



The AGAPE NEWS (#15)

THE SEASON OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD, 2021

A BI-WEEKLY "BLOG-LIKE" NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH



ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH - CALGARY AB – January 12, 2021

Hello dear SMLC Family and friends!

I sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you well and healthy: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy!

This is our second newsletter in 2021. For several reasons, I have decided to send out the newsletter every two weeks now, instead of weekly. Next one should come out around January 25th.

As you know, we are in the holy season of Epiphany. During the Epiphany, we worship Jesus, who has given all mankind access to God through Himself. Matthew 2:1-12; Matthew 3:13-17; John 2:1-11.

The Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6) marks the celebration of the visit of the Magi. Epiphany may include as many as nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter. This year we have 6 Sundays in this season. Epiphany is marked at its beginning and at its end by two important feasts of Christ: Christmas and Easter.

Allow me to share with you some Epiphany practices and traditions. Like Christmas, the Epiphany of Our Lord, the Baptism of Our Lord, and the Transfiguration of Our Lord are feast days of Jesus. The colour for feast days is white. The colour of divinity, purity, and joy. The Sundays after the Epiphany focus on the growth of Jesus' ministry, and in many churches the colour green is used to

symbolize that growth. Our Board of Elders has decided with the Altar Guild, to leave the white paraments (the linens on the altar, pulpit and the banners) for the whole season of Epiphany because the season also has to do with light: the manifestations of God to all nations in Christ, the Light of the world.

And speaking of paraments, you may have noticed that the white paraments look quite new. And indeed, they are! Thank you, Walter, for your generous donation!

On the first Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church celebrates the Baptism of Our Lord. The Father had sent Jesus to bear the sins of the world. So, Jesus steps down into baptismal waters so that He can soak up the sins of the world: He is baptized into our sins so that our Baptism might be into His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. All this is good news, it's GOSPEL (from the Greek, *euangelion*, meaning exactly "good news"). We and all Christians have good news to tell the world that is immersed in darkness and bad news: that, no matter in which circumstances we find ourselves, God is always with us and gives us strength.

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PASTOR'S PERSONAL NOTE ABOUT THE PANDEMIC:

Everybody has a strong opinion on everything these days. The world seems to be more and more divided, despite all efforts for globalization. Even among Christians, the debates are polarized. Pastors of our own synod are divided on the topic.

Let us consider an episode in the book of Genesis. In the flood, God told Noah to build the ark and take shelter and self-isolate because something big (a global disaster) was coming. People around him (the "flood-deniers") were mocking and probably calling "crazy" old Noah's warnings as "fake news". Until sudden destruction and death came upon them.

We at SMLC continue to be cautious and try to follow the protocols to protect each other. As far as I know, we had **only one confirmed case** of an active member that tested positive recently. Please be at ease! I have talked to this person whose identity we will preserve. This member self-isolated for three weeks, so he hasn't been in our church ever since and is now completely

recovered. We thank God for the fact that we are still able to come to church for worship and some fellowship, even when all looks different. By promoting this as best as we can, we try to keep God's three first Commandments.

Please note:

1 - If you have any symptoms, if you feel unwell, please **get tested immediately** and **stay home**: refrain from coming for the worship services. You may watch us from home (our website or YouTube) until you recover fully.

2 - **If you test positive for Covid-19, you MUST call us as soon as possible, especially if you have attended church.** Your church needs to know, we're all liable and we need to be responsible. You may call either the office, or our chairman Peter Graumann or myself, your pastor. We will never disclose your name.

And remember: Despite of anything, we should always trust God's promises that HE IS WITH US in every situation and a stronghold in every trouble. And "trouble" in all around us! Please continue to pray for our church, our families and for the world.

And now...enjoy your reading!

A SMALL DOSE OF GOD'S WORD FOR YOU TODAY:

(From the Psalm reading for the Second Sunday after Epiphany) **PSALM 139: 1, 2**
 "O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar".

IN GERMAN:

„HERR, Du erforschest mich und kennest mich. Ich sitze oder stehe auf, so weißt du es; du verstehst meine Gedanken von ferne“.

NEWS FROM SMLC.

1 – ATTENDANCE ON THE LAST IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICES (Jan 10)

German: 26 / English: 37

2 – THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR: THE LORD’S SUPPER - Remember, we are having the Holy Communion this coming Sunday, January 17. If you are a confirmed member and wish to take the sacrament, please bring a little plate and cup to church.

3 – THANK YOU: I want to thank the Salter family (Dana, Lori and Russel) for letting us borrow the Wise Men figures that are in the sanctuary to represent the Epiphany season. A beautiful touch for our reflection on “Jesus for all nations”.

4 - THANK YOU # 2: Today I want to thank BERND HALWAS. He has been an active reader at the German services. Bernd has also read the sermon whenever we have a reading service, like the one on last January 3. In the past, Bernd has also served the congregation as the treasurer for a period of time.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy". Philippians 1: 3 & 4

5 – BIBLE STUDIES: We continue to offer online bible study on Zoom every Wednesday (except when there's a fifth Wednesday), at 7 p.m. Elizabeth Schieman is leading the study on the gospels ("Life and Times of Jesus") every first and third Wednesday. I am leading the study "who are we, Lutherans?". Call our office if you need the login info.

6 – BIBLY STUDY FOR YOUTH: Elizabeth is also offering online bible study for our youth, every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. Note: There's **movie night every second Tuesday at 7 p.m.** All the other Tuesdays, the bible study starts at 7:30 p.m. Please call Elizabeth if you are interested in those. Cell: 1 (306) 715 1191

7 – ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL: Mrs. Koreen is gathering our kids for a virtual Sunday School, but it's actually during the week, not Sundays! If you wish your child or grandchild to participate in a fun and educational activity while in a Christian environment, please contact us to get the login info.

8 – ONLINE AFTERNOON COFFEE HOUR: I am inviting all members for our second edition of the “online afternoon coffee hour” on January 24, at 3 p.m. It is a one-hour CASUAL social gathering on “Zoom”. You can have a coffee or tea, be in your PJ's and just sit back and relax as we check on each other, do some visiting and

practice some Christian fellowship. No agenda and minutes taking! We may even have fun playing some little game together. You will receive the login info prior to that Sunday. If you don't have access to internet, please call the office to get it. I hope we will be able to have a good time together, as we did last time! See you there!

9 – WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK AND NEXT WEEK?

Jan 12 (Tues): Online Youth Movie Night @ 7 p.m.

Jan 13 (Wed): Online Bible Study @ 7 p.m.

Jan 17 (Sun): Worship services @ regular times with the holy communion

Jan 19 (Tues): Online Youth Bible Study @ 7:30 p.m.

Jan 20 (Wed): Online Bible Study @ 7 p.m.

Jan 21 (Thurs): Online PPC meeting @ 7 p.m.

Jan 24 (Sun): Worship services (German at 9:30 a.m. / English at 11 a.m.)

Jan 24 (Sun): Online Coffee Hour (zoom) @ 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Names of the upcoming Sundays:

Jan 17: Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Jan 24: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

BIRTHDAYS (RECENT OR COMING UP)

Jan 11 – Paul Axel Heinz

Jan 13 – Elfriede Foidl

Jan 13 – Frieda Meiritz

Jan 15 – Bernd Halwas

Jan 16 – Timothy Becker

Jan 16 – Lucas Zeuch

Jan 21 – Tom Voortmann

Jan 24 – Henry Fink

NEW BIRTH (BAPTISM) ANNIVERSARIES:

Jan 12 – Kevin Navis

Jan 20 – Elsbeth Erdmann

Jan 22 – Anton Morela

If any name is missing, please let me know. God bless you all!

FEASTS, FESTIVALS and COMMEMORATIONS IN THE CHURCH YEAR THIS WEEK:

Jan 18 – The Confession of St. Peter

Jan 20 - Sarah

Jan 24 – St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Send us your prayer requests. We have a “prayer chain” where a group of people (the “prayer warriors”) pray for your needs. Your requests will be shared with Lorraine Duncan, from our board of evangelism, who will include them in the prayer chain. **Remember:** A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.

NOW IN GERMAN - UNSERE DEUTSCHE ECKE!

Wenn Sie diesen Newsletter am Computer lesen, können Sie hier unten klicken. Aus Jesaja 60, ein Text in der Zeit des Epiphanias: „Mache dich auf, werde Licht“. Geniessen Sie diese schoene Musik!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oIKRNVO4bwo>



And now, the “clean joke”:

An atheist complained to a Christian friend, “You Christians have special holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. Jews celebrate their national holidays, such as Passover and Yom Kippur. But we atheists have no recognized national holidays. It’s unfair discrimination.”

His friend replied, “Why don’t you celebrate April first?”

Thank you for taking your time to read my newsletter. If you enjoy reading it, let me know!

**In His service,
Rev. M. Zeuch**

On January 12, 2021 Anno Domini

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Visit our website: www.stmatthewlutherancalgary.com

Watch us on

