

JANUARY  
2023

St. John Lutheran  
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Church Office Hours  
Mondays and Fridays  
10:00-3:00 pm  
Sunday  
Worship Service  
10:00 am

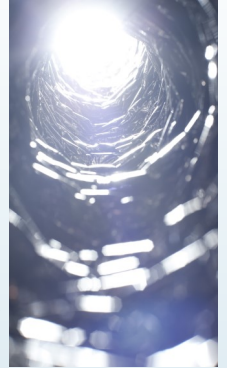
EPHAPHANY

## St. John Lutheran Church

St. John Lutheran Church comes together to love God and one another, serve others and share God's word. We do these things by God's Grace that comes through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ

### A PASTORAL LETTER "Making Light Work" Pastor Tim

Just as the rest of the world is discarding their interior and exterior lights, our faith in worship begins to celebrate the light that has come into the world. It is called the season of the epiphany. The birth story ends with the coming of the magi according to Matthew's Gospel. This is celebrated on January 05. For the Eastern Orthodox (Greek, Russian, etc.), this is their celebration of the birth of Christ. The magi follow the great star to Bethlehem where they bow and worship the Christ child and present him with three important gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. All three are the most precious of their respective element. Thus, the star leads the whole world to the Christ child. Matthew's gospel begins with the message that will be brought to the world through Jesus' disciples at the conclusion of his writing.



It is John's Gospel that makes the most of Jesus being the Light of the whole world. It is associated with the life that Jesus brings into the world.

"What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." - Jn. 1:3b-5. The world tried to distinguish the light at the crucifixion and death of Jesus. He appears, however, to the disciples as the risen Lord and "breathes" on them the Holy Spirit. So John begins and ends his gospel with the backdrop of Genesis 1 where God created light out of darkness; where the spirit (wind, breath) moved over the waters and created. Life comes from God in the beginning of time through light and spirit. The life Jesus brings from God is the light that draws us out of the darkness of death into his own marvelous light.

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of a father's only Son, full of grace and truth." For the gospel of John, it is the community of the faithful, who believe in Jesus as the life of the world and have seen his light. All others who live by the powers of the world rather than the light of the true God live in the darkness. Their lives are closed. Death is the final authority. There is no other. For those who have beheld the glory of God in Jesus, live in the light and have life in them. See Jn. 3:13ff. "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed." - Jn. 3:19-20. On the other hand, "...those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." - Jn. 3:21.

What are those deeds? They are the acts or actions that disciples do toward one another and to others by loving one another as our Lord has loved us. We walk in the light of Christ who gave his life that we may have life and have it abundantly. To walk in that light is to live in harmony with God and act for and towards unity. We can only do this by confessing our actions and inactions that are not grounded in the Word of Truth. Instead, they are motivated by the opposite of truth, that is, deceit, deception, and false pride that serves the ego rather than God.

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"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." - Jn. 8:12. We do not walk in our light or our own uprightness or goodness. We walk in the light of the one who is of God, who comes in the flesh, who alone can give life because he is from "the Father". He is the Truth in love that allows us to come out of our darkness into his light that we may have life in us.

So, we celebrate the light that leads us toward God even as we walk in the darkness of the world. It will lead us to the mountain of God, where Jesus will show forth that light to his disciples. He will then lead them down the mountain into the realities of the world. (Transfiguration Sunday, the last of the Epiphany season).

The followers of Jesus, the community of faith, the church, are to show forth the light to the rest of the world; thereby, pushing back the darkness that can and will resist the goodness of God. As we welcome the newly baptized and present them with their baptismal candle, the pastor exhorts them to "let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"; or, the alternate in the new hymnal, "Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life."

And we sing, "This little light of mine. I'm going'-a let it shine", verse 1. "Everywhere I go. I'm going'-a let it shine", verse 2; "Jesus gave it to me. I'm going'-a let it shine", verse 3. It is the Epiphany of our Lord. We follow his life in our worship together.



*The Voge Family*  
LIFE IN 2022

Dear Friends,

We hope and pray you are having a blessed holiday season!

As we reflect on this past year, we are filled with thankfulness at God's kindness to our family. He has been such a Good Shepherd, and He has led us on an amazing journey throughout this year. During this season, we have been reminded of the journey of those who were waiting and seeking Jesus at the time of His birth. We were so moved in watching the Chosen's episode with the shepherd seeking Jesus. He is so kind and loving in the way He leads each of us and He knows exactly what we need.

It was so special for us to have a sabbatical this year in the USA. It was a blessing to be closer to our families for a season, and also for us to receive rest, renewal, and refreshing. We have so many highlights as a family...mountain trips, celebrations with family, special classes, playing in snow, family devotions, and the list goes on! We asked each of the kids to share one thing they were thankful for during the time...

Lily - time with family

Eli - hiking in the mountains and a Jurassic World Exhibit

David - Disneyworld trips

Micah - parks

*Cont'd on opposite page*

## WELCA Meeting Minutes

The December meeting of St. John Women of the ELCA was held on December 1 at the home of Judy Erbaugh with 6 members present. The officers presented the program.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Treasurer report showed a balance of \$1509.26. Kathy reported 52 cards were sent.

Women's Council will meet December 13 with a carry-in. Caroling will be December 10 beginning at 1:00 pm.

Judy will provide a meal for the Shelton family on December 19. Our Christmas project will consist of giving to the ELCA "Good Gifts" program. We will be purchasing a combination of a goat and a flock of chickens, plus a portion of an irrigation system.

Judy reported no Rotary meals are needed in Jan., Feb., and March.

Earla and Carolyn will provide the homeless meal this month.

Meeting closed with the Missionary Benediction.

Refreshments were served by Stephanie and Judy.

All women of St. John are invited and welcome to attend meetings the second Thursday of each month. Women of the ELCA seeks to be an instrument of Christian Mission in helping the Church to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ through:

- Learning of Christ and the mission of His church
- Witnessing in our daily lives to our Christian faith
- Serving the needs of others in the congregation and Community
- Supporting the total work of the church through prayers and offerings



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We had such a wonderful time in the USA, but we were also ready to return to Cyprus, which has been our home for the past nine years. After our time in the USA, it was clear that God was leading us to new things in Cyprus. So we came back and entered into a season of transition, as we moved our home and ministry to Limassol. This felt like the best decision for our entire family, and we are so thankful for the Lord's provision in the kid's school, our home, and new ministry opportunities. We feel like the Lord has positioned us to really thrive in this new season. We are expectant that there will be new opportunities to bless the surrounding nations.

Thanks so much for being a part of our journey!

Love and Blessings,  
The Voges

**MEMBERS IN OUR PRAYERS**

Patrick Collins	Janet Ferguson	Reenie Halsey
Bob Combs	Butch Spitler	Mark McKinley
Catherine Dafler	Marna Beneke	Bruce Sams & Family
Cindy Dafler	Amy Stockslager	Glen Behnken

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF OUR MEMBERS**

Pastor Mary & Tikkun Farm	Andy Eck
Don Voge	John Matteucci
Alice Blosser	Eric Walker
Jeff Studebaker	Mary Matteucci
Diane Harry	A.J. McKinley
Sue Johnson	Maxine Ingram
Terry & Connie Wysong	Dolly Shelton
Amy Leedy	Dan McKinley
Dotty	John DeVilbiss

**Bible Study** – Monday evenings starting January 9 at 6:30 pm. Pastor Tim leads the group in a study on the book of Galatians and the freedom we have in Christ.



Finland in January!



*January*

*Birthdays*

22nd Julie Dafler  
26th Lorey Collins



*Anniversaries*

16th Steve & Cindy Dafler



**THOSE GRIEVING**  
The families of Dennis Filbrun and David Moysey

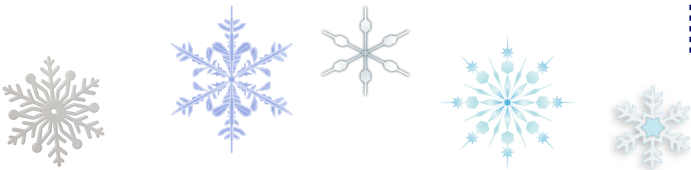
**MISSIONARIES**  
Jon & Michelle Voge and family

*Epiphany Prayer*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The real work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoners,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.*

*"The Work of Christmas" is from Howard Thurman's The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations*



# January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 M-Jenny D. LR-Carolyn S.	2	3	4 Worship & Music Meeting 6:30 pm	5 12th Day of Xmas Service 7:00 pm	6 Epiphany	7
8 M-Carol M. LR-Earla D.	9 Bible Study 6:30 pm	10	11 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	12 WELCA 7:00 pm	13	14
Baptism of our Lord						
15 M-Mandy A. LR-Buzz W.	16 Bible Study 6:30 pm	17	18	19	20	21 Sleep Mat Project 9-11 am
2 Epiphany						
22 M-Jenny D. LR-Stephanie C.	23 Bible Study 6:30 pm	24 Homeless Meal Darlene C. & Becky S.	25	26	27	28
3 Epiphany						
29 M-Carol M. LR-Mark M.	30 Bible Study 6:30 pm	31	AG-Steve & Cindy D. CA-Steve S.	Ushers-Dave W., Buzz W.		
4 Epiphany						