

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
January 1, 2025
Association Minister Message
Rev. Daniel L. Busch

MAGI. "When they (MAGI) saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route. (Matthew 2:10-12). The *MAGI* were foreigners, inquisitors, astronomers, and astrologist from the East. In their search of the heavens, they saw special sightings that they interpreted as striking and enticing.

After visiting King Herod two years after the birth and inquiring about this with his legal experts, it was determined Bethlehem was where the child would be born. Herod sent the *MAGI* on their way to Bethlehem and wanted them to report back to him and if they found him Herod said he would *"go and worship him."* Herod determined this child was a threat and ordered all male children of the Israelites killed under the age of two to eliminate threats to his rule who was thought to be *"King of the Jews."*

There were more than three *MAGI* in the entourage who presented the three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Rev. Episcopal Priest John H. Hopkins, Jr.'s Epiphany hymn certainly has mischaracterized the travelers, relying just on the presentation of three gifts. Gold symbolizes Christ's divinity, God in flesh. Frankincense is symbolic of Christ's willingness to become a sacrifice, wholly giving Himself, reminiscent of the burnt offerings of Jewish worship. Myrrh symbolizes bitterness, suffering and affliction. From a baby to adult, Jesus pays the ultimate price of death on the cross yet ending in resurrection.

Defying King Herod, the *MAGI* *"went back to their own country by another route."* This is a reminder that encountering Christ and following in His ways is a life transforming action. We live life in new directions, and we follow *"another route"* of love, generosity, hope, peace, and joy. Receive and know Jesus as the light of the world to overcome darkness of oppression and receive the light of life.

BLESSINGS ALWAYS - HAVE A BLESSED AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!