

THE MAGDALENE



**From the Desk of Fr.
Neil...**

EPIPHANY SEASON IS GOOD NEWS

Though there was a mad rush to get the Christmas season started in the stores once again this year, I hope there has not been a mad rush by Christians to get the decorations down, boxed and stored before the Christmas season is over.

I know the stores are already on to Valentine's Day and probably even St. Patrick's Day by the time you read this, but Christians ought to dwell a while on the Christmas event and look forward to the Epiphany season....which is certainly tied closely to Christmas. Epiphany officially closes out Christmastide, being the 12th day of Christmas, and it begins another season where we think more deeply on the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

We tend to lump the Wise Men (the Magi) in with our Nativity scenes, however it is believed that the Wise Men probably arrived quite a while after Jesus was born. The shepherds had returned to their sheep and Mary and Joseph had found a place to live. Nevertheless, the Wise Men play an important role in connecting the Christmas event and the birth of Jesus and what it means for us.

The Magi are said to have come from the east. We aren't told where. Some believe they were from Persia, modern day Iran. They were possibly familiar with Daniel's writings. Daniel was a chief in the courts in Persia. In the book

attributed to Daniel, he includes a prophecy laying out a timeline for the coming Messiah. Though not easy to fully grasp, we see in Daniel 9:24-27 the predicting and the timing of the Messiah's return and the events that would take place. In Numbers 24:17 Balaam also mentions a "star" coming out of Jacob. Balaam was also from the area near Persia. And as we know, a star guided the Magi to the place where Jesus the Messiah was living at the time.

Part of the aim of the Book that is written by Matthew, though written to a Jewish audience, is to point us to the fact that Jesus came to save not only Jews, but Gentiles as well. A Gentile is a non-Jew. The Magi were non-Jews. They were Gentiles who had received revelation from God that they were to follow the star to where the one who would be born king was living. Upon their arrival, they worshiped the child Jesus and gave gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The account of the Magi making their journey and arriving at the place where Jesus was and paying homage to Him is recorded to tell us that Jesus was the savior of *all* mankind. He did not just come to save the Jews, but Gentiles as well. Jesus being revealed to the Magi tells us that the Gospel is a message that is universal.

As Epiphany tide goes on, we will also hear readings Sunday after Sunday from other places in the Bible where we are shown how Jesus reveals Himself in different ways to different audiences. These are all gathered together by the Gospel writers to show us that Jesus has come, that He came to save all people, that He has the power to work miracles, that He came in obedience to the Law and to obey and fulfill it for us, and that He has opened the Kingdom of Heaven for us.

Jesus is a gift to us from the Father. But do we really spend time thinking about just how this is? It goes beyond His birth in a manger. The Magi were pagans. It is believed that they were astrologers, sorcerers and magicians...practicing arts that the Jewish Law prohibited. Yet they were drawn to the Messiah. They were drawn to Jesus in order to show us that Jesus' salvation is for all men of all kinds.

Even today, Jesus continues to draw people from all sorts of places in life. Jesus does not accept people "just as they are." What we are is unacceptable until Christ makes us His own. He is in the business of not only drawing all men unto Himself and leaving us as we are, but changing us, washing us in baptism, sanctifying us and making us acceptable to the Father on His account and by His power. All of this is why Epiphany is Good News for us as well.

MORE THAN A TITLE

Out of respect for the office of priest or deacon, we address any man holding these offices by his title. **Please remember to address all priests by Father and deacons by Deacon.**

Acquiring Truth

Why Do We Cross Ourselves At Certain Points In The Mass?

Making the sign of the cross is very common and performed at a number of key points in an Anglican worship service. Though there is no prescribed rule about it, there certainly are points within the service where it is appropriate. To begin with, we might enter the church, dip our middle finger in the stoup and then make the sign of the cross. By doing this we are

reminding ourselves and proclaiming that we are baptized and that we are calling on that baptism as a reminder that we belong to Christ and we enter His holy Church safely because we belong to Him.

Smaller crosses are made with just the use of the thumb as the introduction to the Gospel is read. These three small crosses are made on the forehead, lips and chest. This signifies that we desire that the Word of God would be on our mind, on our lips and in our hearts at all times. A single small cross is made over the lips as we say "O Lord, open thou our lips..." at morning and evening prayer. Here we are, in a way, hallowing our mouth so that we would speak only words that bring glory to God.

It is also done as we end the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, and the Gloria. At these points we are acknowledging the Trinity and as each point in the cross stands for one of the persons of the Trinity, it is appropriate to fortify ourselves by this 'shield' of sorts.

Finally it is appropriate to close the service once again making the sign of the Cross in order to remind ourselves that we are going forth in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

CURRENT EVENTS

HELPING HANDS FOR TEAR DOWN

Everyone who is able to take a Christmas ball off of a tree is asked to stay after **10am Sunday Mass on January 6th** to box and put away the Christmas tree and decorations. It takes about 20 minutes if everyone participates while they drink coffee and have a few treats. Please sign up with Karen Carlson if you plan on helping. We need a couple of men to carry boxes upstairs.

2019 ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

What happens at an Annual Meeting? The short answer is that it is a Reporting of the Operational and Financial affairs of the church.

Theological and organizational topics are not covered in this meeting so please direct your questions to Fr. Neil outside of this meeting.

You will hear reports from all of the Officers, and Guild/Group Chairmen about what their group has accomplished over the year. Most importantly, you will **hear Fr. Neil's vision for SMM in 2019.**

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 27th at 11:30am in the Parish Hall. **A no-host Brunch will be served for \$9.00 per person.** You are also welcome to bring your own brown bag lunch.

Children under 7 years old are free. A child friendly meal will be available.

PLEASE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AS A MEMBER

The good news is that all persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized, confirmed, attendees for at least three months and contributing to the church may be considered a member of the church.

All you need to do is provide Fr. Neil with a copy of your sacramental paperwork. Please contact Fr. Neil for details on how to transfer your paperwork.

Please check the 2018 Members List on the Bulletin Board the first week in January. **All members of the church listed are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on January 27th.**

CRAFT GUILD SELECTS ITS FIRST 2019 RECIPIENT

Cadence Hospice, located in Orange, provides non-curative treatment and comfort to people with a life expectancy of six months or less, according to a physician's judgment. The Guild has chosen to make apron style bibs, and bright colorful lap blankets for their patients. Any questions, please ask Candi Tanner.

NEWS REPORT

ITS TIME TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE TRINITARIAN

The **TRINITARIAN** is the Official Gazette of the Anglican Catholic Church and was first published in April 1979 and became a church-wide publication of The Anglican Catholic Church in 1982.

Everyone who signed up for The TRINITARIAN must renew in February. Jeannie Lawrence will be collecting subscription money for your renewals starting the first week of February. If you would like to subscribe, please contact her directly.

DONATIONS FOR FLOWERS AND CANDLES

Starting in January, Jeannie Lawrence will be taking your requests to donate for flowers and candles. Please use the cards provided in the Narthex or, if you have a list for the year, please provide her a copy. Fr. Neil is requesting that you do not hand your requests to anyone else but her including himself to prevent potential omissions or errors.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE CONFUSING

There are many ways to give monetary donations to the church. One way is to come to church on Sunday and drop your contribution in the plate during service. If you forget, you can hand your contribution to our Treasurer. Another way to give a monetary contribution is to mail it into the church. This can be done anytime by check. Our Treasurer will be able to track your contribution by the name on your check. If you are not a regular church attendee, please make sure your address on the check is the most current and a letter of 'Charitable Contribution' will be sent to you.

In addition, there are two ways your monetary offering to church can be used. If you do not designate on your check where you would like the money to go, it will be used throughout the year to pay for church expenses, upkeep to the buildings and grounds, and other administrative needs. If you contribute to an activity designated for our "Outreach Program", your money will be sent to one of our missions or pre-selected charitable organizations. If you choose to contribute to a specific ACC mission, that money will be compiled with other monies designated for the exact same mission and sent to them directly. 100 percent of your money goes to the intended recipient. There are no administrative costs associated with our "Outreach Program".

WANT TO GET CONNECTED?

St. Mary Magdalene Church offers so many ways to get connected to other church members and the local outside community.

Listed below are just a few ministries with their lead person identified if you want to ask questions.

Altar Guild: This group comes together to assist Fr. Neil in preparing for church services. Marceil Burgess is the lead.

Women's Guild: This group has been charged with all church activities that are not theologically based. Sharon Edlin is the lead.

Outreach Program: Violet Younis leads this group that comes together for specific projects. When no project exists, the group disbands. Projects are usually staffed by volunteers from the Guild or through announcements. Anyone can join a project or lead a project.

Craft Guild: This group meets on the third Sunday of the month. Craft projects to be done by members are directed to service others or to raise money for our Outreach Program.

Women's Devotional Prayer Group: This group comes together on the first Sunday of the month at 9:15am. Karen Carlson is the lead.

Men's Devotional Prayer Group: This group comes together on the first Sunday of the month at 9:15am. Fr. Neil is the lead.

Sunday Brunch: Our 4th Sunday brunches are coordinated for all church members to participate in breaking bread together at a local restaurant. Niki Strate is our new lead for this program.

2019 CONFIRMATIONS

Anyone wishing to be confirmed in the Anglican faith will need to approach Fr. Neil or Sharon Edlin in the month of January to get the approval process and paperwork together. Classes will start the beginning of February. Only one class will be held this year. You are required to attend for 16 consecutive sessions every Sunday at 9am.