



# Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XV, Issue I

January 2020

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

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## What is Epiphany Day?

By Mary Fairchild

Epiphany Day is primarily observed by Orthodox, Catholic, and Anglican Christians. For this reason, many Protestant believers don't understand the spiritual significance behind this holiday, one of the earliest feasts of the Christian church. In general, Christians celebrate the baptism of Jesus on Epiphany Day in recognition of his manifestation as the Son of God to the world (Mark 1:9-11).

### Epiphany Day

- Epiphany is celebrated on January 6, marking the end of the Christmas season.
- Other names for Epiphany Day are Three Kings Day, Twelfth Day, Theophany, and Little Christmas.
- Epiphany commemorates the manifestation of God to the world through Jesus Christ.

### The Meaning of Epiphany Day

Epiphany, also known as "Three Kings Day" and "Twelfth Day," is a Christian holiday commemorated on January 6. It falls on the twelfth day after Christmas, and for some denominations signals the conclusion of the Christmas season. The 12 days between Christmas and Epiphany are known as the "Twelve Days of Christmas."

Though many different cultural and denominational customs are practiced, as a rule, the feast celebrates the manifestation of God to the world in the form of human flesh through Jesus Christ, his Son.

### Origins of Epiphany

Epiphany originated in the East. In Eastern Christianity, Epiphany puts emphasis on the baptism of Jesus by John (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22), with Christ revealing himself to the world as God's own Son:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11, ESV)

Epiphany was introduced into Western Christianity in the 4th century. The term *epiphany* comes from a Greek word meaning "appearance," "manifestation," or "revelation" and is commonly linked in Western churches with the visit of the wise men (Magi) to the Christ child (Matthew 2:1-12). Through the Magi, Jesus Christ revealed himself to the Gentiles:

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

... And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

On Epiphany some denominations commemorate Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine at the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), signifying the manifestation of Christ's divinity and his divine power as well.

In the early days of church history before Christmas was observed, Christians celebrated both the birth of Jesus and his baptism on Epiphany. The feast of Epiphany proclaims to the world that a child (*Epiphany cont'd on page 3*)

## **TWELVE 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)

**On the 9th day of Christmas my true love gave to me...**

### **Nine Ladies Dancing**

The nine Fruit of the Holy Spirit: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

*(Twelve Days of Christmas Continued on page 3)*

**Epiphany from page 1**

was born. This infant would grow to adulthood and die as the sacrificial lamb. The season of Epiphany extends the message of Christmas by calling believers to manifest the gospel to the whole world.

**Unique Cultural Celebrations of Epiphany**

Those who were fortunate enough to have grown up in a predominately Greek community like Tarpon Springs, Florida, are probably quite familiar with some of the unique cultural celebrations associated with Epiphany. On this ancient church holiday, large numbers of high school students will skip school each year on Epiphany to see many of their classmates — young men age 16 to 18 of the Greek Orthodox faith — dive into the chilly waters of Spring Bayou to retrieve the cherished cross.

The "blessing of waters" and "diving for the cross" ceremonies are long-held traditions in Greek Orthodox communities. The one young man who has the honor of recovering the crucifix receives a traditional full year's blessing from the church, not to mention a good deal of fame in the community.

After more than 100 years of celebrating this tradition, the annual Greek Orthodox festival in Tarpon Springs continues to draw large crowds. Unfortunately, many observers do not understand the true meaning behind these Epiphany ceremonies.

Today in Europe, Epiphany celebrations are sometimes just as important as Christmas, with celebrants exchanging gifts on Epiphany instead of Christmas, or on both holidays.

Epiphany is a feast that recognizes the manifestation of God in Jesus, and of the risen Christ in our world. It is a time for believers to consider how Jesus fulfilled his destiny and how Christians can fulfill their destiny too.

**On the Lighter Side****A Senior Moment:**

For all of us who are seniors, for all of you who know seniors, and for all of you who will be seniors, it pays to be able to laugh about it when you are! An irate customer called the newspaper office loudly demanding and wanting to know where her Sunday edition of the paper was. "Ma'am," said the newspaper employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until tomorrow, on Sunday." There was a long pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition ... as she was hanging up, she murmured, "Well, that probably explains why no one was at church today either!"

**Truths Children Have Learned:**

- No matter how hard you try, you can't baptized cats.
- When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.

(Twelve Days of Christmas Continued from page 2)

**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 everlastingly.

**Truths Adults Have Learned:**

- Raising teenagers is like trying to nail Jell-o to a tree,
- Middle age is when you choose cereal for the fiber, not the toy.
- If you can remain calm, you don't have all the facts.
- You're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoes and wonder what else you can do while you are down there.
- You appreciate the fact that wrinkles don't hurt.

## Our Saviour Lutheran Church Bill Trudnak, President November 18, 2019 Board Minutes



**Devotions:** Robbie Wooten

Meeting called to order by President, Bill Trudnak

**Members present:** Melinda White, Joe Finger, Robbie Wooten, Steve Digh, Bill Trudnak, and Alice Vlaservich.

**Members Absent:** Betty Ratchford, Teri Trudnak, Jeff White and Denise Traveria

**Minutes:** October 21, 2019 minutes were reviewed. Steve Digh made the motion to approve the minutes and Alice Vlaservich seconded the motion.

### Reception of Petitions and Communications:

- Quite a few petitions for donations were review; We decided as a Council to give to the Salvation Army any loose offering we collect during worship service for the next several Sunday's. The rest will be supported by prayer.

**Report of the Pastor:** No report available

**Report of the Treasurer:** Report was reviewed, and a motion was made by Melinda White to accept the Treasurer Report and seconded by Robbie Wooten

### Report of the Ministries:

- Property: Several Council members cleaned out the attic in the Sunday School hall
- Stewardship and Finance: Budget was presented to Council
- Worship & Music: Plans to decorate for the Christmas season on 11/30/2019. Come help! Hanging of the Green's service will be 12/2/2019
- Youth Team: No report this month
- Witness: Cards and prayers continue to be sent to shut ins
- Christian Education Team: Operation Christmas Child boxes are due back 11/24/2019

**Report of Auxiliaries:** The group met at the home of Shirlee Marazza with bible study and refreshments. The new meeting time is at 11am. The next meeting will be at the home of Betty Clemmer for a Christmas social and luncheon, 12/16/2019 at 11:30 am.

### Old and/or Unfinished Business:

- Rachel Group now meets at 11 am monthly  
Prayer Group now meets at 1pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month

### New Business:

- 2020 budget was approved. Robbie Wooten made the motion and Melinda White gave the second to approve
- Nomination ballot will be presented 11/24/2019. Four vacancies for Council to be filled and voted on 12/1/2019
- Mail letter to congregation regarding Christmas gifts to the staff

### General Information:

- Attendance
- Laszlo Mission (Kids International ) Report

Adjourned with The Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting: December 16, 2019

Devotions: Alice Vlaservich



### **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 2020 calendar year are in the  
notebook on the office door in the Education wing.  
THANK YOU!



### ANNUAL REPORTS

201 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. 15, 2020

Thank you!



# 2020 JANUARY MISSION EMPHASIS

## International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

### Why and How Should Christians Support and Bless Israel? (from the IFCJ'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.

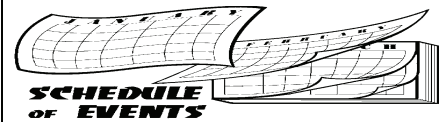
(Mission cont'd on page 7)



# January 2020



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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 2nd Sun. after Christmas	6 Epiphany Team Mtg.	7 Gaston Together	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 2nd Sun. after Epiphany	20 Board Mtg.	21	22	23	24	25
26 3rd Sun. After Epiphany	27 CLW/Rachel	28	29	30	31	

- Jan. 1— Happy New Year  
Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- Jan. 5—2nd Sunday after Christas
- Jan. 6—Epiphany  
Install of new Board members.
- Jan. 6— Team Meetings: Youth 6:30 pm  
Others 7:00 pm
- Jan 7—Gaston Together (see p 8)
- Jan. 12— Baptism of Our Lord/  
1st Sunday after the Epiphany
- Jan. 15—**Deadline for Annual Reports**
- Jan. 19— 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 20— Board Meeting  
Martin Luther Kings, Jr. birthday observed
- Jan. 21—Prayer Group will meet at Home  
of Shirlee Marazza at 1:00 pm
- Jan. 26— 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 27— CLW/Rachel Group at 11:00 am

FOOD FOR THE MONTH: **Pork & Beans.**

**Pinto Beans, Soup**



Choir practice each  
Wednesday at 5:00 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



BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

- Doyle Clemmer
- Bud Penley
- Shana Dease
- Sarah Wooten



### Holy Communion Schedule:

Jan. 6: Epiphany of Our Lord

### Worship Service Assistance:

Acolyte:

Communion

Asst:

Nick Vlaservich

Lay Reader:

Denise Traveria

Worship Asst:

Denise Traveria

Greeters:

OSLC Members

Ushers:

OSLC Members

Collection:

Yvonne Finger

Devotion:

## FLOWERS

### Flower Schedule:

- Jan. 5 Brady & Betty Ratchford
- Jan. 12 Nick & Alice Vlaservich
- Jan. 19 Open
- Jan. 26 Becky Messick

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

- 19<sup>th</sup> .....Brady and Betty Ratchford
- 23<sup>rd</sup> .....Bryan and Jill Petzold

(Mission cont'd on page 4)

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.



A Light to the Nations

## Poetry:



by  
Steven K. Schou

They might have looked foolish,  
those wise men,  
leaving their books, following a star.  
Leaving all behind:  
dreams of the way things might have been,  
or yet might be –  
domestic, dogmatic, dignified dreams –  
they abandoned all  
for the learning of fools: experience,  
where words meet flesh and blood,  
and words fail.

They might have looked foolish,  
giving up tenure,  
ordination,  
speculation in higher things;  
giving up all,  
except hunger and cold -  
madmen driven to the desert to find God.  
All of their wisdom,  
all of their words,  
distilled into darkness,  
and a star.

They might have looked foolish,  
traveling by night  
like bandits bearing treasure  
or lovers driven by desire,  
traveling by starlight down that long road  
from the ivory tower  
to a stable  
where words meet flesh and blood,  
and words fail,  
and all is changed,  
and All Is  
One.

**Steven K. Schou** is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Dickinson,  
North Dakota

## A Stewardship Minute

There once lived a live-wire boy in New York named Jason. His actions, antics and humorous comments added much levity to peoples' lives around him. Down deep, however, Jason was struggling. His faith was dormant; his belief quite shaky.

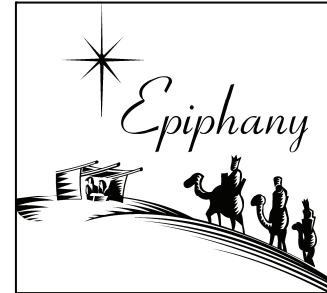
Then something happened. Something that gave him assurance that God was real and wanted him to become a more dedicated disciple. He had an encounter with God that altered him. A friend tells how she observed Jason develop into a steadfast steward of the gifts God had planted in him. She details how he strove to grow close to God in his daily actions,

in Bible study, in prayer, and in service projects, especially those sponsored by the church. In short, Jason began to increase in faith and in service to God and others. Jason, whether he realized it or not, was actually beginning to fulfill the advice that St. Peter gave to the early Christians.

Peter wrote: "As he (God) which called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15). Jason was growing in grace. Good stewardship, is putting God first in our lives and then using all the gifts God has given us to glorify the Creator. To do that is to grow in grace and holiness in ourselves. Jason's adventure is told in "A Call to

Holiness" in January's issue of *Stewardship*.

**Prayer:** Holy and loving God, help us to grow in grace and holiness that we may please you in every way. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## Altar Flowers

**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 to one of our shut ins-

**CONGRADULATIONS** to our new Council Officers.



Thank you for serving: **Anna Lowery, Becky Messick, Alice Vlaservich\*, Robbie Wooten\***

\*Serving 2<sup>nd</sup> term.

They will be sworn in on January 5, 2020

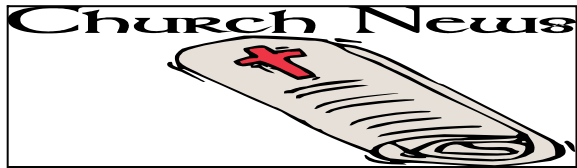
Outgoing Council Officers Steve Digh and Bill Trudnak.

**Thank you for faithfully serving on the Board**



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GASTON TOGETHER'S CLERGY & CITIZENS COALITION

January 8  
8:30 to 10:00 am  
Clinton Room, Gaston Memorial Hospital

**OUTREACH MISSION**

**SHUT-INS  
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**

Please remember our church members who are shut-ins or reside in a nursing home\* and visit them.

**Marilyn Finger**

1150 Meadow Way Dr., Dallas

**Jerri Presley**

2604 Ole Home Trail, Dallas

(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](mailto:agape@agapekurebeach.org)

**Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:**

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: [kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org)

**Web site:** [www.agapekurebeach.org](http://www.agapekurebeach.org)

**Directions to Camp Agapé are on the web site.**

Please see calendars and other information on the bulletin board or go on-line

**Events for:**

**Lutheridge -Lutherock-Lutherspring- Lutheranch**

**Web site:** [www.NovusWay.com](http://www.NovusWay.com)

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](http://oslc-nc.org) or email us at [oslcdallas@aol.com](mailto:oslcdallas@aol.com).



**CLWRACHEL GROUP**

WILL BE MEETING IN THE TBA

on January 27, 2020 AT 11:00 AM

**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)



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), RHONA and ADIAN Carpenter (parents of Raygen Messick), KAREN Brady, MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), EASTON Finger (Aboard Abraham Lincoln Aircraft Carrier in Persian Gulf) DON Greene (cancer-friend of Teri & Melinda), HARDY Feige (Pete's dad - chronic back pain), JASON Hames (friend of the White's) DANA Kirshman (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), CHRIS Messick (intestinal blockage), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), MARY O'Shea (co-worker of Melinda White's), SONDRRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), JERRIE Presley, BETTY Ratchford, RONNIE Shiles (shingles w/complications), TONY Trudnak (cancer), GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), ANNE White (niece of Betty Ratchford-breast cancer), JOE White (stroke), MARY Wooten (Sara's great-grandmother and Rosalee's great-great grandmother). NANCY Wilson (foot



**GOD WANTS YOU!**

- (1) God wants you to participate in His worship service for **2020** 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**

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Dennis Bratcher

The **Twelve Days of Christmas** is probably the most misunderstood part of the church year among Christians who are not part of liturgical church traditions. Contrary to much popular belief, these are not the twelve days *before* Christmas, but in most of the Western Church are the twelve days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany (January 6th; the 12 days count from December 25th until January 5th). In some traditions, the first day of Christmas begins on the evening of December 25th with the following day considered the First Day of Christmas (December 26th). In these traditions, the twelve days begin December 26 and include Epiphany on January 6.

The origin and counting of the Twelve Days is complicated, and is related to differences in calendars, church traditions, and ways to observe this holy day in various cultures (. In the Western church, Epiphany is usually celebrated as the time the Wise Men or Magi arrived to present gifts to the young Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12). Traditionally there were three Magi, probably from the fact of three gifts, even though the biblical narrative never says how many Magi came. In some cultures, especially Hispanic and Latin American culture, January 6th is observed as Three Kings Day, or simply the Day of the Kings (Span: *la Fiesta de Reyes, el Dia de los Tres Reyes, or el Dia de los Reyes Magos*; Dutch: *Driekoningendag*). Even though December 25th is celebrated as Christmas in these cultures, January 6th is often the day for giving gifts. In some places it is traditional to give Christmas gifts for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas. Since Eastern Orthodox traditions use a different religious calendar, they celebrate Christmas on January 7th and observe Epiphany or Theophany on January 19th.

By the 16th century, some European and Scandinavian cultures had combined the **Twelve Days of Christmas** with (sometimes pagan) festivals celebrating the changing of the year. These were usually associated with driving away evil spirits for the start of the new year.

The **Twelfth Night** is January 5th, the last day of the Christmas Season before Epiphany (January 6th). In some church traditions, January 5th is considered the eleventh Day of Christmas, while the evening of January 5th is still counted as the Twelfth Night, the beginning of the Twelfth day of Christmas the following day. Twelfth Night often included feasting along with the removal of Christmas decorations. French and English celebrations of Twelfth Night included a **King's Cake**, remembering the visit of the Three Magi, and ale or wine (a King's Cake is part of the observance of Mardi Gras in French Catholic culture of the Southern USA). In some cultures, the **King's Cake** was part of the celebration of the day of Epiphany.

The popular song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is usually seen as simply a nonsense song for children with secular origins. However, some have suggested that it is a song of Christian instruction, perhaps dating to the 16th century religious wars in England, with hidden references to the basic teachings of the Christian Faith. They contend that it was a mnemonic device to teach the catechism to youngsters. The "true love" mentioned in the song is not an earthly suitor, but refers to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person who is part of the Christian Faith. Each of the "days" represents some aspect of the Christian Faith that was important for children to learn.

However, many have questioned the historical accuracy of this origin of the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. While some have trying to debunk this as an "urban myth" out of personal agendas, others have tried to deal with this account of the song's origin in the name of historical accuracy (see Snopes on The 12 Days of Christmas). There is little "hard" evidence available either way. Some church historians affirm this account as basically accurate, while others point out apparent historical and logical discrepancies.

However, we need to acknowledge that the "evidence" on both sides is mostly in logical deduction and probabilities. Lack of positive evidence does not automatically provide negative evidence. One internet site devoted to debunking hoaxes and legends says that, "there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' was created or used as a secret means of preserving tenets of the Catholic faith, or that this claim is anything but a fanciful modern day speculation. . . ." What is omitted is that there is no "substantive evidence" that will disprove it either.

It is certainly possible, in fact probable, that this view of the song is legendary or anecdotal. Without corroboration and in the absence of "substantive evidence," we probably should not take rigid positions on either side and turn the song into a crusade for personal opinions. That would do more to violate the spirit of Christmas than the song is worth. So, for the sake of historical accuracy, we need to acknowledge the likelihood that the song had secular origins.

However, on another level, this should not prevent us from using the song in celebration of Christmas. Many of the symbols of Christianity were not originally religious, including even the present date of Christmas, but were appropriated from contemporary culture by the Christian Faith as vehicles of worship and proclamation. Perhaps, when all is said and done, historical accuracy is not really the point. Perhaps more important is that Christians can celebrate their rich heritage, and God's grace, through one more avenue this Christmas. Now, when they hear what they once thought was only a secular "nonsense song," they will be reminded in one more way of the grace of God working in transforming ways in their lives and in our world. After all, is that not the meaning of Christmas anyway?

## Daily Bible reading guide from NALC, LCMS and LCC

*Reading the Word of God*, a daily Bible reading guide, has been prepared for Lutherans to use over the next three years.

The North American Lutheran Church has joined with the Lutheran Church-Canada and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to compile a three-year plan of *daily* Bible readings and a year-long series of *weekly* readings on Martin Luther's approach to the Scriptures.

### Daily readings

The daily readings are listed on calendars for **2020**. The plan provides a guide that will take the reader through the entire Old Testament one time in three years, with the exception of Psalms, which are read twice each year. The New Testament will be read twice in the three years.

A reading from the Old Testament, a psalm (or portion of a psalm) and a reading from the New Testament are assigned for each day. Certain church festivals - Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and so forth - have readings appointed for the specific occasion.

Each month of the Daily Bible Reading Guide will be in the monthly newsletter.

# January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> <i>Is. 26:1-21</i> <i>Ps. 1</i> <i>John 1:29-42</i>	<b>2</b> <i>Is. 27:1-13</i> <i>Ps. 2</i> <i>John 1:43-51</i>	<b>3</b> <i>Is. 28:1-13</i> <i>Ps. 3</i> <i>John 2:1-22</i>	<b>4</b> <i>Is. 28:14-29</i> <i>Ps. 4</i> <i>John 2:23-3:15</i>
<b>5</b> <i>Is. 29:1-10</i> <i>Ps. 5</i> <i>John 3:16-36</i>	<b>6 Epiphany</b> <i>Is. 60:1-6</i> <i>Ps. 72</i> <i>Eph. 3:1-12</i> <i>Matt. 2:1-12</i>	<b>7</b> <i>Is. 29:11-24</i> <i>Ps. 6</i> <i>John 4:1-15</i>	<b>8</b> <i>Is. 30:1-7</i> <i>Ps. 7</i> <i>John 4:16-45</i>	<b>9</b> <i>Is. 30:1-7</i> <i>Ps. 8</i> <i>John 4:46-5:17</i>	<b>10</b> <i>Is. 30:18-33</i> <i>Ps. 9</i> <i>John 5:18-29</i>	<b>11</b> <i>Is. 31:1-9</i> <i>Ps. 10</i> <i>John 6:1-21</i>
<b>12</b> <i>Is. 32:1-20</i> <i>Ps. 11</i> <i>John 6:22-40</i>	<b>13</b> <i>Is. 33:1-24</i> <i>Ps. 12</i> <i>John 6:41-59</i>	<b>14</b> <i>Is. 34:1-17</i> <i>Ps. 13</i> <i>John 6:60-71</i>	<b>15</b> <i>Is. 35:1-10</i> <i>Ps. 14</i> <i>John 7:1-24</i>	<b>16</b> <i>Is. 36:1-22</i> <i>Ps. 15</i> <i>John 7:25-36</i>	<b>17</b> <i>Is. 33:1-13</i> <i>Ps. 16</i> <i>John 7:37-52</i>	<b>18</b> <i>Is. 37:14-29</i> <i>Ps. 17</i> <i>John 8:1-11</i>
<b>19</b> <i>Is. 37:30-38</i> <i>Ps. 18:1-30</i> <i>John 8:12-30</i>	<b>20</b> <i>Is. 38:1-21</i> <i>Ps. 18:31-50</i> <i>John 8:31-47</i>	<b>21</b> <i>Is. 39:1-40: 8</i> <i>Ps. 19</i> <i>John 8:48-59</i>	<b>22</b> <i>Is. 40:9-23</i> <i>Ps. 20</i> <i>John 9:1-23</i>	<b>23</b> <i>Is. 40:24-31</i> <i>Ps. 21</i> <i>John 9:24-41</i>	<b>24</b> <i>Is. 41:1-13</i> <i>Ps. 22</i> <i>John 10:1-21</i>	<b>25</b> <i>Is. 41:14-29</i> <i>Ps. 23</i> <i>John 10:22-42</i>
<b>26</b> <i>Is. 42:1-9</i> <i>Ps. 24</i> <i>John 11:1-27</i>	<b>27</b> <i>Is. 42:10-25</i> <i>Ps. 25</i> <i>John 11:28-44</i>	<b>28</b> <i>Is. 43:1-28</i> <i>Ps. 26</i> <i>John 11:45-57</i>	<b>29</b> <i>Is. 44:1-28</i> <i>Ps. 27</i> <i>John 12:1-11</i>	<b>30</b> <i>Is. 45:1-13</i> <i>Ps. 28</i> <i>John 12:12-26</i>	<b>31</b> <i>Is. 45:14-25</i> <i>Ps. 29</i> <i>John 12:27-43</i>	



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# A New Year of Giving

January 2020

