

# the STAR



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

MARCH - APRIL 2022

## GROW YOUR FAITH IN JESUS

God's Word is alive and active at Epiphany Lutheran Church as a host of new faith-growing opportunities has popped up. We may take it for granted to gather with other Christians and learn from God's Word, but about 10% of Christians around the globe do not have this opportunity due to religious discrimination. Praise God that we can learn and worship him here in St. Louis! Even more amazing is that God makes Himself known through His Word.

A group entitled 'Mind, Body, and Soul' has begun meeting every Wednesday at 9 a.m. The group begins with an exercise of the mind, such as a riddle, logic puzzle, or sudoku. The group is sharp! There is an open discussion around a book of the Bible where participants can ask questions and learn. Pastor Tim has led the group so far. The group began with Paul's letter to the Galatians. The group's time together closes with an invitation to exercise their body, to the best of their ability. Due to the cold weather, the group has been walking laps in the sanctuary. You are invited to join!

On Sunday morning during Education Hour, a church-wide study and watch party has been gathering to watch The Chosen series. Starting around 11 a.m., after time for fellowship, a brief dive into God's Word provides a framework for the makeup of the episode. Check out this AWESOME series! During Education Hour you may see (or hear!) our 'Littles' Sunday School class for those before school age. This rambunctious group has been active! They have made gingerbread houses, played dress-up, went on a scavenger hunt, and much more. Led by Amy Zeigler and Barb Schrader, the group is learning stories of the Bible, praying together, singing songs, and forming friendships! On Sunday nights, a Christian parenting Bible study group meets, as well as a high school girl's book club.

Epiphany Lutheran Church has been blessed with new visitors. Many in the group have not been active in a church before or it has been a while since being active in the body of Christ. Pastor Tim is leading a discussion on Sunday morning during Education Hour over 'Life's Big Questions.' The group, no matter their background in Christianity, are welcome to come and ask questions about the basics of the Christian faith.

As your pastor, I pray you are growing in faith in Jesus, our Teacher! God bless you!  
*Pastor Tim Staffeld*



**VISION** At Epiphany, we are family making home for all.



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Sunday Worship: 9:30 am  
Fellowship: 10:30 am  
Education Hour: 10:45 am

685 Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, Fol - low His ex -  
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus And with pa - tience  
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus, Since by death He  
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus, He has ris - en

am - ple pure, Through a world that would de - ceive us And to  
 bear our cross, Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; Where He  
 con - quered death, He will free us from de - struc - tion, Give us  
 from the dead, That to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus,

sin our spir - its here, On - ward in His foot - steps tread - ing,  
 is, there is no loss, Thought to - day we sow no laugh - ter,  
 us in - mor - tal breath, Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion  
 You are - now our head, We are Your own liv - ing mem - bers,

Fil - gians here, our home a - bove, Full of faith and  
 We shall reap ce - les - tial joy; All do - cum - ents  
 That would lead us in - to sin; And the grave that  
 Where You live, there we shall be, In Your pres - ence

hope and love, Let us do the Fa - ther's bid - ding, Faith - ful  
 that us - noy, Shall give way to earth here - af - ter, Je - sus,  
 shuts us in, Shall but prove the gate to heav - en, Je - sus,  
 con - stant - ly, Liv - ing there with You for - ev - er, Je - sus,

Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where You guide,  
 here I share Your woe; Help me share Your joy to know,  
 here with You I die, There to live with You on high,  
 let me faith - ful be, Life e - ter - nal grant to me.

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 from Luther Hymns

# LET US EVER WALK WITH JESUS

They say you can get to know a lot about someone by walking for a while in their shoes. Over these next two months, during the season of Lent, we will not be literally walking around in Jesus' shoes, but we will be walking alongside Him on his way to the cross. During this journey we will learn a lot about Jesus and His love for us. This year's theme for Lent is "Places of the Passion", and we will take time in each of our services to contemplate the many aspects of Jesus' purposeful walk to Calvary throughout His ministry.

During our Lenten journey hymn 685, Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus, will be a theme hymn for us as we sing it each time we gather for worship. This song is all about walking along side Jesus throughout our entire lives and will be good for us to have in our minds even after Lent. Verse one talks about following Jesus in a world whose evil forces would lure us into sin. Only by following in the footsteps of Jesus and staying near to our Good Shepherd do we have any hope of safe passage through the evils and temptations of this world.

In verses two and three we confess that we are not just watchers on this walk with Jesus. We participate in this walk with Him. We have been united to Jesus in Baptism. That means that everything that happens to Him happens to us, even the bad things. We suffer along with Jesus. He never promised a pain-free, happy life, but he did promise that what is to come will be joy incomparable to anything earthly. Eventually, this life will end in death, and we follow Jesus to that as well, as verse three makes clear. But the death of a Christian is gladly undertaken, for in Christ it proves to be the gate to heaven.

Though this song was written for a Good Friday service in 1653, the writer would be remiss not to include the resurrection in our Lenten stroll. Verse four does not disappoint. If we are united with Christ in His death, then we are also united with Him in His life. Resurrection will be ours, and even now we are Christ's living members. For us Christians the journey is one through death to life, and even as we meditate on the Places of the Passion this Lent, we will always be reminded with this hymn that Jesus' path does not stop at death but goes through it. "Where You live, there we shall be."

In Christ,  
*Benjamin Hayter*

## SPECIAL ADVENT WORSHIP COLLECTION



*Thank you for  
 your donations.*

At our Wednesday evening Advent Worship Services in December, we had a special offering collection for Lutheran Bible Translators. Lutheran Bible Translators is a highly trained group of women and men working with church and Bible agency leaders to bring God's Word to those who don't yet have it. The mission of LBT is to make God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. LBT reports that it takes years – involving many resources – to provide a new translation of the Bible; that they have impacted 20 million people with their translations; and that they have been involved with 102 different language communities. Why translate Scripture for every language? Because when we hear God's Word through our own language – not the language of foreigners, colonizers, or overlords – then we understand how much God loves and desires us. Over 1 billion people worldwide do not have the full Bible in a language that touches them deeply. An estimated 165 million do not have a single verse of Scripture. We are pleased to report that we collected \$252.00 during our Wednesday evening Advent services in December that was sent to LBT. More information about Lutheran Bible Translators can be found on their website: [www.lbt.org](http://www.lbt.org).



## GET TO KNOW OUR LUTHERAN GRADE SCHOOL TUITION SUPPORT FAMILIES (PART 1)

Nathan Kuzhilla – Green Park Lutheran School  
 Youssef & Daniel Matta – Christ Community Lutheran School  
 Christian & Stephanie Mitre – Green Park Lutheran School  
 Riona & Alina Stanish – Green Park Lutheran School  
 Jonah Wheeler – Green Park Lutheran School

### **What makes the Lutheran school your children attend special?**

*Kuzhilla Family* – Our schools provide a very great quality of Christian education and teach them God's love, wisdom and strength for their lives.

*Mitre Family* – We like the Christian environment in which our children study, also the curriculum and the staff.

*Stanish Family* – What makes the Lutheran school special is the Christian education the girls (Riona and Alina) receive at Green Park. Also, the Christian people at the school make it special for the girls to be comfortable and enjoy their school.

*Wheeler Family* – The teachers and staff at Green Park show true Christian values, not only in what they say but in what they do. Mr. Eggold, the principal, has gone above and beyond to help Jonah overcome some obstacles throughout his time there.

### **What activities/events are you involved in at your Lutheran school?**

*Kuzhilla Family* – Volleyball, soccer and plays that happen throughout the year.

*Mitre Family* – We are involved in different activities like field day, chapel, Grandparents Day, etc.

*Stanish Family* – Riona is involved with activities of the Junior Honor Society and enjoys "Faith Family." Alina also enjoys the "Faith Family" activity. Both Riona and Alina participate in activities that support and show Christian concern for others. For instance, they participated in a special funding appeal of Green Park to help a fellow schoolmate who is seeking special treatment outside St. Louis for a rare physical condition.

*Wheeler Family* – Before Covid, I was a library volunteer, attended Moms in Prayer group weekly, helped organize holiday class parties and drove on field trips. Since Covid and my divorce, many of these activities and opportunities are not quite available yet and my work schedule has changed a lot. I volunteer to help the concession stand for tournaments and try to help out where I can.

## Upcoming Events

### *Strategic Planning Congregational Creative Event*

**Sunday, March 6, 2022**  
**After Worship**

Join us as we come together for a meal and discussion on the Strategic Planning for the future of Epiphany

### *Lenten Series - "Places of the Passion"*

#### **Wednesday Night Lenten Services**

In this worship series for Lent, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, contemplating what happened at each place our Savior stood along the path of his Passion for our sake. Each service explores the meaning, history and spiritual inspiration associated with the location highlighted. You will learn things you may not have known before as you grow to understand more deeply the hard road our Lord took that the way to heaven might be open to us.

### *Upcoming Worship Services*

#### **Ash Wednesday**

Wednesday, March 2, 2022  
 Dinner 5:30 p.m.

Worship 6:30 p.m. with Imposition of Ashes at the end of the service.

#### **Lenten Worship Services**

Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6  
 Dinner 5:30 p.m.

Worship 6:30 p.m.

#### **Palm Sunday**

April 10

Worship with Communion 9:30 a.m.

#### **Maundy Thursday**

April 14

Worship with Communion 6:30 p.m.

First Communion Service

#### **Good Friday**

April 15

Worship 6:30 p.m.

#### **Easter Sunday**

April 17

Worship with Communion 9:30 a.m.

Special Covid Conscious Worship 2:00 p.m.

# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

1 in 5 adults in the United States in any given year will experience a mental health disorder, and more than half of all adults living in the United States will experience a mental health challenge at some point over the course of their lifetime. In January, Epiphany provided the opportunity for members to become certified in Adult Mental Health First Aid. (Think CPR/First Aid certification, but for mental health issues.) Seven of us took advantage of this opportunity which consisted of 2 hours of self-paced content followed by 5.5 hours of instructor-led learning.

Mental Health First Aid is an early intervention public education program. It teaches adults how to recognize the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to a person who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and how to refer a person to appropriate professional support and services.

Mental Health First Aid was created in Australia in 2000 and was brought to Missouri in 2008 by the Missouri Department of Mental Health. As part of their commitment to serve the community, Lutheran Family and Children Services has staff trained as Mental Health First Aid instructors and provides their services free of charge. The only charge is for the materials and access to the MHFA website, run by the MO Department of Mental Health.

There were 3 important takeaways from this training.

**1. Hope with Facts** – The goal of a Mental Health First Aid provider is to observe and guide, not diagnosis. To this end, we learned how to identify a crisis and how to implement the Mental Health Action Plan (ALGEE). ALGEE is a non-linear plan which guides providers in their provision of support to the person in need.



**2. Meet people where they are at** – This includes:

- Respecting the individual and their experience
- Not making assumptions



- Being mindful of cultural differences in language and expressions and the effect they may have on the interaction
- Recognizing what may make it hard for someone to get/accept help
- Setting aside our own beliefs and reactions in order to focus on the needs of the person so that they can be heard, understood, and helped
- Not making or expressing any negative judgements

**3. Recovery is Always Possible** – Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and well-being, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential with the goals of hope, empowerment, and independence. There are 4 key factors to recovery.

- **Health** – overcoming or managing one's symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being
- **Home** – having a stable and safe place to live
- **Purpose** – conducting meaningful daily activities and having the independence, income, and sources to participate in society
- **Community** – having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendships, love, and hope.

If you would like to learn more about the MHFA training, receive resources pertaining to mental health, or participate in a future MHFA training, please see Britney Hawk or visit the MHFA website: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>.

Here are a few available resources to keep handy in case you are ever confronted with a mental health situation.

Behavioral Health Response: (800) 811-4760  
NAMI St. Louis Help Line: (314) 962-4670  
24-hour Local Help Line: (636) 946-3771  
United Way: 211

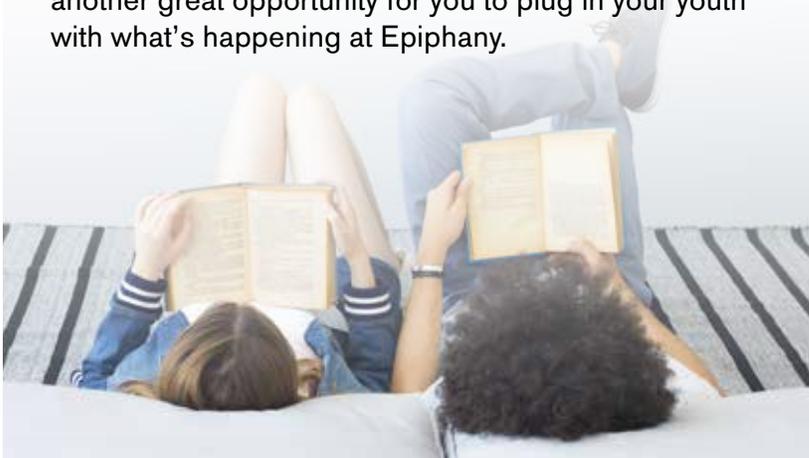
*Britney Hawk*

# SNAPSHOT OF ELC YOUTH EVENTS

This year, Epiphany youth are thrilled and looking forward to all the many adventures that God has in store for them as a church community. The year has already started with a few exciting opportunities for the youths to continue growing in faith and friendship. First, we are continuing our youth monthly dinners, and to start the year, the January youth dinner was hosted by the Bergs at their residence. In February, the youth dinner was hosted at the Zeigler's. These monthly dinners have truly been a time of fellowship not only for the youths but the older members of our church community. Thank you to everyone who has hosted and will be hosting in the future. There are still opportunities for you to be a dinner host for the youth this year. If interested, please reach out to Sunita Manu to coordinate.

Secondly, the senior youth girls' Sunday evenings gathering/book club resumed on January 23rd. This is an opportunity for our senior youth girls and other young ladies in our communities and neighborhoods to get together in fellowship. The group meets every other Sunday from 5 – 7 p.m. at Epiphany Lutheran Church. Discussions are centered around the book being read at the time, while also giving room to other real-life events or personal stories that may arise during the discussion. Please reach out to Sunita Manu for information on joining Epiphany's senior youth girls Sunday evenings gathering/book club, if you know of a female youth in high school who could benefit from a group of young ladies pursuing Jesus, while also building community and friendship.

Lastly, Epiphany's youth group is heading to the City Museum on March 5th! More information about the trip is available in the Starlet and Weekly E-Letter. This is another great opportunity for you to plug in your youth with what's happening at Epiphany.



## SUNITA GETS A NEW JOB

Dear Epiphany family and community, it has been such a joy serving as your Youth and Family Ministry Director over the past year. It saddens me to announce that I have stepped



down from the role as of January 31st. I recently accepted a position with the State of Illinois where I am working as an epidemiologist focusing on the COVID19 pandemic and other public health issues within the refugee immigrant and migrant communities in Illinois.

As my current role at Epiphany comes to an end, I would like to share some of my favorite and best memories at Epiphany this year. First, it was the warm welcome I received from everyone when I first arrived at Epiphany as your Youth and Family Ministry Director. Secondly, it was the families who trusted me and said yes to me being a part of the spiritual growth of their youth. Next, it was my relationship with the youth and the "Littles", starting with me bribing my way into Mimi's heart with chocolate, and finally getting Harvey to play "invisible man" with me thanks to the help of his brother Jackson. And not to forget my girl Lacey who offers the best hugs, has the best stories, and always says yes to leading prayer when asked (Lacey the prayer warrior!). Some of my bragging moments included my admiration for Eli's crocheting skills, Hannah's heart for Jesus, Elise's business and innovative mind-set, Jude's dancing skill, Susie's knowledge of historic events, and Olivia and Titus' amazing baking skills.

I appreciate the unique personalities of each youth member. Most importantly, I appreciate the work being done here at Epiphany for the kingdom of God, and I do cherish the relationships I have created over the past year. Therefore, this is definitely not goodbye! My new position is remote, so you will still see me around – either hanging out with the youth or running around the fellowship hall with the "Littles".

With Love,  
Sunita



*A Discussion  
with Hady Matta  
About How the  
Pandemic Has  
Affected His Work  
at Oasis and the  
Family's Overall  
Mission Work*

## MISSION WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Outreach Committee was curious as to how the pandemic has affected the work that the Matta family has been doing, both personally and through their work at Oasis International, so we asked Hady to share some thoughts and observations.

Like much of the world, Oasis International shut down their classes and in-person services at the start of the pandemic, as did Epiphany's ESL class. This greatly affected Hady and Vickie's access to the immigrant and refugee community.

"To be honest when we started the pandemic," stated Hady, "we felt our ministry was stopped, but God sent more different ways to reach others." He sent 285 refugee families to Saint Louis. Oasis was able to partner with a food bank and a several churches to provide food and laundry items, which Hady, Vickie, and other volunteers delivered to their homes. These efforts and the pandemic atmosphere, built relationships between the volunteers and the refugee families, which led to open discussions about eternal life and other questions about Christianity, over the phone and via online conferences, like Zoom.

Since the problems in Afghanistan started in September 2021, many churches, companies and organizations have stepped up to help the refugees, but they were unable to connect with them. Oasis facilitated this connection and also provided translation services. In addition, Oasis International now has an official partnership with the International Institute to assist the refugee families. Oasis has provided every family that has come to Saint Louis with all the furniture they needed, and they have also provided 16 cars.

Eight to twelve families seek out services from Oasis on a daily basis. Hady deeply desires Epiphany to partner with him and Vickie in their work at Oasis and for members to understand the depth and importance of their mission work. He encourages members of Epiphany to come on their own or as a team on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 10am – 2pm, to meet the people and the families and see how they could best serve our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

In addition, says Hady, "I have a project now on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month and we are giving away around 300 boxes of food to families as they drive through our parking lot in front of Oasis. If you want to arrange and schedule a day to come to help in this project, please call me and come to help."

On a personal note, the pandemic has deeply affected the Matta family's financial situation. As with all missionaries, they rely on financial support from individuals, churches, and organizations, to support their family as they carry out their work. Because of the pandemic, they have been unable to do presentations in other churches and seek financial support from their members.

If you are interested in learning more about the work that the Matta family is doing, volunteer at Oasis, and/or support their efforts financially, please contact Hady Matta at (909) 362-0030 or hadysmatta@gmail.com.

*Hady Matta & Britney Hawk*

# Happy Birthday



## MARCH

- Daniel Matta ..... March 7
- Stephanie Mitre ..... March 8
- Jayne Gallo.....March 10
- Mike Reilly ..... March 10
- Katie Bernal.....March 14
- Angela Langdon ..... March 17
- Kimberly Wheeler..... March 21
- Farah Matta.....March 23
- Michael Lamb ..... March 26
- Noah Boeyink ..... March 27
- Emanuela Cuka ..... March 27

## APRIL

- Donna Reek ..... April 9
- Mariela Mara ..... April 13
- Clio Miyazaki..... April 19
- Jack Hawk ..... April 20
- Pam Clark..... April 21
- Hannah Tongay..... April 23
- Sam Lluka..... April 24
- Jackson Staffeld..... April 24
- Gavin Langdon ..... April 26
- Bonny Lang ..... April 27
- Jude Zeigler ..... April 30

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



## APRIL

- Rich & Diane Berg ..... April 29 (50 years this year!)
- Doug & Rhonda Jones ..... April 19
- Mike & Pam Reilly ..... April 19

## ATTENDANCE

# 59

Average Sunday Worship  
Attendance for 2022  
Through January 31, 2022

*111 different people  
attended worship in January*

## STEWARDSHIP

**2022 Offering Budget – \$114,500 or \$2,202/week**

Budget through January 30, 2022 – \$11,010

Actual through January 30, 2022 – \$6,420

Difference through January 30, 2022 – \$4,590

Average Weekly Offerings through January 30, 2022 – \$1,284



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Return Service Requested

*MARCH – APRIL 2022*

## AN INTENTIONAL DEVELOPER OF HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Selah is a screen-printing business that integrates foreign-born and under-resourced populations to design and print towels, tote bags, and greeting cards. The past year has been a springboard into a potential long-term business model. Our first phase was to design, market, and distribute printed products. We operate our business a minimum of 4 hours per week designing, preparing screens, printing, and book-keeping. Selah employs 11 women, from 6 different countries at this time. Through communal work, we provide New Americans a safe place to try new things and create fellowship, helping to cross cultural barriers, while building friendships. This directly impacts and grows our team in new skills, craftsmanship, communication abilities - all while giving them a confidence to interact within their new community. Selah believes a holistic approach is essential to becoming a changemaker. We host “family” dinners in which we gather to know each other outside of the work environment. Wanting to be involved socially with the community we are serving, Selah uplifts others by giving our profits to local organizations who also serve immigrant populations. We love to spend time interacting with these entities we are donating to, teaching them about our craft and developing further relationships. In our personal life, all 11 workers are connected, regular volunteers/interns to these existing programs. In time, Selah hopes to employ foreign born and under-resourced women in a full-time capacity. We see Selah as so much more than just a company creating printed products, rather as an intentional developer of healthy environments. As Selah grows, we will continue to evaluate how our community needs can be met by the social entrepreneurialism of this business.

