

the STAR



“We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship Him.”
Matthew 2:2

DECEMBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020

VISION

Be a community that puts Jesus first, our neighbors second, and ourselves third, by gathering to be served by Him so we can grow to love as He loves.

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Epiphany Lutheran Church

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Rev. Dr. Joel Biermann
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Sunday Worship: 9:30 am
Fellowship: 10:30 am
Growth in the Word: 11:00 am
Sunday School: 11:00 am



THE MESSAGE IN THE LEAVES

In the spring they are fresh, lush, and vibrant green. They look like life. In the summer the color deepens to a darker green and the unrelenting sun, storm-driven winds, and hungry insects take their toll. Yet, the shade they give still invites the hot and tired; and the umbrella they make shelters the pedestrian surprised by a cloudburst. In October, their glory is manifest and for a few weeks the plumage of the trees rivals that of any rare and exotic bird. And then comes November. In November, the color fades. In November, the life is gone. In November, all that is left is for the spent leaves to shake loose from their twigs and limbs and to waft and tumble down—down onto the street, into the gutter, onto our yards, into our breezeways. In November, leaves are nothing but nuisance.

But November leaves are not altogether done. They have at least one more task. As they litter our lawns and overflow our compostable yard bags they serve as messengers. They declare the stark and inescapable reality of the brevity and fragility of life. We may balk at the message and resent the messenger, but we can't deny the truth. In November, the sober and sad truth descends on us like the leaves themselves: life does not last. What starts unspoiled and full of promise always unravels and collapses into death and decay. The brown and gray leaves that crunch and crackle around our feet as we walk, that carpet our grass and flowerbeds, and that choke the downspouts on our houses will not let us forget. Life does not last. Death is coming. It's not a happy message. But it is the truth. The all-too-brief life of a leaf is only slightly shorter than the life of a man. November leaves force us to face facts.

The leaves of late autumn do their duty and deliver their message. But their message is limited and partial. We need to look elsewhere for an answer to their severe and unsettling communication. We need to look to the Creator of the leaves and the Creator of our lives. His word to us is not hopelessness; it is not despair; it is not defeat; it is not death. His word to us is life—new life better than any spring. His word is new life in the reality of his promise. November leaves have their message to tell, but God's Word has a better and fuller message of reconciliation, restoration, and renewal. The truth of God's Word changes everything and helps us bear everything—even the hard reality of November leaves.

Pastor Joel Biermann

THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

It's the most wonderful time of the year. At least Andy Williams thought so...and, I suppose most children would probably agree. For a child, the Christmas season is magical and the "Christmas spirit" is real and palpable. For a child, the world changes in December. It feels different. The tree goes up, presents start to appear under that tree, and the anticipation increases. Even school days have a new energized feeling to them as the countdown to Christmas progresses and the wonder of the season grows. All the world seems to be on board supporting the magic of the days as stores, neighborhoods, radio stations, TV programming, and movies all affirm the warmth and spirit of the season. As children grow older, though, the magic of the season tends to dissipate...indeed, for most people there comes a time—typically in late adolescence or early adulthood—when there is a shattering realization that the days don't feel that special anymore. The genuine joy is gone, and the season seems to be little more than a nonsensical, artificial, commercial conspiracy of holiday gimcrack and idealistic platitudes void of either substance or authenticity. And while it's often suggested that having children can help adults salvage some of the wonder of the season for themselves, a vicarious experience only takes one so far. Like it or not, I suspect you've also learned the hard truth that those fabulously magical feelings that come at Christmas time rarely survive past childhood.

I wondered for many Christmases how to find a way back to the magic and mystery that had defined Christmas when I was young; but eventually I gave up wondering and simply enjoyed the memories—which didn't do much to revitalize the peculiar spirit that is supposed to infuse the season. I remain convinced that most of what adults do during these days is little more than vain efforts at rediscovering or reconstructing or just remembering what they once felt but know now only as a vacancy and poignant loss. Old movies, parties, songs, nostalgic recipes, and decorations are futile attempts to recreate what once was.

Now, though, after many decades of Christmas celebrations, I've begun to see the whole season in yet another new way, and now the wonder of the season has done more than return, it's grown greater and deeper than it's ever been. The solution is not to focus on the "spirit of the season" or to work for peace and the cultivation of human kindness. Given the human condition, such notions are the ultimate nonsense. And it's not that a sober realism bordering on pessimism about the superficiality and silliness of the world's Christmas season doesn't remain. It does. But along with rich memories of Christmas past and a keen awareness of what is lacking in Christmas present, there is a profound confidence in what the ultimate Christmas future will bring—something utterly absent in Dicken's masterpiece. What makes Christmas indescribably special and beyond magical is the promise that this is but the beginning, that the One who joined himself to human flesh in the incarnation is going to bring our human flesh and all the rest of creation with us into the fulness of his own image. The Christmas season is but another foretaste of the great restoration and eternal celebration to come. That's a truth worthy of celebration. So, enjoy the season; it has a magic and a Spirit all its own.

Pastor Joel Biermann



COMING TOGETHER

Henry Ford once said *“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”*

Coming together: With a great sense of challenge four years ago Epiphany embarked on a new journey—starting an English as a Second Language (ESL) outreach Class. We, along with a handful of others, felt a burden to reach the non-English-speaking population living near our church. In the four years we have been in operation we have learned much from our experiences. To date our ESL program has served over 50 non-English-speaking community members representing many nations and 12 diverse languages and dialects. We are excited to see how God has blessed the program and enabled the ESL students to become a vital part of the community. Without English classes, many refugees and immigrants have a difficult time finding work or even meeting their neighbors. With English classes, they find community and have a better chance at fulfilling their goals and dreams for this new life.

Keeping together: Our program is run by church and community volunteers (24 to date) who come together each Wednesday with one goal in mind: to provide students with the vocabulary and grammar needed for both community and conversations for everyday living. Our volunteers teach classes, tutor one on one, prepare snacks, help with childcare, setup rooms, greet students, and much more. Most importantly we have become friends with each other and our students.

Working together: Success only comes to those who stay together. We have had very little turnover with our volunteers resulting in our students sticking with the program. Year one we offered two basic levels of conversation classes. This year, year four, we are now able to offer three levels: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. In addition to conversation we offer tutoring in reading, citizenship, and high school equivalence exam preparation.

Class Highlights:

- Congratulations to Fatima Zaidan for passing her Citizenship Test in September 2019.
- Congratulations to our students who have advanced on the job or moved to better job opportunities.
- Thanks, to Jared Irby for obtaining the speaker from Casa De Salud, the medical clinic on Chouteau Avenue.
- On November 20th the students, volunteers, and members of the congregation feasted at our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. What a wonderful way to say thanks for all we have!
- Thanks, to Hady and Vicky Matta for their ongoing support of the program.



POINSETTIA DECORATIONS

As we have done in past years, the chancel area will again be decorated with poinsettias. If you wish to help contribute to the cost of purchasing these poinsettias, please enclose cash or a check for \$8 per plant in the envelopes available in the narthex (make sure to include your name and or envelope number), with your regular offering (with a note of the amount you wish to contribute to poinsettias), or online via the “Give a Gift” tab on our website (note poinsettias). The deadline to purchase a poinsettia is Wednesday, December 18. You may take home your poinsettia after the Christmas Day Worship Service. Thank you from the Altar Guild.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

For the last several years Epiphany has sent our confirmation students to Camp Windermere near Lake of the Ozarks for a weekend retreat. This formative event brings Lutheran youth from around the state to engage in the Scriptures together, sing praises to Jesus, eat, play, and do service projects with one another. The retreat builds community between our youth while providing them with opportunities for spiritual conversations. Here are some of our youth's reflections:

What was a highlight of the weekend?

- Eli – Spending time with all of the youth.
- Olivia – When we go to light the candles and pray – it was a good time for me to think and thank everyone in my life and thank God for giving me this wonderful life.
- Donnie – Being pushed into a puddle...you had to be there.
- Torri – Making a video of everybody chasing Jarred - in slow motion. (Maybe he will post it?)
- Titus – Listening to the Bread of Stone's awesome live music.



What was the funniest moment during the trip?

- Eli – The comedy act that Lucas and I did at the talent show.
- Olivia – The scavenger hunt – we were all cracking up.
- Donnie – Creating a giant rock structure to see if it would survive till we return next year.
- Torri – Just hanging out with friends, getting ice cream and candy, watching movies.
- Titus – The videos we made with Jarred. So Funny!



What was one faith building/expanding thought that caught your attention from the speaker or during small group time?

- Eli – The fact that God uses us to do things - we are his tools.
- Olivia – God is there with us, watching over us and helps us when we are in need most.
- Donnie – The things you do reflect on how others view you in the future.
- Tori – We were created differently - introverts and extroverts - but we should try new things and look at other's points of view.
- Titus – God doesn't make people do good, they are inspired by Him.



What would you tell someone about this weekend who is going in future years?

- Eli – It's fun. Bring hearing protection.
- Donnie – Be prepared with extra socks! (watch out for puddles)
- Tori – Bring extra clothes because it can be cold or hot!
- Titus – I had fun, expect a lot of good conversations and be ready to share your thoughts too.

Confirmation is a focused time to equip our youth to understand who Jesus is and how he connects with his people. They are growing into eager conversationalists who speak of Jesus and his impact in their lives. Take a moment in these next few weeks to talk with one of our youth and ask them about the retreat, confirmation, or just about how their school is going. Get connected with this incredible group of youth!

Amy Zeigler

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. EpiphanyKids 10:45 a.m. No Confirmation Class	2	3 Elders Meeting 6:30 p.m.	4 ESL Class 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m. Advent Dinner 5:30 p.m. Advent Sing 6:15 p.m. Advent Worship 6:30 p.m.	5	6 Epiphany Stars 9:30 a.m. AI-Anon 10:00 a.m. Church Office Closed	7
8 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship-Communion 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. EpiphanyKids 10:45 a.m. Bible Study 6-12 10:45 a.m. Confirmation Class 6:00 p.m.	9 Church Council 7 p.m. Church Office Closed	10 CFNA Christmas Party 6:00 p.m.	11 ESL Class 10:00 a.m. Advent Dinner 5:30 p.m. Advent Sing 6:15 p.m. Advent Worship 6:30 p.m.	12	13 AI-Anon 10:00 a.m.	14 Holy Yoga 8:00 a.m.
15 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship-Childrens Christmas Service 9:30 a.m. Christmas Party 10:30 a.m. Christmas Caroling 6:00 p.m.	16	17	18 ESL Class 10:00 a.m. Advent Dinner 5:30 p.m. Advent Sing 6:15 p.m. Advent Worship 6:30 p.m.	19	20 AI-Anon 10:00 a.m.	21
22 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship-Communion 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. EpiphanyKids 10:45 a.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve Worship 6:00 p.m. Church Office Closed	25 Christmas Day Worship 9:30 a.m. Church Office Closed	26 Church Office Closed	27 AI-Anon 10:00 a.m. Church Office Closed	28
29 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship-Communion 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. EpiphanyKids 10:45 a.m. Potluck Sunday 10:45 a.m.	30	31 New Year's Eve Church Office Closed	December			
January			1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2	3 Epiphany Stars 9:30 a.m. AI-Anon 10:00 a.m.	4
5 Choir 8:45 a.m. Worship-Communion 9:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:30 a.m. EpiphanyKids 10:45 a.m.	6	7 Elders Meeting 6:30 p.m.	8 ESL Class 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m.	9	10 Epiphany Stars 9:30 a.m. AI-Anon 10:00 a.m.	11 Holy Yoga 8:00 a.m.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sharing Tree – Once again, this Thanksgiving/Christmas season, we will be sharing our blessings with those who are less fortunate. Woerner has given us a list of wants & needs for 3 of their neediest families. These wants/needs are on tags hanging from the Christmas tree in the Narthex. Please take a tag and purchase the item(s) listed on it. Then return the item(s), unwrapped, to the church office or place it under the tree, with the tag attached, by Sunday, December 15th. If you would like to participate but are unable to shop, cash donations can be given to Britney Hawk and she will do the shopping for you. Thank you for your generosity!

Advent Worship & Dinners – Wednesdays, December 4, 11, 18
Dinner Served at 5:30 PM | Hymn Sing in Sanctuary – 6:15 PM | Worship – 6:30 PM

Advent dinners will be served by the Confirmation students and their families. If you would like to contribute to the cost of providing the dinners, you may make a donation in the offering plate on Sunday with the designation of “Fellowship”. You may also make a donation online through the Give Plus app or through the “Give a Gift” page on our website, www.elcstl.org.

Dinners:

Wednesday, December 4: Chili, cornbread, sour cream, cheddar cheese, dessert
Wednesday, December 11: Soup variety, salad, hot pretzels, dessert
Wednesday, December 18: Turkey & noodles, green beans, dessert

Dessert Schedule:

Elder family groups are being asked to bring desserts.
Wednesday, December 4: Elder Districts 2 & 3, Doug Jones & Chris Hartley
Wednesday, December 11: Elder Districts 5 & 6, Derek Perry & Jarred Irby
Wednesday, December 18: Elder Districts 1 & 4, Rich Berg & Rod Horton

Christmas at Epiphany!

Children’s Christmas Service, Sunday, December 15, 9:30 AM Worship
Epiphany Christmas Party, Sunday, December 15, After Worship
Christmas Caroling to the Shut-Ins, December 15, 6:00 PM
Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 6:00 PM Candlelight Service
Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25, 9:30 AM



December 15 Christmas Events

Children’s Christmas Service

Sunday, December 15th will be a special day at Epiphany. That morning the children of the congregation will be using their talents and their enthusiasm to enrich our time of worship. There will be parts for children from pre-K through high school, so there is need for many children, and it would be wonderful to have every young person at Epiphany involved. Please contact the church office to let us know if you or your children will be taking part in the service. Parents can expect to receive information, by this weekend, about songs and parts that will need to be learned for the service. Songs and speaking parts will be practiced as part of the Sunday School time over the next several weeks, so please be sure that participating children are regular in attendance. Additionally, Pastor and Jeannalee Biermann will be leading a rehearsal for all participants in the Children’s Christmas worship the morning of Saturday, December 14th, and it will be necessary for all children to be present for this important time of practice. With the congregation’s Christmas Party following directly after this special time of worship, December 15th promises to be a memorable day.

Christmas Party

After worship, we will have our annual Christmas Party sponsored by Thrivent Financial. Please bring a dish to share (meat will be provided). We will sing Christmas carols, and play the “share-a-gift” game. Please bring a wrapped gift (valued at \$1-\$3) for the game.

Christmas Caroling

That evening at 6:00 PM, the congregation is invited to join the confirmands and their families to go Christmas caroling to the homebound / shut-ins who are close to Epiphany. After caroling, you are invited to return to Epiphany for treats and fellowship.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to you

Kathryn Zickler.....December 1
 Josiah ZeiglerDecember 3
 Adeline PerryDecember 6
 Lazien Mitre.....December 7
 Michael MeyerDecember 8
 Billy Barnett..... December 11
 Emily Seals..... December 12
 Linda Meyer..... December 13
 Chelsea Lawrence..... December 15
 Susie Boeyink..... December 20
 Nathan Kuzhilla..... December 20
 Barbara Troup..... December 21
 Amy Zeigler December 22
 Ron Diederichs..... December 23
 Dea Kuzhilla December 23
 Miriam Hawk December 24
 Judy Langdon..... December 25
 Adam Welch..... December 26
 Christian Mitre December 31

Youssef Matta.....January 1
 Charles MarvinJanuary 7
 Judy Eickhoff.....January 15
 Billy Horton.....January 16
 George Goetz.....January 17
 Lynn GoetzJanuary 17
 Andrea Barnett January 22
 Kirk Johnson..... January 22
 Thomas Slama January 23
 Tony Stout..... January 27
 Stephanie Kasznel January 28
 Sophi SchraderJanuary 31



Hady & Vickie Matta..... December 17
 Alex & Vicki Schrader December 18
 Jack & Britney Hawk..... December 19

Charles & Judy Marvin.....January 14
 Marsel & Emanuela Cuka January 25

PRAYER REQUESTS

To be a part of the Prayer Chain
 contact Karen Slama at (314) 353.2396.

Homebound

Johanna Armstrong
 Ron Armstrong
 Bonnie Crites
 Ron Diederichs
 Carolyn Gluesenkamp
 Bob Johnson
 Donna Reek
 Emilee Sutherlin
 Dorothy Zickler
 Kurt & Kathy Zickler

For God's Grace, Health & Healing

Vince Birkman
 Billie Black
 (Friend of Vince Birkman)
 Julia Blevins
 Ken Braniecki
 (Lisa Birkman's father)
 Essie Campbell & Family
 (Friend of Ruth Schury)
 Pam Clark
 Bob Hampton
 (Cancer - Friend of Bill Dorsam)
 Susan Harris and family
 John Heinicke
 Jim & Bonny Lang
 Charles Marvin
 Vickie Matta
 Millie Phillips
 Riley Voss
 Judi Winker



**I OFFER THIS PRAYER
 IN THE NAME OF
 JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD
 AMEN**

Serving as Police Officers

Jonathan Baublitz
 (Desiree Stout's brother)
 Andrew Kleffner
 Mark McMurry
 Don Reynolds

Serving in Military

Patrick Coil
 (Mary Kay Sansone's son)
 Paul Frederich
 (Shirley Frederich's grandson)
 Adam Welch
 (Fred & Pat Wachter's grandson)
 David Wheeler
 (Judy Langdon's son-in-law)

Missionaries

Hady & Vickie Matta, St. Louis
 Duane & Elizabeth Meissner, Belize
 Gary & Stephanie Schulte, Togo



4045 Holly Hills Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63116

Return Service Requested

DECEMBER 2019-JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY AVAILABLE ONLINE AND ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE!

Instant Church Directory – the program we use to build our church directory – has a free website for church members to view our directory online. Our church directory is also available to view on your mobile device! There is a free app for church members to download on their Apple, Android and Kindle Fire devices. It can be found in the App Store and in Google Play as Instant Church Directory. To view the directory online, go to members.InstantChurchDirectory.com to log in. You will be asked to enter in your email address as it's listed in our directory. If your email address isn't listed in the directory, let Carrie Beary (cbeary@elcstl.org) in the Church Office know so it can be added. If you have questions you can also contact Carrie or more information can be found at www.InstantChurchDirectory.com.

