

EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT
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LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL
PROTESTANT CHURCH(LEPC)®

The Evangelical Protestant The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

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BREAKING NEWS!

Slaughter in Bethlehem

King Herod has ordered the slaughter of all male children 2 years old and younger, the sound of crying is deafening.

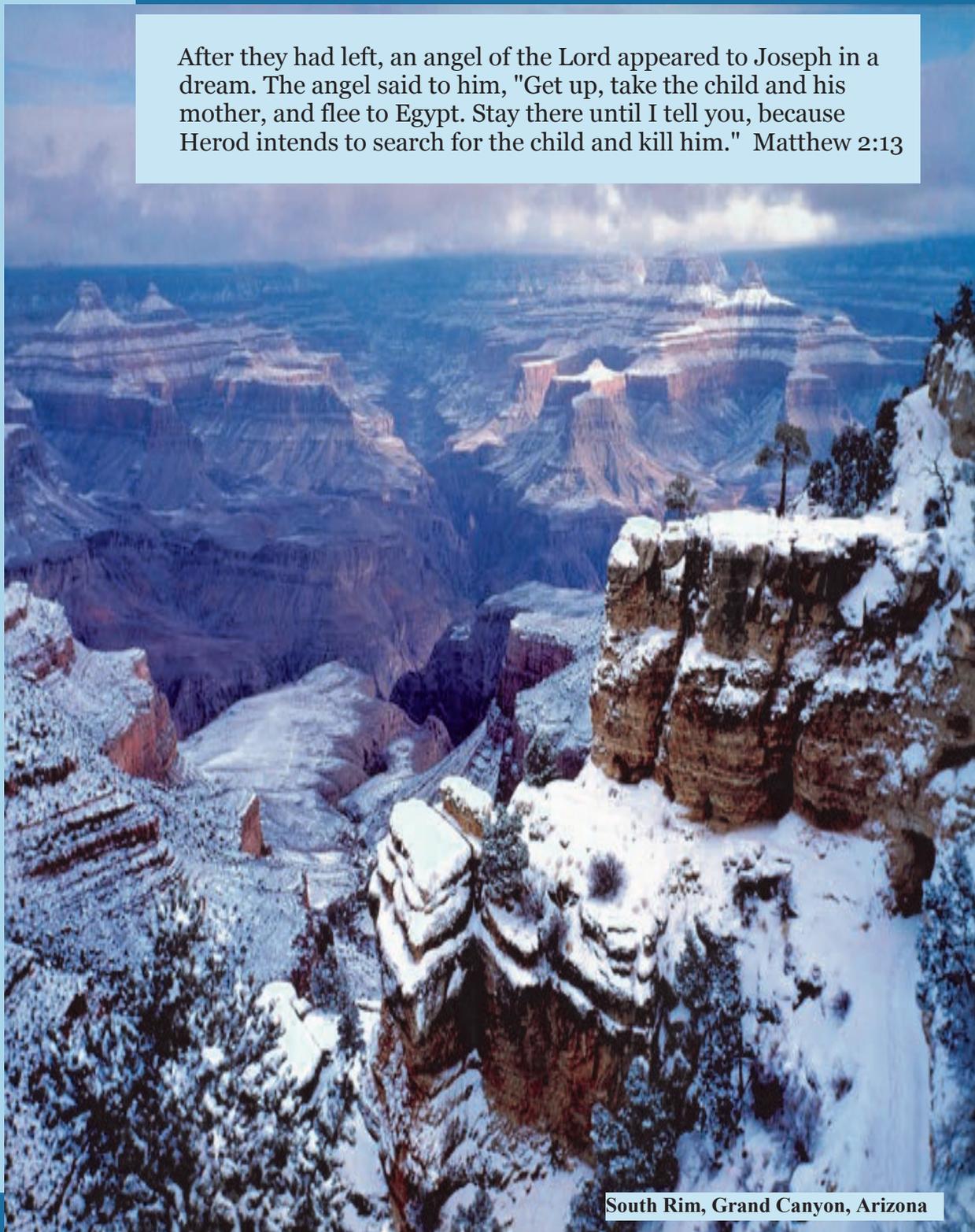
Matthew 2:16-18

Film at eleven, ED

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After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said to him, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and kill him." Matthew 2:13



South Rim, Grand Canyon, Arizona



Evangelical Protestant
Church (GCEPC)® Inc.,

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GCEPC "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2: 8

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The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote" (Church Messenger) was established in 1885,

Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)

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Editor Rev. Steve Bacon

We Believe

1. The Holy Scriptures, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

2. There is one God, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.

3. Jesus Christ is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)

4. Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice

for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. (1 John 2:2)

5. Humankind was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God. (Gen. 3:1-24)

6. Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)

7. Water baptism identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should arise to

walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)

8. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ, to convict of sin, to enable the believer to live a godly life, and to empower the Church to carry the gospel into all the world. (Matthew 12:31, Acts 1:8.)

9. In the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ for His Church. (Matthew 24:30, Rev 1:7)

10. In the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and everlasting separation from God of all those who reject Jesus Christ. (John 1:10-13, Rev 20:11-15)

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

Bishop's Page



Greetings Ministers and Friends of the EPC GCEPC/LEPC,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can you believe we have come to the close of another year? Life in all it's business takes up so much time. I hope at the end of 2013 that you had time to reflect on the old year 2013 and the new year 2014. I like to spend time in prayer with the Lord and in study at the end of the previous year and the beginning of each new year. Here is one thought that Holy Spirit led me to consider in my time with Him.

God orchestrates life for us. He is thinking of us, watching us, preparing us when we do not expect to be even on His radar. He brings about circumstances to put His plan into motion for us.

Saul's father was missing a few donkeys. He sent Saul

with a servant to find them. Saul spent three days looking but no donkeys. Discouraged, he wanted to return home but was persuaded by the servant to consult with Prophet Samuel instead. Meanwhile God speaks to Samuel regarding when to expect Saul to come to Him and told Samuel the true reason for Saul's visit. Saul thought he was looking for donkeys but he was about to become the first king of Israel.

We can think we are doing one thing while God has another completely different plan that He is working on. There's nothing wrong with "looking for donkeys" but remember with God all things are possible. He may be working on something that has not entered your mind and He can get you to that place on His own. A new beginning may be just up ahead or around the next corner. Expect the unexpected. In 2014 be on the lookout for the unexpected plans God has for you.

And now in the words of the Apostle Paul," I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil.1) Amen!

My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.

May God protect you, keep you, provide for you, sustain you and yours, show you His glory and the working of His great faith in you in the year 2014!

IHS,

Bishop Nancy Drew



“Sleep is Essential”

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries



My prayer and blessing for you is that you will discover and uncover the mysteries of God in His ways and His word. I pray for you a revelation of His grace in your life and that all lessons imparted to you through your message will become revelatory teaching for the flock of God.

There are many dimensions to health. In this article I want to discuss the physical dimension and one topic in particular; sleep. Sleep is essential. According to the National Sleep Foundation, there is no magic number to the amount of sleep a person needs. The recommended amount for adults (over the age of 17) is 7-9 hours per night. The amount of sleep you need to function best can be different for you compared to your peers of the same age and gender. You may need 9 hours of sleep to be productive while others may only need 7 hours.

Today, an estimated 50-70 million US adults have sleep insufficiency. Lack of sleep is now reported to be linked to motor vehicle crashes, industrial disasters, medical and other occupational errors. People who have sleep deficit tend to also suffer from chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, depression, and obesity, as well as from cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity. Sleep is essential to maintaining a healthy immune system. The body heals during sleep and recovers from the day. Sleep balances our appetites by regulating hormones that play a role in our feelings of hunger and fullness. Therefore, when you are sleep deprived, you may feel the need to eat more, which can lead to weight gain.

Why is lack of sleep an issue today? Our world has changed. We have round-the-clock access to technology; round the clock work schedules, poor sleep habits. There are also sleep disorders such as insomnia or obstructive sleep apnea that are contributing to lack of sleep. So whether it is behaviors we can change or medical conditions contributing here are some tips to help you get more sleep:

Tips for Good Sleep

1. Darken your bedroom as much as possible. Light can disrupt your circadian rhythm, the biological clock controlling your sleep/wake cycle. The pineal gland in your brain responds to light and switches off production of melatonin, a hormone that naturally rises after darkness falls to induce sleepiness.
2. Eat a high-protein snack several hours before bed. This provides enough of the amino acid L-tryptophan necessary to produce melatonin and the brain chemical serotonin, a precursor to melatonin.
3. Maintain your normal bedtime. Maintain a consistent schedule of going to bed and getting up at the same time, even on weekends. This assists your body's natural sleep/wake cycle.



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“Sleep is Essential”

4. Go to bed as early as possible. Before electricity came into widespread use, people used to go to bed when darkness fell, and rise with the sun. This natural schedule coincides with our circadian rhythms.
5. Avoid snacking before bed, particularly on grains and sugar. These snack foods raise blood sugar and hinder sleep. Later, when your blood sugar drops, you may wake up and have problems going back to sleep.
6. Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoon or evening. The effects of caffeine can last long after drinking caffeinated beverages, and interfere with your body's natural sleep pattern.
7. Steer clear of alcohol. The sedative effect of alcohol wears off quickly; you may wake up and be unable to fall back asleep. Drinking alcohol may also stop progression to deeper stages of sleep, during which many of the body's regenerative processes occur.
8. Maintain a healthy weight. If needed, lose weight. A potentially debilitating disorder called obstructive sleep apnea has been linked to excessive weight. This condition consists of snoring accompanied by gaps in breathing, with symptoms of daytime sleepiness or fatigue.
9. Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed. This will reduce the need to go to the bathroom during the night, and the risk of not being able to get back to sleep.
10. Exercise regularly. Daily aerobic exercise of at least 30 minutes is one of the best cures for insomnia. Make it vigorous enough to sweat a little. Don't exercise too close to bedtime however; this may keep you awake.

Source: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2005/11/prweb309029.htm>

Know Your Surroundings

Check your bedding. Uncomfortable bedding can prevent good sleep. Make appropriate changes if your pillows, comforter or mattress is keeping you from sleeping well.

Keep it cool. Find a comfortable temperature keep your room well ventilated. Generally, cooler is better than warmer in aiding sleep.

Try eliminating background noise. Barking dogs, loud neighbors, traffic, TV or other noise can add to your inability to sleep. Fans, recorded sounds, music or white noise may help block out those auditory distractions keeping you up.

Reserve the bed for sleep. Don't use your bed as your dining room, office, workroom or recreation room. Let your body "know" that the bed is associated with relaxation and sleeping.

“Sleep is Essential”

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries



Sidebar: Did You Know?

The National Online Healthcare Professional Insomnia Poll (2008) revealed that many individuals had an increased risk for insomnia if they engaged in stimulating activities an hour before getting into bed at least three nights per week. These activities included completing household chores, using the computer or surfing the internet, and watching television.

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Keep pets out. If your pets wake you during the night, keep them outside the bedroom.

Still can't sleep? Get out of bed. If you get up in the middle of night and cannot get back to sleep within 15-20 minutes, leave the bedroom and read, have a light snack, do some quiet activity or take a bath. You will generally find that you can get back to sleep within 20 minutes. Do not perform challenging or engaging activities like housework, office work or watching TV.

Get Medical Help

Medical factors can upset sleep including arthritis, acid reflux (heartburn), menstruation, headaches and hot flashes. Seek the help of a healthcare provider if you experience these problems.

Psychological and mental health problems including depression, anxiety and stress are often associated with sleeplessness. For some people, the only sign of depression is the inability to sleep. Consult a medical or mental healthcare provider if you think these factors may be contributing to your inability to sleep.

Sleeplessness may be a medication side effect. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if medications you are taking can lead to difficulty sleeping.

A healthcare provider may **prescribe sleep medication** to you for short-term relief. The decision to take sleeping aids should be made together with your healthcare provider.

The goal is to rediscover how to sleep naturally. Always follow the advice of your healthcare providers.

Bishop Jessica



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When Love Was Crucified

Bishop Dr. David Church

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given... Isa 9:6



Bishop Dr. David Church
Director of Missions

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

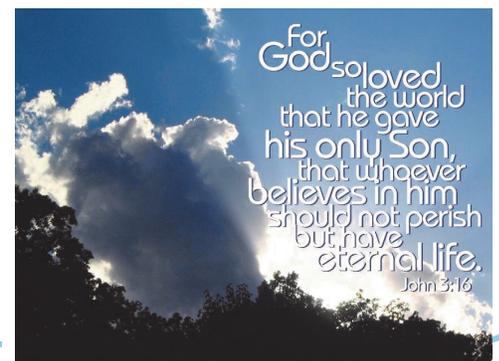
Writing just weeks before Christmas after coming home from a joint men’s breakfast I began meditating upon the Cross and our walk in life. Although we are saved by grace alone through faith alone, our sanctification involves us in the process through our obedience to the Gospel. As we yield to the Holy Spirit working within us we become more like our Master. We are brought to many trials during our time here on earth, to either face them successfully in the power of God or to fail in our own power or because of our unbelief.

Most people in the Church today prefer a life without conflict, pain, or loss. The idea of partaking of Christ’s suffering is foreign or looked upon in distaste. We hear in many popular “religious” shows that we are the King’s Kids and deserve all the good things we can get. If we are under any trial it is because of the Devil and because we do not have enough faith, and therefore we are being punished.

But if we are truly the Lord’s we are not under condemnation any longer. True discipleship teaches us to endure trials. We are told to rejoice in them by James. They exist both to purify our faith and to further prove to us that the promises of God always hold true and never fail. Unfortunately most “Christians” are not disciples, because the goal of many groups is to increase numbers, not faithfulness. The Gospel has been watered down to the God loves everyone “easy believism” preached today. They don’t want to offend the so called “seeker” visiting their church, so sin and repentance are ignored, and the Cross has become both offensive, and paradoxically, a piece of jewelry proudly worn but devoid of any meaning. Instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, Churches are taught to be “Purpose Driven seeker-sensitive” country clubs instead of lighthouses of Truth and hospitals for healing of sinful broken lives. Others have become Emergent, old liberalism with new packaging teaching self-esteem and believing in the inherent goodness of man in spite of evidence to the contrary.

True Christianity with the power of God behind it comes only when we individually begin to realize what the Cross was about. No one will ever be able to say God did not reveal enough about Himself. No one can ever say that God did not do enough to save us from Hell. No one can claim ignorance of God’s existence or how we should live before Him, for the very creation itself shouts His glory and how we should walk in righteousness. But we prefer to go our own way, and even His Church prefers a tamer Christ, the Lamb without the Lion. Programs replace training in righteousness, sin has become mistakes or wrong thinking. Many so-called Christians still believe God will ultimately save everyone because “God is Love” and would not send anyone to Hell (if it exists at all). Truth has become relativized and the Bible has become only one more “sacred text” that shows “a way” to live instead of declaring The Way. Seminaries regularly teach that the Bible is not inerrant nor infallible, and question the reliability and historicity of many stories recorded within its pages, including the Virgin Birth, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection which are all fundamental beliefs in True Christianity.

A watered down Gospel and a weak powerless Christ could not transform anyone from a criminal addict to a faithful servant of God and contributing member of society. Working in Recovery and Re-entry ministry takes a God and Gospel with the power to transform lives. It is the unpopular and offensive preaching of the Cross that leads to repentance and faith in Christ. It is coming to a knowledge of the sinfulness of Sin and the cost of forgiveness that leads us to obedience to the commandments. The wrath of God is upon those who sin (which is everyone). The debt had to be paid or absorbed by God Himself before forgiveness and cleansing could be offered to us. In love this was accomplished at the Cross by the God-Man Jesus Christ. A Son was given to take our place of punishment, which we see in what is one of the most well-known verses stating the love of God, John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”



What is the Epiphany of our Lord?

By Dr. Richard P. Bucher



Dr. Bucher received his seminary training at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana and graduated in May 1985. He earned a Doctor of Theology degree from Boston University, graduating in May 2001. Dr. Bucher serves as an adjunct Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and has taught both on the seminary campus and at Concordia University, Irvine, California. He authored a book, *The Ecumenical Luther*, which was published by Concordia Publishing House in the Fall of 2003.

The day of the Epiphany of our Lord is an important and ancient Christian holy day. Unfortunately, it is little understood and seldom celebrated by many American Christians and pales in comparison to the popularity of Christmas and Easter, for example. This is regrettable, for it is a rich and joyous day, which, along with the corresponding Epiphany season, commemorates important events from the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through questions and answers, this simple article will attempt to explain what the Epiphany is and to place it within its historical context. By the time you finish, I hope you agree that the Epiphany is a day and season worth celebrating!

When is the day of the Epiphany celebrated?

Since ancient times, the day of the Epiphany has been celebrated on January 6. The season of Epiphany is from January 6 until the day before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent).

What does the word "epiphany" mean?

The word "epiphany" comes from two Greek words, the preposition *epi* and the verb *phainen*, and can variously mean, "to shine upon," "to reveal," or "to appear, manifest." The verb *epiphainen* as well as the noun *epiphaneia* both occur in the Greek New Testament. For example, 2 Timothy 1:8-10 joyously declares,

God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing [epiphaneia] of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

At times the word is used to refer to the first appearing or revealing of Jesus (either His birth or the beginning of His Messianic ministry) as in the verse above, Titus 2:11, 3:4, and Luke 1:79. At other times it is the revealing and appearing of Jesus at the end of time which is in view as in 1 Timothy 6:14, 2 Timothy 4:1,8, and Titus 2:13.

Whereas most of the occurrences of *epiphaneia* or *epiphaino* carry the meaning "to reveal" or "to appear," in Luke 1:79 it means "to shine upon." In Luke 1, Zechariah prophesies that his newborn son John the Baptist will

give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on [epiphaino] those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:77-79).

This passage is one of the reasons that light is so emphasized at Epiphany time, as is the case, for example, in the Orthodox Church's "Festival of Lights." It also partly explains why

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What is the Epiphany of our Lord?

By Dr. Richard P. Bucher

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candles are so often used.

What is the "Epiphany of our Lord"? Or put another way, What are we celebrating on the Epiphany?

The short answer is this: the Epiphany celebrates God's revealing or manifesting of Jesus' identity as true God, Messiah, and Savior of the world. It not only commemorates the fact that Jesus appeared to save us, but that God revealed the identity of Jesus to the world. So what particular "epiphany" does the day of the Epiphany remember? The answer to this is not so simple, since throughout history, Christians have celebrated several different epiphanies of Jesus. To learn more about this, turn to the next question.

When did Christians first celebrate the Epiphany and what exactly were they celebrating?

First, allow me to restate what has often been stated. The first Christians did not celebrate an annual day of the Epiphany. Nor did they annually celebrate Christ's birth, death, or resurrection. The New Testament documents show us that the early Church gathered on a weekly basis in some places, specifically on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). That the Christians met on the "first day of the week" coupled with John's mention of "the Lord's day," suggest that Christians chose their weekly day of worship in remembrance of Christ's resurrection on that same day.

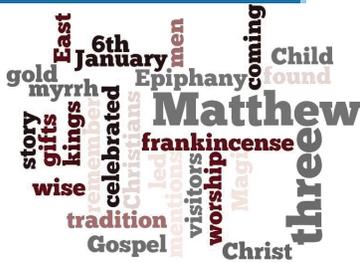
The first annual Christian festival appears to have been the Pascha (the Christian Passover). The Pascha, as first practiced, commemorated Christ's death and resurrection, and was observed on the 14th/15th of Nissan, the same time as the Jewish Passover. In his Church History, Eusebius of Caesarea informs us that in the second half of the 2nd Century, a controversy broke out among the Christians over the correct time of the year to celebrate the Pascha. His account, among other things, tells us that Christians had been annually celebrating the Pascha for many years prior to this (Eusebius, Church History, Book 5:23-25). Besides the Pascha, Pentecost was celebrated as an annual festival at least by the early 3rd Century, as both Tertullian (Concerning Fasting 14) and Origen (Against Celsus 8:22) specifically mention it.

When was the day of the Epiphany first annually celebrated? The first explicit mention of it is in a writing of 361, but there are other evidences that suggest that it was observed earlier than this in some places.

Earlier I stated that the Epiphany celebrates God's revealing or manifesting of Jesus' identity as true God, Messiah, and Savior of the world. However, very different revealings of Jesus' identity were celebrated by the early Church.

Since the time of Leo I of Rome and St. Augustine and following their example (late 4th to mid 5th Century), Roman Catholicism and the Reformation churches have focused on God's revealing of Jesus' identity to the magi/wise men, as recorded in Matthew 2:1-12. But throughout history other revealings have been emphasized, including Christ's birth, His baptism, and His first miracle at Cana. In fact, among

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What is the Epiphany of our Lord?

By Dr. Richard P. Bucher

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Christians living in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, the event of Christ's life that was predominately celebrated on the day of the Epiphany was His baptism. This is explained in a 4th Century document called The Apostolic Constitutions:

Let them rest on the festival of the Epiphany, because on it a manifestation took place of the divinity of Christ, for the Father bore testimony to Him at the baptism; and the Paraclete [Holy Spirit], in the form of a dove, pointed out to the bystanders Him to whom the testimony was borne (Apostolic Constitutions 8:33).

Christ's baptism was seen as an exemplary "epiphany" because both the Father by His voice and the Spirit by His action in alighting upon Jesus clearly revealed who Jesus was: God's Beloved Son.

Why Do Lutherans Emphasize the Account of the Magi on the Day of the Epiphany?

Because, as just mentioned above, it is a clear example of God revealing the true identity of Jesus as God and Messiah. Through the star and the Scriptures (while in Jerusalem, the magi were directed to Bethlehem on the basis of Micah 5) God revealed Jesus to the Gentile magi. They received Him and responded by worshiping Him and bestowing gifts.

Though the epiphany to the magi is our main focus on the day of the Epiphany, we do emphasize Christ's baptism in the Epiphany season that follows, specifically, on the first Sunday after the Epiphany.

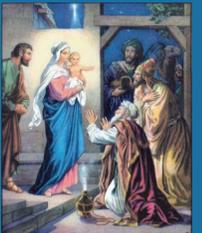
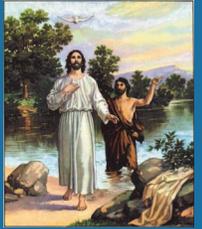
Do the Eastern Orthodox celebrate the Epiphany on January 6?

The Eastern Orthodox celebrate both Christ's birth and His Epiphany on January 6. The epiphany (or "theophany" as they choose to call it) they emphasize, however, is Christ's baptism.

Why is the Epiphany worth celebrating?

It is worth celebrating because, regardless of which epiphany is commemorated (the event of the magi or Christ's baptism), all are permeated with grace and Gospel. In what sense? In the sense that in every epiphany, God took the initiative. In other words, God did not demand that we discover on our own who Jesus of Nazareth is. He condescended to us and revealed Jesus to us in ways that we could understand. He sought out the magi and revealed Jesus' Person and Mission to them through the star and Scripture. They never could have discovered this on their own if He hadn't revealed it by grace. He had mercy on John the Baptist and others at the Jordan on the day of Jesus' baptism. No one there on that day could have possibly perceived the true identity of Jesus as John baptized Him. But God condescended to them and allowed them to hear and see the testimony of the Father and the Spirit. Once again, God took the initiative by His grace and revealed Jesus as eternal God as well as man.

Remembering the Epiphany reminds us that we also have been sought out. God has come looking for us through His Word and Sacraments. Through these He has revealed His Son to us personally, so that through faith we know Jesus to be the mighty God, the Savior of the world; and we believe Him to be our God and our Savior. Have a blessed Epiphany celebration!



WHAT ABOUT WHEN GOD IS SILENT?

By Bishop Nancy Drew

Study the basics of the faith that has guided you. Renew your commitment. Lay aside old grief's, old ideas. Forgive where needed if needed.



After a long time, in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah. I Kings 18:1

Elijah was a Hebrew prophet of the 9th century BC, during the reign of King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel. Elijah had a very close relationship with Jehovah God. Elijah's name means "Yahweh is my God." Elijah served his God with faithfulness and passion. The accounts of his prophetic service are found in 1st and 2nd Kings. At the end of his life on earth Elijah did not die. His God sent a fiery chariot for him and Elijah was taken up into heaven without experiencing death.

God worked extraordinary miracles through the voice and hands of Elijah. God had stopped the rain because of the sins of the people. Nothing like being the voice of God proclaiming the stopping of rain to make you very unpopular in an agricultural region like Israel. King Ahab called him the "the troubler of Israel." Nonetheless Elijah was respected and often feared because of the way God used him and carried him by His Spirit.

Three and half years had passed since the rain had been stopped. But also during that time there was "no word" from the Lord. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah telling Elijah to go speak to King Ahab and the Lord would bring the rain again.

The prophet is often the picture of what God is doing. There was no rain, no word, for surely God's voice is like the dew that refreshes every morning, that guides and directs, that let's your relationship grow. He IS your friend who sticks closer than a brother though you serve Him as your God. You bear the persecutions together, you celebrate victories together but now there is "no word," no rain. No rain to nourish, refresh, cause growth, satisfy thirst, no encouragement to maintain relationship.

I can tell you from my own experience that this can be a depressing time especially when you want so badly to see those things God has already spoken come to pass. You are waiting for His next direction. You have done exploits together. You have experienced His glorious Presence and now things seem so "turned down." It is not because of something you have done but because of something God is doing.

So what do you do in these times of perceived dryness, the long time of "no word"? First and foremost you do NOT walk away from God. You do not malign Him. You do not make negative assumptions about Him. You trust. You love. You wait. He is faithful.

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WHAT ABOUT WHEN GOD IS SILENT?

By Bishop Nancy Drew

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You may feel like an outcast from everyone around you. Every hurt you've ever experienced may try to resurface to discourage you. You may become physically sick and emotionally depressed from the pressures of stress that exist in that moment. How could anyone understand if you said, "I miss Jesus." Didn't He say, "I am with you always"? Yes, He did and He is. He has not gone anywhere and neither have you. He is doing something. What then to do and how to feel in such times of "no rain" when you are God's servant and minister.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Don't pretend that nothing is different because it is, something is different. Stay close to the Lord. Remember His love and care. Get ready to celebrate because the rain WILL come again. You just don't know when.

2. The silence may have nothing to do with you and everything to do with those you minister to just as it was with Elijah. Nevertheless use the time to reflect and ponder changes you may need to make or to seek healing from the hurts of the battle. Use the time to rest your heart. Picture yourself close under the wings of God as in Psalm 91.

3. Think of and review the words, visions, dreams, lessons the Lord has taught you. Is there anything you can do, no matter how small to show your faith by taking action to set those things in place? Remember to find a way to do the small of the large vision God has given you. Do what you are able to do. Called to feed the nations but can't right now? Then feed those few you can who are close around you.

4. Go with what you know already. Study the basics of the faith that has guided you. Renew your commitment. Lay aside old grief's, old ideas. Forgive where needed if needed.

5. Do a "pulse" check on your relationship with God and those who are close to you. Clean up obedience if it needs to be fine tuned. Get ready for the time of increase that will come after the time of seeming decrease.



(Continued on page 13)

WHAT ABOUT WHEN GOD IS SILENT?

By Bishop Nancy Drew

(Continued from page 12)

6. You may feel a little lethargic, tired. Give yourself rest. Do things that nourish your heart and encourage your soul. Let your mind relax.
7. Be careful not to resent the good things going on in other peoples and ministries lives. Stay humble, grateful for what God has done and what He will do.
8. Keep listening. Listen for what goes on around you. Often there are keys and sign posts placed in our path if we are just observant. Listen for His voice coming again with renewed and fresh revelation. You can do this quietly, don't stress. Everything is Ok. Unless you know there is something you need to deal with, don't try to stir up something that is not really there. Soon He will come. And when He does, rejoice and be glad. Acknowledge Him in all of your ways. He will share with you what He has been doing. He will bring the rain.



Not Afraid of Hell

"Not Afraid of Hell"

December 12, 2013

For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek Him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God." Psalms 10:3-4

In the course of his long life, President Ronald Reagan dealt successfully with many situations.

There was, however, one situation which defied his best efforts and expert abilities. That situation was presented to him the day his 12-year-old son told him he "no longer wished to go to church." It appears the boy, already at the age of eight, had decided that religion just didn't make sense and he wasn't going to believe it.

The senior Reagan was shocked and disturbed by what his son had shared. For years he worked, invited, and prayed for a change of heart in his son. That change never came. Today, Ronnie Reagan is boasting of his unbelief in a commercial he has made for FFRF, the Freedom From Religion Foundation. In his radio spot, Reagan says this anti-God group is the nation's "largest and most effective organization of atheists and agnostics, working to keep state and church separate."

The ad is disturbing, but what is most upsetting is the way the commercial ends. The late-president's son concludes the radio spot by identifying himself this way: "Ron Reagan, lifelong atheist, not afraid of burning in hell."

Those last six words are scary. They're scary for a number of reasons:

1. Ronnie may have truly convinced himself there is no God, no Savior, no heaven, no hell. Yes, he may have convinced himself ... but *he can't be sure* they don't exist. He is taking a very big, a very bad gamble.
2. But there's more. Having convinced himself there is no God, Ronnie is boldly flaunting his unbelief and encouraging others to join him in rejecting the Lord's love and grace.

It is almost as if King David had personally met and was describing Ronnie Reagan when he was inspired to write about men who boast in their unbelief and are proud they have renounced the Lord.

In reply to such foolishness, all anyone can say is this: "While you still have time, rethink, reconsider, reevaluate." At this moment you are denying the Lord who sent His only Son into this world to live, suffer, die and rise for you. Right now you are declining His invitation to faith, forgiveness and salvation. Right now you still have time.

But it will not always be this way.

The day is coming when the Lord's invitation and call to salvation will be withdrawn. If you have not left your foolish position, you will be lost.

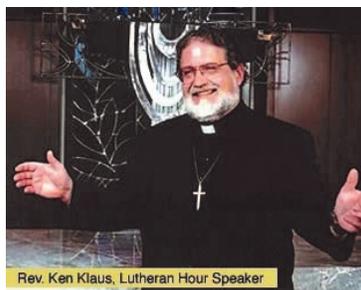
And when that day comes which no unbeliever wants to come, you will find you should have been afraid of hell.

THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, give Christians the insight and ability to break through the misplaced confidence of those who deny You and Your Son. Give us the words that will let them see the love that has been given to all sinners through the Savior's sacrifice. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

In Christ I remain His servant and yours,



Pastor Ken Klaus
Speaker Emeritus of [The Lutheran Hour](#)[®]
Lutheran Hour Ministries



Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker

EPC GCEPC/ LEPC General Conference Meeting 2014

Come join us for a time of fellowship, ministry, worship and time in His Presence.



GCEPC
PO Box 5184
West Columbia, SC 29171
803-739-6960



Dear Ministers,

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our next General Conference. All ministers and their spouses are invited to attend. The Conference will be held at the Clarion Inn Conference Center in West Columbia, SC. Our theme this year is "Launch Out Into the Deep" from Luke 5:4. We will be focusing on the Kingdom and going deeper into the things of God corporately and individually; what does that entail? What did Jesus say? Our Conferences are always a blessing for all who attend. See you there!

Blessings and Peace,
Bishop Nancy Drew, Presiding Bishop, EPC GCEPC/LEPC

Location

Clarion Inn, 500 Chris Drive,
West Columbia, SC 29169

Reservations Call: 803-794-9440, www.choicehotels.com/hotel/sc358

Conference Schedule

February 28th, FRIDAY

2:00-3:00 pm Registration

3:00-5:00 Bishops and New Ordinands Meetings with Bishop Nancy Drew

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:30-9:30 Opening Worship and Convocation - Bishop Nancy Drew

10:00 Evening Compline and Holy Communion

March 1st, SATURDAY

*Continental Breakfast in Hotel Dining Room

8:00-9:00 am Morning Prayer and Worship

9:00-9:30 Break

9:30-12:00 pm Introduction of New Clergy, Ministry Reports, Business Report

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:30-2:30 Healing and Wholeness for You and Others.

2:30-3:30 How Did You Launch Out? Personal Applications from Our Ministers

3:45-4:30 Ordination Rehearsal

5:00-6:30 Service of Ordination/Consecration with Holy Communion

6:30-7:30 Dinner, Sponsored by GCEPC

7:30-9:00 pm Keynote Speaker - Open to the Public

March 2nd, SUNDAY

8:00-9:00 am Continental Breakfast - Hotel Dining Room

9:00-11:00 Morning Worship, Fellowship and Prayer

*A display table will be available for everyone to bring materials describing their ministries.

Do We Dare?

Jesus said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven allows violence, and men of violence take it by force. Matt 11:12

In this eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus talks about the man, John the Baptist, who was seen as a violent man because he was forceful in his message and compares him to those who are not. Today those who are standing by the word of God and preaching the truth are considered violent. Jesus was considered violent in His walk on earth.

Jesus said, "What did you expect when you went out to see John?" The world and society has taught the church that it should not be violent (forceful). In so many cases the church has listened. This is not the church that Jesus is building. In the previous chapter Jesus said, "I did not come to bring peace on the earth, I came to bring war and to set one against the other because everyone who will confess Me before men, I will confess before My Father. I set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter in law against her mother in law and a man's enemies will be of his own household. I came with a sword to divide asunder soul and spirit and reveal the hearts of men. The one who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. The one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life will destroy it and the one who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

We pray diligently for our family members but we are in a war. A war set about by Christ Himself. Families are often war zones and the war zones extend beyond into society and governments because a cry has gone out since the days of John the Baptist, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God has come! Change your way of thinking! Choose this day who you will serve and come follow the Christ, the One who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire!" This is the loving, kind, healing, faithful, strong, powerful, trustworthy, violent, Jesus the Christ.

Living the Christian life, following this Christ, is not for the faint of heart, for the compromiser, the whiner, those who are looking for a lark. It is for the violent. From the days of John the Kingdom of Heaven allows violence and the violent take it by force. Jesus did not leave us alone to accomplish this assignment on our own. He has given us the resources, the means, the power that is needed.

In our upcoming General Conference in South Carolina our theme is "Launch Out into the Deep." We will be discussing the Kingdom of God and going deeper. Plan to join us. You'll be glad you did! February 28-March 2, 2014.



Welcome & Congratulations!



Pastor Ed Burns

Answering the Call

"I have called you by name. You are mine."

Pastor Ed Burns, Jackson N.J., on November 14, 2013 accepted a call to the Pastoral Ministry Team at Fresh Ponds Chapel, South Brunswick, N.J.

Fresh Ponds Chapel is one of five ministries within the Gospel Mission Corps (G.M.C.) of Highstown N.J. The Gospel Mission Corps consists of two Rescue Missions in Highstown, two chapels in South Brunswick and Windsor, and one affiliated congregation in Old Bridge, the Union Bible Church.

The G.M.C. is affiliated with the Wesleyan Church, both are members of the National Association of Evangelical as is the EPC/LEPC.

Pastor Ed asks for the prayers of his sisters and brothers in ministry of the EPC/LEPC as he answers this new ministry.



Rev. W.D. Sirginson

My family is one of many who settled this country in the 1700s. My ancestors were settlers in Washington Territory and Idaho. Since the early beginnings we have a hint of Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran and Southern Baptist in our family. I have served the Lutheran Church in the capacity of a Church Board member, Lay Minister and Eucharistic Minister and finally ordained in the Lutheran Church. As a life long Lutheran stemming from the Augustana Lutherans and other Lutheran bodies, I feel at home with this church body.

My education is that of an Alumni of Fishburne Military School, Central Piedmont Community College and Mt. Olive College, along with courses on Emergency Chaplaincy from the Church of God Seminary.

I am currently a Chaplain with the Sheriff's Office and have a keen interest in serving the community in Greenville, NC and at the coast of North Carolina. Emergency Chaplaincy is my biggest calling, my wife Rebecca and my two daughters and grand-daughter along with my family are behind me in this endeavor. The Word and Sacraments must continue as they were handed down from Christ to us, and his mercy for all to cherish. Let us all be one in the Spirit of our Risen Lord and thank God for all he has given to us, as we are the sheep of his pasture and the lamb of his covenant.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with all of us in our daily activities. May the Lord bless you.

We welcome Rev. Jan Blumentritt of Odessa, Texas to the EPC GCEPC. Rev. Blumentritt is transferring from an Anglican province bringing with her many years of ministerial experience. She has served as an associate pastor in Odessa and has her own ministry also, Franciscans in the Desert, of which she is Director. We look forward to further introduction by Rev. Jan in future issues of the EP Magazine."

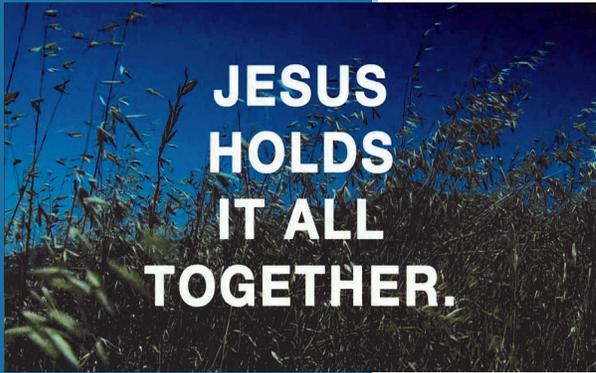


More thoughts on 2014!

from Bishop Nancy Drew



As I stated in my Bishop's greeting at the beginning of this issue of the Evangelical Protestant, I like to spend time with the Lord studying and praying at the end of one year and the beginning of the next. Here are some further thoughts from that time which is still ongoing. I encourage you to spend your own time with Our Lord. 2014, up ahead.



The earth is still here. Man is still on the earth in spite of all the posturing, declarations, plans, threats and humiliation and shame man has brought to it. Who has kept the earth here and man on it? Certainly not man. Man would have destroyed it and all of humanity long ago. If the earth and humanity has not been kept here by man then who has done this thing? "He (Jesus) Himself existed before anything else did, and He holds all things together. ... He not only created them all at first, but it is by the word of His power that they are held together" and continue. Col. 1:17

Jesus holds it all together. Takes care of all. Whatever "it" is or whatever "it" might become. He has never left us alone on this spinning planet... corporately or individually.

What do you see in 2014? Get out there and enjoy it!

Opportunities-In 2014 opportunities will be presented in unusual ways. Don't deny them because they don't come looking like you thought they would. Jesus came as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes as a suffering servant. Many missed the greatest opportunity ever born because of the packaging. Those who are sensitive to the Holy Spirit will know in spite of how the packaging is presented because their knees buckle in His Presence in which case they have no choice but to kneel and yield. In 2014 clear away preconceived notions and ideas of what is real or true and let Holy Spirit increase sensitivity to His leading. This will not only be important for 2014 but for years that come after.



(Continued on page 19)

More thoughts on 2014! from Bishop Nancy Drew

(Continued from page 18)

Completion, new beginnings-In 2014 there is going to be a completion of things, old ways, old days in preparation for what is coming next. Each of us was placed here in a specific space and time for a purpose. We were not just randomly thrown into this sphere. We were known by God. We have within us what is necessary to complete our purpose. What is needed is the outside catalyst that prompts and promotes the internal desire. Every child dreams. The thing you played most at as a child. What was most upsetting to you. So much reveals the passion God placed there for you as an adult. Did something steer you away from those days but you would like to still fulfill those first dreams? Ask God the Holy Spirit to show you who you really are outside of the trappings of this world. Ask Him to make it possible to fulfill your purpose.

"do not grieve the Holy Spirit... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Eph 4:30

Forgiveness, a lifestyle, a preparation-Three little words that can make the difference, "I forgive you." Not, "It's alright" because it usually isn't. Not "it doesn't matter." because it usually does. No need to diminish what has happened but do forgive it. Contrary to what some teach regarding scripture, forgiving does not erase the hurt but it does allow for moving forward and makes way for the pain to ease.

Forgiving takes away the need to seek revenge or cause further harm. It lays the ground work for the event to be in the past. Forgiving does not excuse hurtful, inappropriate words or actions but it does heal the memory of the hurt they caused. It relieves the desire to punish.

Holding on to grudges can be costly. Grudges cause bitterness and resentment to take root and grow and usually spreads to others. Whole families can be wrecked, friendships lost, churches split, businesses fail because of grudges, bitterness and lack of forgiveness.

These three behaviors have been shown from various research but most importantly from the teachings of Holy Scripture to hinder us from forgiving:

1. obsessing about the past. Playing the mental tapes over and over again keeps the event alive. It stirs up the desire for revenge or additional hurt. The unwillingness to move on but instead "setting up camp" in the place where events occurred keeps us stuck. (This does not include the valid efforts in counseling to overcome, move forward and forgive. If someone is having a hard time moving beyond the events, the assistance of a good counselor is beneficial)
2. being unable or unwilling to empathize with others. Lack of empathy and stubborn unwillingness to see a situation from another perspective hinders forgiveness. Trying to understand, imagine, feel what someone else is experiencing humanizes them. It does not mean accepting or approving the behavior. Learning to not automatically reach conclusions based on our own understanding, practicing not being judgmental or making quick interpretations before all the facts are in will assist in living a life of forgiveness.
3. Envy. Envy that produces feelings of deprivation because of what we do not have or resenting the success of others hinders forgiveness. Negative feelings because someone else has been blessed or been given something we would like to have or that we need encourages unforgiveness and bitterness. Envy can cause anger, rage, division; all of which lend themselves to unforgiveness. They become a fuse for explosive behavior even in small slights.

All of these have to do with contamination of the soul. In 2014 seek the Lord to show you where unforgiveness lies and clear out those spaces. Make room for the new good things, feelings and experiences that God is waiting and wanting to put in your life. You've prayed about them and asked for them. Forgive where needed. Adopt a new mind set to maintain a life of forgiveness and move forward into your future.

Peace, joy and blessings in 2014!

The "Back Page" Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn

Awake! awake, and greet the new morn,
 an angel heralds its dawning,
 sing out your joy, for Christ will be born,
 God's gift, this Child of our longing.
 Christ comes as a baby weak and poor,
 to bring all hearts together,
 to open wide the heavenly door,
 and live here inside us forever.

To everyone who sorrows or fears,
 Emmanuel comes a singing;
 the humble song is quiet and clear,
 but fills the earth with its ringing.
 Music to heal the broken soul
 and hymns of loving kindness,
 the thunder of the anthems roll
 to shatter all hate and injustice.

In deepest night Christ's coming shall be,
 when all the world is despairing.
 Where people long to love and be free,
 Christ comes to speak of God's caring.
 A soul without voice breaks forth in song,
 a lame one leaps in wonder,
 the weak are raised above the strong,
 and weapons are broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
 though winds blow wildly and cheer-
 less,
 the rising sun shall
 crown you with
 light,
 be strong and lov-
 ing and fearless.
 Love be our song
 and love our
 prayer,
 and love, our end-
 less story,
 may God fill every
 day we share,
 and bring us at last
 into glory.



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

Music: *Rejoice, Rejoice* Marty Haugen (20th C)
 Words: Marty Haugen (20th C)
 Sequence: Cathouse Pandemonium, Ltd. Blessings,

As we start a new year, the words
 of this hymn take on a special
 meaning.

**We have at our disposal 365 days,
 8760 hours, 525,600 minutes to
 share the Good News of Jesus the
 Christ and the Love of God, our
 Father to those we see each day.**

We have a clean slate to fill with all
 of God's love for human kind. To
 show the world around us that
 while they walk in darkness
 there is light, a light that
 came into the world over
 2000 years ago to save
 mankind.

We have 365 days to give
 hope, comfort, strength and
 love to those who are
 yearning for a better way.

Our Christian walk should
 be evident every hour of
 every day to those we come in con-
 tact with. We can be hope to those
 in the darkness by show the light of
 Christ through God's love.

May 2014 be a year of many bless-
 ings to you, and may you be a
 blessing to those you see all year
 long.

Peace & Love

Pastor Steve

From the Editor

Thanks for all of your contributions. Remember, for this magazine to be a success you must be the reporters and the photographers. I will try and put it together in the best light and we will all praise God in the process.

May the blessings of Christ be with you all. ED.



Is he done yet?



Evangelical Protestant Church(GCEPC)®,
 Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church(LEPC)®

