

THE SERVANT

The monthly newsletter of Servants of Christ
Lutheran Church, a congregation of The North
American Lutheran Church serving the
Cedar Rapids area

Meeting at Robins City Hall Community Room, 265 South Second
St., Robins, Iowa 52328
Worship: 9:00 am; Fellowship & Coffee: 10:00;
Bible Class and Sunday School: 10:15
Ron Voss, Pastor

*****February 2017*****

The Season of Epiphany

Dear Servants of Christ,

In the Lutheran Church, Epiphany extends from January 6th through Transfiguration Sunday, the climactic conclusion of this part of the Church Year.

Some might argue that the Sundays after Epiphany are not really a church season at all, but just sort of a “buffer” between Christmas and Lent. Some even refer to these weeks, with their green paraments, as “ordinary time” as though they are nothing special. But that’s not what the church word “ordinary” means. It comes from one of the Latin words for *number*, to indicate that instead of having names, these Sundays are simply assigned numbers (“the third Sunday after the Epiphany”). The same is done with the “green Sundays” in the long Pentecost season.

If Christmastide presented the Son of God as a human infant, and then as a growing child, the readings for Epiphany seem to ask the question, “But who is this really?” The very **first Sunday after the Epiphany** presents God’s own answer. At the **Baptism of Jesus**, the voice of God from heaven declares Jesus to be “my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

With the authority of the Son of God, then, Jesus begins to call disciples, and to teach them and train them. His role as a prophet (today we would probably say preacher) shows up frequently in the Epiphany Gospel readings. Miracles, when they occur, reveal Jesus as one who cares about people’s problems—whether those problems be something like running out of wine at a wedding or serious, even crippling or life-threatening illness—and is able to do something to deal with those problems.

The **final Sunday in the Epiphany season** celebrates the Transfiguration of our Lord, when Jesus leads his three closest disciples up a mountain, where they see him shining with brilliant light. As the Epiphany season had begun with the voice of God from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, proclaiming Jesus to be God’s beloved Son, so the season

Ends with that voice again, with the very same message. If the Christmas season ended by making us wonder, "Who is this baby, really? And what is he going to become?" the time of Epiphany offers a shining response: "This is the Son of God, who speaks God's good word and does God's wonderful deeds. The wise men had it right: This is the One who deserved to be worshiped!

May the Lord fill your heard with hope!
Ron


Traveling Light (a Bible study on the 23rd Psalm) continues on Sunday morning at 10:20. Sessions for February are:
**February 5—The Burden of Grief
**February 12—The Burden of Fear
**February 19—The Burden of Loneliness
**February 26—Bi-monthly brunch/meeting
Join us on any Sunday (or every Sunday!) as we study God's Word.

In March we will study the pamphlets *Martin Luther* and *About Being Lutheran*. Then we begin our study of the *Augsburg Confession*.



Epiphany: The *Work* of Christmas Begins

The Christmas decorations have been gone for weeks; the Nativity scenes—at home and at age. The “ordinary time” of season, we observe the *work* (and it is *work*) of the beginning. And it is work! prophets, Jesus begins to peace to troubled hearts, the bonds of sin, heal the



churches—are back in stor- Epiphany is here. But in this reason for Jesus’ birth, the coming of the Messiah just Fulfilling the words of the rebuild the nations, bring release the prisoners from broken (physically and spiri- tually), feed the hungry (see the 5,000 chow down), and seek the lost. This is the mission, the ministry, the *work* of the Son of Man. This is the mission, the ministry, the *work* that He gives to His Church. When Jesus

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE

These are available to anyone. Please let Ron know of your interest. Also, devotional and study materials are yours for the taking on the information table.

Mission Outreach Gifts in January



**\$250 sent to The North American Lutheran Church General Fund
**\$500 was sent to support the work of The North American Lutheran Seminary

Your faithful and generous support make this outreach possible. Thank you!

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Individuals who have qualifying Thrivent Financial annuities and/or insurance products will accumulate *Choice Dollars*. If you qualify, please consider designating them to Servants of Christ Lutheran Church. Visit www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 1-800-847-4836 for details on how to designate and give.

Have you included planned giving in your will? Do you have a will? If so, do you review it annually? With our busy lives, we have many things to do and often neglect our wills. You are encouraged to contact your financial advisors and keep your wills current. And, consider remembering The North American Lutheran Church and Servants of Christ in your will.

The Gift of the Word of God

Among all the gifts the gift of the Word of God is the most valuable. For if you take this away, it is like taking the sun away from the earth. For if the Word were removed, what would the world be but a hell and mere realm of Satan . . . For only the Word keeps a joyful conscience, a gracious God, and all of religion, since out of the Word, as from a spring, flows our entire religion. Without the word and Christ, the world would not continue to exist for one moment. Therefore, though there are many great gifts of God in the world . . . Yet the one which includes and sustains all the others is the Word, which proclaims that God is merciful and promises forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

Martin Luther
exposition on Psalm 122 in 1531

February Servants



Greeter/Usher: Dan Heckart
Communion Assistant: Aaron Opperman

Snacks:
**February 5—Mary Collins
**February 12—Ron Voss
**February 19—Tami Gerdemann
**February 26—Brunch: the Arnolds

*Our thanks to
Waterloo Ridge
Lutheran Church for
its gift of \$275.00*



Evangelism = Faith + Sharing

The above phrase is so true! I'm sure you've noticed how many times it has appeared in our Sunday worship folder.

- ⇒ **Share** your faith with a friend, a neighbor, or a relative. **Invite** them to worship with you.
- ⇒ **Join** Ron for door-to-door invitational calling . . . Listen and learn. If interested in joining him, let him know.
- ⇒ Invitational fliers are available for **distribution**. If you would like assistance with this work, speak to Ron.

LifeWay Research surveyed 2,000 Americans who do not attend church on what would draw them to one.

Among the findings:

- 51% a personal invitation from a friend or family member
- 23% a TV commercial
- 23% a postcard
- 21% a church member knocking on the door
- 18% a Facebook ad



2017 Spending Guide

Anticipated Income: \$25,000

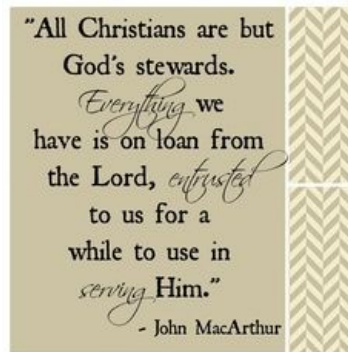
- ⇒ Outreach to North American Lutheran Church: \$3,000
- ⇒ North American Lutheran Seminary: \$1,000
- ⇒ Friends of Madagascar Mission: \$1,000
- ⇒ Trinity Lutheran, Warrenton, Virginia: \$1,000
- ⇒ Iowa Mission District: \$500
- ⇒ Total: \$6,500

Expenses:

- ⇒ Rent: \$2,600
- ⇒ Advertising: \$1,350
- ⇒ Insurance: \$300
- ⇒ Supplies (postage, bulleting/handouts, printing, etc.): \$1,200
- ⇒ NALC Convocation: \$750
- ⇒ Total: \$6,200

Present Financial Balance: \$21,000+

Extra money will be set aside for future facility/rent.



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