

The logo for the newsletter, featuring the word "spirit" in a large, white, lowercase, cursive font, with "NEWSLETTER" in a smaller, white, uppercase, sans-serif font below it. The background is a dark blue gradient with a faint, light blue starburst pattern.

The Monthly Newsletter Publication of Triune Lutheran Church
“Set Free to Serve One Another”
January 2023

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Worship Schedule:

Saturdays 5PM (contemporary)
Sundays 11AM (traditional)

Ministers.....All People

Pastor.....Brad Ross

Administrative Assistant.....Jan Piskac

Organist.....Edith Schatt

Council President.....Dale Kirk

Council Vice-President...Bonnie Piskac

Council Secretary.....Heidi Bailey

Council Treasurer.....Jack Schwab

Yearly reminder:
there is no
resolution that, if
kept, will make you
more worthy of love.

You, as your actual
self and not as some
made up ideal, are
already worthy.

-Nadia Bolz-Weber

Siblings in Christ of Triune,

Greetings! With each new year, I try to bring this image up. For us in the Gospel-proclaiming/adoring ministry, this is a rather Good News worth remembering with every January filled with possibilities galore. Honestly, I don't know if I've ever made an actual resolution on December 31 going into January 1, but evidently, a fair share of people do. Places like Planet Fitness, for example, tend to do rather well for that first month, at least, as people commit to better diet and exercise, for starters. There's also those self-made promises to read more, take on more charitable acts, pray more, etc. More this and that, because, evidently, whatever was done with the previous 365 or so days wasn't quite good enough.



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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

And so, from The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber: “Yearly reminder: there is no resolution that, if kept, will make you more worthy of love.” That’s Good, in fact, Great News, to be sure. Of course, we don’t want to take this to the extreme, either: that we can do whatever we want because God is going to love us anyway. Although, there is truth to that, but that kind of “cheap grace,” as we Lutherans call it, isn’t what we’re supposed to be about. We don’t want to take advantage of God’s mind-boggling kindness and relentless mercy and willingness to forgive over and over again. That kind of mind-boggling love is meant to inspire us to some form of not just yearly resolution, but a daily resolution to “love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself,” for starters.

Yes, some mistakes will be made along the way. And we boldly cling to the God who manages to love our “actual selves” and some “made up ideal” of perfect, always following through our every resolution in this life not just for a few days in January, but all the time. God knows we will mess up not just in the diet and exercise realm, but the “love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself” part, too. Yes, God will keep on loving us anyway.

Except, there’s nothing wrong with making a resolution whether it be on January 1 or July 15 or after a time of confession and forgiveness during worship (as if that’s supposed to be a perfect time for such things) to do our discipling a bit better. No, it will not affect how much God cherishes you to your core. It will not alter our worthiness for such grace-filled affection. That’s already taken care of and it will never change. Except, lest we forget, God cherishes other people around us, too. God cherishes them to their core, too. Hence that “love your neighbor as yourself” add-on is a rather big deal for God.

So, in addition to the diet and exercise resolutions, God invites us to make a daily commitment to extend our own kindness and mercy and forgiveness and grace and love with the foundation of the One who made us all worthy for all the above from God directly. Yes, we will fall short plenty of times. Regardless, there’s always a January 2. There’s always the day after we confess and receive forgiveness from God. There’s always an opportunity to try again, as if that’s what grace is all about. So, no, nothing done in 2023 will make God love us more, but our neighbors may be slightly better off, neighbors who God loves, too, neighbors who God wants to experience their own wholeness and new life. We do so boldly knowing that our worthiness is already taken care of not just this year, but for all eternity. Thanks be to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad

From all of us at Triune Lutheran Church:



We ask you to keep the following siblings in Christ in your prayers:

Niki Grigsby
Charlotte Jackson
Richard Jakubcin
John Kurtz
Dan Maldovan

Jill Maldovan
Annie Slaughter
Gloria Roderick
Mardell Weiss
Clara Wilcox



If you wish to send any cards, please send them, or drop them off, to the church office, and we will be sure to deliver them.



30 ELYSE SIGGELKOW

The Monday Discussion Group

We will resume our discussions of Disappointment with God on Monday, January 30, 2023. New participants are always welcome!



EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



With Epiphany being January 6 (hence, the 12 days of Christmas) to celebrate the arrival of the magi, and the reminder of the Gospel in Jesus Christ being brought to life for the whole world, we join the celebration with our worships on Saturday, January 7 (5pm) and Sunday, January 8 (11am).

A Time to Pay Attention

During Epiphany, Let's Notice the Ways God Appears to Us



I have a bad habit of looking at my feet when I walk. I don't often stub my toe or trip on uneven ground, but occasionally I run into something or someone I'm not expecting.

Our 2-year-old has the opposite issue. While we walk around our neighborhood, his head is always up and looking around. This means he often trips over his feet, but his view of the world is much broader than mine. As is the case with most toddlers, he might ask, "What's that?" or "What's their name?" or "What's that called?" His curiosity reminds me that a simple shift in perspective can engender wonder.

Whether I'm looking at my feet while I walk, hunching over my cellphone or resting my elbows on a desk at work, this posture of folding inward prevents me from truly seeing the expansiveness of God's good creation. This makes me wonder about the opportunities we miss simply because our posture doesn't allow us to see the world around us.

Epiphany marks the day and the church season when Jesus comes to be named and understood as God's own son, the living and breathing manifestation of God in our midst.

The Epiphany story begins with three magi noticing a new star and setting off on a journey. Arriving at their destination, these three people from distant places encounter a child born to a teenage mother in a little-known town, a birth heralded by livestock and ranchers. Jesus' birth story isn't what most imagine when they think of a newborn king. Yet the magi come to see and understand Jesus as God on Earth.

The name Epiphany comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning “manifestation.” Most of us think of an epiphany as a flash of insight, but what if Epiphany is an invitation to notice the beauty and brilliance of what’s already there?

The magi found a new star in the sky. They bore witness to the presence of God within little Jesus. And during the time after Epiphany, we’ll hear Gospel stories of Jesus growing in his understanding of who he is as God’s child and of the kind of messiah he is called to be. Perhaps, then, Epiphany is less a sudden realization and more a growth in understanding.

When I realign my focus, when I notice how much I cast my eyes to the ground or hunch over, I can lift my head, straighten my posture and enjoy a new perspective. With my eyes up, I’m free to perceive and appreciate the beautiful diversity of the people and plants and creatures I encounter. I can truly see my neighbors, noticing when someone is having a rough day. I can even serve my neighbor who’s reaching out for help.

Amid what’s been a very challenging season for many, something as simple as letting someone know you’ve noticed them can produce a profound impact. We long to be seen by each other and God.

Epiphany calls us to see our neighbors—our neighbor in need, our neighbor who’s struggling, our neighbor who puts on a brave face at worship while suffering inside, as well as our neighbor who’s rejoicing. It calls us to notice neighbors who don’t look, worship, speak, vote or pray as we do. It calls us to recognize them, too, as God’s children.

How differently might we treat one another if the first thing we noticed about someone was their identity as a beloved child of God?

When we notice and focus on what draws us together rather than what drives us apart, we can approach our differences from a place of genuine care and concern for one another’s well-being. By seeking to understand our neighbors, we can build the world God intends—a world ruled by peace, built upon equity and justice, and infused with the sweet fragrance of love.

During this time after Epiphany, let’s commit to noticing and celebrating all the ways God appears in our time and place. You might create a list and write down every time you notice God in your world—from people, plants and animals to the movements of stars and other heavenly bodies.

Take a cue from my 2-year-old: Keep your head up and look around. Maybe you’ll fill up your notebook with signs of God’s presence so quickly that you’ll need to buy another one. Notice your opportunities to bless and be blessed by others. Surely the Messiah is with us.

Originally published January 6, 2022, on [LivingLutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org), where you will find this article and other resources for the journey of faith.



Chris Michaelis serves as Pastor of New Hope Lutheran Church in Missouri City, Texas.

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 NAME OF JESUS WORSHIP @11 AM	2	3 AA @ 7pm	4	5 AA @ 7pm	6	7 WORSHIP @ 5 PM TIM MIZE
8 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD WORSHIP @11 AM	9	10 AA @ 7pm	11	12 AA @ 8 pm	13	14 WORSHIP @ 5 PM PASTOR BRAD
15 WORSHIP @11 AM	16	17 AA @ 7pm	18	19 AA @ 8 pm	20	21 WORSHIP @ 5 PM TIM MIZE
22 WORSHIP @11 AM	23	24 AA @ 7pm	25	26 AA @ 8 pm	27	28 WORSHIP @ 5 PM PASTOR BRAD
29 WORSHIP @11 AM	30 Bible Study @ 1pm	31 AA @ 7pm				