

JOY IN CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Building Bridges of Caring, Compassion, and Civility

JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

A Star in the East

The Christmas season ends with Epiphany, celebrating the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, bearing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Sometimes known as the Feast of the Three Kings, Epiphany always falls on January 6th, twelve days after Christmas. In 2019 something rather rare will happen. Epiphany will fall on a Sunday! When it doesn't (which is most of the time) Epiphany tends to be ignored or forgotten.

That's a shame, because Epiphany is very important for those of us who are not Jewish. I suspect that's most of us. Epiphany marks the revealing of Christ to the nations – the gentiles – the whole world. Remember, Jesus was Jewish. He was a Jewish Messiah. The first Christians were all Jewish too. According to the story in the Gospel of Matthew, the first non-Jewish people to worship Christ were the Wise Men, the Magi, who came from the East, “following yonder star”.

Who were these strange visitors from afar? Some people think they came from Persia, in modern-day Iran. There's no evidence to support that. There's no evidence they were kings, either. They were probably astrologers, who studied the stars and planets for advice on how to live our life here on earth. The word “Magi” comes from the same root as “magician”. But we don't really know who they were. The Bible doesn't even say there were three of them – only that they were “wise men” from the East.

Epiphany was much more important for the first Christians than Christmas. In fact, Christmas was not widely celebrated until centuries after Jesus' birth. In the Eastern Orthodox churches Epiphany is still considered more important. Epiphany means “to reveal” or “to manifest”. Beginning with the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6th and continuing through the Epiphany season, we celebrate the revealing of Jesus to the whole world, beginning with the visit of the Magi.

The lessons for the Sundays in Epiphany all focus on the revealing of Christ, beginning with his baptism in the River Jordan. This year's gospel lessons are mostly taken from the Gospel of Luke, and include Jesus' first sermon in his home town of Nazareth, the calling of the first disciples, and his Sermon on the Mount. Throughout the Epiphany season we learn that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that whoever believes in him might not perish, but have eternal life.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, Jewish Christians were uncertain about whether gentiles, or pagans, could even be members of the church. Some thought that Greek and Roman believers should be circumcised and become Jews first, and then join the church. Others, like Paul and Peter, argued that Jesus was Lord of the whole world, including both Jews and gentiles. Eventually, the early church sided with Peter and Paul, which is why we are all Christians today!

Come and join us on Sunday, January 6th, as we sing “We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts we traverse afar – field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.”





Brief update from the Special Congregational Meeting December 2, 2018

There being a quorum of 21 voting members, the meeting was called to order. Jeff distributed a handout containing the agenda, 2019 Expense Budget, Pro Forma Big Picture Financial Situation through 2021 and a final spreadsheet that summarized the financial picture of the congregation if the building was sold.

Jeff asked everyone to review the 2019 expense budget and ask, or email, any questions between now and the January Annual Congregational meeting when the budget will be reviewed in more detail.

Jeff reviewed the fidelity account balance and a pro forma budget through 2021. If our income stays as projected for calendar 2018 through 2021 and our expenses stay the same as 2019 (adjusted +2% annually) through 2021, the annual shortfall should be covered by our declining Fidelity balance through this period.

By mutual agreement Pastor Russ' contract has been extended through June 30, 2019.

Jeff met with Pastor Sara Anderson and Kim Bergstrand at the Synod office to get a better understanding of the process should the congregation call or contract with a pastor who is not an ordained Lutheran Pastor. Jeff will fill out the Synod's Congregational Site Profile (short form), present to the Council for editing and approval, send it to the Synod at which time the Synod will start looking for Lutheran Pastors. He explained the different processes we would go through depending on status and denomination of the person who we decide to call; however, *a decision on whether or not the congregation wants to continue to operate with a part-time pastor needs to be made before any paperwork is submitted to the Synod. It should be noted that we could hire a full-time pastor and use our Fidelity account to pay the entire shortfall resulting in a zero balance approximately by the end of calendar 2020, assuming no changes in income.*

Jeff announced he will search out pastoral candidate from denominations with who Lutherans are in full communion so that there is a larger pool of candidates. He then asked the congregation: *Is JIC about the physical building or about the community that worships our faith together?* The answer is both! Our building is worth approximately \$350,000 per ONE commercial realtor. If we sold the building, committed to a full time pastoral leadership and rented worship and gathering space elsewhere, the congregation would be funded with a full time pastor though approximately 2027-2028 giving us nine years to evolve our ministry.

Making a decision on full time / part time and sell / don't sell are two important, emotional topics that we need to discuss at the January 2019 Annual Meeting.



All reports for the 2018 Annual Report need to be turned in to Jeff by January 6th but he would appreciate it if you could get them in earlier!!

Our **Annual Meeting** will follow the service on **January 27th**. Please plan to attend.



Brief update from the December 16, 2018 Council Meeting

Present: Pam Borgeson, Vicki Burke, Lisa Clairmont, Pat Gladbach, Audrey McNevin, Pastor Russ, Jeff Stone.

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 and an opening prayer was offered by Pastor Russ. The agenda was accepted with one addition from Lisa to add discussion of organizational skills and Vicki added dinner for homeless people under Community Outreach.

Updates

- Confirmation: Pastor Russ has contacted the families involved and has received one enthusiastic response. He will contact the other families and the first day retreat will be at the church at the end of January.
- Stewardship: 19 responses have been received to date and emails sent to those who have not yet responded
- Nominating Committee: Pam has met with Steve and is contacting people to fill vacancies. More work to be done this coming week.
- Congregational Site Profile for the Pastoral Call Process: Jeff had completed most of the sections of the profile and had passed it out to council members a few weeks prior to the meeting for feedback. We discussed the attributes we would like in a new pastor. We discussed if we should set up a Call Committee and agreed to do this in January and due to the size of the congregation, the Council will act as the Call Committee.
- 2019 Budget—Jeff noted that he had paid all the bills for December so he was able to do an accurate comparison of 2018 actual expenses versus the 2019 budget. He noted that the budget did not include any money for mission work. A motion was made to add \$2,000 to the budget for mission work and it was unanimously affirmed. The 2019 budget is still less than we spent in 2018.

Next Community Outreach project

- Lee-Ann had sent an idea via email suggesting “Warming Soles-Sock Drive for souls” in January 2019. Socks are the #1 item that homeless shelters, prisons and other places need and often neglected in clothing drives. She noted that we could include a little prayer. There could be collection bin at Church and Lee-Ann offered to have one at Whitman Wellness as well. Others noted that we could also put collection boxes at the senior centers and ask those who use our building to contribute as well.
 - The Council approved the idea and Jeff was going to contact Lee-Ann to tell her to run with it and let us know how we could help.
- A Warm dinner for the homeless. Pastor suggested involving other local churches and giving out \$10 gas cards as it appears that many of these people have cars but not homes. Before real planning can start on this we need to get an idea of the # of people who are in need. Jeff will speak with St. Vincent de Paul in Abington to see if they can give us some insight on that. This is something that we would like to do in February 2019.

Full-time vs. Part-time Pastor discussion. The group had mixed feelings as to our present need and building our future. Jeff noted that we would need approximately \$24,000 over our present budget to fund a full-time role and that would be a recent graduate and not someone with 10-30 years’ experience. Pastor suggested that sharing a part time pastor would give us full time availability in crisis situations but part time hours, and possibly another congregation to partner with. Jeff has met with two pastors that are looking for part time positions and Council will meet with each of them in January.

Sell the building, keep the building, rent space, rent out space discussion. Most agreed that the members are more important than the physical building, but there was unanimous consensus that we would not like worshipping in a store front environment.

There was some lively discussion about selling the building and renting space from another church as well as looking at the possibility of renting out our worship space/building to congregations who may currently be in store front space. Council decided that the first thing we would do is investigate whether or not there was any interest in renting our space. Jeff will download all the religious institutions in our area and we will assemble a small group after the first of the year who will send letters (and do the follow up work) to determine the interest. We think that this will take approximately three months to complete.

Bible Study: Pastor reported that attendance has been spotty and one week no one attended. Council members who currently do or have attended Bible Study gave some insights on why maybe attendance is off. It is unclear if this is because of the season, health reasons, format of the study or the fact that the start and stop times are sometimes not adhered to. Jeff will contact attendees with a quick survey to determine the future of Bible Study.

Organizational issues: Lisa challenged us to take a look at what we do and how we are doing it to see if some things can be simplified, omitted, etc. Each committee head should discuss this with their group and take an objective look at how they do things!

Next Council Meeting: **January 6, 2019**, 11:15am-12:45pm

Congregational Meeting: **January 27, 2019**, 11:30 am



Thank you to all that have responded so far to this year's Stewardship Campaign. There is still time to climb on board and acknowledge the gifts God has given you and to support the financial needs of Joy in Christ.

Please see George Sullivan, Carol Porter, or Jeff Stone if you are in need of the forms or if you have any questions.

The annual reports are due in to Jeff Stone by **January 6, 2019** so he has time to collate and distribute to the congregation on January 13th. Again, just a reminder that the **annual meeting will be held after worship on January 27, 2019.**



Gaudeamus + Let Us Rejoice

November 25, 2018

Grant Rowan Winiewicz and Mia Jeanette Winiewicz

Baptized on November 25, 2018

son and daughter of Andrew and Nicole Winiewicz



JANUARY

1st: Emily Clairmont
7th: Charlotte Vaillette
7th: Missy Tupa
8th: Phyllis Luddy
17th: Lisa Clairmont
20th: Marianne Djusberg
22nd: Jeff Stone
23rd: Aimee Remes
24th: Pat Gladbach
27th: Veronica Delong

FEBRUARY

6th: Rachel Leadbetter-Shields
19th: George Porter
20th: Lily Williamson
22nd: Alyssa Burke
22nd: Michael Remes
28th: Lee-Ann Trigler

Happy New Year

A new year is about to unfold
With new opportunities to explore
Doors will open for new experiences,
New adventures with the Lord

Remember not the former things,
The things of this past year,
The Lord will do new things in us,
Much more than we are aware.

-M.S.Lowndes



Our mission: To Build Bridges of Caring, Compassion, and Civility



Called to *Serve*



JANUARY ALTAR GUILD: NOREEN DIONNE & LIZ LEADBETTER

| | JAN 6 TH | JAN 13 TH | JAN 20 TH | JAN 27 TH |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| ASSISITNG | LEE-ANN TRIGLER | EMILY CLAIRMONT | PAT GLADBACH | JEFF STONE |
| PROJECTIONIST | STEPHANIE BURKE | LEE-ANN TRIGLER | JEFF STONE | LEE-ANN TRIGLER |
| READER | JERI SCRENCI | LISA CLAIRMONT | JEFF STONE | AIMEE REMES |
| GRUSHER | GEORGE PORTER | JERI SCRENCI | JEAN PETERSEN | PAT GLADBACH |
| WORSHIP SET-UP | JEFF STONE | GEORGE PORTER | KATHY REMES | LEE-ANN TRIGLER |
| COFFEE HOUR | LISA CLAIRMONT & PAT GLADBACH | PAM BORGESON & CANDY STONE | GEORGE & CAROL PORTER | JEAN PETERSEN & AUDRY MCNEVIN |

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SERVE AS SCHEDULED PLEASE NOTIFY
LEE-ANN @ leeann281@gmail.com AND THE OFFICE @ jicchurch@outlook.com or (781) 878-3394

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

TEAM 1
JAN. 13TH AND 27TH

Lee-Ann
 Candy
 Pat
 Vicki

TEAM 2
JAN 6TH and 20TH

Audrey
 Ingrid
 Kathy
 Anita B



Keep Us in Your Prayers: As we begin the New Year, the list of those who we pray for will be updated. Please either call the office (781) 878-3394 or send an email (jicchurch@outlook.com) if you want someone added.

Our mission: To Build Bridges of Caring, Compassion, and Civility

Joy in Christ Lutheran Church
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Pr. Russ Norris is usually in the office on Wednesday and by appointment. It is always best to call first, as visits and meetings sometime alter the schedule. Pr. Norris is available at 774.487.8734(cell) or 508.534.9307 (home) or at rbnorrisjr@gmail.com

JANUARY 2019

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|--|-----|---|---------------------------|-----|
| | | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 CLEANERS | 5 |
| 6 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD 10:00 a.m. WORSHIP 11:15 a.m. COUNCIL MEETING 6:00 p.m. RECOVERY YOGA | 7 7:00 p.m. YOGA GIRL SCOUTS TROOP 66027 4:00 -5:00 p.m. | 8 6:00 p.m. TOPS | 9 | 10 10:30 a.m. WORSHIP & PARISH LIFE | 11 | 12 |
| 13 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 10:00 a.m. WORSHIP 6:00 p.m. RECOVERY YOGA | 14 7:00 p.m. YOGA | 15 6:00 p.m. TOPS | 16 | 17 | 18 CLEANERS | 19 |
| 20 SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 10:00 a.m. WORSHIP 6:00 p.m. RECOVERY YOGA | 21 7:00 p.m. YOGA | 22 6:00 p.m. TOPS | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 10:00 a.m. WORSHIP 11:30 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING 6:00 p.m. RECOVERY YOGA | 28 7:00 p.m. YOGA | 29 6:00 p.m. TOPS | 30 | 31 | | |

An excerpt from David ‘Gunner’ Gundersen
SHARE
CHRISTIAN LIVING
March 1, 2018

The most important time to be at church is when you don’t feel like it.

I’ve talked with three Christians about this recently—two struggling with depression, and a third who just went through a tough break-up—who’ve stopped gathering with God’s people during a difficult season. Whether for weeks or months, all three have decided to stop going to church.

One said it would be unsatisfying, that there just isn’t a sense of connection. Another said it would be awkward, because they don’t want to see their ex. The last said it would be unhelpful, because they have no desire to be there anymore.

My reply to all three: the most important time to be at church is when you don’t feel like it. Yes, I know the church is a people, not a place. The church is a body, not a building. The church is something Christians are, not just somewhere Christians go. Yes, I also know the church is a family that should meet and study and eat and fellowship and pray and serve throughout the week, not just on Sunday. I also know the church is marked, known, and enlivened by its regular, rhythmic, ordered gatherings.

Covenants are made for the hard times, not the good times.

Sure, you could listen to some praise music and an online sermon, but there won’t be any personalized one-anothering, there won’t be any face-to-face fellowship, and there won’t be any bread and wine. Sure, you could read the Bible and pray on your own, but you won’t hear the studied voice of your own shepherd teaching and comforting and correcting you. Yes, you could just attend another church for a while because yours has grown unsatisfying, but that’s not treating your church like much of a covenant community.

In the good times, we don’t need covenants, because we can get by and stick together on feelings alone. But covenant communities hold us up when we’re faltering and pick us up when we’ve fallen. They encourage us when we’re weary and wake us when we’re slumbering. They draw us out of ourselves and call us to our commitments and responsibilities. They invite us back to the garden of Christian community, where we grow.

So go, because the church gathers every Sunday to remember the death of Jesus for our sins and the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and that’s precisely what we all need to remember and celebrate, regardless of what else is going on in our lives. Go, not because your trials aren’t real, but because that tabled bread and wine represents the crucifixion of the worst sins you could ever commit and the worst realities you’ve ever experienced.

Go, and in your going, grow. Go, and in your going, serve. Go, and in your going, let God pick up the pieces of your heart and stitch together the kind of mosaic that only gets fully crafted when saints stay committed to God’s long-term building project, when they speak the truth to one another in love.