



THE LAMPLIGHTER

Christ Lutheran Church Newsletter

ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14

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JAN/FEB 2024

FLIGHT 2024 INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to Flight 2024.

We are all systems go, to take off into the New Year.

Please make sure your Loving Heart, Positive Attitude, and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position.

All self-destruct devices: anger, pity, resentment, selfishness, and pride are to be switched off at this time.

All negativity, discouragement, and hurt are to be set free.

Should your Positive Attitude be lost under pressure during this flight, reach up to pull down a prayer. Prayers are automatically activated by Faith. Once Faith is fully activated, you can then assist other passengers struggling with their Faith.

This is a baggage-free flight.

Our Captain, Lord Jesus Christ, has cleared us for take-off.

Destination—Awesomeness!

May you be blessed with a New Year overflowing with infinite love, abundance, wellness, success, serenity, grace, and joy!

Buckle up with a loud AMEN!!!

Happy Birthday

01/01 Donna Smith
 01/02 Wendy Cain &
 Wanda DuFrain
 01/10 Bob Newhard
 01/23 Cassandra Moyer
 01/27 Greg Centanne
 02/03 Barbara Davy,
 02/12 Diane Shoeman
 02/21 Eddie Harman
 02/23 Dakota
 Dembishack

Happy Anniversary

01/10 Al and D. Yoder



EPIPHANY

The **Christian season of Epiphany** is celebrated around the world and marks the end of the 12 days of Christmas. This important feast day falls on January 6 and is a commemoration of the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the season of **Epiphanytide**, which lasts until the beginning of Lent. During this season, the focus is on the manifestation of Jesus to the world and his mission to save humanity.

The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word 'epiphaneia' which means manifestation, and refers to the manifestation of Jesus to the world. The celebration of Epiphany can be traced back to the Eastern Church in the 4th century, where it was originally celebrated as the birth and baptism of Jesus. It wasn't until the 5th century that the Western Church began to celebrate the visit of the Magi on this day.

For many Christians, Epiphany is a time to reflect on the manifestation of Christ and his divinity. It is also a time to consider the importance of the Magi's visit and the symbolic gifts they brought to the infant Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts are believed to represent Jesus' kingship, divinity, and death, respectively.

Epiphany, also known as "Theophany," is one of the oldest Christian festivals, dating back to the 4th century. The word "epiphany" comes from the Greek word "epiphaneia," meaning manifestation, appearance or revelation. The history of Epiphany is rooted in the Eastern Orthodox Church, where it was initially celebrated as a single event encompassing the birth, baptism, and first miracle of Jesus Christ (at the wedding in Canaan). We know of the Greek Orthodox Epiphany celebration here in Tampa Bay as young men dive in the gulf waters of Tarpon Springs for a cross blessed by the bishop that they may receive blessings in the coming year.

One interesting tradition associated with Epiphany, particularly in the Southern U.S. and many Latin American countries is the sharing of the King Cake. The King Cake is a sweet pastry that is made in the shape of a crown, usually circular or oval shaped, symbolizing the never ending circle of life and God's infinite love. It is decorated with the colors of the Three Wise Men: purple (justice), green (faith), and gold (power). Inside the cake, a small figurine of a baby is hidden, and whoever finds it is said to have good blessings for the year ahead.

The seasons of Christmas and Epiphany remind us of the central belief of our faith, which is the birth, life, and teachings of Jesus Christ. We reflect on our faith, give thanks, and renew our commitment to follow Jesus' example. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, while Epiphany is the commemoration of His manifestation as the Son of God to the world. Put another way, Christmas emphasizes the incarnation of Jesus Christ, highlighting His human nature, while Epiphany emphasizes His divinity, highlighting His role as the Son of God.

Christmas and Epiphany also share a common symbol--the star, which long ago guided the wise men to Jesus, and which guides us still today to Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Come let us worship and bow down before Jesus as Lord, King and Savior as did the Magi; and, let us continue to follow that star to the Perfect Light.

JANUARY NOTES & EVENTS

Christmas 2023 is “in the books” as some say. And, it’s fitting to give some kudos to folks for making the season beautiful and meaningful at Christ Lutheran.

The Bible Study, “Prophecy Fulfilled”, held as a “lunch and learn” session each Wednesday at noon, set us on our Advent journey. We studied the prophecies laid out in the Old Testament by prophets Malachi, Issiah, and Michal, marveling at the detail of their foretelling of the birth of Christ and the references to the in the New Testament chronicling the Christmas Story we love. Many thanks to Pastor John for leading us in this study and to the “soup makers”, Ramona Cruz, Deacon Donna, and June Kopman.

Our Sanctuary was adorned in greenery, with the Chrismon trees, wreath, and creche—all loving made by CLC members past and present. It never looked more beautiful. Again, it took many willing hands to set everything up, change the paraments, ready the candelabra, and bring on the poinsettias. Thanks to all who helped (both at the start of Advent and in packing everything away). A special thank you to Debbie Woodell for serving as appointed horticulturist and kept the poinsettias fresh, watered, and temperature controlled in a makeshift nursery in Pastor’s office for two weeks before Christmas. The poinsettias were beautiful this year, vibrant red color, full and lush. Twenty plus folks donated plants in memory or honor of loved ones and to the Glory of the new-born Savior. Many thanks for your generosity.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight and Christmas Day services were incredible worship experiences enhanced by beautiful special music. Kudos indeed to our musician Karen Benjey who organized the CLC ensemble choir and provided organ and piano accompaniment to all the special music. The ensemble choir (12 strong) did a choral prelude anthem, “O Come O Come Emmanuel”, and the beautiful, soaring “O Holy

Night”. Monique Rigby sang a marvelous solo medley of “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” and “Joy to the World”, and a Smith & Scopel Quartet (minus Lisa who got sick on Christmas Eve) sang “Now We Sing of Christmas”. Luckily, we had a musician friend of Karen’s, Andy, who added to the festivity, playing trombone and “subbing” for Lisa to make a quartet. Great work everyone!

Cheryl Hughes again led the CLC bell choir in preparing and playing the favorite “Carol of the Bells”. The bell choir always gets a workout of Christmas Eve, accompanying all the beautiful carols from “O Come All Ye Faithful” to “Joy to the World”. Thank you, Cheryl, for all you do every week to enhance our worship experience.

Linda Macy was again able to join us with her beautiful violin music for the Christmas Day service of lessons and carols. What a wonderful accompaniment to all the carols! Linda also provided the violin accompaniment to the special music that day—“Gesu Bambino”—with Karen on piano and vocal by Donna Smith. We are so blessed to have Linda lend her musical talent and effort to us throughout the church year.

And, to you Pastor John, we give heartfelt thanks for your preaching of the Word, throughout Advent and the Christmas season. Your passion for the Lord and your strong faith are evident in each and every homily/sermon you give.

December also brought the special congregational meeting to approve the CLC 2024 budget and elect our council members for 2024. Many thanks to Lisa Scopel, treasurer for all her work in preparing the budget. Heidi Shute and Kathy Brewer were elected to the council. The 2024 CLC Council is Dave Besel, Marge Stone, Don Eelman, Greg Centanne, Rob Scopel, Heidi Shute and Kathy Brewer.

JANUARY SAVE THE DATE!

Congregational Annual Meeting—Jan 21 after the worship service. Pot-luck luncheon before the meeting.

What Are The Symbols Of Lent And What Is Their Meaning?

Lent is a forty-day season spent in preparation for the highest holy days of our Christian faith, the Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. Over the centuries many symbols have evolved that represent key spiritual aspects of this holy season. Some are familiar, others might surprise you.

Ashes. In the Old Testament ashes represent death and sorrow for sins. Ashes serve as a stark reminder of human mortality. In biblical times, once people admitted their sins they covered themselves with sackcloth and ashes. On Ash Wednesday ashes are put on our forehead in the Sign of the Cross with one of two statements: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel" or "Remember you are dust and unto dust you will return".

Color Violet. Violet is the liturgical color for the season of Lent. Violet's association with Lent and suffering is based upon Jesus' Passion when the soldiers clothed him in a purple cloak and tortured him.

Stones. During Jesus' quest in the desert he was tempted by the devil, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread" (Mt 4:3), but Jesus made them a symbol for overcoming temptation when he replied, "One does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4; Dt 8:3).

Fish. A fish is a Lenten symbol for the obligation to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and for some to abstain from meat on every Friday in Lent.

Praying Hands. Praying hands represent prayer, the activity that ranks first among the other three traditional practices of penance: fasting, almsgiving, and works of charity. Prayer is the premier way to strengthen one's relationship with God, and in so doing, to turn away from sin.

Palm Branches symbolize Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The branches remind us that there are both triumphs and defeats in life but that if we remain steadfast in our faith, we will ultimately triumph.

Crown of Thorns symbolizes Jesus' suffering and agony when a crown of thorns was placed on his head, mocking him as the "King of the Jews".

Money Bag/Money Bags symbolize the Lenten practice of almsgiving—giving to the poor and needy. Some also associate the money bag with Judas' betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Pretzels. Pretzels had their origin in early Christian Lenten practice. "Because fat, eggs, and milk were forbidden during Lent, a special bread was made with dough consisting of only flour, salt, and water. These little breads were shaped in the form of arms crossed in prayer and were called *bracellae* (Latin, 'little arms'). Among the Germans the Latin word became 'bretzel.' These pretzels were a common Lenten food throughout the Middle Ages in Europe.

WHO KNEW. . . ?

2024 is finally here, and it's no ordinary year — it's a leap year. But what are leap years? Why do we need them? And how did they come about? Leap years are years with 366 calendar days instead of the normal 365. They happen every fourth year in the Gregorian calendar — the calendar used by the majority of the world. The extra day, known as a leap day, is Feb. 29, which does not exist in non-leap years. Every year that is divisible by four, such as 2020 and 2024, is a leap year except for some centenary years, or years that end in 00, such as 1900. The name "leap" comes from the fact that from March onward, each date of a leap year moves forward by an extra day from the previous year. For example, March 1, 2023 was a Wednesday but in 2024, it will fall on a Friday. (Normally, the same date only moves forward by a single day between consecutive years.)

Why do we need leap years? On the face of it, all of this "leaping" may seem like a silly idea. But leap years are very important, and without them our years would eventually look very different. Leap years exist because a single year in the Gregorian calendar is slightly shorter than a solar, or tropical, year — the amount of time it takes for Earth to completely orbit the sun once. A calendar year is exactly 365 days long, but a solar year is roughly 365.24 days long, or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 56 seconds. If we did not account for this difference, then for each year that passes the gap between the start of a calendar year and a solar year would widen by 5 hours, 48 minutes and 56 seconds. Over time, this would shift the timing of the seasons. For example, if we stopped using leap years, then in around 700 years the Northern Hemisphere's summer would begin in December instead of June, according to the National Air and Space Museum.

It takes roughly 365.24 days for Earth to orbit the sun, which is slightly longer than a standard calendar year. Adding leap days every fourth year largely removes this problem because an extra day is around the same length as the difference that accumulates during this time. However, the system is not perfect: We gain around 44 extra minutes every four years, or a day every 129 years. To solve this problem, we skip the leap years every centenary year except for those that are divisible by 400, such as 1600 and 2000. But even then, there is still a tiny difference between calendar years and solar years, which is why the IBWM have experimented with leap seconds. But overall, leap years mean that the Gregorian calendar stays in sync with our journey around the sun.

The history of leap years

The idea of leap years dates back to 45 B.C. when the Ancient Roman emperor Julius Caesar instituted the Julian calendar, which was made up of 365 days separated into the 12 months we still use in the Gregorian calendar. (July and August were originally named Quintilis and Sextilis respectively but were later renamed after Julius Caesar and his successor Augustus.) The Julian calendar included leap years every four years without exception and was synced up to Earth's seasons thanks to the "final year of confusion" in 46 B.C., which included 15 months totaling 445 days. For centuries, it appeared that the Julian calendar worked perfectly. But by the mid-16th century, astronomers noticed that the seasons were beginning around 10 days earlier than expected when important holidays, such as Easter, no longer matched up with specific events, such as the vernal, or spring, equinox. To remedy this, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582, which is the same as the Julian calendar but with the exclusion of leap years for most centenary years.

For centuries, the Gregorian calendar was only used by Catholic countries, such as Italy and Spain, but it was eventually adopted by Protestant countries, such as Great Britain in 1752, when their years began to greatly deviate from Catholic countries. Because of the discrepancy between calendars, countries that later switched to the Gregorian calendar had to skip days to sync up with the rest of the world. For example, when Britain swapped calendars in 1752, Sept. 2 was followed by Sept. 14, according to the [Royal Museums Greenwich](#). At some point in the distant future, the Gregorian calendar may have to be re-evaluated as it slips out of sync with solar years. But it will take thousands of years for this to happen.

And, I thought Leap Year was only give gals the opportunity to propose marriage to their favorite beaus, instead of having to wait for the guy to "pop the question"!

COME AND HEAR AND STUDY GOD'S WORD

- **Bible Study Tuesday morning 10:30am.** Everyone is welcome. Come study the O.T, N.T and Gospel lessons for each upcoming Sunday.
- **Women of Spirit:** Women's Bible Study first Monday of each month 5:00 PM. Currently studying the book of Revelation.

Bible study groups meet in the conference room in Luther Hall

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH REV. JOHN THOMPSON, PASTOR WORSHIP SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION 10 AM SUNDAY

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES NOON AND 7PM
PALM SUNDAY WITH PROCESSION - 10 AM
MAUNDY THURSDAY WITH COMMUNION - 7PM
GOOD FRIDAY TENABRAE SERVICE - 7PM
EASTER SUNDAY - 10 AM



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CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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