

*JANUARY NEWSLETTER – Pastor Dick Erickson*

*The weeks following Christmas are called “Epiphany”. The word means “shining” and it implies that the light that began to shine at Christmas, like the star that guided the Magi to the Christ Child, continues to grow in its beauty and brightness. The true bright and morning star is Jesus Christ who came as “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel”. John’s Gospel begins with the declaration that “the true light that enlightens every person has come into the world. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not been able to overcome it.”*

*We use the word “epiphany” occasionally in conversation when we share a surprising insight that we have received. “I had an epiphany”! We are delighted when it happens. It’s like a beam of light that opens up a new realm, a new horizon, a new reality that had been there all along.*

*Epiphany is the season of increasing light not because Dec. 21 signals the beginning of the season with shorter nights and longer days but because Jesus can bring increasing spiritual insight, bringing to maturity the truths of Christmas in the New Year.*

*Light overcomes darkness. Light reveals the way to go. Medicine has revealed that Light or the lack of it can affect our emotional and mental health, as well. It’s called “seasonal affective disorder” and doctors prescribe getting out of doors, getting some exercise, and taking vitamins. Some may need medication.*

*Nature gives us a picture of what we can do in Epiphany for plants orient themselves toward the light, it’s almost like they have muscles that turn to the plant to face the light, and seek the light, in an amazing way. And we can, too. It’s a decision we make every day to bask in Jesus’ light shining through the pages of Holy Scripture, in the fellowship of God’s people, in the glory (a ‘light’ word) of beautiful music.*

*What has been begun in the celebration of Christmas can continue and mature as we orient ourselves toward the source of spiritual light. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World and as we are transformed by His light we, too, become the light of the world. 2019 can be the year of inviting others, too, to walk with us in the Light. I John 1 promises wonderful things for those who walk in the light. It’s a great chapter to read as we begin the New Year.*