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Our Saviour's Good News

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our Saviour Lutheran Church welcomes all people to a safe place to grow in faith and serve the Lord Jesus Christ

Inside this issue:

- **The Season of Epiphany** 2
- *The Stewardship Minutes*
- **Minutes** 3
- *Church Council*
- **Calendar of Events** 4
- *Worship Assistances*
- *Flower Calendar*
- **Church NEWS** 5
- *Outreach*
- *Agape, Lutheridge, Etc.*
- *God Wants You*
- *CLW/Rachel Group*
- **The Baptism of Our Lord** 6
- **January Mission** 7
- **12 Days of Christmas** 9
- **Psalm for Work** 10
- **Question and Answer About the Epiphany** 11
- **LMIM 99th Gathering** 13
- *Just a Little Humor*



The Day of Epiphany



On the day we call **The Epiphany of our Lord**, astrologers from the Near East found the world power predicted by their cosmic calculations -- the God-man, Jesus. Were they disappointed at the humble baby shown proudly by working-class parents, Mary and Joseph?

The Day of Epiphany was known in the earliest Christian centuries as the *Feast of the Manifestation*, the *Theophany*, and even as the *Feast of Light*. By the second or third century A.D., Epiphany was observed in the Eastern Church, second only to Easter in importance. The Eastern Church celebrated the fact that God became man more than Jesus' birth date.

Christians in the East may have set the date of Epiphany to replace a popular festival, just as Roman Christians may have done in choosing a date for Christmas. Epiphany became the day to receive new members through baptism who were called *illuminandi* - those who were about to be enlightened by Christ, the **Light of the World**.

The Day of Epiphany is a celebration by us who are not descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a celebration that hope -- light in the darkness -- is ours too in Jesus Christ, the Lord!

In this way, the Day of the Epiphany opens a season of light -- the Lord's light -- that has entered our lives and helps us see beyond the darkness, and energizes our lives with his work in the world.

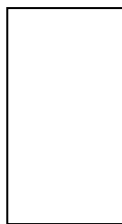
Today little is made of the "Old Christmas." the Epiphany revelation of the Saviour. In the western world all our attention goes to the heartwarming scenes of Christmas. Yet, along with our Lord's resurrection on Easter, the Epiphany revelation of God to the people of the world is an equally mind-boggling history-changing event.

Epiphanies of Jesus' Glory. Early Christians celebrated Epiphany by recalling the first times disclosed his glory as the Son of God when:

- foreign magi discovered divine royalty in the baby Jesus (Mt. 2)
- bystanders heard a heavenly voice identify Jesus at his Baptist (Mt. 3)
- guests at a merry wedding party in Cana saw Jesus' power in his miracle (Jn. 2). Today we hear and taste and celebrate the discovery, too.



A Season for Sharing



The Season of EPIPHANY

In Protestant Churches this season extends from January 6th through Transfiguration Sunday, the climactic conclusion of this part of the Church Year.

Some might argue that the Sundays after Epiphany are not really a church season at all, but just sort of a “buffer” between Christmas and Lent. Some even refer to these weeks, with their green paraments, as “ordinary time” as though they are nothing special. But that’s not what the church word “ordinary” means. It comes from one of the Latin words for number, to indicate that instead of having names, these Sundays are simply assigned numbers (“the third Sunday of the Epiphany”). The same is done with the “green Sundays” in the long Pentecost season.

It seems that names ought to be given to these Sundays (more useful than mere numbers), probably names derived from the Gospel reading for each Sunday. That would make a good classroom exercise week by week.

If Christmastide presented the Son of God as a human infant, and then as a growing child, the readings for Epiphany seem to ask the question, “But who is this really?” The very **first Sunday after the Epiphany** presents God’s own answer. At the **Baptism of Jesus**, the voice of God from heaven declares Jesus to be “my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

With the authority of the Son of God, then Jesus begins to call disciples, and to teach them and train them. His role as a prophet (today we would probably see a preacher) shows up frequently in the Epiphany Gospel readings. Miracles, when they occur, reveal Jesus as one who cares about people’s problems -- whether those problems be something like running out of wine at a wedding or serious, even crippling or life-threatening illness-- and is able to do something to deal with those problems.

The **final Sunday in the Epiphany season** celebrates the Transfiguration of our Lord, when Jesus leads his three closest disciples up a mountain, where they see him shining with brilliant light. At the Epiphany season had begun with the voice of God from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, proclaiming Jesus to be God’s beloved Son, so the season ends with that voice again, with the very same message. If the Christmas season ended by making us wonder, “Who is this baby, really? And what is he going to become?” the time of Epiphany offers a shining response: “This is the Son of God, who speaks God’s good word and does God’s wonderful deeds.” The wise men had it right: This is the One who deserves to be worshiped!

Transfiguration, the last Sunday after the Epiphany, celebrates Jesus’ last epiphany in this season and calls for our last alleluias until the resurrection of our Lord on Easter.

A Stewardship Minute

Early in the New Year is the perfect time to think about stewardship; considering what God has done for us and how we might respond to God’s generosity. To illustrate this need, there is a true story about a pastor’s encounter with an older member of the church.

She lived alone, had no living relatives, and the pastor went to visit her at home. While chatting with her about life and her concerns, he happened to ask her to think about remembering the church in her will. He was not pushy about it, but she responded quickly: “Why should I do that? What has the church ever done for me?” The young pastor dropped the subject, visited a little longer, then prayed with her and left. The old soul’s response, however, lingered with him for a long time later. As he thought about her question as to what the church had for her, it made him think deeply about the subject: “What has the church done for anyone?” he asked himself. Here is what he concluded:

The church gives to everyone the Good News of God’s love. God gave us life. God gave us the earth. God gave us salvation through Jesus Christ. God gave us the church and the fellowship of believers; the family of God. And God has enabled the church to build sanctuaries for worship, schools for learning, hospitals for healing, homes for the needy, and mission stations around the world for those who want to learn about the Savior. The church has provided ministry for the homeless, the poverty-stricken, the jobless, those in prison and so forth.

The pastor began to think of how the church he was serving ministered to the old soul. It had provided the teaching of the Bible, a helpful worship service, music that lifted her spirit, loving Christian fellowship, and comfort in difficult times. In fact, he thought, the pastor’s very presence in her home offering his personal concern should have meant something to her!

Prayer: Loving Creator, thank you for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, who saved us and blessed us by founding the great Fellowship of Believers of which we all are a part.
Amen

Begin
the
Year
with
God

Our Saviour Lutheran Church Anna Lowery, President November 15, 2021 Board Minutes



Devotions: None

Meeting called to order by President, Anna Lowery

Members present: Alice Vlaservich, Melinda White, Anna Lowery, Teri Trudnak, Jeff White

Members Absent: Becky Messick, Joe Finger, Robbie Wooten, Denise Traveria

Minutes: October 2021 minutes were reviewed.; Alice Vlaservich made the motion to approve the minutes and Teri Trudnak seconded the motion.

Reception of Petitions and Communications: None

Report of the Pastor: None

Report of the Treasurer: Report was reviewed, and a motion was made by Teri Trudnak to accept the Treasurer Report and seconded by Melinda White.

Report of the Ministries:

- a. **Property:** Displayed the "Luther Seals" on the church's outside signs! Take a Look. Thanks Nick & Alice
- b. **Stewardship and Finance:** No report
- c. **Worship & Music:** Preparing for the Christmas season. Decorations, Hanging of the Green's Service, Poinsettia orders; Christmas Eve service is to be announced.
- d. **Youth Team:** No report this month
- e. **Witness:** Cards and prayers continue to be sent to shut ins. Alice is also sending bulletins to those unable to attend worship service.
- f. **Christian Education Team:** Operation Christmas Child is in motion. Shoe boxes are due by 11/21/2021. Help spread the Gospel!

Report of Auxiliaries: Prayer Group to meet at the home of Shirley Marazza on 11/16/2021.

Old and/or Unfinished Business:

Council discussed decreasing the number of council members required from 9 to 7 and meeting every other month for meetings instead of monthly. These changes will take affect 1/1/2022. Currently there is a need for one additional member to join the Council. Melinda, Anna, Becky, Alice, Teri & Robbie will remain on Council for the coming year 2022. If you are interested in serving on the Council at OSLC, please let Anna Lowery know. Alice Vlaservich made the motion to accept this new schedule and Teri Trudnak seconded.

New Business:

Amending NALC Constitution, Article 11 was discussed. We as Council had questions/concerns and will also speak with Pastor Feige for guidance. No decision was made at this time.

General Information:

- a. Attendance: BRING A FRIEND!!
- b. Laszlo Mission (Kids International) Report
- c. The organ was tuned recently, and it was noted that a motor is out. The expected quote of around \$2000. Will receive a formal quote before moving forward.

The Council meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is December 20, 2021 at 7pm
Denise Traveria- Devotions



Effective January 1, 2022

- a. Council reduced from 9 to 7
- b. Council will meet every other month for meetings instead of monthly.
- c. Currently there was a need for one additional member to join the Council. Steve Digh agreed to fill that position.
- d. The following will be the new council and be installed the first Sunday in January.
Steve Digh, Anna Lowery, Becky Messick, Teri Trudnak, Alice Vlaservich, Melinda White, and Robbie Wooten.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO JOE FINGER AND JEFF WHITE
FOR SERVING ON YHR COUNCIL.**



ANNUAL REPORTS

2021 has ended and a New Year as began.

All Team (Committee) Chairpersons please submit your Annual Reports, Scheduled for Team Meeting dates, and Looking Ahead activities, such as: Group Meeting, VBS, Conventions, etc. by Jan. 17, 2022

Thank you!

GO OUT ON A LIMB GET INVOLVED BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT

A positions are still open. Participate in the service of the Lord and sign up.

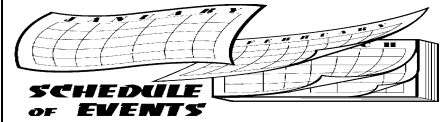
Sign up sheets
for the 2022 calendar year are in the
notebook on the office door in the Education wing.
THANK YOU!



January 2022



Sunday School: 9:45 pm
Church Service: 11:00 pm



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 2nd Sun. after Christmas	3 Team Mtg.	4	5	6 Epiphany	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 2nd Sun. after Epiphany	17 Board Mtg.	18	1	20	21	22
23 3rd Sun. After Epiphany	24 CLW/Rachel	25	26	27	28	29
30 4th Sun. After Epiphany	31					

- Jan. 1— Happy New Year
Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- Jan. 2—2nd Sunday after Christmas
- Jan. 3— Team Meetings: 7:00 pm
- Jan. 6—Epiphany
- Jan. 9— Baptism of Our Lord/
1st Sunday after the Epiphany
- Jan. 16— 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 17— Board Meeting
Martin Luther Kings, Jr. birthday observed
- Jan. 17—**Deadline for Annual Reports**
- Jan. 18—Prayer Group will meet at Home
of Shirlee Marazza at 1:00 pm
- Jan. 23— 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 24— CLW/Rachel Group at 1:30 pm
- Jan. 30— 4th Sunday after Epiphany

FOOD FOR THE MONTH: **Pork & Beans,**
Pinto Beans, Soup



Choir practice each
Wednesday at 4:00 pm
unless otherwise announced
the bulletin



Birthdays

8 Shirlee Marazza
15 Mariel Schmideler
16 Brett Lowery
19 Ashley Holland
20 Noelle S. Agrew
25 Chris Messick
26 Carson Dease
31 Allison Murray



Doyle Clemmer
Shana Dease
Sarah Wooten



Holy Communion Schedule: All Sundays

Worship Service Assistance:

Acolyte: OSLC Member
Communion
Asst: OSLC Member
Lay Reader: Anna Lowery
Worship Asst: Anna Lowery
Greeters: OSLC Members
Ushers: OSLC Members

Collection: Yvonne Finger
Devotion: Anna Lowery

FLOWERS

Flower Schedule:

Jan. 2 Brady Ratchford
Jan. 9 Nick & Alice Vlaservich
Jan. 16 John & Marsha Patton
Jan. 23 Open
Jan. 30 Open

Please sign up to place flowers on the
altar in the glory of God
and
in honor or memory of your love ones.

Plenty of opening
Please sign up and help
Decorate the altar of our Lord



ANNIVERSARIES

23rd**Bryan and Jill Petzold**
16th**John & Marsha Patton**

Church News



OUTREACH MISSION

SHUT-INS

NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Please remember our church members who are shut-ins or reside in a nursing home* or senior living and visit them or send a card to them

Marilyn Finger

2701 Jackson Square, Andersin, SC 29625

Jill Petzold

Brookdale Senior Living, Rm 44,
1680 S. New Hope Rd., Gastonia, NC 28054

(If others, please let the church office know)

EVENTS for:

Agrape/Kure Beach

Contact Camp Agapé:

Telephone: 919-552-9421

e-mail: agape@agapekurebeach.org

Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org

Web site: www.agapekurebeach.org

Directions to Camp Agapé are on the web site.

Please see calendars and other information on-line

Events for:

Lutheridge -Lutherock-Lutherspring- Lutheranch

Web site: www.NovusWay.com



NEW FLOWERS CALENDER FOR THE CHURCH is posted on the first door in the hallway of the Education wing. Please sign up to place flowers on the altar in the glory of God and in honor or memory of your loved ones. You can then take them home with you or give them a love one or friend.

If you need a Pastor, please contact Pastor Pete Feige at 704-516-2805 or our office at 704-922-4648. Check out our website at oslc-nc.org or email us at oslcdallas@aol.com.



CLWRACHEL GROUP

WILL BE MEETING IN THE TBA

on January 24 AT 1:30 PM



PRAYER GROUP

WILL MEET AT THE HOME OF SHIRLEE MARAZZA

on January 18 at 1:00 PM

LET US PRAY... "Are any among you suffering? They should pray...The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up." (James 5:13-15)



MARGARET Addington, SUSAN Aderholt, SETH Alexander, AMANDA (friend of the Penley's), MARVIS Anderson, WHITNEY Auten (breast cancer), KELLY Ballard (friend of Shana Dease), BRAXTON Bearden (friend of the Locketts), ADDISON Blanton (friend of Dease's), KATHY Bohanan (cancer), KAREN Brady, JACKIE Carpenter (friend of Alice Vlaservich-liver cancer), SYLVIA Cloninger (friend of Nick Vlaservich), MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), STEVE Cloninger (friend of Brady Ratchford-cancer), BEVERLY Copeland (friend of Robbie's-cancer), STEVE Digh (cancer), HARDY Feige (Pete's dad – chronic back pain), NANCY Friday, BECKY Goodwin (friend of Brady's – cancer), JAMES Goudelock (cancer), JASON Hames (friend of the White's), GRACE Harbin (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), JEFF Lineberger (stroke), JOYCE in Morganton (Nick & Alice Vlaservich's acquaintance-cancer), DANA Kirshman (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), MARINA Marazza (Shirlee Marazza's granddaughter-Covid19), SAM Marr (Heart), BO Messick (foot), FRANCIS McAllister (broken hip), CHRIS Messick (recovering back surgery), JASON, ALLISON & LEX Murray, MARSHA Patton (embryo implants), ELLEN & ED Pfeiffer (Keenan Gordy's Parents – Heart issues), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), SONDRRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), MARTHA Surratt (friend of Alice Vlaservich-Cancer), LIBBY Toler (Dec 14 – heart valve), TERI Trudnak, TONY Trudnak (cancer reoccurring), GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), HAL White, JOE White (stroke), DANNY Wilson (surgery Dec 22), NANCY Wilson, REESE Wilson (blood cancer)



GOD WANTS YOU!

- (1) God wants you to participate in His worship service for **2022** by servicing as a worship assistant as a Communion Assistant, Crucifer, Acolyte, Lay Reader, Worship Assistant, Greeter or Usher
See the sign up sheet on the bulletin board and please help.
- (2) New Flower Calendar is up. Please remember your love ones and also help decorate our Lord's altar. **Cost of Flowers: \$35.10**



The Baptism of Our Lord

With this Feast, Christmas ends liturgically, though it continues on in spirit and as a liturgical cycle until Candlemas when we recall Mary's post-birth Purification and Our Lord's Presentation in the Temple.

On this, the Octave of the Epiphany, we continue to focus on the Mysteries that entered our hearts on Twelfth night and the Epiphany, but today more specifically with regard to the Baptism of Jesus by St. John the Baptist in the River Jordan. He Whose birth we just celebrated now shows *us* how to be born again or "born from above."

The marvelling at the Theophany continues in pondering the meaning of His Baptism, a meaning made more apparent by the Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory, Preface, and Communion prayers of today's Mass, all of which allude to the Magi and their recognition of Jesus as King and God. The Gospel reading comes from the first chapter of John, verses 29-34:

The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He, of whom I said: After me there cometh a man, who is preferred before me: because He was before me. And I knew Him not, but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down, as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon him. And I knew Him not; but He Who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: He upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God.

St. John the Baptist, the prophet whom prophets foretold, heralded the Christ during Advent, and now, at the end of the liturgical Christmas season, gives testimony once again. He gives this witness not only by being in the spirit of Elias (IV Kings 1:3-8), but by the place he chose as the site of his baptisms: the River Jordan, where Elias (Elijah) was last seen before he was taken up to Heaven, and the waters of which were healed by Elias's son, Eliseus (Elisha):

IV Kings 2:11-19-22

And as they [Elias and Eliseus] went on, walking and talking together, behold a fiery chariot, and fiery horses parted them both asunder: and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Eliseus saw him, and cried: My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the driver thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own garments, and rent them in two pieces. And he took up the mantle of Elias, that fell from him: and going back, he stood upon the bank of the Jordan, And he struck the waters with the mantle of Elias, that had fallen from him, and they were not divided. And he said: Where is now the God of Elias? And he struck the waters, and they were divided, hither and thither, and Eliseus passed over...

...And the men of the city said to Eliseus: Behold the situation of this city is very good, as thou, my lord, seest: but the waters are very bad, and the ground barren. And he said: Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it. And when they had brought it, He went out to the spring of the waters, and cast the salt into it, and said: Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters, and there shall be no more in them death or barrenness. And the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of Eliseus, which he spoke.

But more importantly than this witness, the Father Himself and the Holy Ghost give testimony. St. Matthew's account of this Divine testimony is more explicit. From the third chapter of his Gospel:

And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened to him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

This revelation of His glory was predicted in Isaias 40:3-5: 3

The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain. *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed*, and all flesh together shall see, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.

This Feast is like that of the Pentecost in its revelation of the Trinity, and even more is it like the Feast of the Transfiguration which commemorates the events that took place on Mt. Tabor, when Christ's Divinity was evident in His glorious Light, when the bright cloud overshadowed Him, and when the words of the Father echoed what was heard at the River Jordan:

Matthew 17:1-5

And after six days Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: And He was transfigured before them. And His Face did shine as the sun: and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.

(Baptism cont'd on page 8)

2022 JANUARY MISSION EMPHASIS

International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

Why and How Should Christians Support and Bless Israel? (from the IFCI's website)

Christians should look to God's holy word as the voice of truth regarding the problems in the Middle East. What does the voice of Scripture say? Thousands of years ago, God made an eternal covenant decree in which He gave the Promised Land to Abraham and his descendants.

Israel needs to be supported by Christians because all other nations were created by an act of man, but Israel was created by an act of God! The royal land grant that was given to Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob was an everlasting and unconditional covenant. (See Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:1-21; 17:4-8; 22:15-18; 26:1-5; and Psalm 89:28-37.)

The Lord said to Abraham: *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.* (Genesis 17:7-8)

Today, we are witnessing the unfolding of biblical prophecy in the return of the Jewish people to Israel. The Bible foretold Israel's ingathering and also prophesied that God would call "the Gentiles" to help accomplish this miracle.

Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. (Isaiah 49:22)

Genesis 12:1-3 gives the clearest expression to this idea: *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

The biblical mandate given to the Gentiles is to relate to Israel and the Jewish people with unconditional love. Christians are called to be a source of solace and comfort to the people of Israel, to be a blessing and to stand in solidarity with them in their times of need.

It is important to also know what Jesus said about the future of Israel and Jerusalem. Jesus said: *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

In this statement, Jesus made predictions about the future of Jerusalem. He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem which came true in 70 A.D. Jesus said His Jewish brethren would be dispersed among the nations. This also came true. The Romans scattered the Jews where they lived among the nations. But the cry of their heart has always been, *L'Shana Ha Ba 'A Birushalayim*—"Next year in Jerusalem."

Also, Jesus said the Gentile nations would dominate Jerusalem, as they have for the past 2,000 years. But Jesus spoke of a distant time when Gentile domination of Jerusalem would come to an end, and the Jews would once again control their ancient city. This prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled in 1967 when Israel took control of biblical Jerusalem and marched directly to the Western Wall, the only remaining wall of the Second Temple.

The Apostle Paul spoke about Christians helping Jews in their time of need. He wrote: *It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are, for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them (Jews) in carnal things.* (Romans 15:27)

Our Mission

The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews was founded in 1983 to promote understanding and cooperation between Jews and Christians and to build broad support for Israel and other shared concerns. Our vision is that Jews and Christians will reverse their 2,000-year history of discord and replace it with a relationship marked by dialogue, understanding, respect and cooperation.

(Mission cont'd on page 8)

(Mission cont'd on page 7)

Based in Chicago and Jerusalem, *The Fellowship* operates under the leadership of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, and is governed by an independent board of directors, people from both faith groups who share our strong belief in building bridges between the Christian and Jewish communities.

Projects

GUARDIANS OF ISRAEL provides food, clothing, shelter, housing and other urgent needs for all Israelis, who are suffering due to poverty, terrorism and war.

ISAIAH 58 provides children and elderly Jews in the former Soviet Union with food, clothing, heating, and other necessities by funding humanitarian programs in the FSU.

ON WINGS OF EAGLES helps Jews make aliyah (immigrate to Israel) from around the world, and helps them with their klitah (resettlement) needs once they arrive in the Holy Land.

- ***Aliyah***
- ***Klitah (resettlement assistance)***
- ***Youth Movements Program***
- ***Spiritual Center***

STAND FOR ISRAEL aims to engage people both spiritually and politically on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people by encouraging prayer for Israel and teaching others to advocate for the Jewish state.

(Baptism cont'd from page 6)



This Divine manifestation helps explain why Jesus -- the Sinless One, the Pure and Unspotted Lamb -- would be baptized at all: so that He would be known for Who He is, so that He would be made manifest.

In addition to this reason, St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), in his *Summa Theologica*, gives us three other reasons for the fittingness of St. John baptizing Christ. One is so that Christ might sanctify Baptism, a sentiment expressed by St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) when he wrote "In truth, Christ needed not baptism, neither his nor any other; but rather baptism needed the power of Christ." Another is so that John, by baptizing, "might accustom men to the Baptism of Christ." And the last is so that "by persuading men to do penance, he might prepare men to receive worthily the baptism of Christ." Here he quotes the Venerable Bede:

...the baptism of John was as profitable before the baptism of Christ, as instruction in the faith profits the catechumens not yet baptized. For just as he preached penance, and foretold the baptism of Christ, and drew men to the knowledge of the Truth that hath appeared to the world, so do the ministers of the Church, after instructing men, chide them for their sins, and lastly promise them forgiveness in the baptism of Christ.



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

A Partridge in a Pear Tree

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on December 25, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, recalling the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so . . ." (Luke 13:34)

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Two Turtle Doves

The Old and New Testaments, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Three French Hens

The Three Theological Virtues: 1) Faith, 2) Hope, and 3) Love (1 Corinthians 13:13)

On the 4th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Four Calling Birds

The Four Gospels: 1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke, and 4) John, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation of the world to Himself in Jesus Christ.

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Five Gold Rings

The first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch: 1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.

On the 6th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Six Geese A-laying

The six days of creation that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world (Genesis 1).

On the 7th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Seven Swans A-swimming

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry, 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) giving, 6) leading, and 7) compassion (Romans 12:6-8; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

On the 8th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Eight Maids A-milking

The eight Beatitudes: 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6) the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Matthew 5:3-10)

(Twelve Days of Christmas Continued from page 9)

On the 10th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Ten Lords A-leaping

The ten commandments: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not make an idol; 3) Do not take God's name in vain; 4) Remember the Sabbath Day; 5) Honor your father and mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Do not commit adultery; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not bear false witness; 10) Do not covet. (Exodus 20:1-17)

On the 11th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Eleven Pipers Piping

The eleven Faithful Apostles: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. (Luke 6:14-16). The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders and the Romans.

On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...

Twelve Drummers Drumming

The twelve points of doctrine in the [Apostles' Creed](#): 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. 4) He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell [the grave]. 5) On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 6) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. 7) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 8) the holy catholic Church, 9) the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and life everlasting.

PSALM FOR WORK

The celebration of Christmas is over and a new year has started as we started back to work. I happened to find this updated version of the 23rd Psalm. The author is unknown but the message is timely.

The Lord is my boss, I shall not want; He gives me peace when chaos is all around me. He gently reminds me to pray and do all things without murmuring and complaining. he reminds me tat He is my source and not my job. He restores my sanity every day and guides my decisions that I might honor Him in all I do. Even though I face absurd amounts of e-mails, system crashes, unrealistic deadlines, budget cutbacks, gossiping co-workers, discriminating supervisors and an aging body that doesn't cooperate every morning, I still will not stop -- for He is with me. His presence, His peace and His power will see me through. He raises me up even when they fail to promote me. He claims me as His own even when the company threatens to let me go. His faithfulness and love is better than any bonus check. His retirement plan beats every 401(k) there is! When all is said and done, I'll be working for Him a whole lot longer, and for that

I BLESS HIS NAME!





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

What is the Epiphany of our Lord?

What does the Word "Epiphany" mean?

What does the church commemorate during Epiphany?

Who were the Magi?

What is the liturgical color for Epiphany?

Why is Epiphany such a special day and season?

WHAT IS THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD?

The Epiphany of our Lord is the wonderful liturgical festival observed on January 6. It is the oldest of the Christmas festivals and originally the most important. Since January 6 is most often a weekday, Lutherans and liturgical Protestants sometimes shift the celebration of Epiphany to the Sunday immediately following the 6th. Epiphany is also a season that lasts until the beginning of Lent and encompasses four to nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter.

WHAT DOES THE WORD "EPIPHANY" MEAN?

The word epiphany comes from the Greek noun *epiphaneia*, which means "shining forth," "manifestation," or "revelation." In the ancient Greco-Roman world, an epiphany referred to the appearance of one of the gods to mortals. Since Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors were considered by many to be gods, the word epiphany was also used as a term for divine majesty. The Epiphany of our Lord is the Christian festival that celebrates the many ways through signs, miracles, and preaching that Jesus revealed Himself to the world as Christ, God Incarnate, and King of kings.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH COMMEMORATE DURING EPIPHANY?

The Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord originally commemorated three incidents that manifested the mission and divinity of Christ: the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11), and the miracle at Cana (John 2:10-22). Nowadays, most liturgical churches emphasize the visit of the Magi on January 6th and celebrate Christ's baptism on the first Sunday after the 6th.

WHO WERE THE MAGI?

The Magi were members of the religious hierarchy of ancient Persia and Media (the region corresponding to modern Iran). They were scholars and practitioners of astrology, divination, and the interpretation of dreams. Their expertise in these arcane subjects is the reason they were often referred to as "wise men." The Magi of Babylonia undoubtedly came into contact with exiled Jewish priests living among them. Through these acquaintances the Magi learned of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, including the cryptic "messianic star" passage of Numbers 24:17. This explains why the astral phenomenon described in Matthew 2:1-12 so fascinated the wise men of the gospel narrative.

Many pious legends about the wise men have arisen over the centuries. In the western Christian churches, these include the traditions that there were three Magi who visited Jesus, that their names were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, and that they were kings. To get more detailed information about the Magi, we invite you to read two excellent resources on the subject: *The Magi/Wise Man FAQ* by Rev. Dr. Richard P. Bucher.



(continued on page 12)



Epiphany

(continued from page 11)

WHAT IS THE LITURGICAL COLOR FOR EPIPHANY?

White, the color of purity, holiness, and joy is the traditional liturgical color for Epiphany, the first Sunday after the Epiphany (the Baptism of our Lord), and the last Sunday after the Epiphany (the Transfiguration of our Lord). For the other Sundays of the season, green is normally used. Green represents the new life that Christ gives us in baptism, as well as the spiritual growth we experience during the season as we study the Lord's ministry of teaching, healing, and miracles. Some churches prefer using white on every Sunday of the Epiphany season and reserve green for the season after Pentecost.

WHY IS EPIPHANY SUCH A SPECIAL DAY AND SEASON?

Epiphany is one of the most important festivals of the liturgical year because it shows the church how God comes to His people. We are so full of sin and deserving of divine punishment that we cannot hope to approach God. Knowing that we cannot come to Him, God took the initiative and came to us by becoming one of us. The most holy and almighty God descended to take on human flesh in order to reveal His salvation to the world. This is the mystery of the Epiphany of our Lord.

During this season, Christians meditate on many of our Lord's epiphanies. Epiphany Day itself commemorates the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem to worship the Messiah and bring Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-12). Since the earliest days of the church, these wise men have been considered to be representatives of all the peoples of the earth. By means of a miraculous star, God showed them that Jesus was born to be not only the King of the Jews, but the Lord and Savior of all nations.

The Baptism of our Lord is the first Sunday after the Epiphany. This important festival is the observance of Jesus' baptism at the hands of John the Baptist (Mark 1:9:11). The words of the Father and the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove as Jesus came out of the waters revealed Him to be God's true Son.

The Transfiguration of our Lord, the last Sunday after the Epiphany, is a celebration of the moment that Christ, in the company of Moses and Elijah, literally shined His glorious divine nature on Peter, James, and John, leaving them dazed and awestruck (Luke 9:28-36). This event, the greatest of Christ's epiphanies until His triumphant resurrection from the grave on Easter, serves as the dramatic conclusion of the season. Transfiguration Sunday stands in vivid contrast to what takes place just a few days later: Ash Wednesday, the day of sorrow and repentance that initiates the season of Lent.

In between the two Sundays that mark the Lord's baptism and transfiguration, the church concentrates on several of the other incidents from Scripture that show how Jesus manifested God's love to the world through His ministry of preaching, miracles, and healings. What is common to each of these epiphanies is that in one way or another they make known the identity and mission of Jesus Christ: True Man and True God, born into this sinful world to be the Lord and Savior of all humanity.

We begin to understand the joy and wonder of Epiphany when we read the story of Simeon (Luke 2:22035). Simeon was a devout old man who lived in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the promised Messiah with his own eyes. When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple to be consecrated according to Jewish law regarding firstborn males (exodus 13:2), Simeon realized that this infant was the Christ. In joyful response to this personal epiphany, the old man took the baby Jesus in his arms and chanted a magnificent song of thanksgiving best known by its Latin title, *Nunc Dimittis*. We at Saint Paul's, along with Lutheran Christians everywhere, sing Simeon's great canticle at the end of each service of Holy Communion. The words of the *Nunc Dimittis* remind us of the mercy and grace that God revealed to the world in His Son, Jesus Christ:

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace
 according to Thy word,
 For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation
 Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people:
 A light to lighten the Gentiles
 And the glory of Thy people Israel.*

The 99th North Carolina Lutheran Men in Mission 2022 Gathering

*will be held at
Grace Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, NC on March 5, 2022
Further details will be posted as they become available.*

JUST A LITTLE HUMOR

THE BAPTIST WHITE LIE CAKE

Alice Grayson was to bake a cake for the Baptist Church Ladies' Group in Tuscaloosa , but forgot to do it until the last minute. She remembered it the morning of the bake sale and after rummaging through cabinets, found an angel food cake mix & quickly made it while drying her hair, dressing, and helping her son pack for scout camp.

When she took the cake from the oven, the center had dropped flat and the cake was horribly disfigured and she exclaimed, "Oh dear, there is not time to bake another cake!" This cake was important to Alice because she did so want to fit in at her new church, and in her new community of friends.

So, being inventive, she looked around the house for something to build up the center of The cake. She found it in the bathroom - a roll of toilet paper. She plunked it in and then covered it with icing. Not only did the finished product look beautiful, it looked perfect. And, before she left the house to drop the cake by the church and head for work, Alice woke her daughter and gave her some money and specific instructions to be at the bake sale the moment it opened at 9:30 and to buy the cake and bring it home.

When the daughter arrived at the sale, she found the attractive, perfect cake had already been sold. Amanda grabbed her cell phone and called her mom.

Alice was horrified-she was beside herself! Everyone would know! What would they think? She would be ostracized, talked about, ridiculed! All night, Alice lay awake in bed thinking about people pointing fingers at her and talking about her behind her back.

The next day, Alice promised herself she would try not to think about the cake and would attend the fancy luncheon/bridal shower at the home of a fellow church member and try to have a good time. She did not really want to attend because the hostess was a snob who more than once had looked down her nose at the fact that Alice was a single parent and not from the founding families of Tuscaloosa , but having already RSVP'd , she couldn't think of a believable excuse to stay home.

The meal was elegant, the company was definitely upper crust old south and to Alice 's horror, the cake in question was presented for dessert!

Alice felt the blood drain from her body when she saw the cake! She started out of her chair to tell the hostess all about it, but before she could get to her feet, the Mayor's wife said, "what a beautiful cake!" Alice , still stunned, sat back in her chair when she heard the hostess (who was a prominent church member) say.

"Thank you, I baked it myself." Alice smiled and thought to herself, "God is good."





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January 2022

A New Year
of Giving

