



The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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“Call To Worship”

THE SEASON OF LENT calls us to renewal in Christian worship, discipleship and mission.

God created human beings for eternal life in close, personal, intimate companionship with God: we might call it “Holy Communion”! And God established the Sabbath Day in order to nurture our humanity toward the wholeness and holiness for which all God’s children, created in his divine image, are destined. We might call it: “Holy Communion”!

The giving and receiving of the body and blood of Christ, consecrated in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, consummates the marriage covenant between God and the church, the “Bride of Christ” sealed in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. The *sacramental* manifestation – “epiphany” – of God *with us* – “*Emmanuel*” – is the *primary source* and most *powerful proclamation* of God’s *vision, affirmation* of humanity’s *hope*, and *inspiration of faith* in the Gospel’s *proclamation* of God’s *love and promise* of *salvation* for all people. The weekly worship assembly – on *this* day; at *this* time; in *this* place – is the divinely appointed time and place in which humanity’s communion with God becomes as close, personal, intimate, and holy as it can ever be on this side of heaven!

Of course, it is true that God is everywhere, and God is always with us – just as my wife, Rosarii, our children and grandchildren are always with me in my heart, in my thoughts, or in the pictures of them I keep in my wallet. But there is no good substitute for our face to face, hand in hand, human touch of smiles, voices, hugs and kisses – just ask any soldier and sweetheart reuniting after a long tour of duty! And that’s the difference between Sunday – or the Sabbath Day – and every other day of the week!

Yes, God is present everywhere – and, as our Holy Communion liturgy affirms, God deserves our worship “at all times and in all places.” But in this divinely appointed time and place of weekly worship, God is present in a unique form, and for a unique purpose, distinct from the many and various ways God is present at all other times and every other place – be it a beautiful sunset, in the garden, on the golf course, in personal prayers and private devotions ... In the public liturgies of worship God is with us, here and now, to revive the divine vision of peace on earth, to renew the divine promise of peace on earth, to restore humanity’s hope for peace on earth, and to replenish the church’s faith and rejuvenate the church’s mission to proclaim God’s promise of peace on earth.

Our English word *liturgy* is derived from two Greek words: *leitōs*, which means “people” and *ergon*, which means “work”. Worship of God is *literally* the work of God’s people, our primary vocation – we might even call it our proper “*work ethic*.” Worship is the God-

given foundation, not only for our personal peace of mind, but of our ethical mission to proclaim the gospel of God's whole and holy new creation of the cosmos in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ. *Unlike* God's presence in all other times and places, God's presence in worship calls us, inspires us, and strengthens us to resist the worldly idols of power, wealth and status that daily tempt us to serve *self* rather than to serve *God* by serving our *neighbours*.

In his own wilderness temptations, the newly-baptized Jesus of Nazareth resisted the idolatry of our fallen humanity's natural narcissism, rejecting the daily and lifelong temptations in pursuit of happiness founded on cultural mythologies of *self*-fulfillment, choosing instead to seek and serve the fulfillment of *others* by serving the word, will and worship of God above all!

Apart from worship's primary purpose to glorify God with our praise and prayers of thanksgiving – "*eucharist*", in Greek – the *second* most important reason to participate in the church's public liturgies is that all of us need the support of a community in order to worship most profoundly and effectively. Even when we are unable to assemble in person – due to illness or injury, weather or pandemic; family commitments or work schedules – it is vital to imagine oneself "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10), united *virtually* with God's *physically* assembled people in worship "for the remembrance" of Jesus, into whose death we are baptized, *by* whose resurrection we are *saved*, and whose self-giving, sacrificial love is the *source* and *promise* of humanity's eternal salvation in the holy communion of God.

Pastor Peter Lisinski

(First Sunday in Lent Sermon – March 9, AD 2025)



APRIL CALENDAR

FRIDAY APRIL 4

10:00-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (GoogleMeet)

SUNDAY APRIL 6

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (PURPLE)

12 noon Holy Communion Service

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

THURSDAY APRIL 10

7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

SUNDAY APRIL 13

PALM AND PASSION SUNDAY (PURPLE)

12 noon Service of the Word

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

FRIDAY APRIL 18

GOOD FRIDAY (BLACK)

12 noon Solemn Good Friday Service

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

SUNDAY APRIL 20

EASTER SUNDAY (WHITE)

12 noon Holy Communion Service

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

FRIDAY APRIL 25

10:00-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (GoogleMeet)

SUNDAY APRIL 27

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)

12 noon Service of the Word

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

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Zoom Link to EPIPHANY LUTHERAN

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09)

[pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09](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



Although the *connection* between politics and religion may be uncomfortable, if not controversial, today's clash between King Herod's *political* mission and Messiah Jesus' *religious vision* clearly reveals that the Bible affirms a proper purpose and common mission of *both* religion and politics – namely, to promote social justice, protect human rights, preserve the common good, and produce personal morality.

In response to Herod's threat on his life, Jesus *accepts* the potential political consequences of his anti-establishment mission, but *without* accepting our modern notion that "separation of church and state" means separating spiritual values from public policy: "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am going to continue to do God's will, whether you like it or not, even though it may cost me my life'" – which it did!

Of course, stories of human lives disrupted, distorted and destroyed by the idolatry of "national interests", or the manipulation of religious impulse in the name of patriotism, and/or the social injustices of domestic policy – not to mention culturally entrenched attitudes of prejudice and their consequent threats of violence – are not confined to the pages of sacred scripture or secular history books. Manifestations of institutional evil are as contemporary as the pages of our daily newspapers, as local as our neighbourhood police station or court of law, or government legislature, corporation boardroom, and even church bureaucracy.

What people believe about God, the world and the meaning, or value, of human life, shapes the moral values and social structures that govern our common life. If we believe human beings are merely biological organisms of evolution among whom the fittest survive, and therefore deserve what they get, while the weak get what they deserve, our public institutions of law and order will evolve and function differently than if we believe all people are *equally* deserving children of God, despite the *inequalities* of personal health, family fortune, ethnic origin, cultural heritage, or inherent intelligence.

Jesus' political and religious concern was that all people, created in God's image and loved by God,

might reflect the love of God – God's love for us and our love for God – in all human relationships: in our marriages, in our families, in our neighbourhoods and congregations, in *our* nation, in *all* nations and *between* all nations on earth.

"Knot For Prophet"



And, as we have been frequently reminded in recent weeks and months, every political platform and economic strategy of every election campaign – from Marxism to Capitalism; from protectionism to globalization – promises to deliver prosperity, freedom and justice for all. But given the track record of human history – from Pharaoh to Caesar, from Caesar to Herod, from Herod to Pontius Pilate, from Pilate to Hitler, from Hitler to Putin, from Putin to Trump – it seems reasonable to question, after some fifty years of "trickle-down Reaganomics," whether higher corporate profits produced by lower corporate tax rates produces

fair and just distribution of our common-wealth; or whether imposing Musky austerity measures to reduce public services while increasing the military budgets and strengthening the strategic international alliances demanded by the idolatry of MAGA patriotism, actually serve the word, will and reign of God.

In a world where poverty, homelessness and working conditions seem to be getting worse instead of better, including in our own prosperous society, it becomes the church's urgent calling to challenge the wisdom of government policy in light of God's word, will and reign. Jesus tells "foxy" King Herod – we might even call him "DOGEy" King Herod – "the times they are a-changin'"; and Jesus calls his disciples to *pray*, in worship, for God's will to "be done on earth as it is in heaven,"; and Jesus sends us forth *from* worship to teach the world to *practice* what he *preaches* by doing the holy work God has given *all* God's children to do: feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, heal the sick in body, mind or soul, and welcome all God's children into the new creation of God's Holy Communion, promised in Jesus' birth, established in his crucifixion, fulfilled in his resurrection, and revealed – made manifest, "epiphany" – in us, among us, and through us.

Pastor Peter Lisinski

(Second Sunday in Lent Sermon – March 16, AD 2025)

Dear Companions in Christ,

When I was diagnosed with bladder cancer in October 2018, I found myself jolted by the unexpected prospect of mortality. My urologist quickly assured me that this is the most common and most effectively treatable type of cancer: "Don't worry," his nurse promised, "You are not going to die of this!"

After the initial shock, I found myself contemplating the words of consolation I have offered many others under similar circumstances of illness, grief and loss over nearly four decades of pastoral ministry: "No matter what may happen next, everything is going to be alright." Easy to say; hard to hear. But over the course of the next two years, after two surgeries and post-op treatments, and five annual checkups later – most recently last month – I remain cancer free.

Our Easter celebration in this month of April – "Cancer Awareness Month" in Canada – affirms that God is just as unhappy about the truth of our human mortality as you and I are. The risen Jesus stands with us when we mourn loved ones lost to the darkness of death and grave. Jesus walks with us on our way "through the valley of the shadow" of our own looming death.

Everything will be alright – because Jesus Christ *makes*, and *will make all* things right! Our confidence is not founded on the fragile, fleeting condition of our current health, wealth or happiness, as many among us have recently been reminded. I may be cancer-free today, but I am not yet free of my mortal humanity. Notwithstanding, in the fear, doubt and grief of our personal "dark nights of the soul", our faith confirms the Easter promise that God holds us fast in the firm grip of divine grace, and will *never* let go!

In companionship with Jesus Christ, and one another, we are on a journey into fullness of our human being within God's eternal life and infinite love, where pain and suffering, grief and death will be no more (Rev. 21:4). The cross of Jesus promises strength for today; the resurrection of Jesus inspires hope for tomorrow. Everything will be alright, no matter how long it takes; no matter how hard the road; no matter what may happen next! Happy Easter!

Happy Easter! Peace be with you ...

Pastor Peter

"Dear Pastor ..."

Beginning in this issue readers are invited to submit questions (anonymously) to the editor, concerning topics and/or themes you are interested in or troubled about which you would like addressed pastorally, theologically, spiritually, etc. i.e. "Dear Pastor ..."

These in turn will be forwarded to Pastor Peter's attention and his thoughtful reply will appear in a future issue.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Council Chair:	Geoff Crewe
Council Vice-Chair:	Denise Dennis
Council Secretary:	Vacant
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

FEbruary 2025	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$1,610.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	440.96		
AMMS PROPERTY TAX	1,442.00		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	126.43		
SPIRITUAL SOCIETY PARKING	1,500.00		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$9,194.39	\$8,093.04	\$1,101.35
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$17,838.07	\$14,058.51	\$3,779.56
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT FEBRUARY 28, 2025			68,224.15
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT THE END OF FEBRUARY			168,435.92
SCOTIA BANK NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 5% MATURING AUGUST 28, 2025			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer



As Easter nears, the anticipation of celebrating God's love and generosity with flowers, uplifting songs, festive food, and symbolic treats, lightens the remaining days of our Lenten journey.

One treasured example is coloured "Easter eggs." The practice of colouring eggs can be traced as far back as the Middle Ages¹. The Christian church prohibited the eating of eggs during Holy Week, although eggs continued to be laid over that week. To identify these "Holy week" eggs, they were dyed and decorated and then distributed on Easter Sunday. The "Easter" eggs, as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ, were hidden, with the search for them associated with the search for Christ when the tomb was found empty. As with many traditions, this has been expanded to include the giving and receiving of different egg-shaped or themed treats, but with the aim of sharing the joy of God's generous love.

The approach of Easter then gives me a chance to point to the many "Easter" eggs that have been coloured and shared by the faith community of Epiphany. Members have been encouraged to consider different ways of sharing gifts of time, treasure, and talents with those in the community surrounding Epiphany. From food bank donations to Christmas gifts, to blankets, these eggs have been "hidden" (because the giver is anonymous) around and about south-east Scarborough.

I also believe there have been many "hidden" eggs of compassion, care, and prayer for the members of our community. They may seem hidden, but because of their warm and creative colours, they can be found and treasured.

If Stewardship at Epiphany can be likened to an Easter basket, then there are many beautiful Easter eggs filling it up. I see these eggs as a marvellous extension of God's love and compassion, coloured with the special colours of time, talent, and treasure, colours of care and compassion, colours of peace, charity, and love.

Blessings to all the egg decorators! And a blessed Easter.

Denise Dennis

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica