

First Lutheran Church - Wiota

January- February



A new year is just around the corner and, while New Year's Day is overshadowed by Christmas, it is still regarded as an important holiday. Especially for Americans, it reflects our well-known love for all things new. Despite being an arbitrary division, a new year seems to offer fresh possibilities in our lives. We consider buildings to be old after a few decades, while Europeans would say the shine is not even off them yet. Advertisements regularly tout "new and improved" formulas and frequently try sell the "product of tomorrow," not just today. Politicians are barely elected before there are calls to "throw the bums out." New cars, new cell phones, new celebrities and new fashions all appeal to us.

The flip side of our love of newness, however, is that we know it does not last. The "new car smell" fades quickly. Fads are fleeting and soon seem out-of-date. Before long, new tablets and cell phones feel slow and short on features. Before we know it, we will be well into 2019 and looking toward 2020.

Because of that, even as we continue to like what is new, we also long for that which will endure. It is unnerving to feel time passing so quickly. It seems as if our children grow up in the blink of an eye. It is frustrating when new products break down or fail to deliver. Vacations seem to be over before they begin. Maintenance projects need to be re-done almost as soon as they are finished.

In the Gospel, though, we find a truth that both offers the allure and overcomes the disappointment of newness. In Revelation 21:5, the risen Christ proclaims, "Behold, I am making all things new." By the forgiveness of sins, he cleans the slate and gives us a new start. Faith in Jesus grants us new life. Even the power of death will be set aside in the resurrection when a whole new creation will dawn.

But notice the grammar in that verse. "I am making" is a present participle. It indicates ongoing action, not a one-time event. It promises that Jesus makes us new again and again. In the section on Holy Baptism, the Small Catechism declares that "the new person (in Christ) should come forth every day and rise to live before God." Week after week, God pours out His grace on us through Word and sacrament to renew us in faith and devotion. The newness Christ works in us is not temporary nor does it fade away, but is constantly renewed in us by the Holy Spirit.

So, whether the year is new or old, whether we are living in the spring of childhood or the winter of our elderly years, whether our circumstances are recently changed or well-established, with Christ we have the best of both worlds. For he assures us every day, "See I am making all things new," and he will do so through all eternity.

Grace and Peace
Pastor Mike



Do you have a question you would like Pastor Mike to answer in his "Ask the Pastor" section of an upcoming monthly newsletter or on the website? If so, contact him directly (pastormike@q.com) or 515-238-5446

1. **Q: I have seen the letters IHS and INRI around the church. What do they mean?**

A: Those groupings of letters each refer to Jesus, but in different ways. IHS are the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek, the language in which the New Testament was originally written. Until the printing press was invented, the Bible was copied by hand and the copyists developed many abbreviations and short-hand forms to make their work easier. One of those was to write IHS instead of Jesus' whole name. From there, it was taken over into art and sculpture as a brief way to name Jesus.

INRI comes from Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire. It is an acronym for the charge that Pontius Pilate ordered to be affixed to Jesus' cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." As in Greek, Jesus' name begins with an "I" in Latin, as does the name of the Jews. The "R" comes from Rex, the Latin word for king. The full phrase would read IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM (with "V" representing our letter "U"), which was obviously much easier to abbreviate as INRI.?

2. **Q: I was wondering if you could explain Epiphany to me a little better. Also, when was the Circumcision of the Lord?**

A: Epiphany is from a Greek word, meaning to "reveal" or "make manifest." The season of Epiphany is our time to focus on the revelation of "who" Jesus is: both true God and man. On the Festival of Epiphany, Jan. 6, we hear the reading of the visit of the wise men (Mt. 2:1-12). In that event, these foreigners bowed down in acknowledgement that this infant was indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

The Sunday after Epiphany we hear the story of the Baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:13-17). Here, God the Father confirms that this man standing in the water is His beloved Son. The following Sunday we hear the story of the changing of water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11). Through this event, Jesus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him.

According to Jewish law, all males were circumcised on the eighth day--one week after their birth. We don't know the actual birth date of Jesus, so we don't know the day of His circumcision either. But since we have set aside a date for observing His birth, Dec. 25, we then set aside Jan. 1 (eight days later) as the date for the naming and circumcision of Jesus (Luke 2:21). The significance of this day is that our Savior began His long ministry of submitting Himself to the Law in our place. Also, this was the first shedding of His blood, and points, in a small way, to the ultimate shedding of His blood on the cross.

"The Cosmos Shrouded in Majesty"



Don't miss the season of Epiphany! Epiphany is season of light but is squeezed between Christmas and Lent. The message of this season ought to shine brightly for it teaches an important topic: the mission of the church.

The Lord God Is Manifested in the Incarnate Son

It progresses from bright star guiding the Magi to the shining dove at the Baptism of Jesus to the glory of the Transfiguration. The structure of the season proclaims the mission of God's people.

The story of the Magi is that of distant people coming to Christ. The light draws the wise men from far off to worship Him. The Church calls people who are isolated from God to come. But the invitation is not to some idea or theory but to "God in man made manifest" (LSB 394). The Church's mission is to call sinners to communion with the life-giving flesh of Christ.

The first Sunday after the Epiphany takes us to the waters of the Jordan. There John baptized Jesus, who numbers Himself among sinners. ***The Triune God Opens Heaven to You in Holy Baptism***

The bright dove, the Holy Spirit, points out Christ in the water. Outreach to the world and into the Church points to the same water. Those whom the mission calls to join Christ and His Church are called to the light of Christ in Baptism.

The remaining Sundays of Epiphany focus on the ministry of Jesus. ***The Divine Glory Is Manifested in the Signs of Christ*** He is the light of the world. He preaches. He prays. He heals those afflicted by Satan. In other words, He does mission work. The Church does also. ***The Lord Is Manifested as Our Savior through the Preaching of the Gospel*** Jesus also calls us the light of the world. The mission of the Church is like Jesus' ministry: long and patient. The Church's mission is not to simply bring in as many as we can through the front door. It is to keep shining the light of Christ through His word, season after season, so that those living in darkness may continue to see the great light. ***Jesus Has Authority to Forgive Your Sins and Give You Life***

The finale of the Epiphany season is the Transfiguration. God in flesh is at the center but now not Magi but the glorified saints of old and the trembling disciples surround Christ. ***The Glory of God Is Manifested in the Body of Christ*** The light that pointed to Jesus at His Baptism now shines through Him. This is the goal of the Church's work: to bring people into God's presence for eternity. The light of Transfiguration shows us how important the Church's work really is. The mission of the Church is aimed at that divine joy.

Pastor Mike

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Prayer Requests for
Missionary Rev, Carl Hansen
Missionary Rev. Michael Paul

Those who have asked for our Prayers

shut-ins

Darlene Hockenberry

Rosemary Davidson

Millie Miller

Robert Miller

Rich Tibken

Ricky Taylor

Helen Schoenbohm

Joan Hahn

Glenda Lensch

Kenneth Karstens

Ardath Euken

Mike Lechner

Marlen Miller

Dianna Casteel

Pat Nilan

Mitch Osborn

Keira Reed

Shloe Flanagan

Joanne Lienemann

Scott Ward

Collin Evans

Alice Anstey

Jeff Krause

Kathy Dorsey

Lynette Steele

Delmar Walker

Brooks Wollum

Sharon Steffens

Christina Williams



Prayers for those serving in the Armed Forces:

Trent Burg

Christopher Hines

Jayne Hoegh

Ryan Johnson

Brianne Munsey

Theo Sager

Josh Reed

Prayers for our College Students

Jessica Aupperle

Lindsey Dinkla

Mackenzie Cross

Casey Ihnen

Tyler McAfee

Pastor Mike Bodkins

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Church Business

The regular Quarterly Voter's meeting of First Lutheran Church met right after church service on Sunday, December 9, 2018. Chairman Mike Plagman called the meeting to order. Pastor Mike opened with a prayer.

Geoff Barrick moved to suspend with the reading of the minutes as they were published in the newsletter for all to read. Linda Eilts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The Treasurer's report was printed for all to review. Any questions should be directed to Beth Dinkla.

Pastor's Report: Sunday School program preparations continue, as well as visits to shutins and confirmation. There has been word of wireless systems needing replacements by May 2020. Will continue with checking into this.

Deacons: Rick reported that there has been some concern with not having Christmas Day Service. Gary Dinkla moved to take a vote, with Judy Kennedy seconding to have a Christmas Day service for whoever could make it. Motion carried. There will be a Christmas Day Service at 10:00 AM.

Farm Trustee: No report

Cemetery: Duane Steffens remarked that he will be retiring from the committee. He was thanked for all his years of service. Ralph Wickey reported that Zak mentioned he will take care of the fallen tree when weather permits. Jeanine has mentioned that she would like to replace some of the trees.

Church: Tom Eilts Reported that the furnace has been fixed and will be trying to get along with current one for a couple years before replacing.

Sunday School: Melissa Ihnen reported that the National Youth gathering will be held next July 11-15 in Minneapolis. Geoff and Barb Barrick have volunteered to be chaperones. We have several teens that will be attending. Melissa mentioned it will be costly and they will be doing some fundraising. Jan Steffen moved with Rick Stender seconding that our Advent Meals offering go to the youth to help in this fundraising, and the youth helping with the meals. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: Jim Schroeder of the LCMS Foundation gave a presentation on creating an endowment fund, leaving a Legacy for Future Generations.

Constitution: Copies of the new proposed constitution have been available for all to read. There were several questions as to what items was to be changed. The voter's were encouraged All to read the proposed Constitution, direct any questions to the Chair or committee so action may be able to begin at the January meeting.

New Business: It was reported that Rex Berg has been elected to attend the National convention next June in Tampa Bay, FL as a lay delegate for our circuit. He is also our delegate for the Iowa District West convention along with Pastor Mike.

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Chairman Mike Plagman appointed Jan Steffen, Barb Barrick, and Randy Daugherty to the Audit Committee. All committees are asked to have their reports to the church office by January 20, 2019. Pastor Mike was excused from the meeting. Treasurer Beth reported that she has been in contact with IDW. Pastor Mike is being paid according to IDW guidelines. It was brought up that **WE** had voted that we wanted to have a full time minister here at First Lutheran, so it is up to **ALL** of to step up our giving to continue to be able to pay accordingly. Duane Steffens moved to approve the Budget, Linda Eilts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Gary Dinkla moved to give Pastor a \$300 Christmas gift, Judy Kennedy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Gary Dinkla presented a slate of officers for election and moved to approve a unanimous slate, Linda Eilts seconded and motion carried.

Chairman—Mike Plagman	1 year term
Secretary---Jacque Wickey	1 year term
Treasurer---Beth Dinkla	2 year term
Farm Trustee--- Ernie Thomsen	3 year term
Church Trustee—Tom Eilts	3 year term
Cemetery Trustee--Tucker Tibken	6 year term
Deacons- Eric Euken, Blaine Behnken, Tom Eilts	4 year term

The next meeting will be Sunday, January 27, 2019, right after church service. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Secretary

Jacque Wickey

Faye Ihnen Memorial

The First Sunday in Advent was a dedication of the new oil candles for the Advent wreath. They were a gift from the memorial of Faye Ihnen.

Also gifted was a new fine linen veil and under-cloth for the communion vessels.

We thank the family for these items.

OFFICERS for 2019

Chairman	Mike Plagman
Secretary	Jacque Wickey
Treasurer	Beth Dinkla

Farm Trustees Dan Miller, Glen Dinkla, Ernie Thomsen,

Church Trustees Jerry Lowers, George Behrends, Tom Eilts

CEMETERY Ralph Wickey, Kent Euken, Tucker Tibken, Eric Euken

Deacons Zak Kennedy, Nathan Steffen, Mitch Kennedy, Terry Daugherty, Justin Miller, Randy Daugherty, Rick Stender, Geoff Barrick, Blaine Behnken, Tom Eilts, Eric Euken.

Inner Core

Chairman: Zak,
Rick, Tom, Randy