

Sunday, January 5, 2025

Epiphany



Faith Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

"Building a welcoming, nurturing faith community that is guided by Jesus and shares the Gospel."

MINISTERS

SENIOR PASTOR

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Every Member

Derek Harkins

Sylvia Bull

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

EPIPHANY PROCESSION: "We Too Have a Star to Guide Us" (Isaiah 60:1-6)

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

GATHERING HYMN: ELW 275 "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" *

GREETING

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Word: God speaks to us through scripture reading, preaching and song.

READING: see next page

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Tune - "dejlig er den himmel blå" (ELW 301)

GOSPEL READING: see next page

CHILDREN'S SERMON & STAR WORDS

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW 446 "I'm Going on a Journey" *

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING MOMENT

OFFERING SONG: ELW 302 "As with Gladness Men of Old" v. 3 *

Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION HYMNS:

WOV 646 "We Three Kings of Orient Are"

ELW 815 "I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light" *

Sending: God blesses us and sends us into the world to love and serve our neighbors.

BLESSING

SENDING HYMN: ELW 301 "Bright and Glorious is the Sky" vv. 1-5 *

DISMISSAL

**ELW = Red Hymnal; ACS = Purple Hymnal*

GOING DEEPER

- What is on your heart as you come to worship today?
- What connected with you in the sermon today?
- What challenged you?
- What prayers are on your heart today?
- What nourishment do you need from Jesus for the days ahead?
- What will you carry with you from worship this week?

READING(S)

Reading: *Ephesians 3:1-12*

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2:1-12*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 2nd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,

wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ!**

DWELLING IN THE WORD

- What words or phrases catch your attention in the reading(s)? What surprises you?
- What questions do you have?
- What might God be saying to you, or to us as a community, through the reading(s)?

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

Monday - Reflection on Isaiah 60:1-6

The lectionary appoints this poem from Isaiah because it served as a backdrop for Matthew as he wrote of the meaning of the birth of Jesus. The light becomes for Matthew the star, and the gold and frankincense are gifts that the magi present. Thus for Matthew the gifts of the magi affirm that Christ is the light that the poem from Isaiah described.

Tuesday - Connections with the Liturgy

Even when today's churches encourage parish contributions via automatic withdrawals from individuals' bank accounts, the liturgy hopes to make clear that at every service, whenever believers celebrate God's gift of grace, they make donations for those in need. Our offerings to help those in need and to pay for the ministries of the church are like the magi's gold, frankincense and myrrh: they are gifts of financial value that come in symbolic praise to God and in recollection of the death of Christ.

Wednesday - Especially for Children

Matthew says nothing about "three" magi, and both female and male maguses would be included in the plural word "magi." Thus any number of both girls and boys in your life can be asked what they would bring as gifts to an infant who everyone knows will die before old age. Children can be reminded that Holy Week is less than four months away, that the crèche is set up near the crucifix.

Thursday - Life on the Earth

Ancient peoples such as Zoroastrian priests believed that the heavenly bodies revealed the divine will, and early Christian theologians taught that God's ways and will were displayed in both nature and Scripture. Only in the last three centuries have some Christians distanced scientific discoveries from religious truth. In this text, the stars themselves bear witness to Christ, and these ancient scientists see it.

Friday - Reflection on the Gospel Reading

This reading proclaims that even as a young child, Jesus is recognized as a king of the Jews who has significance for the entire globe. Even the sky shows new light. Not only Jews, but also people from other religions see God's light in Jesus. Christians have seen their gifts to the poor and to the church as like the gifts of the magi. Herod's threat is a down payment on the cross.

Saturday - A Hymn for the Day

A fine Epiphany hymn is Nikolai Grundtvig's "Bright and glorious is the sky" (ELW 301). In 1801, Grundtvig, esteemed as the greatest Danish hymn writer, wrote this hymn with nineteen stanzas as a way to teach children the meaning of Epiphany. For Grundtvig, all the stars now beckon us to Christ. In our translation, the magi are appropriately called sages.



CHURCH
Announcements

Thank you for your offering of **\$14,477.59** for the week of December 22, and **\$27,601.74** for the week of December 29th!

Altar Flowers for the week are provided by Altar Guild. **Thank you!**

Thank you to everyone who baked cookies, both at the church and at home, helped with organization and set-up, worked the event, and came out to buy cookies for our **Cookie Walk** this year! It was a great success, and we are excited to put the money raised toward the Kitchen Fund and Sunshine Fund. We can't do this event every year without the help of all our volunteers!

Thank you to everyone that sponsored poinsettias for the Christmas season! They will be **available for pick-up** starting after the 11am service on this Sunday, January 5th.

Our **2025 Flower Chart is up!** Sign up to sponsor altar flowers (cost is usually around \$50) on a Sunday during the year for a special event, in honor or memory of someone, or just because! Look for the flower chart out in the Gathering Place.

We will be hosting a **Blood Drive on Wednesday, January 8th from 4:30pm to 7pm.** Look for links to sign up on our Facebook page, website, and using the posters on the doors and in the Gathering Place!

Please join the Men of Faith on **Thursday January 9th 2025 at 9am**, as Ben Kubischta will be conducting a **presentation on “Highways and Roads: Connecting the History of Bismarck.”** Some road and street projects in Bismarck were not complicated But, some were and some were very controversial. You will hear stories about these projects. You will learn about a project which was proposed in 1950 that if it was constructed would have had a major impact upon Bismarck today. And you will learn about five Highway Department men from Bismarck who had a major role in developing roads and bridges in the first half of the 20th Century.

Message: Pastor Sylvia Bull

Liturgy: Pastor Derek Harkins

Music: Judy Kubischta, Handbell Choir

Worship Assistants:

8:30 - Team H: John Power, Jill Power, Larry Hill, Shelley Hill, Dwight Barden, Connie Barden, Doug Johnson, Betty Johnson

CALENDAR

Monday, January 6

7:00 AA

Tuesday, January 7

9:00 Quilting

2:00 Crafts

7:00 Scouts

Wednesday, January 8

10:00 Bible Study

4:30 8th/9th Confirmation

4:30 Blood Drive

5:30 BLAST Meal

5:30 Handbells

6:00 Church School

7:00 Worship

Thursday, January 9

9:00 Men of Faith

2:00 Knit/Crochet Group

7:00 Ruth Circle

Friday, January 10

Newsletter Deadline

8:00 NA

Saturday, January 11

Sunday, January 12

8:30 Worship

9:45 5th Grade P/S

9:45 Church School

11:00 Worship

4:00 Cub Scouts

MISSION Focus

JANUARY: YOUTHWORKS

Youthworks provides short-term transitional housing and support services to homeless young adults ages 18-24. They also assist families and youth under the age of 18 as well in many different ways. For more information and ways to support this organization check out their website: youthworksnd.org. They are currently looking for menstrual supplies, hats, gloves, winter coats, scarves, new socks, diapers, baby wipes and baby formula.



Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? - Isaiah 58:6-7