



**January 13th 2018 - Epiphany
"All will be revealed"**

I know, Twelfth Night was the 6th January, but I needed to write about Covenant last week so I am late with my Epiphany thoughts. Mind you that seems to be how I have been this Christmas season, late for everything, writing cards and posting them, getting presents, the only thing I seemed on top of were the various services that I was either taking or sharing in. But as that for me was what Christmas was all about, the rest was just the icing on the cake. (Which I had to admit I never got round to doing!)

So by now I guess all the presents have been opened and put away or used, and we are left wondering what the fuss was all about. The decorations will be down and all that is left with be those strands of tinsel that seem to float about, the odd decoration that either fell behind a chair or you forgot to take it down and having packed everything away, you're not sure what to do with it now, and if you has a real tree, pine needles that keep appearing even though you have swept.

But to get back to Epiphany, planning a Christmas event for one of the churches I came across the "true" story behind the song the 12 Days of Christmas. In the 1500's when to be a catholic was banned, it was originally used to teach Catholic children about the faith and they could sing it without being found out by the authorities.

The "True Love" in the song was Jesus Christ, because Love was truly born on Christmas Day, and the partridge in the pear tree also stands for Jesus because of the partridge's willingness to sacrifice its life to protect its young. The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments. The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe humanities fall into sin and promise, that in love, God would send a Saviour. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation. Seven swans a-swimming represented the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8-11; Romans 12, Ephesians 4; I Peter 4:10-11). The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22 & 23). The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles. The twelve drummers drumming stood for the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

That song may have been about keeping faith secret, but the coming of the Wise Men which we celebrate at Epiphany, Twelfth Night, was not secret but it revealed who Jesus was and would be, and we live today in the light, hope and promises of that event, with the King of kings, who advocates and prays for us and who gave his life as a sacrifice for us, symbolised in the Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

As we leave Christmas behind and start again the journey of Christ growing up and beginning his ministry of healing and teaching may we realise afresh the depth of love that God has for each of us, that he should do this for you and me.

God present with us, in us and through us, reveal your love in our lives that we may be "wise" and share our faith and love of you with others, that we do not keep you a secret, but live in such a way that others know we are yours. In Christ we pray. Amen