

Epiphany 1986

Dear Friends in Christ:

Christmas Day has come and gone. Packages have been opened, the tree is beginning to shed its needles, most of us have been overfed with holiday treats, and those of us involved in the liturgical life of the church are ready for a quiet moment or two to recuperate. The frenetic pace of the holidays has slowed down to a point where we, the Christian community, can contemplate the message of the angels and the witness of shepherds and kings.

Who is this child, born of Mary, yet proclaimed by the angels to be the Saviour, Christ the Lord? Who is this child who compelled the shepherds to come and behold and then to go out to share what they had seen and heard? Who is this child to whom gentile kings brought gifts fit for one who would rule as king--the one whom Simeon would acknowledge as "the light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel"?

During the Epiphany season, which begins on January 6, we celebrate the good news of Jesus made manifest to the world, and we are called to proclaim him in our midst. The Collect for the Epiphany reads thus: "Lead us, O God, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face...." We come Sunday after Sunday as the body of Christ, affirming his presence with us through word and sacrament. We confess in creed and prayer that Jesus, born as a human, yet called to be Son of God, Ruler of Creation, is the one who dwells among us. We are called through the power of the Holy Spirit to know this Jesus, the Christ, and to make him known to a broken world.

Who is this Jesus for us, the people of Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, South Dakota? How is he to be manifest among us? In the next weeks you will be asked to consider your continued support of the ministry in this church through your time, talent and treasure. In that process I would encourage each of you to reflect on how the Lord is present in this place and to what ministry you are being called. Each of you has been blessed with gifts for ministry--teaching, lay reading, pastoral care, hospitality, and on and on. As the three kings presented their gifts to the child, so are we to present to him all that we are so that he may use us, our selves, our gifts, our possessions, in a world which desperately needs to hear the good news one more time. How is he made known in this day? Through you and me, his people, his body.

Who is this Jesus? He is the one who has come to show us the way to peace on earth and good will towards all people. Let us go forth in the power of the Spirit to love and serve him.

God's peace,

Karen