward;
Kendra, Dan,
Emmalyn, and Dayna
Pack;
Ernst Hernandez;
Ray and Elodia
Boreham;
Jan Martins;
Louanne Norman;
Reagan and
the Stanko family;
Elizabeth Ann and
her husband;
Stephen;
safety on the highways
for all who commute,
especially during
rush hour;
the life and
continuing longevity
of
St. Luke's
Chapel in the Hills;
and for all those
who are in our hearts,

that it may please Thee to
comfort and relieve them,
according to their several
necessities; giving them
patience under their suf-
ferings, and a happy issue
out of all their afflictions.
And this we beg for Jesus
Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer
list was current as of
December 31st.
Please contact Father
Parrish to make cor-
rections.

First Things First

John the Baptist was very popular. He was Israel's first prophet in 300 years, and people flocked to hear him. He lived in the desert wilderness, a place where there were many snakes but few people, a place where you could die if you got lost between waterholes, and still the people came. They came from Jerusalem, the big city, a place where there was lots of excitement and plenty of watering holes. They came in droves to hear John preach. "Repent!" he cried. "Be baptized for the forgiveness of sins!" And they repented! They were baptized, and they returned to the city feeling clean and pure—sometimes for the first time in many years.

But then King Herod killed John. Herod didn't want to kill John, because he respected John. But John criticized Herod for taking his brother's wife, and Herod's wife hated John. She and her daughter conspired to trick Herod. After the daughter performed a strip tease for his dinner guests, Herod said, "Anything you want! Up to half my kingdom!" And the daughter said, "I want John's head on a platter!" Herod was trapped. He didn't want to kill John, but he also didn't want to back down in front of his guests and so he served up John's head on a platter.

But still, John was popular, even after his death. Twenty or thirty years later, in the book of *Acts*, Paul came across disciples of John who had never even heard of Jesus. There were pockets of John's disciples around for decades. That just shows you how popular John was, even after his death.

But in life, John tried to put himself in the right place with regard to Jesus. *St. John 1:8* says of John that "He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the Light."

When the priests and the Levites asked John who he was, he told them who he wasn't. He said, "I am not the Christ." Obviously, somebody thought that he was the Messiah, and he was trying to nip that idea dead in the bud. "Who are you?" "I am **not** the Christ! **Not!** Did you get that? **Not** the Messiah!"

Finally, they asked him who he was. He answered, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" That's my job! That's my mission! That's my purpose in life! The Lord is coming, and my job is to get people ready for Him!

What John did to prepare people for Jesus was to preach and to baptize. He called people to repent, to confess their sins, and to be baptized. When Jesus came, He would

add to what John had done. Jesus would add the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then things would really happen! Jesus, helped by Spirit-gifted people, would change the world.

It occurred to me as I read this story that we, the Church need to be doing exactly what John was doing. We need to be testifying to the Light, pointing to Jesus, making sure that people see Jesus. We need to make straight the way of the



"Behold!
The Lamb
of God
who takes
away
the sin
of the
world!"

John 1:29

Lord. We need to prepare people to know Jesus. We need to call people to repent, to be baptized, and to confess their sins. We do lots of things as a church, but these are what educators would call our core curriculum: testifying to the Light; pointing to Jesus; making straight the way of the Lord; and calling people to repent, to confess, and to be baptized. That's our

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First Things First

mission.

We, the Church writ large, are always tempted to forget that. We are tempted to get involved with other things and to push Jesus off to the side. We are tempted to put second things first and first things second, because the Church's secondary things are also important: feeding the hungry, helping the downtrodden, and promoting harmony among all people is important, and the Church does a lot of that. As *St. James 2:26* reminds us, "Faith without works is dead." But works are our secondary task. Our first task is to witness to Christ through word and sacrament.

Sometimes we, the Church, forget that our first task is to witness to Christ. When that happens, the Church starts to die. When the Church becomes primarily a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, a counseling center, an AIDS shelter, a place to meet nice people and eat good food for fellowship, a concert hall, a rummage sale, or anything other than a witness to Christ, it starts to die. Our first task is to witness to Christ. When we fail to do that, Christ lets us wither on the vine.

In the last few decades, mainline churches have lost millions of members. The nation's population has grown—church attendance has grown— but mainline

churches have shrunk. People wonder why. A few years ago, C. Kirk Hadaway and David A. Roozen did a careful study of growing and declining churches. Listen to what they have to say:

To grow and to continue growing, it is necessary for each mainstream church to become a vital religious institution, vibrant with the presence of God. It must develop a clear religious identity, a compelling religious purpose, and a coherent sense of direction that arises from that purpose"

— *Rerouting the Protestant Mainstream: Sources of Growth and Opportunities for Change*, page 86

If I may be so bold as to put their conclusion in different words, mainline churches have declined over the past few decades because we took our eye off the ball. We need to recover our sense of mission, and our mission is to witness to Christ. The primary way that we do that is through word and sacrament— through preaching, Eucharist, and baptism.

Now here's the tricky part. One of the ways that we witness to Christ is to meet the needs of vulner-

able people— to feed the hungry, house the homeless, heal the sick, and build schools in places that need them. When we do those things, we show forth Christ's love and thus bear witness to Christ. Christ calls us to do those things, and the Church has always done them. We often do them well. We must continue to do them. They are important.

But we must always remember that our first task is to witness to Christ through word and sacrament— through preaching, Eucharist, and baptism. If we genuinely bear witness to Christ through word and sacrament, Christ will bless us and will make it possible for us to do the other things as well. If we fail to witness to Christ through word and sacrament, we will die.

When I was thinking about this, the phrase "bright morning star" came to mind. I knew somehow that it was speaking of Jesus as the brightest star in the heavens. I looked up "bright morning star," and found that it comes from the book of *Revelation*. Jesus says, "I am the root and the offspring of David; the Bright and Morning Star." (*Revelation 22:16*).

I had never understood this reference to Jesus as the bright morning star until recently, in part because I am neither an outdoorsman nor a

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First Things First

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morning person and had never really seen the bright morning star. In the past year, though, I've been forced to get up and get out of the house at zero-dark-thirty in order to get a workout completed before my first meetings of the day. The place I park at the gym faces east, so I see the bright morning star arise. It is, of course, not really a star but the planet Venus. No matter the name, the bright morning star dominates the eastern sky. While the stars are tiny flecks of light, the morning star is like the landing light of a great airliner, a bright, megawatt lamp that shines as brightly as all the other stars put together. It is a brilliant diamond on a black field, surrounded by flecks of diamond dust.

Jesus says, "I am...the Bright and Morning star." He is the brightest light in the sky. He is the center of everything that we do as the Church. If we turn our backs on Jesus, our sky grows dark. If we turn our backs on Him, it matters not what other good things we do. We must keep ourselves and the Church focused on Christ if we are to succeed in our mission, because witnessing to Christ through word and sacrament **is** our mission.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about all the things that we worry about— what we

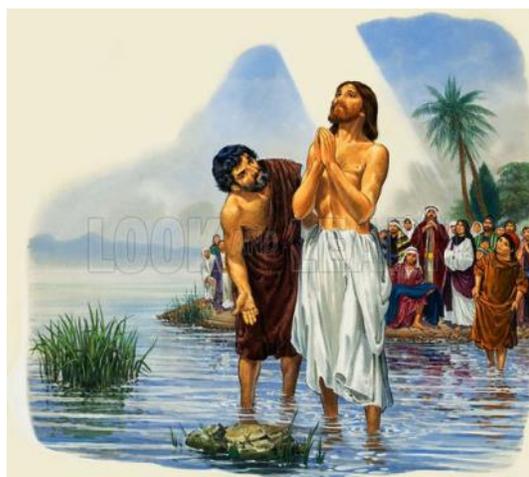
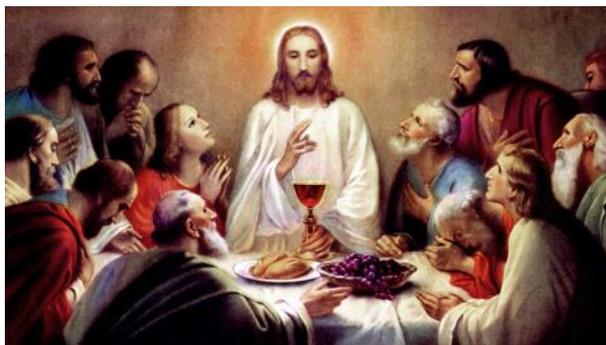
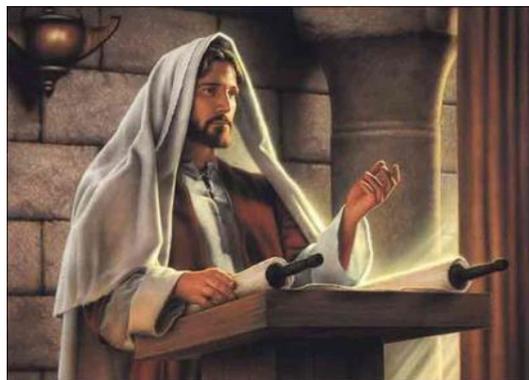
will eat or what we will drink or what we will wear. Then He talks about God providing all these things, even for the birds of the air— and He assures us that we are more important to God than the birds. He tells us not to worry, and concludes by saying:

"But seek first God's Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well."

St. Matthew 6:33

In the Church, we sometimes worry about a thousand things, all the way from feeding the hungry down to the color of the carpet or whether the berry garlands are evenly swagged or the coffee and tea are ready by the time we get downstairs! We are always tempted to put second things first and first things second, to be distracted by little things so that we forget the big ones. Let us, for the sake of Christ's kingdom, keep focused on the big thing— our witness to Christ through word and sacrament— trusting that God will then make it possible for us to do everything else He wants us to do.

— *The Reverend Mr.
Peter Vogel*



A Prayer and a Resolution for the New Year

Those of you who know me well know that I usually select a different translation of the Bible each year. For 2018, I am reading the *New King James Version Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, and I will be happy to report on what I have learned from it at a later date. The prayer below is from parts of the New International Version's translation of *Psalms 119*. It can be used any time but seems appropriate for the upcoming year.

May Your unfailing love come to us, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your promise.

Make us friends to all who fear You, to all who follow Your precepts.

Let law from Your mouth be more precious to us than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

Keep our feet from

every evil path so that we might obey Your word.

Be our refuge and our shield; let us put all our hope in Your Word.

May we be Your servants; give us discernment that we may understand Your statutes.

Turn to us and have mercy on us, as You always do to those who love Your Name.

Direct our footsteps according to Your Word; let no sin rule over us.

Grant us the great peace of those who love Your law, and let nothing make us stumble.

This we earnestly and faithfully pray in Jesus Christ's holy Name. Amen.

I am not so good at making New Year's resolutions, but the Word of God truly is active and living. This passage (also from the New International Version) even con-

tains a list of very excellent spiritual resolves!

...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II St. Peter 1:5-8

May God bless us, every one, as we dedicate ourselves to His worship and service this new year and evermore!

– Kim Vogel



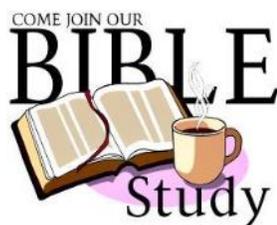
Parish Postings

There will be a Work Party at the Chapel on Saturday, January 6th, beginning at 11:00 AM. We will be tidying away the Christmas decorations and doing other necessary tasks. Please join us—many hands make light work!



CHURCH WORKDAY

Bible Study will resume on Sunday, January 7th. Class begins at 9:15 AM, and the topic will be *Zechariah 8*. All are welcome!



The Vestry will meet on Sunday, January 7th, immediately following the worship service.



The following is a notice from Father Parrish:

Dear Peter, Churchwardens and Vestry,

I write to let you know that while continuing to serve as your rector, I shall also serve as a supply priest to St. Paul's Anglican Church, Los Altos, on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays of the month, beginning January 2018. I shall celebrate Holy Communion for them on these Sundays at 10:30 AM. On January 14th, a 2nd Sunday, a Lay Reader will conduct Morning Prayer and read one of my sermons during the 10:00 AM service. I shall return in time to conduct Holy Communion at 12:00 PM.

Bishop Ron Johnson, the rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church, passed away just before Thanksgiving, and I have been asked to help out while they search for a new rector.

With every blessing,
Chris Parrish+

Please note: After January 7th, the Healing Service will move to the 4th Sunday Holy Communion service at noon.



Our Vestry has selected Sunday, February 11th, as the date of our Annual Parrish Meeting. There will be only one worship service: Holy Communion at 10:00 AM.

The Annual Parish Meeting requires that at least a quorum of the church membership be present to hear various business reports, consider the 2018 budget, and elect Vestry members. Please join us!



As February 11th is also Quinquagesima Sunday, the parish will have its annual Pancake Luncheon in conjunction with the Annual Parish Meeting. (Please look for a sign-up sheet.)



In this new year, please prayerfully consider:

- Offering altar flowers.
- Increasing your weekly offering.
- Joining one of our ministries.
- Contributing to this newsletter.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 6th

Work Party
11:00 AM

Sunday, January 7th

The First Sunday after Epiphany

Bible Study: Zechariah 8
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Vestry Meeting
immediately following the worship service

Sunday, January 14th

The Second Sunday after Epiphany

Bible Study: Zechariah 9
9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
noon

Sunday, January 21st

The Third Sunday after Epiphany

Bible Study: Zechariah 10
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Sunday, January 28th

Septuagesima

Bible Study: Zechariah 11
9:15 AM

Office of Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
with Healing Service
noon

Sunday, February 4th

Sexagesima

Bible Study: Zechariah 12
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM





The Hillside Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF
ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS
ANGLICAN CHURCH

A PARISH OF
THE CONVOCATION OF THE WEST,
PART OF THE
MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF
ALL SAINTS IN
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

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«AddressBlock»

Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

*"A place
where the Bible is taught."*



*Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.*

First Sunday of each month
Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month
Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Please note that both services on Feast Days occurring on these Sundays will be Holy Communion.

Third and fifth Sunday each month and Feast Days
Holy Communion
10:00 AM