



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PERRY

JANUARY 2025 CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Church Office Closed No Fellowship Supper	2	3	4
5 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	6 Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm	7 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am	8 Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Cong. Care meeting 4:00 pm Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	9 Christian Educa- tion 10:30 am	10	11
12 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	13 Craft & Fellowship 1:00pm	14 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am	15 Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	16 Finance com- mittee meeting 11:30 am	17	18
19 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	20 Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm Church Office Closed	21 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am	22 Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	23	24	25
26 Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am	27 Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm	28 Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Session Meeting 5:30 pm	29 Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm	30	31	

Dear Friends---

Here we are in Christmastide, the season when we ask ourselves questions like, “how long does the Christmas tree remain in the sanctuary?” It is a season of questions. Many of which get answered in a word, “Epiphany!”

Epiphany has an explosive start (Bethlehem’s Star) and an equally explosive ending (Transfiguration’s Star). The last Sunday of Epiphany explodes in starry, shining Transfiguration. Still, as beautiful as these stars seem, stars fade. Bright miracles and bright festivities give way to the unremarkable as everyday life resumes. This resumption of the ordinary creates questions like, “Is God no longer present?” The answer is, “Epiphany!” Epiphany is a vision or experience of God. Epiphany declares what we cannot fully perceive; how we are called to follow Jesus on the mountaintops and in the valleys.

Sometimes we do not perceive starry light, yet God is no less present to us. Genesis 28:16 which has Jacob blurting out “surely God is in this place, and I did not know it.” Isn’t this how it often goes with us? This is a Truth of Epiphany: God is in our space, yet we do not perceive the Presence.

Sometimes we focus on ourselves, our sin, or our inadequacy, and this causes us to completely miss Epiphany. That missed Epiphany is God’s presence. Sometimes we miss it because of our wrong focus, other times we miss it because we see Epiphany and do not like what we see. Epiphany is not necessarily a thing that we will like, follow, or even grasp. Jacob’s Epiphany desire is to, “... come again to my father’s house in peace.” Yet this Epiphany doesn’t inspire Jacob to reconcile with the brother and father that he’s fleeced. Almost two decades later, Jacob finally follows where Epiphany light leads.

Epiphany is great, but following Epiphany is another matter entirely. Magi rejoice and follow Bethlehem’s star. Disciples leave the mountain and follow Jesus into the valley. The Christian life is one of Epiphany and of following. God is surely here. Emmanuel is with us in this place. Our challenge is to have a right focus, so that we perceive and experience Epiphany; to become excited, to embrace it, then to follow it.

Of course, we do have other options. Herod and his scribes hear the Epiphany report of the Magi, yet none of them opts to follow. People around Judaea and Galilee experience Epiphany miracles again and again, yet refuse to like, follow, or even grasp them. Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5), still, many shake off the Christmas story along with bright Epiphany, clearly preferring other stars.

Christmas and Epiphany stars are leading stars. They are challenging stars, because as soon as we spot them, they call us to follow. Then, they give us two questions to ponder, “Am I willing to follow where Epiphany light shines, and will I still follow once star lights fade?”

Peace--- JDB+

P.S. Thanks so much for your generosity at Christmas. It is its own bright leading star. I am deeply grateful. Happy New Year!

Notes and Reminders

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January Birthdays

Heather Speas—January 2

Sally MacNeill—January 13

Mike Perrine—January 20

Nancy Bell —January 24

Jalen Albritton—January 6

Sandi Hilgendorf—January 19

Isabel Campbell—January 23

Stephen Seecharan—January 31

January Anniversaries

Steve & Cindy Brown—January 5

Bobby & Kristie Harper—January 21