

The Connection

Messages of Hope



HOPE
CHURCH | RALEIGH
WORSHIP . GROW . SERVE .

A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 765

January 10, 2024

“Arise, Shine”

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. — Matthew 2:11

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. Isaiah 60:1–6

January 6, 2024 was Epiphany of the Lord Day. This coming Sunday, January 14, 2024, is the Second Sunday after the Epiphany. In Western Christianity, the feast commemorates principally (but not solely) the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, and Jesus Christ's physical manifestation to the Gentiles. It is sometimes called Three Kings' Day.

So with that said, we acknowledge that we have come to the end of Christmastide which is a celebration on the eve of Epiphany that prepares for the Magi's arrival and the presentation of their gifts to Jesus.

Reflecting on the Magi's account in scripture, Matthew tells us that when they saw Jesus, they presented Him with gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Three gifts that over the years inspired greeting card artists to depict a Magi carrying each one. I'm sure you have received and sent cards like these.

As for me, I have a question. Were there only three travelers from afar? I read the first 5 verses of this passage above this past Sunday (Isaiah 60) as our Call to Worship. In it, we read about a “multitude of camels” on the journey. Now maybe these Magi didn't master the art of packing lightly for a trip. What if, there were more than three Magi following that star?

The word “multitude” means a large number. If there were a large number of camels, as Isaiah predicts, then could there have been more than the three learned astrologers who started this trip? What if there was a multitude of travelers, eager to see what this new star in the sky meant? What if the long journey, and it was a very long journey taking several months, led some to fall by the wayside? What if some in the multitude decided the journey just wasn't worth it and turned back? What if some got sidetracked along the way by what they thought was something better, a better village to stay in perhaps? What if, out of the many who wanted to see this thing God had done, only three faithful, die-hard travelers were rewarded and saw Jesus?

On this Second week of Epiphany 2024, should we take a look at our faith journeys? How committed are we? I wonder about the candles that once burned very brightly, will they continue to light the world long after the star in the sky has vanished? Will we grow weary on the road serving God and allow ourselves to be side tracked, never fully seeing God's manifestation in the world? Or will our faithfulness be strong enough to stay the course?

One day the truly faithful believers, called by God, saved by Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, will fall on their knees in awe and adoration. For before their eyes, they will see the Christ Child and be in the very presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2024 will bring its own challenges for all of us. But we are called to be faithful and be a light in this dark world. We are called to be a light on a hill where we allow no one or anything to cover our light. Arise, shine, Believer, for your Light has come!!! May your light burn brightly in this lost world. May your Epiphany live on!

Maybe this is a prayer you can pray with me.

Prayer: God, when I see Your Son, Jesus, I want to pay Him homage as the Magi did. I want to stay the course and not grow weary on this journey of faith. Give me the strength and courage I need so that I do not give up or give in. Let my light shine bright in witness to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Blessings my friends,
Pastor Marty - HOPE Church Raleigh
Worship . Grow . Serve

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, January 10

Wednesday Night Supper, Study & Prayer @ 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, January 11

EPC Pastors Breakfast @ 7:30 a.m.
Worship Team Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 13

Women of HOPE @ 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 14

Worship Team Rehearsal @ 8:30 a.m.
Worship @ 9:30 a.m.
Fellowship Time @ 10:50 a.m.
Sunday school @ 11:10 a.m.
Session Meeting @ 12:00 p.m.

Monday, January 15

MLK Jr. Federal Holiday

Wednesday, January 17

Wednesday Night Supper, Study & Prayer @ 6:15 p.m.



Outreach Ministries

“Food of the Month”

for the Raleigh Dream Center
Food Pantry

Boxed Cereal

We have a collection bin in the foyer

HOPE Meal Ministry

Take a meal from the freezer if needed for you or someone else.

The Computer Lab is on “Pause”

TLC Devotion

4th Wednesday each Month
@ 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Growth Ministries

Women of HOPE

Saturday, January 13
@ 1:00 p.m.

Meeting @ Panera Bread

Wednesday Night Supper, Study & Prayer Resumes

Tonight - Study: Exodus

Supper @ 6:15 p.m.

Study @ 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Time @ 7:45 p.m.

Menu:

BBQ Chicken, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Green Beans, Rolls & Dessert

Prayer Requests:

Reville & Mary Lane Mallory, Jamie Baldwin, Donna Williams, Carol & Colin (Kathy Herriman’s Sister & Brother-in-law), Loretta (Sandi Underwood’s daughter), Joan Summers, Shelley, Diane Mack’s Sister-in-law, Jordan & Cinnamon (son and daughter of Lynn Joyner’s family members), Tommy and Billy Lanphere (Lynn Joyner’s brothers), Gene & Becky Hale, Ellie Tappan, Dave & Dot Geil, Carlyle and Cynthia Franklin (Sandra Pierce’s dad and stepmom), our Military, our Missionaries, our Nation, and the world.

If you have those you would like added to our prayer concerns, please email me those names.

HOPE - REBOOT 50 - Days to Vitality

**BEGINS THIS SUNDAY,
JANUARY 14TH
GET READY
EVERYONE!!!**

If you did not get the email with the 50-Days to Vitality document, please let Pastor Marty know.

**Session Meeting on
Sunday,
Jan. 14th @ 12 p.m.
(REBOOT Vision Team
to join in)**

Helping Hands Ministries

Fellowship - January 14
Church is Providing

ProPresenter - January 14
Elizabeth Floyd

Soundboard - January 14
Ben Pierce

Live Streaming - January 14
Al Floyd

Communion - January
Sandra Pierce

Greeter - January 14
Joan Rollinson

Nursery Volunteer - January 14
Volunteer Needed

Scripture Text and Sermon This Sunday

Nehemiah 1:1 - 11

“Despair or Repair?”

Daily Devotions For This Coming Week

Jan. 14	Amos	4
Jan. 15	Amos	5
Jan. 16	Amos	6
Jan. 17	Amos	7
Jan. 18	Amos	8
Jan. 19	Amos	9
Jan. 20	Obadiah	1

Quote of the Week

“To wait on God is to live a life of desire toward Him, delight in Him, dependence on Him, and devotedness to Him.”

Matthew Henry

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Worship Time: 9:30 AM

www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org
www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh
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YouTube.com (type “HOPE Church Raleigh” in the search box)