Springfield Presbyterian Church

Epiphany

The 307th Day of March

**Those Who Dream Will Persevere**

1. The Journey

Whenever we come to Epiphany in the liturgical calendar, I think it’s always important to acknowledge that these twelve verses sum up a much longer journey. On Google Maps, you can see that the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem is around 235 hours on foot. That puts you at about 10 days of walking, if you never stopped for a moment for food or to rest. And while they were following the star, we do not know with the terrain, with the empires in power, or their route really how long it must have taken to get to Jesus.

We also assume that there were three wise men because there were three gifts. Now, that’s ultimately possible, but more folks could have been on this journey. We just don’t know – we take guesses along the way.

However you look at it though, we can see that this was no day’s trek and it’s important to remember that their journey of faith to the manger must have had some stumbles along the way even if it was ten days. I imagine that there were questions – is this the right route, is this what we really should be doing, what if we were wrong? Signs of doubt are ultimately signs of faith being developed. Sometimes the journey is what leads to growth.

1. Camino de Santiago

While I’ve never taken the pilgrimage, I’ve heard of many who have benefitted from a journey called Camino de Santiago also known as The Way of St. James. There are different routes you can take, from terrain to length of time on pilgrimage. Whatever route you choose though, you will ultimately seek to end up at the coastal destination of The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela which is where scholars believe St. James was buried.

Those who walk the path are guided by scalloped shells, a sign that you’re on the right route. The symbol of the scalloped shell has many different origins, but often folks who are journeying will wear a scallop around their neck to signal that they are a traveler on the way.

Those who I have encountered who have taken this journey speak to the ways that the Camino has changed them and continues to change them. In fact, many people go back to the pilgrimage at other points of their life, following a different route, but finding that same sense of sacred connection.

1. A People Meant to Journey

Whether it’s the route to the manger or the Camino de

Santiago or other journeys we find ourselves on – I pray that it leads us closer to Christ. The Magi remind us that the life of faith is a life that dares to journey, to trust a star, and to dream of something better. The day they dreamt for did come, they met the Christ, and they rejoiced. And while it might seem like their journey ends there, we know that they go back home, they journey home, by a different route and even then, their journey will continue.

This week, I challenge you to find a new way to journey. We are a people born to journey, to sojourn whether that’s by foot, or through other means – like journaling, or art, or singing, or whatever else makes sense to your mind and body. But find what way makes sense for you, live it out, even when it seems challenging or daunting or you get tired of the road laid out before you – may you come back to Christ and this community and hear the encouragement and love that surround you.

To close out our season of ‘Those Who Dream’, I finish by reading a poem from Rev. Sarah Are called, I Imagine:

I imagine they packed bags—

Water and food, blankets and clothes.

I imagine they packed tools—

Maps and telescopes that could bring the stars closer,

As if the sky was a comforter they could pull near.

I imagine they hugged loved ones and said, “We’ll be back soon.”

And when loved ones said, “Don’t leave,” “It’s risky,” “You don’t even know what you’re chasing,”

I imagine they put lips to foreheads and said, “There is a light in the darkness. I must chase that.”

And then I imagine they walked.

I imagine they walked until legs were tired and knees gave out. Maybe they told stories on the road and laughed into open sky, Or maybe they sat in silence and prayed for more light. However the road unfolded, I imagine it was not easy.

I imagine all of this, not because I’ve chased stars,

But because I have dreamed.

And these dreams for justice make the Magi’s story my own.

For every time we fight for justice, We start in the dark.

We hug loved ones and say, “There’s a light in the darkness, I must chase that.”

We walk until we’re tired, And then we keep walking.

We laugh at the open sky as a form of resistance.

We pray in the night for signs of more light.

And no matter how important the journey is,

And no matter how much progress we make,

The journey to justice is never easy.

And so I pray, That maybe one day,

We will be like the Magi,

And will walk ourselves into the light.

Until then, don’t forget—

There’s a light in the darkness. We must chase that.

And so may the journeys we go on lead us to epiphany moments, moments where we have the bright ‘aha’s that lead us to think in a different way, ways that lead to justice. May we be brave, even when the journey looks long, arduous, or stressful – may we trust there this hope on the other side. And above all, may we find Christ again and again on this road, rejoicing each time, propelled to move forward in faith, to persevere and act on the call just like the Magi. Amen.