



BULLETIN for EPIPHANY, 2022

a ministry of The Lutheran Church – International and of the World Lutheran Parish

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the family of the Lutheran Church-International,

The Christian Church guides us throughout the year with daily and weekly Holy Scripture readings that help us to understand how to live as Christian disciples. This liturgical time is given to us by the Church as a period in which Christ's nature as the Messiah is shown to all peoples in all ages. We rejoice that the Son of God is given to us as a Savior. We read of His birth in Bethlehem, His acknowledgement by scholars from the East, His presentation in the Temple in Jerusalem and His first activities as a young preacher, and the rebuke of people in His home town of Nazareth. We are led by Holy Scriptures to know more about Jesus' ministry that brings grace and salvation to us.

Using this opportunity to reinvigorate our study of Scripture, we in the LC-I can reflect and rededicate ourselves to our service in faith as we understand Christ as the Messiah and as we Journey with Him to Calvary. We can renew our commitment to our faith and congregational life as we again walk with Jesus on His path to the cross. The blessing of faithful Bible study will be poured out upon us.

The LC-I has a significant history of service to the Universal Church. Maintaining our continued and steadfast identity as an evangelical catholic church body can bring healing to this broken and suffering world. We continue to have exceptional opportunities for service in the LC-I, and we need more workers in the vineyard to bring blessing to the entire Christian community. The need is especially important for assistance with our media -related ministries through the World Lutheran Parish and other means of outreach.

If you feel that you can contribute to this or any other aspect of ministry, please contact me, the LC-I Archbishop, at Archbishop@LutheranChurchInternational.org.

May God bless and keep you and all of us in His grace and care! ++*Robert*

May these selections from the Holy Bible be a light on your path during the coming weeks. (Revised Common Lectionary)

- **Sunday, February 20, 2022:** [Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany](#)
- **Monday, February 21, 2022:** [Psalm 38; Genesis 33:1-17; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#)
- **Tuesday, February 22, 2022:** [Psalm 38; 1 Samuel 24:1-22; 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 27-33](#)
- **Wednesday, February 23, 2022:** [Psalm 38; Leviticus 5:1-13; Luke 17:1-4](#)
- **Thursday, February 24, 2022:** [Psalm 99; Deuteronomy 9:1-5; Acts 3:11-16](#)
- **Friday, February 25, 2022:** [Psalm 99; Deuteronomy 9:6-14; Acts 10:1-8](#)
- **Saturday, February 26, 2022:** [Psalm 99; Deuteronomy 9:15-24; Luke 10:21-24](#)
- **Sunday, February 27, 2022:** [Transfiguration Sunday](#)
- **Monday, February 28, 2022:** [Psalm 35:11-28; Exodus 35:1-29; Acts 10:9-23a](#)
- **Tuesday, March 1, 2022:** [Psalm 35:11-28; Ezekiel 1:1; 2:1; Acts 10:23b-33](#)
- **Wednesday, March 2, 2022:** [Ash Wednesday](#)
- **Thursday, March 3, 2022:** [Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Exodus 5:10-23; Acts 7:30-34](#)
- **Friday, March 4, 2022:** [Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Exodus 6:1-13; Acts 7:35-42](#)
- **Saturday, March 5, 2022:** [Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 12:27-36](#)
- **Sunday, March 6, 2022:** [First Sunday in Lent](#)
- **Monday, March 7, 2022:** [Psalm 17; 1 Chronicles 21:1-17; 1 John 2:1-6](#)
- **Tuesday, March 8, 2022:** [Psalm 17; Zechariah 3:1-10; 2 Peter 2:4-21](#)
- **Wednesday, March 9, 2022:** [Psalm 17; Job 1:1-22; Luke 21:34-22:6](#)
- **Thursday, March 10, 2022:** [Psalm 27; Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18; Philippians 3:2-12](#)
- **Friday, March 11, 2022:** [Psalm 27; Genesis 14:17-24; Philippians 3:17-20](#)
- **Saturday, March 12, 2022:** [Psalm 27; Psalm 118:26-29; Matthew 23:37-39](#)
- **Sunday, March 13, 2022:** [Second Sunday in Lent](#)
- **Monday, March 14, 2022:** [Psalm 105:1-42; Exodus 33:1-6; Romans 4:1-12](#)
- **Tuesday, March 15, 2022:** [Psalm 105:1-42; Numbers 14:10b-24; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#)
- **Wednesday, March 16, 2022:** [Psalm 105:1-42; 2 Chronicles 20:1-22; Luke 13:22-31](#)
- **Thursday, March 17, 2022:** [Psalm 63:1-8; Daniel 3:19-30; Revelation 2:8-11](#)
- **Friday, March 18, 2022:** [Psalm 63:1-8; Daniel 12:1-4; Revelation 3:1-6](#)
- **Saturday, March 19, 2022:** [Psalm 63:1-8; Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 6:43-45](#)





Lutheran Church – International: Synod News!

As our nations and people throughout the world adapt to a “new normal” while COVID-19 continues to ravage many people in many areas, the work of the church goes on. The Constitution of the Lutheran Church – International establishes Annual Synods, but circumstances of the ongoing pandemic have made it unwise to schedule an Annual Synod in 2020 and in 2021. For that reason, the Executive Board plans that the Annual Synod XXIII will be held

beginning on Tuesday, July 26, 2022 in Lyons NY.

One of the actions to be taken at the 2022 Annual Synod will be the elections of three officers (Vice-President for an annual term, Treasurer for a partial term of two years, and Secretary for a term of four years) and two representatives (Lay and Clergy each for three-year terms) to the Executive Board, including the election of a new Secretary for a four-year term. In addition, some changes to the Constitution will be presented for ratification.

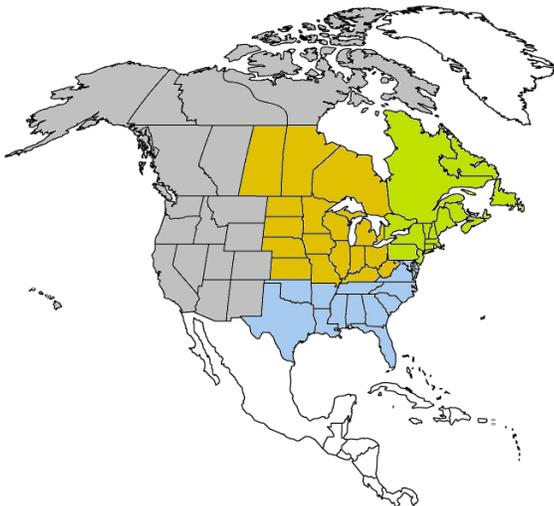
Your input is important during this time of preparation for the Synod. Ideas for consideration and the names of candidates for offices can be submitted to the Archbishop’s office or to any member of the Executive Board.

Housing arrangements are not yet completed. A dinner will be arranged for pastors, deacons and delegates arriving on Monday, July 25. More details will be provided later. The Executive Board will meet following the dinner.

The LC-I Executive Board will meet by Zoom on March 4, 2022 to discuss more details of the Annual Synod. Contact the Archbishop if you want to add other items for consideration.

Where YOUR help is needed:

✚ If you feel called to help with the **INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH of the LC-I**, the Archbishop would like to talk with you. We especially need “workers in the vineyard” of **Hispanic / Latino/Latina / Latinx, Asian and African ministries.**



✚ We are planning a new **ON-LINE JOURNAL for the World Lutheran Parish.** If you are interested in helping, please contact Archbishop Hotes at 217-691-3090 or write to Bulletin.LCI@gmail.com.

✚ The position of **LC-I SECRETARY** (a four-year elected term) expires in 2022 and a new Secretary will be elected. If you are interested in serving, please contact Archbishop@LutheranChurchInternational.org.

✚ Help is always needed in establishing **NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITIES at home and abroad** and in **reinforcing EXISTING MISSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS.** If you live in the Sacramento or Los Angeles areas of California or in any other place of possible mission growth, please contact and of the LC-I bishops.

✚ **ORDAINED PASTORS, DEACONS and NON-ORDAINED PASTORAL ASSISTANTS** are needed.

✚ **THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST in Rosedale (Queens), NY** is seeking to issue a Call to a full-time Pastor. This dynamic and unique multi-ethnic congregation, presently served by an Interim Pastor, has a parochial school, diaconal staff and an active liturgical and music ministry.

- Contact Christ Church at ChristChurchRosedale@gmail.com
- or Archbishop Hotes at Archbishop@LutheranChurchInternational.org





Your \$ Contributions to the LC-I:

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – INTERNATIONAL ARE BOTH NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.

Did you know that your contributions and bequests to the Lutheran Church – International can be designated for specific purposes and needs? 100 % of your contribution goes where you designate! (Compare that to other charitable giving where only a percentage goes where designated because of administrative and fund-raising expenses. Some “charities” get only 10% after expenses!)

The Executive Board of the LC-I provides financial oversight so that funds designated are used precisely as designated. For example, your unspecified and general contributions go to the General Fund, and special intentions are fully funded as designated by your gifts. These fund intentions include:

- General Fund**
- India Assistance**
- Disaster Relief Fund**
- Mission Activity Fund**
- Bishops’ Fund**
- World Lutheran Parish**
- Endowment (for future growth in ministries)**
- Memorial Fund (for Pastoral Education and future designations)**



Please send all funds, payable to “The Lutheran Church – International” to
Treasurer, LC-I % Pastor William Wigmore
15 High Street, Lyons NY 14489
Treasurer@LutheranChurchInternational.org

For **EVERY** clergy member and community of faith:

DON'T FORGET 2022 DUES!

It is the personal responsibility of EVERY clergy member and community of faith to support the LC-I through *at least* the payment of annual dues. These funds are necessary to support our LC-I ministries which endorse, support and roster **you!** The dues are split with 90% to the General Fund and 10% to the Endowment Fund. If you are a clergy member or the treasurer of one of the LC-I parishes and have still not paid the 2021 dues, please do so as soon as possible. Dues for 2022 should be paid by January 1:

for Bishops, Pastors, Deacons: \$75; for Congregations: \$150.

Please send by check or electronic transfer, payable to “The Lutheran Church – International” at:
Treasurer, LC-I % Pastor William Wigmore
15 High Street, Lyons NY 14489
Treasurer@LutheranChurchInternational.org

NOTE:

If you are a clergy member or community of faith of the LC-I and are *financially unable* to contribute at least the nominal dues, please ask your diocesan bishop for a waiver for the current year. This is out of **pastoral concern** for you as an individual or community of faith, and assistance for you can be considered!

(Simply ignoring the dues could be misunderstood as disinterest in the LC-I.)

✚ If you know of anyone who is not current for 2021, please gently remind them.

DUES are DUE for 2022!





UNDERSTANDING AFRICA

by The Rev. Canon Les Martin

From ancient Ethiopia to the pyramids to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Africa has long captured the imagination of the West. The stories of missionaries, the vibrancy of worship we see, the stories of God's power made manifest, and the sheer numerical strength of the churches has meant that African Christianity has also captivated American Christians. But what do we really know beyond these often romantic impressions? As a missionary serving in Nigeria, I wanted to share this article to help us all better understand Africa: the continent, the churches, the challenges and the promise.

Understanding Africa- as the bumper sticker says, "It's a continent, not a country." Africa is a large enough land mass to contain the continental USA three times over. It is home to 54 sovereign nations and some 1.3 billion people. There are an estimated 2,000 languages spoken and some 3,000 tribes. Just reading the numbers doesn't make the impact it really should: Africa is vast, complex and diverse in a way that isn't always apparent to outsiders. It defies ready explanation or interpretation. Nonetheless, some generalities can be made:

‡ **Africa is young.** The median age is 19.7 years, meaning that over half the population is below this age. What does this mean? For example, by 2050, Nigeria (currently the world's 7th largest country) will be larger than the USA (currently the world's 3rd largest country) in terms of population. If demographics are destiny, Africa is the future.

‡ **Africa is poor.** For a variety of reasons- some of which follow- the image of Africa as poor is sadly true. Considered the poorest continent of Earth, one in three Africans (1 in 2 in sub-Saharan Africa) live below what is considered the poverty line. There is massive wealth in Africa as well, but it is wildly uneven in its distribution. Which brings us to our next point...

‡ **Africa is poorly governed, both in the public and private sectors.** This is a kinder way of saying that Africa is corrupt. Corruption is consistently pointed to as the main cause of African poverty, as well as a host of other issues: War, terrorism, kidnapping, infant mortality and disease can all in some way be at least partially attributed to the numerous failed states and lack of civil society institutions.



It's not all bad news. Poverty and disease have been on the decline in recent decades. The youth bring an energy to life here, and even with the very real disorganization, there is still a sense of possibility and optimism-against-the-odds. Perhaps surprisingly, Africa is a joyous place, more so than the much more prosperous West.

The African Church- Christianity has been in Africa at least since the ministry of Saint Mark. According to Ethiopian tradition, Christianity first came to the Aksum Empire in the fourth century A.D., making Ethiopian Orthodoxy - which so fascinated Martin Luther - some 1600 years old. It is the largest religion in sub-Saharan Africa, so it comes as no surprise that one can find most all of the traditions located here, including some churches started specifically in the African context.

African Christianity is BIG and young. More Christians - some 631 million, it is estimated - live in Africa than in any other continent. The demographic realities of Africa apply to the church as well: the average Christian here is most likely to be a female in her teens.

Lutheranism's heart is now in Africa. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the largest Lutheran body in the world, at some 10.4 million members, followed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, with 7.9 million souls. The Lutheran World Federation, the International Lutheran Council (Missouri Synod affiliated bodies) and other confessional churches and synods are represented throughout the continent. To get the idea, think of this: over 24 million Lutherans are African, whereas the homeland of Germany can only boast of 11 million - counting *all of those* who have had *any* contact with the state church.

A struggling church. Poverty and persecution are the daily challenges that much of the African church faces. Less well-known are the doctrinal issues. Influenced by the American Word-Faith and prosperity movements, as well as their own cultural worldviews, many African Christians espouse a form of faith that would at best be unrecognizable to many confessional Lutherans, and at worst succumbs to "health and wealth" teachings, moralism, legalism and other heretical tendencies. Tribalism also divides the body of Christ in much of the continent.





The African church comes of age. In spite of the challenges- and perhaps, paradoxically, *because* of the persecution- there is a real sense that the center of Christianity has moved to Africa. The faith of the people, the dynamism of the worship, the sense that the faith is actually true are all palpable here. New and powerful methods of evangelism, mission work, church-planting, and outreach to those of other religions are all worth paying attention to by the rest of us. In some ways, the Western church still very much needs to be the teacher to the African church. In other ways, we would do well to be the students.

Getting Involved With the African Church- the people of Israel both sojourned in and were delivered from Africa. Christ took refuge from Herod there. There is a sense that, in some way, the faith and this continent are deeply linked. Further, we are all linked in baptism as sister and brothers in Christ. So the desire to be more closely involved with the new center of Christianity makes sense. But how? From my years of experience, here are a few simple ideas I might suggest:

✚ **Pray.** Above all, let prayer for the African Christians be your priority. For both strength in the challenges they face, and for the demographically-induced leadership role they are beginning to take globally.



✚ **Be informed.** In the West, we are often guilty of living in our bubble. Educate yourself on the situation of our brothers and sisters in Africa, particularly as regards both persecution and state repression. Where appropriate, you may wish to urge your government officials to do more for suffering Christians here on the continent. If you are a history buff, try also learning about the great ancient churches of Ethiopia and Egypt, or about the more recent missionary works here.

✚ **Give.** The African churches need your help- but caution is in order, as indeed corruption is even in the church. Financial giving is best done through well-known Christian and secular aid agencies. If you wish to give of your time on short-term mission, it is best to go with an established group. If you wish to help in the much needed and urgent task of theological education and ministry preparation, gifts of money or materials are best given to well-established seminaries or those with whom you have a defined and trusted relationship. Sadly, scams and con men do exist in their numbers, so be wise, not only generous.

by The Rev. Canon Les Martin, Missionary in Nigeria

ED – LINKS:

Learn more: <https://www.aperianglobal.com/debunking-common-myths-stereotypes-africa/>

Map - page 3: <https://www.worldatlas.com/r/w960-q80/upload/d5/95/3f/southern-africa-map.png>

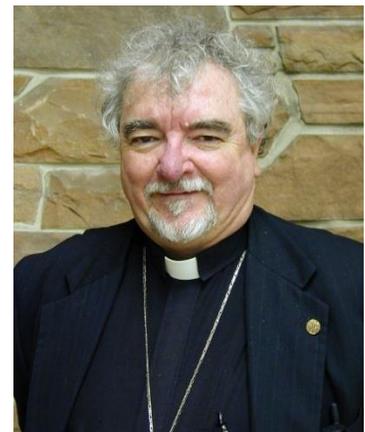
Map - page 4: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/styles/body_full_width_landscape/public/2018-09/africa-map3.jpg?itok=L4NRvBh9

Our condolences and prayers for the family and friends of

The Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Spears, D.D.

President of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod – USA (LMS-USA)

Dr. Spears, a graduate of Wittenberg University and of the Hamma School of Theology (Columbus OH), was ordained by the Lutheran Church in America in 1964. Following ordination, he served congregations in Ohio and New Jersey before serving as Pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Indianapolis IN. In addition to his pastoral ministry, he was a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Indiana. He took additional studies at the College of William and Mary, and was later recognized for his scholarly analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls and awarded the Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) degree by St. Timothy Lutheran Seminary (Chetek WI). Dr. Spears was a founding member of the LMS-USA in 1995, served as the first President of the Synod then served as President/Pastor of the Ministerium for most of its history. Under his leadership, the LMS-USA joined and participated in the International Lutheran Council. President Spears died on December 19, 2021 at the age of 83. He is survived by his wife, Sallie, a daughter Maureen Tullis, two sons, John and Josh, six grandchildren and three sisters.





Remembering All the Saints – with condolences and prayers for the family and friends of:

- ❖ Christopher Guida
- ❖ John Moss
- ❖ Samore Edwards
- ❖ Dr. Henry P. Shotwell IV
- ❖ Dal Beeman, one in a set of triplets, was killed in an automobile accident.
- ❖ Tana Rotola
- ❖ The Honorable Frank B. Priore
- ❖ Lt. Dominic Tafuri
- ❖ those who died over the past two years from COVID-19
- ❖ Law Enforcement officers who died in the line of duty (34 in January 2022 and a total of 538 during 2021)
- ❖ Emergency Medical and Fire Services and Military personnel who died in the line of their duty
- ❖ those who died as a result of disasters, war, violence, prejudice and injustice.



Prayers for one another -

- ❖ for the family and friends of Vice-President Alice Smith and her family following the deaths of her husband Kenneth Smith and also of her brother
- ❖ for Bishop Jeffrey Bischoff following the death of his father
- ❖ for The Rev. Del Baier following the death of his wife, Mardel
- ❖ for Pastor Arthur Sziemeister (at home following surgery)
- ❖ for Archbishop Robert Hotes
- ❖ for Deacon Norbert Mayer
- ❖ for Pastor Gene Fortune
- ❖ for Deaconess Christine Stephenson in the final steps toward earning her doctoral degree
- ❖ for Pr. James Townsend and the people of St. Paul's Sacramento and for the people of Holy Cross Mission
- ❖ for Pastor (Dean Emeritus) William Babbitt, host of Facebook's "Lutheran Coffee and Donuts"
- ❖ for our brothers and sisters in India under the care of Missionary Dean Prasad
- ❖ for LC-I World Lutheran Parish contacts in Africa, Australia, the Caribbean and Brazil
- ❖ for the ministries of Mission Developers Pastors William Gies, Bruce Hackman and Arthur Hebbeler
- ❖ for the ministries of the Lutheran Church-International and for those faithful laborers in the vineyard
- ❖ for the Church everywhere, especially in Jerusalem
- ❖ for caregivers of persons suffering from forms of dementia
- ❖ for all others who need our prayers and who have asked for our prayers
- ❖ for the victims of prejudice and injustice
- ❖ for peace in a time of increasing domestic and international tensions
- ❖ for the people of Ukraine as they resist the invasion of their country by Russian military troops
- ❖ for the people of Russia, Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Belarus and Israel
- ❖ for all who pray alongside family and friends who are living in the midst of fear and uncertainty
- ❖ for those who are experiencing hunger and the terrors of armed conflict in Ethiopia and Sudan.



Christmas in India (see more on page 8)





Words Do Still Matter!

by Bishop Richard W. Horn

Some would say that my head is stuck in a different, much earlier, former generation: a generation that knew the importance of words and remembered Biblical principles like the Second Commandment and the Name of God; or Luther's explanation of the Eighth Commandment: **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** We should fear and love God, so that we do not lie about, betray or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."

Nostalgia for the past does not help me. I am reminded that times change, not always for the better. In the senior community in which we live, large pins are being worn prominently; they have only one word on them in bold letters: RESPECT. Why were we, all "senior citizens" born before the 60s, being reminded to be respectful? Could we, or some of us, have been disrespectful? To whom? When dining conversation is expected to politely avoid politics and religion, where is the disrespect?

Apparently, the pins were not just to remind us but also to be a statement to those outside, in stores, restaurants, political gathering, even in churches and mosques and synagogues. I, for one, miss the days when we watched our words (and so did everyone else, their words and ours) so that we were respectful of differences in appearances, family practices, race, religion, cultures and ideas.

But today, the term "politically correct" is a pejorative term met with insults and derision. Conversations have become "profane," far from sacred! Christianity is ridiculed and mocked as weak and powerless. Truth is contorted. Vulgarities are shouted out by political leaders, requoted on newscasts; "coded" words or expressions are seldom misunderstood. Threats, rancor, and divisiveness tear away the fabric of civility, and, with it, society. Yelling "fire" in a crowded theater has consequences and accountability; yet too many have forgotten that **"WORDS MATTER!"** The power of life – and death – is in the tongue!

On January 6, 2021, we saw words used to inflame into violence. Once before, during the War of 1812, the British attacked the Capitol of the United States. Never again - until 2021. This attack was by American citizens, at best an "unruly mob," or at worst insurrectionists incited to violence, calling for the overthrow of an American Presidential election and the execution of the Vice-President, the second-highest official of the United States!

In the early morning hours of January 7, 2021, a lone preacher stood before elected Congressional leaders who had completed their sworn duty. Reflecting the words of Proverbs 18:21, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Barry C. Black, United States Senate Chaplain, spoke with a quiet reverence words we need to hear today:

"Lord of our lives and sovereign of our beloved nation, we deplore the desecration of the United States Capitol building, the shedding of innocent blood, the loss of life, and the quagmire of dysfunction that threaten our democracy.

These tragedies have reminded us that words matter and that the power of life and death is in the tongue. We have been warned that eternal vigilance continues to be freedom's price.

Lord, you have helped us remember that we need to see in each other a common humanity that reflects your image.

You have strengthened our resolve to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies domestic as well as foreign.

Use us to bring healing and unity to our hurting and divided nation and world. Thank you for what you have blessed our lawmakers to accomplish in spite of threats to liberty.

Bless and keep us. Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to do your will and guide our feet on the path of peace. And God bless America. We pray in your sovereign name. Amen."

Chaplain Black's words matter! Your words matter! Our words matter! God's Word matters!!

+RWHorn

*Editor's PS: ideas sent to the **BULLETIN** may be shared in a forthcoming issue **but only if permission is granted.** Any personal information will be recast as generic. Use this email address: Bulletin.LCI@gmail.com.*





Our LC-I Website:

The official website of the LC-I has a lot of interesting features, including the current and past issues of the **BULLETIN**, the LC-I Constitution, photos of various ministries and people, and lots more. Pastor William Wigmore is the webmaster: <http://www.lutheranchurchinternational.org/our-church-1.html>

LC-I on Facebook:

LC-I Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LutheranChurchInternational>

This is an open public Facebook page for the LC-I. However, postings, links and opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent official positions of the LC-I.

LC-I Leadership Team Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Williewig3>

World Lutheran Parish: <https://www.facebook.com/Lutheran-World-Parish-348944365237640/>

BULLETIN Changes have been made over the past years. What do you think of these changes? What is most helpful in support of the ministries of the LC-I? What would you like to be different, added or restored? Please respond to Bulletin.LCI@gmail.com and make it better for all of us.



THE CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

*with Worship, Singing, Food and Gifts
by our sisters and brothers in India*



*May God continue to bless + all of you and
your ministries in Christ.*

++ Robert W. Hotes

Archbishop, Lutheran Church - International

Do you know of individuals interested in receiving this **BULLETIN**?
Please forward a copy AND send the names and email addresses to the Archbishop:

Archbishop@LutheranChurchInternational.org

