

## The Reverend Marjo Anderson

A-Epiphany  
Matthew 2:1-23

6 January 2019  
Salem, Bridgeport

### The Adoration of the Magi

We come from God and our life is a journey finding our way back to God  
The magi were seeking the one born king of the Jews

The magi knew it would be a journey of FAITH as they had no map, no clear directions, but would instead be following a sign - a star. It's the same for us. We don't have a map or clear directions either and just like the magi we will be relying on a sign from God to guide us.

*[Take a minute and write down any question or doubt that you may have about either your individual journey or our journey together at Salem.]*

The magi could make a guess at the time frame. If they were headed for Israel it would be a LONG journey. It would take them months at least - or if they ran into trouble it might be as long as a year or two. We can make a guess at our time frame - maybe a year or two before we have to get where we're going.

*[Take a minute and write down where you'd like to be in your own life and where you'd like Salem to be by the end of 2019.]*

The magi knew their journey would be EXHAUSTING. Just think how you'd feel setting out by foot or pack animal from here to Richmond Virginia or Pittsburgh Pennsylvania or Buffalo New York.

*[Take a minute and write down your hopes for the journey – what you would like God to provide for you along the way.]*

It would also be a RISKY journey – since to follow a star they'd have to travel at night when it was more difficult to see and when they were more at risk of being robbed of their valuables. For us, too, the journey will be risky, and we too may have to part with things we love along the way.

*[Take a minute and write down your fears for the journey – what you are afraid of losing or of having to endure.]*

So the magi knew their journey would be one of faith and would be a long and exhausting and risky. But here's the good news. It wasn't an individual journey. The magi weren't traveling alone - they were traveling together. That doesn't mean it made it easier. Chances are they were three different personality types who had to learn to listen to each other, to understand each other and to trust each other along the way. But they also had each other's company and that's really important.

*[Take a minute and write down the names of people here at Salem for whom you are grateful.]*

They were carrying gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Those gifts have been interpreted symbolically in various ways. But for me the most helpful way is this:

Frankincense can be seen as a symbol of our divinity - of what we bring when we are at our best, our highest self, with much to give.

*[Take a minute and write down what your greatest spiritual gift is.]*

Myrrh can be seen as a symbol of humanity - of what we bring when we are at our worst, our lowest, our greatest need;

*[Take a minute and write down what your greatest need is.]*

And while frankincense and myrrh together represent all that we are,  
Gold can be seen as a symbol of all that we have - our time, our talent and our treasure.

*[Take a minute and write down one way that you are willing to grow in your giving – by getting involved in a new way or committing some more time or contributing some more money.]*

This is the first Sunday in the year 2019 and each of us is on our own spiritual journey. Each of us has our own New Year's resolutions, our own goals, our own deep needs and our own high hopes.

And in addition to our own individual journeys, we're also on a journey together.

Our journey is no clearer than that of the magi who traveled through the darkness of the night with only a star to guide them.

Like the magi's journey, ours is going to be long and exhausting and not without its share of risks.

But we can't stay where we are anymore than the magi could stay where they were.

We need to step out into the cold and darkness of the night and walk together, with all that we are and with all that we have.

We need to look up to the heavens in prayer and in faith to find the light that will guide us. And when we find that light we need to follow it – no matter what where it goes, no matter what the risks, and no matter how long and difficult the journey...

...because it's only when we follow the star that we find that for which we are searching – our lord and savior and king.

May God guide you on your individual journey this year  
and may God guide us as together we follow where God leads. **Amen**