



“Go Tell My Brothers . . .”  
John 20:17

*The Voice of your Friend*

The Newsletter of Friends in Christ Lutheran Church  
180 E. Waverly St. Morris, IL 60450 815-341-1255 office@fielc.org

Worship: Saturday 5:30 pm Sunday: 8:15 am, 10:45 am, 9:30 Bible Study & Sunday School

### **Gold, Frankincense and Wha-a-a-t?**

It is January and we are into the Church season called Epiphany. It is **the story of the wise men (Matthew chapter 2)**, and another part of the Christmas story that has a lot of questions coming its way. Who are these guys? Where are they from? How many are they? Why those gifts? Are they Kings (like in the song), wise men, (like in the Christmas programs), or astrologers (like some have said recently)?

**How many were they?** We don't know. The number three is taken from the number of gifts, but the Bible doesn't say how many they were.

**Where are they from?** They are from the east, probably the area that made up ancient Babylon. This is important because Babylon is where the Jewish people went into exile in 587 BC. Among the exiles was a young man named Daniel (who has a book about him in the Old Testament). Through God's working Daniel ended being named the chief wise man of Babylon and got to teach wisdom to the other wise men. So there were set up schools of learning that included the books of the Old Testament.

The wise men likely saw the star, and were familiar with the prophecy in Numbers 24:17 that talks about a star connected with the birth of the Messiah. So they would think of a child born in Judea and head to Jerusalem. There they found out about another prophecy Micah 5:2 naming Bethlehem as the place where the Christ was to be born.

**What about those gifts?** Two of the gifts are named in Isaiah 60:6 - Gold and Frankincense. In fact Isaiah 60:1-6 mentions camels, nations coming, and "kings" (v. 3) which is why we sing "We Three Kings." But what about the other?

Here's where it gets fascinating. Myrrh is never mentioned in the Old Testament prophecies. If the wise men are following the prophecies, why include myrrh? And add to that what they did when they got there and saw Jesus. "They fell down and worshiped him." (Matthew 2:11)

**Why did they worship Him?** If they were reading and studying the Old Testament prophecies they would run into the questions the Jewish teachers had been asking. Who is the Messiah / the Christ? He is called the Son of God. Who is it who is walking in the garden in the cool of the day? Who is the man Jacob wrestles with (Genesis 32) where he says "I saw God face to face"? Is that the Messiah? Is the Messiah divine? Is he God? Why do Moses and the elders of Israel see a human figure when they go up Mt. Sinai? And the question Jesus asked later on - about the Son of David the Christ; if he is David's Son how does David call him Lord? All these questions were part of the Old Testament people searching the Scriptures and asking about the Messiah.

When the wise men "fell down and worshiped him" they made their confession of faith. "This child is God." Bring Him incense. Worship Him. God has come into our world. He lives among us, shares our burdens, calls us close, and has come to bring salvation. But there is more.

**What about the Myrrh?** Fascinating! Myrrh is not in the prophecies. Apparently the wise men added it to Isaiah's list of what to bring. Myrrh is burial ointment. But - Burial ointment for a baby ?!?! Why would they do that? Apparently they have read some of the other prophecies. Such as Isaiah 53. (There are many others.) They are making the good confession; telling what they have come to believe about this child of Bethlehem. He has come to be God with us; and He came to die for us. Those who have learned this, who understand the Scriptures this

deeply, and come to worship Him really do have to be called "wise."  
So, wise men they are.

It is fascinating how **everything fits together seamlessly**. (And we haven't even talked about why Bethlehem sheep are different. There are more amazing things in that part of the story.)

The story holds together. The Word of God is the same. **It is the story about Jesus and it always reminds us about His cross**. In this part about the wise men it is tucked away, neatly wrapped up woven together with all of the other parts. And when you look closely **there is a simple beauty in how God sets the truth in front of us**.

Have a wonderful Epiphany season!  
Your friend in Christ,  
Pastor Mark Willig

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **Sunday School Recruiting:** If you are interested in teaching, planning crafts or helping with crafts, please let Cathy Thompson know (815)357-8027 or charms6297@yahoo.com) as soon as possible. (Think about what you could do to be a part of this great work among us. And then talk with Cathy about it.) Thank you to all of our Sunday School teachers and helpers: Cathy Thompson, Deb Carter, Alexis Carter, Kim Breyman, Alice Hunt, Sue Seidler, Vicki Kahn and Paula Willig.
2. **Adult Information Class:** It is becoming time to plan an Adult Information Class, for those who are interested in knowing more about our teaching, who may be thinking about becoming members, or who want to review their confirmation instruction. Talk to Pastor Mark if you are interested.
3. **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING:** Friends in Christ will be collecting again this year for Souper Bowl of Caring to assist the homeless and the hungry. Our "Soup Pot" will be on the front table as you

- walk in. All proceeds will go back to the national organization through We Care. Thank you in advance for your continued prayers and gifts for those who struggle in these difficult times.
4. **Website, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube:** We have updated our Website <http://www.ficlc.org> and we now share information on our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/ficlc>, Twitter and Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKZWEqeoOgmh6RoSEFbnK3w> Be sure to take a look at what we have online.
  5. **The Memorial Service for Donna Olson** will be held at the church on January 25, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. There will be visitation starting at 2:00 and a reception to follow the service. We pray for Donna's family and friends that the Lord give them comfort in knowing that Donna is now celebrating with Him.

#### **ANNIVERSARIES FOR JANUARY**

5th	Darrel & Judie Thompson	51 years
16th	Cliff & Tina Nighsonger	60 years

#### **BIRTHDAYS FOR JANUARY**

9th	Vicki Kahn Alec Wills
12th	Alyssa Applebee
13th	Remington Pempe
15th	Kalelyn Christ Kim Foehringer
16th	Ethan Thompson
17th	Mark Thompson
20th	Paige Whalen
22nd	Cathy Thompson Laura Wills

24th Jared Carlson  
29th Gracie Brandt

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL!!!**

Please call the Church office if you have a birthday and it is not listed.

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**Let's thrive Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**

**GREAT NEWS!!** Friends in Christ Lutheran Church has been approved to Participate in the Thrivent Choice Program.

**THRIVENT CHOICE** is a charitable grant program where members can Participate in how Thrivent Financial distributes some of its charitable funds.

Members may participate in Thrivent Choice in one or two ways.

- 1) All benefit and associate members can “vote” to recommend how to distribute Grant funds one to two times a year.
- 2) Choice dollars: members can direct Choice dollars to Friends in Christ Lutheran Church. (Choice Dollars are not deducted from your personal investments)  
You may direct funds online at [Thrivent.com](http://Thrivent.com) or calling 800-THRIVENT and Saying “Thrivent Choice”.

ONLINE INSTRUCTIONS: [thrivent.com](http://thrivent.com) / log in or register / Membership & Gifts / Thrivent Choice / Get Started / Fill in information: DO NOT fill out entire form:

- Enter State (IL)
- County (Grundy)
- Chapter (Grundy)
- Chapter Number (31090)

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Questions? Call Judy Johnson 815-942-4115 or Larry Fish (Thrivent Advisor) 815-941-9880