
ST. MATTHEWS LUTHERAN CHURCH ESKO, MN

A family of believers grounded in, growing in and reaching out in Christ

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Brenda Hall, Office Manager
Rebecca Bauer, Secretary

Epiphany in Puerto Rico and Around the World

When Christina returned from Puerto Rico with the mission team from St. Matthews, she mentioned that Epiphany, Monday January 6, 2020, is a big celebration in that particular country. Here in the United States Epiphany is barely celebrated as the 12th or last day of Christmas and is not a holiday. But in Puerto Rico and many other countries around the world Epiphany is a major public holiday. Epiphany is the day that children receive their presents and not on Christmas Eve.

Epiphany is commonly known as Three Kings' Day or the Feast of the Epiphany. It means "manifestation" or "showing forth". It is also called Theophany ("manifestation of God"), especially by Eastern Orthodox Christians. Epiphany refers not only to the day itself but to the church season that follows it – a season that has a varied length because it ends when Lent begins, and this depends on the date of Easter.

Epiphany commemorates the first two occasions on which Jesus' divinity was manifested: when the three kings (also known as wise men or Magi) visited infant Jesus in Bethlehem, and when John the Baptist baptized him in the River Jordan. The Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Lutheran churches emphasize the visit of the Magi when they celebrate the Epiphany. The Eastern Orthodox churches focus on Jesus' baptism.

While other countries are gearing up for Christmas, most Puerto Ricans are looking forward to Three Kings Day. Puerto Rico does celebrate Christmas, but unlike most European countries, their festivities don't end on December 25. Instead, the parties continue almost non-stop all the way until January 6th when Three Kings Day or Epiphany draws the festivities to a close.

Three Kings Day, also known as *El Dia de los Reyes* in Spanish and *Epiphany* in other countries, is a long held Latin American tradition. For young Puerto Ricans it is perhaps the most exciting and important day of the year, since it is on this day that they receive their presents. According to Puerto Rico tradition, the youths place a box filled with straw, grass or hay and a bowl of water under their beds. This is a gesture of good will and is supposed to be used to feed the king's horses while they rest as their owners make

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deliveries. If the child is good, he wakes up the next morning to find candies, sweets or toys in his box. If he was bad, he will only find a lump of dirt or charcoal. Apparently, the tradition is much older than that of Santa’s visit on Christmas Eve and much of the proceedings are celebrated across the globe in a similar fashion.

In some European countries, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, children dress as the three kings and visit houses. In their roles as the kings, or wise men, they sing about the Jesus’ birth and pay homage to the “king of kings”. They are rewarded with praise and cookies.

In France *Le Jour des Rois* (the Day of Kings), sometimes called the *Fête des Rois*, is celebrated with parties for children and adults. The *galette des rois*, or “cake of kings”, highlights these celebrations. This cake is round and flat, cut in the pantry, covered with a white napkin and carried into a dining room.

Children in Spain fill their shoes with straw or grain for the three kings’ horses to eat and place them on balconies or by the front door on Epiphany Eve. The next day they find cookies, sweets or gifts in their place. The “three kings” make an entry in many cities in Spain on Epiphany Eve, accompanied by military bands and drummers in medieval dress.

Epiphany is a public holiday in countries such as Austria, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Ethiopia, parts of Germany, Greece, Italy, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Spain, and Uruguay. It is not a public holiday in Australia, Canada the United Kingdom and the United States. Special rituals for Epiphany or Three Kings Day include foods associated with the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus as the “new King” is welcomed by His subjects.

Jesus is no ordinary King. Jesus is the king of kings and Lord of Lords and yet He is the servant King who eventually goes to the cross and gives to each of us the greatest gifts possible – the gift of life everlasting, forgiveness of sins, and love that knows no end. Epiphany is a not only a day that the Savior gives gifts to us it is a day to bring our own gifts and a time to come to worship *the* King, rejoicing in His blessed reign over us. Epiphany is January 6, 2020, a day that God reveals to the entire world His intention of being our servant King, our Savior.

Have a blessed and joyful Epiphany!

In Christ,

Pastor Jeffrey Walther

Special thanks and credit to “Behind the Scenes @ timeanddate.com” for their contribution to this article.

Congregational Meeting

The next Congregational Meeting will be Sunday, January 12 following the second (10:30 a.m.) service of worship.

December

Funeral

December 5, 2019

Glen Weber

May comfort this family through the Living Lord Jesus.

St. Matthews Offering Income

December 17, 2019

Month	Given	Budget	Difference
July	40,000	43,800	(3,800)
Aug.	37,800	43,800	(6,000)
Sep.	45,000	43,800	1,200**
Oct.	38,500	43,800	(5,300)
Nov.	43,600	43,800	(200)
Dec.	29,700	26,300	3,400*
	234,600	245,300	(10,700)

** 5 Sunday Month

* 3 out of 5 weeks



Blood Drive at St. Matthews

Saturday, January 11

9 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1- Karen Pierre
- 3- Paul Olson, Trent Welman
- 4- Todd Rengo
- 5- Donald Pykkonen, Logan Maslowski, Isaac Wisted
- 6- Jennifer Kuhlman, Dee Sprenger, Webster Czerwinski,
Sharon Hughes
- 7- Cindy Aho, Wyatt Weber, Lyla Temoche, Emily Sturm,
Sawyer Severson
- 8- Dale Erickson, Alexa Sykes
- 10- Tracy Durovec, Dean Kuhlman, Tim Lau, Julie Weiler,
Ava Lindquist
- 11- Kristi Schultz
- 12- Bruce Welman, Karen Sue Williams, Jeffrey Stephenson
- 13- David Lindstrom, Lori Hicks, Nikolas Martineau,
Michael Abell
- 14- Conrad Schmidt, Mason Bober
- 15- Dylan Frank
- 16- Keith Pantsar, Cheryl Wight
- 17- Cole Engen, Zachary Kangas, Leo Hallgren
- 18- Teagan VonGillern, Adam Dallmann
- 19- Stella Beck
- 20- Hannah Kovac
- 22- Jeffrey Lantry
- 23- Owen Zywicki, Candyce Jutila
- 24- Jeff Kazel, Scott Czerwinski, Bob Stokes
- 25- Rick Weiler, Morgan Stodola
- 26- Ben Haugen, Chelsea Laurent
- 27- Winnie Anderson, Scott Eskuri, Hope Czerwinski,
Keith Jutila, Lois Featherly, Trae Witte
- 28- Mary Koski, Ben Fischer, Morgan Schmidt
- 29- Ryan Murphy, Ian Hanson, Logan Sickmann
- 30- Drew Prachar, Joy Skifstad, Amelia Hipp, Luke Kavajecz
- 31- Honna Olson, Carol Putnam

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

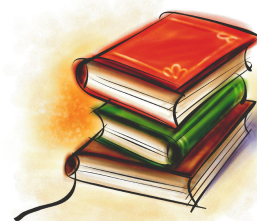
The next Birthday Luncheon will be held on Thursday, January 9th at 11:30 a.m. at Sammy's Pizza in Cloquet.



BOOK DISCUSSION

NOTE THE DATE CHANGE

We will be reading “Catching Christmas” by Terri Blackstock for our meeting on Wednesday, January 15 at 12:30 pm in the Fireside Room.



For information, please call Judy Nelson at 218-590-1521.

LAKE SUPERIOR CALENDARS

Lake Superior Scenic 2020 calendars are available for \$10.00 in the office. The calendars have beautiful pictures and space to write by each date. The entire \$10 benefits St. Matthews youth. These make great gifts!

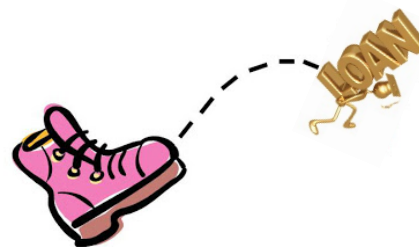




Dave Ramsey class starting January 12th!

We are ready to go!!! Classes will begin Sunday January 12 at 6:00 and run each Sunday thru March 8. Please consider joining us and pass the word around. The class will give you insights into your financial life that will bring you out of debt and into the life God has for you.

Some of the topics to be covered are working together on a budget, gazelle intensity on eliminating debt, giving financial emergencies the boot, taxes, insurance and the dreaded college loans. We are not shy about wanting to get rich, living and giving to the max. Let's roll up our sleeves and give your income stealing loans the boot! As Dave Ramsey puts it *"we are going to live like no one else so later we can live and give like no one else"*.



If you have any questions talk to Sue or I, email or phone us. Hope you can join us!!

Joe and Sue Wischnewski

Joe_wischnewski@yahoo.com

(218)348-5603



YOU MIGHT TAKE HOME ONE OF THESE...



EVERYONE WINS THE REAL PRIZE



Every year teams from LCMS churches around the state gather to participate in this fun, highly competitive, double-elimination contest.

If you are a student in grades 7-12 and would like to be on a team to represent our congregation, contact the church office.

This year we're studying the Book of Judges. Not an expert? Don't worry! We'll study together.

The competition is held April 4, 2020, at Concordia University, St. Paul. We hope you join our team!

BIBLE BOWL 2020

TALK TO CHRISTINA FOR MORE INFO

Texas Mission Trip

The dates have been set for the trip to Rockport, Texas. We leave on Saturday, February 1st and return on Sunday, February 9th.

Anyone else interested, we will meet on Thursday, January 2 at 6:30 p.m. Show up at the meeting or talk to Ron Eng at 384-4104. We'll meet again maybe the week before we leave to line up ride shares and a list of needed tools.

God's blessings

Indoor Whiffle Ball

Saturday, January 18th at 10:00 a.m. - St. Matthews



Beat the winter chill this January and play ball in comfort and warmth in the Family Life Center at St. Matthews. Everyone is welcome to play or just watch (spectators always add to the game). Equipment for the game is provided and the rules will be explained in greater detail the day of the games. Each team can consist of 6 on the field at a time. All balls are live until they hit the floor in foul territory. Home runs are off the back wall above the paint line, but if they are caught before they hit the floor, it is an out.

Coffee and water will be available, any other snacks or beverages will be on a BYOB status.

Any and all questions can be directed to Johnny at 218-310-1385. Please let me know if you plan to attend.

Prayer Request

We need your prayers for the new president of the LWML. Who is she? We do not know yet. If you like to organize things, this may be what you are looking for.

It has been a time of learning and growing for me. I have gotten closer to some of you and hope that you felt you could come to me with ideas or problems. I hope that still is true as I deeply care for all of you. I am moving on to a different adventure. This has been yet another stepping stone to what lay ahead on my journey. I thank you for all your support and advice and especially your help. Brenda and Rebecca have helped keep me on track and answered questions as well as helped to find dates. They have helped more than they know. The pastors have answered so many questions and been willing to help.

Yes this has been an amazing time, but it is time to let someone else use their talents and help all of us grow even more. So it is with thankfulness that I take a step back to go forward on a different journey.

Thank you for trusting me and letting me be in this important role.

Darlene Eng



The combined meeting of the LWML groups was held on Saturday, November 23, 2019, with president Darlene Eng presiding; eleven members were present.

Minutes of the September meeting were read and approved.

Darlene presented a treasurer's report in Deb Hustad's absence. It was discussed and approved.

Correspondence included informational reports of various missionary groups we help support.

Old Business: Church decorating for Christmas will be Saturday, December 7, beginning at 9 a.m.

New Business: The Best Christmas Ever Pancake breakfast that will be held at St. Matthews on Saturday, November 30, needs a kitchen supervisor, otherwise the fund raising group has their own workers. Mary Brinkley volunteered to stop in to see if they need any assistance.

The Senior Citizen Christmas Dinner is Wednesday, December 4 at noon. Florence Maki is in charge. Food and workers are in place, so Florence didn't have any further requests.

Joy Skifstad and Nancy Stanius are putting together the Christmas baskets for shut-ins; baskets will be available December 11 in the Teller's Room.

Much discussion was held on the annual Christmas giving that we do in November. In looking ahead to next year and the fact that we will not be doing the Spring Salad/Hotdish Luncheon for a fund raiser, a motion was made and approved to keep \$5000 in the treasury for various expenses and projects, especially when we need the money up front to buy the meat for the Harvest Festival Dinner. Various amounts in donations were given to four national organizations, six different local groups, one private organization, two individuals going to school who are going into ministry work, and \$800 was given to help with expenses for the Confirmation students who attend the St. Matthews Youth Retreat, for a total of \$4400.

Darlene stated that she has been questioned about the use of styrofoam cups for coffee, and why aren't we using paper cups instead which are more biodegradable. It comes down to cost: styrofoam cups are \$17.50/carton and paper cups are \$70/carton.

Election of officers is every two years, and this is the year to elect new officers. Darlene will be stepping down as president, and no one has come forward to fill that position. Joy Skifstad said she will remain vice-president as long as there is a president, Pat Johnson will remain as secretary, and Deb Hustad will continue as treasurer. Judy Uran agreed to stay on in the Human Care position. Discussion was held about possibly having co-presidents so one person doesn't have all the responsibility, but no one came forward to agree to do this.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

Joy Skifstad led the Mite Devotion "God's Grace for this Generation" - a LAMP ministry and one of the 2019-2021 mission grant requests.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Johnson, secretary

Members often ask how we are paying our bills when our offerings are often short of our budgeted needs. The short answer is that we need to budget for all expenses we are obligated to pay. At the end of each month, we will show how our offerings are actually being spent. Any surplus funds at the end of our fiscal year (June 30) will be used to pay down the church mortgage (\$795,417 on 11/30/19).

Church Operating Expenses Paid:	September	October	November	Total
Salaries	17,691	17,527	17,196	86,660
Benefits	9,567	6,799	6,246	36,149
Debt Payments	7,166	7,166	7,166	35,830
District/Synod Support	2,417	2,417	2,417	12,081
Electricity	696	877	899	3,907
Christian Education	474	253	200	1,886
Church Property	620	659	498	3,174
Office	974	1,605	1,043	5,955
Worship	186	700	100	1,809
Youth	70 -	-		462
HRA	151	55	170	682
Heating Fuel	57	342	641	1,423
Repair and Maintenance	1,406	109 -		3,312
Outreach/Missions	-	-	-	653
Conferences	-	-	-	170
Insurance	-	-	-	-82
Other	-	-	-	
Total	41,475	38,509	36,576	194,071
Budgeted Needs	43,783	43,783	43,783	218,915

Stewardship Corner

Our God is a God who works through means. He can and has worked immediately without agency, as the Bible testifies, but primarily, on the whole and for the most part, our God works through means. He does this not only for all of our earthly needs but also for all of our spiritual needs. And He does this for our benefit.

He provides for all our needs of this body and life through means. He gives us fathers and mothers to care for us when we are young. Through them, God provides house and home, food and clothing, education and training in the arts and work of this world.

He gives us good government to protect us from harm and danger; He gives us faithful neighbors and good friends to help in times of need and lack. He gives us employers who trade our work for income so that we may acquire the needs of the body. He gives us brains and brawn so that we will have something to trade with those employers for that needed income. This work, which we are able to do only because of what God has provided to us, redounds to the benefit of others. And so, the cycle of God giving through means continues.

He provides for all our needs of our souls. He sent His Son into the flesh to be our Savior. In that body, our Lord Jesus Christ lived the life that God demands of us all – a life we have failed to live because of our sins – and, in that body, He made payment for those sins on the cross, once and for all.

God delivers this forgiveness through the means of His Word and Sacraments. He calls pastors to proclaim, in His stead and by His command, that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Through these same pastors, God Himself claims us as His own in Holy Baptism, placing His own name on us in water and Word, igniting faith by the gift of the Holy Spirit. And He gives us His life-giving body and blood to nourish us in this same faith until the end. Our God is a God who works through means.

This is true also of stewardship. This is what St. Paul wrote in Philippians:

“I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:18–19).

The gift St. Paul received from the Philippian church is a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. They gave to God. God provided for St. Paul through the

See “Stewardship Corner” continued on page 10



LCMS Service of Worship - every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. televised by KBJR Channel 6 NBC

Main Street Living Northland is a locally produced TV program that includes a 30 minute worship service led by participating pastors of the Minnesota North District of our LCMS, along with a 30 minute remastered program called “This is the Life” from Lutheran Hour Ministries (starting at 10:00 a.m.).

January 5
Pastor Jeff Walther
St. Matthews Lutheran Church
Esko

January 12
Pastor Robert Franck
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
Duluth

January 19
Pastor Tim Ludwig
Peace in Christ Lutheran Church
Hermantown

January 26
Pastor Jeff Walther
St. Matthews Lutheran Church
Esko

“Stewardship Corner” continued from page 10

Philippians. And the God who loves both Paul and the Philippians will supply their every need according to the riches in Christ Jesus. Our God is a God who works through means.

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Jesus Christ],” St. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 1:20. This is true also of you. Trust in the God who provides for all that we need in body and soul through means. And not only will you find His “yes” to you, but others will find it, too, through you. “But as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you – see that you excel in this act of grace also” (2 Cor. 8:7).

Memorial Fund

Sincere thanks to each person who honored and remembered a loved one or a friend with a gift to The Memorial Fund in September and October 2019

Gifts have been given in Memory of

Ron Semerau
Clifford Trevena

Undesignated Fund
Sunday School Fund

Please notify the church if you do not receive a Thank you from the family or the church for your gift.

For more information on Memorial gifts, please call a member of the Memorial Committee: Winnie Anderson, Walt & Shirley Behm, Eileen Christopherson, Elaine Lindquist, Gene & Margaret Lindquist, Florence Maki, Judy Nelson, Marilyn Pykkonen, Don & Ardy Pykkonen, or Judy Uran

Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of a friend or loved-one, is welcome to do so. Please include the following information. Memorial folders are also available at the Welcome Center and on the table in the Narthex of the church. Contributions may also be made from our church website at www.stmatthewsesko.org. Select *Giving and Fees* in the top menu bar.

Memorial Fund

In Loving memory of

In Honor of _____

Given to St. Matthews Lutheran Church by

Name _____ Address _____

Fund _____

Experience Recovery

ER is a group that meets here at St. Matthew's every Thursday from 6 to 7:30pm. (Sometimes we get here just a couple min late.) We are here for **any** hurt, habit, or hang-up. Let's be honest, who doesn't have one or two of those. We use the 12 steps as shown us in the bible to work on the solution to our problems. Johnny Eng



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Blessed Epiphany!

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