

THE STAR

DECEMBER 2016

Rooted in Christ • Growing in Faith • Reaching to Invite and Serve

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church
Elmhurst, Illinois



CHRISTMAS EVE

WORSHIP SERVICES



4:00 p.m.

Children and Family Worship
with candlelighting

(A 30-40 minute service designed especially for little ones
and their short attention spans!)

8:00 p.m.

candlelight Worship with Holy Communion

11:00 p.m.

candlelight Worship with Holy Communion

PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL WORSHIP TIMES

Sunday, December 25

One Worship Service

at 10:00 a.m.

No Sunday School

Saturday, December 31

No Worship Service

Sunday, January 1

One worship service
at 10:00 a.m.

No Sunday School



A Few Words from Pastor Jennifer

John 12:20-36 – “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself....” ³³ ³⁶ After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

We've celebrated Christ the King Sunday, the official "end" to the church year. We are now in the season of Advent. The altar paraments will be changed to blue, the first candle banner will be hung from the sanctuary ceiling for Sunday, and the tree will soon be up as well. Around town, the street lights have been wrapped in evergreen and white lights, and our "Christmas Wonderland" neighbor on Spring Road already has their blow-up Christmas figures in their front yard, to my little boy's extreme delight. The signs and rituals of the season are everywhere. Lovely signs, festive signs.

And yet.

And yet, this is the passage that keeps coming into my thoughts. And these are the words that whisper into my heart: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." On "Meet the Press," incoming Chief of Staff, Reince Preibus, indicated that there are no current plans to create a registry of all Muslims in the US, but that he would not rule it out. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." In our Nation's Capital, racial slurs and swastikas continue to be spray-painted on the walls of public buildings, and – in my hometown – even on the side of houses where minorities or Jewish people live. Our government and our people seem hopelessly divided. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Language of "us" and "them" is ever increasing in our media, and we seem increasingly comfortable with making broad, sweeping assumptions about "THEM" (at least if the casual conversations I've overheard around town or been privy to on Facebook are any indication). "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." And a recent news article I read announced that Chicago has had more shootings and gun-related homicides this year than New York and Los Angeles combined. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

We are still raising our Christmas trees, and wrapping gifts, and baking cookies. We are still taking joy in the season, and it is right that we do. But I am mindful that for so many, these holiday trappings will do no more than put a thin veneer over deep, soul-searing questions. We are thirsty for the living water. We are hungry for the bread of life. And we need to see Jesus. (continued next page)

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Yet Jesus' answer to the Greeks in this passage (his answer to us) is a frustrating answer and an inadequate answer. An absurd answer, really.

But, we come anyway. We've heard the stories and, like the Greeks before us, we want to see for ourselves. Some of us have come a long way to get to this place in our lives. We're tired and road weary – soul weary – from the journey.

But, we come anyway. Because we've heard the stories. Water changed into wine. Chronically ill people made well. Thousands of hungry people fed off of five loaves and two fish. Walking on water. A man, blind from birth, being made to see. Amazing stories. Wondrous stories.

Well, now we want to see, Jesus. We want to see a sign of our own. And, instead, you speak to us of death, and of serving. You speak to us of being glorified and of being lifted up from the earth. You tell us that when you are lifted up in this way, all will be drawn to you. And then you hide: we won't see you again until you are nailed to the cross. We are thirsty for the living water; we are hungry for the bread of life. What sort of answer is this?

It is - quite simply - the most beautiful, amazing, and heartbreakingly answer possible.

How difficult do we suppose it would be for the Word, which created the world, to walk on water? Probably not so very. Rearrange a few atoms and it should work well enough: an easy thing for the world's creator to manage, I'm sure.

But how difficult do we suppose it would be for the Word, king of the entire universe, to allow himself to come here? Allow himself to be born to a poor family under the cloud of scandal? To have to live as we do: subject to all the joy and pain that comes from being human? To allow himself to be arrested, imprisoned and killed? And all of it done willingly, all because of the deep, endless, passionate love he felt...and feels...for us? How many of us can sustain love on that kind of level? It is beyond comprehension.

Signs, no matter how big they are, no matter how wondrous they seem, exist in a moment and for a moment. Like a shooting star in the night, they create a bright glow, but vanish in the sparkling mist of morning. And this is not what Jesus' kingdom is about.

Jesus' kingdom is about something much more permanent: something much more important than an entertaining sideshow. Jesus' kingdom is about extravagant, irrational, no-holds-barred, self-giving and self-gifting kind of love. A love that WAS: in the beginning, with God. A love that IS: and is God. A love through which all things were made. A love that was and is and will always be the light of all people, because nothing else is strong enough – nothing else is enduring enough – to gather us all in from the dark.

There is darkness all around us, and we wish to see Jesus. And this is the good news that we can proclaim this Christmas season: the Word became flesh and lived among us in the person of Jesus. And we have seen his glory. And we get to see it again and again and again. We see it wherever and whenever we see extravagant, self-giving and self-gifting kind of love at work. Because that is the gift of light that Jesus gave to the world. It is the light that shines in the darkness. And the darkness does not overcome it.

Blessings to you and yours this Advent and Christmas season.

Pastor Jennifer

Poinsettia Plants 2016 - Only Two Sundays to Order

You can help beautify the chancel area for Christmas by purchasing a poinsettia plant. To place your order, please complete the form below and mail it to Dawn Sanders, 572 Saylor, Elmhurst, IL 60126 or put it in the Altar Guild mailbox in the church office. **Please include payment of \$15.50 per plant with your order. Checks should be made payable to Epiphany Lutheran Church.** You may pick up your plant after the 8:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services, or you may leave it for delivery to our sick or shut-in members. Please indicate your preference on the form and **be sure your order is placed by December 11.** If you have any questions, please call Dawn Sanders at (630) 279-2546. Thank you!



Christmas Poinsettia Plants orders are due by Sunday, December 11.

Number of plants _____
(\$15.50 each – please include payment making checks payable to Epiphany Lutheran Church)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please designate:

We will pick up the plant(s) after the 8:00 or 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

Please deliver the plant(s) to a sick or shut-in person.

Visionary Parenting Study

Wednesday, December 7 - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

This recurring group is geared toward parents, newly married couples, even grandparents. We will meet the third Wednesday of each month with the exception of the month of December. Due to the Christmas holiday, the meeting date for December will be **Wednesday, December 7**. In January we will return to meeting on the third Wednesday of each month.

We will be using Dr. Rob Rienow's Visionary Parenting series as our guide. Some of the topics covered include:

- ◆ Capturing a God-sized vision for your family.
- ◆ Creating a less chaotic and more peaceful home.
- ◆ Learning how to pass faith and character on to your children.
- ◆ Experiencing the power of prayer as a family.
- ◆ Winning the hearts of your children.

If you know someone outside of our church family who would benefit from this study, please invite them! This is a great opportunity for spiritual growth, fellowship, and bringing new faces to Epiphany. To learn more about Dr. Rienow's extraordinary vision, please visit www.visionaryparenting.com. For more information about the group please contact Kareen and Todd Ripperda at (630) 774-1588 or krippeda@comcast.net



Welcome New Members

Moose Flores comes to us from Zion Lutheran Church in Ferndale, MI where he grew up. Moose is a graduate of Michigan State and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He recently joined our staff as youth director and lives on Roosevelt Road in Forest Park. And, yes, "Moose" is his legal name!

Lisa Hier grew up in Chicago and in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. She is an administrative assistant in the office of Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Brian and Sarah Meyer and son, **Seth**, come to us from the Methodist church. They own and run Golfer's Edge in Lombard. Seth, is 5 years old and attends kindergarten at Emerson School. The Meyers live on N. Walnut Street in Elmhurst.

Brian and Alison Parker, and sons, **Evan and Benjamin**, live on Hillside Avenue in Elmhurst. Alison is from Elmhurst and is a real estate agent for Berkshire Hathaway Prairie Path Realtors. Brian, who is from Orland Park is in IT/security with USG. Evan is 4 years old and goes to Buttons and Bows pre-school. Benjamin will be two years old this month.

Barbara Brunk comes to us from Resurrection Lutheran Church in Franklin Park. She has two daughters, **Elaine** and **Nancy** (Innocentini). She lives in Leyden Township and enjoys reading, knitting, baking, and spending time with her family.



Epiphany Gives

Thank you, everyone, for participating in the Party-in-a-bag project. We delivered 50 beautifully filled bags of birthday party essentials to the Humanitarian Service Project in Carol Stream. They were impressed with our Sunday School effort!



Fourth Quarter Update From the Epiphany Finance

YTD Offerings behind Budget by 3.25%

As of October 31, offerings to the church are running behind the forecasted expectations on a year-to-date (YTD) basis by \$14,700 or 3.25% of the budget. As we approach the last few weeks of the calendar year and enter the Advent season, please check your offering commitments and help the church get back on track as we conclude the year.

Offering Counter Needed

The finance committee needs volunteers to assist with the weekly counting process of the church's offerings and gifts. Bill Thiel will be retiring at year end after a significant number of years volunteering, and we are grateful for his service. If you are interested, please call or email Jack Graham at the church at (630) 832-8457, or jack.graham@epiphanyelmhurst.org

In Christ,
Epiphany Finance Committee

Want To Make A Difference This Year?

Required Minimum IRA Distributions (RMD's):

Why not save yourself the tax? Many retirees are required to take funds from their retirement accounts at age 70 1/2 but don't actually need these funds for their monthly living expenses. Here's one way to take those distributions TAX FREE:

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 first allowed taxpayers age 70½ or older to exclude from gross income otherwise taxable distributions from their IRA ("qualified charitable distributions," or QCDs), up to \$100,000, that were paid directly to a qualified charity. The 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act has now made this a permanent benefit to all taxpayers. Not only are these funds donated to the church tax free, there may also be additional tax benefits as a result of the QCD.

Gifts of Appreciated Securities:

You can contribute securities tax-free. Securities that have appreciated in value may be donated to Epiphany, and you pay no capital gains tax on the securities you donate. Epiphany sells your securities and uses the proceeds for its mission and ministry. Did you know that Epiphany has a brokerage account to accept in-kind transfers of securities such as common stock, mutual funds and Exchange Traded Funds (ETF's)? By transferring to Epiphany, the securities are not sold until they reach Epiphany's brokerage account. The full amount is then tax free, and allows you to potentially use the full amount as a charitable donation/deduction on your tax return making this a win/win situation. Please consider this as part of your year-end tax planning. Please call the church office to help make this transfer.

If you have any questions on either of these topics, or the potential tax savings implications, please contact the church office at 630-832-8457.

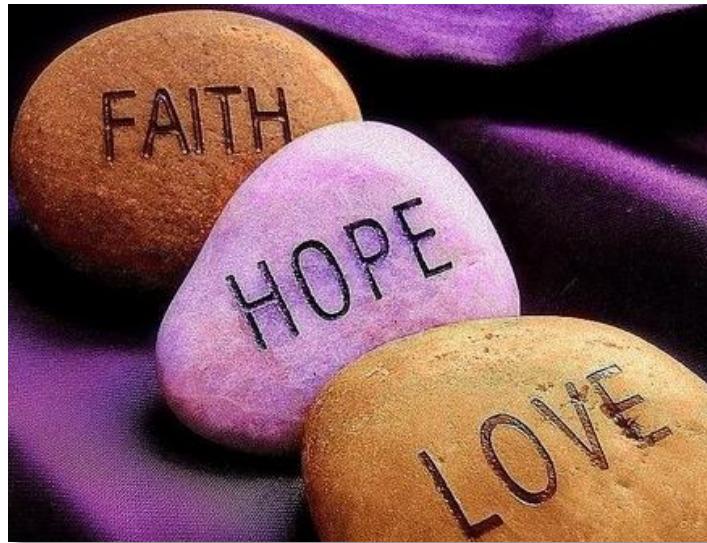
The Tree of Love and Caring/Coat and Boot Drive

Epiphany has a long standing Christmas tradition of supporting those in need within the community through the Tree of Love and Caring. The tree is now up in Epiphany Center with its star and bell ornaments. Please help to brighten a child's or adult's life this Christmas by participating in this worthwhile gift-giving project! A coat and boot drive for those in need is also underway. Last year through your generosity several needy families were delighted by your donations of warm winter clothing. Please remember to set aside any "gently used" winter clothing that you are willing to donate, and bring it to the Tree of Love and Caring table in Epiphany Center by **December 18**. It will be distributed along with the gifts to the Tree of Love and Caring families on **December 18** with any extras being donated to charities. Thank you so much for your help! Please call Lisa Budris with any questions at (630) 247-9264.



Faith, Hope Love Group

We'd like to welcome you to check out a new weekly drop-in group called "Faith, Hope, Love." This will be a safe place to come together with others to share "grace moments," bring up life concerns, or simply voice a prayer request. There is no cost for the group, and it will meet **every Wednesday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel starting December 7**. If you have any questions please contact Jill Hinrichs at (630) 834-0821.



Men In Mission Annual Christmas Dinner and Fundraiser

The Men in Mission Annual Christmas Dinner and Fundraiser will take place Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Epiphany Center. Through this event we provide families in need with food, clothing, and gifts for children at Christmas time. Last year, over 30 people received help from us at Christmas because of the generosity of our congregation and the Elmhurst business community.

Tickets for this adults-only event are \$15.00 per person and go on sale Sunday, November 27, and will be available for purchase on the Sundays of December 4 and December 11. Tickets will also be available after the Saturday night services on those weekends.

A Christmas tree will be decorated and donated to a family in need. Ornaments for the tree would be appreciated and these can be brought to the event.

If you are unable to attend the dinner/fundraiser but would like to make a donation, we accept cash, or checks made out to Men In Mission. We honor requests for anonymity, if desired.

Throughout the year, we also provide funds for medical, utility, and housing expenses to those in need, and to Epiphany organizations that assist the needy, to the extent we are able to do so.

If you have any questions please contact the co-chairmen of Men In Mission: Bill Friberg at (630) 606-0219 or Tom Connolly at (630) 290-4025 or speak to any of the Men In Mission board members: Tom Connolly, Brendan Connor, Bill Friberg, Phil Darling, Wilbur Lippert, Dave Norquist, Gary Sanders, Roy Schroeder, Sr., Roy Schroeder, Jr., Bob Sutherland.



Elmhurst Area Children's Choir Concert

The Elmhurst Area Children's Choir, accompanied by the Glory Ringers and New Life Ensemble of Epiphany Church will embark on their annual Holiday Concert Tour **on Sunday afternoon December 11th** leaving the church at 12 noon via charter coach and making three stops to bring their holiday music to deserving audiences. We will begin at Lexington Square of Elmhurst with a 1:00 p.m. concert, the 2:0 p.m. concert is at Concord Plaza in Northlake, and the 5:00 p.m. concert will be right here at Epiphany! Under the direction of John Tanis, the three performing groups will bring holiday cheer in song under the title *A Stocking Full of Holiday Cheer*. Be on the look-out in future announcements for the complete concert itinerary.

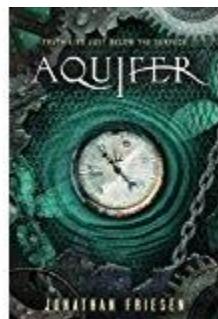
Seeking Musicians For Christmas Worship Services

We are seeking musicians (instrumentalists/ vocalists) for our Christmas Eve services! As many of you know, our three Christmas Eve services begin with a half hour of pre-service music presented by musically talented members of the congregation. If you are a budding musician (youth) or are a seasoned musician (adult) and would like to share a favorite Christmas song during these pre-service times (4:00, 8:00, or 11:00 p.m.), please contact our Music Director, John Tanis, at john.tanis@epiphanyelmhurst.org or at (312) 388-7790. Help us celebrate the birth of our Savior in song with your musical contribution!

Check it Out!

Despite occurring in the oft-traversed area of persecuted Christians in a post-cataclysmic dystopia, Jonathan Friesen's *Aquifer* is the most creative novel I have read in years. Like real life, what or who seems important, predictable, or unquestionable often is discovered to be inconsequential, spontaneous, or diverse. "Yet some truths are certain." Australia and the rest of the world is in a permanent drought -- no water, no emotions, and no books; but it is the best world that can be hoped for and worthy of preservation at any cost. Whom can the young hero trust: the officer of the secret police, the pirate, the condemned criminal, the mayor, or Her? I recommend this book for any jaded reader willing to forgo a nice tidy bow. This book can be checked out for FREE until confiscated by order of the Council of Nine.

--Assistant Librarian Teri



December Birthdays

1	David Schleich, Lindsay Browning	16	Scott Bublitz, Kristine DeGrace, Christina Pankow
2	Katie Stauch	17	Connie Earnst, Evan Nutile, Morgan Semmelhack
3	Scott Bonthron, Charlie Sutton, Leon Casey-Bell, Grace Lynde, Ramiro Zepeda	18	Phil Darling, Wendy Russo
4	Kim Mehring, Adam Haukland, Nilsen Hurst	19	Fritzie Glover, Gary Gross, Timothy Zubradt, Mark Kammerdiener, Julia Zablovdic
5	Josie Heard	20	Eileen Pietraszek, Kristy Proctor, Olivia Mann
6	Debora Persenico, Tony Hall, Gracie Durham	21	Barbara Szczepaniak
7	Madyson Hudson, Caroline Marshall	22	Rosemarie Petersen, Katie Pyne, Andrew Langer
8	Taylor Kiddle, George Redfearn, Madden Michalski	23	Brandon Nolen, Victoria Biery
9	Dan Wachholz, Zachary Dettloff, Caroline Dierksheide, Peter Connor	24	Mary K. Hanson, Jennifer Reichert
10	Fred Antlesperger	25	Lori Lewis, Erin McGonigle
11	Noel Schroeder	26	Melanie Bublitz
12	Phyllis Field, Linda Merrinette, Melinda Hudson, Linda Davies, Anna Thiel, Rachael Gould	27	Arlene Taylor, Sean Browning, Owen Stufflebeam, Andrew Weirman, Jack Davies
13	Barbara Nelson, Stephen Callahan, Matthew Moser, Blaire Porter, Christopher Diaz, Rebecca Hartley	28	Sheila Durbin, Kim Kortes, Alivia Schumaker
14	Graham Biery, Alexander Hernandez, Madeline Schleich	29	Kelli Marti, Jessica Sutherland, Owen Hurst, Madelyn Honsey
15	Marylin DeVries, Kris Johnson, Erin Lewis, Julia Neri, Jabob Lupa, Samuel Guterman	30	Nancy Langer, Kristen Samar, Joseph Dickert
		31	Bruce Lindgren, Bill Reichert, Camden Hildy, Karrick Ripperda

December Anniversaries

8	Robert and Judith Scheurman	22	Richard and Gwen Becker
12	Kie and Sally Hammerle	28	Brad and Kristine Lundine
17	Kirsten and Chris Healy		Timothy and Monika Zubradt
19	Edward Jr. and Savanna Samuelian	30	Tracy and Kathy Hunt
20	Colleen and Michael Korzen		Hal and Cheri Gabrielsen

In Our Prayers

Our members: Todd Becker, Wayne Bell, Judith Billingsley, Nancy Bode, Marie Buford, Bill Friberg, Babette Halen, Josie Heard, Ella Hruby, Catherine Knapp, Darryl May, Maureen, Asher, and Clark McPherson, Gena Medema, Greg Moser, Bob Sutherland, Marlene Tegmeyer

Our friends: Skip Anderson (son-in-law of Mary Hanson), Emma Barz, (friend of the Redfearn family), Eli James Becker (grandson of Gwen and Richard Becker), Bill and Virginia Bonham (Bill Friberg's brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Evelyn Boutin (Lito Toreja's sister), Laverne Budris (Lisa Budris' mother), Judy Elenbaas (friend of the Kellers), Elizabeth Engfer (daughter of Marjorie and Bill Thiel), Charles Fahrenwald (Wayne and Joan Bell's grandson), Marge Flemming (friend of Pat Hidle), Gwen Gorman (daughter of Glen and Elsa Heinemann), Keith Groenwald (former member), Owen Thomas Gross (grandson of Gary and Sue Gross), Andy Hamblin (Jan Davis' son, Helen Evensen's grandson), Lorna Hansen (Amy Rimington's mother), Jan Harms (Jen Mann's mother), Christa Johnson (friend of the Hedricks), John Johnson (Janet Rudhman's brother), Robert Kampf (friend of Daryl Bartelson), Kevorak Kahvedsian (friend of the Hildles), Glen Kelley (friend of the Hildles), Bob Krzyzewski (Lila Peters' brother-in-law), Lindsay Larson (Andrea Redfearn's niece), Greg Lechowski (friend of Joe Schram), Bill Lentine (father of Trisha Graham), Lora Corey Marut (friend of Linda Stratton), Harriet Mason (friend of Sandra Vaughn), Karen McCaa (sister of Amy Pilny), Betsy McKeever (Kristin Hall's aunt), Evan Thomas Mevis (Ruth Blair's grandson), Marie Mueller (mother of Keelie Witzel), Gail Nerison, Nancy O'Leary and Family (Sue Mooshoul's sister), Mary Overbeck (friend of Karen and Larry Bircher), Patti Paul (friend of Curt Clifford), Betty Patch (Lori Trimble's mom), Barbara Phelps (Wayne Phelps' mother), Joe Pilny (David Pilny's father), John Rossi, Eva Salems (Lila Peters' sister), Marge Swanson (Shirley Swanson's mother), Pat Swanson (Shirley Swanson's sister-in-law), Joan Sturino (sister of Dawn Sanders), Bea Tanis (John Tanis' mother), Irma Tena (friend of the Johnson family), Matt Toole (friend of Phyllis Field), John VanFleet (friend of the Tengroths), Eric Von Schaumburg (husband of Lindsay Rudhman), David Wells (son-in-law of Elsa and Glen Heinemann), Lori Wood (friend of Pastor Moser)

STAFF DIRECTORY

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Moose Flores	Director of Youth Ministry	630-774-1588	LYO@epiphanyelmhurst.org
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Maria Terracciano	Custodian	630-832-8457	Maria.Terracciano@EpiphanyElmhurst.org

Star News

Thank you to everyone who submits articles to The Star. Articles submitted are subject to review by the editor. Any significant revisions will be discussed with the author of the article. You may email contributions to: info@EpiphanyElmhurst.org
Deadlines for submissions for the January edition are due Friday, December 9.