



The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

20 Old Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 3J5

416-284-5922 • www.epiphanylutheranchurch.ca

Pastor Peter Lisinski • 647-395-7649 • fryarpuck@hotmail.com

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Layout: Sigi Sommer 416-264-9929
sigisommer@rogers.com

Dear Friends in Christ,

The first Christians were regarded with suspicion – much like modern-day refugees and immigrants, criticized for strange religious faith, worship rituals, cultural values and moral principles. In an imperial economy organized around preparation for waging war, for example, Jesus' followers armed themselves with the one and only weapon commanded by the Prince of Peace: "Love one another as I have loved you."

The love Jesus commands is God's unconditional, unlimited, universal love for all human beings, the very love Jesus himself *personified* in his public mission – love for *neighbours*, love for *strangers*, even love for *enemies*! But love was not the *goal* or the *promise* of Jesus' mission; the *goal* of Jesus' mission was the *kingdom* of God, and the *promise* of God's kingdom is *peace on earth*, proclaimed by a choir of heavenly angels to lowly shepherds on the very first Christmas Eve: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace ..." (Luke 2:14)

Peace is the goal of God's love; *peace* is the *promise* of God's love; and *peace* is the very first *gift* of God's love, given in the very first words the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples on the very first Easter Sunday: "Peace be with you." (John 20:22). The goal, promise and gift of God is *peace*; and *love* is the *strategy* – the *means* and the *method* – by which God's *peace* is given, received and shared.

Love is more than an emotional feeling within the human heart. Love is action inspired by the love of God – *God's* love for *us*; and *our* love for *God*! The church's *God-given* mission is to wage *peace* – the divine commission issued by our commander in chief, Jesus Christ, Lord of all, who in his Sermon on the Mount promises: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9). *That's* the goal! *That's* the *promise*! *That's* the *destiny* of God's love for *us*, and of *our* love for *others*!

Peace be with you, one and all!

Love,
Pastor Peter

MAY CALENDAR

SUNDAY MAY 4

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)
12 noon Holy Communion Service
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

THURSDAY MAY 8

7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

FRIDAY MAY 9

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

SUNDAY MAY 11 (MOTHER'S DAY)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)
12 noon Service of the Word
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

SUNDAY MAY 18

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)
12 noon Holy Communion Service
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

FRIDAY MAY 23

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

SUNDAY MAY 25

SIXTH 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

The Health Benefits of Worship

by Rosarii Lisinski

*"Sing a new song to the Lord;
praise him in the assembly of his faithful people"*

(PSALM 149:1)

IN THIS TIME AND AGE, so many people are conscious of their health by exercising, eating right, and even doing meditations, which are all good ways to live.

According to recent research, singing has many health benefits also. Singing boosts the immune system by raising levels of antibodies in your body that fight infection. It also increases your pain threshold by releasing endorphins – the "feel good" hormones.

I mention this recent information as a good reason for going to church, because this is a safe place where we can sing and praise God freely. Worshiping our Lord in his temple, as is commanded, connects us with our Creator.

The Church is where we meet our Lord Jesus, the light, hope and peace of our lives. God is waiting for his children to acknowledge Him and to worship Him. The Church is a holy place where we grow in faith and find healing and peace in His presence. For Zephaniah 3:19 says, "The Lord God is in our midst."

Praising God by singing and praying together benefits us more than we know. As we learned in Sunday School, worship is the surrender of all we have – ourselves and everything we hold dear – to the worth and joyful recognition of the triune God.

Another tid bit of information: research has found that the music – especially the music of Mozart – lessens the amount and length of seizures an epileptic patient has! Yes, there is power in music and singing praises to God, which improves our lives in so many ways.



IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Turnacker

Our sister in Christ, and longtime former member, Elizabeth Turnacker, died on March 21, AD 2025. A memorial service was held at her graveside on March 29 at Resthaven Memorial Gardens in Scarborough.

As the old German proverb promises, "Those who die in the Lord never see each other for the last time." As Apostle Paul encourages us in the earliest of all our New Testament scriptures: "Therefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

Peace be with you all ...

Pastor Peter Lisinski

Johannes Rickershenrich

Johannes Rickershenrich, born on March 23, 1933 passed away peacefully on April 23, 2025.

Beloved husband of Zita, they shared over 65 cherished years together and have been members of Epiphany since the mid 1960s. Proud father to Connie, devoted grandfather and loving great-grandfather, Johannes' legacy lives on in the hearts of those who knew him – a life well lived, marked by deep family bonds, a love of nature, and a humble spirit. He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

Pastor Rasma Caune presided over a service held on April 29 at Highland Funeral Home Scarborough Chapel and burial at Elgin Mills Cemetery.

Epiphany members and friends offer their sincere condolences to Zita and her family.

**Go now in peace, never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen, amen, amen.**

Shared by Avis, Denise's mother,
from a hymnal that she knows.



The Art of Resurrection: A meditative poem

How is it possible
not to believe in
Resurrection;
when daily it
is accomplished
around you?

When from sleep's dark
and purple night the

Divine rhythm so long laid down

pulses playing and form is freed while colour
washes the sky clean and the birds sing their
holy astonishment at seeing the light again
for one more day.

Where were you then, this dawning when
the daily Easter exultet took place?

To what noise were your ears tuned?

To what sights your eyes?

Did you begin with faith in the beauty that
awaited you beyond the door of your snoozing
senses; or did you soldier slumber at the tomb
of your yesterdays unwilling to have your gaze
lifted to sky's summoning to a new start?

No matter, this miracle awaits you,
every day, with divine patience.

Come then and join the dawn chorus of delight
and allow sun, and sky, and sea; bird, and bush,
and beast to teach you the ancient wild
resurrection art of blessed beginning.

Brother Richard, a Capuchin Franciscan
Priest-friar. Catholic Monastic tradition.
Meditation & mindfulness teacher.

The Second Sunday of Easter has been given the nickname “Low Sunday”, due to the significantly *low* number of present worshipers when compared to the *high* attendance of Easter Sunday. A *second* peculiarity of Low Sunday is the Gospel story of Doubting Thomas, who was absent when the risen Jesus appeared among his fearful disciples one week earlier. It’s the only reading in our church’s entire three-year lectionary cycle appointed to be read every year! The twin themes of *doubt* and *absence* invite Christians to serious reflection on the church’s *spiritual* condition – particularly in Protestant churches, of which our own Lutheran denomination is the oldest and still largest in the world.

The steady decline of the Christian church in western civilization actually began around the end of World War 2, during which church membership and worship attendance in North America had grown to their highest levels ever – affirming, I suppose, the familiar military proverb, “There are no atheists in foxholes.” But over the first quarter century of this third millennium, the downward spiral has accelerated dramatically, as witnessed by the empty chairs that surround us Sunday after Sunday.

In today’s Gospel, Doubting Thomas insists, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” His skepticism probes the conscience of the Christian church and the authenticity of our witness to Jesus Christ. Our English word ‘*witness*’, used to describe Jesus in today’s reading from Revelation, is a translation of the New Testament Greek word ‘*martyr*’ – someone willing to sacrifice one’s own life for a cause beyond the self-interest of personal survival and security.

Survival and security are two cardinal human values, as our recent federal election campaign has confirmed. And united with our vaunted virtues of law and order, they fuel the fear which inspires the idolatry of patriotism – which is the very foundation of a global economy dominated by preparation for war, which is the primary cause for *most* human suffering! The massive amount of money spent on weapons of mass destruction and military personnel imposes drains the resources available for health care, education, food security and affordable housing. And it’s been that way in every generation since Christianity was decriminalized by Roman Emperor Constantine early in the fourth century A.D. and, a decade or so later, decreed the official religion of the empire, which then began to justify its political and military ambitions in the name of God – most horrifyingly exemplified by the disastrous rise of fascism in Nazi Germany, and again rearing its ugly head in western civilization, particularly among our neighbours south of the border!

In contrast, Doubting Thomas’ demand to see the scars of Jesus’ wounds reminds faithful Christians of Jesus’ call to take up the cross of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and self-giving love, which are the hallmarks of Jesus’ *own* faithful witness to God – martyrdom – expressed in love for all people, including enemies, and in compassion for God’s suffering children.

Speaking of children, as our family settled in to watch the Maple Leafs’ hockey game last Thursday night, our conversation somehow turned to the topic of homelessness. When Rosarii reminded us of how grateful all of us should be for everything we have, our eight year-old granddaughter, Chelsea, replied, “I wish I was poor instead of them.” The next day I asked Chelsea to clarify what she meant. “I want other people to be happy instead of me!”

That’s compassion. Jesus’ earthly mission was to show compassion for suffering people; and that *remains* the mission the *risen* Jesus fulfills in, with and through his church! In today’s Gospel, Jesus commissions his followers accordingly: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. . . . If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” The church’s mission of compassion is rooted in personal responsibility and accountability for sin. Not until I recognize my own need for forgiveness do I dare suggest anyone *else’s* need for forgiveness! Authentic *Christian* spirituality is rooted in our *personal* repentance and forgiveness of our *own* sin. Only *then* are we sent to invite *others* to repentance and forgiveness of sin, which is the very *source* of peace with *God*, the world’s *only hope* for peace on earth, to which the cross of Jesus bears faithful witness.

Peace on earth is the heavenly promise proclaimed at Jesus’ Bethlehem birth; peace is the very substance of Jesus’ public ministry; peace is the very last gift the soon-to-be-crucified Jesus gave his disciples around the [Holy Communion] table of his last Passover supper with them; peace is the very first word the risen Jesus spoke in his very first Easter Sunday greeting to his very first disciples, and to Doubting Thomas one week later. Peace remains the promise of God, gift of God, and word of God the same crucified and risen Jesus Christ speaks among us today – and sends us to speak to the world around us in his name: “Peace be with you.”

It seems fitting, on this annual “Low Sunday” to give the final word to the late Pope Francis. In his autobiography (p. 31) simply entitled “*Hope*”, Francis writes: “God is peace. And Jesus tells us in the Gospel that peace is made by being childlike. Let us be like children, building peace with generosity, kindness, and humility. Let us all be childlike.” [Like Chelsea!]

“Doubt and Absence”

ACTS 5:27-32 • REVELATION 1:4-8 • JOHN 20:19-31

Pastor Peter Lisinski

(Second Sunday of Easter Sermon – April 27, AD 2025)

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

MARCH 2025	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$3,805.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	508.30		
AMMS PROPERTY TAX	1,442.00		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	421.34		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL UTILITIES	1,242.97		
INITIAL ENVELOPE OFFERING	45.00		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$11,539.61	\$14,284.65	(\$2,745.04)
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$29,377.68	\$28,343.16	\$1,034.52
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT MARCH 31, 2025			65,002.19
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT THE END OF MARCH			158,754.70
SCOTIA BANK NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 5% MATURING AUGUST 28, 2025			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer

STEWARDSHIP Refugee support

As you may know, we live in a central "hub" for immigration; some new arrivals move to other cities, but many "land" in Toronto and stay within the greater GTA. There are many situations and circumstances that lead to the decision to leave, or flee, one's home country. Some of you reading this may have had some experience with this yourself. Yet, this remains a truth:

Refugees and newcomers fleeing conflict face difficulties starting life in Canada.

Learning English is the biggest challenge refugees face when starting over in Canada, because it forms the foundation of everything from finding a job, getting health care, to securing a home. Sadly, long wait times and overcrowded language classes often leave newcomers without the basics or practice needed to build this essential skill.

However, as I have previously shared, the registered charity, Find Haven (www.findhaven.org), provides a simple and innovative solution by matching refugees with native speakers for one-on-one practice to accelerate their language learning.

On the website, refugees post requests for help, and Canadians post offers to help (once you are vetted as a volunteer). You select who, how, and when you help; a 30-minute conversation is enough to help a refugee. While not everyone is local to Scarborough, you

choose who you connect with to offer support. The meetings are virtual and are set up through the Find Haven site.

I have been working with a refugee from Ukraine; our conversations help build the language skills for resolving their immigration status and finding permanent employment.

It's a rewarding way to help our "new" neighbours!

Denise Dennis

