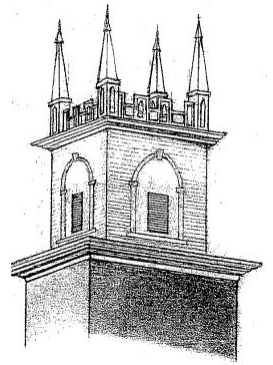


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Vol. 24 No.1

January 2024

Message from the Pastor



As I write this message only hours away from the dawn of a new year, my heart holds more hope than pessimism. Once again, I draw inspiration from the beauty of our luminaries on Christmas Eve—what we remember vividly is not the darkness but the power of light. Our season of Christmastide formally ends with Twelfth Night, the Feast of the Epiphany, or as we have come to know it, the Feast of the Three Kings. This remarkable story begins with the wise men from the East, led by the star, pay homage to the Baby Jesus with gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh. After their departure, an angel appears to Joseph and says, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” (Matthew 2:13)

Among the many ways that artists over the centuries have imagined this scene, this historical landscape, “The Flight into Egypt” (1609), from German Renaissance artist Adam Elsheimer speaks to me in dark times.



Though danger and darkness were present all around him, Joseph unhesitatingly obeyed the angel and followed the light to a land of safe haven for his family. Today, the very place where the Holy Family fled has filled us with scenes of horror and cruelty like Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents. Let us be united in our prayer for peace to prevail in all places of war.

For me, the lesson of Elsheimer's "Flight into Egypt" is more about the light than the darkness. Because of Joseph's protection, Jesus grew and flourished to complete his mission on earth. We are called to be children of light. Let us continue to choose hope over despondency and to live and to love every day through this New Year.

No amount of regret changes the past.
No amount of anxiety changes the future
But any amount of gratitude changes the present.

—Marc and Angel Chernoff

With shared blessings,

Michael F. Dwyer, Pastor