

THE STAR

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELMHURST, IL

ROOTED IN CHRIST • GROWING IN FAITH • REACHING TO INVITE AND SERVE



July/August
2026



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026

A FEW WORDS FROM PASTOR DON

Epiphany Dreams

As part of "Whole Hearted" Sunday last month, Epiphany members and friends were invited to fill out a card or send an email describing "A Dream I Have For Epiphany." We received 50 responses, which I thought was a good return. Nearly all fell into the following seven categories, which were discussed at this week's church council meeting. I share these now with you, along with brief thoughts on each. These are listed in descending frequency of mention.



Young Families: Virtually every church wants to increase its membership of young families. Epiphany is in a position to do so because there is already a "critical mass" of young families. Members can invite friends, first-time guests see peers of the parents and the children, and we have a strong Sunday School.

Member Engagement: A recent Barna study identified that the gap "between curiosity and commitment is the defining pastoral challenge of this moment." Intentional discipleship is the key. This will take some fresh energy and approaches, and also commitment across time.

Ministry Beyond Epiphany: Serving others is a great way to meet genuine needs while at the same time resisting the very human impulse to turn inward. This is God's love in action.

Worship and Music: This received a number of mentions, some of which border on being mutually exclusive. Epiphany's volunteer leaders took great care in addressing service times and worship style/content before beginning this program year. I do not recommend that we revisit this while in an interim period, because it will be taken up again when Epiphany calls a new pastor.

Finances: Ministry and/or staff expansion dreams have financial implications. These are on top of the increasing costs of much of the ministry already in place. I sense that Epiphany's desire is to do more with more rather than to do less with less.

Next 100 Years: Epiphany has families who have been active here for generations. And Epiphany has been a positive presence in the community for a long time. Those are legacies on which to build.

Call Process: Epiphany's call committee is doing good work and is entering a period in which their congregational updates will be vague by necessity. This is to protect the confidentiality of potential candidates. When there is a preferred candidate to bring forward for a congregational vote, there will be much more information. Your support and patience are appreciated.

Enjoy your summer activities and travel, and I look forward to seeing you when you're in town.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Don

FINANCIAL UPDATE

	Current Month			YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Operating Income, less Special Gift	\$59,462	\$46,642	\$12,820	\$ 308,242	\$243,160	\$ 65,082
Rooted in Christ	10,732	7,738	(2,994)	37,970	43,140	5,170
Growing in Faith	6,164	3,678	(2,486)	18,514	18,390	(124)
Reaching to Invite and Serve	2,641	417	(2,224)	3,069	2,085	(984)
Participation with other Christians in the Mission of the wider Church	833	833	(0)	5,067	4,165	(902)
Mission Support	36,235	36,166	(69)	214,401	198,829	(15,572)
Total Operating Expense	\$56,606	\$48,832	\$ (7,774)	\$ 279,021	\$ 266,609	\$ (12,412)
Operating Fund - Net	\$2,856	\$(2,190)	\$ 5,046	\$ 29,221	\$ (23,449)	\$ 52,670
Operating Fund - Net + Special Gift	\$2,856	\$(2,190)	\$ 5,046	\$ 140,221	\$ (23,449)	\$ 163,670

Operating income for May was above budget by \$12.8K. Regular Offerings were \$51.9K during the month which was above budget by \$9.9K. We received \$9,521 offerings as part of the Whole Hearted appeal. Other income received during the month was \$7.6k which was above budget by \$2.9K. YTD Operating Income above budget by \$65.1K exclusive of the special gift of \$111K. YTD Regular offerings of \$279K which is above budget by \$60.6K.

Total Operating Expenses for the month of May were above budget by \$7.8K. Rooted in Christ was above budget by \$3K due to additional Praise Band expenses \$1.9K and purchase of additional worship supplies \$1.4K. Growing in Faith was above budget by \$2.5K due to timing of Youth group work trip payment \$3.7K. Reaching to Invite and Service above budget by \$2.2K due to time capsule engraving \$2.6K. YTD Operating Expenses above budget by \$12.4K.

SUNDAY SCHOOL/VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Hello Sunday School and Church Families!

I pray that everyone is enjoying summer break. I know that we are!

While we have wrapped up "regular" Sunday School for the year, we are continuing to have mini-sessions during the sermon. All children are welcome to come down to Fellowship Hall with us. There is no set lesson/curriculum so no worries if you miss a week or two.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

The big event for June was VBS! We learned about the parable of the sower and looked at how the seeds in the story represent God's teachings and the different kinds of soil represent the different kind of heart people can have.

We collected donations of canned fruits and vegetables for the Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry and monetary donations that supported the Epiphany Youth as they travel to Hazlet, New Jersey next month for Work Camp. Thank you for your generosity!

Fifty-three kiddos signed up, and we averaged roughly 30 children each night. The week closed with a short program highlighting the work of the week followed by an ice cream social. Pictures from VBS are on the following pages.

Thank you to our 2026 Epiphany VBS Volunteers (apologies if we missed anyone):

Rhonda Berg and her mom - amazing decorations; Maureen McPherson - music; Nate McPherson - sports and games; Judy Samuelian - kitchen; Lillie Samuelian - craft; Kaitlyn Rice - craft; Grey Hopkins - music.

We also thank: Katie Wilbur, Chris Wilbur, Becky Knapp, Mary Fraser, Lydia Samuelian, Meghan Schleich, Maddie Schleich, Tyler Dunn, Hendrix Reynolds, Marlow, Paul, Cailyn Ziola, Ava Ziola, Kate Frahm, Sally Dunn, Jim Dunn, and Chris Samuelian.

LOOKING AHEAD

Blessings of the Backpacks will take place on Sunday, August 9th.

We will return to regular Sunday School on Sunday, September 13th!



If you are interested in serving as a Sunday School teacher or helper for the upcoming school year, please speak with Kerrie Samuelian. We are continuing our rotations curriculum and would love some extra hands! All materials are provided. Thank you for prayerfully considering joining our team!

-Kerrie Samuelian

PICTURES FROM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



PICTURES FROM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (CONT.)



CONFIRMATION UPDATE

Confirmation Class is on break for the summer!

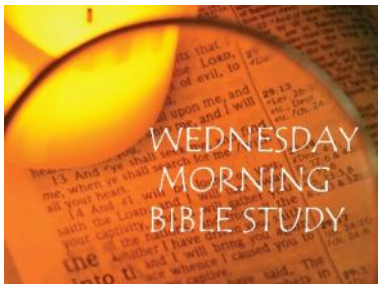
We're looking forward to welcoming our new class of confirmands this fall on Reformation Sunday (October 25). Next year's Confirmation classes will begin in September. We'll send more details in August about a family meeting and schedule. If you know of a 7th or 8th grader who would be interested in joining us in the fall or would like more information, please reach out to us in person or at confirmation@epiphanyelmhurst.org.

Thanks,

*Katie and Chris
Wilbur*



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY



Wednesday Morning Bible Study will continue to meet every Wednesday in July and August (July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; August 5, 12, 19, 26) from 10:30 to noon in the Conference Room.

Please BYOB—Bring Your Own Bible.

No preparation is necessary! Even if you've never participated in Bible Study before this, you will feel welcome. We hope you'll join us.

LYO SPRING UPDATE AND GROUP WORK CAMP

As we come to the end of a full and meaningful spring season, we're grateful for the many ways our youth have grown together in faith and fellowship. One of the highlights was our Senior BBQ, where we were thrilled to see so many students gather to celebrate our graduating seniors and enjoy time together as a community.

Looking ahead, we hope to see an even stronger attendance this fall. Every member adds something meaningful to our group, and we'd love to have more of you join us regularly.



Group Workcamp Is Almost Here!

Our Group Workcamp trip to Hazlet, New Jersey is coming up quickly—July 17th–25th. This week of service, worship, and community is always a powerful experience for our youth, and excitement is building as we prepare.

As we finalize plans, we do have one important need: **We are still seeking an additional adult chaperone, who is at least 25 years old and is willing and able to drive our van for our upcoming LYO Group Work Camp trip, July 17-25.**

If you're available these dates and are interested in serving, please reach out to Charlie Sutton – charliejsutton@gmail.com or Kerie Samuelian – Kidsministry@EpiphanyElmhurst.org.



JOIN THE ROMEOs—WEDNESDAY, JULY 15



Are you retired or working from home and would like to get out? **The ROMEOs will meet at 9:00 a.m. at Fresh Start Café on Wednesday, July 15.** Contact David Norquist (630) 310-0934 or Rich Leabru (630) 334-9108 for more information.

JOIN THE JULIETs—WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

The JULIET's will be gathering **at Pinstripes in Oak Brook on Wednesday, July 15, at 12:30 p.m.** Please RSVP to Lisa Budris at lbudris@hotmail.com by Monday, July 13 so that we will have the correct number of seats. As always, **all are welcome!**



INTERESTED IN PLAYING SOME GOLF? ALL LEVELS ARE WELCOME!



We are trying to find a group of people who would be interested in playing 9-holes of golf. Can we start by just finding those people interested, finding some days and times when a few can meet, and then see if we can develop possible regular days and times? Very Informal! This is about community, maybe a few laughs, and some time outside on the golf course.

If you are interested, email Bill Edwards at edwardsw625@gmail.com.

PICTURES FROM JULIET's JUNE DINNER

Pictures from the Juliet's dinner on June 17, at Phase 3 Brewing Co. where Karen Norquist's and Mary Fraser's birthdays were celebrated.





HELP YOUTH IN NEED.

Give the gift of learning!

The kids we serve need the following school supplies:

- Classroom Must-Haves

- Calculators
- Notebooks
- Headphones
- Pencil cases
- Art supplies
- School bags
- Folders
- Pencils and pens
and more

Cash donations are also welcome.

How to Donate:

- Scan the QR code or type the link in your browser: Giftlist.LSSI.org and select "Intact Chicago School Supplies"
- Purchase tax-exempt items online.
- Items are directly shipped to the program to be delivered to families.



Questions? Contact Maizee.Millere@LSSI.org or 309.229.5508

**EPIPHANY MISSION TEAM
FUNDRAISER GOLF OUTING
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
LOMBARD GOLF COURSE
2400 W. BUTTERFIELD ROAD**

Greetings! Our Fundraiser Golf Outing is almost here! Tee times will start at 1:00 p.m. and continue until 2:40. Golf will be followed by a dinner, at which time prizes will be awarded and raffles will be conducted.



The fee of \$40 per person includes nine holes of golf with cart, a goody bag, and several on-the-course contests. Golfers will also have the option of trying to “Beat the Pastor” on the 9th hole. The fee for dinner is \$20 per person, which includes a great meal and a ticket for a free soft-drink. A dinner reservation may be made separately for non-golfers. Contest prizes and raffles will include everything from golf stuff to collectibles to a \$100 bill, and more.

The Epiphany Mission Team (formerly Men in Mission) exists to help individuals and families who are experiencing financial difficulties. For more than 30 years, we have been conducting fundraisers and using the proceeds to provide Christmas gifts to needy families, pay utility, medical, and car repair bills, and assist with rent and other emergencies. The generosity of our Congregation, our friends, and the Elmhurst community make it possible for us to serve others in this way. We hope you will join us on September 20.

Registrations will be taken Sundays August 30, September 6, and September 13. Another way to register: click on the Golf Outing Registration Form at the beginning of this Constant Contact, complete the form, and return it with your payment by September 16, as instructed on the form.

Thank you and God bless!



BIRTHDAYS

1	Alece Hall, Eric Thiel	16	Keith Keslinke, Jill Mueller
2	Charlotte Fitzer, Jessica Jensen	17	Wil Sly
	Steven Schmuhl, Linda Stratton	18	Taylor Allen, Chad Frahm
	Jenny Toreja	19	Chloe Raia
3	Lily Anderson, Nate Anderson	22	Caroline Bending, Warren Bending
	Adam Brimie, Lisa Budris-Chudik		Glen Ganser, Andrew Hebert
4	Dylan Pozeck		Bryan Keller, Meghan Sly
5	Brittany Bending, Emily Doering	23	Chase Bending, Doug Johnson
	Sarah Martich	24	Megan Hanebuth, Fred Keller
6	Mark Leibrock, Will Parks		Kathryn McGirk
7	Mary Thiel	25	Sue Schlosser
9	Paige Vogel	26	Greg Boullion
10	Katie Frahm	27	Taya Banta
11	Gary Block, Matthew Morrell	28	Jackie Darling
13	Mia Allen, Natalie Stufflebeam	29	Bill Edwards, Brianna Richardson
14	Sydney Bonthron, Maria Jones	30	Paul Doering
	Caitlyn Korzen, Chris Wilbur		
15	Emily Barszcz, Brigitte Hoaglund		

ANNIVERSARIES

3	Paul and Kristi Gibbs	17	Norm and Jennifer Damer
5	Charlie and Nikki Sutton	26	Steve and Laurie Hier
8	Fred and Beverly Keller	27	Tom and Lisa Michalski
10	Jon and Betsy Markwald	28	Tom and Pat McGonigle
11	Brian and Rita Adams	29	Joe and Dee Schram
15	Dave Chudik and Lisa Budris-Chudik	31	Scott and Deborah Hawkins
16	Pat and Joe Rodriguez		



BIRTHDAYS

1	Alexa Barszcz	18	William Fries, Caroline Keslinke
4	Keregan Hudson, Jack McGarry		Colleen Korzen
5	Payton Ptak	19	Dominic Alfano, Elizabeth Keslinke
7	Jennifer Hanyzewski, Marilyn Heinle		Kim Ptak
8	Tracey Lupa, Zoey Witzel	20	Sue Kriz, Terry O'Toole
9	Mike Lazas, Jason VanDenBrook	23	Jennifer Villarreal
	Gary Wilson	24	Ken Bartels, Ty Hodgson
10	Doug Prine	25	Aidan Allen, Kate Mueller
11	Joanna Wilbur		Carleigh VanDenBrook
12	Judy Scheuerman	26	Brandon Haukland
13	Kianna Becker	27	Acadia Hebert
14	Brooke Vogel		Janet Rudhman, Kate Sawosko
15	Babette Halen, Nikki Sutton	30	Lynna Sly
16	Jenny Barton, Cayley Getz	31	Christian Ewald, Julie Hanebuth
	Allison Raia		Lauren Rickenbrode

ANNIVERSARIES

1	Tony and Kristin Hall	20	Dave and Julie Hanebuth
4	Mike and Mary Lazas	21	Greg and Karin Boullion
5	Chris and Kerrie Samuelian	23	Jon and Emily Beerhalter
6	Andy and Becky Knapp		Gary and Wanda Block
13	Ken Becker and Teri Kleck		Phil and Margie Gotsch
	Vern and Elaine Magnesen	24	Mark and Kelsi Morrell
14	Jim and Cindy O'Malley		Dave and Diane Wyman
16	John and Stacy Hildy	31	Drew and Kim Ptak
	John and Pam Pozeck		
19	Chip and Donna Johnson		
	Wil and Lynna Sly		

IN OUR PRAYERS

**(Please contact Joan Halvey if we missed anyone.)*

Members:

- Joan Lux
- Karen Norquist
- Randy Wiegel
- Joy Wieska



Family and friends of members:

- John Austin (friend of the Witzel family)
- Kathleen Duda (daughter of Joan Lux and Gerard Duda)
- Jorn Inge, Lena and Maria Troye (relatives of the McGonigles, McPhersons, and Tengroths)
- Arlene Lown (mother of Amy Jones)
- Nancy Przybylo (friend of Jill Setterlun and Bill Bringman)
- Nick and Mary Vandenberg (friends of the Muellers)
- Mary Witzel (mother of Joe Witzel)

If you would like to be on Epiphany's prayer list or if you would like to add a family member or friend, please call Joan at (630) 832-8457. We will keep each request on the list for four weeks. If after four weeks you would like to renew the request, please let Joan know.

STAFF DIRECTORY

Don Wink	Interim Pastor	Donwink17@gmail.com
Clay Corso	Director of Music	Clay.Corso@EpiphanyElmhurst.org
Kerrie Samuelian	Director of Children's Ministries	Kidsministry@EpiphanyElmhurst.org
Charlie and Nikki Sutton	Directors of LYO	charliejsutton@gmail.com
		ntsutton15@gmail.com
Joan Halvey	Congregation and Office Manager	Joan.Halvey@EpiphanyElmhurst.org
Paul Halvey	Custodian	Paul.Halvey@EpiphanyElmhurst.org

In the event of a pastoral need or emergency, please contact Pastor Don at (224) 639-2769. Contact information regarding pastoral needs or emergencies during Pastor Don's vacation will be shared in the near future.

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: Joan.Halvey@EpiphanyElmhurst.org

Deadline for submissions for the September 2026 edition is Friday, August 21.