



Faith Methodist Church

2622 11th Ave Sidney, NE 69162  
Church Phone 308-254-4505  
E-mail: faith.mthdst@gmail.com  
Facebook Faith Methodist Church  
Website https://www.faithmthdst.org

Secretary: Karen Larson  
308-249-2066

Office Hours Mon-Thurs 8am-1pm  
Fri 9 am - Noon

Pastor: Rev Corey C. Jenkins  
Mobile Phone: 308-249-3709  
E-mail: crstrnr@gmail.com

Faith Methodist Church

Our Mission:

"To make disciples of Jesus Christ  
Who worship passionately,  
Love extravagantly,  
And witness boldly.

Our Vision:

To know God, to love God,  
and to serve God and our neighbor.  
(Luke 10:27)



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January 2024

Prayer Focus for January  
Ad Council

Valeta Rosenbaum, Barb Wachtel, Scott Law-  
son,  
Margaret Sprenger, Linda Raddatz,  
Loren Hoekema, Kristin Simmons, Bill Napier

Remembering in Prayer

Bob Lafler, Nicholas Harrison,  
Jolene Visser Lichty, Merna Billings  
Barb & Pete Filanowski



Sunday Mornings

Worship  
9:30 am  
Sunday School  
1st & 3rd Sunday  
8:30 am- 9:15 am  
Confirmation Class  
Resumes on January 21

Weekly Bible Studies

Tuesday  
7:30 am - Son Rise  
Romans Study - 10 am

Wednesday  
7 am - Men's Breakfast  
And Bible Study  
At Grandma Jo's

Thursday  
Bad Girls of the Bible  
5:30 pm

Faith Methodist Church - January 2024

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

The chaplain at a large Kentucky hospital stopped to visit a new patient on his floor. The nurses said he was a really nice man, but had a very strong back-woods drawl. No problem thought the chaplain, and proceeded into the room. The man sat up a little straighter in bed when asked how he was doin' that morning. "Far," he said. The chaplain thought, far...? far...? Aha! Suddenly he got it - in the man's strong back-woods drawl, "far" really meant "FAIR!" The man was saying he was "fair" that morning...!

Once a man from New York city was visiting in the south. He happened upon a live nativity, so he stopped, and as he looked around, he noticed 3 young boys, all dressed as firemen, standing to one side of the nativity. He couldn't make sense of why they were there, so he asked some people standing next to him about the boys. In a strong southern accent, one of the men said, "Don't you know the story? Those are the wise men come from a far!"

Quick trivia question: which is further from Sidney, NE - the moon or Denver, CO?

Of course, the answer is Denver! We can see the moon and we can't see Denver...

OK - so, "far" could be that you're feeling pretty well this morning; "far" could be what's happening as your house burns merrily to the ground; or "far" could be something a long ways away from us. But in any case, an epiphany is involved in understanding the context of the conversation...! Epiphany - the dictionary definition is, "any insightful or dramatic moment of new vision or perspective..." Usually the word is reserved for some spiritual insight, or understanding, so this month, January, we need to talk about the Epiphany when we celebrate the wise men who recognized the appearance of Emmanuel, God with us, and traveled from faraway lands to visit the new-born King of the Jews. Their "epiphany" was their recognition of the Christ-Child. Let's look at some of the things that can shed some light on our own recognition of the Christ-Child.

FIRST, these wise men had been studying. They astrologers (NOT astronomers) who saw signs and omens in the stars. They were lookin' at the stars and in their understanding they discovered something of great importance! Because of their study, there was a readiness - an expectancy - a willingness to recognize a "sign" when they saw it!

SECOND, they did not keep their noses in their books, and neither did they just spend all their time star-gazing. They were very particular observers of the world around them!

THIRD, they were willing to go lookin' for some confirmation of what they had learned and seen. They put their learning to the test. They took a chance on bein' proved wrong or right!

FOURTH, in the original Greek, the word "magoi" (magi) is in the masculine plural form: men. If it were not so clearly stated, I might hesitate to say these were wise MEN. After all, what self-respecting man would be willing to stop and ask for directions? If they had been wise WOMEN, they would have arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and at least brought practical gifts!

FIFTH, when the wise men found the object of their search - the baby Jesus with His mother, Mary - they responded with all the gratitude and excitement and awe they could muster! They fell to the ground and worshiped the baby Jesus. They offered Him the very best they had - gifts fit for a king!

SIXTH, when all their hopes and dreams had been fulfilled, these men still remained hopeful and watchful and observant. They remained open to new insights, revelations, epiphanies - and were receptive to another vision. This time, they were warned to avoid goin' back to King Herod and reporting the location of the baby King of the Jews. Instead, they knew they were to go home by another way around.

So - what epiphanies might WE see here? In today's world, "spirituality" means it's all about you - how you feel - what you like - what you want to believe. Modern spirituality is more about inner reflection and deep contemplation of "self," and less about contemplation of the God-Man Jesus! Self-reflection quite often leads a person to avoidance of the disciplines of study and research, and instead, it urges the seeker to spend time peering within themselves to gain personal knowledge, wisdom and understanding of God. I would argue that the likelihood of a deeper, more meaningful encounter with God BEGINS with motivated and devoted study of the Bible! This means that idles speculation of what you think you already believe just doesn't cut it! If you're gonna spend the time tryin' to gain new insights, you should spend time with God's word first and foremost...!

So even though I'm a HUGE proponent of study, you can't just bury yourself in the Bible and your books and let the rest of the world go slidin' on by. You gotta be aware of the world around you. You must be vigilant, you must be observant - you can't idly wile away your time in star-gazing. At some point you'll need to make the connection between what you're studyin' and what you're livin'!

You must also be willing to put your learning to the test. Don't just take things at face value. Don't simply accept everything you think you already know to be the final truth. Be open to the possibility you MIGHT be wrong! No one person has all the answers: no preacher, no teacher, no small group, no single denomination has all the answers. However, Christianity is the only religion with ALL the answers! Other world religions may offer valuable insights and observations - but every one of 'em falls short of the final answer. None of the other world religions offer you a Savior - none of them offer you hope - none of them offer you life - none of them offer you grace - none of them offer you Jesus! If you are gonna go lookin' for the Christ-Child, be willing to admit to your own failings and shortcomings - and be willing to seek help from outside yourself along the way!

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**SOUND**

- Jan 7 Loren Hoekema
- Jan 14 Brian Slagle
- Jan 21 Allen Aurich
- Jan 28 Bill Napier

**MUSIC**

- Jan 7 Nan & Carolyn
- Jan 14 Marva/Valerie
- Jan 21 Marva/Valerie
- Jan 28 Nan & Carolyn

**USHERS**

- Jan 7 Taylor Sprenger, Kevin Sittner, Ron Jessen, Brian Sprenger
- Jan 14 Bret Whartman, Allen Aurich, Greg Sprenger, Kinley Lawson
- Jan 21 Loren Hoekema, Stan Flessner, Mike Mitchell, Drew Glover
- Jan 28 Lanny Schiessler, Kristin Simmons, Brian Slagle, Ron Egger

**POWER POINT**

- Jan 7 Kristin Simmons
- Jan 14 Julie Slagle
- Jan 21 Kevin Sittner
- Jan 28 Avery Lawson

**KIDZ TIME**

- Jan 7
- Jan 14
- Jan 21
- Jan 28

**READERS**

- Jan 7 Kristin Simmons
- Jan 14 Jordan Ball
- Jan 21
- Jan 28 Bob Long

**ACOLYTE**

- Jan 7
- Jan 14
- Jan 21
- Jan 28

**GREETERS**

- Jan 7
- Jan 14
- Jan 21 Tony & Debra Grothe
- Jan 28

**NURSERY**

- Jan 7 Barb W & Jan L
- Jan 14 Rebecca N & Brenda F.

A new year gives us the opportunity to think again about what our focus should be. In Grace Gardens, we will be learning about the ministry and miracles of Jesus and try to make the connection between baby Jesus and Jesus, our Savior. We also continue to work on developing language, math, and motor skills by practicing letters and sounds, shapes, numbers, colors, and a variety of fine motor skills. We are blessed to work with these young learners and blessed by the interest and support we receive from our church family. Wishing you a wonder-filled New Year. Angela and Valerie

I would like to thank all those who furnished and prepared all the turkeys for our very successful All Church Christmas Dinner. We served over 100 meals, I think that is a new record for this celebration. We had a wonderful group of helpers in the kitchen, setting up the day before, putting it all together the morning of and extra help with all the dishes afterward. It is wonderful to have so many hard working, willing members of the congregation come forward to help. Thanks to all the people who brought the delicious side dishes, salads and

**Sunday School:** All elementary age kids are welcome to join us for Sunday School. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 8:30-9:15 am. So far, we have had a steady attendance of at least 4 students each week. We sing, learn and do a little crafting. If you would be interested in being on the sub list for a leader or assistant teacher, please let Kahla know. Thank you to all of the teachers, helpers, parents and grandparents. It is SO fun to see these kids come together and learn the stories of the Bible.

**Team Meetings in January**  
 January 9 - NOW Team @ 5:30 pm  
 January 11 - Trustees @ 7 pm

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When you finally receive confirmation of your study and searching and hoping, remember: excitement and rejoicing are NOT out of place! A definite sign of spiritual maturity is rejoicing at a deeper or newer understanding of God either in your own life or in the lives of other people!

A natural outgrowth of spiritual maturity is generosity - the next step from awe and wonder is giving the best of what-ever it is you have to offer. And finally, resist the temptation that once you have received some new insight and blessing from God you don't lose sight of the fact there are other mountains to climb - other roads to travel - other views to be seen - other discoveries to be made - other epiphanies to be experienced! A wise person should be open to the possibilities of experiencing something new and wonderful!

Yes, it may seem strange at first, but never ever forget the whole reason for Jesus coming as a baby some 2000 years ago - it was so we could know Emmanuel! No matter where you go, or how you go, or what you may encounter along the way, never forget God is with us! All these are important insights for us - new discoveries, new ways of thinkin' about things, new epiphanies if you will. So what's really important to us as we begin a new year is this: seeking Jesus! He's the whole reason we are who we are in the world! If there were no Jesus, there would be no church. There would be no X'Mas, no Magi, no Easter! We would have no reason for hope or joy or life if it weren't for Jesus!

After all the study, all the searching, all the misdirection - when they finally entered in to where the star had led them - the wise men discovered the object of their hearts deepest desire - and they worshiped HIM! The Greek word "proskuneo" - literally means to fall down on your face in worshipful reverence. It means to lay flat at another person's feet. It's where we get the English word "prostrate." When those visitors from eastern lands found the newborn King of the Jews, they recognized Him for Who He was - God's Messiah! Their joy and excitement was so overwhelming they fell on their faces and worshipped that baby boy! Then - and only then - did they offer their gifts!

Too often we get it backwards and we try to offer gifts and trinkets instead of actually worshiping the One Who gave us those gifts in the first place. What happens then is that we equate the giving with the worship - but worship is an attitude of focus on God that precludes anything else. We don't say we come to church on Sunday mornings to offer gifts - we say we come here to worship! Part of worship is the giving, but it's not the whole of it. Worship can be defined as religious adoration and devotion to God. Worship proclaims and defines the reality of God, who God is, what God has done, and what God is doing in the world! So the primary actions of Christians should be joy and excitement at what God has given us!

So to get started, we must learn; and learning will bring us to understanding; and understanding will bring us to epiphany; and epiphany will bring us to worship; and worship will bring us to generosity!

Grace To You, and Peace,  
 Pastor Corey

**January 2024**

**Sunday** Sunday School - 8:30 - 9:15 am  
 1st & 3rd Sundays

**Tuesday** Sunrise Bible Study @ 7:30 am  
 Romans until January @ 10 am

**Wednesday**  
 Men's Breakfast & Book Study @ 7 am  
 (Grandma Jo's)  
 G-1 - January 17 @ 6 pm

**Saturday** Care Share - January 13 & 27

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**YOUNG WORSHIPERS**

Be watchful for new activity bags to make your worship experience even better!

There will be new activities and treats. Check out "I Spy" and the "Maze"

These were made by our church group the