



*...behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."
Mathew 2:1-2 (ESV)*

January
2019

The News

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Epiphany: Celebrating Christmas for Twelve Days

The Greek word *epiphania* means "manifestation." The feast of the Christian Church called "Epiphany" has been celebrated on January 6 in the Eastern tradition (Orthodox, Coptic) of the Church since the 3rd century onwards. It was originally celebrated in honor of the Baptism of the Lord, where Jesus' identity as God's Son was made manifest. In Matthew 3:16-17, John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River, and we read, "And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'" In the 3rd century, this feast of Epiphany ranked with Easter and Pentecost as one of the three principal festivals of the church.

Epiphany was introduced into the Western Church in the 4th century but here lost its character as a feast of the Baptism of Christ, which the Eastern Church has retained to the present day. Instead it became associated with the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles in the story of the Magi or the wise men. The Magi were a learned class of people from Persia, who came to pay homage to the child "who has been born king of the Jews" bearing the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, in Matthew 2:1-12. For this reason, many Christians around the world still celebrate this special day with great feasting, parades and the giving of gifts. It is also called the Feast of the Three Kings, although the scripture does not indicate the number of wise men who came bearing the three gifts. Nevertheless, names were given to three men in a Byzantine tapestry in the sixth century, to further cement the tradition of three kings bearing the gifts.

It is sometimes suggested that the wise men came a bit later than the shepherds who were immediately invited by the angels to the birth of the Messiah. For one, it appears that Mary, Joseph and Jesus have moved from the stable or the cave where the animals were kept (with the manger or feeding trough, mentioned in Luke), and the wise men now enter "the house." Also, Herod

estimates the age of the child from the time when the star appeared, and attempts to eliminate this possible threat to his own children's inheritance of his throne, by killing newborns in Bethlehem up to two years of age. So, significant time may have elapsed before the wise men actually arrived at Bethlehem. Epiphany helps us celebrate all twelve days of Christmas.

Taking at least twelve days in the reflecting on and the celebration of Christmas is a good idea in my view. Not only does it connect us with Christians around the world. It reminds us that the incarnation of the Lord, God's putting on of human flesh, is as important as any teaching of the Christian faith. God loved us so much that he came to visit us and show us that love in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. That love was made manifest not only in Jesus being born "the king of the Jews," but also as that "light for revelation to the Gentiles," symbolized by the recognition and the coming of foreign dignitaries in the story of the wise men. The offering of gifts is important to remind us that Jesus is worthy of the giving of our entire lives to him. The Christmas birth narratives are wonderful ways for the gospel of Jesus Christ to touch lives.

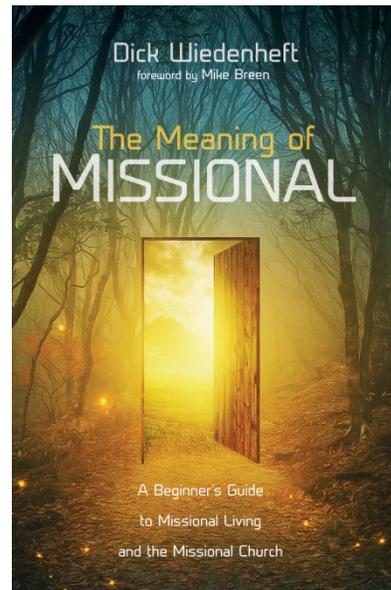
May our lives be changed by the manifestation of the One revealed as Savior, Messiah and Lord, the light of revelation to us Gentiles.

Have a blessed Epiphany!
Pastor Rich McDermott

Becoming a Missional Congregation

There is a new book out from one of our friends at 3DM called *The Meaning of Missional*. Dick Wiedenheft is a pastor and frontier leader with the 3DM Missional Discipleship movement and he has written this book to help us know what it means to be missional, why that is so important, and share some practical steps we can take to begin. The word "missional" has been misunderstood and misapplied and that has created some confusion about what it means. Is it about social action? An emphasis on outreach? Being organic instead of program-driven? His book sets out to provide succinct, clearly written, and biblical answers to those questions and more. I am excited to receive this soon and dive into it. My great hope is that a group of us can study this together in 2019 and continue to grow into one of our MARKS at FPCA – Missional Discipleship.

Happy New Year from the Campbells!
Pastor Chris Campbell



The Importance of a Welcoming Office!



Questions FPCA church members might ask—
Who answers the phone when I call the church office?
Who is the first person a visitor to our church office might see?
Could I possibly volunteer to be that person?
Call or e-mail Lona Watkins for answers!!
817-460-1372; wboblo@aol.com



Children's Ministry

31 Day Family Prayer Calendar



Praying every day is a great habit to develop and it helps us grow in our faith. But it can also feel overwhelming. How about just starting off with 31 days? We've made it easy for you by creating short prompts to guide your time. You can use these prayer prompts by yourself or use them to guide your family in praying out loud together.

Don't get discouraged if you miss days here and there—no one's keeping score! Our goal is to give you a practical and meaningful way to restart the year with a focus on faith and your family.



□ **DAY 1:** God, Your Word says: *“Forget the things that happened in the past. Do not keep on thinking about them” (Isaiah 43:18 NIV)*. Help our family to view the New Year as a new start. Help us to forgive others and ourselves. Help us to move beyond the failures, hurts, and regrets of the past.

□ **DAY 2:** Father, help us to be content with all You’ve given us. We know that the best way to be content is to remember all the things You’ve already done for us. If we had nothing else, Your love is enough. Thank You for the hope You’ve given us through Jesus.

□ **DAY 3:** Father, thank You for loving us enough to send us Your Son, Jesus, even when we did nothing to deserve it. Help us to not only love others, but to do something to show them we love them in every situation.

□ **DAY 4:** God, You know every part of us. You know our thoughts, our hopes, and our fears. You even know the number of hairs on our head. You know us inside and out. Thank You for being a Creator who loves us completely. Give us the confidence to love ourselves the same way.

□ **DAY 5:** God, You love it when we work with others. Thank you for reminding us that we can get so much more done together than we can alone. We may not feel like it, we may not want to do it, but working together matters to You, so it should matter to us.

□ **DAY 6:** Father, help us to be people who think before we act. Remind us to pause, take a deep breath, and consider our options before we make choices. We know that showing self-control helps us just as much as it helps others.

□ **DAY 7:** Lord, we know that it’s important for us to keep going, even when we want to give up. We know that showing perseverance makes us stronger—and it makes our life better, too. Give us the strength to push through, even when it’s difficult.

□ **DAY 8:** Father, help us fight feelings of discontentment. It’s easy to look at what other people have and wish we had those things, too. You give us what we need each and every day. Help us to celebrate other people when we’re tempted to be jealous or upset.

□ **DAY 9:** God, when we’re hurt, tired, angry, or anxious, it’s hard to keep going. But we know that those are the times when it’s especially important to fight the temptation to give up. We need You, God, to remind us that You are the source of our strength when we are weak.

□ **DAY 10:** If we lived in a world without generosity, it would be a very sad place. Help us to remember that although our lives aren’t perfect, we are loved by a giving Father in heaven. Help us to show compassion to others to spread light and hope in the world.

□ **DAY 11:** God, you made me different from my friends and family—on purpose! You did this because You wanted me to be me. Show me all the unique ways You created me; help me to use those things so that others see what a big, loving, amazing Father You are.

□ **DAY 12:** God, thank You for our family. You have brought us together to work with and support each other. Help us to cooperate whenever and wherever we can. You created us to belong and to work together—thank You for that!

□ **DAY 13:** God, help us to show self-control in every situation. When we want to lose our tempers or give in when we shouldn't, remind us that with your help, we can overcome temptation and make the wise choice.

□ **DAY 14:** The next time we are struggling with feelings of anxiety, anger, or discontentment, help us remember to tell You about it. Sharing our weaknesses with You helps make us stronger. You are the source of comfort and peace.

□ **DAY 15:** God, thank You for creating us just the way we are. You made us special, different, and unique. You want us to love ourselves the way You love us. Help us to do that. Help us to celebrate Your good works.

□ **DAY 16:** God, thank You for the people in our lives who have shown us grace. You have given us people to love us and forgive us. You have also given us people who have supported us, accepted us, and encouraged us. Help us to do those things for others, too.

□ **DAY 17:** Father in heaven, we pray for people who need You. We pray for those who are lonely, sick, or hurting. Father, use us to shine Your light into these peoples' lives. And when we don't know how to help, give us the wisdom to know what to do and the courage it takes to do it.

□ **DAY 18:** Father, Your Word tells us that You knew what our lives would look like before we were even born. It says that You have a specific plan for us—a good plan! God, give us the courage and the faith to accomplish all that You have set out for us.

□ **DAY 19:** God, help us to ask ourselves: How can we be more patient? How can we be more kind? How can we be less selfish? How can we make wise choices? Give us the wisdom and strength to better ourselves today and every day after.

□ **DAY 20:** God, we pray for our family's perseverance. Thank You for all the ways You've helped us push through in the past. We know that You can help us keep going when we feel like giving up. Thank You!

□ **DAY 21:** Father in heaven, forgive us for any time we have mistreated someone because they are different from us. Forgive us for any time we have seen someone being mistreated and did nothing about it. Give us the courage to do the right thing and to stand up for someone else.

□ **DAY 22:** In Galatians 6:9, the Bible says: “*Let us not become tired of doing good*” (NirV). Father, Your Word tells us to do good, even when it’s hard. Help us to look for ways to be kind, generous, and helpful—and to not grow tired in doing so.

□ **DAY 23:** In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Paul tells us that each of us was created with a variety of gifts and talents. Father in heaven, thank You for the gifts and talents You have given us. Help us know how to use those gifts and talents to make You look good.

□ **DAY 24:** God, it’s easy to give up. It’s challenging to work hard. We pray that in the moments we feel like we can’t keep going, that we would remember You are a big, strong, and loving Father. Thank you for being with us and for helping us when we ask.

□ **DAY 25:** Father, we ask You to help us forgive those who hurt us, upset us, or make us angry. You have forgiven us for so much, and we want to forgive others to show how thankful we are for Your grace.

□ **DAY 26:** The Bible says in Colossians 3:12 (NIV) to “*clothe yourselves with compassion.*” Lord, each day remind us to do what your Word says—to be completely and fully loving and generous with others. Help us to be so compassionate that it’s as if we were actually dressed in it.

□ **DAY 27:** God, thank You for all Your amazing creations. Thank You for the birds, the animals, the flowers and the trees, the lakes and the streams, and the sun that rises and sets each day. Thank You for creating a beautiful world for us to live in and enjoy.

□ **DAY 28:** Father, sometimes it’s hard to be brave and courageous. Sometimes our fears can feel bigger than our faith. But we know that You are always with us. Help us to tell You when we’re afraid. Help us to know You are with us.

□ **DAY 29:** The Psalmist says that “. . . *those who look to the Lord have every good thing they need*” (Psalm 34:10b NirV). Father, it can be hard to focus on the good things we have when there’s something we really want. Help us to look to You in moments of jealousy and discontentment.

□ **DAY 30:** God, there are times when we don’t feel like talking about what’s wrong. We just want to be mad or sad or frustrated. Sometimes, life seems really unfair. Father, You are the only One who sees everything and knows everything. Please help me to trust You. Please help me to rely on You when I feel this way.

□ **DAY 31:** God, thank You for our family. Our family doesn’t look like all other families. We are different—and that’s a good thing! Help us to remember that our family is a gift from you. And even when we don’t get along, You want us to show each other patience, grace, and love.

Children's Ministry Dates to Remember

Save the Date

- January 6** Luncheon for families with children in 6th grade and younger
January 18 Kids Night Out from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
February 1 Kids Night Out from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
February 3 Luncheon for families with children in 6th grade and younger
February 15 Kids Night Out from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
June 10-14 Vacation Bible School

Youth Ministry

Lines of Communication

Happy New Year! With the New Year upon us and everyone looking to start their New Year's resolutions I thought I would join in on the fun. So, my new year's resolution is to provide some resources on different topics that will help parents minister to their youth. The first topic I would like to tackle in the new year is COMMUNICATION.

Do you remember the story in Luke 1 when the angel appeared to the priest, Zechariah, to tell him that he and his elderly wife, Elizabeth, would have a son and name him John? Zechariah doubtfully questioned the angel, and swift consequences followed. His ability to speak was taken from him until the day of his son's birth. Why is that important? Zechariah's ability to communicate clearly with people was removed and they had no clear idea what had happened. Is that happening today?

Here is another way to ask this question. Do you know what ROFL, 831, 9, BWL mean? If not, then our teen's style of communication and our style are very different. These are considered texting shorthand. And this is why our teens must know how important real communication is. For those of us who are a little uninformed when it comes to texting shorthand, the following is a list of the definitions of the above shorthand:

ROFL – Rolling on floor laughing

831 – I love you

9 – Parent watching

BWL – Bursting with laughter

Nothing is more frustrating than trying to have a conversation with your teen when they won't even make eye contact because they are glued to the screen of their phone or tablet. Or are we the culprit? Do we immerse ourselves in the digital world to the point that our teens can't get OUR attention?

We are going to be talking about opening those lines of communication with our teen this month. And we can either make technology work for us or against us. How about we WTO (win this one)! Made that one up all by myself.

Communication with your teen is vitally important to the health of your relationship! But communication is changing as fast as your teen is! I want to give you a few ideas to help you with this very important issue.

1. Sit down with your teen and talk with them and not to them. They want to know that you are really listening to what they say and not what you think they are saying.
2. Agree that yelling is not allowed. You can't yell at them and they can't yell at you. It shuts you both down and makes you feel undervalued and disrespected.
3. Don't just "lay down the law" about cell phone and computer use! Allow your teenager to have input. For example, your teen can text while doing homework, but no cell phone is allowed within ten feet of the dinner table.
4. Agree to never argue through texting. There is no way in the world you can know what the other person is saying unless you can at least hear tone of voice.

There are so many other ideas, but these should get you rolling.

It is vitally important that you teach your teenager that communication is not with the fingers on a keypad, but it is tone of voice and hand gestures and wise choice of words.

Remember, Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word spoken at the right time is like golden apples on a silver tray." But unless we teach our teens about real communication, they will not know how to truly appreciate this verse!

Walking with you and many blessings to you on this journey we call parenting!

Blessings,

Adrian Rodriguez

Important Upcoming Youth Ministry Dates

Winter/Spring 2019 Events:

- Lock-In - January 25
- Super Bowl Party - February 3
- There 4 Conference (Girl Students Only) - February 15 & 16
- Talent Show - February 17
- Love Invasion (Local Mission Trip for High School Students) - March 11-14
- Senior Sunday - May 19

Summer 2019 Events:

- The Great Escape (Jr. High Camp/Conference Trip for Jr. High Students) - June 22-29

November Finance Update

Budget

Income including funds released: \$ 85,308

Expense: \$ 72,751

Income - Expense for month: \$ 12,557

Income - Expense for 2018 Year to Date: (\$ 18,786)



Comments:

Total Income and Funds Released is over budget for the month by \$1,961 and over budget for the year by \$8,714.

Donors - Under budget for the month by (\$1,525) and under budget for the year by (\$29,332).

Total Expenses – Under budget for the month by (\$6,409) and over for the year by \$26,753.

Seen Around the Church

Festival of Tables





The picture below is of elders being installed to Grace Presbytery committees. Suzie McCoy was present for the installation service at the December meeting held at Northpark Presbyterian Church.



Youth Christmas Party



Youth Confirmation Sunday



Advent Festival



This Month



Bible Studies

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Monday Night Bible will resume on Monday, January 21, at 6 p.m. in the parlor.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the Bride's Room every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m.



Music Ministries

Chancel Choir

This is the primary worship leadership ensemble for the 11:00 service. The choir also sings for special services around Christmas and Holy Week. It is more than just a great choir, it is a caring fellowship. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. *Nursery care is provided during rehearsals.*

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

This intergenerational handbell group rehearses Wednesday evenings from 6:15 until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested in ringing, please contact Russell Farnell (fpcamusic@yahoo.com or 817-274-8286).

Agape (Youth) Choir

During the school year, this group of youth in grades 6 to 12 meets on Sunday, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., in the choir room.

Children's Music Ministries

The children's choirs meet from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. on Sundays during the school year. Children ages 4 (when school starts) through grade 5 participate in activities including music/singing and bells/chimes, instruments, and listening activities. There are two sections, divided by age, and both participate in the 11:00 worship service twice per year, usually in December and April.



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Thursday, January 3, at 6:30 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Facilities, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, January 10, at 6:45 p.m., all teams meet for worship in the chapel with subsequent gathering into respective teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, January 24, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets in the parlor to oversee the ministry of the church. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.

Discipleship



Library Team

The library team works the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Anyone interested is welcome. No particular skill is required, the work is easy, and we always have a good time as we process books to be added to our inventory. If you would like to be involved in library work but cannot come at that evening time, please contact Sandy Thomlinson and special daytime work sessions can be arranged.



Fellowship

Happy Quilters

This group meets Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in!

Saints Alive!

Church seniors will meet for a potluck lunch on Thursday, January 17, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert and enjoy a fun and interesting afternoon.

Contact Bev Koch (817-261-3202) for details.



**First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins Street
Arlington, TX 76010**

Deadline for the January issue of The News is December 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Esther Albright, Richard Ankele, Elaine Bahn, Jack Bos, Shirley Bragg, James (Andrew) Bridges, Vannah Caylor, Kevin Chin, Frank Coburn, Edna Collins, Lee Carol Copeland, Mike Copeland, Michael Deardorff, Laura, Moses and Abe Duffney, Neal Estes, Don Farrell, Bobbie Fowler, Tom Fowler, Joe and Lila Glenn, Jack Gray, Andrew Hydock, Bob Johnson, Tim Karnes, Pat May, J. Fred Miller, Allen Miller, Barbara Mooers, Ruth Moore, Cosme Pacot, J.D. Paulk, Bill and Sue Perry, John Pittman, Nita Price, Jim L. Quick, Sarah Rabb, Joanna Rouborn, Al Smithson, Kyle Terwilliger, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Richard Whitenight, Jake Winkler, Karl Winter, Mary Jane Wright, Bob Zakrzewski

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, James Dailey, Eric Dill, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Mancini, Amie Murtha, Jack Murtha, Stephen O'Neil Sosa, Colin Peden, Jason Polk, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Peyton Steeno, Christopher Young, Robbie Wallace.

Pray for our homebound members.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

Please contact Pastor Rich McDermott at the church office at 817-274-8286. For questions about specific concerns listed above, please contact Marge Dawson at mdawsonarltx@att.net or 817-980-6825.