

January 3, 2016 Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6 Matthew 2: 1-12 John 1: 1-18

The Christmas story is told in the gospel of **Luke**. It is the story of angels, shepherds and an overcrowded Inn. It is a story of a stable and the humble birth of the Christ Child. It is wrapped in the wonderful glow of glory.

The gospel of **Matthew** tells the story of **Epiphany**. It is the story of a star's guiding light, **Wise Ones** from afar and prophecy fulfilled.

Isaiah, the Wise One sees this epiphany light shining on his people one day. The same light **Isaiah** sees enlightening the nations and eliciting gifts of **gold** and **frankincense**.

In Matthew's story gifts of **gold** and **frankincense** and **myrrh** are offered by **wise** outsiders to **the one born King of the Jews**.

The Gospel of **John** tells of the **Mystery** in the midst of life becoming the possibility of a self-surpassing life which is the light of consciousness for all humanity. This light of consciousness shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Epiphany: Aha! The light of **God's self-surpassing life** shining in the darkness.

Epiphany: Aha! Recognizing what **God** is up to in our lives.

Epiphany: Aha! The shining **light of Consciousness** revealed to the nations as prophesied long ago.

Isaiah, the Wise One sees this light shining on his people one day.

Matthew, another wise One sees this light in the Christ Child revealed by **Wise Ones** who follow the **light**.

John, another **Wise One** sees this light first revealed in the self-surpassing life of the man, **Jesus**.

We know that Christmas doesn't come without angels.

Well, **Epiphany** doesn't come without **Wise Ones**: the **Wise Ones**, whose **insight** help us recognize, that the light of consciousness is here to shine through our lives.

However, not everyone is happy in **Matthew's** epiphany story. Remember all Jerusalem was thrown into an uproar over the **Wise Ones** information. Remember **King Herod** blindly believed that he alone should be the focus and locus of God's action.

Not all are happy in **John**'s rendition either. Ignorance prefers darkness over the light of conscious. Ignorance struggles against the possibility of the light of conscious awareness lived among us.

Friends, we all have our **King Herod** moments, when it is all about us: Or when we resist stepping out of our comfort zones to strike out onto the road less travelled.

We all have our **King Herod** moments of unconscious fear and foreboding.

We all have our **King Herod** moments of acting out when consciousness required us to let go of our insecurities and allow love to become our response.

You see, when we react, when we get upset, we slip down into the primitive flight or fight response. We turn on our automatic, unconscious autopilot that resists change.

But here is the problem. Consciousness is always a self-surpassing challenge.

And when we see the light and take up the challenge,

when we go the extra mile,

when we turn the other cheek,

when we look to the good of others in word and deed.

We see with the eyes of **Wise Ones**.

With the **Wise Ones of Epiphany**, we recognize that the light of consciousness and intensified humanity and a self-surpassing life are one and the same. In the context of **Epiphany**, this intensity, this consciousness, this self-surpassing is the **shinning light of God's Spirit** guiding and directing us. In the story of **Epiphany** the **light of God's Consciousness** shines forth first, through the infant **Jesus**. **Wise Ones** are drawn to it. **Wise Ones** are able to see it and celebrate it. **Wise Ones** are willing to become that light for the world.

With the **Wise Ones** we come to the '**aha!**' moment and find ourselves presenting the **gold** of our best self,

the **frankincense** of an awe-filled and worshipful heart,

and the **myrrh** of spiritual insight and personal practice.

The Application of Epiphany

Be the **light of conscious awareness**.

Live a self-surpassing life.

Aha! We all can do it.

Hymn #81 A Light Is Gleaming

Amen.

Prayer for Light and Loved Ones at the Turning of the Year

Let's settle into God's presence.
Follow your breathing inward to that prayerful place.
Rest there in the light and love of God's presence.
Feel it. See it. Appreciate it. Let it surround you, enfold you.

Now recall any friends or loved ones who have died in the year 2015.
Hold each one of them up to the light and love of God's presence.
Sense the light and love surround and enfold each one.

Hold their families up to this light and love.
Sense the light and love surrounding and enfold each family.

Now, since one of our church family died exactly one year ago today,
let's all hold Alberto Santos up to the light and love of God's presence.
Sense the light and love surround and enfold him.

Hold up all of Alberto's family who are here today to the light and love.
Sense all of them surrounded and enfolded.

Hold up any who could not be here today to the light and love of God's presence.
Sense these also surrounded and enfolded.

Let's us give thanks to God for all those whom we have held up to the light and
love of God's presence at the beginning of this New Year.

Amen.