

JANUARY 2026

PEW ECHO

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Hold On to the One Who Holds

“Stop doubting and believe.”

- John 20:27b

“Doubt your doubts and believe your beliefs.” I’m not sure who first said this. Look it up on the internet and you’ll find several different versions of where it comes from, or who first said it or wrote it. In one sense, you could say that it came from Jesus and what he said to Thomas following His resurrection. As one of Jesus’ disciples, Thomas had seen Jesus do many amazing things, and had heard Jesus teach many amazing things. Yet he has been given the nickname “Doubting Thomas” because, despite all this, he initially doubted what the other disciples had told him about Jesus rising from the dead. So when the Lord appears to Thomas, He challenges Thomas to stop doubting and believe.

We’re so quick to do the opposite, aren’t we? The doubts creep in, and we start to doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts. The devil is so good at planting seeds of doubt in our minds. He’s been doing it from the beginning, ever since the garden with Adam and Eve. He even tried to get Jesus to doubt, as we read in Matthew 4. None of us have perfect faith; none of us are immune to doubt. Even many of the great heroes of the faith in the Bible experienced and expressed doubts from time to time. There are times in which we go through really hard things, and we might find ourselves questioning God’s mercy, His love, His ability and willingness to answer our prayers. It is then that we must turn to God’s Word and trust in His promises. If you feel unloved, remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:39). If you feel caught off guard by an unexpected change or

challenge, remember that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). If you feel the weight of guilt from your past, remember that God wipes our sins away (Acts 3:19) and remembers them no more (Isaiah 43:25). The list could go on and on. There is a promise from God for every pressure to doubt that creeps in. The question becomes: which will we choose to focus on, our doubts or what we believe?



May our prayer today be like the words of the father in Mark 9:24 who came to Jesus seeking healing for his son. He said to Jesus, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief.” Jesus will help us overcome our unbelief as we learn to focus more on trusting Him and less on listening to doubts.

We are heading into a new year. It’s a time of both anticipation and uncertainty. There are things that we look forward to, but there are also things that we are unsure about. Which will we choose to focus on as we look ahead to the new year: our doubts, or what we believe about the promises and faithfulness of God? We don’t know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future. So let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful (Heb. 10:23). Let us take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us (Phil. 3:12). Let us hold on to the One who holds. He never leaves us or forsakes us (Deut. 31:6). He never let’s go.

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor Brad



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Dean Hanke
- 10 Karen Heidenreiter
- 12 Connie Lund
- 15 Cliff Otte
- 21 Gary Bimmel
Jeanette Meinnert
- 26 John Boge
- 27 Rick Arthur
- 30 Nancy Van Wyk
Alyse Fabian
Sharon Crivello



Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)

Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES:

- 19 Curt and Sheila Teunissen (25)

FOR THE DARK TIMES



Lighthouses are now a popular decorating theme for living rooms, calendars, cards, screen savers, towels and more. Many images are infused with shimmering light to symbolize Christian faith and hope.

Yet the purpose of a lighthouse isn't to look pretty against a sunny sky — although it does — but to illumine a ship's way beneath heavy, dark clouds or a moonless night. Indeed, the lighthouse itself doesn't even light up until its surroundings grow dark!

Surely Jesus loves to share our joys, and we praise his glory during life's bright times. But God's primary purpose for coming to live among us was to save us from the storm of sin; to illumine our path through the darkness of death, in all its forms; to be the light guiding all people safely home. Jesus' light shines for us day and night, rain or shine, to bless us with faith and hope.

WISDOM FROM A 3-YEAR-OLD



The mother of a 3-year-old girl was teaching her daughter how to pray the Lord's Prayer. After a few nights of having the girl repeat the prayer after her, the mother asked the child if she would like to pray the prayer by herself. She did pretty well until just after she prayed, "and lead us not into temptation." Instead of praying, "deliver us from evil," she

prayed, "deliver us from e-mail."

When we see all the "spam" that comes into our e-mail boxes, who can deny the child's wisdom?

FEELING BORED?

A young boy complained to his father that most of the church hymns were boring to him. They were too far behind the times, with tiresome tunes and meaningless words. The father put an end to the complaining by saying, "If you think you can write better hymns, then why don't you?"



The boy went to his room and wrote his first hymn. The year was 1690 and the teenager was Isaac Watts. "Joy to the World" and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" are among the nearly 350 hymns he wrote.

He also wrote "How Long, O Lord, Shall I Complain."

Evidently, just long enough to write his first hymn.

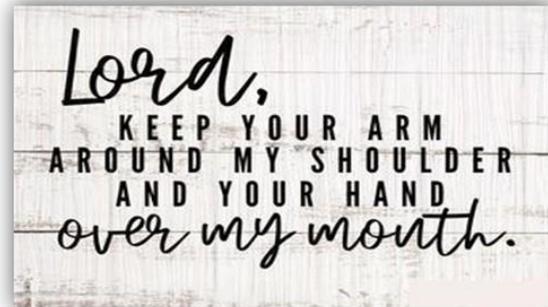
CELEBRATING EPIPHANY



Epiphany, from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means an appearance or manifestation. Christians celebrate this festival each year on January 6, the 12th day after Christmas. Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.

Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus. Because the Magi were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the light — and Savior — of the whole world.

The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle or star; a crown or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people. It's also a reminder to engage in Christian community and to heal divisions among God's children.



USHERS FOR JANUARY

Steve Stoffregen
Rick Arthur



**USHER
SCHEDULE**

GREETERS FOR JANUARY

Jan. 4
Dennis & Kris Beach

Jan. 11
Steve & Sharon Crivello

Jan. 18
Jim & Betty TenPas

Jan 26
Marty & Sherri Halverson



Dear Friends,

Thank you for praying for our **main Christmas outreach**, which we hosted with another church in the city. By God's grace, the event was a great success.

We rented meeting space in the building pictured. **160 people** attended.



We proclaimed the **Gospel** through song, testimony and the Word



Amazing seeds were sown, and now both churches will be busy with **follow-up conversations**. During the program, **fifteen people** (like Arda, Rukiye and Nisa, pictured below) indicated by a show of hands that they came to **faith in Christ in 2025**, making this their first Christmas celebration in the Lord. How special for them!

Please continue to pray for Turkey!



Love,

Brian and Dana

Avant

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[Kansas City, MO 64155](https://www.avantministries.org)

www.avantministries.org



KID'S PAGE



Q. Which servant of God was the biggest lawbreaker?

A. Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.



I am a **CHILD** of God.
I know it. I live it. I love it.

I'm Plugged Into the Cross!



Without **GOD** our week would be

Sin day
Mourning day
Tears day
Waste day
Thirst day
Fight day
Shatter day

7 days without **GOD** makes One Weak

God is great, God is good.
Let us thank him for our food.
By his hands, we are fed.
Thank you God for daily bread.
Amen.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

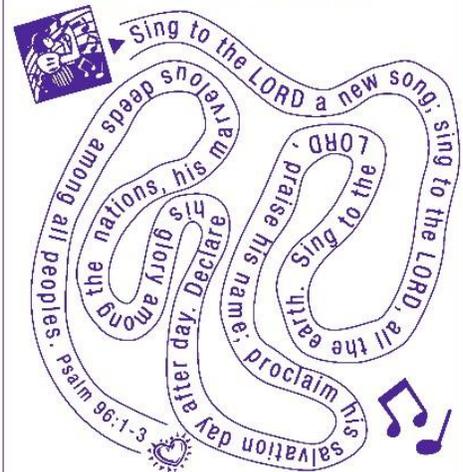
What I want to learn	What I want to try for the first time
One thing I'll do to be healthy	One thing I'll do for my family
One thing I'll do for fun	One book I'll read
One thing I'll do with friends	An act of kindness I'll practice

Just for KIDS

David's Psalm of Praise to God

When we welcome the New Year, let's not forget to praise God! In the Bible, David praised God often in his psalms.

Follow the path to read David's Psalm of Praise.



GOD'S RULES

ONLY have ONE GOD	WORSHIP HIM ONLY	Don't USE BAD words	WORK 6 days REST 1	OBEY your MOM & DAD
Never hurt ANYONE	Do not CHEAT	Do NOT Steal	Always TELL THE TRUTH	DON'T Be Jealous OF OTHER PEOPLE'S STUFF

JANUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	5 2:30pm Living Bible Study	6 1pm Dorcas Society 7pm Elders	7 6:30pm Youth Night	8 6:30pm Prayer Gathering	9 Lake Lundgren Men's Retreat	10 Lake Lundgren Men's Retreat
11 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS Lake Lundgren Men's Retreat	12 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	13 7pm Consistory	14 6:30pm CrossCenter	15	16	17
18 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	19	20	21 No Group—Leaders Co-op	22	23	24
25 9:30am Worship 10:45am POW 45 / SS	26 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	27	28 6:30pm CrossCenter	29	30	31



A Sunday school teacher was speaking to a group of four-year-olds about Jesus, Joseph and Mary. After the lesson the kids were to draw

a picture depicting their favorite part of the story. The teacher shared the pictures the children drew with the entire class. She got pictures of the Baby Jesus in the manger with animals, she got pictures of the three wise men and the like. Then she got to a picture from little Jimmy, a picture of an airplane with four people on it. She called Jimmy up to explain his picture. She told Jimmy that she could see Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus, obviously in their 'flight' to Egypt. She didn't understand why there was another man on the plane. Jimmy quickly explained, 'That's Pontius, the pilot.'



One Sunday morning the pastor noticed little Johnny was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The young man of seven had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up and stood beside him and gazing up at the plaque he said quietly, "Good morning son."

"Good morning pastor," replied the young man not taking his eyes off the plaque. "Sir, what is this?" Johnny asked.

"Well son, these are all the people who have died in the service," replied the pastor. Soberly, they stood together staring up at the large plaque.

Little Johnny's voice barely broke the silence when he asked quietly, "Which one sir, the 10:30 AM or the 6:30 PM?"

Q. What was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.