

## EPIPHANY AT ALL SAINTS

We had a successful celebration of Epiphany in January 2006. This was our first year in many years of celebrating this holiday and the planners for January 2006 were Diane Frankle and Gloria Van Bree, ably assisted by Ken Van Bree.

Epiphany is January 6 each year. The holiday can be celebrated on the Sunday evening nearest that date or on that date even if a weeknight.

Our theme in 2006 was “journeying toward God.” Other themes – crowns, stars, the Magi, the wonder of God. This is a magical holiday – it is the “bookend” of the Christmas season that begins on December 24 and is also the official end of all the Christmas celebration. It is a time for small and big children, for celebrating the Child again, for wonder and magic and spiritual journeys.

We had an Epiphany service – Evensong – to begin the celebration. Need to schedule this with the clergy to be sure they have it on the calendar and will cover it! Worship Committee may pick hymns or help with themes for service etc.

Promotion:- start to advertise in e-notes by 2d weekend in December because this holiday comes up right after Christmas and lots of people are gone or involved with family until the first Sunday after Christmas. Signup sheets are needed since this is a Potluck – have people sign up for a main dish, salad or dessert. Event promoter should make sure church has drinks and napkins. Announcements should be made last Sunday of Advent and the Sunday after Christmas – both 8am and 10:30am announcements need to be covered. Also event promoter should arrange for others to talk about the event and invite people personally – don’t just rely on the invitations by announcement or enotes.

Sample announcement:

EPIPHANY CELEBRATION - Bring the Christmas season to a wonderful close – come to the Epiphany Service at [6:30pm] on [day of week], January 6 and then join us for a Parish Potluck and Discussion. [Childcare will be provided.] There will be a chance for fellowship and getting to know each others’s journeys as we celebrate this magical season together.

Arrange for childcare for the babies in Nursery – Note also that this is a wonderful intergeneration event so work with Director of Children’s Ministries and Youth Group Leader to be present if at all possible and work on possible crafts [making crowns and stars, drawing a journey, thinking of gifts for Jesus, etc.] and also a special discussion group for the Youth [see below].

Set up: – tables were set up separately, not in a long line, allowing each table to have a community for fellowship during dinner – all tables were set with the same color table cloth [I think we used white table linens] and Glori Van Bree brought in a variety of beautiful stars and candles for the table settings. We had placed 8 people at a table and the places were set [but

plates left at the buffet table] – glasses on the table too. Note that wine and water should be set on the tables and also baskets for bread – have bread brought by some particular person and placed in each table's basket.

There was a potluck buffet – so 2 tables joined, and covered with linens should be set near the wall to the kitchen – but ideally allowing lines to form on both sides of the tables - these tables will be holding all the potluck dinner items – grouped if possible by type [salad, main dish, dessert] –

Set up for this takes about an hour or 90 minutes so the conveners should be at the church about 4:30-5:00pm and you need at least 1-2 men for the tables and 2-4 total helpers to set up parish hall – chairs, linens, place settings, baskets for bread, table decorations, glasses for wine.

Dinner: After service we were invited into the Parish Hall for a potluck dinner. [note the way this event flowed we did not find it workable to have a cocktail time – rather people should go in to the parish hall and directly into buffet line for dinner]. Participants were invited to help themselves to the buffet and then find a seat – Note – Grace - arrange that a member of the clergy come and say grace as soon as all are in parish hall and even perhaps before the buffet line starts as this will permit early folks to begin eating as others move through the line. Remind folks that they need to clear the tables to the kitchen after dinner and await instructions!

Dinner topics could include: “What Gift would you bring to the Christ Child?” – we didn't try to direct dinner conversation, as we knew there would be a chance for conversation in groups after dinner, but this would be a possible variation or a new discussion topic for next time. Allow total 60 min for dinner including buffet line and eating.

Dinner clean up – HIRE DISHWASHERS – Ray Dempsey has 2 women who will come. All tables responsible for bussing tables to the Kitchen window. **SOMEONE HAS TO TAKE TABLE LINENS HOME TO WASH AND RETURN TO CHURCH.** As you are finishing dinner someone should remind the tables to have tables cleared to the kitchen.

After dinner we had a spiritual movement interlude led by Gloria Van Bree – it is helpful to have some reason to cause folks to get up out of chairs and mix a bit. We also then had a prayer led by one of the event leaders – ie for the Spirit to be with us in our discussion groups. Remind folks that after discussion we would come together for a closing prayer and to help clean up tables etc. .

Then we asked people to form into groups of about 6-8 people to allow good sharing and encouraged participants to go to a group with some new faces of people they didn't know so well. We chose 4 group leaders but could have used 6 or 8 to keep groups small. **CHOOSE GROUP LEADERS AHEAD OF TIME.** Leaders just supposed to make sure every group member has a chance to speak, to keep stories on track and keep group members to a general time limit so everyone has a chance to share. Groups to be formed with the chairs from the tables but not necessarily “at table” –better to drag chairs away from tables and into a small circle.

Our topic, which certainly could be used again, was “tell us about a journey you had where you feel you met, or were trying to meet, God.” Each person in the group was to take 10 min or less – so just a quick story – longer if less people. This takes easily 1 hour if everyone shares. Another topic would be the “what gift would you bring to the Child from yourself “ After the discussion looks like it is completed, someone ideally should stand and ask all participants to form a big circle or otherwise convene as a big group again and have a closing prayer [remind to help with clean up after closing prayer].

Then we needed to arrange for cleanup – announce this ahead of time both before you break into small groups and as the big group reconvenes – need to garner help for tables and chairs – tables and chairs need to be put in the closet on the holders – also someone needs to push the push broom to clean the parish hall floor and you will need the dustpan, and you will need someone to collect all the table settings [in our case for Gloria] and make sure wine, etc. in storage or refrigerator.