



Red Bank United Methodist Church

"A Diverse Body Unified by Christ"

EPIPHANY: THIS IS THE GUY!"

Let me ask you a multiple choice question: *Christmas is over when:* (a) all the presents have been opened (b) all the fruit cake has been eaten (c) you take the tree down (e) the first credit card bill arrives (f) none of the above.

The season of the Christian year known as "Christmas" ended Wednesday night. The Christmas season only lasts 12 days. It is the shortest of all the seasons of the church. (Advent (4) , Epiphany (6), Lent (6), Easter (7) Pentecost (26)are all longer than Christmas).

Did you sing the 12 days of Christmas song this year? You know, the partridge in the pear tree, a bunch of lords a leaping, drummers drumming, and those five golden rings. People think the 12 days start with the 13th of December; it doesn't. It started December 25th and came to an end Wednesday night

For much of church history, the 12 days of Christmas were a big deal. It's only been in last 80 years the church has fallen prey to making too much out of pre-Christmas. For 1900 years they didn't. But the 12 days of Christmas was a BIG deal; a time of celebration, much fan-fair, nightly parties with gift giving.

The birth of the Christ child was not a one day event; but something celebrated for almost two weeks. A century ago children did not get out of school until Christmas Eve and there first day back? January 6th 12 days after Christmas. People did not put up their Christmas tree until Christmas Eve and it was understood such stayed up and decorated until January 6th .

People gave to others one gift a day for 12 days. Gift giving and gift opening was done at night to commemorate the birth of Christ at night. You opened one gift per night for 12 nights.

12 days have passed and we are now in Epiphany. Sunday. The word "Epiphany" doesn't mean anything to us in the church as it once did; we've allowed Christmas to over-shadow it; we have no clue what this season of the Christian year is about.

The word "epiphany" means manifestation/revelation. Starting with the story of the wise men and how the Christ child was revealed to them; they were the first Gentiles to have baby Jesus revealed to them. Another story is the baptism of Jesus and how God



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descends like a dove and proclaims: *"this is my beloved son! He's the one I've been promising."*

John the Baptist made clear that he wasn't the promised one but he was preparing the way for the Messiah to come. On the beach there were fishermen, one by the name of Andrew, came to his brother and said to him, *"we have found the Messiah!"* And both would become disciples of Jesus. A man named Lazarus died and his sister, Martha, prayed for a miracle. Jesus asked her who she thought he was and she said *"you are the Messiah; the son of God."* And Lazarus was raised from the dead. 19 times in the gospels people recognized and acknowledge that Jesus was "the one". That's what was being manifested.

In Christmas – Christ is born...but that's all there is...a birth. In Epiphany – Christ is revealed; he is shown to the world; it's a season where the Church says: **"this is the guy!!! "this is the guy!!!" "He really is who He says He is!" This is the Messiah!**

Have we lost the importance of Epiphany? Have we allowed Christmas to overshadow it? Both seasons are important. But when we lose Epiphany we lose a lot. God reveals himself through Jesus Christ; various manifestations, revelations, occurrence after occurrence; epiphany after epiphany.

I think one of the biggest things we lose is that we don't expect epiphanies anymore. We go through the motions of church and don't expect God to show up and do anything; manifest anything. We come to church with no anticipation of a life being changed. We have no anticipation of water being turned into wine, or the spirit to fall upon someone like a dove, or healing to come to a body, soul, or spirit. My dear friend, God is still revealing Himself, He is still doing miracles, He is still changing lives, He is still manifesting Himself.

Epiphany shouts to us that the birth is not all there is... there is more. Epiphany shouts to us that this babe in a manger is the one; He's the guy! And even today God is alive and kicking and wants to reveal Himself in a variety of ways to a variety of people. And he wants to reveal himself to you.

Open your eyes....look for God revealing himself to you; to others; in this church; in our ministries; in our community. I am confident that in this new year God wants to show you something; God wants to do something in your life. Be on the lookout for Epiphanies



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John 1:14-29 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁴ *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John bore witness of him, and shouted aloud, This is He of whom I spoke, ¹⁶ And of his fullness have all we received; grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

¹⁹ *The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? ²⁰ And he confessed, I am not the Christ. ²¹ And they asked him, Are you Elijah or one of the prophets? And he said, I am not. ²² Then said they unto him, Who art thou? ²³ He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord*

²⁹ *The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him, and says, Behold the Lamb of God, the Messiah, which takes away the sin of the world.*

John 1:40-42 King James Version (KJV)

⁴⁰ *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first finds his own brother Simon, and says to him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.*

John 11:23-27 King James Version (KJV)

²³ *Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. ²⁴ Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*

²⁵ *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though they were dead, yet shall they live. ²⁶ And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. D you believe this?*

²⁷ *She said unto him, Yes Lord, I believe that thou are Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, which shall come into the world.*