

First Presbyterian Church
January 6, 2019
Matthew 2:1-12
Rev. Catherine Oliver

If you look up the word Epiphany you will find many definitions. But the most common definition is the manifestation of God to the gentiles, which is referenced from Matthew's gospel.

We just heard the story. The story that has been enhanced over centuries from 3 kings, to astrologers, to wise men meeting the evil King Herod.

In all of the stories we hear that these people had an epiphany, a sudden insight to follow a star, to find the child Jesus, the Messiah.

In truth, this beloved story found in Matthew's gospel never mentions how many people followed a star, nor if they were men or women.

But we love this story no matter who the people were or where they came from. We love this story because this is a story of hope, not to mention that many churches provide King's cake, following their worship service just to celebrate this day, yum.

But, this is another one of our biblical stories, if we allow it, inviting us to listen deeper.

To believe in the living hope and mystical ways of God's presence with us.

Like many of us, these wise people had a need. They sensed a calling to get out. To look beyond themselves and follow a star, an insight or dream that was directing them to a new and hopefully better way.

They were looking for, some profound insight,
an AH Haa moment that changed their lives.

From this text we can imagine that there is a guiding light that leads us all...
because we are all foreigners in search of truth, kindness, honest relationships.

So according to this story, there is a light that guides us all into
faithful relationships, true understanding, an epiphany: that God loves us so
much!

God created each and every one of us and even became human just like us.

God, our creator entered our world, no longer satisfied just to be with us but now had to become one of us.

When we understand this mystery, this epiphany, our focus changes.

No longer do we see ourselves as the center of the universe and others as outsiders.

Rather we become a holy unity, embracing all of life including the divine.

God with-us, God in-us, God beside us, God over-us, God under-us, God surrounding us! And everyone in-between!

It's an Epiphany.... Amen?

In seminary I learned a new way of understanding God the trinity.

No longer was there a traditional triangle with God the Father above then God the Son and God the Holy Spirit below at separate angles.

Rather, God's essence was depicted in a circle with all of us included. Peri-choresis. What it symbolizes is the Divine dance.

Peri-meaning around like a perimeter and choresis, like a choreographer, the one who teaches us to dance.

Now, I've never been a great dancer.

And I sometime step on toes, but if the rhythm strikes me just the right way... look out, I may start swaying and swinging my arms in rhythm, to the beat, just like Ellen DeGeneres!

And in the divine dance it doesn't matter how well we dance because we meld together into the divine harmony.

It is God's dance, God's connecting us with God and with one another.

This **is** the Divine Epiphany!

Sometimes, a lot of times actually, we try to avoid this dance.

Many of us don't like dancing and some of us, believe that we can't dance so we don't even try.

Instead we attempt to build a wall that keeps us from dancing with others.

Some of us are uncomfortable shaking our booty.

But what if, we trusted God enough to enter the divine dance circle?

What if we choose to join the divine dance during this season of Epiphany?

What if, this is the true definition of Epiphany?!

To be found by God, while searching for God?

And then we take hold of God's hands and all of the other hands and dance with our heads flung back, with wild abandon, with joy!

As I leave this church today, that's what I want to remember.

FPC knows how to dance!

Your staff knows how to dance!

As you welcome your new pastor, I hope that you will invite her to dance with you.

Happy Epiphany, I love you all so much.

Amen

