

CLARION

JANUARY 2023

FROM PASTOR'S DESK



Happy New Year!

“And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” Luke 6:31

I cannot believe how fast 2022 passed by! It seems like it was just yesterday that I was struggling to make the shift from writing “2021” to jotting down “2022.” And now I’ve got to get used to “2023!”

Each year, I try to choose a theme verse for the year. It is intended to be a little snippet of Scripture that perches in my brain and is ever-present as I go about my days. Perhaps you noticed the theme verse for 2022: **“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”** (Romans 10:17). I wanted to have that nudge back into the Word of God; that reminder to spend time hearing what God had to say, knowing that it builds faith.

For 2023, my verse is Luke 6:31, which you’ll see at the top of this article. It is taken from Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount.” Having selected His apostles, Jesus brought them down and “stood on a level place” and he gave a sermon to the crowd that had gathered. Luke describes it as **“a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon”** (Luke 6:17). They were there to hear what Jesus had to say. They were there to be healed. They were there to be freed from the unclean spirits that were troubling them.

Jesus had a lot to say in that sermon, but some of the most surprising words were words of peace. **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you”** (Luke 6:27-28). I daresay those words carry some of the most challenging guidance that Jesus gives us. It’s not in our nature to love our enemies. We never want to do good to those who hate us. We cringe at the thought of blessing people who curse us. And words of prayer for an abuser rest uncomfortably in our mouths, if they come to mind at all.

Ultimately, it boils down to that theme verse. You know it, perhaps, as The Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” That’s simple to say, but really hard to do. Our sinful nature gets in the way. We want to lean into “an eye for an eye” (which is drawn from the law in Leviticus 24, after all). After all, that’s fair and equitable. It’s a useful approach in a system of justice that helps to govern the people (which is where it comes from), but in interpersonal relationships, Jesus challenges us to seek a path of love and forgiveness.

Which makes sense, of course. In his dealings with us, God took the path of love and forgiveness. He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us (John 3:16), so that the penalty for our sins would be covered (1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Peter 2:24) and we might be forgiven (Ephesians 1:7) and reconciled to God (Colossians 1:19-20). As a result, we are blessed with the certain promise of eternal life, freed from our sins and forever in the presence of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I’m taking on that challenge this year, seeking to treat others the way that I hope and pray they would treat me. And I’m adopting Luke 6:31 as my theme verse for the year; a little reminder of Jesus’ challenge to live a life marked by love, kindness, and forgiveness. May God bless you in 2023!

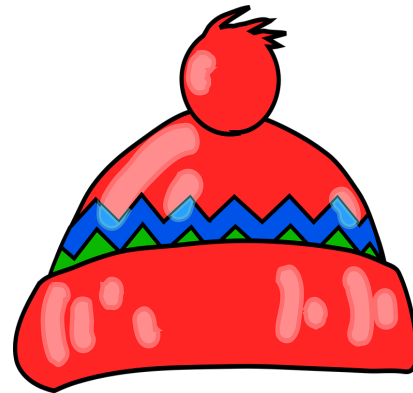
In HIS service,

Pastor Eric Longman

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From the office...

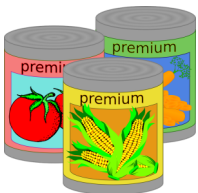


Once again we are collecting winter coats, jackets, hats, gloves, scarves, and blankets for those in need. As it gets colder we see a great need from those who come in for food and shelter at our pantry. If you have any gently used items of this sort, please consider donating them to the church office and we will see to it that they get into the hands of those in need. Thank y'all for your help and support!

FOOD PANTRY

Hours

Tuesday-Friday
2 pm-4 pm.



PASTOR'S CARE FUND

Hours

Thursday-Friday
2 pm-4 pm.

A Friendly Reminder

Any information you need put into our weekly **NEWS & NOTES** needs to be submitted to the office by **NOON** on **WEDNESDAY** of each week.

Any information you'd like put into the **CLARION** is due to the office by **NOON** on the **15th** of every month.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

2023 EDITION



CRAFTY CREW

Enjoy some relaxing fellowship time **every Thursday** from **4-8 pm**. We have people who scrapbook, crochet, embroider, make ornaments, and other various crafty goodness. Come check us out!



CHURCH BUS

We offer rides to our Sunday services in the church van. The van does **NOT** have wheelchair access so riders will need to be able to get in and out with a hand from the driver. We are looking for drivers to help with this ministry as well. If you could help even one or two Sundays a year it would be greatly appreciated!

If you are interested call or text Ted Reinker at (409) 750-9633.



PINOCHLE

Friday, January 13th will be our next date for playing cards. Hopefully you have your calendar marked and will be ready to help set up at 6:00 pm and get cards in your hand for play at 6:30. Don't forget to bring a little something to share for a snack. Looking forward to seeing everyone and perhaps a few new faces!

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - ROGERS



Parents' Day Out

Faith-based education and care for children 0-5

Emergent play-based curriculum

Fun & engaging Biblical lessons

Experienced teaching staff

Art experiences

Songs & stories

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9 am - 2 pm

\$60 per week

For more information:

holytrin.org/pdo

pdo@holytrin.org





The Purpose of Epiphany

*On Epiphany, we celebrate the day when men,
made wise for salvation through the Word, met their righteousness.*

The Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas, or the Gentile Christmas as many have called it, is a festival rich in meaning. Many of our Christmas celebrations actually sprung from this day. We light Christmas lights and put stars on trees as a reminder of the light of the star that the Magi followed. We also exchange gifts, a reminder that the Magi brought gifts to Christ, their King, who Himself was the greatest gift of all, God the Father's gift to mankind. This is a day and season to mark well, worthy of its adorning customs, as Christ is revealed as God and Man for us and for all.

On Epiphany, or January 6th of our calendar year, we celebrate the day when men, made wise for salvation through the Word, met their righteousness, even as we meet Him still today, wrapped in the Scriptures. He is Jesus, He who saves. This was the whole reason for the Scriptures. This was where all the prophecies were meant to ultimately lead. This was why the Jewish people were set apart, as from their line the Savior of the nations would come. Jesus was the whole point. The recent commemoration of Jesus name on January 1st reminds us of this, that His very name means Savior.

His own, who should have known the prophecies the best and recognized Him first, did not bother greeting Him. In fact, some acted against Him. As those who have been baptized and instructed, we do well to take the warning. What a commentary it is when others who have never known the Lord before come to Him with a greater depth than we do, rejoicing in the freedom of the Gospel as we pine for the onions of Egypt and begrudge them their joy. Or, even more, put a religious veneer on this begrudging. These men had missed Christmas, but Christmas was still for them. And it's still for all, whether or not they've been around before.

He was revealed by a star, a light in the sky, from which we get the custom of Christmas lights and stars on trees as I mentioned earlier. He is the light of the world, and the heavens, from which He came to rescue those on earth, proclaim His birth. And this light He shines is not primarily a light to expose, to shame and indict, but a light that guides our way to salvation, because He is the Way.

These men, the visiting Magi, came from the East. They were not Jews, but Gentiles. Christ has come to save all. No one should think they are beyond His reach or grace. God wants none to be lost, but all to come to a knowledge of His Son, His mercy. We should never hesitate to assume this is true for others, or of ourselves. There is no Christian type. There are sinners who need saving, among whom we are chief. We are not sinners without a Savior nor without hope.

These men bring gifts. This infant Child is also a King, worthy of their best, and so they bring Him precious presents. They bring myrrh and burial ointment, for Him who will die for their sins. They bring gold for the King of the Universe, tiny and helpless though He appeared. They bring frankincense for the greatest of the prophets, the Prophet from among the Jews foretold by Moses, whose prayers, like incense, arise before the heavenly Father and intercede for us. So also, we do well to bring our Lord gifts worthy of His person and work. Even better, He brings them from us, indeed, turns us into them, making us His living sacrifices imbued with worship in even our most mundane vocations, our daily life.

(continued on page 6)

Notice also, they were not disturbed by His humble circumstances. They received Him as He chose to come to them, as a Jewish infant in the little town of Bethlehem. They might have pictured God differently in the past, and they might have expected something quite different from what they found, but when they encountered Christ, even if it was with Him lying in a manger and wrapped in swaddling cloths, they rejoiced and welcomed Him. We are called to do the same, to receive Him as He comes, ever so simply, in Word and Sacrament, because He comes for our benefit, for the increase of our faith, and for our life everlasting. And would we really rather He come another way? No, He would be a terror, a holy terror. And so He comes in flesh to draw us to Himself, hiding His divinity and knowing our humanity full well.

The recent commemoration of Jesus name on January 1st reminds us of this, that His very name means Savior. At Epiphany, we celebrate that this Jesus is for everyone, even me, even you, whether or not we had a "good" Christmas, whether or not we've been "good" Christians or Christians at all. A good Christian, after all, is one who trusts this Child ,who receives this gift, who sees his or her true identity in this Jewish Child who still draws people from every edge and corner of the earth to Himself, not for Himself, but because He is for them.



ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Wade Johnston has degrees from Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Central Michigan University, and Erasmus University Rotterdam. He serves as Assistant Professor of Theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and served for ten years in parish ministry in Saginaw, Michigan. He is one of the hosts of the 1517 Podcast, "Let the Bird Fly," and has authored several books including, "A Path Strewn with Sinners" and "An Uncompromising Gospel."

Johnston, W. (2019) *The purpose of Epiphany, 1517*. Available at: <https://www.1517.org/articles/the-purpose-of-epiphany> (Accessed: December 26, 2022).

KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



What is “The Epiphany of Our Lord”?

The word “epiphany” (pronounced ee-PIF-uh-nee) comes from the Greek word meaning “manifestation.” Jesus was made known to all people simply by being born. If we had been alive back then, we could have actually reached out and touched Jesus! He was real, and the evidence was in His birth!

Why do we celebrate Epiphany?

Epiphany is the third part of the Christmas season. During this special season in the Church Year, we remember the visit of the Wise Men. Traditionally, this visit is celebrated on Jan. 6.

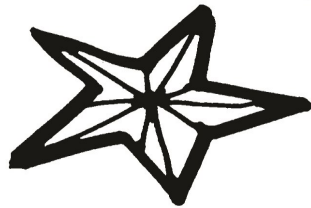
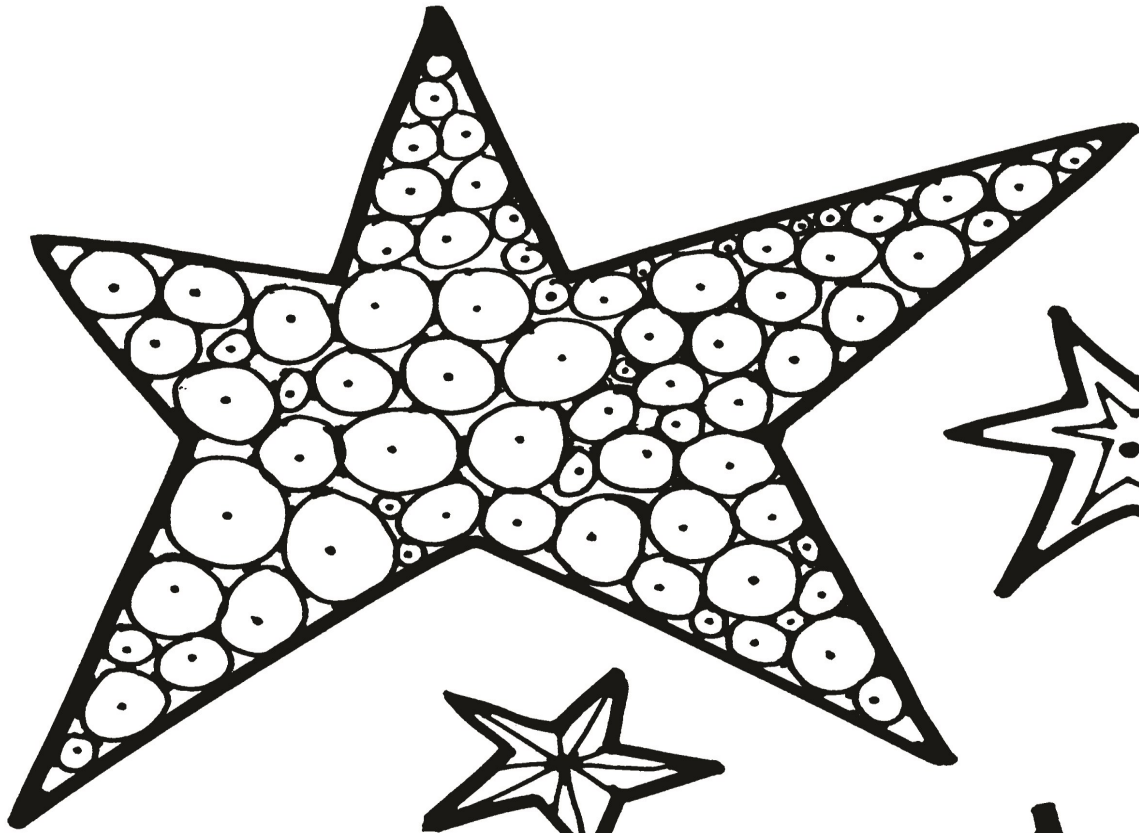


Epiphany also brings to mind many other important events in Jesus’ life. For example, we remember Jesus’ Baptism, the star that guided the Wise Men, and most importantly, His birth! Wow! There sure is a lot happening after Christmas!

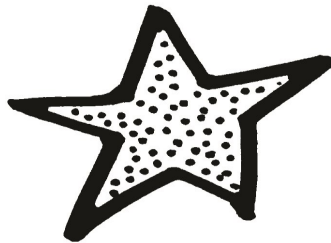
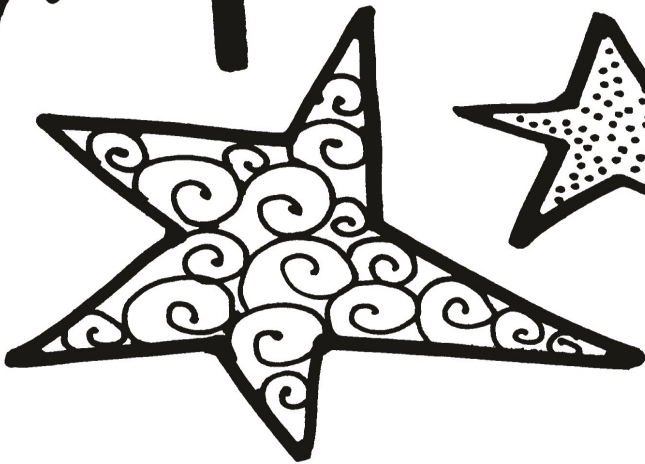
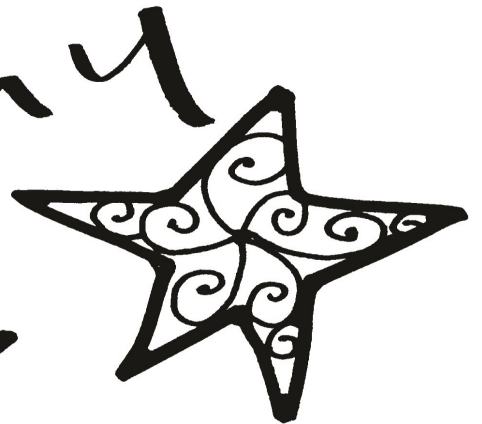


Parents: “God in flesh made manifest” is a hard statement for children to understand. Be sure to remind them that Jesus is real, alive and once walked on the earth for all to see. When Holy Communion is offered, be sure to let your children attend with you. Instruct them that this is where Christ manifests and gives His true body and blood for us.





Epiphany



My eyes have seen your
salvation which you have
prepared for all people

FEED MY SHEEP

November 2022

Food Pantry Statistics

Total Households = 28 (76 people total)

Adults (18-60) = 39

Children (0-17) = 22

Senior Citizens (61+) = 15

Other (*Unknown*) = 0



PASTOR'S CARE FUND

November 2022

These disbursements are from money designated for the Pastor's Care Fund. Your contributions bring a tremendous relief to your neighbors who are in difficult circumstances.

Total Households = 21

Bibles = 2

Utility Help = 3

Rent/Mortgage = 1

Motel = 12

Transportation = 0

Clothing = 14

Other = 0





January

Birthdays

3 Kim Boyd	12 Craig Hanson	20 Eric Kerr
5 Terri Blake	Brandon L'Hommedieu	Bill Neumann
Gail Brown	Carol Wahl	21 Rex Mayer
Mary Grayson	13 Betty Brokaw	Andrea Speer
6 Christy Lehenbauer	Rhonda Snider	22 Rev. Lynn Spencer
7 Becky Klaus	14 Don Bracht	23 Sarah Blaske
Ken Rader	15 Bonnie Gust	25 John Augustine
8 Paul Heilman	16 Tom Bach	28 Peggy Ives
11 Brandy Brown	17 Katy Dickerson Warlow	28 Elaine Lauderville
Phil Garling	Fred Lewis	29 GD "Jerry" Ball
Nolan Kerr	18 LeAnn Girshner	31 Lisa Nelson

Anniversaries

1 Justin & Lesley McCarver	6 Rev. Lynn & Donna Spencer
4 Jim & Diane Williams	26 Dean & Nancy Eisma



SERVING IN JANUARY 2023



**January 1
(CHRISTMAS 1)**

**January 8
(BAPTISM OF
OUR LORD)**

**January 15
(EPIPHANY 2)**

**January 22
(EPIPHANY 3)**

**January 29
(EPIPHANY 4)**

READERS

8:00 AM	--	ELAINE LAUNDERVILLE	SABRINA ISBELL	JOHN AUGUSTINE	MARY FREVERT
10:45 AM	JOHN JENKINS	PAM PICKETT	JEANNE MEYER	WALT HEYNE	ELLIE GRIFFIN

GREETERS

8:00 AM	--	VERN SCHMIEGELOW & ELAINE LAUNDERVILLE	JUDY BANKHEAD & BETH KIKOEN	SAM & KATHY WELBORN	MIKE & LISA NELSON
10:45 AM	RAY ESCHENBURG & KAREN LAUNDERVILLE	SKIP & TONI SHANE	BILL & JEAN GREGESICH	SHARON DAVIS & KATHY LAVENDER	PEGGY JONES & MAXINE REIHMAN

MEDIA

8:00 AM	--	BETH KIKOEN	DAVID HEINTZ	JENA EISMA	JOHN JENKINS
10:45 AM	DONNA WINTERS	ZACHARY GUST	LEVI WRIGHT	JEAN GREGESICH	ZACHARY GUST

STREAMING

MAC MACGOWAN	OWEN WINTERS	MAC MACGOWAN	OWEN WINTERS	MAC MACGOWAN
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LEAD COUNTERS

FRED & SHIRLEY LEWIS	FRED & SHIRLEY LEWIS	FRED & SHIRLEY LEWIS	FRED & SHIRLEY LEWIS	BILL & JEAN GREGESICH
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LAWN CARE

ALTAR GUILD ELDERS

MARY FREVERT & MARY MAYER
8:00 AM – DAVE FERGUSON
10:45 AM – MATT BOLTE



USHERS

8:00 AM – TEAM B
(JAMES SIJ, RAY ESCHENBURG, BRUCE PILCHER, JOHN AUGUSTINE, STEVE MOELLER)
10:45 AM – TEAM D
(JIM WILLIAMS, DON BRACHT, BOB BAUER, PHIL GARLING, CHRIS PLAISANCE, GENE KIESEL)



JANUARY 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 CHRISTMAS 1 (FEED MY SHEEP) 10 AM-COMMUNION 	2 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	3 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6:30 PM—ELDERS	4 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM-CONFIRMATION	5 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM-CRAFTY CREW	6 EPIPHANY 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 	7
8 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 8 AM-WORSHIP 9:30 AM-EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM-WORSHIP	9 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	10 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6:30 PM—COUNCIL	11 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM-CONFIRMATION	12 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM-CRAFTY CREW	13 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6 PM—CARDS	14
15 EPIPHANY 2 8 AM-COMMUNION 9:30 AM-EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM-COMMUNION 12 PM-CLARION DUE	16 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	17 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	18 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM -CONFIRMATION	19 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM-CRAFTY CREW	20 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	21
22 EPIPHANY 3 8 AM-WORSHIP 9:30 AM-EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM-WORSHIP	23 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	24 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	25 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 12 PM—NEWS & NOTES DUE 5:30 PM-CONFIRMATION	26 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 4 PM-CRAFTY CREW	27 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	28
29 EPIPHANY 4 8 AM-WORSHIP 9:30 AM-EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM-WORSHIP	30 PASTOR'S DAY OFF	31 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY				