



LIME LIGHT

WHAT'S CENTER STAGE AT LIMESTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • GAFFNEY, SC

JANUARY 5, 2023



Photo: December 21, 2020/plm

The Star of Bethlehem

What was it? In the conversation in December on art and the nativity, we looked at Giotto's comet as the star that guided the magi (detail below), but the truth is that no one is certain about what the star was. In addition to a comet, some have proposed that the star was a supernova or a meteor or even a conjunction of planets, like that in December 2020 (top picture).



The Great Conjunction, as it was known, occurred on December 21, 2020. In the evening sky, Jupiter and Saturn appeared so close together that they almost looked like a single star. Computer

software easily allows us to rewind the motion of the planets. Astronomers know that in the year 7 BCE Jupiter and Saturn had three conjunctions in a relatively brief period of time. Then, on August 12, 3 BCE, Jupiter and Venus would have been as close together as Jupiter and Saturn were in 2020 (just 1/10th of a degree apart...about 1/5 the diameter of the Moon). The two planets would have danced around each other in the sky for most of the next year. In June 2 BCE, they would have appeared to merge into a single star.

We may never know exactly what natural phenomenon piqued the interest of the magi enough that they set out on a journey, but we know *who* put the natural phenomenon and the magi in motion: the God of heaven and earth.

Epiphany: A Quiz

Epiphany has a standing date in the calendar, like Christmas (rather than moving around like Easter does). Epiphany is January 6, the day the church marks the coming of the magi to the manger. It also is the 12th day of (the season of) Christmas. Here's hoping that tomorrow you'll have a yard full of drummers drumming and geese a laying (not to mention five gold rings).

In the West (places influenced by the Roman church), the themes that are present in the story of the visit of the magi – varieties of people begin to see and know that Jesus is more than your average carpenter from Nazareth – will appear in readings on the Sundays following Epiphany.

How much do you know about either the day? Check yourself with the quiz below. You'll hear answers to some of these questions during worship on January 8.

- How many magi visited Jesus, Mary, and Joseph according to scripture?
- Which king of Israel wanted to kill the baby who would grow up to be the Messiah?
- The story of the visit of the magi appears in which gospel?
- Who wrote the poem "The Journey of the Magi" which begins "A cold coming we had of it, just the worst time of the year for a journey, and such a long journey"?
- What does the word *epiphany* mean?
- What is myrrh?
- What did the visitors' gifts to Jesus symbolize?

Please remember in prayer:

JT & Teresa Spires; Ashton & Jenni Lail; Rachel Hopper; Family & Friends of Rev. Marion Boozer; Butch Carroll; Noah Lindemann; Mark Porter; Miriam Burgess; Steve Beheler; Justina Eddy; Jo Jo Ritchie; Trish Tong; Confirmation Class: Layla Lemmonds, Taylor Miller & Leah Miller; Confirmation Sponsors: Michelle Jolly, Hazel Hubbard, & Becky Wheeler.

Sunday, January 8

9:45 AM Confirmation Class – Parlor
9:45 AM Children's Sunday School – Epiphany Party
10:15 AM Chancel Choir Practice – Choir Room
11:00 AM Worship – Sanctuary & via Facebook Live
2:00 PM Remove Christmas Decorations

Tuesday, January 10

10:30 AM Circle 1 – Parlor

Wednesday, January 11

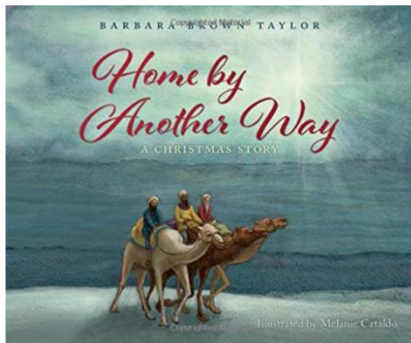
6:00 PM Wednesday Night Supper – FLC

Check it Out!

Faith Resources from the LPC Library

Home by Another Way: A Christmas Story

Have you ever wondered about the wise men who are part of the Christmas story? The children's book, *Home by Another Way: A Christmas Story*, is a beautiful book that tells the story of the three wise men who were from different countries, why they made their way to baby Jesus, who they met along their path, and why they decided to go home by a different path.



Based on Matthew 2:1-2, this children's book was written by Barbara Brown Taylor, who is a New York Times best-selling author, a teacher, and an Episcopal priest. The book is illustrated with mixed-media paintings by Melanie Cataldo, a children's book illustrator from Worcester, Massachusetts.

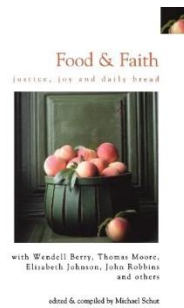
In a fun and often humorous way, the story tells about three wise men who were in their own countries "when a bright star lodged in the right eye of each of them." Each of them sets off to discover what the bright star is trying to tell them. As they travel towards Jerusalem, they meet each other and discover that they are on the same journey and join one another for the adventure. They first meet King Herod in his palace and are not impressed by him. They realize he is not the king they are seeking.

The star leads them to Mary and Joseph, where they meet Jesus and know instantly that they have met someone special. The wise men give their extravagant gifts and then feel foolish.

Check this book out of our library to see Cataldo's heart-warming paintings of the wise men holding baby Jesus and learn how Brown Taylor masterfully hooks you into their journey, then learn why the wise men choose another way home.

--Robin Morris

Food & Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread



You are what you eat, according to the old adage. But do you want to be the food that you are eating? *Food and Faith* compiles a variety of voices to help us look at food through the lens of our faith: its sacramental character (one of our sacraments is a meal), its connections to the health of people and the health of the planet, the ethics of our eating.

Beginning with a chapter titled "A Celebration of Food," the book moves through subjects like the family farm, food and spirituality, the economics of food, and addressing hunger. Edited and compiled by Michael Schut, contributors include food writer MFK Fisher, poet Wendell Berry, and Norman Wirzba (whose book on Sabbath has been recommended for this year's PW Bible study).

You might pick up the book just to read the "French Fries" essay (pages 123-125) by Alan Durning and John Ryan. The short essay is a lighthearted, yet eye-opening look at what it takes to get that paper container of fries to our fast-food bag.

LPC members share meals on Wednesday nights and receive FoodShare boxes and serve meals at Soup Kitchen regularly, so this subject might be one that we should engage more. The book includes a study guide, so if anyone is interested in gathering a group to look more closely at food through the lens of faith, this is a good place to start. Let Lynn know if you are interested in being part of a book study. Lynn already had a copy of this book on her shelf, and she was delighted to see it in the LPC library. She was sad to see that no one had ever checked it out. You can be the first!

Coming Soon: 2023 Bible Studies

Rather than one 10-week (or so) Bible study in the spring, there will be two shorter studies.

First, in January/February a 4-week study of the twelve disciples - who they were, what they did, what we know about them, what we don't know, what they can teach us. You will be required to learn the song with all their names. You will not be required to sing the song as a solo.

There will be a second 5- or 6-week study during the weeks of Lent. That study will be a broad overview of the whole Bible.

No night is convenient for everyone, but we can try to make it convenient for the most people. If one week night is better (or worse) than others for you, please let Lynn know.