We all remember where we were January 6, 2021. I was working from home with a full schedule of Zoom meetings. When the attack on the Capitol Building began, I postponed all the afternoon meetings and sat with Betsy in front of the TV, shocked by what I was seeing. Little did I know that as bad as it looked, videos later released would show it was far worse despite the heroism of the Capitol Police. The House of Representatives Select Committee to investigate the January 6th Attack concludes the insurrection was inspired by a president who refused to accept the results of an election. January 6 is a date that will go down in our nation’s history along with the tragic dates of December 7, 1941 November 22, 1963, April 4, 1968 and September 11, 2001.

January 6 is a day of domestic terrorism and on the church calendar it is the celebration of The Epiphany. January 6, 2021 was a day of destruction, death and an assault on democracy itself. January 6th in the church is a day of humility (the magi kneeling before the Christ child), joy, hope, and an expression of the Oneness of our God with all humanity and all creation.

The Gospel passage for Epiphany ends with the Magi giving their gifts and then, warned in a dream not to return to King Herod who wanted to know where the child was born, they “left for their own country by another road.” What is the “other road” we are invited to on January 6th? Some of it is expressed in the prayer the Church gives us for the 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 Book of Common Prayer, 214.

Perhaps another dimension of that “other road” is revealed to us in the passages that follow the Epiphany story. Joseph is warned in a dream that King Herod “is about to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus flee to Egypt. “When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger.” The violence we witnessed two years ago was no dream, but truly a living nightmare. How might what we witnessed move us to protect our children now? And what would that look like on January 6, 2023? It would look like a strong democracy where every vote counts. It would look like an unparalleled movement to stop the ravages of climate change by caring for God’s creation. It would look like an honest confrontation of the Unholy Trinity of poverty, gun violence and racism and a “room at the inn” for immigrants and refugees. Could it be that a nightmare could awaken us to God’s dream for our world?

January 6, 2021 will be remembered as a day of domestic terrorism. January 6th – The Epiphany – will always be an invitation to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).”