



Crossnore Presbyterian Church

"Growing Deeper in Faith, Reaching Out in Love"

P. O. Box 386/200 Chapel Dr., Crossnore, NC 28616
828-733-1939/cpcpcusa@gmail.com.
www.crossnorepresbyterianchurch.org

Announcements and Items of Interest

January 6, 2021

This Sunday, January 10, we are worshipping together virtually; no physical worship in the sanctuary due the rising cases of COVID-19 in Avery County. An email will be sent out by 11:00 am. Sunday morning with Zoom links to the recorded service and sermon, and .pdf files with the announcements, worship service bulletin and sermon.

We received many, many donations to our Christmas Eve Offering for heating oil and electricity for our neighbors in need through Volunteer Avery County. We have more than doubled our donations compared to last year and have received over \$6,500. We will announce the final total soon. Thanks to all who have given so generously.

Volunteers are needed to help at Feeding Avery Families, sign up on <https://feedingaveryfamilies.org/> volunteer. Due to current Social Distancing guidelines, Feeding Avery Families has shifted to a non-contact / drive-thru model for distribution of food to clients. There are a variety of roles for volunteers on Thursdays and Fridays. **Truck Unloading and Stocking, Packing Boxes—Thursdays 9:30 – 11:30 am.**

Distribution and packing boxes—Fridays 9:30—11:30 a.m. and 1-3 pm.

On December 22, the church received good news about two grants that we applied for:

1. The Stafford Family Trust has for over more than a decade invited us to submit an annual request. This year we received \$18,000 which will be used for the replacement of the sanctuary roof.

2. We were also invited to submit an application to the Partners for Sacred Places. Out of 250 sacred places in Central Appalachia that were invited to apply, only 10 places were chosen, and Crossnore Presbyterian Church was accepted! Thanks to George Riggsbee and Ashlyn DeWitt for assisting Pastor Kathy with the application. Partners for Sacred places will be working with us in a variety of ways and we hope to receive a grant of at least \$10,000 for our sanctuary roof. Take a look at their website: <https://sacredplaces.org>.

We are so humbled and deeply grateful for the Stafford Family Trust and their financial support for over a decade and our new relationship with Partners for Sacred Places. God works in wonderful ways to help us grow in our ministry and mission and to

be faithful stewards of the historic sanctuary and church addition for our generation and generations to come.

Our Zoom Bible study will continue next week on, Wednesday, January 13, at 3 p.m., with our study of Acts.

The Session will hold its next meeting on Thursday, June 7, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held on Zoom.

Volunteers are also needed at Reaching Avery Ministries. Please call Michelle at the office. (828-733-5127).

Sheri Elderfield has reversible winter masks with adjustable bands; masks are \$8 each. You can pick your mask(s) up at the church office or call (828-733-1939) and we will mail the mask(s) to you.

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in Avery County, we ask that you call the office and make an appointment if you need to come by. Office phone: 828-733-1393. The buildings will be locked even during office hours. When you arrive at church, please call us to let us know you are here. And of course, masks are required. We also have hand sanitizer available. Thank you!

January Birthdays

- * JEAN BARRIER—JANUARY 1
- * JOHN HALIFAX—JANUARY 1
- * FRANK DUNCAN, JR.—JANUARY 2
- * SALLY WILHITE—JANUARY 4
- * BOYD BARRIER—JANUARY 5
- * DAVID SHRADER—JANUARY 5
- * SYLVIA GILL—JANUARY 6
- * SHELLIE DUNCAN—JANUARY 17
- * BONNIE VUOLO—JANUARY 20
- * TY PRIOR—JANUARY 24
- * BIRTE HOGAN—JANUARY 29

Prayer Requests

- * BILL AND BOBBIRAE HASSETT
- * JOE JORDAN
- * CONNIE VUOLO, GABE VUOLO'S MOM
- * MARTHA LIND, ERIN LIND
- * CONNIE & RB DANNER
- * FRANK DUNCAN
- * JESSE & BARBARA DOWNING
- * MARILYN GASCHO
- * BONNIE VUOLO
- * JANET WELLS
- * TASHA REID
- * MAGGIE LAUTERER
- * MIKE KILGORE
- * FRANK DUNCAN
- * DAVID FRANCE
- * FRANCES & LARRY BROWN

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. -Isaiah 60:1

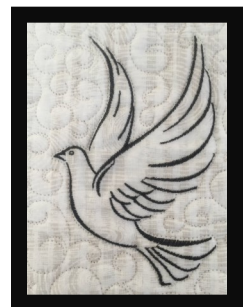
Pastor Kathy's Reflection

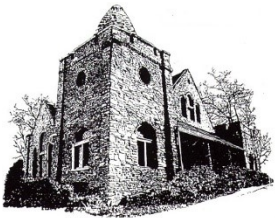
In the aftermath of the domestic attack that took place in our nation's capital yesterday, it is important for us to remember who we are as the Body of Christ and as Sisters and Brothers in Christ. There is much confusion, anger, and fear in our country today, and as Christians, we are called to be peacemakers, to speak the truth, and to seek justice. So, let us each take time today to focus our heart, mind, soul, and body on being Christlike in this fragile time. I would like to offer a prayer to help guide us in this day and the days to come. It is the prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, the truth;
Where there is doubt, the faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.





Crossnore Presbyterian Church

"Growing Deeper in Faith, Reaching Out in Love"

P. O. Box 386/200 Chapel Dr., Crossnore, NC 28616
828-733-1939/cpcpcusa@gmail.com
www.crossnorepresbyterianchurch.org

Announcements and Items of Interest—Page 2

January 6, 2021

Daniel's Den

"Reflecting on Epiphany"

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the Magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road." Matthew 2:1-12 NRSV

The season of Epiphanytide is a time on the Christian liturgical calendar which we protestants often neglect. Celebrated on January 6th, Epiphany is the festival that commemorates Christ's divinity through the visitation and adoration of the Magi; and, in antiquity, it used to be as crucial as the feasts of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The word "epiphany" means manifestation or sudden insight. In many Roman Catholic countries, the festival is often called "Three Kings Day," and the day is celebrated by having King Cake, a desert where a small replica of the baby Jesus is placed within the cake. The cake is then sliced, and whoever finds the baby Jesus in their slice is given a gift in remembrance of the gifts the Magi brought the Christ child. Reflecting on these customs, I went to Matthew's gospel and began to ask some questions, and I immediately realized that the Epiphany story is a micro summarization of the entire gospel narrative where the first were last and the last became first. This is a story where foreign pagans became the first to recognize Jesus for who He was, while those comforted by their status and privilege feared the transitions that Jesus' birth signified. One may even say that I had an epiphany about Epiphany. Starting with the text in Matthew, we are introduced to the folks called "Magi." According to scholars, these people probably served as priests in the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism, a monotheist religion not unlike Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, which has survived to this day in the modern country of Iran. What gives this theory credibility is that Zoroastrianism requires its priests to seek out astrological changes to decipher God's will, making it highly likely, given the biblical account, the Magi were Zoroastrians. Whatever their faith tradition, the fact remains that these people were gentile pagans, yet they joyfully and exuberantly sought out Jesus, realizing it was the will of God to give him worship. The story then mentions that the Magi stopped by Herod's palace (after all, it is logical to look for a newborn king at a palace, right?), and their message terrifies "all of Jerusalem" with Herod. We cannot lose this irony; indeed, the people who shouldn't have cared for the Messiah's birth were earnestly seeking him while those who had been waiting for the Messiah since ancient times were troubled to hear of his birth. It seems that this idea of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable started with Jesus' birth before he could even open his mouth to argue with the Pharisees and Sadducees. This is the core of the Gospel of Jesus: that those who were unclean or alien become God's children not because of pedigree but because of faith, which forces us out of our comfort zone to be in relationship with the Living God. These Zoroastrian priests could see the Christ child's divinity even when Herod and all of Jerusalem could not.

Reflecting on the Epiphany Story, I concluded that the first Christians were these pagan priests. They may have gone back to their own country and practiced their rituals and religion, but they had an encounter where they were changed forever. The word which we translate from Greek which means "homage" also means "worship" and "adoration," which indicates that the same glorification which we Christians give Jesus today was given by those Magi who, on faith, left their own country of origin to find the promised King of Kings.

Have a question on church history, liturgy, sacred tradition, Presbyterianism, or more? Submit it to Daniel's Den at

Daniel.Coffey@upsem.edu.



Daniel Coffey
Union Presbyterian Seminary Student
(828) 386-5212