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A Star of Hope

by Tim Tripp

We don't know much about the star the Magi saw. We don't know whether it was a comet or a glowing mass that God put in the sky. We don't know if it was only visible to them or if others witnessed the unusual light in the night sky. We do know that it appeared to them, it captured their interest and something about it that drew them. It seemed to move ahead of them, leading them to what they were to see.

We aren't told how they knew that the star was a harbinger of the birth of the king of the Jews but somehow they knew. When they spoke with Herod, then the leader of the Jews, they expected him to know where this king was to be born but he had to ask the experts in the Jewish law who told him that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. The Magi followed the star to Bethlehem where it appeared to stop over a specific place. It must have seemed an unlikely place for a king but they knew this had to be it. They were rewarded for their long journey by getting to see the one born to be the king. They gave him gifts, bowed down before him and worshipped him.

We don't know what they thought they would find when they got to where the star led them but we know what they did find. They found hope. They found a little child in whom dwelt the fullness of God. We know they saw him before he worked his miracles, before he fed the masses with a child's lunch, before he walked on water and before he kept multitudes mesmerized by his teaching. They could not have known the suffering that lay ahead for this little one, the death he would die and that he would be raised to life soon after. All they knew was that this little one brought hope, brought God's presence among man and brought life. For them, that was enough.

We are living in times that are extraordinary. We have a world-wide pandemic continuing to make headlines and compelling many of us to take vaccinations to avoid catching and spreading this potentially deadly disease. There have been dangerous storms, social unrest and international disputes. There has been continual political strife and economic impact. Many have said that things just feel hopeless. We need that star.

We need the star of Bethlehem to show us that God is still with us. We need the star to guide us to the place(s) where we find Jesus. We need the star to reveal to us God's plan for the future. We need the star to bring us hope.

There is good news on that front. That star is still shining today. You may not be able to pick it out of the night sky but it is there. It can be found in the pages of the Bible and especially in those pages that tell the story of Jesus. It can also be found in the hearts of those who follow Jesus today. His disciples, the church, will always be able to point the way to Jesus. They can share the good news that whatever may be going on in the world around us, God is in control and will make all things work for His glory and for the good of those who seek him and are called according to his purpose.

The star of hope is still burning bright. It still leads us to Jesus. It still brings hope to the world. May God bless you this season as you, like the wise men of old, follow the star of hope and seek the presence of the King in the form of an infant. May you know that he still brings hope, still is God's presence in this world and still is life. If you know that, that is enough.

DIOS LE BENDIGA! (God Bless You!)

by Aris Ortiz

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year my West Side Family!

From my family to yours, we want to express our appreciation for all of you and pray that God will bring beautiful blessings for all of you!

Starting next year, I will be in this little section once a month, sharing and updating all of you about our Spanish Work Ministry.

May God enrich everyone with abundant health, peace and happiness.

Blessings My West Side Family!

Gathering Times

Sunday Morning 10 Am Worship
& Kids for Christ
ages 1yr-3rd grade

In- Person Adult/Teen Bible Study
Wednesdays 6:30pm - Room 3 & Cornerstone

Friendship Cafe and Conversational Christianity
Sunday Mornings at 8:45

In- person Bible Study for all ages
Sunday Mornings at 9am

Holiday Schedule

Worship Service Only

for Dec. 26th.

Friendship Cafe will be closed,
& classes will not meet;

that includes all adult and children's
classes and Kids For Christ.

Rather, we will all meet together for Worship
Service in the Auditorium at 10am.

Additionally, **no classes** will meet on **Wednesday Dec. 29th.**

***Normal schedule will resume Sunday Jan. 2nd
including Friendship Cafe!***

Disaster Relief Information for Mayfield, Kentucky

If you would like to contribute to general needs then a relief center is operating out of the Seven Oaks Church of Christ. If you are trying to help a specific family then attach a note to that effect.

Seven Oaks Church of Christ
Tornado Relief
290 State Route 97
Mayfield KY 42066

If you would like to contribute specifically to help Carol White's family, there are two ways you can do that.

Contribute to the address above and specify the name
Marilyn and Kenneth McCormack
Or

Send directly to them
C/o Jo Tibbs:

4680 State Line Rd Dukedom, TN 38226

**Sign up for WS emails at
westsidear.org/subscribe**

Week of: 12-19-2021

Weekly Giving: \$ 15,574

Attendance

Weekly Budget: \$ 13,820

Sunday AM - 242

YTD Giving: \$ 675,527

Wednesday PM - 36

YTD Budget: \$ 704,807

Family Illness and Recovery

Krista Magness, great niece of Trish Bailey has been having seizures. Tests are being done to rule out a tumor. Please keep her in your prayers as she continues to battle cancer and the effects of it on her body.

Patsy Parnell has blood clots in her legs. Please pray that this can be corrected without major surgery.

Casey Elmore, friend of Shannon Walters, is recovering from brain surgery. Please pray for his pain to be controlled and for a full and rapid recovery.

Ongoing prayer requests:

Jesse Boshears - cousin of Chad Crain

Sofia Juarez

Sid Womack

Tami Robinson

Happy 100th Birthday!

Wayne Nordin will be 100 years young this Christmas!

(Dec. 25th) Be sure to send him a card to let him know you are thinking of him.

Mail cards to him C/O his daughter Sherry Polsgrove.

1304 Skyline Drive, Russellville, AR 72802

Love. Share. Disciple.