

# Our Family

Hope Lutheran Monthly Newsletter

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## *From the Pastor*

Epiphany is one of the Feast days of the Church year we tend not to talk about that much, but it has had a long history in the Church. Observance of Epiphany on Jan 6 probably preceded Christmas by about two decades. Although, this is not as impressive as it might sound since a heretical group in Egypt started it by observing the baptism of Jesus around 200 AD. (By contrast, the annunciation of Gabriel to Mary as March 25 started about 220 AD. Christmas started sometime after this when people used Dec 25, nine months after the annunciation, as the birth of Jesus.) The Christian Church started celebrating of the baptism of Jesus before 361 AD. The Greek-speaking Church in the East observed Jan 6 as the baptism and birth of Jesus (taking Luke's statement that Jesus was about 30 when he began his ministry to mean he was exactly thirty at the day of his baptism, Lk 3:23). The Latin-speaking Church in the West celebrated the birth (Dec 25) and baptism (Jan 6) of Jesus separately.

Over time, the Latin Church (which Lutherans are rooted in) used the time between the birth and baptism of Jesus to symbolize his childhood. This is reflected in the scripture readings for the Sundays in the Christmas season which include the dedication of baby Jesus at the temple and the coming of the Magi. The period between Christmas and Epiphany is known as the twelve days of Christmas. The season of Epiphany begins after Jan 6 and observes the growth of Jesus' ministry following his baptism which supposedly happened on Jan 6.

For the Latin Church, the visitation of the Magi became the highlight of the early childhood of Jesus and the main point of observance on Jan 6 instead of the baptism of Jesus. This change resulted in celebrating Jesus' baptism on the first Sunday after Epiphany. We know the visitation of the Magi occurred a decent length of time after the birth of

Jesus, though, because: the dedication of Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem was done without fear of King Herod, the smallest price for the dedication was paid (Lk 2:24) which would not have been done if the Magi offered Christ gold (Mt 2:11), and when Herod was sure the Magi were not coming to tell him where Jesus was, he ordered children in Bethlehem two years old or younger to be killed instead of only newborns (Mt 2:16). It is possible that Mary and Joseph spent a long time in Bethlehem, especially if the star of Bethlehem appeared at the moment of Christ's birth. The Magi would have been travelling for months if they originated in Persia, Babylon, and Arabia as certain Church traditions claim.

Why is Epiphany important for us? Concerning the visitation of the Magi, Epiphany is important because it marks when wise men from nations outside of Israel recognized Jesus as a legitimate king. Jesus is not king of the Jews only but the king of the whole world. All peoples look to him for their salvation, whatever nationality they happen to be. This fulfills the prophecy found in Isaiah 60:1-7 where a great light appears to us so we might come into the light of the world, bearing offerings like gold and frankincense. Concerning the baptism of Jesus, Epiphany is important because this is when Jesus is anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit for his official ministry. Someone is anointed when they are to be a king, a priest, or, on occasion, a prophet. Celebration of the baptism of Jesus marks when we come together unto our king who was dedicated to our salvation. He now reigns over us as Lord that we may find salvation in the kingdom of God through baptism into Christ.

Traditionally, house blessings are done during the season of Epiphany as an annual event. As the Magi came into the home of the Christchild to bless him, pastors come into your home to bless you. Rather than giving you gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (not too sure how many pastors can afford

that), your pastor brings to you the word of Jesus that our Lord might dwell with you in your home. The prayers in a house blessing service rejoice that our Lord has come to be among us and request that the house in which you dwell may be dedicated in good service to him.

As we head into January, I encourage you to think about the Feast of Epiphany as a way to remember how our Lord should be revered in this world. He should not only be present in word but also in our daily actions inside and outside the home. May our God lead us in His Spirit to welcome all people into His grace and salvation, and to find comfort in knowing our Saviour is among us at all times.

God bless,  
Pastor Adam Chandler

### *From the Worship Committee*

As we leave the Christmas Season in our worship and enter Epiphany, I am reminded of the soulful Taize hymn 'Christe Jesu Lumen Cordium'. Jesus is the light of the world, and without His guiding light, we would indeed be lost. This hymn will be the opening meditation for one of the services during Epiphany, and perhaps we can include it as an opening hymn as well for all to sing. All Taize hymns contain very simple melody lines, meant to be repeated several times so that we can close our eyes and 'internalize' the chant both individually, and as a Community in Christ. Chanting is one of the oldest forms of musical worship, going back to the Gregorian Chants. There is a beautiful simplicity in chants, and they are truly an example of 'less is more'. As we start the New Year, it will be good to uncomplicate our lives a bit, and singing these simple chants is a wonderful way to help us immerse in 'the word' and 'worship'.

Yours in Christ,  
Barbara

### *Stop, Look and Listen*

*Stop your busyness, Look out at the world, Listen to your heart*

Stopping what you are doing, is different than stopping your busyness. Stopping and thinking about how, what, and when you do anything, as my niece once told me, is working not harder, but smarter. The Scandinavian term is mindfulness. The Bible tells us to "be still". Whatever way you define the action, the result is the same. When I get in a rut or stall about something, I look to people that I view as my mentors, most of whom are solid in their faith. They have already figured out how to spend their time purposely. These people seem to be able to fit in caring for other people, serving our God in our church or our community, taking time for studying the Bible and having devotions, and being still or at peace. This is all in the midst of their daily tasks.

Looking out to the world around us will reconnect us with nature to soothe our frayed edges, see the cares and needs of others to make better choices for the use of our time, and do selfcare so that we refresh ourselves with the Word and better serve the Lord. When God created the world, it was created with complexity and integration. There are some intricacies that we are still learning about nature. One of these is a new secular spa trend called "forest bathing". The clients peacefully wander through a forested area and literally breathe in the healing power of nature. Looking outside of ourselves towards other people and then contributing to their needs, will mentally and emotionally allow healing of our own wounds. Jesus demonstrated the need for retreating from care of His sheep. He showed us that by resting and praying, we will be renewed in our faith and trust.

Listening to our heart or inner voice and then using the gifts given by God, helps us to find good solutions for our issues. To me, my inner voice is planted there by the Holy Spirit. At baptism, we are gifted with spiritual gifts. In Colossians 3:12, we, as His chosen people, are to clothe ourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. All are bound together with God's love. There are other gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy,

distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different tongues, and the interpretations of tongues, which are also given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, God equips us with the tools to stop, look, and listen.

*Give thanks to our Lord, for He is good.*

Louise  
Evangelism

*"To do list": we all have one and here are some suggestions for the coming year!*

Clear out your cupboards, drawers, closets, and storage areas and what to do with what you take out of them!

- used stamps are collected in a round box in the foyer and sent to Trinity in Vancouver to support missions

- used clothing, shoes and fashion accessories that no longer work for you can be deposited in the clothing bin, in our parking lot, to financially, through the sales of goods at Sally Ann stores, support Vancouver Children's Hospital Auxiliary and our local Salvation Army programs. Donations are picked up monthly by a Salvation Army truck in our parking lot. By the way, our neighbours are often seen dropping off donations. When thanking them, they thank us for providing the bin as a place to donate goods.

- extra items found around the house including books no longer useful to us, can be dropped off at ReStore to support low cost housing or Salvation Army or WIN (transition housing for women in need of safety). WIN donation bags can be picked up to fill and drop back off at the Hillside Customer Desk on the Shelbourne side near Shopper's Drugs.

- extra fabric or wool/yarn, ask Deborah or Theodora for needs, to use to make mitts or toques for Our Place or baby caps for the infant ward at VGH and quilts for charity

- canned foods etc, un-opened and not past the expiry date that you are not going to use, dropped off in a Mustard Food Bank bin (one at Tulip Noire on Oak Bay Ave,)

- a bag of empty recyclable containers can be donated at donation bins in front of bottle recycling stations

- Recycling BC online will have locations for drop-offs for most things

If you have need for assistance, please call Louise Rushton 250 592 6048 Evangelism Board.

Other "could do's" include:

- make a will,

- fill out a funeral arrangement form, available from the church office or Pastor

- chat with Pastor or an Elder about a subject that is weighing heavy on your heart or mind and then confess, pray and receive forgiveness

- consider your finances, skills and time and make a commitment or increase, to your church

- with PPC elections happening in May 2022 or positions in need of filling, ie spare teller, scripture reader, handyperson, Altar Guild volunteer or sewing group member, there may be some way that you would like to serve the Lord at Hope, for specific jobs or on a scheduled time

(Who to speak with about this last item? Pastor, Theodora, the office assistant, or any of the Elders or PPC members would love to listen to your suggestions of assistance or direct you to the person to speak to about it.)

- plan to attend Theology On Tap to find out what it's all about, the first Saturday of the month at 7:30; watch for the announcement for the next location

- check your contact info in the 2021 Directory and phone or email the office with any changes, by Feb 1st. Please, with your permission, include an alternate contact person and info if you live alone. Also, indicate an alternative means of communication, that you prefer, ie Messenger.

- phone at least one person, in our church, once a month, to "check in" to see how they are doing or just to talk

- check out Hope's Bible Study groups in person or Online, by tuning in to the worship services or studies or devotions live stream or online at Face Book or YouTube, if you are not already doing so. Please leave a comment or smiley emoji if you wish, as encouragement for the church to continue to offer this service. Contact the office or Pastor if assistance is needed

- contribute to a LWML-C Mite box, which funds local and around-the-world missions

- adopt an additional mission to contribute to and/or pray for regularly

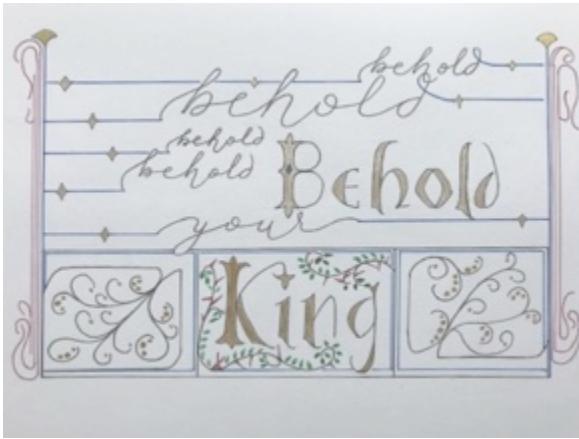
-consider "Home" on your donations envelope, to be a local mission, as our church cares for its congregation by providing a place of worship, instruction, counselling and prayer.

-pray for, encourage and visit with our Pastor  
-pray, pray without ceasing, the Bible tells us, for whatever or whoever you feel is in need of prayer.

God's blessings on all your choices of ways to serve and honour our Lord.

### Greetings from the Darrahs

(A shortened letter from Barbara Darrah)



Dear Friends at Hope,

We are always happy to hear news from Hope.

We care for Dale's mom (99) and my dad (95) to help keep them safe and comfortable. Due to a fall, Mom is now in "a perfect retirement home with full services."

God has blessed us. She is happy and we have peace of mind.

My dad is in physical and mental decline. He stays in his home, but would be better in a care facility. I make BIG prayers that he changes his mind and allows us to move him to a better situation.

We are very happy at Riverbend Lutheran Church. We attend the Pastor's Bible study Sundays and on Monday nights are a part of a zoom study group. We just finished Revelation and it was wonderful. Our attendance at RLC is limited by restrictions but we are still able to attend. Over Christmas we have 5 services to accommodate the demand. A nice problem but tiring for our Pastor.

Please pass on a Merry Christmas to any others at Hope that might remember us and wish Bert a Happy Birthday on the 25th.

In Christ,  
Barbara

*God's Blessing to everyone  
with January birthdays!*

### Hope History Quiz



As we marked another anniversary of our church on Dec. 29th, a pop quiz has been suggested!

1. Which two women, in our church, made the beautiful blue Advent paraments?
2. Who commissioned the first four stained glass windows?
3. Who started our chimes music group?
4. Did our congregation ever have real Christmas trees in the sanctuary, and if so, who donated them?
5. Who was our first organist at Hope?

The answers will be in February's newsletter! Have fun with these! Any suggestions for upcoming questions can be emailed to Louise.

Theology on Tap, on Sat, January 15th, at 7:30 pm. The central location, this time, is at the Fifth Street Bar and Grill on Hillside, near Quadra St. Please join Pastor and others for lively conversation. There is a good menu for ordering a sip, an appy or a meal.

2021 in Review



# Children's Corner

## What is "The Epiphany of Our Lord"?

The word "epiphany" (pronounced ee-PIF-uh-nee) comes from the Greek word meaning "manifestation." Jesus was made known to all people simply by being born. If we had been alive back then, we could have actually reached out and touched Jesus! He was real, and the evidence was in His birth!

## Why do we celebrate Epiphany?

Epiphany is the third part of the Christmas season. During this special season in the Church Year, we remember the visit of the Wise Men. Traditionally, this visit is celebrated on Jan. 6.

Epiphany also brings to mind many other important events in Jesus' life. For example, we remember Jesus' Baptism, the star that guided the Wise Men, and most importantly, His birth! Wow! There sure is a lot happening after Christmas!

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Colour the Three Wise Men

## Epiphany Crossword

### Across

1. Another name for the three wise men
2. The jealous king who reigned at the time of Jesus birth.
3. Bethlehem is in the land of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Magi came from the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. They followed the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

1. The three kings gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The three kings paid homage to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The wise men were warned in a \_\_\_\_\_ not to return to Herod.

