

Epiphany

Eureka! said Archimedes. “I have found it!” Great story—triumph of scientific thought and intellect. “I figured it out!” We use “epiphany” the same way in English—a little light bulb goes on over our heads. We figured it out! The Greek word, *epiphaino*, means to “appear,” “give light,” in the active voice, or to “appear,” or “be revealed,” in the passive. Traditionally, the Feast of the Holy Theophany, or Epiphany, of our Lord celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John, at which he is revealed-or, “outed,” if we want to use modern vernacular, as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit of God. It is a foundational moment in our theology of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I find it to be a beautiful holiday, though one that is different in character from Christmas. At Christmas, everything is lit by candles—soft light in the darkness, a comforting, celebratory atmosphere. To me, Epiphany is more like the morning after the New Year’s Eve party—it is the moment when the lights come on, and all the leftovers from the party are revealed: the empty cups, the potato chip crumbs, the half-eaten cookies. It isn’t a bad thing. It’s just that the beautiful story-like elements of Christmas are past, and we are returned to our realities. Our realities are that we have to pay those credit card bills, that we must return to work or school, that the dryer won’t fix itself and the tires on that car aren’t going to last the winter. Our realities include our losses and our griefs, our accomplishments and our failures. But the story of Christmas is not that a baby was born once, and then the event was over. The story of Christmas is that when this child was born, the Earth was forever changed. We take Christmas with us into our realities. Unlike Narnia, where, for a time, it was always winter and never Christmas, the truth revealed to us at Epiphany is that it is always Christmas. God broke through reality to bring us out of our darkness and this person, Jesus of Nazareth, is the manifestation of God’s presence with us. We may have to clean up periodically, but we are still at the party, still invited to the table. Epiphany may be LED lights to Christmas’ candles, but it is light nonetheless. I wish you joy in your New Year—may the light of this season break through into your reality with the love of God!

Sound in the Sanctuary

This article is just a brief report on our work on the sound system in the sanctuary. Over the course of the fall, Jeff Curcio and Jim Ray have been trouble-shooting our sound system. On Sundays, they and Peter Arrington have been trying different settings. A representative of the company from which we bought the system has come in multiple times and has told us a few things, specifically that our sound system is working as it is designed to work, but is a complicated system, one that is more complicated than what we need. Right now, the team (along with the Finance Team) has decided it is not in our best interest to buy a new system. Jeff and Jim continue to trouble-shoot and work on solutions. We appreciate your patience and wanted you to know how much work has gone into trying to solve these issues. Your feedback has been appreciated and heard—we want to continue to hear from you, because it is important that the sound system work. Personally, I wanted you to know how hard this team has been working to fix this problem, and to ask for your continued feedback, for your continued patience, and for your support of them as they do this work. Thank you!

Booted Up and Running!

We have accomplished so much in 2018—I am proud of us all! Since April we have:

- Voted to revise our by-laws, created a team to do so, found people willing to do this work, and they have already begun their work to fulfill this task;
- Voted to revise our diaconate, by renewing our sense of the purpose of this board, and helping define tasks in ways that fit our congregation; we found people willing to do this work, and they have begun their work to fulfill this task;
- Voted to renovate our Ground Floor Room, created a team to do so, and found people willing to do this work; they are ready to begin work on this project in the new year;
- Voted to explore new ways of doing missions; we had monthly events, each focused on a single mission organization with which we partner; our events were well-attended and lots of fun! We voted to continue with this way of exploring missions through 2019, giving ourselves plenty of time to connect with different organizations and to think through what will be our role in servant ministry in the world.
- Explored our Baptist identity, and continued the ongoing work of personal spiritual growth through our Sunday School classes and our weekly Bible study;
- Worshiped weekly, with beautiful music, including many stunning soloists, ensembles and guest musicians, with gifted worship leaders, with amazing guest preachers, and with a spirit of love and openness that has made many very special moments possible;
- Continued to connect with the needs of congregation through our prayer team, and through the ministries of men and women in the church who pray, who visit, who call, who bring casseroles, and who care deeply for each other.

I could not have, in my wildest dreams, pictured that we would accomplish so much in this time. I believe (now you all know what a big deal it is for me to use that word) that God has been at work in us and through us, and will continue to do so. May God continue to bless us richly in 2019!

¹ Arland, Barbara, Kurt Arland, Johannes Karvidopoulos, Carlo Martini and Bruce Metzger, eds. *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998, p. 71.

Bible Study Group

Every Wednesday
10:30 a.m.
Church Parlor
Come join us!



Come Grow With Us

SUNDAY MORNING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES

SEARCHERS

Meets in the Brooks
Education Wing
downstairs. (9:45 a.m.)
God With Us:
Rediscovering the
Meaning of Christmas
From Christmas to Epiphany

THE FORUM

Religion and current events
are discussed in the Brooks
Education Wing downstairs
(10:00 a.m.)

ADULT STUDY

The Formations - Meets in
the Parlor *Jesus' Ministry to*
the World (9:45 a.m.)

Men's Breakfast!

Join us
on January 19th, 8 a.m.,
Acorn Hill Bistro
2134 Old Forest Road



Come join us!

BIRTHDAYS AND *ANNIVERSARIES FOR JANUARY



03 Wanda Templeton
05 Garrett Lois Sawyer
09 Ryan Riley
09 Tyler Riley
10 Debbie Snidow
11 Marvin Templeton
15 Beth Ellis
15 Denise Riley
17 Martha Jane Arrington
18 Jim Patterson
19 Priss Riley
20 Phil Sanders
23 Andrew Cook
24 Nancy Cook
25 Chase Templeton
28 Bonnie Benedict
29 *Nancy and Sam Cardwell
29 Cheryl Curcio
29 Norman Moon, Jr.

VOLUNTEER A LITTLE OF YOUR TIME!

**We are looking for a team of people who would
like to videotape
Martha's sermons on a few Sundays.**

**Call Jim Ray or Jeff Curcio if you would
be willing to help out
during the year. Easy job.**

They will train you!



A Special Thanks!

*Thanks so much for everyone's generosity
of giving to the Jericho Toy Barrel*

*The Jericho Outreach Ministry
was very appreciative.*



THANKSGIVING BOXES TO 13 FAMILIES

Thanks to everyone who contributed
time and money
to fill our Thanksgiving boxes.

It was a wonderful mission project!

Women on a Mission



Decorating our Worship Room

*Thank you for coming to decorate
our worship room.*



Frank Legon
Clif Potter
Susan Spencer
Martha Kearse
Dan Raessler
Deborah Raessler
Farshid Shahrokhi
Richard Bowhay
Donna Johnson

Bill Riley
Bundy Potter
Vicki Mays
Bill Fleming
B.J. Reid
Dana Garrard
Susan Epling
Jeff Curcio



Rivermont Emergency Food Pantry

**Special thanks to the wonderful folks who helped make
the starter bags for the Rivermont Food Pantry.**



**Jay Spencer, Pete Luce, Susan Luce, Dawn Daniel, B.J. Reid,
Susan Spencer, Sandy Garrard, Martha Kearse, Susan Epling,
and last, but not least, Pat Fleming**

We were a great team! Love you all, Leslie Willman

January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day Holiday Office Closed	2 10:30 am Bible Study	3 7:30 pm Choir	4	5
6 9:45 & 10 am Christian Education 11 am Worship (Communion)	7 7:30 am McNeely Book Group	8	9 10:30 am Bible Study	10 7:30 pm Choir	11	12
13 9:45 & 10 am Christian Education 11 am Worship	14 7:30 am McNeely Book Group	15	16 10:30 am Bible Study	17 7:30 pm Choir	18	19 8 am Men's Breakfast at Acorn Hill Bistro
20 9:45 & 10 am Christian Education (Dr. Steve Harmon Sunday School hour) 11 am Worship (Rev. Kheresa Harmon, Pulpit Guest)	21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday Office Closed 7:30 am McNeely Book Group	22	23 10:30 am Bible Study	24 7:30 pm Choir	25	26
27 9:45 & 10 am Christian Education 11 am Worship	28 7:30 am McNeely Book Group	29	30 10:30 am Bible Study	31 7:30 pm Choir		

CHURCH STAFF:

The Rev. Dr. Martha D. Kearse
The Rev. Nathan C. Brooks, III
Ms. Debbie Burton

Pastor
Pastor Emeritus
Music Director

Mr. Allan Heer
Mrs. Donna Johnson
Mrs. Kim Morales

Organist
Administrative Assistant
Bookkeeper

VISION STATEMENT

We are faithful and loving servants of God who believe that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord. We are a spiritual, ecumenical congregation, called by God, bound by faith, united in fellowship, dedicated to freedom, and engaged in God's work of mission and outreach.

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