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First Christian *Chimes*

...CALLED BY GOD TO LIVE AS A BLESSING...

2010: Where did you experience God?

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN TEACHES GRATITUDE, ACCEPTANCE AND COURAGE.

Examen of the Year

At the turn of the year we often find ourselves reflecting on the year past and looking forward to the new. This time of reflection can be deepened by exploring the spiritual prayer practice of Examen. Examen is a prayer practice developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 15th century. It may be adapted for daily or weekly use.

Here is an example of the movements of Examen:

Stillness

You may wish to light a candle.

Take a moment to find a comfortable position.

Notice your breathing and begin to focus inward.

Become more fully aware of being in the presence of God, in the presence of love.

Reflection

Remember the events of the last year: Christmas... Autumn... Summer... Spring... the beginning of 2010....

Ask God to bring to your heart the moment(s) from the past year for which you are most grateful.

If you could relive one moment, which one would it be?

When were you most able to give and receive love?

Reflect on that moment and give thanks for it.



Sorrow and Regret

Look again back over the year.

Ask God to bring to your heart the moment(s) for which you are least grateful.

When were you least able to give and receive love?

Be with whatever you feel without trying to change anything. Take in deep breaths and let God's love fill you just as you are.

Hope for the Future

Back to the present: What insight or grace do I receive from the experiences of the last year?

What gift do I hold for the new year?

What would I like to bring into the new year?

When you have finished, give thanks for what you have experienced.

The Magi: Footprints of Generosity

WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR—LESSONS IN GIVING

The story of the Magi may be the most mysterious of all the Christmas stories. Matthew does not introduce them to us; he simply tells us their story. It may seem a bit odd that the most Jewish of the synoptic Gospels is the one that celebrates Christ being worshiped by Gentiles.

Epiphany—it's the celebration in the church of the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as the Magi worshiped him. The word can also be used to describe a sudden understanding of something.

But as we learn from the story of the Magi, the Epiphany was anything but sudden. The Magi saw a sign in the heavens and followed for up to two years before they found the Christ. It wasn't an easy journey. Their travels took them to a faraway place—where people had a different culture, a different language, and a different religion.

They journeyed expecting to find greatness. Journeyed looking for what they didn't know. They traveled to worship a new king whose sign was seen in the heavens.

They traveled by faith. For you see, the star that they had seen in the East was not ever-present in the night sky. They knew where they had seen it and used that knowledge to plot their course. They simply continued their pilgrimage anticipating that one day they would find the king and honor him.

Their travels, like our lives, included detours. They went to the palace looking for the king. Instead of finding the king, they found Herod. The Magi, men and women on a mission, sought counsel and learned from the scholars where the Messiah was to be born. They then traveled to Bethlehem and once again saw the star and followed until it rested over the place where Jesus was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great joy! Joy in that they had found what they were looking for. Joy that led them to worship Christ. Joy that caused them to be generous in their giving. Their exceeding generosity reflected their exceedingly great joy!

The New Year usually finds us taking a time for reflection and often resolution. As you reflect on your journey—has it taken you to Christ? Are you filled with great joy as you worship Christ? Does your generosity truly reflect your joy?

—*Footprints of Generosity*, www.abc-usa.org



The Magi, © He Qi, www.heqigallery.com, used with permission

Giving Totals

December 5	
General Fund*	\$3655.00
December 12	
General Fund*	\$2055.00
Freezing Nights	\$ 50.00
December 19	
General Fund*	\$1110.00
Disciples Christmas Offering (via <i>Second Time Around</i>)	\$ 140.00
Disciples Christmas Offering	\$ 82.00
December 24 Special Offering	
NAPAD Youth Council representatives	\$ 119.00
December 26	
General Fund*	\$ 719.00
Disciples Christmas Offering	\$ 25.00

***To meet 2011's General Offering budgeted income, weekly General Fund giving must average \$1,346.15.**

coming up in january: birthdays

- 2..... Joyce Wolff
- 8..... Laurie Stanhope
- 10..... Tony Ackerman
- 11..... Cary Stanhope
- 12..... Donna Larsen
- 16..... Herb Crabtree
- 18..... Dick Best
- 18..... Tina Blevins
- 18..... Curtis Yanasak
- 20..... Rose Marie Howard
- 28..... June Armstrong
- 28..... Anna Mae Blevins
- 31..... David Dimond

anniversaries

- 16 Nancy & Ed Durrant

baptism dates

- 1934 Dorris Rickert
- 1950 Joyce Wolff
- January 10, 1971 Charles Raup
- January 20, 1946 Eunice Squires (re-baptized)
- January 23, 1972 Thom Crabb

A Day in the Life of Me

A PERSON WITHOUT A HOME DESCRIBES THEIR DAY

In summer I wake up at dawn with the sun and the birds... in winter I wake up to Freezing Nights volunteers getting me up at 6 am so I can put my bedding and cot in the trailer, eat breakfast, pack my belongings, and go out into the wet, cold, dark morning. Most places aren't open that early. On a good day I have a couple of dollars for a cup of coffee at McDonald's, and if I'm really lucky, the nice one is at Jack in the Box to give me a coffee, something to eat, and let me sit. Some mornings I go straight to the AA hall. My mode of transportation is walking. My backpack gets heavy but I'm afraid it will be stolen if I leave it someplace, besides, I might need something from it because everything I own is in it.



The rain is almost worse than snow. My shoes, socks, jacket and pants get wet so it is nearly impossible to warm up or dry out. By the time the library opens (if it does open today), my body is hurting and I'm tired, but the library doesn't allow napping.

What's my daily schedule? Some mornings I might have an appointment with DSHS or SEAMAR (community health services). I eat my sack lunch around noon, the one I got this morning when I left Freezing Nights. I have to plan my travels with a public bathroom in the vicinity; there aren't many open to the homeless. Much of the day I experience fear, stress, anxiety, loneliness and depression. I have to try to look "normal" so the police don't give me a ticket or arrest me for loitering. Some days I drink to forget my troubles and the hopelessness I feel, drinking too much when the days are long.

For dinner I go to the Armory, eat and head back out. I could go up the hill to the "Y" to take a shower in the early morning or at closing, but how do I get there and do I have \$3? I can take a shower at the Nazarene Church on Sundays; a weekly shower will have to do.

It has been a long day. It's time to meet other homeless people at the police station for a ride to the church that will be hosting Freezing Nights tonight. I look forward to Fridays when First Christian hosts. I'm not the only one who feels they are a special host church. Bingo is fun and it is great to have a reason to laugh. I enjoy visiting with all the caring volunteers. Hopefully I will get a good night's sleep so I can get up in the morning and do it all over again.

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life of the church in january



- Studies for all ages Sundays - 9:45 am
- Service of Worship Sundays - 11 am
- Women's Study (BRB) Wednesdays - 10 am
- SO & SEW Study & Ministry Thursdays - 10 am
- Men's Study Thursdays - 7 pm
- Freezing Nights Fridays - 7 pm
- Adult Lectionary Study Saturdays - 8 am
- 1 New Year's Day
- 4 Book Club discussion *The Lotus Eaters* - 7 pm
- 6 Epiphany
- 6 Council reports due
- 13 Council Meeting - 6 pm
- 15 Lunch with a Friend - Peace Lutheran - 10 am
- 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January's Book Club Read

READERS MEET EVERY FIRST TUESDAY—COME JANUARY 4TH AT 7 PM TO DISCUSS *THE LOTUS EATERS*

“Read Susan Orlean's *The Orchid Thief*, and you'll have an entirely new appreciation for the orchid. Did you know that the orchid takes seven years from seed to bloom? That there are over 100,000 named varieties and hybrids? That the plant lives so long fanciers make provisions for it in their wills?”

I didn't think I was even interested in any of this, but Ms. Orlean writes in such a way that I took in these facts as easily and unknowingly as the pills my mother crushed in applesauce. But this is not just a book of facts, it is a tale of adventure, peppered with people who will go to any lengths to find or develop a unique plant.”

—Dorothy Judd, www.brothersjudd.com

