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Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XVI, Issue I

January 2021

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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The Spreading Light of Epiphany

Welcome to Epiphany, the season of spreading light. The birth of Christ, our Light, was celebrated on Christmas. And the bright news of the Christ's birth now radiates out to all the world. The wise men were among the first to recognize the spreading Light of Christ. "We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him," they declared (Matthew 2:2). Since that time, people from the four corners of the globe have been touched by Christ's spreading Light in all its dazzling and varied glory. This Light reveals Christ's gracious gifts of divine presence, forgiveness from sin, and everlasting life. Where exactly can the Lord's radiating Light be seen today? Take a look below!

The Light of Christ spreads out through the Scriptures.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path," we read (Psalm 119:105) The story of our salvation, culminating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is brought to light each time people read from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Highlight in your Bible those passages that have enlightened you in your walk with Christ, and then make an effort to share those verses with friends and family. Consider giving or lending a Bible to someone who does not yet know Christ.

The Light of Christ spreads out through missionaries.

Many men and women have heeded the directive of Jesus to "make disciples of all nations" and gone to places near and far where people have not yet been exposed to the Light of Christ (Matthew 28:19). Find out the addresses of missionaries who are our church supports. Write letters of encouragement to them to "keep spreading the Light of Christ." Make donations to them to brighten their day and support their work. (See page for organizations)

The Light of Christ spreads out through us.

The wise men responded to the Light of Christ by bowing down to worship him. They presented him with the gift of gold, frankincense and myrrh (see Matthew 2:11). Gladly

attend worship services in our church and generously give of your time, talents and treasures in love and service to the Lord. In our church and in our community this Epiphany season, let the Light of Christ beam forth with powerful force.

Jesus Spreads Light

The Bible readings often used during the Season of Epiphany "shed some light who Christ was ...and is. Here's some "light" reading for the season.

Read Matthew 2:1-11. The star that shown brightly in the night sky declared to the world that Jesus was a King. Stars have long been linked with royalty. The Epiphany star reveals to us that Jesus is the King of heaven and earth and the ruler of our hearts, souls and minds.

Read Matthew 3:13-17. When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan, it was not because he needed to be forgiven. It was an opportunity for God to bring this news to light for us, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Read John 2:1-11. When Jesus changed water into wine at the wedding at Cana, he shed light on the fact that he is the Bringer of Joy and Enricher of Life.

Read John 1:29-34. John the Baptist's announcement that Jesus is the Lamb of God spotlights for us that Jesus is the one who serves as the Sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

Read Matthew 5:1-12, 38-48 & 6:24-34.

The disciples called Jesus Rabbi, which means Teacher. His many parables and sermons (on such varied topics as being blessed by God, interacting with our hurts, dealing with money, and getting rid of worry) help us to learn to live as children of the Light.

Read Matthew 17:1-9. Christ's appearance in full glory on the Mount of Transfiguration enlightens us with the knowledge that he is the Holy One who will take us to heaven. (Mark Zimmermann for *The Parish*)

Save your fork!

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things 'in order,' she contacted her Pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Everything was in order and the Pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her.

"There's one more thing," she said excitedly.

"What's that?" came the Pastor's reply.

"This is very important," the young woman continued. "I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand."

The Pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

"That surprises you, doesn't it?" the young woman asked.

"Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request," said the Pastor.

In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, "Keep your fork." It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming...like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!"

So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder "What's with the fork?" Then I want you to tell them: "Keep your fork, the best is yet to come."

The Pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. She had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. She KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman's casket and they saw the cloak she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the Pastor heard the question, "What's with the fork?" And over and over he smiled.

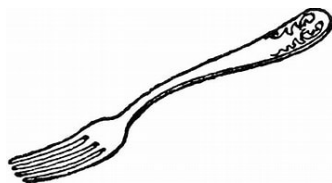
During his message, the Pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her. He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either.

He was right. So the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come. Great friends are a very rare jewel, indeed, they make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.

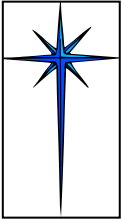
Show your friends how much you care. Remember to always be there for them, even when you need them more. For you never know when it may be their time to "Keep your fork."

Cherish the time you have , and the memories you share

Being friends with someone is not an opportunity but a sweet responsibility.



JANUARY Epiphany — Navigating by GPS



When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. — Matthew 2:9

In the church of Jesus Christ we do our work by starlight.

The wise foreigners in the story of Jesus' birth found their way to the Messiah by following a mysterious light that guided them through unfamiliar territory. They navigated by **GPS** — **God's Peculiar Star**. It was a surprising, uncommon, traveling star. It appeared out of nowhere, but somehow they knew it was a sign from God. It led them to a peculiar place where they found a peculiar scene: a poor child in a manger who was King of the universe, Son of God, Prince of Peace, and Savior of the world. The Bible tells us that they were "overwhelmed with joy" as they bowed to worship him.

Leaders in the church are servants who allow themselves to be guided by God's mysterious starlight through unfamiliar territory to the places where Christ is revealed. As we move through the darkness of uncertainty, or conflict, or puzzling change, we know that we are headed in the right direction as long as we follow God's light. We never lose faith, even when the destination seems a bit peculiar. The manger and the cross are not treasures in the eyes of the world, yet in God's grace we know that these peculiar gifts come to us bearing eternal life.

God's guiding starlight is still everywhere in the church and the world. It glistens in the water of Baptism, illumines the bread and the wine, and shines over places of poverty and hopelessness where Jesus lives among the poor. By this light, miracles happen, wounds are healed, the hungry are fed, prayer is answered, leaders are raised up, and reconciliation overcomes hatred. We can feel the joy grow as we find our way closer and closer to the places where God calls us to be the light of Christ. Even though we were frightened and uncertain as we set out to follow this peculiar light, the overwhelming joy at the end of the journey assures us that it is God who has brought us to this place.

Prayer:

God of Grace, we thank you for starlight and peculiar destinations. Guide us by your mysterious light to the places where you want us to serve. Give us the courage to travel in unfamiliar territory, the wisdom to recognize your light, and joy at the end of our journey. Amen.



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 up-dated 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!

Begin
the
Year
with
God



"I'd like to thank the congregation for the snooze alarm you gave me for Christmas."

Our Saviour Lutheran Church
Anna Lowery, President
November 16, 2020 Board Minutes



Devotions: Anna Lowery

Meeting called to order by President, Anna Lowery

Members present: Alice Vlaservich, Anna Lowery, Melinda White, Robbie Wooten, Teri Trudnak, Denise Traveria, Joe Finger

Members Absent: Becky Messick and Jeff White

Minutes: October 19, 2020 minutes were reviewed.; Anna Lowery made the motion to approve the minutes and Melinda White seconded the motion.

Reception of Petitions and Communications: There was one request for assistance from an outside source. The Council will continue conversation at next meeting about trying to assist a family/person during the Christmas season.

Report of the Pastor: None presented.

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

Report of the Ministries:

- a. Property: Gutters need cleaning at the parsonage. Will talk more at next meeting about taking care of that.
- b. Stewardship and Finance: No report
- c. Worship & Music: Decorate for Hanging of Greens Service by 11/28/2020.
- d. Youth Team: No report this month
- e. Witness: Cards and prayers continue to be sent to shut in's
- f. Christian Education Team: Operation Christmas Child is here! Fill a shoe box for a child and help spread the Gospel. Deadline for turning in shoe boxes is 11/22/2020.

Report of Auxiliaries: No meeting scheduled until after January 2021.

Old and/or Unfinished Business:

- a. Council decided it was in the best interest of the church to keep the approved 9 seats and the current Council members will remain the same at this time (for one year).

New Business:

- a. The approval of 2021 Annual budget was presented, and Alice Vlaservich made a motion we accept this budget for 2021 and Joe Finger seconded that motion. A letter will be mailed to the congregation and the budget will be presented to the congregation on 12/6/2020.
- b. Two new Christmas trees were purchased. Thank you, Becky Messick and Julie Digh.

General Information:

- a. Attendance: BRING A FRIEND!!
- b. Laszlo Mission (Kids International) Report

The Council meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is December 21, 2020 at 7pm
 Devotions: Robbie Wooten



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 2021 calendar year are in the
 notebook on the office door in the Education wing.
 THANK YOU!



ANNUAL REPORTS

2020 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, 2021

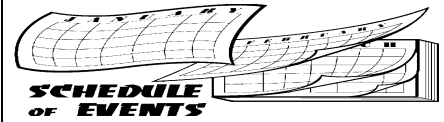
Thank you!



January 2021



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



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

- Jan. 1— Happy New Year
Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- Jan. 3—2nd Sunday after Christmas
- Jan. 4— Team Meetings: 7:00 pm
- Jan. 6—Epiphany
- Jan. 10— Baptism of Our Lord/
1st Sunday after the Epiphany
- Jan. 15—**Deadline for Annual Reports**
- Jan. 17— 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 18— Board Meeting
Martin Luther Kings, Jr. birthday observed
- Jan. 19—Prayer Group will meet at Home
of Shirlee Marazza at 1:00 pm
- Jan. 24— 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 25— CLW/Rachel Group at 11:00 am
- Jan. 31— 4th Sunday after Epiphany

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



- Doyle Clemmer
- Shana Dease
- Sarah Wooten



Holy Communion Schedule:
All Sundays

Worship Service Assistance:

Acolyte:

Communion

Asst: OSLC Member

Lay Reader: OSLC Member

Worship Asst: OSLC Member

Greeters: OSLC Members

Ushers: OSLC Members

Collection: Yvonne Finger

Devotion: Alice Vlassevich

FLOWERS

Flower Schedule:

- Jan. 3 Brady Ratchford
- Jan. 10 Nick & Alice Vlaservich
- Jan. 17 Open
- Jan. 21 Open
- Jan. 31 Open

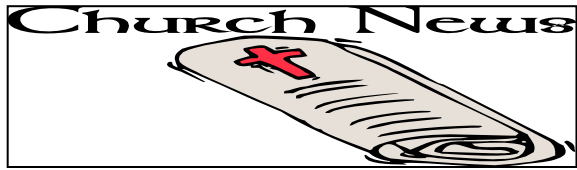
Please sign up to place flowers on the
altar in the glory of God
and
in honor or memory of your love ones.

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



ANNIVERSARIES

23rd*Bryan and Jill Petzold*



GASTON TOGETHER'S CLERGY & CITIZENS COALITION
Not Meeting Due to Covid 19

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.

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

Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: kurebreach@agapekurebeach.org

Web site: 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

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.



CLW/RACHEL GROUP

WILL BE MEETING IN THE TBA

on January 25, 2021 AT 11:00 AM



PRAYER GROUP

WILL MEET AT THE HOME OF SHIRLEE MARAZZA

on January 19ih 2921 at 1;30 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)



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, BOB Clemmer (friend of Brady Ratchford), SYLVIA Cloninger (friend of Nick Vlaservich), MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), STEVE Digh (cancer and Covid19), JULIE Digh (Covid19), RENEE Falkenberg (broken ribs), HARDY Feige (Pete's dad – chronic back pain), NANCY Friday, JAMES Goudelock (cancer), JASON Hames (friend of the White's), DANA Kirshman (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), MARINA Marazza (Shirlee Marazza's granddaughter-Covid19), FRANCIS McAllister (broken hip), CHRIS Messick (recovering back surgery), WAYNE ANN Penley (Covid19), ELLEN & ED Pfeiffer (Keenan Gordy's Parents – Heart issues), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), SONDRRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), JERRIE Presley, TERI Trudnak, GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), JOE White (stroke), NANCY Wilson.



GOD WANTS YOU!

- (1) God wants you to participate in His worship service for **2021** 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.

2021 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 9)

(Mission cont'd on page 8)

Based in Chicago and Jerusalem, *The Fellowship* operates under the leadership of Rabbi Yecheil 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.



Did You Know?

A number of scientists and Bible scholars offer that the star of Bethlehem may have actually been a divinely placed supernova, comet or conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn.

Early Christians called those who were preparing to be baptized the *illuminandi*, which means, "those who are about to be enlightened" by Christ. The *illuminandi* were baptized on the Day of the Epiphany.

In the New Testament, being "in the light" means to be living in a right relationship with God. "Walk in the light as he himself is in the light," we read in 1 John 1:7. The Season of Epiphany celebrates this new relationship we have with God because of Christ, who brings us with him into the Light.

(Mark Zimmermann for *The Parish*)

Baptism cont'd from page 7

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.



Comfort for the Connecticut Event

Twas' 11 days before Christmas, around 9:38 when 20 beautiful children stormed through heaven's gate.

Their smiles were contagious, their laughter filled the air. They could hardly believe all the beauty they saw there. They were filled with such joy, they didn't know what to say. They remembered nothing of what had happened earlier that day.

"Where are we?" asked a little girl, as quiet as a mouse. "This is heaven" declared a small boy. "We're spending Christmas at God's house." When what to their wandering eyes did appear, but Jesus, their savior, the children gathered near. He looked at them and smiled, and they smiled just the same. Then He opened His arms and He called them by name. And in that moment was joy, that only heaven can bring those children all flew into the arms of their King and as they lingered in the warmth of His embrace, one small girl turned and looked at Jesus' face and as if He could read all the questions she had He gently whispered to her, "I'll take care of Mom and Dad." Then He looked down on earth, the world far below, He saw all of the hurt, the sorrow and woe. Then He closed His eyes and He outstretched His hand, **"Let My power and presence re-enter this land!" "May this country be delivered from the hands of fools." "I'm taking back my nation. I'm taking back my schools!"**

Then He and the children stood up without a sound. "Come now my children, let me show you around." Excitement filled the space, some skipped and some ran. All displaying enthusiasm that only a small child can and I heard Him proclaim as He walked out of sight, **"In the midst of this darkness, I AM STILL THE LIGHT."**

Written by Cameo Smith, Mt. Wolf, PA

A Stewardship Minute

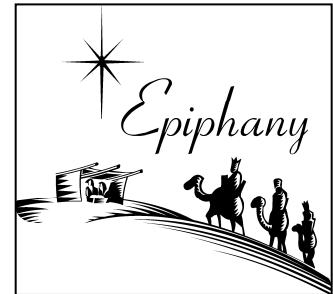
When you thought about resolutions for the New Year, did you consider making one for your spiritual life? In the twelfth chapter of Paul's letter to the Christians living in Corinth, here is what he urges them to consider: That God has given each person many gifts. Paul says that each gift is meant for the common good. That is, God means for us to use our gifts for the church, for society, for the welfare of the world.

Paul points out that just as a human body has many parts, so does the Body of Christ, that is, the church, when he writes: "Now you are the

body of Christ and individual members of it." Then he lists how each person is very important and has a role to play in the life of the church. Some are teachers, some preachers, some natural leaders, some gifted at organizing, some at leading prayer groups, others at working with youth, and some are talented in the field of music or financial matters. And so on.

St. Paul's insight and instructions are clear: to use the gifts that God has given to us for the benefit of others in God's Kingdom. So the question is "Are you, and am I, resolved to allow God to use us and our resources for the glory of God and the work of God's kingdom?" Will that be our New Year's resolution?

Prayer: O Lord, increase our love for you. Keep us from growing lax in our worship and to begin to work steadfastly for you. Help us to strive faithfully to the end that your kingdom and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **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-



Marilyn Finger's new address:

2701 Jackson Square

Anderson, SC 29625



I wonder what would happen if we treated our **Bible** like we treat our cell phone

What if.....

- We carried it around in our purse or pocket?
- We turned back to get it if we forgot it?
- We flipped through it several times a day?
- We used it to receive messages?
- We treated it like we couldn't live without it?
- We gave it to our kids as a gift?
- We used it as we traveled?
- We used it in case of emergency?
- We upgraded it to get the latest version?

OH, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phones, we don't have to worry about Bible being "disconnected" because **Jesus** already paid the bill.



It's what you scatter that matters

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes...I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes.

Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?" "H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good." "They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?" "Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time." "Good. Anything I can help you with?" "No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas." "Would you like to take some home?" asked Mr. Miller. "No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with." "Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?" "All I got's my prize marble here." "Is that right? Let me see it", said Miller. "Here 'tis. She's a dandy." "I can see that. Hmm mmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked.

"Not zackley but almost. "Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble". Mr. Miller told the boy.

"Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store."

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts... all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket. "Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about.

They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size.... they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho ..." With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

The Moral: We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath.





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A New Year
of Giving

January 2021

