



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
10 Johnson Road, Chestnut Hill Estates
Newark, DE 19713
302-737-6176
www.ourredeemernewark.org
Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE January 2020

Happy *Epiphany*?

Epiphany is a word taken over from Greek and literally means "manifestation." The Church has long used the word to describe the manifestation of the man Jesus as the Son of God. Therefore, scripture lessons associated with Epiphany include: the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem, when Christ is manifested as the Savior of Gentiles; the baptism of Jesus, where Jesus is manifested as the Son of the Father; and Jesus' first miracle, changing water into wine—as John put it, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11).



January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany. The Gospel lesson is the account of the Wise Men visiting. Many might be surprised to learn that January 6, in the very early days of the Church, was also celebrated as the birth of Jesus. You see, back in those days, people didn't typically remember birthdates. Instead, they remembered the day people died. Only truly important people had their birthdates recorded, and Jesus came from humble origins, humanly speaking.

However, as Christianity grew, believers wanted to celebrate his birth and the day we celebrate the manifestation of God in the flesh seemed like a good candidate. However, there was a philosophical problem. You see, again back in the early centuries of the Church, it was generally believed that people tended to die on the anniversary of the day they were conceived. This was especially held true if the person was important, like an emperor or prophet. This provided a symmetry to their lives.

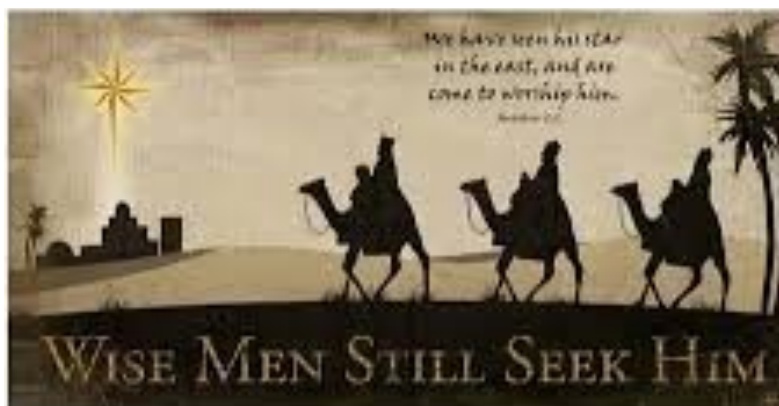
It was generally held that Jesus died on April 25. Following their reasoning, then, Jesus was conceived on April 25, carried to term by Mary, and born on December 25. So, the visit of the Wise Men (Epiphany) and the birth of Jesus (Christmas) slowly began to be celebrated on two different dates.

Epiphany now marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the Epiphany season. However, it is certainly a season in which we rejoice, because it is a season that accents that the infant whose birth we celebrated on December 25 is much more than just another baby boy—He is, to quote the prophet Isaiah, "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:5). This is the truth manifested by the Holy Spirit to all believers.

So yes, "Happy Epiphany!" We rejoice that Christ has been manifested to us as God in the flesh, our Savior and Redeemer.

Happy Epiphany,

Pastor





Digging In The Nicene Creed Second Article, Part 8

And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, **the only-begotten Son of God**, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and

was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

Last month we began looking at the phrase “the only-begotten Son of God.” We learned that this is a relational way of considering God the Father and God the Son and didn’t reflect a sequential relationship. In other words, there has never been a time when the Son didn’t exist. He and the Father (along with the Holy Spirit) have always existed.

This eternal relationship is given more oomph with the next phrase, “begotten of the Father before all worlds.” This phrase makes it impossible to think of the Son as part of the creation and therefore subsequent to the Father in terms of time. It also distinguishes the Son from creation. All of existence can be divided into two categories, that which is created and that which creates. Quite obviously, that which creates comes before that which is created. In a limited way, we see that all around us. Which came first, a painting or the painter? Which came first, a building or those who built it? Which came first, the Model T or Henry Ford?

Of course, when we create something, we are really simply rearranging material in a new way. When God created the universe, and all the worlds that are part of that universe, He created it out of nothing. So, we read, “... the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). Also, “[God] calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Romans 4:17).



As the Lord Jesus Christ was “begotten” prior to creation, he is obviously not part of the creation. I should point out that the “word of God”—by which the Father created—is the Son, as revealed quite clearly in John 1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3, 14). See also Hebrews 11:2.

In terms of the Father-Son relationship, Jesus was obedient to the Father (John 8:55; Hebrews 5:8). One of the most famous passages in the Bible is John 3:16. Consider the obedience of our Lord reflected in it: “For God [the Father] so loved the world, that he gave his only Son [who obediently and willing was given], that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”



We have all heard the phrases like “He’s a chip off the old block” and “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” These express the idea that a child, in this case a son, is a reflection of his father. This Father-Son relationship is reflected in Hebrews 1:3, “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature”. So, in truth, to see the Son is to see the Father, as Jesus said to Philip, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9).

A third aspect of the Father-Son relationship is that it is a relationship of love. The father loves his son and the son loves his father. We also see this reflected in the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. In John 3:35 we read, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.” Then in John 5:20 Jesus says, “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.” (I might also add that fathers give their sons gifts and these passages show the Father giving the Son most wondrous gifts out of love.) John 4:8 has the famous passage, “God is love.” This refers not only to God’s love for us but to his very nature which existed before all worlds. Who was there for God to love? Love is a relational word. God has always been “love” because the relationship within the Godhead is one of love. The Father loves the Son (and the Holy Spirit) and the Son loves the Father (and the Holy Spirit).

Certainly, more could be said about this relationship as we reflect on the ideal Father-Son relationship, but next month we will move on. We’ve actually already taken a quick look at the phrase “before all worlds,” but we will go into more about it next month. Until then, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

Hope for the New Year

This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us. Romans 5:5

Let's talk about hope. What do we mean when we say that we *hope* for something? Often it means a strong wish, a fervent desire: "I hope to get caught up on my bills this year." "I hope the test results come back negative for cancer." I hope I get an A on that test so I can pass the course." This is a study in possibilities that may or may not come true. This is not how scripture depicts hope.

God is not
our last
hope. He is
our only
hope!

When God talks about hope, He means that, in Him, that hope is a solid fact, a reality that will come about or already exists, whether we recognize it or not. In the Psalms, God tells us that those who hope in Him *will not* be disappointed—not "may or may not" be so; He shows us the validity of hope in Him through people like Abraham, who had hope that he would become the father of a son and even of many nations; God tells us that hope is stored up for us in heaven, the fulfillment of life eternal because of Jesus; St. Paul calls Jesus our hope, and in the book of Titus he says that we wait for hope, which is "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

This is true hope, not wishful thinking. God promised that Jesus would be born for us, live and die and rise again for us—this is the hope "which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began." This is real hope for life that usually does not go according to our plans or "hopes" or dreams. This is sure an certain hope that we can share with those in our lives who so desperately need it.

May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

January — Epiphany:

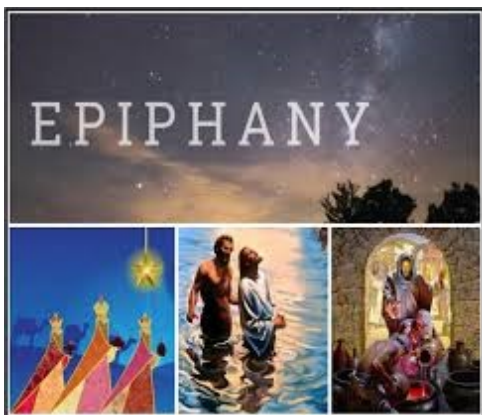
The final Christmas message revisits the familiar story of Jesus' birth with the shepherds visit. Isaiah speaks of Zion bringing light to the nations. The Gospel continues with the baptism of the adult Jesus by John; who also calls Him the Lamb of God.

The Gospel continues with Jesus ministry, healings, and the calling of His disciples.

During this period, the Epistle lessons record the ministry of Saul, whom the Lord called to faith and a ministry to the Gentiles.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul admonishes the believers to live their new life in service to the Word by pointing to Jesus' death and resurrection as the example. We are dead to sin and alive in Christ.

THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW



In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul expresses his thanks to God regarding the spiritual gifts they display in their lives. However he also mentions his concern over the divisions that have occurred; wherein some claim to follow Paul or Cephas or Christ. His appeal is that they recognize only Christ Jesus who gave His life to save them.

In the Old Testament lessons the focus is on Christ as the Servant of the Lord who will provide His saving gift to all. There are several references to the Servant of the Lord. In this period Isaiah prophesies the coming of the Christ child whose life will assure salvation to all.

Arlen D. Besel– Worship

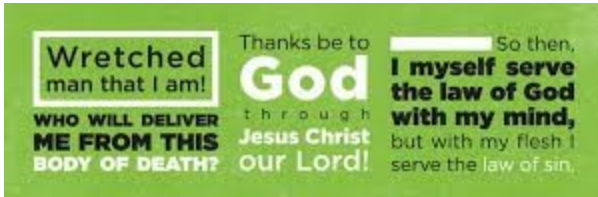
The Lutheran Hour: A Devotion—**Call His Name Jesus**

And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:21)



This is the day some call the "Feast of the Circumcision," and others "the Name of Jesus." It marks the first time Jesus officially came under the authority of the Law of Moses, the set of rules God gave to Israel about how to live. All of these rules, from greatest to least, were designed to teach the people about God's holiness and impress on them the need for them to be holy also.

But anyone who has ever tried to keep the Ten Commandments knows how impossible that is. Read through them! "Do not murder," okay, that seems like an easy one. But then Jesus comes and explains to us (Matthew 5) that this includes any kind of harm or insult that we throw at someone else, even just in our thoughts. Oops! "Do not bear false witness." Well, I can avoid false testimony in court—mainly because I've never had to testify in my life—but avoid deceiving anyone in any way ever? I'm clearly in trouble.



When I look into the Law I don't see a manual for how to get to heaven; I see a very clear reflection of every flaw, vice, sin, and mess-up I have ever committed. And I can't erase them or make up for them. Who will help me? "Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25a). Jesus was born into this world to take my place under the Law—a Law too heavy for me to carry, but not for Him.

From birth forward, Jesus did fulfill that Law—and He did it perfectly. How incredible! But that wasn't all. Then He willingly chose to take on Himself the penalty due to lawbreakers—pain, suffering, and death. He paid our debt to the Law. By doing that, He set us free. We owe nothing anymore. And when Jesus rose from the dead, He promised to share His own everlasting life with all of us who trust in Him. That's how much He loves us. Thanks be to God!

Epiphany Begins

As we move into the new year we also enter the season of Epiphany which extends nine months. The word epiphany means the appearance. We consider the appearance of Jesus to earth and the Wise Men's visit to the young child.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador



In the fall of 2020 the LWML will be having an auction event and we are announcing this now so you can start gathering and crafting items to donate. Ideas could be handcrafted items, gift baskets and when the time gets closer home-baked goods. The proceeds from the event will go to our Seminary student & missionary Kate Phillips who we are sponsoring. Kathy O'Malley, LWML President

ORCHARD Presentation! Just because it's winter doesn't mean that all us gardeners are idle! Master Gardener & friend Rick Judd will give his "Tomato Talk" here at church on Tuesday evening, 1/28 at 6:30 pm; please join us & find out what varieties of tomatoes grow best in our area, how to have tasty tomatoes & much more!

January Anniversaries

6 Bob & Bonnie Johnston

If we missed your special day, please call or email the church office with your info so we can celebrate with you! (302) 737-6176; secretary.orldcde@outlook.com



Flowers

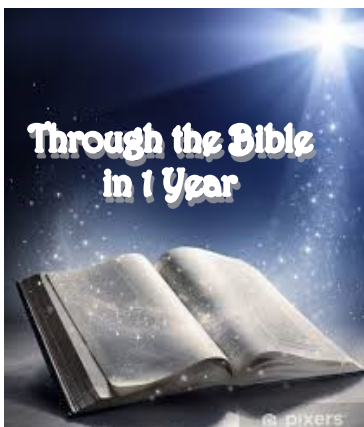
If you provided poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary this Christmas,, please remember to pay for them (the list is posted in the narthex with prices); also, please take your plants home or to one of our homebound members—thanks! Also, please sign up for altar flowers for 2020; we still need flowers for January, as well as the rest of the year. Reservice your special thankful Sundays soon!



Pastor & Kitty wish to thank everyone for their love, kindness & generosity shown to us throughout the year, and especially this Christmas; we are humbled by your gifts to us. It is a joy to service our Savior Jesus Christ among you!

JANUARY BIBLE READINGS

- 1** Luke 1:68-79
Mark 2
- 2** Psalm 30
Mark 3
- 3** Psalm 31
Mark 4
- 4** Psalm 32
Mark 5
- 5** Psalm 33
Mark 6
- 6** Psalm 34
Mark 7
- 7** Psalm 35
Mark 8
- 8** Psalm 36
Mark 9
- 9** Psalm 37
Mark 10
- 10** Psalm 38
Mark 11
- 11** Psalm 39
Mark 12
- 12** Psalm 40
Mark 13
- 13** Psalm 41
Mark 14
- 14** Psalm 42
Mark 15-16
- 15** Psalm 43
Genesis 1-3



- 16** Psalm 44
Genesis 4-6
- 17** Psalm 45
Genesis 7-9
- 18** Psalm 46
Genesis 10-12
- 19** Psalm 47
Genesis 13-15
- 20** Psalm 48
Genesis 16-18
- 21** Psalm 49
Genesis 19-21
- 22** Psalm 50
Genesis 22-24
- 23** Psalm 51
Genesis 25-27
- 24** Psalm 52
Genesis 28-30
- 25** Psalm 53
Genesis 31-33
- 26** Psalm 54
Genesis 34-36
- 27** Psalm 55
Genesis 37-39
- 28** Psalm 56
Genesis 40-42
- 29** Psalm 57
Genesis 43-45
- 30** Psalm 58
Genesis 46-48
- 31** Luke 1:68-79
Genesis 49-50