

**January 5 Worship**  
**Sunday Before Epiphany**  
**Greeters-** Tracy & Michael Marcoux, Ray Godin  
**Readers-** Nadine Callahan, Ray Godin

**Announcements/Joys-**

**Time Of Quiet Meditation-** *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”* Isaiah 60:1

**Opening Scripture-** Psalm 147:12-20(page 545-546)

**Opening Chorus-** 164- We Three Kings(1<sup>st</sup> verse)

**Responsive Call To Worship-**

Leader: A new day has dawned, a new year begun.

**People: O Lord, call us so we may hear Your voice.**

Leader: The world turns to hopes and dreams of the future.

**People: O Lord, keep us in Your ways and on Your path.**

Leader: We enter this new year with hope and excitement.

**People: O Lord, remind us that You lead us.**

**All: O Lord, guide us as look to You, and worship You. Amen.**

**Hymn-** 31- To God Be The Glory

**Unison Prayer-**

Dear Jesus, as You led the Magi to You by the light of a star, please draw us ever closer to You by the light of faith. Help us to desire You as ardently as they did. Give us the grace to overcome all the obstacles that keep us far from You. May we, like them, have something to give You when we appear before You. We pray as You taught us, saying...*Lord's Prayer*...

**Gloria Patri-** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

**Old Testament Scripture-** Jeremiah 31:7-14(page 679)

**Special Music-**

**Gospel Scripture-** John 1:1-8(page 922)

**Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace**

**Hymn-** 200- If That Isn't Love

**New Testament Scripture-** Ephesians 1:3-14(page 1017)

## Message

### *“What Is Your Epiphany?”*

It is good to see that everyone has survived the New year holiday. Now that the holiday season is behind us, we can resume whatever normalcy we had before it began. We look forward each year to this joyous time of year and we are so relieved when it is over. Now we can begin the process of getting on with the New Year. I told you last week that I would be talking about New Year's resolutions today, but I am not going to ask you what they are. I am sure that we all made some sort of decision as to what we can do to improve our lives through changing something that we do that may not be as beneficial as we once thought. We understand that most resolutions don't last very long. We have a special holiday coming up just for that, it is called “Quitters Day.” Yes, there is an actual day for quitting our resolutions, it falls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday after New Years. I suppose that gives us just enough time to figure out that we really didn't want to change whatever it was that we thought was so bad.

Tomorrow, January 6<sup>th</sup>, is “Epiphany of the Lord Day” in the Christian calendar. It is also called “3 Kings Day,” and commemorates the day that the 3 Wise Men, or 3 Kings, came to find the infant Jesus in Bethlehem. It was meant to celebrate the manifestation or appearance of the Messiah to the world. There had been prophecies regarding the birth of a Savior 483 years before Jesus' birth. The scriptures contain 300-400 prophecies pertaining to a Messiah. The 1<sup>st</sup> comes from the book of Genesis. The fulfilment of all the prophecies was manifested in the birth of Jesus.

Having an epiphany is not simply confined to religious experience. Have you ever had a sudden thought or idea that was so significant that it amazed you? How many of you grew up with Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner? Each time that the coyote set trap for the roadrunner, it failed and each time he would have another bright idea for some contraption that he would build. When he came up with an idea, a lightbulb would appear over his head. He had an epiphany. Have any of you ever had this experience? Of course you have and it is amazing to think about. As I grew up, I was taught all about God and Jesus and how Christ was my Savior, and I did kind of believe. I knew from a young age that Jesus was always there to protect me but I just took Him for granted. When the day came that I suddenly had that epiphany regarding Jesus, there was a lightbulb that came on in my mind. In an instant, everything that I thought I knew went out the window. The sudden realization that knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Jesus made a difference in me that I cannot explain. I don't think I have to tell anyone who has been there any more about it.

Last Sunday, I spoke little bit about resolutions. I have had the same New Years resolution for over 50 years and I have managed to keep it for all that time; I will not attack Peru unless provoked. I have been faithful to that since I first made it. Now I realize that this is a foolish resolution and does not mean much. This year I am dropping that old resolution and coming up with a new one. Starting right now, I am going to put as much emphasis as I can on learning and teaching as much as I can about how we relate to the Trinity. Now I realize that I give sermons about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit quite a bit. I have come to realize that when I do, I am usually speaking in terms of the historic Trinity. By this, I mean that I speak about who and what they were in the scriptures, which is fine but how about who they are right now, right here?

Each year, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, how He built His ministry, His miracles, His teachings, and then we get to His last days in Jerusalem where He was tortured, crucified, and then Resurrected on Easter morning. We should all be experts by now on His life and times. The history of Jesus and the early church has been taught over and over again until it becomes almost tiring to hear about. What about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit right now? How about them in the future? The story didn't end when Jesus ascended into heaven or when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8) In the Gospel of John, Jesus made 7 statements, each of which started with the words, "I Am." He did not say I was, He said "I Am" and I believe that He was telling us that what He wanted us to know is that Christ is forever.

When Jesus ascended into heaven 40 days after His resurrection, He did not disappear. He went to be with His Father. He then sent us the Holy Spirit to be with us until His return. On Easter morning, we shout and sing the words, Hallelujah, He lives, Hallelujah He has risen. Do we really believe this? Are we just saying the words? Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is just as alive as He was 2,000 years ago, He is simply in a different place. He has promised that one day He will come back. Listen to these words from Jesus in John's gospel, chapter 14, verses 1-8; "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

Yes, it is important to know as much as possible about the life and times of Jesus Christ. The more we know about Him, the closer we are to Him. It is as important, or possibly more important, to recognize the power that is in our lives today, right now, through a working and loving personal relationship with all aspects of God. Living our lives as if Jesus is just a bunch of stories from the past keeps us from having all that God promises is here for us if we take the time to work with the Holy Spirit in building up our faith and belief in just how much strength and power is available to us by following Christ today.

We made a great start when we accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. Do not allow it to end there. I challenge you to make a New Year's resolution to build up your relationship with God by living your life as if He was right here, now, with each of us. The fact is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are as alive and working in our world as they ever were. Remember, God was, is and ever will be with us, if we allow Him to be. Praise Be to God. Amen.

**Prayers of People/Prayer-** We are incredibly stubborn, O Lord. We have entered the season in which Your Light has been given to the world, your blessings have been poured out on the world, and yet all we can think about is our own problems, our own needs, our own desires. Help us to desire you, Lord. Help us to yearn for your presence. Pour your baptismal waters over us again, cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance. Nourish and heal us so that we may joyfully serve you. Wash away our jealousy, greed, and all negative thoughts and behaviors

that stand in the way of our truly being the people you have called us to be. Again let us receive the blessings offered in creation, in the birth and baptism of Jesus, and in the ministry of the saints of light. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

**Communion Hymn-** 376- A Hymn Of Joy We Sing

### **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**Thanksgiving Prayer-** God of gentleness, thank You for relieving our burdens and for filling our emptiness with the Bread of Life. Create of us the living Body of Christ, that in these challenging times we might witness the power and possibility of Your love and peace in our world today. Amen.

**Closing Hymn-** 188- Fairest Lord Jesus

**Benediction-** Go in peace; love and care for one another in the name of Christ; and may the Spirit of God which filled John and Jesus, fill your hearts, souls and minds; may the power of God which upheld them, strengthen you for each day; and may the love of God which directed their every action be your guiding light and your shining star, both now and forevermore. Amen