

Celebrations

Congratulations to the Food Hub for a recent fundraising hockey game held on Saturday, Jan. 11th.

Our thanks go out to all who supported the annual Salvation Army Kettle Campaign. Volunteers and donors alike. A worthy effort for a worthy cause.

Happenings

Happenings around the parish.

- **Annual Vestry Meeting** – Feb. 23rd, Parish Hall
- **Parish Council Meetings** – Jan. 22nd and Feb. 19th.
- **Keenagers** – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, every month at 10 to 11 a.m. – Civitan Hall.
- **Pray K7A** – Jan. 26th @ 7:00 p.m. – Bethel Pentecostal Church, Hwy 29, Smiths Falls.
- **Community Games Night** – Feb. 7th, Food @ 5:30, Games start 6:30.

If you have any events you would like to have posted here you can drop us a line at:

stjohns.smithsfalls@gmail.com

"Events" in the title.



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Epiphany – What Does It All Mean?

An **epiphany** (from the ancient Greek ἐπιφάνεια, epiphanea, "manifestation, striking appearance") is an experience of a sudden and striking realization. Generally, the term is used to describe a scientific breakthrough or a religious or philosophical discovery, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realization allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective.

Epiphanies are studied by psychologists and other scholars, particularly those attempting to study the process of innovation.

The word epiphany originally referred to insight through the divine. Today, this concept is more often used without such connotations, but a popular implication remains that the epiphany is supernatural, as the discovery seems to come suddenly from the outside.

In Christianity, the Epiphany refers to a realization that Christ is the Son of God. Western churches generally celebrate the Visit of the Magi as the revelation of the Incarnation of the infant Christ and commemorate the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. [\(continue on Pg. 2 – Epiphany\)](#)

The Biblical Story of The Magi

The story of the Epiphany is told in the Bible in Matthew 2:1-12, where the wise men follow a star to find Jesus in Bethlehem.

These "wise men" or Magi or astrologers were gentiles. Known as dream interpreters. These wealthy priests would have travelled with an entourage for protection as officials from the East.

The Greek word Magos is taken from the Mede language and means "spiritual advisors" or simply "priests". They were appointed by Darius over the state religion as priests of Persia, which is modern day Iran, and served as official advisors to the king. This was at the time of Daniel, who had been captured by the Babylonians and taken from Israel to Babylon.

In Daniel 2 and 5:11, he is given the title of "Chief of the Magi". It is possible that these Magos were descendants of those who had been taught by Daniel, and because of his prophecy of the Messiah, King of the Jews, being "cut off", they may have been able to decipher the date of the Messiah's birth along with the interpretation of his rising star.

[\(continue on Pg. 3 – Magi\)](#)

Pause With the Pastor

Have you ever had a Spiritual Experience? A moment when you knew something truly remarkable has happened that can only be explained by God's intervention.

Perhaps it was something very quiet – a mysterious sense that “Someone” is present with you; a powerful experience of connection to the world in nature or in community that filled you with awe or joy; an answer to prayer that came in a form you could never have imagined, let alone expected.

Can you find words to describe it?

It is a strange thought for shy and polite people but being able to tell the stories of our Spiritual Experiences is the beginning of helping others to find a connection with God in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. These real, powerful stories that so many of have and so few of us share, can very often bring hope and encouragement.

It can also be part of the life long journey of faith for a person who is slowly walking the path toward God. So, here's a small assignment for you for this month: recall a Spiritual Experience and tell a friend or family member about it. Then tell us all what happened next! (T. Brauer)



Matthew Dillabough



Terry Dillabough



Paul Howard



Rob MacLean



Ethan Watkins



Ron Watt



Dan Willis

Meet the Media Team. They capture our services weekly, sending them out to the world beyond our walls

Epiphany

[*\(continued from page 1 – Epiphany\)*](#)

Traditionally, Eastern churches, following the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar, have celebrated Epiphany (or Theophany) in conjunction with Christ's baptism by John the Baptist and celebrated it on January 19. However, other Eastern churches have adopted the Western Calendar and celebrate it on January 6.

Some Protestant churches often celebrate Epiphany as a season, extending from the last day of Christmas until either Ash Wednesday, or the Feast of the Presentation on February 2.

In some countries many families will take off 6 January and exchange presents.

In Spain and Latin America, *El Dia de los Reyes* is just as important as Christmas Day itself. A bit like how you might leave a carrot and mince pie out on Christmas Eve, the night before El Día de los Reyes, children leave out drinks for the Three Kings and there are parades and fireworks displays to mark the occasion.

The date of Epiphany also happens around the time of Twelfth Night too. Traditionally, Twelfth Night marks the end of Christmas - 12 nights after Christmas. (C. Kerfoot)

Games Night – Come Out and Play!!!

Games Night is usually the 1st Friday of the month and everyone is welcome!

A meal is always shared with everyone. We eat around 5:30. The main course is provided by our Games Night organizers and sides, snacks and desserts are always an exciting surprise as friends contribute to the food table.

There is always a free-will offering basket to help support the cost of the meal prep.

As for the games, we usually have 2 games of crokinole going, card games, and whatever games have been brought to share. Laura usually has some craft or game off to the side that is a little more interactive for anyone to join. It can get a little more intense depending on the supplies at the table (Can you say, marshmallow fight!!).

Games Night has been running with a pause for Covid, since 2019! We enjoy each other's company, the food and making new friends. If you have an interest, please email us at the newsletter

stjohns.smithsfalls@gmail.com

with the words “Games Night” in the title. Thank you. (L. Porter)



Parish Hall

A Progress Update

Perhaps you have been wondering what progress has been made on the decision-making process for the future of the parish hall since the discovery of extensive mould in the lower hall.

A subcommittee of parish council was struck to investigate the situation and provide recommendations to council. The group identified eight options for repair or replacement of the hall, as well as which spaces could be accommodated in each option.

The gathering of information has included: a meeting with Joel Prentice responsible for facilities and buildings in the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, consultations with Tedd Nathanson, engineer, Robert Eves, CEO of Carebridge, Peter Mansfield, Architect, INEngineering (structural engineer's report), DDDS, engineering firm, (mechanical engineer's report), Watkins woodworking (inspection report of the attic area), Town of Smiths Falls (building permits, zoning, lot footprint), and Bob Mulrooney (financial analysis).

Chris Saumure and Chris Haines have generously offered to provide the last pieces of information needed for decision making; estimates of cost and timeline to completion.

Once this final assessment is complete, a full report will be compiled and distributed, and you will be invited to meeting(s) for further discussion and to choose a path forward.

(L. Arkell)



What the Magi Found

(continued from page 1 – Magi)

By the time of Jesus's birth, Persia had been conquered and was being governed by successors to Alexander the Great. It is quite possible that these Magi came from the Mesopotamian region of Seleucia.

Although we are not told how many Magi came to visit Bethlehem, it was likely quite a large entourage. This likely caused the uproar and commotion in the town. See Matthew 2:3, possibly over 100 who traveled in the caravan

arriving from the East in Jerusalem.

These Magi were extremely wealthy. They presented gifts that totaled a great sum of money, not tiny presents wrapped with bows, but treasure chests full of financial wealth. We are not given the monetary value of each gift, but we know that frankincense and myrrh are extremely costly.

“the Magi saved the Christ-child”

These treasures probably financed the exodus of Mary, Joseph and Jesus to Egypt when

Herod announced the slaughter of all boys under the age of 2.

The gifts themselves had deeper meanings and layered interpretations from both an historical and a biblical perspective.

Gold is an often-used symbol of the deity of Christ. Frankincense points to His perfect life of holiness, excellence and devotion. Myrrh is an embalming spice which speaks to us of the suffering love of Christ that led Him to His death on the cross.

The symbolism found in scripture is amazing, if we take the time to search it out! (C. Kerfoot)

This Month's Interesting Read

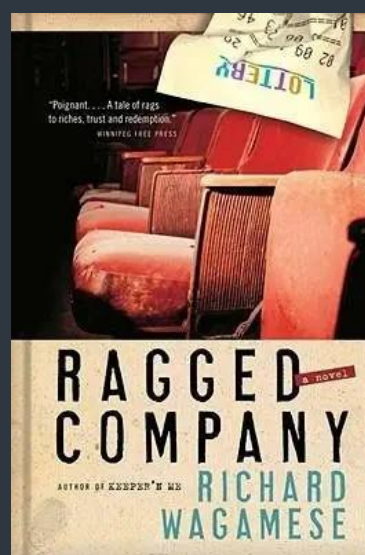
Ragged Company

Authored by Richard Wagamese.

Four chronically homeless people-Amelia One Sky, Timber, Double Dick and Digger- seek refuge in a warm movie theatre when a severe Arctic Front descends on the city. During what is supposed to be a one-time event, this temporary refuge transfixes them. They fall in love with this new world, and once the weather clears, continue their trips to the cinema.

An insightful read into the plight of homelessness and who the people are. Sometimes being in this state by their own volition

Available on [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and on [Indigo.ca](https://www.indigo.ca) (C. Kerfoot)



A History of Epiphany

To understand Epiphany's origin, we need to look at the Church Calendar's history.

In the first century, the earliest Christians set aside one day a week as the Lord's Day. We observe this day on Sunday.

In the second century, they established Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Lent was a period of time set aside for penitence and the training of new Christians. Easter observed Christ's death and celebrated His Resurrection, followed by Pentecost, where the church focused on triumph and victory.

In the third century, the early Church leaders established Epiphany. This holiday celebrates and recognizes Christ's birth, baptism, the adoration of magi, and the first miracle at Cana.

It wasn't until the end of the fourth century that early Christians began observing Christmas and Advent. Christmas became the time to celebrate Jesus' birth. Advent is the four-week period of time before Christmas. It is used to prepare hearts to receive Jesus.

As we can see, Epiphany originated from the earliest Church leaders and has a spiritual meaning.

(C. Kerfoot)

Upcoming Events

- **Parish Council and Annual Vestry Meeting.**
Next council meeting is Wednesday, January 22nd at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. In February, the meeting will be on Wednesday, February 19th at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This will be followed by the Annual Parish Vestry Meeting, February 23rd, 2025, following the 10 a.m. service (Start time approx. 11:45).
- **Keenagers.**
Hosted by the First Baptist Church, this is a fellowship time of prayer, scripture reading, music and guest speakers for individuals 55+. The Smiths Falls Civitan Club. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 10 a.m.-11am. All are welcome. Anyone needing a ride may contact Eric Wills 613-283-7007.
- **Pray K7A.**
On the last Sunday of each month, the local Christian community gathers together for shared fellowship and prayers. It will be held on January 26th starting at 7 p.m. at Bethel Pentecostal Church 301 County Rd 29 (Brockville Hwy), Smiths Falls, ON K7A 4T4.
- **Games Night.**
Games nights happen regularly each month, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The next games night is on Friday, February 7, starting with food at 5:30 and games at 6:30 p.m.
- **Food Bank Baskets.**
Every third Sunday of the month, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items for the food bank. Please leave your contributions in the baskets at the base of the chancel steps.
- **175th Anniversary Events.**
Stay tuned as the Anniversary Team adds special events and activities throughout the Fall.
- **Future Editions.**
February 2025 – Vestry Edition, Winter events and more.

Times of Worship:

Sundays:

- 8 a.m. spoken eucharist.
- 10 a.m. sung eucharist.

Wednesdays:

- 10 a.m. weekday eucharist.

Parish Office:

- 9 a.m. to noon, weekdays (613)283-1261

