

Devotion, 2nd Week of Christmastide, 2023

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

Christ has come, and the Wise Men are on the way. They will arrive on Epiphany, the 12th day after Christmas Day, or January 6. Did they come 12 days after the baby was born? We don't know. But twelve is one of those perfect Jewish numbers, so that time frame may have been used to indicate that all 12 tribes of Israel acknowledged the kingship of this holy child. The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh certainly signified the supremacy of this baby. Gold represents kingship. As the book of Daniel states, "He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed."

Frankincense represents Jesus' deity. In the Old Testament, frankincense was traditionally burned in the temple as an offering to God (Leviticus 2:2). By bringing this gift, the Magi affirmed Jesus was no ordinary man; he is both fully man and fully God.

Commonly used to embalm bodies, the gift of myrrh foreshadows Jesus' death. We see in John 19:38-40 that Nicodemus brought myrrh at the time of Jesus' burial: "They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom."

With the coming of the Wise Men, the child is acknowledged as the Savior of the whole world. When we look at this event, I am reminded of 2 Corinthians 2:14 – "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him." Christ's life frames our lives, and isn't it a wonderful thought that this relationship fills our lives with a "fragrance" wherever we go?

May you sense this aroma of holiness with you this week.

Jeanne