

January 26, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I continue to see the light of Christ in you and for that I give God praise and thanks.

Januaries are always a busy time. Added to the denominational yearly reports, there's our Bethany Annual Report, and this year Consistory was asked to answer questions about our understanding of Office for the Commission on History. Throw in an overnight conference in Utica for the Regional Synod Conference and the times have gotten really nutty! The one place I have found joy is in the belief that all of this 'work' is centered in God. Each report reveals how God has been at work in and through our church.

This is the meaning of: Epiphany. Epiphany is God's revealing of God's own self in the person of Jesus. Often we associate Epiphany with the arrival of the Magi at the birth of Jesus but it is so much more. God moved the hearts of the non-Jewish astronomers to such a point that they left the comforts of home to travel following a brilliant star to an unknown place to fall down on their knees worshipping the newborn King. From the beginning, God is revealing himself to be the God of the Jews and the non-Jewish. God is over all creation mandating that the star remain brightly shining for as long as was needed. We spent time in worship with John the Baptist and his revelation that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And last Sunday we heard from Jesus what he was sent to do as prophesied by Isaiah, bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, free the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Once we understand who Jesus is, we can more appropriately enter into the Season of Lent. February 10 is Ash Wednesday and so begins our Lenten journey. We will be having two worship opportunities: one at Bethany at 1:00 and the second at Third Reformed Church beginning at 6:30 PM with a pot-luck supper.

I pray this will be a deep and wonderful Lent for you ... *Pastor Peggy*