

The Bell



Bergstrasse Evangelical Lutheran Church

January 2019

Worship With Us

January, 2019

Sunday, 6th – The Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord – Word & Sacrament – Healing Prayers following Worship

Texts: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Epiphany means “manifestation.” On this day we will celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles—that is, to all nations. Some Christian traditions celebrate three great epiphanies on this day: the magi’s adoration of the Christ child, Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle, in which he changes water into wine. The word and sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God’s grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst.

Sunday, 13th – The Baptism of Our Lord – Word & Sacrament

Texts: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

The Baptism of Our Lord cannot help but recall our own and all baptismal blessings. We recall and celebrate our adoption as daughters and sons, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promised company of almighty God when we “pass through the waters . . . the rivers . . . fire.” On this day the heavens open again for this assembly, and we receive the gift of the beloved Son of God in bread and wine.

Sunday, 20th – Second Sunday after the Epiphany – Word & Sacrament

Texts: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

The Sundays after Epiphany continue to celebrate the revelation of the glory of God to us as it was made known to the magi and to those on Jordan’s banks at the baptism of Jesus—today using wedding imagery. Our God rejoices over God’s people “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride.” By the power of the Spirit there are gifts galore for everyone. In Christ Jesus the best wine is saved for last. Taste and see.

Sunday, 27th – Third Sunday after the Epiphany – Word & Sacrament

Texts: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

The glory of the Lord is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of the glory of God. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

Seed Money Received for Projects

	Seed Money Collected	20% Congregation	Funds Still Needed	Project Cost
Doors	\$ 5,085	\$5,532	\$447	\$27,660
Paving Parking Lot (Church)	\$10,237	\$14,545	\$4,308	\$72,727

Funds still needed for projects \$4,755



The flower and bulletin charts for 2019 have been placed on the bulletin board.

The cost for sponsoring the altar flowers is \$30. The cost for the bulletins is \$10 per week.

January
6 cereal
13 fruit juice, canned fruit
20 bath products (bar soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet paper)
27 pasta, spaghetti sauce



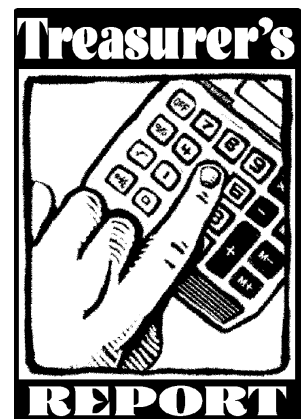
The Bell is published monthly (except a combined July-August edition) by Bergstrasse Lutheran Church
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www.bergstrasselutheran.com
Worship - 10:30 AM

The Rev. Robert Kramer, Interim Pastor
717-405-0044 (cell)

Deadline for the **February** newsletter is **January 20.**

As of 11/30/18

General Fund	\$ 19,070.50
Improvement Fund	\$ 5,993.38
Mission Plus	\$ 74,686.14
Mission Plus 2	\$ 2,730.94
Parsonage Security Dep/ Memorial Fund	\$ 11,281.29



I think you would agree with me that most of the characters in the Christmas story that gospel writers Matthew and Luke share with us experience profound disruptions in their lives.

There's Mary, the teenager with her whole future lying ahead of her. Suddenly blindsided by the news that she is going to be a mother. Her world is turned upside down in an instant. And then to top it off, her fiancé insists that she goes with him on an eighty-mile journey with a baby due any day.

There's Joseph, a conscientious, law-abiding man engaged to Mary, who is suddenly blindsided by the news that she will have a baby that he knows is not his.

There's the innkeeper in Bethlehem. Business was great. All the rooms filled with guests. I suppose with it came many demands. Room 5 needs more towels. Room 2 could use a crock of hot water. Busy, busy, busy. And in the middle of it all he is confronted with a young couple desperately needing a place to stay for the night.

There are the shepherds living in the yonder fields. The flocks are settled down for a good night's sleep when the sky suddenly explodes with a light show and heavenly singing at the top of their lungs. Good news? Yes, but please don't spook the sheep.

Yes, we have a God that specializes in disruptions, don't we? And whenever they come (notice I didn't say if they come) we can choose to ignore them or even squelch them. Or we can choose to engage in them.

The Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods, a respected writer on faith and leadership, states that the average life of a shopping center built today is fifteen years. And if the shopping center does not make radical changes (disruptions to their usual ways of doing business) at least half-way through that fifteen years it may not even last that long. He goes on to quote Geoff Clovin from an article written in the Fortune magazine that the most innovative companies embrace disruptions to the usual routines as opportunities to grow.

A question for us then might be how well does Bergstrasse respond when God's Spirit changes the routine? Does the congregation... Ignore? Squelch? Embrace?

Whenever a congregation calls a new pastor, change and disruption to the routine will happen. It may serve well to remember that life span of the shopping center model especially when change is ignored or squelched; and to embrace the change and disruption by opening ourselves to God's life-giving light and God's life-giving nourishment.

May you all have a blessed, life-changing New Year.
Pastor Bob

Mabel Bolar
 Evelyn Coldren
 John Duing
 Earl and Sandy Eshlemer
 Betty Evans
 Jean Fryberger
 Polly Gunzenhauser
 Carolyn Hibshman
 Bill Irvine
 DJ Keisling
 Darlene Kreider
 Shirley Martin
 Kendall Mumma
 Lawrence Rice
 Randy Rice
 Ellie Root
 Polly Schmuck
 Erma Snader
 Noah and Joan Stahl
 Nancy Sweigart
 Ruth Troutman
 Barbara Alexander
 Rev. LaVonne Althouse (Inez Hare's sister)
 Tracy Bear (daughter of Deb Burkholder)
 Kaye Biermann
 Halley Bittle
 Claire Brenner
 Evanna Estes (friend of Mary Duing)
 David Evans
 Kevin Ferguson (friend of Ben and Polly Gunzenhauser)
 Devin Gebhard (Cleone Rudisill's grandson-in-law)
 Rick Gerhart
 Elmer and Sheila Gockley
 Harold and Norma Good
 Earl Goshert (Jane Pittman's step-father)
 Naomi Goshert (Jane Pittman's mother)
 Ben Gunzenhauser, Jr. (Ben and Polly's son)
 Chris Horbey
 Robert L. Hornberger (Polly Schmuck's brother)
 Carolyn Houck (friend of Betty Evans)
 Orion McMahon (niece's husband of Jane Pittman)
 Caitlyn Mertz (family of Jane Pittman)
 Mark Mertz (Jane Pittman's cousin)
 Anna Mae Moyer (Pastor Bob's aunt)
 Sharon (friend of Alice Krah)
 Susan Rice
 Dana Shoemaker (friend of Ben and Polly Gunzenhauser)
 Jennifer Sikie (family of Jane Pittman)
 Jared Snyder (Gail Smith's grandson)
 Tom and June Stuber (Jane Pittman's sister and brother-in-law)
 Joe Suprik (friend of Jane Pittman)
 Cosette Sweigart (Polly Gunzenhauser's niece)
 Diana Sweigart (Kathryn Sweigart's daughter-in-law)
 Vernon Sweigart (Kathryn Sweigart's son)
 Randy Walker (friend of Chad and Kathy Landis)
 Harry Werner (friend of Sylvia Smith-Garman)
 Randy Wintersohl (Darlene Kreider's grandson)
 Miriam Wolf



Congratulations to those with January birthdays:

6 Glenn Buffenmyer
 10 Chris Weaver
 Alex Ressler
 29 Austin Landis
 31 Beth Weaver



JANUARY

Bad weather?

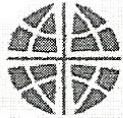
IF THERE IS A DOUBT whether worship services are being held due to weather, please call the church office at 717-733-7808. The recorded greeting will include information about services. Please hang-up after you hear that information and before the end of the recording to avoid filling the voice mailbox with blank messages.

Worship participants for January

January	6	13	20	27
Greeters	Mary Keisling	Evelyn Michael	Glenn and Almanara Buffenmyer	Lisa Conway
Lector	Cathy Feather	Bonnie Grater	Peggy Rushton-Witmyer	Lisa Conway
Acolyte				
Counters	Bonnie Grater Mary Duing	Selma Hainley Cathy Feather	Selma Hainley Cathy Feather	Earl and Sandy Eshleman
Flowers				
Bulletin				

	Ushers	Communion Ushers January 6,13,20,27	Altar Guild
January	Glenn and Almanara Buffenmyer		Jane Pittman





Lower Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Rev. Thomas E. McKee
Secretary of Synod

tmckee@lss-elca.org

OFFICIAL NOTICE: CALL OF THE 2019 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

To: The congregations and the rostered ministers of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

From: Thomas E. McKee, synod secretary

Re: Call of the 2019 Synod Assembly

This is the official notice that the 2019 Synod Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, will be held Thursday, June 6, 2019, beginning at 6:45 p.m. and continuing until Saturday afternoon, June 8, 2019. Sessions will be held in Parmer Hall of the Calvin and Janet High Center for Worship and the Performing Arts on the Messiah College Campus, Grantham, Pennsylvania. The theme of this assembly is "Hungry for God's Mission." At this assembly, we will be electing a bishop, vice president and secretary.

All Ministers of Word and Sacrament and all Ministers of Word and Service rostered in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, a lay male and a lay female elected by each congregation of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, and lay officers and members of Synod Council constitute the voting membership of this assembly. In addition, based on having more than 500 baptized members, some congregations may send a third voting member. In selecting voting members, all congregations are encouraged to consider electing youth, young adults, and persons of color or of primary language other than English.

In accordance with the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop, a special meeting of each conference will be held in January of 2019. The conferences' January assemblies' schedule can be found online at <https://www.lss-elca.org/synod-assembly/nominations/>. The voting members of the upcoming Synod Assembly shall be asked to consider a set of questions developed by the Synod Council designed to recognize the conference's understanding of this synod's mission, the issues deemed important for this synod, and the gifts desirable and necessary in a bishop. **To have full engagement in this process, congregations should identify their 2019 assembly voting members by January 1.** If congregations are unable to identify voting members by January 1, they are encouraged to send their 2018 voting members to the first conference assembly. Please note that our synod office does not need to be notified of your voting members prior to assembly registration which opens on March 1, 2019.

Because electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a key responsibility of the Synod Assembly, **our Synod Council calls us to prayerful deliberation.** As an election, it is a process governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of our synod;

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however, it is also a call process. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective both of individuals and of our synod as a whole. Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election. Resources and prayers will be posted on our website (<https://www.lss-elca.org/synod-assembly/>) within the next few weeks to be used by individuals, congregations and gatherings in our synod as we prepare for this year's assembly.

Information about the 2019 Synod Assembly including registration materials will be posted on our synod website as plans are completed. A single registration fee will register voting members for the entire assembly. To meet registration deadlines, congregations may pre-register voting members (as voting member #1, etc.) without providing personal information. Hard copies of assembly materials will be mailed only to those requesting to receive information in this manner.

Is God Calling You?

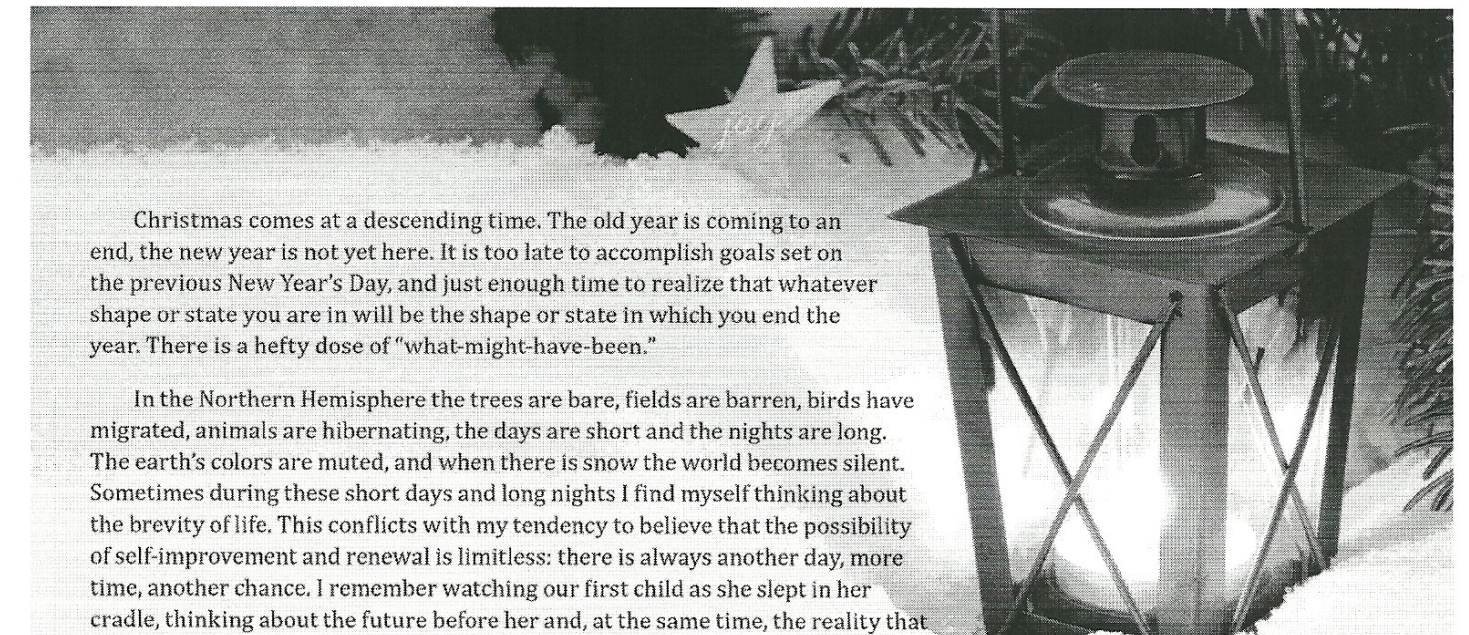
Our synod celebrates the diverse gifts of its members and asks that members consider sharing those gifts in leadership roles in this church. The Gifts Discernment Committee, a committee of Synod Council, is seeking nominees for synod vice president and synod secretary. The Nominating Committee of this synod, comprised of one member of each conference and three members of Synod Council, is seeking volunteers who are willing to be nominated for election to the Synod Council and Discipline Committee. On our website you will find the nominations handbook, a list of positions, the 2019 Nominee Information Sheet, and contact information for our Nominating Committee. Because we need your help identifying possible nominees, please share this information with members of your congregation by downloading the print-friendly bulletin insert from our website as well. To seek nomination, please complete the nomination form and return it by **January 11, 2019**. Have questions? Contact Pastor Tom McKee at tmckee@lss-elca.org or 717-652-1852, ext. 111.

As noted in this letter, a lay male and a lay female participant is to be elected by each congregation. If you are willing to represent Bergstrasse please contact a council member or Pastor Bob. The process for electing a Bishop to serve the Synod begins on January 22 with a conversation among the congregations in the North Lancaster Conference to be held at St Paul's Lutheran Church, Lititz beginning at 7:00 PM. The congregation's representatives should participate in this assembly.

Disaster Response Meeting Sunday, January 27, 6 PM

On Sunday, January 27, at 6:00 p.m. there will be a planning meeting for the 20th disaster response trip made up of local volunteers from across the Lower Susquehanna Synod! At the meeting we will share details on the dates of our upcoming trip (which are still being finalized), the location of the trip and costs associated with the trip. The meeting will be in the Community Room at Luther Acres, 600 E. Main Street in Lititz.

Following that meeting, at 7:00 p.m., there will be a presentation from the trip, just completed in November, to Puerto Rico. Everyone is invited to come out and hear the stories from our trip and to share dessert and coffee!



Christmas comes at a descending time. The old year is coming to an end, the new year is not yet here. It is too late to accomplish goals set on the previous New Year's Day, and just enough time to realize that whatever shape or state you are in will be the shape or state in which you end the year. There is a hefty dose of "what-might-have-been."

In the Northern Hemisphere the trees are bare, fields are barren, birds have migrated, animals are hibernating, the days are short and the nights are long. The earth's colors are muted, and when there is snow the world becomes silent. Sometimes during these short days and long nights I find myself thinking about the brevity of life. This conflicts with my tendency to believe that the possibility of self-improvement and renewal is limitless: there is always another day, more time, another chance. I remember watching our first child as she slept in her cradle, thinking about the future before her and, at the same time, the reality that there would be an end. The Ash Wednesday declaration, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," became more pointed and more poignant. The cradle-to-grave progression is our path; the inevitable decline of our strength.

"As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more" (Psalm 103:15).

Maybe this is why the Christmas season can be so fraught. Of course, there is anticipation and celebration, but there is also pressure and stress. Perhaps we are trying to greet the Lord's birth with our best efforts (when I was a girl, Christmas preparations were not complete until the silver was polished, and that job fell to me), but desperation can creep into the urgency to get Christmas right, to hold back the night. "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight" (ELW, 279). This is freight that Christmas can't carry when Christmas depends on us.

But Christmas also comes at an opportune time. God did not come to us that first Christmas when we were at the top of our game or when the world was perfect. Even the circumstances of Jesus' birth were a sharp reminder that all was not well – forced migration to Bethlehem, no room for the young family, born in a stall. Emmanuel – God with us – came to us and comes to us precisely at the time when our need is greatest. Our attempts to bring about perfection actually get in the way of receiving the gift. When we try to fit into an unrealistic ideal of who we ought to be instead of welcoming God into our real self, no matter how messy, then what is left on the 13th day of Christmas? Fatigue, certainly, but also the dull acceptance that life moves from cradle to grave.

On Christmas, God has reversed the cradle to grave progression. The angel announced to the shepherds:

"I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: for to you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

Here is the new reality. Here is the truth. Our lives are not a meaningless trudge from cradle to grave, but a joyful journey – true and lasting joy – from grave to cradle. All our brokenness and death meet life and healing and hope in the child in the manger. His cradle defeats the grave. We are loved. We are alive. Now we are free to greet this holy season.

Merry Christmas, dear church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.