

**3 Epiphany, 2007, January 21
St. John's**

Two Christmases ago I was invited to join Judi and her family on Christmas Eve as we opened presents from one another. It had been a family tradition for years and now, as part of the family, James and I were invited to join.

Two Christmases ago we had all our children and their fiancs to our house for Christmas dinner. It has now become a tradition for us.

Traditions and customs-the particular way of doing things as families.

And then there are our personal customs that we have. We always get up and make a pot of coffee. We always kiss our spouse goodbye. We always tell those whom we love that love them.

Our personal customs make us who we are.

Even Jesus had his customs. Today we read that Jesus went to the synagogue as his custom was on the Sabbath day.

Elsewhere is the gospel we often read that Jesus went alone to pray as his custom was.

People noticed that Jesus went to church and that Jesus prayed.

You know it is the customs of our life that people

notice. There is an old saying that it is not what you say but it is what you do that counts. The sermon lived is far better than the sermon preached. It is the custom of our lives are the traits that people notice.

The customs of our lives are not always those things that are bred into us. Often the customs of our lives are learned.

For instance, if you want to be a person of prayer then first you must learn how to pray and then you must take time to say your prayers. That then becomes a custom and the way of prayer then becomes an integral part of you life.

If you want to be person who is kind then you must practice being kind in word and in action. There is a great difference in talking about being kind and actually being kind. You have to do it.

If you want to be a person who is a loving person than you must begin to love other people.

If you want to be a person who is forgiving then you need to understand first of all that you are a person forgiven by God and we are asked to forgive, truly forgive, others. Not just to say it but to really do it.

All of these things we make choices to do.

We choose to do good things. We choose to be a good person. We choose to think of others. We

become intentional about living a life that Jesus would have us live.

And I believe that when we begin to live the life that Jesus would have us live then other people notice. Not for our glory or prestige, but because as Christians we want the love of Christ to radiate through who we are and what we do. The more that we choose to allow the love of Christ to live through us the more our words and actions speak for themselves. The more people will say they are doing just as their custom is.

What you are doing with your life has become customary and people see it as customary.

But the customs of your life are always yours by choice.

So choose them well. . People do watch. People do notice.

But what will they see? The choice is ours.

Amen