



The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

20 Old Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 3J5

416-284-5922 • www.epiphanylutheranchurch.ca

Pastor Jordan Smith • 416-356-3505 • revjordansmith@gmail.com

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Submissions 15th of the month
Layout: Sigi Sommer 416-264-9929
sigisommer@rogers.com

Bearing Witness

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (JOSHUA 1:9, NIV)

As I write my final Morningstar message as your interim pastor, I feel that the above verse from the book of Joshua is fitting but perhaps misplaced. Yes, my hope for the people of Epiphany is that you are strong and courageous and not afraid. However, it is not you who are leaving. I am the one who is going to another place and perhaps am looking for the reminder that God will be with me wherever I go.

Even though I am the one departing, the congregation is entering another time of transition, and each of the people of Epiphany are on many journeys and going to new places. Some of these changes will be taking place in your personal lives: retirements, milestone birthdays, changing homes, or deaths of loved ones. Our lives are everchanging on our journey through the years. Other changes are taking place in the neighbourhood: buildings being repurposed, favourite restaurants closing while new ones open, and new neighbours moving in who have different needs and desires than those who used to live here. Finally, changes continue to take place in the congregation: the music we sing, how the worship space is arranged, the pastor who preaches each week, and the various roles people take on in leadership.

Change is constant and through it all God is with you. That is the message I have tried to preach each Sunday over the past eighteen months. The name of the congregation, Epiphany, comes from the Greek word meaning “manifestation,” and is recognized in our church calendar on January 6th each year as the day where the Magi adore Jesus. Jesus’ baptism and the miracle at Cana are two other manifestations, or epiphanies, of Jesus which are central to our understanding of God being present with us through the Son, Jesus Christ.

As life continues to change, there is one constant that does not change. God is present. God is with you and God has been revealed to you. As you continue to walk with Jesus, God will repeatedly be revealed through your lives and by the love offered to each other and to those around you. So do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Pastor Jordan Smith

MAY CALENDAR

FRIDAY MAY 3

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

SUNDAY MAY 5

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)

12:00 noon Service of the Word

Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

THURSDAY MAY 9

7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

(In-person & Zoom)

SUNDAY MAY 12 (MOTHER'S DAY)

7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)

12:00 noon Holy Communion Service

Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

FRIDAY MAY 17

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

SUNDAY MAY 19

DAY OF PENTECOST (RED)

12:00 noon Service of the Word

Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

SUNDAY MAY 26

THE HOLY TRINITY (WHITE)

10:00 a.m. Service of Word and Sacrament

Pastor Ernie Skujins (In-person & Zoom)

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



German Worship Connections

We are happy to share opportunities for our German speaking members to worship and hear occasional sermons in your native tongue.

Pastor Katharina from St. George's in downtown Toronto will hold an occasional prayer and social gathering in Scarborough at the Schwabenclub. Please speak to Ute Wentzel for more information.

Pastor Annika from Martin Luther Church has a weekly devotion that airs on Sunday at 9:30am on CHLO Radio AM530 and which is also posted on their website.

Please follow these links if you wish to hear her devotion.

AM530 Website: <https://am530.ca>

Martin Luther Church Website: <https://martinluther.ca/worship-services/radio-devotions-podcasts/>

We are pleased to share that a new Interim Pastor, Ernie Skujins, will be joining us at Epiphany after we say good-bye to Pastor Jordan. The details regarding service times, and what services we can enjoy with Pastor Ernie are being negotiated, but you will be advised as soon as all the paperwork is complete.

Looking forward in faith, Epiphany Church Council

GOSPEL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

¹Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean.

And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

^{31b}"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

SERMON

Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father.

As we have journeyed together during this time of Lent, we have been waiting for it to be the time. We have been readying ourselves, and also hearing of how God has readied the world through the law and the prophets, for this time where human and divine are brought together.

And so now, when it is the time, Jesus performs an act of welcome. He prepares the disciples one more time for what is happening. Jesus, knowing what is to come, and what needs to occur, gets up from the table, removes his outer robe, and ties a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple's feet.

Foot washing is an ancient practice of hospitality and preparation that most of us don't fully appreciate the significance of in our culture. In Genesis we are told that Abraham has the feet washed of his heavenly guests. In Exodus it is instructed that the feet of those coming before the presence of God in the sanctuary must wash their feet. In the homes of prominent Jews in the first century, slaves would be positioned by the door of the home to wash the dusty feet of the guests who entered. (*Source: AYBD and Eerdmans*)

The feet of the guests who entered the home were washed, not by peers, and definitely not by those of a higher ranking, but by the servant. The washing of feet was the first preparation for any hospitality which was to follow.

In washing their feet, Jesus is preparing the disciples for what is to come.

Our reading from Exodus this evening is also a narrative of preparation. The Lord speaks through Moses and Aaron, telling the people of Israel how they are to prepare for the first Passover, for the night that the final plague will strike Egypt and prepare the way for their freedom.

The Passover meal itself is important, a perpetual ordinance to be observed at the beginning of each year, to ensure that this night is remembered by future generations. And yet what also stands out, aside from eating the meal, is the preparation. A lamb shall be obtained, kept for a number of days, it shall be slaughtered at twilight and the doorposts marked with blood. You shall eat it with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hands.

You, the people of Israel are told, shall be prepared for what is to come, your freedom.

In that meal, the Israelites witness God preparing God's beloved and chosen people, for God's continued presence. For how they will participate in God's acting in the world.

Now, back to Jesus' washing the disciples feet...

In this moment, as the one who is the greatest demonstrates how he is prepared to act in the role of the servant, Jesus is preparing the disciples for the coming meal, but also for how they will witness and participate in God's acting in the world.

Jesus says: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

It is instruction for how others will recognize they are disciples, instruction for how they are to walk out from that place. It is preparation for how they are to live as people beloved and chosen by God.

God prepares people for how they are to follow God's lead.

And yet, as we well know, living as God's people is difficult. Participating in God's action is challenging.

Will Willimon, Professor of Ministry at Duke University, tells this story:

"I know a church that was in decline for many years. They were a "neighborhood church" whose fortunes rose as the suburban neighborhood was being built and then declined when the suburbs became urban. They prayed for renewal. A couple of pastors ago, they tried some programs for evangelism. Nothing worked. Their decline continued unabated. "Lord, please give us a way to reach out to our new neighbors and grow," was an often-repeated prayer. Then the bishop sent a new pastor to the dwindling church. She was in her late twenties. There had been a day when no pastor with so little age and experience would have been sent to that church, but that was yesterday. They received their new, young pastor with a sigh. Wonder of wonders, the congregation began to grow. A wave of new, young families moved into the neighborhood. For some reason—maybe it was the cheerful young pastor, or perhaps they were attracted by the older women in the congregation who were glad to serve as surrogate grandmothers for their children—they found a new home in the congregation. Now the church that was dying became the church that was growing. Their decaying building required refurbishing. The empty Sunday school rooms had to be refitted for the children's nursery and kindergarten. A new sound system was required for the band that now led worship. "We need everyone to step up and increase your giving," said the pastor one Sunday. While it was

wonderful to see their church growing, new life in the congregation brought new challenges. "It was sure a lot easier to be a member of a dying church than one that is growing," said one of the longtime members." (Source: Will Willimon, *Connections Year B V.2 p147*)

When God acts, and invites us to work alongside, all too often we grow weary. Those who had been freed from Egypt rebel and deny God during their years of wandering. Of those who had their feet washed, one betrays, one denies, and the rest lock the door to the room where they hide.

Following Jesus' commandment to love, as he loves us, is a tall task to take on.

But thankfully, as an act of grace and mercy, God lays out the ways for us to participate. Jesus offers the path for how to be one with the Father as he is. Through Jesus' intercession on our behalf, through his willingness to love us, even to the end, Jesus prepares us for the great feast to come.

In these three days, as we journey through the passion and resurrection, we participate in Jesus' actions. Tonight, we eat together, one with Christ at the table.

Tomorrow, we join the crowds in observing his death, being one with Christ in the experience of all humanity.

On Sunday, we gather in the garden, to witness Jesus' power over death.

But on this night, again, we eat.

We eat at the table where each time we approach we are offered forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, through Christ's body and blood.

We are prepared for our journey of faith, with words passed down from Christ to the disciples, and through the generations. Do this in remembrance of me.

As the Lord's words prepared the Israelites for their Passover meal, and as our Lord Jesus Christ prepared the disciples for his commandment of love, so too we are prepared, through the food and drink we are about to receive, to understand the love that Jesus demonstrated for all sinners, and we are prepared to act with God in loving others in the same way.



CONTRIBUTED BY DENISE DENNIS



SPRING gives us more sunshine, flowers, and time outdoors. In that spirit of giving, we are able to help our neighbours by making donations of furniture to the Scarborough Furniture Bank. This is a program of Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) that supports our neighbours in need. The Furniture Bank *“helps individuals and families turn their house into a home with gently used home furnishings. We (SCHC) provide support to those who identify as low-income and are moving into a permanent living space.”*

Drop off days for donations of furniture are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10-3pm. You are asked to call first about the day and time you would like to make the donation. Please contact the Social Support Coordinator at 647-381-5435 or email: furniturebank@schcontario.ca.

The Furniture Bank is located at 1960 Ellesmere Road, Unit #5. You can learn more here: <https://schcontario.ca/programs/community-support-services/furniture-bank>.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtfulness and care of our neighbours!

Denise Dennis

CALL TO BOOK A TOUR TODAY!

647-931-1514 or EMAIL info.parkway@livinglivita.com




LIVITA PARKWAY: 1645 Pickering Parkway, Pickering, ON L1V 7E9
www.LivingLivita.com

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council Chair:	Geoff Crewe
Council Vice-Chair:	Denise Dennis
Council Secretary:	Margaret Fler
Councillor-at-Large:	Greg Furan
Councillor-at-Large:	Gord Munro
Councillor:	Gordon Vollmer
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 2024	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS (DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$3,815.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	1,153.23		
AMMS PROPERTY TAX	1,404.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL UTILITIES	1,201.04		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	431.91		
INTEREST INCOME	750.00		
SPIRITUAL SOCIETY PARKING	1,500.00		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$14,330.18	\$16,846.16	(\$2,515.98)
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$33,010.23	\$36,957.26	(\$3,947.03)
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT MARCH 31, 2024			33,776.47
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT MARCH 31, 2024			141,283.01
SCOTIA BANK NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 5% MATURING AUGUST 28, 2025			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer



From the book "Good Enough" by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. This is the prayer that followed the devotion section which was read recently at Bible Class by Marg Crewe.

A Blessing for when you're weary

Oh God, I am so tired. Each breath is shallow. My strength has melted away and hope is hidden behind a wall. I don't even want to crawl out of bed.

I feel alone. The parenting. The endless to-dos. The juggling too much. The spread too thin. Oh God, I cry out to You from the ends of the earth: Show me again how this works – how you bring dry bones to life. Help me.

Blessed are we, the weary and weak and sore, with only the merest ember left burning but who still say: Breathe on me, God. Breathe life into my tired body, my heavy limbs, bring light to the dark corners of my mind. Breathe comfort into my sad heart.

Blessed are we who turn our gaze to seek the One who truly sees us and knows us, like newborns whose bleary sight focuses to find adoring eyes beaming down, delighting and filling, mirroring and multiplying.

Blessed are we who discover we are loved and held in arms that are strong enough to hold that which we cannot.

