



THE MESSENGER

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEST SEATTLE

MARTIN LUTHER'S HYMNS FOR CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY

In these days, we continue to celebrate the glorious twelve days of Christmas, from the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord on December 25 through the twelfth day on January 5. On January 6, the Church remembers the Epiphany of Our Lord, the first day of the season extending through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning “manifestation” or “showing forth.” In the Western Church, the season traditionally recalls three events by which Christ is made manifest as the Son of God following those of his birth: at the arrival of the Magi at “the house” (Matthew 2:1-12), contrary to the common lore of them worshipping him at the manger; at his baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan, where he was revealed as God’s Son by a voice from heaven (recorded or mentioned in all four Gospels); and at the wedding at Cana where he changed water into wine, his first miracle or sign (John 2:1-11).

Martin Luther provided hymns for many of the seasons and major feasts of the church year, in an effort to clearly proclaim the Gospel in and through these foundational events. He wrote two hymns for Christmas. The best known of these is *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* (LBW 51), written in 1535 for his family’s Christmas Eve celebration. Over 14 verses, it combines the angels’ announcement of the birth of Jesus, the shepherds’ visit to the manger, and the believer’s response to, “what God for us has done in sending us his own dear Son.” Published in 1539 together with the text, the melody is generally also thought to be by Luther. His other Christmas hymn, *All Praise to You, Eternal Lord* (LBW 48), is not widely known. The first verse was borrowed from a late 14th century Latin Christmas hymn, to which Luther added six verses of his own, published in 1524. The original version ended each stanza with “Kyrieleis,” a common rendering of “Kyrie eleison” (Lord have mercy). The LBW version has five verses, each ending with “Hallejuah” rather than the original “Kyrieleis.” The melody appeared with the text in 1524, though its composer is unknown.

For many years the carol *Away in a Manger* (LBW 67) was commonly attributed to Luther, but is actually of 19th century American origin.

To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord (LBW 79) recalls the second and most important of the three manifestations of Christ in the Epiphany season, his baptism by John the Baptist at the river Jordan. Published in 1541, it includes the key elements of the event in response to his Father’s will. “This heavenly washing now shall be a cleansing from transgression and, by his blood and agony, release from death’s oppression. A new life awaits us.”

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*“Of the Father’s love begotten; Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.”*

LBW Hymn #42

The twelve days of Christmas begin with the Feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end on January 5th. This is a time of celebration as we recognize the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. January 7th marks the first Sunday of the Epiphany season. On this day we observe the baptism of our lord.

Pastor update: Pastor Bryon Hansen is officially our candidate of choice for permanent pastor of FLCWS. While this in itself can be a lengthy process, we are happy to offer an opportunity for the congregation to gather with him on Sunday, January 7th, to meet him and get to know him. Additional information is included in the Call Committee report in this newsletter.

2024 budget update: At our December council meeting we began working on our 2024 budget. Thanks to your dedication, we received many additional pledge cards. Your generous support of our church helps in many ways, but particularly during the call process of a permanent pastor. We plan to finalize the budget in January and will have it available to vote on at our annual meeting. As of this writing it is a tight budget, but do-able.

One of the challenging items to our budget is the necessary work on the parsonage. I'd like to thank the many individuals who have volunteered time, supplies, designated giving and all-out physical labor to get the parsonage to where it is today. By late January we hope to have the kitchen upgrades, bathroom upgrades, finishing work, electrical work and flooring complete. The plan is to hire a property management team to rent the parsonage to an individual or family in the community. The income from the parsonage will help us to increase income to offset costs within our budget.

Constitution updates: In follow up to the November congregation meeting to update the constitution, the second meeting will be to ratify only the constitution changes, which need two votes. This meeting will occur immediately following the 10:30 am Liturgy on Sunday, January 28th. The bylaws needed one vote, which was accomplished at our November meeting. Immediately following the constitution meeting, we will be holding our annual meeting. Please plan to attend both of these events in the Parish Hall.

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all that we do, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LBW p. 15

-Janine Douglass, President



CALL COMMITTEE

First an apology; my published timeline for the next steps of the call process was incorrect. After consultation with committee members, staff, and the candidate we developed a new road map of having two meet and greet sessions, a small number of pulpit supply appearances and having a separate congregation meeting in February for the actual vote.

In early December the candidate met with the staff and took a formal tour of the building.

We would like to invite the congregation to meet Rev. Hansen for a small plate lunch on January 7th in the Parish Hall and then again for lighter fare on February 4th in rooms C and D. These events will replace our monthly congregational coffee fellowship gatherings for January and February.

We are keeping the annual meeting separate from the call vote meeting. The call vote will occur on February 11th after the service. That is Superbowl Sunday, but the game doesn't start until 3:30 pm PST. The candidate would then have 30 days to accept the call. The formal installation would occur after Easter. The called Pastor could assume the position after the call is accepted, but before the investiture.

-Matthew Kahn, Call Committee Chair

PARSONAGE REPORT

The parsonage renovations will continue on into early 2024. Demolition of the kitchen flooring had occurred during the fall. The Parsonage committee began seeking bid quotes from contractors to complete the following items: soffit relocation, flooring install, purchased kitchen cabinet installation, counter top installation, and painting. Construction materials, such as the flooring, counter tops and appliances, were agreed to be purchased separate from the labor quotes.

On December 12, 2023, the church council voted and agreed to authorize \$35K towards this phase of the parsonage renovations. It was decided during that council meeting that the contractor bid to move forward with was Kris Sagmoen. Kris intends to begin his work on Tuesday December 19, 2023. The contractor work is expected to last 3 weeks. Following Kris's work, next for the parsonage will be carpet replacement quotes and installation scheduling, punch list walkthrough, and finishing touches.

The parsonage committee hopes to have the parsonage completed by early 2024.

-Steven Liang, Church Council

EXTENDED MINISTRY – CAN YOU HELP?

There is an **urgent need** for bedding, blankets, sleeping bags, pillows, clothing, toiletries, etc. at **Riverton Park United Methodist Church**. Several hundred asylum seekers have been arriving at the church seeking shelter, many of whom walked from Sea-Tac Airport. A number of articles have appeared in The Seattle Times about this overwhelming situation. If you feel you can help, go to the website <https://rivertonparkumc.com/donate> [Click on "Social Services" in the left hand column; then "Migrant Arrival Support" in the next column, scroll down to "DONATIONS" and explore "How You Can Help."] This is the season to share and give gifts. Helping people who are strangers in our country and have few possessions or clothing, will be a blessing in so many ways.

-Lorraine King, Church Council

STEWARDSHIP

As we take another look at stewardship during this time of pledge gathering and church budget planning, let's start with the simple reminder that giving is good and we should strive to do it! Faithful stewardship is always the work of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end. It is really the Spirit at work in us and through us that creates the joy in giving we all seek to have.

A starting point in looking for ways to best be good stewards is to listen in prayer and be open to God's guidance. As the church seeks to support a new pastor, taking a more deliberate approach to giving is also in order. A recent insert in the church bulletin from the Church Council reasserted the need for regular tithing, and how a lower percentage of giving can increase over time to reach that 10% goal. Pledges are a very good way to practice regular giving and doing so can help the church make thoughtful decisions. When we truly embrace that God is the owner of all things, that we are His stewards, and that His agenda is the only agenda, our journey as a biblical steward will flourish.

Of course, this can sometimes be challenging. At times, personal financial matters arise that are emergent and may take away the ability to honor a pledge or a regular amount of giving. These circumstances also fall under the purview of God's grace. Catching up on our giving/pledge when we can is also an example of healthy stewardship!

-Ben Dobbeck

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The West Seattle Food Bank box and all collections are in

room C. Suggested Food Bank donations for January are pastas, noodles and sauces, although any non-perishable foods, personal products, or grocery store gift cards are welcomed. Compass Center is in need of new socks for men and women. Your much needed donations are taken to the West Seattle Food Bank, Compass Housing Alliance and Mary's Place as they come in.

HOLY EUCHARIST – Communion: Those who are baptized in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and believe are welcome to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If you are not able to walk up to communion but would like to receive, talk to one of the ushers before the liturgy. On Sunday, January 7th, and the first Sunday of each month, multiple cup communion will be offered, in addition to intinction.

WHY COMMUNION REGISTRY? Our Constitution limits voting to members who commune at least 3 times each quarter and contribute at a given level. The Worship Registration form is an objective way the Council can document who meets the communion requirement. Thank you for your cooperation.

DEO GLORIA CANTORES: Choir rehearses on Thursdays, from 7:30 to 9:00 pm each week. Rehearsals resume on Thursday, January 18. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Dean Hard or Andrew King at the church office.

ANNUAL REPORT AND MEETING: Staff, officer and committee reports are due. If you have not already sent your report in to the office please do so as soon as possible. The Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 28th, at 12:00 pm.

2024 FLOWER CHART: The 2024 Altar Flower Chart is posted on the hall bulletin board. Check it out early for the best choice of dates.

PARISH PRAYERS

*Remember in prayer before God those whom He has made your
brothers and sisters through baptism.*

Pray for members and friends of our congregation that God will bless and strengthen them in these days: Nancy Lawson, Holly Petersen, Natalie Nesvig, Eileen & Dave Nestoss, Kyra Stromberg, Peter and Dana Morrison, Paula and The Rev. Douglas Lindsay, Karen Granger, Shirley Graham, Angel Lynne, Lauri Nygaard, Connie Baker, and Ernie Hopson.

Pray for the shut-ins that the light of Christ may give them joy: Joan Olson, Bob & Mona Ayer, Jeannine Lingle, Robert Schorn, Lou and Lori Landino, and Melanie Johnson.

Pray for our bishops Elizabeth Eaton & Shelley Bryan Wee; our presiding ministers Philip Lee, Barry Fritts, Bryon Hansen, Douglas Lindsay, Jack Richards, Horacio Castillo, and Philip Nesvig; our choirmaster Dean Hard, our cantor Andrew King, and all who faithfully assist with worship. May they be strengthened in faith, love and the holy office to which they have been called. Pray for our church council and our call committee, that God will guide and strengthen them in these days.

Pray that God would give us hearts to find joy in service and faithful stewardship. Pray that God would work within you to become a good steward of your time, talents, and finances. Pray to strengthen our commitment to stewardship in our congregation.

Pray for the hungry, ignored, abused, unemployed, addicted, homeless, and unbelievers. Pray for the mercy of God for these people, and for all in Christ's church to see and help those who are in distress. Pray for our country and those who lead us, that our collective actions may honor God and be a blessing in the world.

Pray for people around the world who suffer from the effects of war, terrorism, natural disasters, poverty, and abuse, especially the people of Ukraine, Israel, the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, and all who live in fear.

Pray that God will bless you through the lives of the saints: St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles; The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., renewer of society and Martyr (1968).

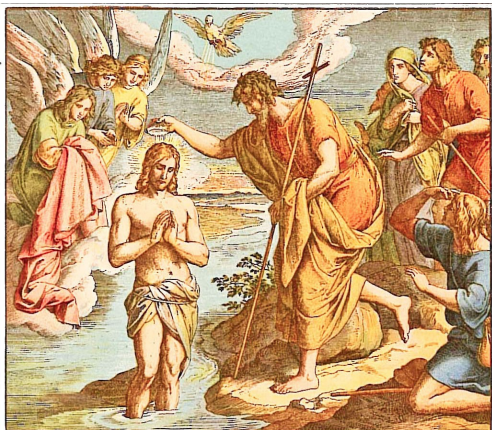
A Treasury of Prayers

Gracious and Eternal God, as we stand upon the threshold between the Old and the New, in this hour of new beginnings, awaken in us a thankful heart for thy gracious ministry whereby we have been brought to this moment:

As we enter upon the responsibilities and privileges of the coming days, strengthen us to live as those who have been awakened to the urgency of living, as those who would always adorn and never belittle the station with which Thou hast entrusted us.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Donald Houston Stewart (20th Century)
For All the Saints, Volume III, page 179



Baptism of Our Lord

Sunday, January 7, 2024, 10:30 am

In Matthew 3:15 Jesus tells John to baptize him in order "to fulfill all righteousness." Luther teaches:

As though it were not enough that Christ Himself submitted to Baptism, ... as soon as he comes out of the water, the whole heaven opens up so that the divine Majesty comes down and appears visibly. Although it is told simply, it is certainly the greatest sign and most glorious revelation ever heard or seen. Here God actually shows Himself.... All three persons of the Godhead.... (Luther's Works 57:163)

Baptism was instituted by God primarily for Christ's sake and then afterwards also for the sake of all men. For first

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JANUARY 2024



First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
4105 California Avenue S.W.