



ORA

THE MESSENGER

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

JANUARY 2025

Who Worship Passionately, Love Extravagantly & Witness Boldly

Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot, Pastor

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



The Visit of the Magi
Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot

Matthew 2:1–12 NRSV

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men 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 wise

men 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 down 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.

We are the Wisemen

I have always been fascinated by the story of the Wisemen, the Three Kings, the Magi... tradition maintains that there were three, although that is not directly supported by scripture. The number three is logical considering the three gifts mentioned, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, so three fits the narrative nicely. There is also no mention of them being royalty, really, although their gifts were certainly indicative of substantial wealth. Their one characteristic which is truly supported in scripture is that they were wise, learned men, with a

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knowledge of astronomy and navigation, and the ability to discern truth from deception.

Tradition also places the wisemen at the manger scene, worshipping the newborn Jesus and presenting their gifts alongside the shepherds and animals in the stable, but scripture supports that some time, perhaps a year or even two, had lapsed between the birth and the arrival of the wisemen.

I think the thing that fascinates me most about the story of the Magi is their willingness to investigate the sign that was given to them... their hunger for answers to the questions raised in their hearts and minds by the appearance of an unfamiliar star in the heavens. Their perseverance in traveling great distances, seeking the answers to questions rooted in a foreign belief system, in a set of writings that were counter to the culture they were familiar with, comfortable with. In other words, they had to be willing to look outside their comfort zone, think outside the box, go against the grain, live out on the edge in order to gain the knowledge and understanding they were seeking.

I wonder, how many of us today have that kind of hunger for the truth? How many of us living in the world today have the willingness and initiative to set out on a journey of discovery based simply on the signs that we have been provided - signs given in scripture, signs given in our own personal experiences with the prevenient grace and justifying grace and sanctifying grace of God. How many of us have a working knowledge of what those different types of grace are, and why they are important? How many of us living today are even curious about, let alone willing to discover what those terms mean?

How many of us are willing to take the initiative to understand the basic tenets of our faith? How many people in our culture today are willing to drive down the street to their local church, never mind travel a thousand miles by camel or donkey or horse, to spend some time learning all they possibly can learn about the God who

created them and His Son who came to save them?

There is a church every few hundred yards in this community, and every one of them has a Bible study or two and all of them have more empty seats than they do occupied seats on any given Sunday and at any given bible study. If every person in this community that needed to know Jesus actually attended those studies and church services, we'd all need to build bigger churches. Sadly, that is not the current reality, is it?

The thing is, all of us were created to be the Magi. Our true nature is to hunger for a relationship with God. Our true nature is to seek Him out and to not be satisfied with unanswered questions. When we follow our true nature, then we are the Magi - on the hunt for the truth, looking for the revelation of Christ in our lives. We are looking for the epiphany - the understanding of who He is and who we are in relationship to Him. We are looking for epiphany - the light of understanding to penetrate the darkness of ignorance; the light of life to cut through the darkness of the shadow of death under which we have been existing. We are the Magi when we seek Christ! Go... Seek Him!

By His Grace,
Pastor Steven†

**Wisemen still
seek Him!**

January

calendar of events

1st – New Year's Day

5th- Holy Communion & Worship

Communion Rail Gifts to
 The Good Samaritan Fund
 9:00AM*
 Sunday School 10:15AM
8th- Bible Study & Dinner 5:45PM
12th- Worship Service 9AM*
 Sunday School 10:15AM
 Board of Stewards Meeting 12:45PM
15th- Bible Study & Dinner 5:45PM
18th- Food Pantry Day 9AM
19th- Worship Service 9AM*
 Sunday School 10:15AM
22nd- Bible Study & Dinner 5:45PM
26th- Worship Service 9AM*
 Sunday School 10:15AM
29th- Bible Study & Dinner 5:45PM
 * 9AM Worship Services
In-person and Online
firstmethodistchurchsplendora.org

COME JOIN OUR
BIBLE
 Study
8 Keegan Graves
9 McKenzy Keith
13 Dell Hart
7 Lonnie Johnson
17 Barbara Martin
23 Chloe Hendry
26 Kathy Johnson
27 Jacob Vasquez

resumes in January

Start the New Year out right in joining in our weekly Bible Study and dinner. Starting January 8 at 5:45PM we will resume our Wednesday night meetings. Dinner will be provided at 5:45 and the Bible Study will begin at 6:00PM. It is a great way to fellowship and dive deeper into the Word of God. If you do not like driving at night, we will help find you a ride. Hope to see you then!



January birthdays
 5 **Chari Ricks**

Christmas angels

As the New Year comes, we close out one of our biggest ministries; Christmas Angels. Again, we partnered with Splendora ISD to provide Christmas gifts for over 80 local children in need. Many thanks go to Splendora ISD, Tess Nardoizzi, Charles Jones, Sheila & Karl Keith, Frankie Freeman, Gary Fritz and a number of volunteers. This ministry cannot be done by just one person. We praise God for the many financial and donations of time to help make this possible. Thank you to everyone who helped!

Looking ahead in the new year

As we say farewell to 2024 and greet 2025. In this new year, we have many new opportunities to serve God. Pray and ask for the LORD to help you find a new way to serve. It may be as simple as going to Bible Study every week, helping in Worship,

cl : church, praying with others.
G place for you. Seek Him about
hc y grow in Spirit and skills.



Prayer requests

*"Pray without ceasing."
--1 Thessalonians 5:17*

Family of Tommie Greening - Comfort &
Peace
Ed Smith (under hospice care at home now)

Ed is Angel's brother
Wanda Earheart - End stage cancer -
Husband Sean and Children
Aillene Wilson - In hospital
Ramona Ferguson - Pending Surgery
Sage Herr - Cancer/Healing
Chantel Wilson - Cancer/Treatments
Wally LeMaster - Cancer/Treatments
Charlie Kincannon - Cancer
Joe & Jeanette Melton - Travel mercies -
William Blake - Health
Caleb Barroso - Health
Kevin Hendry - Health
The Hantelmans - Health
Lovada Linqvist - Health
Charles & Mawana Jones - Healing
Patti Lyons - Continued Healing
Angel Van Ostrand - Continued Healing
Duke, Masterson and Shugart Families
for Faith & Healing
Joey Masterson - Faith & Healing
The Keith Family
Jeremiah Johnson
Shirley & Bob Adams
Shirley & Harry Schumaker
Tommy Johnson
Duane Hall
Ralph Madonna
Becca Reed
Stephanie Reed
Garry @ Turbo Valves
Debbie Szymanski & Family
Frankie, Evan & Brooke Jones
Pastor Steven & Family
Our Church & Leadership
Our Country & Leadership

Unspoken



Remembering Tommie Greening

January 20, 1925 - December 11, 2024

*Tommie Lucille Greening, 99 years old,
went home to be with her LORD on
December 11, 2024. Born January 20,
1925 to Willie Clark and Ida Hartt Clark.
Tommie was preceded in death by her
beloved husband, Rufus Earl Greening; her
parents, Willie and Ida Clark; her sons,
Kenneth Greening, Willie Thomas Greening
and wife Carol; her brothers, Charlie Clark,
AJ Clark, MJ Clark, Billie Clark; her sister,
Willie D. Clark Lee; and granddaughter,
Barbara Ann.*

*Tommie became a member of First
Methodist Church Splendora, March 19,
2006. At First Methodist Church, Tommie is
remembered as a faith filled lady who loved
to dress up and known as a "fashionista."
She enjoyed wearing matching hats with her
outfits.*

*Tommie, affectionately known as "Mamaw,"
lived a life filled with love, faith and family.
She never missed an opportunity to shop for
a bargain, eat something sweet with her
coffee, or enjoy a soda pop while fishing
with loved ones. She was very proud of her
four sons and adored all of her 11
grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, and
6 great, great grandchildren!*

*Tommie's family and friends will miss her
greatly.*

*In honor of Mamaw, take a moment to shop
at your local dollar store, enjoy a honeybun,
a beer and cherish the simple joys of life,
just as Tommie did.*

