

January 2024 Newsletter

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From the Pastor's Desk

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolation he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. PSALM 46

A new year. A new beginning. How much does turning the calendar page matter? What does it change in our lives and our world?

It seems much of our modern angst is of degrees. The world has always been troubled: there have always been wars, crime, acts of extreme cruelty. There have always been natural disasters. There has always been illness, always political unrest, always poverty, always abuse.





What is new in our present age is the immediacy of everyone finding out, the depth of the coverage, the photos that lay bare all the atrocities. It becomes overwhelming and can easily render us powerless to do anything at all to alleviate suffering, to actually hear any single cry for help in the cacophony of all voices everywhere. All of that combined with the latest technology that kills, maims and destroys so much more powerfully than ever before. The Revolutionary War officer's order "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes," seems quaint and humane when compared to today's warfare involving destruction wrought by unmanned drones raining down destruction on targets unseen and enemies unacknowledged as human beings.

And then there is the great existential threat of climate change. It is no wonder humans across the globe are filled with angst and fear.

How do we respond, as people of God? What can we do to quiet the disquiet we are living in?

We have rich resources to remind us of our God who cares, who upholds, who comforts. Look at this Psalm: God is our present help. Not far off, not remote, but here in every time and place. Whatever the circumstances, God is in the thick of things. Is with us. Is our refuge.

How can we possibly live into that promise, that presence? In this New Year, let us begin by going back to basics. Be still and know. Know that God is God. God is exalted among all nations, in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us.

Be still, and know. There are many spiritual practices that are designed to tap into that stillness and knowledge, and help our head knowledge sink down to become heart knowledge, and from heart knowledge we can reach back out to the world to help carry the love of God into a broken world. If you are interested in exploring spiritual practices in this new year, I am open to leading and teaching some of them. Just let me know how I can help you be still, and know.

Blessings for 2024,

Pastor LaVonne

**Church Council
MEETING**

The next Church Council Meeting will be Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7pm via Zoom. Upload team reports or documents to the Council Google Drive (January 2024 folder) and send them to Martha Garner via e-mail. You may also e-mail them to Linda Stamps at luthern.epiphany@gmail.com for her to upload.

January 2024 Worship Services

Worship time is 9 am Sunday morning - all in-person worship services continue to be offered online [via Facebook Live](#) for those who are unable or unwilling to attend worship in person. Holy Communion is offered at all in-person worship services unless otherwise indicated.

Sunday Morning Worship Services

All Sunday worship services are held in person and online at 9 am at Collierville Presbyterian Church.

January 7, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Baptism of Our Lord

January, 14, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 21, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 28, 2024—Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

[Instructions for watching via Facebook Live](#)

Coffee Hour and Fellowship immediately following worship

January 7 & 21



Epiphany's Core Values — Faithfulness, Inclusion, Love

Our Guiding Principles

We accept and appreciate your presence.

We serve everyone.

We grow personally through the word of God.

We are God's hands, feet, and voice to serve our community.

We rejoice and share in the love of God.

Our Purpose — to welcome all, sharing God's promises and love through our actions.

Epiphany Financial Update

YTD tithing is now 2% below budget but overall income is <1% below budget. Meanwhile, Expenses were 3% under budget for the month and 5% under budget YTD.

	Nov-23			2023 YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Net	Actual	Budget	Net
Revenue	\$ 6,341	\$ 6,483	-\$ 142	\$ 80,454	\$ 80,733	-\$ 279
Expenses (incl. Loan)	\$ 7,895	\$ 8,101	-\$ 206	\$ 85,187	\$ 90,111	-\$ 4,924
Net	-\$ 1,554	-\$ 1,618	\$ 64	-\$ 4,734	-\$ 9,378	\$ 4,644

Donate

As always, you may mail your check to Epiphany (see address below) or give via ACH bank draft ([click here for instructions](#)).

We also accept tithes and offerings as well as payments to special funds (Property Fund, Food Pantry Fund, Hispanic Food Pantry - El Redentor) through PayPal. [Please visit our website](#) and click on the PayPal button at the top of the home page to donate. (You may have to refresh your website or delete cookies to use the button more than once.) You may also click on the PayPal logo above.

You may also mail checks to: Epiphany Lutheran Church. P.O. Box 1805, Collierville, TN 38027



Kroger Community Rewards

[Click here to register](#) with Kroger's Community Rewards program.

We are registered as Epiphany Lutheran Church, organization #39854.



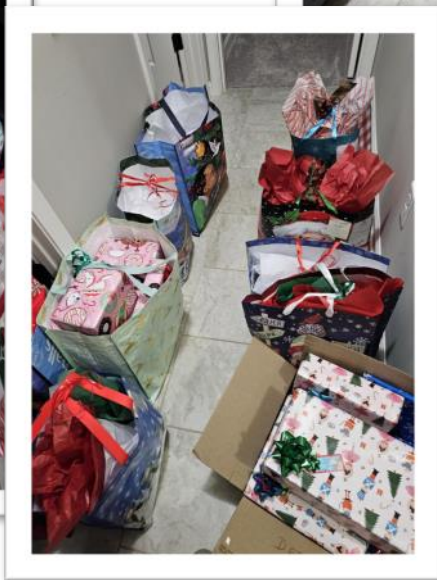
Celebrating Christmas



Fun was had by all at our Christmas dinner and gift exchange!



What a beautiful sight! The Christmas tree is decorated and ready for Advent.



Thanks to all that provided gifts for the Peace Angel Tree!

Social Ministries/Outreach



We will continue collecting change on the first Sunday of every month in 2024 to benefit the **Alpha Omega Veterans Association**. Please help us support this worthy organization - **our next collection is Sunday, January 7. Thanks for your support!**

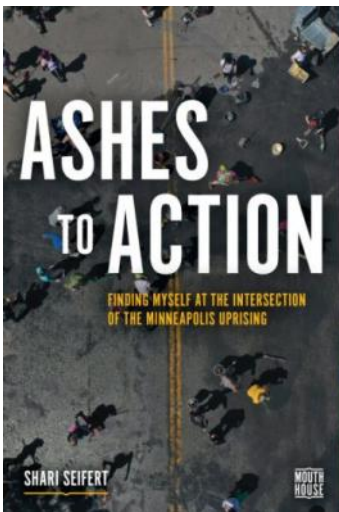


SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Synod News

Tropical Storm Pilar has done significant damage to rural Guatemala and has impacted many families in our companion church [ILAG] Iglesia Luterana Augustina Guatemala. According to Pastora Karen Castillo, President of the ILAG, 289 families have lost their crops in the storm and are looking at experiencing food deprivation without needed corn and seed to replant their crops again. Click on the link below to give now. Enter an amount on the line designated "Guatemala Disaster Response."

[Give Now](#)

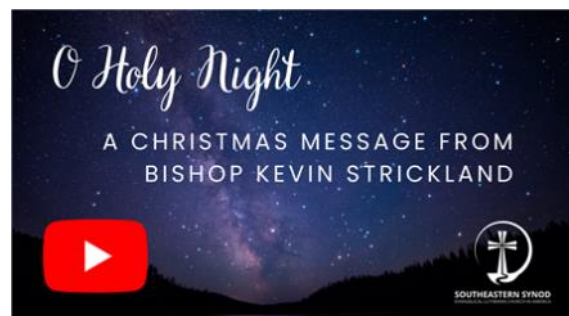


Living Lutheran: "A church at the epicenter of an uprising" (an interview with activist Shari Seifert)

In the days following George Floyd's murder, the eyes of the world were on the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. The corner where Floyd was killed by police in May 2020 became the epicenter of a passionate local uprising around racial justice, leading to the largest protest movement in American history. One block away from the corner now known as George Floyd Square stood Calvary Lutheran Church, where Shari Seifert, president of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, is a member. [Click here to read the interview.](#) with Shari Seifert, author of *Ashes to Action: Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising*.

Christmas may have passed but you can still listen to a wonderful message from Bishop Kevin Strickland. In a weary world, how can we rejoice?

Click on the image to go straight to the video.





Join Us In Germany!

OCTOBER 10 - 19, 2024

- Our Tour Highlights -

- Wittenberg (Sunday worship at the Castle Church)
- Erfurt (overnight stays in the Augustinian monastery where Luther lived)
- Wartburg Castle
- Leipzig
- Seiffen ('toytown' in the Ore Mountains)
- Dresden
- Berlin...and much more!

Included:

- Airport pickup
- Motorcoach transportation
- Tour guide
- Hotel rooms (single, double & triple rates are available)
- Entry fees
- Daily breakfasts and daily 3-course dinners

**Round trip airfare to/from Berlin is not included.

Private Tour Hosted By:
European Castles Tours
europeancastlestours.com

**Itinerary and booking info on
our Facebook group page:
Luther Land Tour 2024**

Have you dreamed of walking where Luther walked and sleeping where Luther slept? You can do just that when you join us for our October 2024 tour of Eastern Germany! The tour will visit important Luther and Lutheran hot spots, including Wittenberg, Erfurt, Wartburg Castle, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin. Some "off the beaten tour path" sites include the charming mountain town of Seiffen. It was here that the first nutcracker was created, and where you will find family-owned businesses that have created wooden Christmas products for generations. You will be able to visit workshops and still have plenty of time for shopping! [Click here for a complete itinerary](#) on the Facebook page for Luther Land Tour 2024.



You're invited to join us for the 2024

**The Bishop's Commemorative
Martin Luther King, Jr. Worship Service**

"Beloved Community"

Sunday, January 14th at 4 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church - Lilburn, GA

1826 Killian Hill Road SW Lilburn, GA 30047



SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA





YOU ARE INVITED

to a cluster wide, zoom Bible study.

Every other Monday, beginning January 8th.

6:00pm—7:00pm

You don't need to be a member of a WELCA unit
to participate.

Topic: WELCA Cluster 8 Bible Study

Time: Jan 8, 2024 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Jan 8, 2024 06:00 PM

Jan 22, 2024 06:00 PM

Feb 5, 2024 06:00 PM

Feb 19, 2024 06:00 PM

Mar 4, 2024 06:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81409695259?pwd=AJVdapv05WQ1HROBafbFjaAKmYxH6S.1>

Meeting ID: 814 0969 5259

Passcode: welca

[Click here to join Zoom meeting.](#)

Investing in Epiphany Lutheran Church

If You Are Over 72

As many of you know, if you have an IRA investment account and you are over 72 you are required to take a minimum distribution from that account each year. What you might not be aware of is that you can make contributions to any charitable organization from this distribution and those contributions are tax exempt. It is excellent way to make a contribution to Epiphany. You should check with your investment advisor and find out how you can take advantage of this benefit.

At Any Age

If you have an investment portfolio with significant gains, ask your financial advisor about setting up a charitable donor-advised fund. You can transfer stock, mutual funds, etc. directly to it without paying capital gains and that transfer counts as a charitable contribution for your itemized deductions. Many investment companies sponsor donor-advised charitable funds (e.g., Fidelity, Schwab, Vanguard); some banks (such as Bank of America) offer them as well. You can then manage this donor-advised fund to donate to charities (including Epiphany) whenever you want.

Thank you to everyone at Epiphany Lutheran Church for the generous Christmas gift. I feel so blessed to work for such an amazing church.

Many Blessings,

Linda Stamps



[Click here](#) to find out what's happening at your library!



Collierville
BURCH
LIBRARY



Town of
Collierville
TENNESSEE

[Click here](#) to find out what's happening in your town!

January 2024 Calendar of Events

(Please [check our calendar online](#) for the most up-to-date information)

	<i>Pastor LaVonne's Office Hours</i>	Pastor LaVonne holds office hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays - please e-mail her to make an appointment.
Sun 1/7	9 am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Baptism of Our Lord Worship Service w/ Holy Communion Coffee Hour & Fellowship
Wed 1/10	7 pm - Via Zoom	Church Council Meeting Join here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85341174437
Sun 1/14	9am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Second Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service w/ Holy Communion
Sun 1/21	9 am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Third Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service w/ Holy Communion Coffee Hour & Fellowship
Sun 1/28	9 am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service w/ Holy Communion

January 2024 Prayers

Every month, the ELCA provides its Prayer Ventures for member congregations. The link to the monthly prayers can always be found on our website on the [Christian Education page](#), along with an ELCA Daily Bible Reading and Luther Seminary's God Pause Daily Devotion. [Here is the link for this month's prayers.](#)

You may also access our Epiphany Lutheran Church prayer list [here](#). If you would like to add someone to the prayer list, [please email Linda Stamps](#).



Happiest of Birthdays and God's Blessings!

Vicki Scherf	January 14
Dick Wieland	January 19
Beth Schnitkey	January 23
Praharsh Lankapalli	January 30



Have we missed **your** birthday? [Please send the month/day to Linda Stamps \(lutheran.epiphany@gmail.com\)](#) so you can be included!

January 2024 Worship Servants

Worship servants still needed for Sundays - please consider volunteering!

Want to know more about being a worship servant? [You can review the duties and guidelines here.](#)



Worship Servant SignUp Genius

[2024 SignUp](#)

If you need assistance, [email Linda Stamps](#) - she will be happy to help you sign up if you have any issues!

[View current prayers](#)

Please send your [prayer requests to Linda Stamps](#). You may also [submit a prayer request online here](#).

Thank You!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Epiphany Lutheran Church

Worship Location

Collierville Presbyterian Church (USA)

202 W. Poplar Avenue

Collierville, TN 38017

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1805

Collierville, TN 38027

Rev. LaVonne Johnson

Email

Website

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

pastor@epiphanylu.org

info@epiphanylu.org

www.epiphanylu.org

www.facebook.com/EpiphanyLutheran

www.twitter.com/epiphanyville

<https://www.instagram.com/epiphanylutherancollierville>