

Our Family

Hope Lutheran Monthly Newsletter

January 2023

Volume 13 No. 01

From the Pastor

A blessed New Year to you all. May the Lord guard the going out of your 2022 and the coming in of your 2023 to secure you in your way forth forevermore (cf. Ps 121:8).

There have been many things going on at Hope Lutheran Church this past year. You might say there has not been anything too different at the church, but there really has been a lot that has gone on. I will leave a fuller summary of all the particulars—the good and the ill—for the newsletter in February in preparation for our Congregation Meeting on Feb 19, but for now I will focus on what has been happening at Hope.

God's Word has been proclaimed in worship and Bible studies, and the administration of the sacraments has continued. You might say this is business as usual for a congregation, and you would certainly be right. Yet, it is important to note that these things are necessary to the faith. In the foundational document of Lutheranism—the Augsburg Confession—the Christian Church is defined as the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. If we ceased to have God's Word and Sacraments, we would cease to be the Church of God. Therefore, it is always important to have these means of God's grace.

In the past year, it was not always easy to have the Word and the Sacraments because, at the beginning of 2022, we still retained pandemic restrictions within congregational practices. Thankfully, they have become more relaxed than the previous year, but they were nonetheless constricting. As we look forward to 2023, let us look to the continuing grace our Lord gives us and remember that He will never suspend the promises He has made.

Come whatever may, our Lord will always uphold us in the salvation of Jesus Christ. He will always forgive us our sins when we confess them unto Him (1 John 1:8-9). He will always guard our salvation in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5). He will always be calling us by name that we may know we are His, which is why we return time and time again to the Word and Sacraments; they are constant offerings of the forgiveness and salvation we have in Christ Jesus.

As we contemplate our challenges in the congregation (again, look for the summary of all this in February's newsletter), let us always return to the grace given us by the Lord through the Word and Sacrament, which are just as effective in applying salvation to us today as they were last year, the year before that, and all the time since they were first instituted by our Lord Himself. While nothing may be terribly different in terms of what we are doing, God is always bringing the dead to life, week after week, through the forgiveness of sins. So this year, let us continue gathering week after week to enjoy the great gifts of our Lord.

God Bless,
Pastor Adam Chandler



Epiphany: From Darkness to Light, Christ has come!

Jesus is the Light of the World! Light, in our church this past Advent and Christmas season, shone from the candles, the lights on the tree, even from the sanctuary lights shining through the beautiful stained glass windows during evening Advent and Christmas Eve services! Jesus arrived during the night in a small stable, heralded by a host of angels and with a bright star in the sky marking His location! During the darkest time of the year, while families and individuals were travelling—many far from their homes—to register their names for the government, the Light of the World arrived with heavenly fanfare!

An epiphany is defined as, “a moment of sudden revelation or insight” or “an illuminating discovery” (Google). The Christian definition is the “manifestation of a divine or supernatural being, of Christ, to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi”.

“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to

Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.” Matthew 2:1–12 (NIV)

Events around Jesus' birth were surrounded with God's light! The shepherds left their flocks, after falling down from the brightness of the heavenly chorus, to go find the Light of the World and bow down to worship Him. In the heavens, a new star was of such brilliance, that it led the Magi from faraway lands, to follow it and then worship an infant, gifting Him with precious gifts and homage worthy of a king.

For us Christians, Epiphany is both an “illuminating” re-discovery every year and a celebration of Jesus Christ, given to us by God, to be our Saviors, in the flesh.

Jesus is a light to bring us out of the darkness of sin. He is a light to guide us, to show us how to stay on God's path of righteousness. He also wants this light to be reflected in us.

In Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV), Jesus tells the people during the Sermon on the Mount, right after the Beatitudes, that “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to the whole house. In the same way, let your

light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Jesus tells us to do good works so that the world may see God through us; whenever we are kind or generous or helpful, with words or actions, to others, people see the light of Jesus. And we also give thanks to God for His help in being able to serve one another.

So, let your light shine in the world's darkness as you go about your day, so that others will know the love of our Saviour and "praise our Father in heaven!"

Louise

From the Worship Committee

On January 8th, our hymn of the day is "All Christians Who Have Been Baptized", number 596 in our hymnal. This hymn was written by one of our heritage Lutheran hymn composers, Paul Gerhardt, in the 1600's. We indeed have a long heritage, and it is good to remind ourselves of this fact through the many steadfast hymns that have endured over time. Take a moment to read the poetry of the verses before the worship service, and to discover the strength and reassurance of the words. They are powerful.

This hymn is based on the tune "Nun Freut Euch", written in the mid-1500's, which roughly translates to "Rejoice, and Be Happy". This same tune is used for a few other Lutheran hymns—492, 556, and 568—all of which celebrate our Christian hope for life eternal.

During the month of January, we demonstrate hope and happiness through our worship music to offset the bleakness of the winter months, to celebrate the joy of our Lord's birth, to welcome the New Year, and to remember that Jesus is the Light of the World.

Our chime rehearsals continue Saturdays at 3 pm. New chimers welcome!

Bella Voci rehearsals continue Thursdays at 3:30 pm. New singers welcome!

Blessings to all,
Barbara

Living Hope Christian Church

For the past couple of months, Living Hope Christian Church has been using our building for their worship services. This is a small Baptist congregation who are mostly Filipino because they are serving immigrants and students from the Philippines in the Victoria area. They invited the congregation to join them for their Christmas potluck on Dec 11 (the reason why the basement has been decorated so nicely for December), so I took them up on their invitation. Several of the Living Hope parishioners expressed their great thanks to me for Hope Lutheran giving them a place to worship. For them, this was an answer to prayer. For us, we can thank the Lord that He called us to assist this congregation. While we are not in altar and pulpit fellowship with their group, we can definitely pray for them in Christ's name and share a meal as brothers and sisters in Christ.



Now, many of us Lutherans might be curious as to what Baptists believe and in what regard we have fellowship with them, especially if they are sharing our building. The easiest way to explain

this may be going through the parts of the Small Catechism to show differences in what Lutherans consider core beliefs.

We agree on the Ten Commandments, although they will use a different numbering system than we do. They also follow the Eastern division while Lutherans follow the Latin division, but this is not a significant difference.

There is more significant difference between us and the Baptists on the Apostles' Creed. Thankfully, faithful Baptists will be able to confess the Creed as the correct understanding of the Trinity (which means they are not heretics) but Baptists are non-credal. This means Baptists tend to not recite the historic creeds. If you attend a Living Hope Church's service, they will not have the Creed in it but they still profess belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Lord's Prayer is the same, although I have yet to hear it prayed in a Baptist service (not that I've attended many) in favour of praying many other prayers.

Now, the Office of the Keys is a major area of difference. The Baptist faith has a "lower" view of the clergy. Pastors are not called to forgive sins in Confession or the Sacraments, only proclaim the Word of God, which is also the duty of every Christian. This notion may find its way into worship services where laypeople will often be called to have a message and the pastor does not always preach despite leading the service.

Baptism is also a subject of significant difference. Lutherans believe the scriptures teach that God works through the means of water and the word to give the Holy Spirit to

forgive and renew us in faith. Baptists believe baptism with water is a good work done by a believer to publicly confess that they already have faith. It is not viewed as God's work for salvation but a confession; therefore, since infants are unable to confess faith, Baptists reject infant baptism.

The last section of the Small Catechism is the Lord's Supper which is also understood quite differently by Baptists. Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that Jesus used the words of institution to make his body and blood present in bread and wine for us to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins. Baptists believe that the Lord's Supper is only a memorial meal where they remember what Christ has done. There is no presence of the body and blood for them. Traditionally, Baptists have also been a dry denomination so many Baptist congregations do not use wine but grape juice in their suppers.



To sum all this up: Lutherans and Baptists agree on the Trinity, Christ being fully God and fully man, and salvation by grace alone. This is the core of the Christian faith and must be confessed to be in the Christian Church. However, Lutherans and Baptists disagree as to how God saves us by grace through means, that is, the Word and Sacrament. Therefore, while we can and should welcome them as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are not in altar and pulpit fellowship (where we can share preachers and sacraments) because we disagree on what is at the altar and the pulpit. "A Simple Explanation of Christian Denominations" booklets are in the narthex if you would like to read more.

Pastor Adam Chandler



Sewing Group

Our Sewing Group will resume to meet starting Thursday, January 12th. If you want to try something new, come join us – sewing experience not required. On the third Thursday of the month, we continue to sew Heart Pillows for the heart patients in the Royal Jubilee Hospital.

The LWML-C women of Redeemer and Hope shone Jesus' light onto local organizations and across the world with donations of bedding, children's quilts, as well as children's toques, mitts, and socks. Organizations that received our donations included the Esquimalt Neighbourhood Centre, the Fernwood Community Centre's Family Program, as well as Compassionate Warehouse (and an affiliated group, Canada Comfort Society) whose current shipments are to the Ukraine.



Flight 2023

Hello and Welcome to Flight 2023. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destruction devices: pity, anger, selfishness, and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away. Should you lose your positive Attitude under pressure during the flight, reach up and pull down a

prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith. There will be No Baggage allowed on this flight. God, our captain, has cleared us for takeoff. Destination GREATNESS!


Wishing you a New Year filled with New Hope, New Joy, and New Beginnings. Stay Blessed and Welcome in 2023.

This message was shared with me, and I am passing it on to you.

In His Service
Deborah

SIGN UP, SIGN UP, EVERYBODY SIGN UP

Get your pencils out! The sign-up sheets for after-service coffee and flowers are in the Narthex ready for you to step forward over the coming year. Please remember that these are excellent ways to share your talents and honour our Lord in service to one another.



LIBRARY

Did you know we have a library? It is located by the elevator, opposite the mailboxes. Check out the books, magazines, and videos.

Church History

Do you have a historical tidbit or photo to share? Send us a brief note and we will include it in the newsletter. For example, did you know that Richard Uhl has been playing the piano/organ at Hope for 60 years? Thank you, Richard!



From the invisible photographer

2022 in Review

Children's Corner and for those Young at Heart

Is Epiphany the end of Christmas season?

The Feast of Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th and concludes the 12 days of Christmas. It is also referred as "Three Kings Day", the day when Jesus was revealed as the saviour of the world.



What comes after Epiphany?

The First Sunday after Epiphany celebrates the Baptism of our Lord. This is important as it marks the beginning of His mission to save the world from sin through his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Scripture says, Jesus' Baptism was one of the many things He did to "fulfill all righteousness."



Jesus had a big job ahead of Him when He was born! If you really think about it, Jesus was born to die on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. But before He died, He lived a perfect life under God's Law. As a man, Jesus took the place of mankind under the Law and fulfilled it. That means that for every time we failed to keep the Law, Christ succeeded!

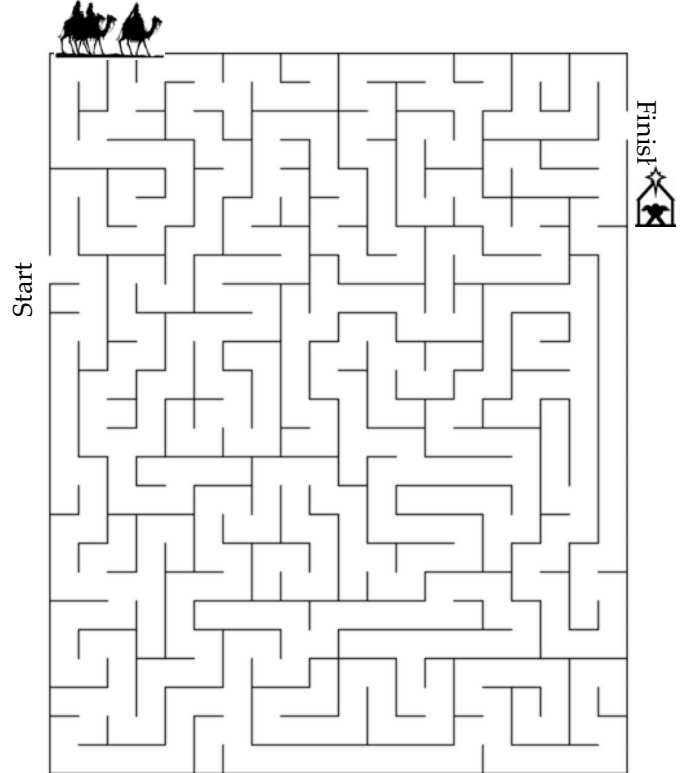
The Transfiguration of our Lord marks the end of the Epiphany Season. The word "transfigure" means change form or appearance. In Matthew 17, we learn about Jesus' transfiguration. Jesus led Peter, James and John up a high mountain, and when they got there His appearance changed right before

their eyes. His face became as bright as the sun and His clothes as white as light.

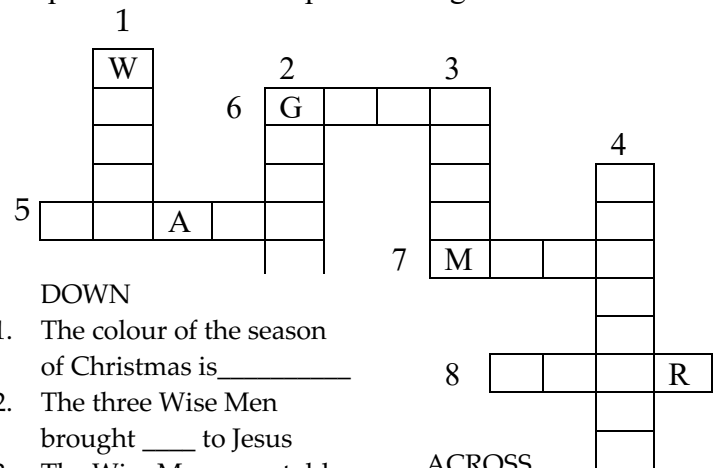
"I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord"

Isaiah 63:7

Have a **BLESSED NEW YEAR**



Complete the crossword puzzle using the word bank



- DOWN
- The colour of the season of Christmas is _____
 - The three Wise Men brought ____ to Jesus
 - The Wise Men were told in a _____ not to return to Herod
 - The church season we are now in is ____

- ACROSS
- The ____ of the Epiphany is on January 6th
 - The three Wise Men brought _____, frankincense and myrrh
 - Another name for the three Wise Men is ____
 - The three Wise Men followed a ____ to Jesus

Gold	Magi	Star
Dream	White	Feast
Gifts	Epiphany	