Happy New Year. Again.

Comedian Pete Holmes—who often mentions that he's a former seminarian—has a bit I love where he insists he has every right to say "Happy New Year!" on any random day of the calendar. His logic is simple: every single day is, technically, a new year since the last one.

He even jokes that our big countdown on December 31st is a little like watching the numbers on an odometer reset to 000000—interesting, maybe even exciting, but also a bit silly if we don't treat the rest of the year with the same sense of possibility.

Personally, I love the ritual of New Year's Day. I love the feeling of January 1st—the quiet hope, the sense that something fresh has begun, the subtle courage that seems to come more easily when the calendar turns. What makes me a little sad, though, is how quickly that feeling fades. Two weeks later, the energy of new beginnings often feels like it has already slipped through our fingers.

In many ways, that describes my annual struggle not to let the joy and promise of the incarnated God fade with the turning of the calendar pages—or, as a friend of mine likes to say, the effort to "not keep Christ in Christmas."

What fascinates me is that for a culture so obsessed with newness, we seem remarkably quick to give up on the idea of new beginnings.

I understand why. Newness takes risk.
It takes forgiveness.
It takes courage.
It takes faith.

And for me, it also takes the steady reminder that God Incarnate doesn't belong to a single season. It means new possibilities, new realities, and new narratives—all year long.

Some days, that might mean taking the risk to be hopeful when the year already feels long. Other days, it might mean something harder—recognizing that even the comfort of routine can quietly ask us to try something new. Because if God truly makes all things new, then newness doesn't just reassure us—it also invites us forward.

That's where Epiphany begins to matter more to me every year.

If Christmas is about God coming near, Epiphany is about learning how to live differently because of it. It's the season that refuses to let the story end at the manger. It insists that revelation keeps unfolding—that light keeps showing up in unexpected places, and that faith keeps asking us to move, to notice, to respond.

The Magi don't just admire the light.
They follow it.
And when they encounter it, they don't go home the same way.

Epiphany feels like the church's quiet way of saying: newness isn't a moment—it's a movement.

And that movement isn't only personal. It's communal.

As churches, we talk a lot about renewal—about being places of transformation, welcome, and hope. But Epiphany gently presses the question: are we willing to live as if God is still revealing something new among us? Are we open to being changed by the light we claim to follow?

Maybe that's why Pete Holmes' joke lands so well. It's playful, yes—but it also carries a deeper invitation. What if every day really were treated like a new year? What if every morning carried just a little of that January 1st energy—the kind that says beginnings are possible, change is real, and yesterday doesn't get the final word?

Because in the end, the Christian story is a story of newness that refuses to be contained by a season. The Incarnation isn't a holiday—it's a declaration. God has stepped into time itself, and in doing so, has made every day a place where something new can begin.

So maybe it's not so strange to say "Happy New Year" on a random Tuesday in February. Maybe it's simply a way of naming what Epiphany keeps teaching us.

Light keeps showing up.
New paths keep opening.
And beginnings are always closer than we think.

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