



# The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

**EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

20 Old Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 3J5

416-284-5922 • [www.epiphanylutheranchurch.ca](http://www.epiphanylutheranchurch.ca)

Pastor Peter Lisinski • 647-395-7649 • [fryarpuck@hotmail.com](mailto:fryarpuck@hotmail.com)

NO. 683 • MARCH 2026

Submissions 15th of the month  
Layout: Sigi Sommer 416-264-9929  
[sigsommer@rogers.com](mailto:sigsommer@rogers.com)



## Dear Wilderness Companions,

**T**he season of Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday, February 18th – this year intersecting with the anniversary of Martin Luther’s death, calls us to renewed *discipleship*, rooted in baptism and nurtured in the three traditional *disciplines* of Lent: prayer, fasting, and charity. “Let your light shine before others,” (Matthew 5:16) says Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount – an admonition echoes with the presentation of a lighted candle during the sacrament of Holy Baptism. This year, in addition to whatever our personal practice may be, our congregation will observe a “communal fast” from Holy Communion until Easter Sunday to focus more intentionally on baptism’s call to repentance and reflection.

Toward that end, in February I invited members to submit requests for certain topics of interest or concern for our sermons during Lent. I received four responses which will be addressed on each of the first four Sundays in March, under the following titles:

March 1 – “Trials And Temptations”

March 8 – “Known By Our Fruits”

March 15 – “Vocation And Motivation”

March 22 – “Reincarnation And Resurrection”

In a sermon on the First Sunday in Lent, AD 1522, Pastor Martin Luther teaches:

“Let us now consider how we must observe the blessed sacrament, which is our highest treasure. It is very necessary that our consciences be well instructed for proper reception. There must be faith to make our reception worthy and acceptable to God, for this holy food demands a hungry soul, constantly battling to overcome its sins. Whoever is not in this state of mind, should abstain until God, through his Word, takes hold of the heart and draws forth the fruit of this sacrament, which is love. This is the only vocation of a Christian. The true gospel and pure Word of God have but this one and only purpose, to urge us to faith active in love.”  
(*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 51, pp. 88-96)

May God bless our Lenten fast!

**Pastor Peter**

# MARCH 2026

## CALENDAR

### SUNDAY MARCH 1

2ND SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### FRIDAY MARCH 6

10-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (GoogleMeet)

### SUNDAY MARCH 8

3RD SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### THURSDAY MARCH 12

7 p.m. Council Meeting

### SUNDAY MARCH 15

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### FRIDAY MARCH 20

10-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (GoogleMeet)

### SUNDAY MARCH 22

5TH SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### SUNDAY MARCH 29

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY (PURPLE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### Zoom Link to EPIPHANY LUTHERAN

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09>

Or by phone following the prompts:

+1 647 374 4685 Canada  
Meeting ID: 989 080 0583  
Passcode: 095565

## Thank You!

Thank you to all members of the congregation who made the time to support Epiphany by attending the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday February 22, 2026. Like many others these days, we are overall an aging congregation finding it difficult to devote resources to attracting new members. When we come together to be involved in the life of our church, working and praying together, good things are possible ... don't underestimate that.

*Geoff Crewe, Council Chair*

## Stewardship

Let me wish you a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

March was considered the first month of the year in ancient Rome. This month is named for the god of war and agricultural guardian, Mars. So, the New Year in March meant a return to military preparations as well as preparing for the growing season.

For some, March may mean starting seedlings ready for transplanting when the weather warms. We are also preparing for longer days with the return of Daylight Saving Time (March 8) and the official arrival of Spring (March 20)!

Although not officially the "new year," the longer days can lift our spirits and encourage us to shake off our wintery hesitations, making it easier to get out and about as spring unfolds. From a stewardship perspective, this can suggest participating in activities with the Toronto Nature Stewards; they support the "ecological restoration of ravines and natural areas by picking up litter, removing invasive plants, [and] planting native species." This is an important and local initiative; you can learn more here: <https://torontonaturestewards.org/what-is-tns>.

Scripture reminds us:

"But remember this ... a farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to, for cheerful givers are the ones God prizes." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (LB))

Whatever you might plant, be it seeds, smiles, or friendship, be cheerful! Spring is in sight!

Happy New Year!

*Denise Dennis*

## CONCEIVING GOD'S PASSION

*For* the past 1500 years, on March 25th, the liturgical Christian churches of western civilization have celebrated the Annunciation of Our Lord – that is, the announcement of Angel Gabriel to Mary of Nazareth that she had been chosen to become the mother of God's Son, and humanity's Saviour, Jesus Christ. Although March 25th very rarely coincides with Good Friday, an ancient Christian legend – which many church historians find credible – dates Jesus' crucifixion as March 25th, c. AD 33!



The death of Jesus on the cross – in the particular place of a particular time in human history – is the fulfillment of God's original purpose for all of creation! At the very moment unwed mother Mary gave consent for God's eternally-begotten Son to be conceived within the finite physical limits of her virgin womb, nine months before Jesus' birth, God's eternal plan of salvation was conceived – *retroactively* – in the primordial gestation before the Big Bang moment at the beginning of time, projected forward into God's promised future beyond the end of time. The infinite love of God encompasses the entire cosmos of creation, and embraces all mortal humanity in the divine incarnation of Jesus Christ's birth.

The cross of Jesus, son of Mary and Son of God, is the *ultimate* manifestation – *epiphany* – of God's divine nature, spiritual substance, and eternal being. In the divine humanity of Jesus' selfless passion God *incorporates* – *graciously and mercifully* – all the human suffering of sin, evil and death, past, present and future, into the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ "incarnate of the Holy Spirit *and the virgin Mary*," as our Nicene Creed believes, proclaims, and insists! And in Jesus' resurrection from the dead "on the third day" – the proverbial *eighth* day of creation – God provides a place for each and all human beings, including us, within the holy communion of God's divine immortality beyond the finite limits of our mortal humanity.

Merry Christmas, indeed – today and every day!

Pastor Peter Lisinski



## Summary of the Good Samaritan – Understanding Who Our “Neighbours” Are

**I**n the Gospel of Luke, Jesus shares the parable of the Good Samaritan after a lawyer asks Him, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” and, seeking clarification, “*Who is my neighbour?*” Jesus responds with a story that challenges cultural boundaries and redefines the meaning of neighbourly love.

A man is traveling the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho when he is attacked by robbers. They strip him of his clothes, beat him severely, and leave him half-dead by the roadside. First, a priest comes along. Seeing the man, he crosses to the other side of the road and continues on his way. Soon after, a Levite—a temple assistant—also sees the injured man but chooses to pass by without offering help.

Then comes a Samaritan. At that time, Jews and Samaritans had deep-seated hostility towards one another, making it surprising that he would stop. Yet, moved with compassion, the Samaritan tends to the man’s wounds using oil and wine, places him on his own animal, and takes him to an inn. There, he cares for him overnight and pays the innkeeper to continue looking after him, promising to cover any additional costs upon his return. By tending to the wounded man, he not only offers immediate care but also ensures ongoing support, reflecting the universal responsibility we share towards one another.

In a world rife with conflict and division, the timeless teaching of loving one’s neighbour takes on even more urgency.

So how are countries who HAVE assisting those who HAVE NOT?

Canada is being accused of retreating from its role as an international development leader after the Liberal government’s budget announced it will cut \$2.7 billion in foreign aid over the next 4 years, primarily via reductions to global health programming, without providing specific details. “*Global health funding really is somewhere that Canada has a good recent record and it’s really unfortunate that it is stepping back after seeing what the impact of other countries’ stepping back is doing*”, a spokesperson for Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres commented. “*Staying the course would be leadership at this point*”, he said. “*Global needs have only gotten worse, we’re all aware of that. So seeing Canada step back in terms of its commitments is, I believe, short-sighted.*” A University of Ottawa Associate Professor in their School of International Development criticized Canada’s comment that it is reducing funding because the country’s contribution “has grown disproportionately relative to other similar economies.” Other experts in the field say that pulling back on health funding suggests the lesson of the COVID pandemic – that a contagious disease in 1 country could soon spread everywhere – has been forgotten.

Canada’s cuts come after the Trump administration folded its international aid agency USAID into the State Dept while drastically cutting funding and programs. The cuts are meant to realign foreign assistance with the administration’s “America First” policy. Unfortunately, that policy will result in more people getting sick around the world and likely more deaths from treatable diseases. Republicans in Congress have largely been unimpressed by those concerns, noting the need for the US to cut its trillion \$ debt. Germany and the UK have also cut their foreign aid budgets significantly.

I suppose none of this should come as a great surprise. Polls leading up to the US and Canadian elections in 2024 and 2025 respectively showed that the cost of living, and more broadly the economy, was considered the most important election issue by 79% of Americans and 71% of Canadians. In the US, immigration was #2 with 61% of people rating it “very important” (Canada was at 27%). Down at the bottom in both countries was Climate Change, ranked as “very important” by just 3% of the electorate. So governments respond to what the people want (and what they’ve been convinced by government they SHOULD want, for example, in the US, seeing immigrants as undesirables and immigration as undesirable for many reasons). Moreso than ever, people are focused on looking out for #1, themselves. If you can get them to think beyond that, they will acknowledge we have domestic problems such as food insecurity and a lack of affordable housing in Canada. Until such problems are fixed, many Canadians are critical of the government for spending ANY money on issues beyond our borders. I would suggest we can and should find ways to do both.

It isn’t clear that international aid is first and foremost an expression of altruism (defined as “showing a selfless concern for the wellbeing of others, without care for one’s own interests”). For example, China has been active in Africa providing

foreign aid for years. In the Western world, we view China's motives for such assistance as self-serving, creating opportunities to exploit natural resources, impact political allegiances, etc. American motives include these same objectives.

The US is reluctant to support critical aid to Gaza – people's basic needs are not being met and those who, like the Samaritan, want to help for humanitarian reasons only, are being limited as to the extent to which they are permitted to help or prohibited from doing so altogether because Israel, with the blessing of the US, is intent on ethnically cleansing Gaza and expanding their own territory. The US are only too happy to support this effort, with the likes of the Trump family proposing to seize the opportunity to build gaudy tourist resorts and attractions and make huge profits redeveloping the area. Again, we see ulterior motives at work – "How can I/we profit from this miserable situation?"

Or how about the US justifying its recent invasion of Venezuela based on President Maduro's repression of his people and affinity for corruption? They have no plan to make life better for the Venezuelan people. So what's the real reason? The US wants to steal their oil!

Humanitarian organizations such as CLWR, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam and others, who do their work for the RIGHT reasons, deserve our continued support. Maybe we can even step it up a notch or two. CLWR's current flagship endeavour is the restoration of the Lake Chad catchment area, the largest inland water basin in Africa. Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns, largely attributed to climate change which is affecting Africa more significantly than many other parts of the world, are causing the ecosystem to degrade quickly (the lake is literally shrinking), giving rise to food insecurity. CLWR is active all over the world ... why? Because there is a need all over the world ... no hidden motives.

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches that a neighbour is not defined by proximity, ethnicity, religion or social ties. Instead, a neighbour is any person in need, and love for our neighbour is demonstrated through active compassion, even toward those we might consider strangers or adversaries. The story shifts the focus from asking "who qualifies as my neighbour?" to "how can I be a neighbour to others?"

The lesson is timeless. Genuine love transcends boundaries and mercy is the true measure of neighbourliness. It calls us to see every human being as worthy of care and to act with kindness, even when it is inconvenient, costly or counter to social expectations.

Let us each strive to be that Good Samaritan for, in so doing, we not only honour the teachings of love but also pave the way for a better future for all.

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Council Chair:	Geoff Crewe
Council Vice-Chair:	Denise Dennis
Council Secretary:	Frank Dietz
Councillor-at-Large:	Greg Furan
Councillor-at-Large:	Gord Munro
Councillor:	Frank Dietz
Councillor:	Sigrid Engler
Treasurer:	Nalini Badley

## COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Education:	Open
Finance:	Geoff Crewe
Property:	Geoff Crewe
Stewardship:	Denise Dennis
Visioning:	Gordon Vollmer
AMMS Liaison:	Geoff Crewe
Worship & Music:	Marg Crewe
Morningstar:	Sigi Sommer
Seniors Group:	Ute Wentzel
Advertising Coordinator:	Nalini Badley
ELW:	Sigrid Engler
Envelope Secretary:	Sigrid Engler
Mutual Ministry:	Open
Spiritual Society Liaison:	Open

## TREASURER'S REPORT

JANUARY 2026	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$3,080.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	390.70		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	111.08		
SPIRITUAL SOCIETY PARKING	1,500.00		
<b>CURRENT MONTH TOTALS</b>	<b>\$9,156.78</b>	<b>\$6,683.42</b>	<b>\$2,473.36</b>
<b>YEAR TO DATE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$9,156.78</b>	<b>\$6,683.42</b>	<b>\$2,473.36</b>
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT JANUARY 31, 2026			35,393.81
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT THE END OF JANUARY			220,113.87
SCOTIA BANK NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 3.04% MATURING OCTOBER 26, 2026			30,000.00
CIBC NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 2.80% MATURING OCTOBER 19, 2026			30,000.00
CIBC FLEXIBLE GIC AT 2.154% MATURING OCTOBER 19, 2026			20,000.00

*Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer*



# World Day of Prayer 2026

## Journée mondiale de la

**"I Will Give You  
Rest: Come"**

Matthew 11:28-30

Title: Rest for the Weary

Artist: Gift Amarachi Ottah



**« Je vous procurerai le  
repos. Venez »**

Mattieu 11, 28-30

Titre : Le repos pour vous qui peinez  
sous le poids du fardeau

Artiste: Gift Amarachi Ottah

**Ecumenical Worship Service Information/  
Renseignements sur la célébration œcuménique**  
**Day, Time/la date, l'heure**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Location/l'endroit**

**St. Joseph's Parish  
200 Morrish Rd., Scarborough, ON M1C 1E8**

**Additional Information/informations supplémentaires**

**Everyone is welcome to join us for this prayer service.**

Service written and **Prepared by WDP Nigeria**, prepared and adapted for use in Canada by the Women's In   
Church Council of Canada

Service **préparé par des chrétiennes du Nigeria**, préparé et adapté pour le Canada par le **Œcuménique des chrétiennes du Canada**

Epiphany is proud to participate in the World Day of Prayer presentation again this year.

**Sigrid Engler**