

Sunday

FROM GENERATION  
TO GENERATION...

*We keep seeking*



## A BLESSING FOR THE SEEKERS

Blessed are you who turn your face up to the sky,  
who open your arms to feel the wind,  
who notice all the things that we should notice.  
Blessed are you who are fluent in wonder  
and familiar with awe.

Blessed are you who, even now, dream dreams,  
who have not lost hope,  
who swear the glass is still half-full.

Blessed are you who plant trees  
and sing the harmony,  
who tell the children how this world can be magic.

Blessed are you who  
walk and seek  
and turn over every stone,  
pointing out all the corners and colors  
that God lives in.

Blessed are you.

Amen.

*Poem by  
Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed*

## *We keep seeking*

READ Matthew 2:1-23

COMMENTARY | Dr. Christine J. Hong

A better world for all means to enter deep solidarity and accountability with one another. In the decade after the Korean War ceasefire, my grandparents and my parents would tell me about the many ways neighbors helped one another survive. In fact, when I was growing up, I had great aunts and great uncles whom I later learned were not biologically related to me. They were neighbors who raised children together, cooked together, lived together at times, and became one another's adoptive families in the wake of the loss everyone experienced when one Korea suddenly became two.

When my parents became immigrants in the United States, their experience of being welcomed by the Korean American community was what grounded them during a bewildering and tumultuous time. In the Korean American church, they sustained life together, preserving culture and language for their children, and processing the many ways racism affected their lives. For them, in the Korean American church there were no strangers, only extended family.

When we consider Mary, Joseph, and Jesus' story as refugees, fleeing from an enraged despot, I wonder about the people who came alongside them. We know the example of the Magi, who protected the Holy Family by going home another way. Yet, surely, there were others too. People who helped the new parents and their child hide along the way to Egypt. Neighbors who helped settle the small family in a new country, among a new people. Friends who helped them learn a new language, and new ways of life. Jesus probably had many aunts and uncles who were not his blood relations but were family all the same. I give thanks for all my great aunts and great uncles via war and displacement, for all the Korean American church aunts and uncles who raised me, and for the aunts and uncles in Jesus' life those thousands of years ago. I give thanks for the strangers who became friends and family through solidarity with the Holy Family, wanting a better world, not only for themselves, but for a refugee family too.



The Golden Pilgrimage | Carmelle Beaugelin  
*Acrylic, gilding paint, canvas collage on handmade reclaimed paper*

## We keep seeking

READ Matthew 2:1-12

FROM THE ARTIST | Carmelle Beaugelin

Imagine the whispers in the town of Bethlehem. The relatives of Mary and Joseph, curious about the absence of the soon to be young mother, grateful to have a sense of distance from the silent scandal of an unwed wife and a man who remains with her in her apparent dishonor. Members of the community whispering of Herod's increasing anxiety over the birth of one of their own. Those learned in the ways of the stars gazing up to search the dark skies for a prominent golden orb, over which the elders have been speculating.

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the pilgrimage of three distinguished individuals to the newborn revelation of God revealed in the Christ child. Whether there were only three wise men, or kings, or Magi does not matter. However many of them made the harrowing pilgrimage to the newborn Jesus, they were most likely foreigners and outsiders.

Often the community we begin a journey with is not the same community that supports us throughout our journey's length. *The Golden Pilgrimage* depicts the kind of surrogacy that occurs when a friend, a sibling, a neighbor, a father, or a pastor steps in as a much-needed friend. Even in the story of our Savior's birth, it is not a matter of whether blood is thicker than water. Instead, what matters are the bonds that tie a community together when love and acceptance flow like the healing frankincense and myrrh of the gift-bearers.

## PRAY

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.



Wednesday | Journal Prompt

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...

*We keep seeking*

*Consider the Magi and what it means to be a seeker. In the space below, name what you are seeking as you begin a new year.*





Flight to Egypt | Lauren Wright Pittman  
*Digital painting*

## *We keep seeking*

READ Matthew 2:13-23

FROM THE ARTIST | Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Our ancestors forge pathways that become a part of who we are. It is difficult to break those patterns, even if you aren't keenly aware of them. In this context, one of the most defining ancestral narratives of an Israelite's life would be the Exodus narrative. Joseph is advised to move in direct opposition to the way his ancestors moved. He must go toward Egypt instead of away. It takes great courage to consider the ingrained patterns of your history and blaze a new trail.

Joseph must uproot his family from their home to ensure their son will become who he was made to be. In this image, the Holy Family escapes the wrath of Herod in Bethlehem and faithfully travels toward the looming unknown in Egypt. They are flanked by flowers: on the left are Star of Bethlehem flowers and on the right are stylized lotus flowers you might see in Egyptian art. In the background are shadowy figures. On the left, they represent Herod's men seeking to kill Jesus, and on the right, they represent the weight of the past—God's enslaved people and their oppressors. The menacing silhouettes surround the family, personifying the inherent risk in either path they choose to take. The angel of God envelops the Holy Family in an embrace, comforting them from the grief of leaving home and shielding them from the fear of what is to come. In other icons of this pilgrimage, the Nile River often flows below, teeming with fish, but I chose to fill the water with lotus flowers, Egypt's national flower and a symbol of regeneration. God is writing a new story, transforming their destination, which swells with generational trauma and pain, into a haven of refuge and rebirth.

## PRAY

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.





Scan to hear  
the tune!

# Always Seeking

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Henry Thomas Smart (1866)



As the wise men scanned the hea - vens  
When they reached King Her - od's pal - ace  
Flee - ing from the wrath of Her - od  
Seek - ing signs or seek - ing pow - er



There they saw Christ's na - tal star  
Ask - ing where to find the child  
Jos - eph led his fam - i - ly  
Seek - ing safe - ty, seek - ing home



Then be - gan the long pro - ces - sion  
Her - od schemed in all his mal - ice  
Seek - ing in the des - ert a - rid  
Day by day and hour by ho - ur



Seek - ing him in coun - try far Al - ways seek - ing,  
This new king him - self to find  
Safe - ty there as ref - u - gees  
We press on toward the un - known



mov - ing on - ward Fol - low - ing where God may lead

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...

# SABBATH IN THE KITCHEN

*As a Sabbath activity, follow this family recipe or prepare another favorite dish.*

## CREMAS

**A family recipe shared by Carmelle Beaugelin**

Cremas (Kremas or Cremasse) is a popular drink in Haiti and is served regularly at social events and during the holidays. The beverage possesses a creamy consistency similar to a thick milkshake, eggnog, or a thicker Puerto Rican Coquito, and varies from off-white to beige in color. Cremas is a great holiday dessert drink alongside another traditional Haitian dish, soup Joumou,<sup>9</sup> which has been eaten since the victory of Haitian independence against France in 1804. Traditionally, all ingredients are added over very low heat to allow for the melding of flavors, strained, and allowed to sit and cool for 4-6 hours, then finished with fresh lime with rum added in last.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of unsweetened condensed milk (*or vegan condensed milk*)
- 2 cans of sweetened condensed milk (*or vegan condensed milk*)
- 1 can of cream of coconut
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon (*or a cinnamon stick over heat*)
- 1 teaspoon star anise extract (*or star anise over heat*)
- 1 teaspoon of almond extract
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon of lime juice (*zest optional*)
- 1 cup of rum (*for authentic flavor, use dark Barbancourt Haitian Rum*) or 1-3 tbsp of rum flavoring (*for a non-alcoholic version*)

## INSTRUCTIONS

In a bowl, mix 1 can of unsweetened condensed milk and 2 cans of sweetened condensed milk. Add the cream of coconut and mix the ingredients thoroughly. Add vanilla and almond extracts, star anise, cinnamon, and nutmeg to the mixture. Add the lime juice to the mixture to slightly thicken it. Finally, add the dark rum into the bowl and mix thoroughly. Let the ingredients sit for a few minutes, then use a funnel to pour the mixture into bottles. The mix should fill a 750 ml bottle. Adjust the sweetened condensed milk to your preferred sweetness. It is best served over ice, chilled. Enjoy!

<sup>9</sup> Soup joumou is a pumpkin-based soup. Prior to independence, Haitian slaves were forbidden from eating the soup. Since the revolution, the soup has become a symbol of freedom and is often enjoyed on New Year's Day.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God.

Learn more about their work at  
**[sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)**.



@sanctifiedart | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org) | [contact@sanctifiedart.org](mailto:contact@sanctifiedart.org)