

“I Keep Asking”

January 2009

Hymn “God reveal your presence” VU 391

Scripture Ephesians 1: 15 - 23

Prayer Let us pray – We praise you, O God, for fresh winds of the Spirit, for warmth in the winters of our lives, for refreshment in the midst of our weary toil. Thank you, God, for the consolation of your word, the blessing of your peace, the riches of your grace. Shine on us now with the light of your presence and the power of your truth. Meet us here with a fresh revelation of the possibilities in your service. Amen.

Lesson What’s an epiphany? – Perhaps it can be defined as a moment which rescues from the commonplace the radiance of an experience, “the enchantment of the heart.”

As we enter the New Year we could make a “book of epiphanies”. We will not want a scrapbook but a series of pictures for our “hard drive”. Like our camcorder “epiphany machine”, we open ourselves to the moment, “click” and it’s on record, an epiphany! No one epiphany tells the whole story. Even the wise men knew only a part of the story when they left the stable, but they had had an epiphany. Light had broken in their darkness and they would never be the same again.

In our scripture lesson from Paul’s letter to the people of the church in Ephesus we read of Paul’s prayers, how he keeps asking. Sometimes prayer can be like pushing a full wheelbarrow – with no wheel. At other times it’s like rushing down the rapids of a mountain river. What makes the difference? As we have read, Paul’s prayers overflow with praise and thanksgiving. Can reading or praying produce an epiphany?

Migrating Redwing Blackbirds were making a great racket. On investigating, a hundred birds materialized from one tree. One person reported, “I saw a tree, then a rush of colour, then a tree again. It was as if the leaves of the tree had been freed from a spell in the form of Redwing Blackbirds.” For that person, it was an epiphany of the wonder of God’s creation.

It is out of a number of such epiphanies that we shall build our lives into the pattern of Paul’s letter to Ephesus, “the comprehension of what is the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love.” So that we may be filled – gradually, bit by bit, with the fullness of God.

Discussion In small groups, talk about the following:

- one of your epiphany experiences
- a time that prayer has been difficult for you
- how you can make AOTS and/or the church more a part of your life

Prayer Let us pray – O God, as the songs of Christmas fade, we sometimes turn away from Christ and from your call to service. Lead us back, gracious God, for life apart from you is drained of meaning. Amen