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# *The Steeple*



Jan 4,

2024

## **The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church**



### **Epiphany**

In Fredrich Buechner's book, "Wishful Thinking" there is no definition of the word *Epiphany*. **Darn it!** Turning instead back to Old Webster then, *Epiphany* has many meanings: manifestation, revelation, realization, and insight. I've even heard the word "unveiling" associated with the word Epiphany too. But fear not! Right Jeff? Buechner does define *revelation* for us:

There are two different ways of describing how you came to know something. One is to say that you ***found it out***. The other way is to say that ***it occurred to you***. Reason is involved in both. To say you ***found out*** so and so was the best friend you ever had suggests that you reasoned your way to such a conclusion. To say it ***occurred to you*** that he was, suggests that although the conclusion was not reached by reason, it was not incompatible with it!

***It occurred to you*** as distinct with you found out suggests knowledge given as distinct from knowledge earned. It suggests inner meaning as distinct from knowledge earned. It suggests inner meaning as distinct from outer semblance. For example, I ***found out*** that Francis of Assisi gave all his money to the poor, called the sun his brother, and preached sermons to birds. But ***it occurred to me*** that he must be a saint! Or an idiot. Revelation means knowledge as grace...

[It's safe to say we know which is which – about St. Francis I mean – emphasis on the word saint]

Christianity is not primarily reasonable or something man has ***found out*** or worked out for himself. Christ came. He healed people. He forgave people their sins and said to love everybody including your enemy. He died in a peculiarly unpleasant way, forgiving his executioners. Christianity was born when ***it occurred to*** some of the ones who had known him that his kind of life was the only kind worth living, and that in some mysterious way Christ was still around to help them live it.

Nobody figured Christianity out. It happened. That is what it means to call it a revealed religion – not incompatible with reason maybe, if you give it some thought, but not arrived at primarily by reason either.

[How else might you go about explaining water turned into wine?]

Epiphany, it seems, is concentrated encounter with revelation and in some profound way - acts like a fulcrum (much the same way Christ the King does with the season after Trinity) as it brings the Christmas season to a close by focusing on who Jesus is and what he will become in the eyes of all of those who believe in his name. How you come by that knowledge in your life ... happens ... I think. The Word of God always “happens” to us. What we do with what we find out in those encounters has the potential to unveil something which still remains mysterious – that Christ is still around to help us live a life worth living too.

Together let us pray: O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, **who know (found out or occurred -jk) ...** who know thee now by faith, to thy presence, where we may behold thy glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

In hope,  
Nick+



## Theologians Corner:

### William Passavant, Prophetic Witness, 1894

William Passavant, a Pennsylvania Lutheran pastor, was born in Zelienople, Pennsylvania, on October 9, 1821. He attended Jefferson College and later Gettysburg Seminary.

Passavant was a parish pastor at heart and served in that capacity for much of his ministry, even while pursuing other duties. Passavant was the founder of numerous hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable organizations, principally in Western Pennsylvania, but the reach of his efforts extended from Boston and New York in the east to Chicago and Milwaukee in the mid-west. Many of these institutions continue to this day.

On a visit to Germany, Passavant came into contact with Theodor Fliedner, the founder of the reconstituted deaconess movement among German Lutherans, and, in 1849, he invited Fliedner to come to Pittsburgh and bring four of his deaconesses to serve in the hospital there. A year later, in 1850, the first American Lutheran deaconesses were set apart by Passavant, and thus began the renewed deaconess movement among American Lutherans.

Passavant was driven by a desire to see the consequences of the gospel worked out in practical ways in the lives of people in need. For Passavant, the Church's commitment to the gospel must not be spiritual only. It must be visible. For him, it was essential that gospel principles were worked out in clear missionary actions. Passavant also knew the importance of education and was the founder of a number of church schools scattered across the mid-west, principal among these being Thiel College, a Lutheran-affiliated college in Greenville, Pennsylvania.

In addition to his charitable, philanthropic, and educational work, and his guidance of the early years of the deaconess movement, Passavant was also a cutting-edge communicator of his time. He founded two church newspapers, *The Missionary* and *The Workman*, both designed to interpret the church's mission, in consonance with the Lutheran confessions, for the purpose of provoking the desire of the faithful toward loving service to those in need without concern for race, color, creed, or national origin. Later generations of Lutheran communicators look to Passavant as one of the trailblazers of the field of religious journalism.

Passavant died on January 3, 1894.

Together we pray: Compassionate God, who hast raised up ministers among thy people: May we ever desire, like thy servant William Passavant, to support the work of equipping the saints for service among the sick and the friendless; through Jesus Christ, the divine Physician, who hast prepared for us an eternal home, and who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

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**Please pray for:** Liz Green, Michelle Sheffield, Catherine Sheffield, David King, Pris Snow, Ben Baker, Sanawbar, Diana Farris, Joel Hahn, Steve McCraw, Josh Harris, David Swindell, Norma Perrier, Connie Finch, Dorothy Buchanan, Peggy Kauffman, Ryan Kiesel, Tony Clapper, Bruce Neiswander, Jack & Karla Stoecker, Joseph, Tim, Shania Smith, Terry Grogan, Tyler Roberson, Jerry Nezam, Jim Brooks, Tom Martin, Don Doty, Luke Karel, Miriam Petrovich, Lynette Beebe, Nancy & Joe Norton, Jack Smith, Tina Holland, Margaret Holden, and Molly Ferguson.

**Please add the following to your prayers this first week of Christmas:**

**St James, Oklahoma City**

**St Andrew's, Stillwater**

**St Augustine Canterbury-OSU Campus Ministry**

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## Winter Needs

Concern's current Pantry needs: peanut butter, canned beans, canned vegetables, chunky soups

For homeless -.

**GLOVES, SOCK HATS, AND HAND WARMERS.**

### Luke's Place Jan 4, 2024 -Jan 10, 2024

- Jan 4<sup>th</sup> Men's Breakfast, 7am, Metcalf  
Rector's Bible Study, 9:15am, Metcalf  
Green Country Eucharist, Rite I, 1pm, GCV
- Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8am, Chapel  
Faith Forum, 9:15am, Metcalf  
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 10:30am  
Godly Play, after children's sermon, upstairs
- Jan 9<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Discovery, 10am, Library
- Jan 10<sup>th</sup> Choir, 5pm, Choir Room  
YD, 6pm, Rodgers

### Birthdays and Anniversaries, Jan 7<sup>th</sup> - Jan 13<sup>th</sup> , 2024

#### Birthdays



Kim Breedlove (1/11)  
Sally Lindsey (1/11)

#### Anniversaries



If your or a loved one's name doesn't appear on the list, please email or call the office, and we will add your birthday or anniversary!



**LAST CALL FOR PLEDGE CARDS!** And Many, Many Thanks to everyone who have turned theirs in! The budget will be finalized in the next week or two and presented to the Vestry and to the Parish at the Annual Meeting.





## January Item

This month's Pack the Backpacks items are zippered pencil bags for 3 ring binders. These run for less than \$2 a piece at Walmart. You can find them on line, Staples, and most of the Dollar stores. The goal is 100. Will you help?



## Images of Christmas 2023











*For unto us a child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given,  
And the government shall be  
upon His shoulders and His  
name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting  
Father, Prince of Peace*

**HOPE  
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work experience & testimony  
-Attach a current resume

For more information, see  
our website at  
[hopeclinicbartlesville.com](http://hopeclinicbartlesville.com)



Questions? See Pam or Tim Hanson



**The Tree of Celestial Hope will be coming down after this Sunday. If you placed a special ornament on the tree, please take it home with you.**

# The Fear of the Lord

Note: Many of you know that Jeff Birk is studying for the Deaconate. From time to time he is given assignments which he shares with us. The following is one such assignment he presented to Faith Forum this past Sunday:

Dec 24 (part 2) -- Reading Wisdom in the Ancient Near East Write a 200-word paragraph describing what it means to 'fear the Lord'. Write it for someone unfamiliar with the Bible but familiar with the cultural understanding of a wrathful God who is ever present in the Old Testament.

(Scene: Mutt and Jeff, riding an elevator.) Mutt: "Look! Somebody wrote 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge' on the wall!" Jeff: "That's in the Bible, Mutt ... the Book of Proverbs." Mutt: "Hmm ... I thought the beginning of knowledge was Kindergarten, where I learned my colors, my numbers, and the alphabet. I even learned to tie my shoes!" Jeff: "That's a different kind of knowledge, Mutt. The Proverbs are about wisdom. Some Bibles even use the word wisdom instead of knowledge in this passage." Mutt: "What's the difference?" Jeff: "Think of it this way, 'knowledge' is knowing 'how' to tie your shoes. 'Wisdom' is understanding 'why' it's a good idea to do it." Mutt: "So my shoes won't fall off, or I won't trip on the laces?" Jeff: "Yes, that's why it's a good idea to tie your shoes." Mutt: "OK, I get that. Who is this Lord? Is that Jesus?" Jeff: "Good question. Although today, Christians normally refer to Jesus as 'the Lord', the Book of Proverbs was written long before Jesus was born. So, in this case, 'the Lord' refers to God." Mutt: "Ooooh ... I've heard God punishes people. Should I be afraid of Him?" Jeff: "No, not at all. Although it's true that God demonstrated his wrath in many ways, long ago. For example, God nearly wiped out all forms of life from the earth with a flood, due to the wickedness of mankind. But He gave the world a 'do over' by commanding Noah to build an ark, saving Noah's family and all kinds of animals." Mutt: "Couldn't He do that again? Shouldn't I still be afraid of Him?" Jeff: "Well, yes, He could. He promised never to do it again, though. He loves us, and He wants us to love Him, and He wants everyone to live together in peace. ... Let's get back to the writing on the wall, OK?" Mutt: "Alright, alright." Jeff: "A key is the word 'fear'. Although we think 'fear' is being afraid of something, the Bible often uses that word to mean 'respect and reverence' ". Mutt: "So, it means something like, 'To respect and reverence God is the first step toward knowing how He wants us to live, and why?'" Jeff: "Yes. We have no need to fear God. We should reverence and respect Him, and His commandments. The most important of which is to love Him with all our heart, our soul, and our mind. And the next is to love our neighbors as ourselves. Doing so is very wise. Just think about how wonderful the world would be if everyone did so." Mutt: "Can I borrow a Sharpie?" (fade to black)







**Save the date of February 11<sup>th</sup> for our Annual Parish Meeting. We will have the election of our leaders and the budget for the coming fiscal year presented. We will also look back on this past year of growth and development.**

(Ministry Leaders- I will need your ministry report in the office by January 30th for the Annual Parish Report. Thanks! Penny)



Epiphany not only highlights the visit of the three wise men, but also marks the end of the Poinsettias' reign in the sanctuary. After the 10:30 service, you may take a plant or two home with you-Be sure to leave the clay pots! They are needed for Easter. The poinsettias were really lovely during our Christmas services and held their blooms high. Now it is time for them to rest and find a home. Remember, right after the 10:30 service on Sunday and leave the clay pot.

### **Collect for Epiphany**

Traditional: O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only- begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know thee now by faith, to thy presence, where we may behold thy glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Contemporary: O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the Peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



In this service, we mark our front or main entrance doors with chalk as a sign that we are inviting God's presence into the places, relationships, and situations that we call home. This practice resonates with God's instructions to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 6.

Chalking the door is done most commonly on Epiphany Day itself. However, it can be done on any day of the Epiphany season. In some localities, the chalk used to write the Epiphanytide pattern is blessed by a Christian priest or minister on Epiphany Day, then taken home to write the pattern.

As participants take turns making the inscription, the leader says: The three Wise Men, [C] Caspar, [M] Melchior, [B] and Balthasar followed the star to Bethlehem and the child Jesus [20] two thousand, [20] and twenty four years ago. [+ +] May Christ bless our home [+ +], and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

The chalking of the doors of a home encourages Christians to dedicate their life at home to God and to others. Seeing the symbols over our doors can help to remind us, while passing in and out on our daily routines, that our homes and all those who dwell there belong to Christ. It also serves as a reminder of welcoming the Magi gave to Jesus. We should strive to be as welcoming to all who come to our homes to visit us!

**Epiphany Blessing:** Loving God, bless this family and those we hope to welcome over the course of this year. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**20 + C + M + B + 24**



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