

Shepherd's Staff

January 2024

We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.

"I be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!"

Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m.

Welcoming a New Year and New Members!

Recently we were excited to witness the public profession of faith of seven of our young people! On November 26, Kellen, Ellie and Lila Reints, Savannah and Rylan Ascher, Emma Haan, and Lilly Stirling stood before the congregation and committed their lives to Jesus Christ as new members of our church congregation. They were able to jump in right away by participating in the Advent readings. We are so thankful God has led them to this major point in their lives and let's be sure to welcome them to all the privileges church membership has to offer!

New Members

Front Row: Savannah Ascher (junior), Ellie Reints (sophomore), Lila Reints (freshman), and Lilly Stirling (middle school-eighth)

Back Row: Emma Haan (sophomore), Kellen Reints (junior), and Rylan Ascher (freshman)



Welcome!



Pray for Perry

No, not again. We keep hearing of shootings and killings and we ask, "Why?" Again, this week, this time close to home, another school shooting occurred where people were injured and lives were lost. It breaks our hearts to hear this news so often and we wonder what we can do. Pray, folks. Pray. Pray. If you are able to reach out and do more, do it! God bless you! But many of us feel our hands are tied and our actions or inability to help physically are limited. But please remember the power of prayer. We need to raise these concerns to God. Pray for:

- The injured
- The families of the injured
- The families of those whose lives were taken, including the shooter's family
- The Perry students, faculty, and staff
- The emergency personnel
- The medical facilities, doctors and nurses attending to the injured
- The pastors and churches of the families who were directly affected
- The other children and adults who are so confused or hurt and have so much hate that they feel the need to take the lives of others and oftentimes themselves
- The Perry community
- Whatever it takes to stop this violence



Please continue to keep this community in your hearts and prayers.

A Word About the Wise Men

Did you know January 6 is known as the Epiphany of the wise men? What is epiphany? The Greek word “epiphaneia” means “appearance” or “manifestation,” and it symbolizes the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God to the Gentiles, represented by the magi, who were not of Jewish descent. Epiphany is the 12th day after Christmas and closes the Christmas season.

We sing “We Three Kings” during the month of December, but we find that the lyrics may not be entirely accurate. Here are a few things to contemplate.

1. Magi can be traced back to Joseph in Egypt when he was called by Pharaoh to interpret a dream, as well as to Daniel in Babylon, when King Nebuchadnezzar also had a dream. Daniel interpreted the dream and the King put him in charge of all the wise men (magi). Daniel was a follower of God and had access to the Old Testament scrolls and shared about the coming Messiah. When King Darius ruled, he made the wise men become astronomers, as well as king makers. No one became king without their approval. They were powerful and political and would have made a grand entrance into Jerusalem.
2. “Magus” in the Persian language meant “priest.” The Greek calls these men *magoi apo anatolon*, “magi from the East,” and the term has been variously translated as wise men, astrologers, and magicians. They were specialists in medicine, religion, astronomy, astrology, divination and magic. There were both good and bad magi, depending on whether they did research in the sciences or practiced black magic, divination, and witchcraft.
3. The visit of the magi most likely comprised a large caravan, setting their number much higher than three. Some historians believe the figure was over 300. This would have included the magi, cavalry, servants and slaves.
4. Camels may not have been the mode of transportation. Much evidence points to the region of Babylon / Mesopotamia / Persia / Arabia as origins from “the East” for the magi. People from this area were accomplished horsemen and most likely would have ridden Arabian horses. The magi would have been too important to ride camels. The camels would have been present, however, they would have been used for carrying supplies. The visit of the magi was of great significance for later Christianity. The magi were pagans and the fact that Gentile magi performed the same adoration Jewish shepherds symbolized the universal outreach for future Christianity.
5. The great good news of how God revealed His Son not just to Jewish people, but to all of humanity everywhere which began as the light from a single star, has now illuminated the entire globe through the One who said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12).

We know the Bible is rather vague on the details of the magi, but through years of research, historians have been able to piece together information to help us learn a little more about these men. However, matter how much we gather about the magi’s history, we do know that they achieved their purpose in the total Christmas story, which was to expand it. Until the visit of the magi, the knowledge of the birth of Jesus had been kept pretty much local. But once the magi showed up, that all changed as Gentiles, Jews, and Jerusalem learned of the birth of the Messiah. Maybe we could even call the magi the first missionaries!



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January Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday


- 1/2 Mel Riebkes
- 1/6 Lila Reints
- 1/11 Dennis Mennen
- 1/16 Gerald Haan
- 1/17 Lauren Husz
- 1/28 Mary Boersma

Happy Anniversary

- 1/13 Larry & Mary Johnson



Reminder: If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Armstrong by the 20th of the month.



“A snowflake is one of God's most fragile creations, but look what they can do when they stick together!”

