

**Christmas 2C (Epiphany)**  
**St James and Good Shepherd, Laconia, NH**  
**The Rev. Dr. Janet Lombardo**  
**January 5, 2025**

Happy New Year!

Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, the journey of the three wise men to see the infant Jesus. The wise men journeyed long and far, following their hearts and the star, to see the infant, the new king. To see the light enter the world, the light that would take away the darkness. This is a magical tale, following a star, finding the King – not where they expected, but in a small home, among poor people. Then going home by a different way, all because of a dream. Who does this? How can this be real?

Their journey was not without missteps. First, they went to Herod, thinking that he must know where this new king is. Herod did not know, but indeed he wanted to know, so he asked the wise men to tell him when they found the king. Of course, we know that they did not tell Herod, after being warned in that dream.

The journey of the wise men required faith, perseverance, tenacity and an openness of heart. Certainly, we have experienced that. The wise men were willing to look foolish, to risk much, to sacrifice and endure all to follow a star and offer gifts to a newborn babe. Talk about stepping out in faith! These wise men knew somehow that this was their journey, that this was their path. I marvel at their faith, at their clarity of purpose and at their sheer determination. What would it be like to have their clarity of purpose and their willingness to act?

Inaction is often at the core of our lives. We may know what we need to do, but we have a hard time doing it, we get paralyzed by inaction. This is the beginning of a new year and many of us have made resolutions – great ideas and intentions – but most of us statistically will fail to implement them. We will fail to lose weight, fail to save more money, fail to... whatever. Now we don't mean to do this, but accomplishing our goals is often hard work. It takes planning and persistence. It takes dedication and surety of purpose. It takes belief and faith in ourselves that we are worthy to accomplish our goals and that we are capable of doing so. We must believe that we can live into the new life that we hope for ourselves.

Maybe an issue or something in your personal life that you know you need to change; God calls you to get up and follow the star. You don't know exactly how to go, but you need to take that first step – to let your heart lead and let God guide you. We have so many excuses, but they just stop us from leading our best life, the life that God intends for us to lead.

Today, on the fifth day of 2025, we can start again by reminding ourselves why we are here and how God wishes us to live our best life. We have a clear example of how to do that – with faith, with belief and with action. Just as those wise men did so long ago, following that oh-so-distant star.

What do you say? Are you willing to get up and follow the star? Are you willing to commit yourself this year to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ? Life is filled with all sorts of possibilities, if we can just step out in faith, letting our hearts guide us, letting God lead us. We are all here to help us to live our best life, following Jesus – “And a little child shall lead them.” When we follow in faith, amazing things will happen!

Amen