



Epiphany

What is this thing we call “Epiphany?” The word “epiphany” means to reveal, appear, or to make known. The date of Epiphany is January 6th, and is marked by the visit of the wise men. The wise men were Gentiles, possibly from ancient Persia. Thus Jesus is revealed or made known as the Son of God who appeared to offer salvation to all people, not just the Lord’s chosen Israel.

The word “epiphany” is taken from the Greek *epiphaneia*. This word is found in I Timothy 6:14: “*keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing (epiphaneia) of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” It is also found in Titus 2:13: “*While we wait for the blessed hope, the blessed appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

The Epiphany season lasts anywhere from 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the date of Easter. If Easter is early (like in late March), then the Epiphany season is only 4 weeks long, because Ash Wednesday and Lent will come early too, thus shortening the Epiphany sea-

son. If Easter is in late April, the Epiphany season is longer, because Ash Wednesday does not come until March. This year Easter is April 20th, so that means the Epiphany season is a bit longer, going into the first week of March.

The theme or emphasis of Epiphany is that Christ Jesus is revealed or made known to be the Savior of all. But He is not revealed merely as a human person, like a great king or prophet. Rather, he is revealed as the Son of God. The wise men said they had come to “*worship him.*” We do not worship humans; rather we worship God. Jesus’ baptism is also part of Epiphany. At His baptism, God spoke and said, “*This is my beloved Son,*” and the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus. Jesus did not need baptism for the forgiveness of his sins, like we do. Rather, Jesus was baptized to “*fulfill all righteousness,*” that is, to show that He was placing himself under the Law, which He would obey in our place, and save us by His righteousness. Jesus’ first miracle is one of the Epiphany lessons, where He turned water into wine at the Cana wedding feast. It is appropriate because it shows His miraculous powers and, as John 2 notes, “*He thus re-vealed his glory and his disciples put their*

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)
faith in him."

The visit of the wise men is usually the Gospel lesson for Epiphany Sunday. Their visit is significant because the wise men were Gentiles. (That is, they were not Jews, not descendants of Abraham.) Many of the Israelites looked down on the Gentiles as pagans and idol worshipers. But here we see God's great love: He sent His Son for the Gentiles because He loves them too! The Israelites had all the advantages of being God's chosen people. God revealed His Law (Commandments) to Israel. God raised up prophets and priests to teach, instruct, and sacrifice for Israel. God gave them the beautiful Temple in Jerusalem, where Jesus frequently taught. But that doesn't mean God forgot about the Gentiles. Frequently in the Old Testament God said that the coming Messiah "*would be a light unto the Gentiles*" and that "*nations (Gentiles) would come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*"

In the coming weeks of the Epiphany season we will hear more of how Jesus is revealed as the Son of God, the Savior of both Jew and Gentile who believe. Jesus turns water into wine; He teaches at the synagogue in Nazareth and says that He has fulfilled the words of the Old Testament; Jesus drives out evil spirits; He shines with divine glory, standing with Moses and Elijah. As we hear these accounts think about how God's Son is revealed (*epiphaneia*) to us!

In Christ Jesus, our Epiphany King,

Pastor Gillaspie

2025 Church News

Wednesday Night Worship at 6:30 P.M. in January

In order to see if an earlier worship time on Wednesday nights is a better fit for our members, including families with young children,

***We will be having Wednesday night worship at
6:30 P.M. during January.***

This is just on a trial basis. It will be evaluated at the end of the month by our Board of Elders.

If you have a preference for 6:30 or 7:00, please speak to our elders or pastors.

We want your feedback!

Thank you

2025 Envelope Boxes are in members church mailboxes or on the table in the foyer. Please do not use these envelopes until January 1st, 2025.

Offering Record Sheets are available for 2025.

Installation of Newly Elected and Appointed Officers will be December 29th, 2024.



Share the Blessings

Did you know that we have a "Share the Blessings" Fund as part of our Endowment Fund? The Share the Blessings is distributed once a year to help our missionaries working in foreign lands.

Currently we are providing assistance to Dan and Kathy Conrad serving in Mexico and Central America; Steve and Martha Mahlburg in Sri Lanka (off the coast of India); People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO), a mission in the Detroit area focused on bringing the Gospel to Muslims; and Becky Grossman who works with Bible translation in Liberia, West Africa.

Jesus calls us to "make disciples of all nations." Please consider making a gift to "Share the Blessings" as we start the New Year. The easiest way to make a donation is by using the Endowment Offering Envelope in your packet of envelopes. There are several Endowment envelopes in each packet, and there is a place marked "Share the Blessings."

Please speak to an Endowment Committee member if you have any questions.

.....
(A message from Dan & Kathy Conrad)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the name of the Lord during this Advent season. We have been very busy in the Dominican Republic as we finish up the academic semester and prepare for the Christmas celebrations. You can find more information from our newsletter on your church bulletin board. We thank you for your prayers and financial support that make the Lord's mission possible. Have a merry Christmas celebration and may the Lord bless you abundantly in 2025!

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

In Christ,

Rev. Daniel and Kathy Conrad

Lutherans Laymen's League

Meeting

Monday, January 20th
Church Overflow Room
7 P.M.

Everyone is invited to join our meeting where **Wayne Hecht** will be speaking about his trip to Germany that he has recently returned from.

We look forward to seeing you there.
.....

Thank you
all who joined us for our
LLL/ Mary Martha Christmas Party
and supporting the
St. Michael's Hot Lunch Program!



Mary Martha Guild

will meet on **Monday, January 6 at 7 pm.**

Luanne Jaruzel from Millington will share information about Sleep in Heavenly Peace. A volunteer organization whose aim is to help children in need have a warm place to sleep.

Everyone is welcome.



Lutheran for Life's Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

will be observed in Lutheran churches across our nation on Sunday, January 19, 2025. This year's theme is "Life Shines in Darkness," based on John 1:4-5: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

A special door offering will be collected on Life Sunday and Wednesday, January 22, for Lutherans for Life and Focus on the Family's Option Ultrasound. Both of these prolife organizations work with families giving them HOPE that is only found in our newborn Savior Jesus. Please plan ahead for these mission opportunities and pray for the efforts of Life Sunday.

No one can doubt or deny that we dwell in darkness. Sinfulness has broken humankind and left the world wrecked around us. Danger and despair, deception and dysfunction abound. Sanctity of life situations like surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis confront us with uncomfortable realities. Serious and genuine threats emerge: pain and labors, poverty and obligations, abandonment and abuse, disgrace and sacrifice. The voice of the devil, the spirit of this age, and the weakness of our flesh tempt and pester us to use death as the solution to the difficulties.

Yet the darkness reaches deepest right before the dawn. And shadows only show up where the light arrives. The hour has come to wake from slumber because the daylight is at hand (Romans 13:11-12).

The incarnate and crucified Son of God, our humble and gentle Lord, our risen and forgiving Savior radiates the light of life in the unlikeliest of places. The Almighty Father creates, redeems, and calls every human life special, precious, and priceless, no matter what age, appearance, or ability, from fertilization to forever. He delivers blessings of truth and love, joy and hope, community and purpose,

grace and faith even in humanity's shortcomings. In Him is life, and this life is the light of all humankind (John 1:3).

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2). Jesus Christ has conquered death and brought life—both immediate and immortal—to light (2 Timothy 2:10). God bless our Gospel-motivated voice For Life, for it shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it!

Lutherans for Life is offering online and in-person opportunities for **Life Week 2025**. From January 19 -25, you can learn about life issues from the comfort of your home. All presentations will be at 8:00 PM ET, with the exception of Saturday, January 25, which will be at 10:30 AM ET. Questions? lifeweek2025@lutheransforlife.org

Sunday, January 19: **Life Shines at Church** with Virginia Flo Focus: An overview of the created-redeemed-called Gospel motivation and practical suggestions for speaking and showing the sanctity of life in and with the local congregation.

Monday, January 20: **Life Shines at School** with Michelle Bauman Focus: Identifying life issues that students especially encounter and outlining the opportunities educational communities have for celebrating sanctity of life in curriculum and on campus.

Tuesday, January 21: **Life Shines in Children** announcing speaker soon Focus: Emphasizing the blessings God gives through procreation and parenting and finding ways both to oppose the cultural adult-first outlook and affirm receiving kids - one's own and those of others - as privileges, particularly inculcating in them their worth as well as their neighbors'.

Wednesday, January 22: **Life Shines in Money** with Dave Probst & Rev. Michael Salemink Focus: Exploring how a consumption economy pressures against the sanctity of life, attending to a Biblical theology of income and expenditure as service to neighbor, and inventorying how to convert cash into investment in Gospel proclamation.

Thursday, January 23: **Life Shines in Dialogue** with Josh Brahm Focus: Strategies and practices for speaking the truth in love about life issues, overcoming barriers and opening relationships through

conversation and advocacy that displays both courage and compassion to warn and win over.

Friday, January 24: Life Shines in Civic Action with Kim Laube Focus: Reaching beyond voting toward educating oneself about advancing legislation, engaging elected representatives with grace, and local governance arenas that affect sanctity of life matters.

Saturday, January 25: Life Shines in Vocation with Rev. Jeff Leininger Focus: Leveraging one's relationships, occupations, interests, and environments to demonstrate the sanctity of neighbors and declare to them how God loves every human being.

Then top off the week by attending the in-person events from Thurs through Sat, Jan 23-25, in Washington, D.C., at the March for Life for adults, while the youth are at the Y4Life conference. Find more information on these opportunities by going to the Lutherans for Life Facebook page or online at lutheransforlife.org. Gather, learn, and gain ideas for support and action at these events!

Come out of the shadows and into the shine. Rejoice and embrace the sanctity of every human life! May God continue to bless us all this new year!

Dianne Stresman,
Life Ministry Coordinator
Lutherans for Life of Michigan



Winterfest Auction

The Winterfest Auction to benefit the school's Media Center will be held on Saturday, February 15th.

Doors will be open at 5:00 p.m.



The theme this year is "Down on the Farm!"

Ticket Prices are \$30.00/ticket or a table of 10 for \$250. Ticket Sakes will be between church services on Sunday, January 19th and 26th. Tickets can also be purchased at the school starting January 17th.

The meal will be a steak dinner.

Donations/baskets can be dropped off at the school and given to Leslie Brown in the Media Center.



Sisters of Ruth

will meet at church on *January 8* for a potluck lunch at *noon*.

Bring any leftover cookies for dessert.



Stewardship Minute

Stewardship isn't just about giving---it's about aligning our priorities with God's purposes. In every decision we make, there's an opportunity to either hold tightly to what we have or to open our hands in trust and generosity. This reflection invites us to examine our approach to giving and how it can deepen our relationship with Christ. As we reflect on our stewardship we are entrusted with time, talents, finances, and resources which can be invested in the Kingdom. It's easy to give the "leftovers" of our time and resources out of a sense of duty. But when we follow scripture, we need to make God's Kingdom our first priority. When we do this our stewardship takes on a new dimension. It becomes a way in participating in God's work, leading us to greater trust and a closer relationship with Christ.



WHAT DO YOU *Treasure?*

When we invest in God's Kingdom, our hearts grow closer to him, and our faith deepens. Stewardship is more than obligation; it's an invitation to walk closely with Christ! As we come into this new year and set our sights on 2025, take time to evaluate your stewardship. Is your giving a response to God's generosity or simply an attempt to fulfil an obligation? Ask God to show you areas where you can prioritize His Kingdom, and trust Him to multiply whatever you offer in faith.

Heavenly Father, thank you for every blessing You've given. Help us to remember that all we have comes from you and that You call on us to use it for your glory. Grant us a heart that is willing to make Your Kingdom our top priority. Teach us to trust you more, to give generously, and to experience the joy and peace that come from walking closely with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture references:

"For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." Matt.6:21
"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matt.6:33

-Board of Stewardship

Charitable Planning

Lunch & Learn

(Pizza Luncheon)

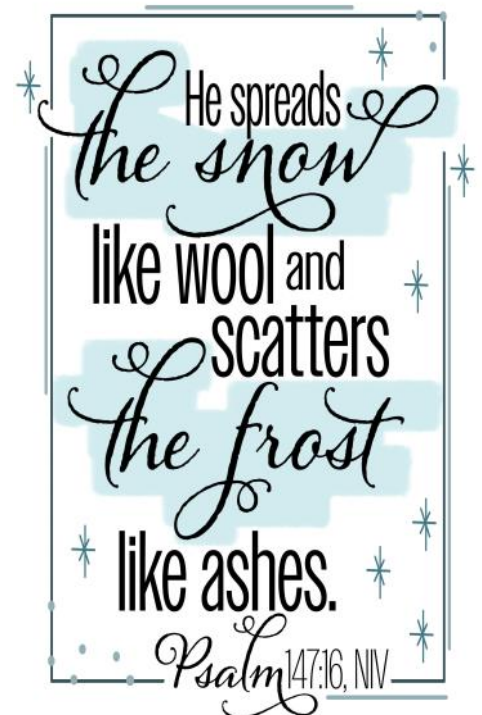
January 12th, 2025

12:00 P.M.

Church Overflow Room

Come and learn about strategies in which to maximize your giving now and through your estate. All adults are welcome to attend. There is no cost.

Hosted by Board of Stewardship

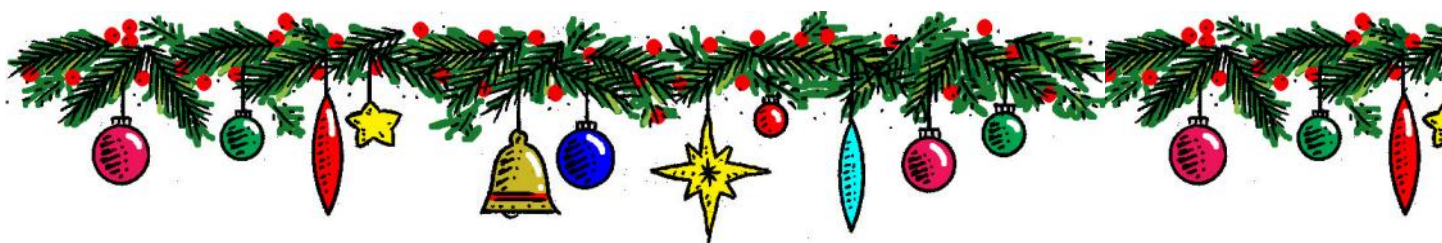


Operation Christmas Child

Thanks for all of your help for Operation Christmas Child. It was a great first year.

We had a very successful collection. We collected 2,359 shoe boxes and had over 127 hours of service collecting the boxes. Thanks for the cookies and all your hard work to pull this off. We look forward to doing this again next year.

God bless Sara Knea



✝ Financial Report as of		11/30/24	
MISSIONS			
Missions Collected YTD	Goal \$50,000	\$	22,215.18
Non Budget Missions Collected YTD		\$	1,243.00
HOME PURPOSE		MTD	YTD
Home Purpose Balance as of	07/01/24		\$ (286,907.20)
Home Purpose Income		\$ 136,842.15	\$ 761,661.86
Home Purpose Expenses		\$ 101,407.11	\$ 642,949.31
Thrivent Choice in-H.P.	\$ 912.00	\$ 35,435.04	\$ 118,712.55
School Income		\$ 3,453.00	\$ 90,886.10
School Expenses		\$ 8,031.66	\$ 45,603.06
		\$ (4,578.66)	\$ 45,283.04
Child Care/Preschool Income		\$ 58,237.31	\$ 286,485.13
Child Care/Preschool Expenses		\$ 48,134.02	\$ 276,053.38
Thrivent Choice in Childcare	\$ 37.00	\$ 10,103.29	\$ 10,431.75
Home Purpose Balance (includes Child Care/Preschool/School)			\$ (112,479.86)
New Construction Balance as of	07/01/24	MTD	\$ (18,215.51)
Income	Goal \$25,000	\$ 4,535.00	\$ 15,052.72
Expenses		\$ -	\$ -
New Construction Fund Balance		\$ 4,535.00	\$ (3,162.79)
Franklin Ave Mission	Goal \$5,000	\$ 960.00	\$ 2,135.00
Capital Improvement Balance as of	07/01/24	MTD	\$ 160,870.93
Collected	Goal \$80,000	\$ 3,652.35	\$ 12,713.35
Expenses		\$ -	\$ 34,683.97
Capital Improvement Balance		\$ 3,652.35	\$ 138,900.31

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
3455 S. Van Buren Road
Reese, MI 48757

hello
2025

