Sunday, January 6, is the date in the Christian liturgical calendar we call Epiphany. On this Sunday, we celebrate the arrival of wise men bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus. The story is much more than an allegory of the gifts we bring in worship and praise to our Savior. Epiphany in its boldest sense represents a new way of living after encountering this one called, “Emanuel, God with us!” After this encounter, “or epiphany,” there is no going back to life before as symbolized in the wise men’s journey by a different route to escape the dastardly deeds of King Herod.

January begins our epiphany moment at National City. After months of prayer, study, reflection, and days of dedicated work by staff and congregation leaders, our Epiphany Process Executive Summary has been released. (Copies can be found at our website www.nationalcitycc.org, or in our Atrium.) It is a comprehensive, and indeed, a challenging summary of the thinking and visioning for the future of the life and ministries of our congregation.

As in the biblical story, we are confident that during the Advent and Christmas seasons we have prepared for the coming of the messiah and have brought our best in worship and praise. Now we MUST fulfill the promise by being and doing the work Jesus calls us as his disciples – to be God’s light to a darkened world. It is not an easy calling and journey!

Christians continue to live with an ever more skeptical and despondent public to organized religion. “Ordinary,” not to be confused with “traditional,” church no longer is the cornerstone of social and spiritual living. Church must become something extra ordinary, reaching the questioning and seekers of a deeper spirituality that seems to have been lost in these turbulent times. To this moment, leaders feel National City is uniquely positioned in our nation’s capital to meet these needs both locally and as the “national church” of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

During January, we will have occasions prepared as a community to meet in conversation and intense listening in members’ homes and at church. You can see the schedule below. This will be the beginning of making us the extra ordinary that so many of our neighbors living within just a few miles of our grand steps are searching for in their community. We hope you will join us in this epiphany, in spirit of the newborn king, to transform lives and be catalysts of peace in an extraordinary place called National City Christian Church.

- Steven Baines

Sundays, January 6 & 13, 9:45 a.m.
Christian Pathways Class, National City Christian Church

Sunday Afternoons, January 13 & 20, 3 p.m. – TBD

Tuesdays, January 15 & 22, 7 p.m.
Home of Stephen & Miriam Gentle, 1107 S Street NW, Washington, D.C.

Wednesdays, January, 16 & 23, 7 p.m.
Home of Emma King & Travaughn Lovick, 1615 North Portal Drive NW, Washington, D.C.

Thursdays, January 17 & 24, 7 p.m.
Home of Steven Baines & Rick Mohn, 921 N. Jacksonville Street, Arlington, Virginia

Fridays, January 18 & 25, 7 p.m.
Home of Aixa Diaz & Anthony Mague, 1301 M Street NW, Washington, D.C.

Saturdays, January 19 & 26, 11 a.m.
National City Christian Church, Large Atrium
January Birthdays

5 Maury Lee
6 Fay Arrington
7 Richard Blackmore
   Kelly Swanson
9 Conrad Bolston
   Dorothy Davis
10 Darin Skelly
   Will White
12 Nick Bullock
   Beverly Williams
13 Kathy Mosley
16 Carol Gesell
   Becky Kelley
22 Drusilla McCain
   Erin & Kelsey Stewart
23 Joy Fulgham
25 Victor Vasquez
26 Sheridan Ruiz
29 Bob Mansker
30 Allen Harris
   Tony Johnson

February Birthdays

4 Sara Imhulse
5 Matt Cahill
6 Denise Ross
   Glen Gerada
7 Erin Hedlund
9 Paul Heffron
13 Dick Gesell
14 Robert Ross
16 Carolyn Gesell O'Sullivan
   Alia Waheed Ky
17 Bill Stewart
   Holly Ahlbin
20 Nett Brown
21 Ken Brooker-Langston
24 David Robeck
25 Melissa Wilson*
26 Perry Ives
27 Lynne Morgan
28 Linda Sharp

* Indicates a student

For additions or changes, contact Kathleen Swihart at kswihart62@gmail.com

Sermons for January

January 6
   Epiphany!
   Stephen Gentle
   Matthew 2:1-12

January 13
   When the Lord Calls
   Stephen Gentle,
   Isaiah 43:1-7

January 20
   Bring the Good Stuff
   John Von Almen
   John 2:1-11

January 27
   The Greatest Is Love
   Stephen Gentle
   1 Corinthians 13:1-13

NCCC Offers Prayer Call on Monday Mornings

All are invited to join the weekly conference prayer line for National City at 6:30 a.m. on Mondays. Simply dial 712-775-7031 and enter access code 371015. For more information contact Loretta Tate at 202-489-2020.

Gospel Choir Rehearsals

The Gospel Choir will rehearse on January 8, 15, and 29 at 7 p.m. in the Music Suite. The Gospel Choir will discuss the February, March, and April rehearsals dates at their January 8 rehearsal.

To join the choir or for further information, contact Valeria Foster, director.

Congregational Meeting To Be Held January 27

A congregational meeting and luncheon will be held Sunday, January 27, in the Howland Center following the 11 a.m. service. A full slate of elders, diaconate, and committee positions will be presented.

At the November congregational meeting, officers were elected: Alan Williams, moderator; Aixa Diaz, vice moderator; Chip Talbott, treasurer; and Richard Bahr, secretary.

Time to Update the Membership Directory for 2019

A copy of the 2019 Church Directory is at the front desk. You are encouraged to check it for accuracy and update it at the desk or to call or email Kathleen Swihart - kswihart62@gmail.com - for any needed changes.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Services on January 13 and January 20

Join in a joyous sing-along at the D.C. area "MLK PEACE EXPO: Welcome to the Beloved Community" on Sunday, January 13, at 3 p.m. at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at 1313 New York Avenue N.W. There is free parking next to the church at 1399 New York Avenue until 6:15 p.m. The McPherson Square Metro (orange line) and the Metro Center Metro (red line) are both just 1 1/2 blocks from the church.

The Christian Church Capitol Area Martin Luther King Tribute and Action is Sunday, January 20, at 3 p.m., Michigan Park Christian Church, 1600 Taylor Street, N.E. The prolific Disciples author and ecumenical leader, the Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnemon, will be the main speaker.

We’ll once again celebrate on Super Bowl Sunday February 3 with a selection of take-home soups to benefit the food pantry. Soup containers will be $10 and feature Theresa Beaton’s delicious soups.
Welcome to Ophelia Rose Denison
We welcomed Ophelia Rose Denison in a child dedication on December 23, celebrated with the congregation and Ophelia’s family and godparents Kelley and Mike Gable.

Ophelia was born June 28, 2018. She is the daughter of Amanda Sallee Denison and James Denison, who were married at National City in August 2012. Mike Gable assisted Dr. Gentle in their marriage ceremony. Ophelia joins sister Elena, who is 5, and brother Levi, who is 3.

Welcome to Adam Jordan Oettinger
We welcomed Adam Jordan Oettinger in a child dedication on January 6.

Adam was born August 14, 2018. His parents, Rick Oettinger and Stephen Jordan, were married at National City on September 15, 2012. Accompanying his parents and Adam were Adam’s godparents Amy Mullica and Zach Miller.

Congratulations Wesley and Amber Gentle
Wesley and Amber Gentle were married at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, a Christian retreat center, on Saturday, December 29, with close family gathered outdoors on a cold and snowy day!

Warm blankets and hot cocoa provided additional warmth, along with the warmth of family love surrounding them.

Wesley and Amber will make their home in Fort Worth, Texas, where Wesley is the Development Director for the Fort Worth Arts Council and Amber is continuing her studies to become a public school educator. Wesley is the son of Dr. Gentle and Rev. Miriam Gentle. Dr. Gentle performed the wedding ceremony.

Congratulations to Deloris Ruddock
Long-time member Deloris Ruddock had two special celebrations in 2018.

First, Sunday, September 16, was a special day for Deloris - the day she turned 95 years old. The day was celebrated by our church family with a cake and treats during coffee hour. It was a surprise to Deloris and she was truly delighted by the love shown by her church family. She works weekly with the Food Pantry passing out bags to those in need and she is also part of Disciples Women. We were happy to celebrate this special day with one of God’s daughters.

Then, she found out that she, along with other members of her military unit, would be remembered on a monument and would be attending the ceremony in the fall of 2018. She was part of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only African American WAC unit involved with the directing of mail to soldiers in the European Theater during World War II. They were assigned to Birmingham, England; Rouen, France; and Paris, France during World War II. Dedication of the 6888 Central Postal Directory Battalion Monument was held at the Buffalo Soldiers Monument Park at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Lenten Devotional Writers Needed
 Writers interested in contributing to the 2019 Lenten Devotional are encouraged to sign up at the Atrium front desk. The writer’s deadline is February 1. If you are interested in more information, please contact sgentle@nationalcitycc.org.

This year’s theme is “MOVEMENTS: Travels and Teachings of Jesus.”
One Year with Tony Johnson and “My Neighbor Ministries!”

It's been one year since we joined with Tony Johnson in starting “My Neighbor Ministries,” an outreach ministry with our working poor and homeless neighbors. Together with the DC Cluster of Congregations and homeless ministries of several other downtown churches, including First Trinity Lutheran and Foundry United Methodist, National City and Tony have helped expand and deepen the direct contact with this vulnerable population. During the year, Tony has been serving in two food pantries twice a week, clothing closets, and greeting persons on the streets of DC. His goal is to build relationships with over 200 people in the community who are homeless, poor, and/or living marginal lives with little means of survival.

Meeting with these people on the streets, listening and offering spiritual support, and providing resource information and assistance, Tony has invigorated National City’s existing Food Pantry program and encouraged us to think more compassionately of our neighbors we encounter. National City members’ in-kind donations of socks, gloves, coats, hygiene and food bags, and most importantly, engaging in conversations with the homeless have enabled Tony to build trust and understanding of people in the wide-range communities we serve.

Tony adds, “This ministry would not have been possible without National City Christian Church’s support. As I continue to live out my call this year, our mission is to build greater local partnerships, recruit dozens more volunteers, and expand “My Neighbor Ministries” to the wider DC community.”

Please consider making a donation in 2019 to support Tony Johnson and our work together by making your check out to National City Christian Church with “My Neighbor Ministries” in the memo line.

Congratulations, Tony!

- Steven Baines