

From: FCCV (fccv@snet.net)
To: fccv@snet.net;
Date: Fri, January 6, 2012 2:02:10 PM
Cc:
Subject: Pastor's Weekly Email

My dear friends, in the Western Christian tradition January 6 is celebrated as Epiphany, and in my family it has been another time to gather together with good food and to exchange gifts. This tradition is observed in the Hispanic and Latin cultures and in some places in Europe and is also known as Three King's Day. In Italy, the equivalent of Santa Claus is La Befana, who is an old crone who delivers gifts to deserving girls and boys on Epiphany. Originally thought evil, people would ring clay bells to keep her away. Now she is seen as a gentle spirit who brings gifts.

Epiphany marks the conclusion of the seasons of Advent and Christmas and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6. The season of Epiphany lasts until Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. The term epiphany means "to show" or "to make known," and remembers the coming of the wise men [Matthew 2:9-11] bringing gifts to the Christ child, and the "revealing" of Jesus to the world as God in human form.

Although in many ways we tend to think of the gifts of the Wise Men as symbols of the perfect gifts, maybe it was God who originated the tradition of Christmas giving. It has been said that "Gift giving is the way the invisible becomes visible, the way the hidden heart is made known, the way the spirit risks itself in substantiation" [John Shea]. In the first chapter of Matthew we read, "And you are to name him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins," [1:21], and later, "And they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us'" [1:23]. What a gift!

As we close the Christmas season, let us remember the blessing of the perfect gift we have received from God's heart, and may it remain in our hearts and in our memories all the remaining days of this year, and in the Christmas seasons yet to come.

Joseph Tobin
Field Placement Student

I want to clarify an important matter that was mis-stated in the cover letter regarding the Executive Committee's report. This was mailed out earlier this week and there appears to be contradictory statements between the cover letter and the EC report.

The one significant staffing change, beginning on September 1, 2012, will be a reduction in hours for our church secretary, Nancy Young, to 20 hours per week during the program year (September 1-June 30) and 16 hours per week during July and August.

This change has been discussed with Nancy Young and she understands the reasons for its proposal.

Pastor David