



ALL ARE WELCOME! 

February 2024 Newsletter

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Ash Wednesday

Dr. Mark D. Roberts

When I was in college, the band Kansas released their biggest hit, “Dust in the Wind.” After hearing that song on the radio, with its stunning guitar intro, striking words, and haunting melody, I immediately went out and bought the album on which the song appeared, Point of Know Return. I liked the whole album and listened to it dozens of times. But I listened to “Dust in the Wind” at least 100 times while in college and many more times since then.

“Dust in the Wind” begins this way:

I close my eyes
 Only for a moment and the moment’s gone.
 All my dreams
 Pass before my eyes, a curiosity.
 Dust in the wind,
 All they are is dust in the wind.

And it ends with:

Now don’t hang on.
 Nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky.
 It slips away,
 And all your money won’t another minute buy.
 Dust in the wind,
 All we are is dust in the wind.
 Dust in the wind,
 Everything is dust in the wind.

As you encounter those lyrics, you may be thinking, “That sounds a lot like a passage from the Bible.” Indeed, it does. The songwriter, Kerry Livgren, once said that “the message was out of Ecclesiastes.” Indeed, the use of dust echoes Ecclesiastes 3:20, which is itself an echo of Genesis 3:20. Also, Ecclesiastes repeats over and over again this refrain, “All is vanity and a chasing after wind” (for example, Ecclesiastes 1:14). Interestingly, Livgren wrote “Dust in the Wind” while on a spiritual quest that ended three years later when he became a Christian. The grim truth of Ecclesiastes no doubt

Continued on p. 2

helped him to recognize his need for a Savior, whom he found in Jesus (or, better, who found him).

“Dust in the Wind” is a fitting song for Ash Wednesday. On this first day of Lent, Christians throughout the world ponder the fact that we are from dust. And, because of sin, we will return to dust. We are mortal. We will die. Our own mortality points to the brokenness of the whole creation. It’s not just that we are dust in the wind. Rather, everything is dust in the wind.

Apart from God, that is. Though God does not grant us immediate immortality when we accept God’s grace through faith, and though our bodies will die, that’s not the end of the story. We are not merely dust in the wind because the God who once breathed life into our dustiness now breathes eternal life into us through Jesus Christ. Moreover, though we live in a world that is still broken by sin, the mending of this world has begun through Christ. What we do with our lives is not simply dust that will be blown away by the wind. Rather, it can have eternal significance.

On Ash Wednesday, however, we don’t jump ahead in the story to the time of eternal significance. Rather, we take seriously our dustiness, our mortality, our brokenness, and lostness. We feel the pain of human sin, our own sin and the sin of the world. We ache for victims of tragedy and injustice. We let the sufferings of the poor and oppressed into our hearts. With the Psalms we cry out, “How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever?” (Psalm 89:46).

On Ash Wednesday, Christians throughout the world are marked with ashes as a sign of our terminal dustiness. We wear on our foreheads the symbol of death. Yes, the symbol of death, a cross, one of the most brutal forms of execution ever devised by fallen humanity. Yet, in Christ the cross means more than excruciating death. It points to the grace of God that overcomes our sin. It highlights the love of God that never lets us go. So even as we acknowledge our sin and mortality on Ash Wednesday, even as we admit our desperate need for a Savior, we also confess that our Savior has come.

We are dust in the wind. Yes, that’s true. But that’s not all. It’s not true that “all we are is dust in the wind.” We are also people marked by the cross. We are children of a Heavenly Father who loves us beyond all measure. By taking seriously our dustiness, we are ready to celebrate even more fully our belovedness. Yes, indeed, but not today. That celebration comes after Lent. Today we’re just beginning.



<https://depre.org/dust-in-the-wind-a-devotion-for-ash-wednesday>



The next Church Council Meeting will be Wednesday, February 19, 2024 at 7pm via Zoom. Upload team reports or documents to the Council Google Drive (February 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.

February 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.

February 4, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 11, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Transfiguration Sunday

February 18, 2024 Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - First Sunday in Lent

February 25, 2024—Worship Service w/ Holy Communion - Second Sunday in Lent

[Instructions for watching via Facebook Live](#)

Coffee Hour and Fellowship immediately following worship

February 4 & 18



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

Tithing for 2023 almost exactly matched budget. Overall income was 1% over budget because of the pumpkin patch. Meanwhile, Expenses were 2% over budget for December due to advertising and 5% under budget YTD. Overall, our bank accounts were reduced by \$4365 compared to the end of 2022. We also paid off \$9020 of our mortgage in 2023. Tithing for 2023 almost exactly matched budget. Overall income was 1% over budget because of the pumpkin patch. Meanwhile, Expenses were 2% over budget for December due to advertising and 5% under budget YTD. Overall, our bank accounts were reduced by \$4365 compared to the end of 2022. We also paid off \$9020 of our mortgage in 2023. Tithing for 2023 almost exactly matched budget. Overall income was 1% over budget because of the pumpkin patch. Meanwhile, Expenses were 2% over budget for December due to advertising and 5% under budget YTD. Overall, our bank accounts were reduced by \$4365 compared to the end of 2022. We also paid off \$9020 of our mortgage in 2023.

	Dec-23			2023 YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Net	Actual	Budget	Net
Revenue	\$ 8,017	\$ 6,483	\$ 1,534	\$ 88,471	\$ 87,216	\$ 1,255
Expenses (incl. Loan)	\$ 8,040	\$ 7,901	\$ 139	\$ 93,228	\$ 98,012	-\$ 4,784
Net	-\$ 23	-\$ 1,418	\$ 1,395	-\$ 4,757	-\$ 10,796	\$ 6,039

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.



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, February 4. Thanks for your support!**



SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Synod News

TWO 2024 Lenten Devotionals for you... "Living into the Promise of God's Community"

A 2024 Lenten Devotional

by Synod Authorized Minister and Synod Intern Kristin Berkey-Abbott

The lectionary readings this year return to ideas of Covenant--what does it mean to be a community of God?

What do these ancient texts have to say to our communities today? When we look at contemporary problems and issues through the lens of the lectionary, does our understanding change?

This devotion can be found by on the image to the left. Each week you will find the lectionary readings, discussion questions, interesting quotes from biblical scholars, ideas for creative/arts projects, and more.



"LOVE"

A daily devotional for Lent 2024

by Susan Maier, member of Holy Cross LC, Athens, GA

You'll find on the same site a daily Lent devotional a brief scripture lesson, a personal reflection, and a prayer. Click on the heart to get your devotional.



Women ^{of the} ELCA

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.](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81409695259?pwd=AJVdapv05WQ1HROBafbFjaAKmYxH6S.1)

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.



Please keep Pastor LaVonne in your prayers as she has been admitted to the hospital. There is no diagnosis at this time.

Peace,

Martha Garner, President

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!

February 2024 Calendar of Events

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

	Pastor LaVonne's Office Hours	Pastor LaVonne holds office hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays - please e-mail her to make an appointment.
Sun 2/4	9 am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Worship Service w/ Holy Communion Coffee Hour & Fellowship
Sun 2/11	9am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Transfiguration Sunday Worship Service w/ Holy Communion
Wed 2/14	12pm - 3pm	Ash Wednesday Drive-up Imposition of Ashes
Sun 2/18	9am - CPC and via Facebook Live	First Sunday in Lent Worship Service w/ Holy Communion Coffee Hour & Fellowship
Mon 2/19	7 pm - Via Zoom	Church Council Meeting Join here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85341174437
Sun 2/25	9 am - CPC and via Facebook Live	Second Sunday in Lent Worship Service w/ Holy Communion

February 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!

Jennifer Parker	Feb 1
Becca Schumacher	Feb 13
LaVonne Johnson	Feb 28



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



Spring Gardening Series

with the Memphis Area Master Gardeners

Composting • Garden Pollinators
Vegetable Gardening • Monarch Butterflies

February 2024



Memphis Area Master Gardeners' Spring Gardening Series

As Spring approaches, it's time to cultivate your green thumb! The Memphis Area Master Gardeners will present a Spring Gardening Series that will help you transform your plot into a thriving, pollinator-friendly garden.

Composting - Wednesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.

Garden Pollinators - Tuesday, Feb. 20, 6 p.m.

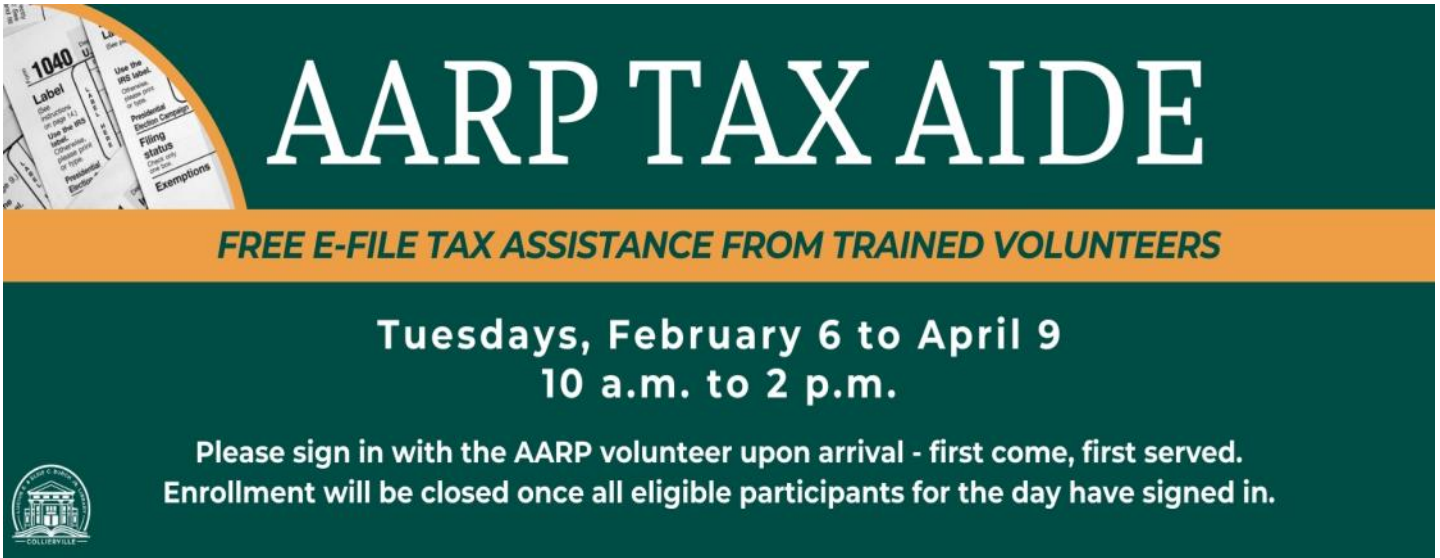
Vegetable Gardening - Wednesday, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m.

Monarch Butterflies - Wednesday, Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m.

Registration begins two weeks before each program.

About the Memphis Area Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener Program is offered by The University of Tennessee Extension. Its main goal is to increase the availability of horticultural information to improve quality of life with community garden/landscape programs. This is only possible through the training and utilization of volunteers, known as Master Gardeners. The Memphis Area Master Gardeners (MAMG) provide services to Shelby County under the supervision of the University of Tennessee Shelby County Extension Service. Visit them online at memphisareamastergardeners.org.



AARP TAX AIDE

FREE E-FILE TAX ASSISTANCE FROM TRAINED VOLUNTEERS

**Tuesdays, February 6 to April 9
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Please sign in with the AARP volunteer upon arrival - first come, first served.
Enrollment will be closed once all eligible participants for the day have signed in.

Tax Season Just Got Easier

This Spring, volunteers from AARP will be at the Library to assist patrons with completing their taxes. Patrons will be helped on a first come, first served basis beginning at 10 a.m. There will be no appointments this year.

How to Participate

Please sign in with the AARP volunteer upon arrival. Sign in will close when capacity is reached. Please bring all important documentation with you to the Library. [Visit their website for details.](#)

Tax aide will take place this year on Tuesdays, February 6 to April 9, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Halle Room.

About Tax Aide

[AARP Foundation Tax-Aide](#) is the nation's largest free filing program, and it's aimed at taxpayers who are 50 or older. It's available across the country and staffed by volunteers who are trained and certified by the Internal Revenue Service.

February 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>