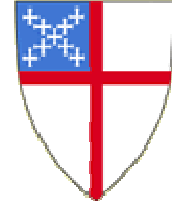




# THE PARISH PAPERS

St. James' Episcopal Church Parkton, Maryland



Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. James'

Epiphany, January, 2009

Epiphany is a bright, hopeful, optimistic season that begins with Jesus' baptism and ends eight weeks later (this year) with the Transfiguration. Its stories and symbols revolve around the wise men, the star of Bethlehem, the baptism of Jesus, the miracle at Cana, and Jesus' healing works as told in the Gospel of Mark.

Epiphany means "appearance," "manifestation"—thus the recognition of the Christ Child as savior and king by the wise men from the East. According to a 6<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Alexandria, Egypt, the wise men were called Caspar, Melchoir, Balthasar. These Persian astrologers had the inspiration and courage to follow a star to the manger where Christ was born.

With this journey of the wise men in mind, we move from the celebration of Christmas to the season of Epiphany that reveals (through scripture) Jesus' identity and mission. The lessons during this time help us to reflect on our own faith and mission. They speak about light, salvation, redemption, and the needs of the poor and the needy around the world. The collect for Epiphany addresses these same themes: "O God by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face..."

The lessons, the symbols, the stories, and the collect for Epiphany bring home the question of how we as a parish can reach out to people not only in the Parkton area but also to the global community. We have been remarkably generous in helping the hungry at the Hereford Food Bank, providing clothing to the people at Paul's Place, and offering care to the children of New Life Community. The question is: can we extend this same generosity of spirit beyond our borders? We might consider supporting an orphanage like "Our Little Roses" in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, or adopting one of the needy Episcopal schools like Ecole St. Etienne in Haiti.

The Epiphany spirit means beginning a new journey of the spirit. My 89 year-old mother-in-law, Edie, gave me a book for Christmas called "Angels in Africa." It tells the story of seven African women who have overcome great obstacles in their lives to better their communities. Through compassion, resourcefulness, and courage, these women confronted problems with hunger, the environment, violence, illiteracy, and neglected children in their different countries. The star of Epiphany hovers over their work as it hovers over our own. Bishop Sutton has encouraged all of us in the diocese to support a global community. I suggest we begin to pray about how we might reach out to such a community—one that would, in turn, be interested in connecting with us.

Happy Epiphany Everyone!

Blessings,

Elizabeth+

Enjoy the ending of W.H. Auden's famous Christmas poem,  
"For the Time Being:"

He is the Way.

Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;  
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth.

Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;  
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life.

Love Him in the World of the Flesh;  
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

## Hereford Food Bank

In the December newsletter it was suggested that our Christmas giving center around a local need, the Hereford Food Bank. In response to this, at least one parish family made the food bank the center of its gift giving, while many others also made generous gifts.

The week before Christmas, to the delight of the Food Bank staff, we delivered to them a check for \$540. Other donations continued to arrive during the last weeks of December. This week we will deliver another check for \$1,375 for a final total of \$1,915.

Your caring and generosity exemplify the true meaning of Christmas. Many thanks for your support.

Best wishes for a happy new year.

### A Prayer (Anonymous)

*Let me be aware.*

*Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,  
Just getting somehow safely through the days,  
Not even groping for another hand,  
Not even wondering why it all was planned,  
Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,  
Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,  
Please, keep me eager just to do my share.  
God—let me be aware.*

*Let me be aware.*

*Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,  
Let me walk seeing horror and stain.  
Let my hands, grouping find other hands.  
Give me the heart that divines, understands.  
Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.  
Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.  
Please—keep me eager to do my share.*

*Let me be aware.*

*Submitted by Jennie Hellert*



### Make a Commitment to St. James' Church

Happy New Year! I Hope you all enjoyed a blessed Christmas. Now that a new year is about to begin, we need to look at the upcoming year and our priorities for St. James'. A proposed budget was presented to the vestry but we were unable to approve it without more pledges to support our mission and programs. At this time we have 31 pledges out of a possible 83 with a total commitment of \$55,000. Our goal is \$100,000. Like your budget, utilities (fuel and electricity) are our biggest increase. Another addition to our expenses is the mortgage on the Education Wing. Up until recently, the Building Fund has had enough money to cover the payments. Now we have no money to make the payments so we have added our mortgage to our general budget. We have refinanced our loan to 3%, reducing the payment from \$1,623 to \$635 over a 30 years. This all sounds great but we still need your support. If you have not sent in you pledge, please do so in the next few weeks.

Mortgage Meal  
Sunday, January 25 5-7 p.m.  
You are all invited to an Italian supper with all the trimmings in the Parish Hall to help pay down the mortgage.  
There is no set price for dinner but we ask that you offer a donation.  
A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board or contact the office to reserve your space. All proceeds will go to pay principle or more.



Look for information concerning the sale of the remaining memorials in the Education Wing. Steve Fox will present a chart at one of our coffee hours to demonstrate what is available. You may give them in "thanksgiving" or as a memorial. All proceeds will go to reduce the mortgage principle.

<b>January Anniversary</b>	<b>January Birthdays</b>
Emilie and Leonard Pieper: Jan. 2	Adam Smith: 3
	Dick North: 8
	Austin Walker: 12
	Sue Wallis: 14
	David Swartz: 16
	Jackson Tillman: 17
	Judith Pickering: 20
	Barbara Moffett: 25
	Chris Walters: 31

An illustration of a yellow birthday cake with black outlines, sitting on a white plate with a black handle. There are five black candles on top of the cake.