



Advent Week 2 (December 5)

Jesus Shows up in Messy Places

Read: Matthew 2: 1-3, 7-12, 16-18

Light: Two Advent Candles

This week, we read a story that illustrates just how messy the world was when Jesus was born. We see a ruler, obsessed with his own power, do the unthinkable. It's a setting full of chaos, dishonesty, and tragic loss. There's nothing peaceful or calm about this setting for the Savior of the world to be born into.

While there's great sadness in this part of the story, there is also incredible hope. The magi are moved by what God has revealed to them and by their encounter with Jesus. This experience has the power to change their plans and disrupt their route home. They become brave enough to take heroic action to keep Jesus and his family safe. They have seen the light, and that light has the power to illuminate - showing what's true and false; good and evil; just and unjust.

We are reminded in this story that God can show up anywhere, even in the bleakest scene. And we're reminded, too, that this isn't an experience limited to the magi long ago. Even in our world today, even in our own personal and communal moments of darkness, we have a God who shows up. We have a shared faith story that inspires us to be like Jesus when we encounter the messiness of life. And we remember that we, too, can be called to live out our faith in a way that keeps the story going.

This week, consider what it would mean for God to show up in a messy place.

- What is an area of life that seems messy?
- Why are you especially concerned about this particular situation?
- What would it look like to experience the hope of Jesus in this messy circumstance?

Pray: Lord, we lift up to you the messy places of our lives and the world. We ask that you would both remind us of your light and inspire us to be your light when we encounter darkness. Help us be brave and compassionate people as we live out our faith. Amen.