

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts, be acceptable to you O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer.

Well its the celebration of Epiphany. The day and the season that Jesus the Christ was revealed to the Gentiles. The story now includes all of us. And God continues to act in divine and mysterious ways. I thought I would be amongst you but with cancellations of many flights i am coming home via a different way. How ironically familiar does this sound to our Gospel passage for the Magi went home via a different road. Their reasons are so much different than mine but it does make me more aware of how God appears in these moments and how our eyes are opened to new things when we are asked to return via a new road.

Im sure that was certainly the case for the Magi. They went home via a different road but my guess is that they arrived home a little differently too. Transformed? Awe-struck? Extra-weary? Full of words to speak? Or silent because its just too hard to put such an experience into words. It is a very clear way of saying things have changed and we are walking in a new way even if the destination remains the same. Except that because the journey to get there is different so the destination might even look a little bit different too. I never imagined that I would fly from Regina to Vancouver via Winnipeg but yet there has been a rightness to the ways things have unfolded. Though I'm not home yet!

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But this was not known to the Magi. They only knew that the stars revealed His arrival and so they went to Jerusalem to ask King Herod where the True King was to be found. But King Herod was not happy. In fact, the Gospel passage tells us that he was

frightened. Why? Because he did not like the idea that there was a new King in town and that there already were people who wanted to worship the new King.

So Herod asked the chief priests and scribes, where this King might be found. The Magi had looked to the stars. The chief priests and scribes looked to Scripture and found the prophecy that spoke of a new ruler that was to come out of Bethlehem. Herod then told the Magi the general region where to find Christ Child, but secretly so that no one else would hear of this. And then he asked them to let him know the specific whereabouts so that he could then also go and worship.

Well we know from previous readings that Herod wanted to know where the Christ Child was, but it most certainly was not to worship Him. And through a message told to the Magi, through their sleeping dreams, they were warned not to tell Herod. And so after seeing the Christ Child they went home via a different road.

We really don't know very much about the Magi, and they asked only one question of the Christ's whereabouts. And upon seeing the child they were overwhelmed with joy and that they gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh

It feels like there is so much more than we should know. We didn't hear much about the journey to get there, and we learned even less about their journey home. Knowing the complications and the unexpected gifts of my trying to get home it seems like there should be more of a story attached to the journey of the wise men. But though they were to be part of the story, it wasn't their story to be told.

The story is still about the Christ Child. And it is the story of the revealing of the Christ Child to the Gentiles. And we haven't even talked about the Christ Child! That doesn't seem right, yet in some way I think it is as it is supposed to be. Most of us in power, like our power to be acknowledged, to be acclaimed, maybe even to be worshipped. That certainly is the way of King Herod, otherwise he wouldn't have felt threatened by the presence of even one as small as a new baby. Jesus did not come into this world in fanfare or pomp or huge celebration. No, he came into this world with only the silent stars announcing his presence. Many of the powerful would expect all to come and worship him. Jesus only invites, he never demands. And where King Herod sat on his palace throne, Jesus lay in his rickety manger. The weakness of the power of the Christ Child becomes our greatest strength. And we often forget that our stories that we want to share really need to be placed in the bigger story of God.

So this Epiphany story becomes our story too. We too, have been given the invitation to visit the Christ Child. We too have been given the signs that point our way home. And the reading from the prophet Isaiah reminds us to keep looking up. Arise, Shine! Lift up your eyes and look around you! The Glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice. The stars announced Christ's presence, and the light of Christ's presence within us can be a beacon for others to see.

The Magi sought the Christ Child with the intent to worship. King Herod sought the Christ Child with the intent to eliminate the competition. As we begin this new year here at St. Paul's I wonder what is our intent as we seek the Christ Child? In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul

reminds us that through Christ we now have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. Could this be an opportunity for God to call us to return home via a different road?

Through their sleeping dreams, a message was given to the Magi. They were warned not to return to Herod. And so, after seeing the Christ Child they went home via a different road. As we continue to discern and live into the ministry, mission, and calling of St. Paul's, might it be possible that God will reveal to us that we are not to return to things that are familiar or to things that have always been. Life with Christ is still our destination, but maybe the road will be a different way.

And so my friends, whether in person or in prayer, I pray that you will see glimpses of the Christ Child in new ways. I pray that you will continue to seek the Light. I pray that you will see and know that the Light that shines so bright through each one of you, will be the light that becomes the new road that brings others home, as well. Amen.