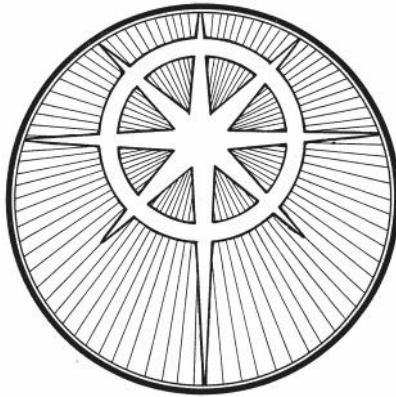




“For we saw his star
when it rose and have
come to worship
him.”

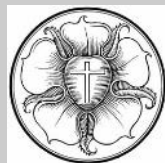
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FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL
FOR THE EPIPHANY OF
OUR LORD



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Esprit

Volume 49, Issues 1-2

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Epiphany—Season of Light

by Pastor Meyer

EPIPHANY follows the Twelve Days of Christmas. We’re familiar with the the English carol of that name, “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” In the carol, there is an increasing number of gifts. I won’t get into the speculations as to what these gifts mean nor whether it was a coded song to teach the Roman Catholic catechism. Most scholars debunk that. Perhaps it was just a fun carol to sing.

The Epiphany theme might be termed the Day of Light. The visit of the Magi is associated with Epiphany, not Christmas, so you might remove your wise men from your creche! The relics [bones] of the Magi are supposed to be buried in the Cathedral in Koeln [Cologne]. Epiphany is one of the oldest festivals in the liturgical year. The icon for Epiphany is the Star of Bethlehem.

Epiphany means “appearing” or “showing.” The Nativity of Our Lord was not noticed by the world. Only Shepherds attended it. No big celebration happened. The only-begotten Son of God entered the world silently. The only real celebration happened in heaven as the multitude of the heavenly army [angels] sang. The shepherds knelt in awe but there was no loud celebration even though we have that in some Christmas hymns. We sing “Silent Night, Holy Night;” Epiphany but contrast is bright:

“Arise and shine in splendor;
Let night to day surrender.
Your light is drawing near.
Above, the day is beaming,
In matchless beauty gleaming:
The glory of the Lord is here. (*Lutheran Service Book* 396:1)


Light. Brightness. Splendor. After the winter equinox around December 20-21, the days begin to grow longer. It is the beginning of the dawn. Light dispels darkness and that is what the birth of Christ reveals.


Only the shepherds heard the announcement of the birth, but Epiphany begins a world-wide proclamation. Christ dispels the darkness by his arrival. Epiphany is the Season of Light, yet it seems that our world remains wrapped in darkness and fear. So much distressing news occupies our waking hours, translating into restless sleeping hours. I could point you to a dozen news reports that would further those distresses, but Epiphany proclaims the good news that the Christ has arrived and that there is light and life in him. Isaiah proclaims:


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Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

IELCTH.org

 ielcth

 @ielcth

 @ielc_th

645 Poplar Street
Terre Haute, IN 47807-4203

Phone: 812.232.4972

Fax: 812.234.3935

Rev. Jacob R. Sutton, *Pastor*
pastor@ielcth.org

Rev. Gary W. Schultz, *Kantor*
kantor@ielcth.org

Rev. Philip G. Meyer,
Pastor Emeritus

Sem. Paul D. Norris, *Vicar*
vicar@ielcth.org

Stacy Gibbens,
Administrative Assistant
stacy.gibbens@ielcth.org

Esprit is the informational and educational newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Esprit de corps indicates a sense of union and of common interests and responsibilities, as developed among a group. Our community of Immanuel is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to us in the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church is an historic and centrally located parish—called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ’s Word and Sacraments—confessional in doctrine, evangelical in orientation, orthodox in liturgy, cosmopolitan in membership; serving the Terre Haute community and the students of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and reaching out to the nations since 1858 as a parish of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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Arise, shine;

For your light has come!

And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,

And deep darkness the people;

But the Lord will arise over you,

And His glory will be seen upon you.

The Gentiles shall come to your light,

And kings to the brightness of your rising.

“Lift up your eyes all around, and see:

They all gather together, they come to you;

Your sons shall come from afar,

And your daughters shall be nursed at your side.

Then you shall see and become radiant,

And your heart shall swell with joy;

Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,

The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you (Isaiah 60.1-5, NKJV).

While we live in dark days due to sin, Epiphany points us to the Light, draws us to the Light, who is Christ our Lord. Christ is manifest to the Gentiles, the Magi. Then he is manifest at his baptism in the Jordan River. There he is manifest as the Lamb of God who takes on the sin of the world. At his baptism the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and the voice of the Father was heard, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (St. Matthew 3.16-17).

Some of my favorite hymns are Epiphany hymns. Everything is bright and upbeat because they proclaim the revealing of the Son of God, our Savior. The One who is Immanuel—God with us—takes on our sin.

The Epiphany season goes on to reveal the Christ by his miracles, at Cana—the healing of palsied limbs, the restoration of health—all the signs that the Messianic kingdom has arrived and that this kingdom will continue forever.

A good way to finish here is with a stanza from an old Latin hymn [c. fifth to tenth century]:

Abide with us, O Lord, we pray;
The gloom of darkness chase away;
Your work of healing, Lord, begin,
And take away the stain of sin. (*LSB* 402:4)

God grant us all a bright and blessed Epiphany season! ✠

The Old Testament = Jesus

by Vicar Norris

WE often only remember the Old Testament stories as ones we learned as children in Sunday School long ago. We don't give much thought to them as adults as it seems as though most sermons are preached from the Gospel. This might lead us to the false belief that the Old Testament is just the Law and the New Testament is the Gospel. This couldn't be further from the truth: All of Scripture, the Old Testament, and the New Testament is about Jesus. The very first mention of our Savior is from Genesis: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3.15). There at the beginning of the Old Testament Yahweh promises to send the Messiah. This verse is often referred to as the "Protoevangelium" which is Greek for "the First Gospel."

Not only is the promised coming Messiah mentioned in the Old Testament, but we also see appearances of the pre-incarnate Son of God. This is referred to as a "theophany" which is Greek for "the appearance of God." Well-known Old Testament theophanies of Jesus include:

- ✘ the burning bush (Exodus 3);
- ✘ the pillar of cloud and fire leading the Israelites (Exodus 13);
- ✘ God whispering to Elijah (1 Kings 19);
- ✘ Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32); and
- ✘ Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22); (to name a few).

Perhaps the most striking story which illustrates our Savior is from Genesis 22.1-19, the sacrifice of Isaac. As Christians who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, it is easy for us to see Jesus in this narrative. Abraham is told by a voice from heaven (the pre-incarnate Son of God), to sacrifice his only son Isaac. What a test of obedience from God to Abraham! Isaac is not

technically Abraham's only son, as in unfaithfulness he has a son—Ishmael—with Hagar.

But it is Isaac who is the promised son from Yahweh to Abraham, and he is the "only son" as only he is from God's promise, and only he is the heir to Abraham. Three times God calls Isaac the "only son."

The similarities to Jesus continue in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. God tells Abraham to take Isaac to the land of Moriah. The land of Moriah is exactly where the temple will be built in Jerusalem. Isaac rides on the donkey to his sacrifice, just like Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, the place of his crucifixion.

As Abraham and Isaac walk to the place of sacrifice, Isaac carries the wood for his sacrifice. On the day of his crucifixion, Jesus carried the wood of his sacrifice, the cross. Isaac is laid upon the wood, and our Savior is laid upon the wood of his cross. As Abraham raises the knife to kill his only son, the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Son of God, cries out and stops him.

To answer Isaac's question in verse 7 "but where is the lamb for a burnt offering," God provides a male sheep, a ram who is stuck in a thicket of thorns for the sacrifice. Just as Jesus wore a crown of thorns as he was scourged.

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice (Genesis 22.15-18).

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This second address demonstrates that the promises now made to Abraham are the climax of the sacrifice of Isaac narrative. In verse sixteen, Yahweh swears "by myself" which perhaps is the strongest oath Yahweh can make. This is the only instance in the book of Genesis where Yahweh swears by himself.

This promise is repeated to Abraham directly from Yahweh due to his obedience and faith by offering his only son Isaac as a sacrifice as commanded by Yahweh. He will bless Abraham, and multiply his seed in a number that is too many for mankind to comprehend. Further, Yahweh promises that Abraham's seed will possess the gate of his enemies.

Lastly, in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience, not only will the future Israel be blessed, but also the whole world will be blessed.

What would be obvious to the Hebrew reader is the wordplay between the word "bless" and

the name of Abraham "father of a multitude/ blessing" in this reading. Abraham is a man of great blessing from Yahweh. The blessing which is bestowed upon all the nations of the earth is the seed that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3.16).

Yahweh kept his promise and sent Jesus as God and man to be the Savior of the world. Isaac was spared from being sacrificed, but our Lord Jesus was not. Abraham was stopped as he raised the knife to kill Isaac, but there was no such reprieve for Jesus; the Roman soldiers hammered the nails through the hands of God's only Son as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins. And just as the water and blood flowed from the side of the precious Lamb of God, so too the waters of Holy Baptism flood over us, and the true body and blood of our savior continue to be given to us at the altar.

As we read the Old Testament, we pray that the Holy Spirit would enlighten us as we read of Yahweh's promise of the Messiah. That promise is fulfilled in Christ Jesus, the Crucified One. ✘

YPI Christmas Party

Immanuel youth enjoyed dinner and a gift exchange at the YPI Christmas Party. The youth also made and signed Christmas cards to mail to our home-bound members. ✘



Doxology “Take Heart” Conference by Kantor Schultz

FROM November 16-18, I attended the “Take Heart: Strength and Confidence for Demanding Days” conference presented by Doxology: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel. The series of “Take Heart” conferences are respite retreats for pastors sponsored by the LCMS Office of National Mission at various locations across the country. The conference I attended was in Donaldson (near Plymouth) at the Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center on the campus of Ancilla College. The campus had a beautiful chapel where we prayed Matins and Vespers each day. The college is in the process of designing and installing a new organ in the chapel.



**Chapel at
Ancilla College**

Doxology is focused on assisting pastors in their work of providing pastoral care, as well as focusing on their own spiritual and emotional health. The organization hosts a regular curriculum of conferences for pastors and congregational leaders. This particular conference I attended was a separate topic from the traditional Doxology conference and focused on the unique circumstances that churches are facing in providing pastoral care during the pandemic.

Doxology is led by the Rev. David Fleming and Dr. Beverly Yahnke. Pastor Fleming

continues to serve part-time as pastor of Our Savior—Grand Rapids, MI, where he served as senior pastor for over twenty-five years. Dr.



**The Rev. David Fleming,
Doxology Executive Director
for Spiritual Care**

Yahnke is a clinical psychologist who has served in private practice and as a professor at Concordia University Wisconsin. Between the two of them, they presented a wonderful curriculum that included both psychological and theological wisdom and insights. This particular conference also included the Rev. Robert Wurst as chaplain and preacher for the Daily Office. Rev. Wurst serves in the LCMS Office of Disaster Response. Nathan Beethe was the cantor for the conference, and he serves as Kantor at Grace—Auburn, MI. It is always a good experience to visit with other musicians, and to participate in worship from the pew, having a break from being the leader.

The topics in this conference included: ministry in the face of calamity; addressing loneliness and isolation; the cost of caring; prayer, meditation, and lament as a means for spiritual self-care; pastoral resilience in adversity; care for the soul; and setting goals. It was a good combination of psychology and theology, of practical and theoretical discussion. I found it helpful to discuss the societal challenges that the church is facing today in a focused manner that went beyond complaint and lament; but rather focused on the causes, possible solutions, and provided help for navigating our challenges. While this information was focused on the worldwide

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pandemic, much of it could also be applicable to more localized or specific tragedies and challenges. Some of the information was a helpful reminder of information I had forgotten, some was new to me, and some provided a fresh way of thinking about challenges and situations.

I enjoyed the conference and found it very helpful and timely in the topics and the discussion that followed. I was able to visit with a number of pastors that I



Ancilla College—Donaldson, IN

have known from college and seminary and other places we have connected before, as well as meet some new colleagues. Most of the pastors were from the Midwest, but one attendee was serving a parish in Alaska! I am thankful to the LCMS Office of National Mission for providing this conference at no charge to the participants.

Find out more about the work of Doxology at their website: doxology.us. ✕



Children's Christmas Service 2021

"O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" (*Lutheran Service Book* 372), one of Paul Gerhardt's Christmas hymns, was the theme for the 2021 Children's Christmas Service. The children of Immanuel presented the story of Jesus' birth in Scripture and hymns. Thanks to Karie Sutton, Erin Wineinger, and Amy Cracraft for helping organize and direct this year's service, and to all the children for their good work. ✕

Our Website: IELCTH.org

VISIT the website for announcements and information about upcoming events, Divine Service, the church year, and catechesis. The *Parish News* and *About Sunday's Music* are regularly published on the website each week. Share the website with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers as a way to spread the word about our confession of faith and activities at Immanuel.

Our website is the best way to stay up-to-date with Immanuel news as we share our regular weekly and monthly correspondence and special events on-line. ✕

Immanuel's Google Calendar

VIEW the church calendar on the website. At the top of the page, go to "Resources" and click on "Events." Click on the "click here" link to see the calendar. Add the calendar to your own Google calendar to stay up-to-date on events at Immanuel. ✕

Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship

by Leslie Bilyeu

THE Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship would like to thank everyone for their generous support of the Sutton family while participating in the Ladies Christmas Tea and Fundraiser with donations of gift baskets, purchase of event and raffle tickets and silent auction bids. Guests spent a tea-riffic afternoon enjoying delicious tea party foods, many varieties of tea and long overdue fellowship. The silent auction and raffle were well supported by the congregation and only became a little competitive at the end as the silent auction closed. It was all in good fun! With the tea party being such a big hit, we plan to make this an annual event. A big thank you to the committee who helped to make it all happen. The decorations were beau-tea-ful!

- ❖ **Undecorating:** Thursday, January 6 following the Epiphany service. It really goes quickly so plan to stay to help take down the decorations and put them away.
- ❖ **Valentine Bake Sale:** Sunday, February 13 following Divine Service. A sweet way to raise

fund for the Sutton family's needs. Reserve some calories (or don't) because you won't want to miss out! More information coming soon!

- ❖ **Ash Wednesday:** Wednesday, March 2 Cinnamon rolls are served after the service. Please join us.
- ❖ **Midweek Lent Meals:** will be served between 5:30-6:30pm Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6. Reservations inserts will be included in service bulletins.

As we decorated the Church for Christmas we noticed we are in need of new garlands for the balcony. If you are interested in shopping for these and a few other decoration upgrades, please contact Leslie Bilyeu.

The Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship is always looking for volunteers to help with sponsored events. Come join the fun! Be a regular or volunteer for a single event that interests you. We'd love to have you join us. Contact Leslie Bilyeu if you're interested or have questions leslie@ielcth.org.



Ladies Christmas Tea Party 2021



Colleen Davis, Beth Beel, Kathy Tschudny, and Melissa Pound were 'steeped' in joy and having a good time at the Ladies Christmas Tea Party.



Shirley and Karie Sutton enjoying the photo booth

DIVINE SERVICE is celebrated every Sunday at 10:30am and on Feast Days as announced.

DIVINE OFFICE: LAUDS (MORNING PRAYER) and **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) are prayed as announced in the weekly *Parish News*.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION is offered the fourth Thursday of the month from 5-6pm (January 27; February 24), or anytime by appointment.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY are Sunday at 9am.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT BIBLE STUDY with dinner is on Sunday at 6pm.

ADULT CHOIR rehearsals are Thursdays from 7-8:30pm and Sundays from 9:45-10:20am in the Parish Center.

"WORSHIP ANEW," produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel's special gift collection, airs every Sunday morning on WTWO at 8am.

YOUTH CATECHESIS is on Saturday at 9am.

ESPRIT DEADLINE for March/April is Tuesday, February 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing. Watch the *Parish News* for the date.

HIGHER THINGS REGISTRATION Registration forms for Immanuel youth are on the table across from the Parish Office. A \$150.00 non-refundable registration fee must accompany the completed registration and turned into the church office ASAP. The deadline for registration is January 15.

WABASH VALLEY RIGHT TO LIFE is sponsoring their annual pro-life billboard campaign, where positive life messages will be posted around Terre Haute in January 2022. We would like to raise \$375 to sponsor a billboard this year. If you would like to contribute, please do so before January 5, marking your donation "Right to Life." Please call the church office with any questions or e-mail Stacy.Gibbens@ielcth.org.

Serving in January and February at Divine Service

Altar Guild – January: Beth Gibbens; Rachel Gibbens; Emma Wineinger
February: Gloria Hayne; Madeline Tate

Tellers – January: Kris & Leslie Bilyeu; Jodi Tate | February: Mike & Sara Latta; Rick & Kathy Todd

Ushers – January: Dave Morge; Jack Casassa; Cam Casassa; Kris Bilyeu
February: Larry Hayne; Shawn Wallace

Schedule of Divine Liturgies for January and February

January 2	Second Sunday after Christmas, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 6	(Thursday) Epiphany of Our Lord, 7pm	Divine Service
January 9	Baptism of Our Lord, <i>transferred</i> , 10:30am	Divine Service
January 16	Second Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 23	Third Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 30	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30am	Divine Service
February 6	Transfiguration of Our Lord, 10:30am	Divine Service
February 13	Septuagesima, 10:30am	Divine Service
February 20	Sexagesima, 10:30am	Divine Service
February 27	Quinquagesima, 10:30am	Divine Service