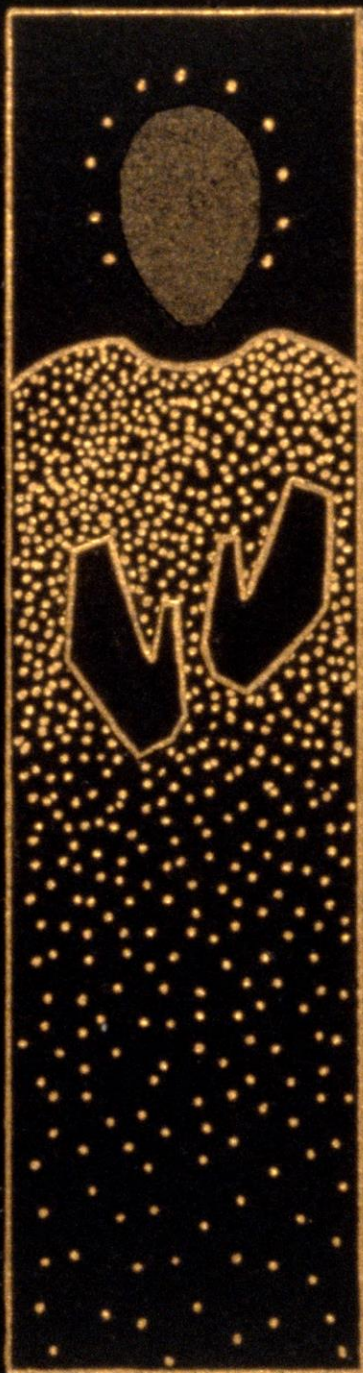




# REZKIDS FAMILY

# DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE

Epiphany 2014



## THE COLLECT OF EPIPHANY

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## THE COLLECT OF THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

RezKids Family Devotional Resource  
[www.churchrez.org/rezkids](http://www.churchrez.org/rezkids)

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Published by Church of the Resurrection

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# A NOTE FROM AMY

Dear Rez Families,

Happy New Year!

What are your hopes for yourself and your family in 2014? If you're anything like me, your resolutions are an exercise in willpower. I will lose weight, I will save 10% more, I will read my Bible every day, I will commit my family to more prayer. But then, my resolve melts before the snow and I am left disheartened and frustrated. Unfulfilled resolutions are a clear illustration that we need God's power to become faithful followers of Christ. We can never follow him through sheer willpower alone.

How do we open ourselves and our families to be transformed into believers who love Christ with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength? Transformation implies change, but it does not mean we have to change all by ourselves. Rather, we must give ourselves daily to God and he will give us the faith, love and hope we desire.

**This winter we have an amazing opportunity to give God our will and experience his transformation. On January 12th, Resurrection is embarking on Prayer100. From Epiphany through Easter Sunday, we will pray without ceasing for 100 days. Our theme 'Thy Kingdom Come' asks God to transform our lives, our church, our community and our world.**

As a church we can fulfill Jesus' command to pray without ceasing and we want your family to join in. It is an incredible opportunity to meet God as a family and show your children that prayer changes lives. During Prayer100 your family can sign up for a one hour slot to pray in the prayer chapel. There are so many ways that children can pray and most

of them are not silent! The prayer chapel will have different stations where kids and adults can pray through art, music, writing and hands-on activities. If you are able, I encourage you to sign up for a weekly slot. You could make it a special time for each child to go one-on-one with a parent or bring the whole family!

This Epiphany, our Devotional Resource focuses on Jesus' ministry to the Gentiles. Epiphany reminds us that Jesus was a refugee as a child and that he loved those considered outsiders. I hope these devotions get your family thinking about how to love the lost and the least in your lives.

I am praying "Thy Kingdom Come" for your family this new year!



Blessings and joy,

Amy Patton  
Children's Pastor

# FAMILY WORSHIP

*Setting aside time for the Word, prayer and fellowship are essential for your family's life together. Worshiping together knits you together as a family and together with Christ.*

## Worshiping at Home

### Family Liturgy

(Adapted combined version of At Close of Day & Compline, BCP)

*Use this devotional to structure the family devotionals provided. Gather in a circle facing a cross. Have a parent or reading child lead the devotion while letting other family members lead sections.*

Leader: Father, we thank you for protecting us today. Give us a peaceful night and a refreshing rest.

Leader: Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

**Family: The maker of heaven and earth.**

**Family: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia.**

*Complete family devotional questions and scripture reading.*

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer;

**Family: And let our cry come to you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

*Pray together as a family.*

**Family: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

Leader: The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.

- Adoration of the cross: Simply touch the cross and say, "Thank you, Jesus."
- Create a prayer wall for the week. Designate a wall and put out papers and pens. Encourage your family to put up prayer requests during the week. Then family members can spend time at the prayer wall praying for each other's concerns.

### Serve as a Family

The wise men brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were not gifts fit for a baby or a child. These were gifts with a purpose, gifts for worshipping a king.

In the final verse of the hymn *In The Bleak Midwinter*, Christina G. Rossetti asks the question, "What can I give him?" She notes that the shepherds could give Jesus a lamb and the wise men could do their part; all she has to offer is her heart. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the disciples that whenever they see someone lonely, hungry, or otherwise in need, serving them is the same as serving Jesus.

Like the wise men, bringing their gifts, like the shepherds with their lambs, like Christina Rossetti with her heart, and like the disciples, we have gifts to give to Jesus. These are gifts that God has given us and we are called to give them back to him.

This Epiphany season, that gift could be as simple as your presence in the life of someone who is lonely. There are a number of nursing homes in our area that have lonely seniors. As a family, try visiting one of these to spend time with men and women who no longer have friends or family. Give them some of your time as though you are giving it to Jesus.

# Devotionals

*Each devotional contains different components to enrich your worship. The **Anticipate** question builds interest and curiosity. **Going Deeper** provides additional context or resources to supplement the passage. The **Explore** discussion questions target multiple age levels and encourage your family to apply the Scripture to your lives. The **Concrete Connection** at the end of each devotional is a fun activity including service opportunities, games and outings.*

## Wise Men Come From Afar

### Anticipate

What gift were you most excited to give this Christmas?

### Matthew 2:1-20

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went

ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,  
weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more.”

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

### Going Deeper

In this passage, three wise men from the east come to worship Jesus and present gifts to him. They are not Jews, but they saw the star in the sky and wanted to worship the newborn King. As we know, Jesus was sent into the world for the salvation of all people, not just the Jews. The story of the three wise men already demonstrates God’s plan for reaching people other than the Jews through Jesus’ life and

death on the cross. Even before Jesus' ministry to the gentiles started later in his life, God was already sending them to Jesus! God does not wait for Jesus to grow up to accomplish his purpose of reaching the gentiles. Instead, He sends the wise men to Jesus and then they can return home and tell of the wonders they saw. In this way, the good news proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds ("For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11) is already being spread long before Jesus begins doing so himself.

The story of the wise men also fits into prophecies from the Old Testament concerning Jesus. In Isaiah 60:6 it is prophesied regarding the future glory of Jerusalem that "They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord." Another prophecy is found in Haggai 2:7 about the restoration of the Temple: "the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts." In the story of the wise men, we see them bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh, treasures for a king, to Jesus who is the fulfillment of those prophecies.

### **Explore**

- Why do you think the wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus?
- Can you think of any reasons for these three gifts?
- Why do you think God warned the wise men not to return to Herod after worshiping Jesus?
- How can you tell other people about the good news of Jesus' birth?

### **Concrete Connections**

Though we can't give concrete gifts to Jesus like the wise men did we can still make something for him as an act of worship. Grab some pens and paper and draw a picture for him. Another idea is to sing or write a song for him or do a dance for him. Be as creative as you want!

Another way of doing giving Jesus a type of gift is by doing something kind for another person to show them Christ's love for us. For example, you might make a card for someone you love. Another idea is to help them practically by doing an act of service. Some things you might do are to shovel their driveway for them or help them clean the house.

# The Roman Centurion

## Anticipate

Have you ever been so sick you couldn't get out of bed? Who took care of you?

## Matthew 8:5-13

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

## Going Deeper

The Centurion was a commander in the Roman army occupying Israel. As a commander he would have come from Rome instead of Israel. His army had taken over Israel and was controlling the lives of the Jews. The Centurion did not know the God of Israel, but he had heard of Jesus' miracles and he believed that Jesus could heal his servant. He knew that Jesus didn't even need to see or touch the servant to heal him.

In the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings we see another story of a military officer who humbles himself and asks for healing. In 2 Kings 5, we meet Naaman who was a

commander in the Aram army. Aram was fighting against Israel and not a friendly neighboring nation. Although Naaman was a very important man, he humbled himself and came to ask Elisha for healing. Even though Naaman was an enemy, Elisha healed him. Naaman was amazed and believed in God.

## Explore:

- What makes the centurion so powerful?
- Why did the Centurion think he wasn't worth enough for Jesus to visit his home?
- Why does Jesus heal the servant?

## Concrete Connection:

We all have our strengths that God has given us, things we are good at. We also have things that we are not good at, our weaknesses. Even though the centurion was very powerful, he could not heal his daughter; however, he knew that Jesus could do what he could not. Can you think of things that you can do for others? How about things that you need Jesus to do? We can bring our requests to God in prayer. Create a prayer journal where you can either draw or write your prayers. You can make a journal by finding many colors of construction paper. Punch holes through all the pieces and tie them together with a ribbon. Now you have a journal where you can talk with God by drawing or writing!



# Parable of the Banquet

## Anticipate

What did the Epiphany scene look like? Where the Magi insiders or outsiders in Jewish culture?

## Luke 14: 12-24

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

## Going Deeper

As we know from the story of the Epiphany, God chose to become a human being of the lowest possible rank. He was born to a poor family in a place not fit for humans. The decision for Joseph to marry a woman who was not having his own son would have looked really bad to the Jewish people as well. And yet as we know, God led the Magi from outside the Jewish people through the scriptures and the star to celebrate Jesus’ birth.

Do you see the connection between the Epiphany and the above parable? Jesus is calling us, like God himself did, to invite the poor and the lame into our homes and our care. Then he goes on to tell a story about his own people refusing to come to a banquet. In the same way that God invited the Magi to Christ’s birth, the servant is commanded to go into the alleys and streets to bring the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. Then the servant is commanded to go to roads and country lanes. These people from far away are the Magi. That is what God did in extending salvation to the Gentiles. We are supposed to do the same.

Even though Jesus was not crippled, blind, or lame, he was extremely poor. And because he was born without people knowing who his father was, he would have been an outcaste from the very beginning. Jesus himself was a member of the group that he tells people to invite into their homes for parties. Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples that “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25: 40) God identifies himself with the least in society from the very beginning. When we give our time and energy to those people that most people think don’t deserve it, God is with us through that other person.

**Explore**

- Who were the people that actually came to the banquet at the end of the parable?
- Do you know anyone that nobody likes at school that might need a friend? Why are they made fun of? How would Jesus treat them?
- Jesus does not want us to pity outsiders but treat them equally. How can you show that you care about people who are made fun of or don't have friends without making them feel like you look down at them?

**Concrete Connections**

Throw a party!

Invite some of the kids from the neighborhood over for a party. It doesn't have to be your birthday party. Come up with a fun theme like February Festival or Almost Spring Fling. Make sure to invite people from school that are maybe of a different culture than you are. You can invite your friends, but also invite kids that need friends.

# The Woman at the Well

## Anticipate

Why did God send Jesus to earth? Who did he come to save?

## John 4:4-25

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither

on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

## Going Deeper

In Jesus’ time, the Jews avoided Samaritans. A long time before (before the exile), the Samaritans were 100% Jewish, but during the exile they married foreigners. Because the Samaritans were not 100% Jewish, the Jewish people thought the Samaritans were unclean, and went out of their way to avoid them. Being unclean to the Jews was a big deal. It didn’t mean that the Samaritans were dirty from playing in the mud outside. No, it meant that their souls and spirits were dirty. The Jews thought the Samaritans were unworthy and unable to worship God.

In this passage, Jesus does three remarkable things. First, he does not avoid the Samaritan woman at the well, but instead talks with her. Second, he asks her for a drink – even though, according to Jews, she is unclean! And third, most amazingly, Jesus tells her (and us) that all people can worship God, if they worship him in spirit and truth.

## **Explore**

- How does the Samaritan woman realize that Jesus is a prophet?
- How are we supposed to worship God? What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth? What does true worship look like?
- After the Samaritan woman leaves the well, what does she do?
- How can we share that Jesus is the Savior for the world with others?

## **Concrete Connections**

Pray together as a family for the people you know that are far from Jesus (relatives, friends at school, etc). Write down their names on a piece of paper, and pray for them every day for a week, or a month, that they would come to know Jesus as their Savior, and that God would give you opportunities to share his truth with them. Your family can fill out a prayer request card in the All Saints Chapel and pin it to the Western Wall, so that our church family can pray for them too!

# Pray for Our Missionaries

*This season as we focus on Jesus' ministry to the gentiles, we will be praying for those still unreached by the message of the cross. We've chosen 4 countries where Resurrection currently has missionaries serving Jesus. You can pray for these countries at home or you can come to All Saints prayer chapel and pray for an hour during Prayer100. There are many great ways for kids to pray including a missionary wall with a very large map!*

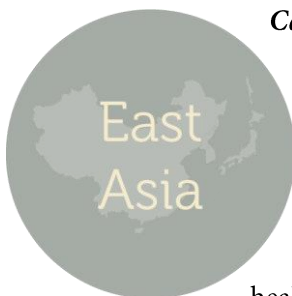


## **Afghanistan**

Pat and Joan Krayner have served in Afghanistan for 20 years at the international church in Kabul, the capital. Because Afghanistan is a Muslim

country, it is often difficult for

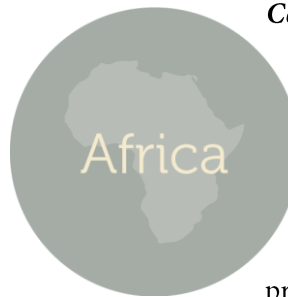
those who follow Jesus. Pray that they would have the strength and courage to continue in their faith even when it's hard and lonely. Life for children in Afghanistan is often also difficult, so you can pray that they would have opportunities to go to school, have food and clothes and that they would hear the story of Jesus.



## **Cambodia**

The Whitakers serve in Cambodia, a small country in Asia where they serve in a growing Cambodian Anglican Church and also provide health services to children.

Most people in Cambodia worship many different gods. One way you can be praying for Cambodia is that the people would come to know the one true God. Another way you can be praying for the children in Cambodia is that they were learn the importance of basic hygiene and have access to clean water so that they can stay healthy.



## **Central African Republic**

The Festens are serving in the Central African Republic. The people they work with don't have the Bible in their own language, Mpyemo. You can pray for the Festens as they

work to translate the Bible. You can also pray for the Mpyemo people would learn to know and love Jesus and they would soon be able to read the Bible in their own language.



## **China**

Katelyn Aulie serves the poor in China, especially those who are sick and live in the countryside of China. You can pray for the people she serves that they may come to know the

true healer, Jesus. You can also pray that they would have enough to eat and to keep warm in the cold winter months.



## **Those unreached in the Wheaton area**

While it is important to pray for other nations, it is just as important to pray for those who don't know Jesus that live all around us.

Pray for your neighbors, family members and friends that are far from God. While you are praying, ask God what He would like you to do to witness to them. How can you love those far from God?



# FAMILY LIFE IN THE CHURCH

## Living Liturgically

*Church of the Resurrection cherishes the traditions, symbols and rituals the Church has practiced for centuries. These traditions greatly enrich our faith and help us live within the common life of the Church. Although children notice these traditions, they can be confusing if not clearly explained. By explaining colors and calendars, rituals and rites we are acknowledging children's place within the Great Tradition. Enjoy pointing out the traditions together on Sunday!*

### **Why Does the Really Big Candle 'Get Dunked' During Baptisms?**

When you hear people talk about the Feast of the Epiphany, you probably think about the Wise Men coming to visit the Baby Jesus-- and you're right! The Feast of the Epiphany is about the visit of the Wise Men. But the Feast of the Epiphany also reminds us of the Baptism of Jesus, which is one of the reasons we have baptisms that Sunday at Church.

Have you ever wondered why the priest puts that really big candle into the baptismal font just before people get baptized? Here's why!

The Bible teaches that baptism washes away our sins. Now it's easy to see how water can wash away dirt, but how can water wash away sins? It can't-- but Jesus can! Jesus did not get baptized to have his sins forgiven—he didn't have any! Instead, Jesus got into the water to show us that he would be the one actually forgiving our sins through the water of baptism.

The really big candle that we light each Easter and use at baptisms is a symbol of Jesus, who said that he is the light of the world. The reason the priest dunks that candle into the baptismal font just before baptisms is to remind us of Jesus' baptism, and how it is Jesus, who works through the water to wash away our sins at our own baptism. Remember that the next time you see a really big candle getting dunked!



# Living Compassionately

*The compassion ministries at Church of the Resurrection seek to serve and build relationships with the Lost and the Least in our community. In this section, you and your family can read a biblical reflection focusing on one of the compassion ministries and learn about ways you and your family can get involved.*



## The Flight to Egypt

### Matthew 2:13-15

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

### Going Deeper

The liturgical seasons of Christmas and Epiphany are deeply rooted in the themes of migration and hospitality. No, I’m not talking about Santa Claus traveling around the world in one night or leaving our milk and cookies, but about how the Holy

Family first came from Galilee to Bethlehem and from there, fled for their lives to Egypt. Imagine Mary, in the late stages of pregnancy, walking through the desert to Bethlehem and later escaping to Egypt with a small child as a refugee. Mary and Joseph found themselves afraid for their lives. They left everything behind to save the gift of Jesus. Just like Mary and Joseph, there are many people who have had to leave their homes and go to another country in hopes of finding food, a house, and a safe place from war and hatred. Like us, these people need a chance to use the talents and gifts God has given them. Today we call these people immigrants or refugees. There are many immigrant families who live very close to you and your family. In many ways, their lives can be very hard. But in a very special way Jesus knows exactly how they feel. When he went to Egypt with Mary and Joseph, Jesus became a vulnerable immigrant. So if Jesus has lived as an immigrant it is very important for us to welcome and love immigrants in our own neighborhood. Do we open our hearts and receive them like Jesus would receive them?

The whole story of the Bible is a story of welcoming and loving people. Jesus welcomed us when we were far from God. Now he calls us to welcome other people who need help, people like immigrants. Jesus put it this way: “*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me,*” Jesus tells his disciples, because “*whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me*” (Matthew 25:35-36, 40).

As we reflect on Jesus’ flight to Egypt, let’s remember that we never know who the “stranger” who arrives in our neighborhood might be. When we welcome them, we may be welcoming our Lord and Savior. If we ignore them, we might be ignoring Jesus.

### Explore

- When Mary, Joseph and Jesus fled to Egypt, how do you think they survived the long journey through the desert?
- Jesus and his family probably looked, talked, and dressed differently. How do you think the Egyptians treated them?
- Did the Holy Family make friends in Egypt, or were the Egyptians afraid of them because they were strangers?
- How do you treat new kids in your neighborhood?
- What are some things you could do to show hospitality to new people in our neighborhood or church?

### Concrete Connections

- Partner with World Relief to serve the refugees being resettled in our community. Contact Matt Woodley ([matt@churchrez.org](mailto:matt@churchrez.org)) to get involved. Visit the Anglican Immigrant Initiative website to learn more about how our diocese is welcoming the stranger in our midst - <http://greenhousemove.wix.com/immigrantinitiative>
- Attend or Volunteer at the *Caminemos Juntos* conference hosted by Church of the Resurrection in July to learn more about the Hispanic congregations in our diocese.

# Meet Matt Woodley

*Meet Church of the Resurrection's Compassions Pastor.*



## **When did you start working at Rez?**

Father Gregory started walking me through all the different facets of compassion ministry in April of this year. There was a lot of thinking that had been put into what we believe about compassion ministry. He was my guide and friend for all things compassion ministry.

## **How did you get started working in Compassions ministry?**

The first thing I did when I moved to Wheaton was to start coaching soccer at the Parkside apartments. I wasn't familiar with Parkside personally, but I knew a little bit about it. I knew they were immigrants and refugees. I volunteered as an assistant coach, but they never found a head coach, so I ended up being the head coach. I wasn't a very good coach, and we didn't become a great soccer team, but we had a lot of fun. I enjoyed building relationships with the kids. I would often go pick them up for practice. That was my doorway to life at Parkside, and is how I got started in Compassions ministries at Rez.

## **What is an experience you had growing up that made you realize caring for outsiders was important?**

The first time I noticed this compassion that God planted in me was in grade school. There was this kid named Gary who was picked on by everyone at school. He would "Spaz Out" and go "Berzerk", and that would make kids make fun of him even more. One day, I saw him standing on top of this hill. These kids were taunting him, pretending they were going to come and get him, and trying to keep him from coming down.

For some reason, I got really angry when I saw it. I got up on top of the hill and got between them and Gary. I yelled at the people taunting him. I said "You need to stop this, you leave Gary alone!" I wasn't even really friends with Gary before that. I don't really know what prompted me to do it. I think it was just something- a desire for justice or compassion for people that are outsiders- that God planted within me. We stayed friends all the way through high school.

## **Did you find that after that experience you gravitated towards helping people more regularly?**

Yes, when I was at college, I gravitated towards people of different cultures. It's really hard to adjust to American culture. Americans can make foreigners feel like they are not welcome and it's not easy for foreigners to enter into American culture. I wanted to get to know their culture, their country, their food and their churches. I wanted them to have an easier time in America. When I showed genuine interest, they really opened up and told me about their lives. I would invite myself over for food. "Can you take me to a Nigerian restaurant and tell me what I should get on the menu?" I wasn't able to learn their language, but I learned the language of food.

**How can we grow more compassionate towards others?**

The first thing you can do is notice people. If they are on the fringes and don't seem to be mingling with a lot of people it may just be that they are having a little difficult time breaking in. The second thing is to admit your ignorance. I don't know what you are like, I am not going to pretend to know. The third thing you can do is to ask questions. What was it like growing up? What do you like to do for fun? Be a learner, not an expert.

**As a parent, how would you go about teaching a child to be compassionate?**

Let's say you are watching a TV show as a family, and there is a kid who is clearly being treated as an outsider. You could pause the TV show, and ask your child how he thinks "Johnny" would feel. Or if there was anyone like Johnny at school? Is there anything you could do for him that would make him feel better.

**How does the Epiphany, Jesus revealing himself to the Jews and the gentiles alike, connect to your ministry?**

The magi were outsiders to the Jewish culture. They had different language, clothes, and customs. It is fascinating that they show up to celebrate the birth of Jesus, while the Jewish leaders did not. So here is this very powerful statement that God is calling outsiders to believe in his son. The Messiah coming is not just a little Jewish thing, but is a global, multi-ethnic invitation for all the nations to come from the very beginning.

It's like going friend's birthday party, and all of a sudden 3 kids show up who weren't invited. It would be awkward and uncomfortable. But that is what Jesus does. He draws people from outside-people from all the nations. And it's not like the magi on their own found their way to Jesus. He was guiding them through the scriptures and the star to his son.



# PRAYER100 THY KINGDOM COME



**Journey with Resurrection as we join the global movement of 24/7 prayer that cries out for the kingdom of heaven to invade earth.**

Beginning January 12th and continuing 100 days until Easter Sunday, intercessors will gather in the transformed All Saints Chapel, praying without ceasing for the kingdom to come into our lives, our church, our nation, and our world.

**Here are a few ways you can be involved as a family:**

- Sign up for a prayer slot at [www.churchrez.org/prayer100](http://www.churchrez.org/prayer100)
- Attend a prayer service. Every week there will be a Monday evening and a Wednesday morning service, focusing on a specific prayer topic. The topics will be posted on the website, in the RezArts Newsletter, and in the Sunday announcements.

In the All Saints Chapel, you can pray as a family at the following stations:

- **Western Wall**  
Families can write out/draw prayer requests and post them to the prayer wall
- **Prayer for the World**  
On one wall there will be a large map of the world with different requests for different countries, and requests for our Wheaton community. Families can discuss and pray through these requests together.
- **Art**  
There will be a table with art supplies (colored pencils, crayons, etc), and instructions for kids of 'praying in color.' Families can post their art on the art wall.
- **Music**  
Families can pray, dance & worship through music together.
- **Prayer Beads**  
Children can make their own prayer bead bracelet and use a simple liturgy with Scripture to guide prayer.

