Epiphany at Christ Church

It’s a new year and a new season in the church year—Epiphany—which we will celebrate in our worship on Sunday 4 January. Epiphany means “manifestation.” It tells the story of magi who follow a star to find and honor a new king. Epiphany is the season of light and illumination—a time of “manifestation.” It leads us to imagine what light is shining for us and for others to guide them to Christ. It also inspires us to think about the words we say in greeting, “Welcome to the light,” and to keep asking the question, “How can we more fully be the light of Christ in our community and world?”

To help us enter this Epiphany time, we are having an Epiphany Party on Sunday 4 January at 4pm at Christ Church Lutheran. You are invited! Come on the eleventh day of Christmas, Sunday 4 January. That morning in worship we’ll celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, and then that afternoon we’ll continue our feasting. Why not continue celebrating throughout the twelve days of Christmas? We’ll eat, drink, and make merry. We’ll sing some of our favorite Christmas carols. We’ll bless our church building, our house of worship. We’ll also send everyone home with a liturgy to bless your own dwelling places—homes, apartments, bedrooms—for the coming year. Childcare will be provided. Please plan to come.

There is an old tradition that Epiphany (officially, January 6) is a time to pray for God’s blessing upon homes and dwellings. Historically, Epiphany is even older than the festival of Christmas, Epiphany being the church’s first celebration of the incarnation—a celebration that God does not dwell far off in some other world or place but has chosen to dwell among us here, on earth, in the flesh. It therefore makes sense that Epiphany would also, over time, become an occasion for blessing homes—our dwelling places, places where God is with and among us. Come and share this old tradition as we enter the new year together.

Epiphany is also a time for growing in our baptisms. On Sunday 11 January, we observe the Baptism of Our Lord and remember our own baptisms. For the rest of our January Sundays, we focus on our baptismal callings: as God’s beloved children, we are sent into Jesus’ mission of justice and peace for the whole creation.

Come and grow in the meaning and purpose of your life in Christ. Welcome Epiphany!

—Pastor Carlson

**Staff**

Pastors
- Pastor Kristine Carlson
- Pastor Erik Haaland

Cantors
- Pastor Robert Farlee
- Pastor Martin Seltz

Office
- Stephanie Okoneski

Facilities
- Chuck Merrell

*Courier Editor*
- Josh Messner

**Council Officers**

President
- Bob Victorin-Vangerud

Vice President
- Dan Mueller

Secretary
- Naomi Bruesehoff

Treasurer
- Melody Pauling

**Council Members**

- Pat Baehler
- Kevin Reuther
- Ann Davis
- Luann Skrivseth
- Hilary Gebauer
- Will Stark

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**Announcements**

**Retirees**

Join us in the Concordia Room at 11:00am Wednesday 28 January for a program. Watch the bulletin for further information. Potluck lunch will follow.

**Baptisms**

Ivy Grace Young, daughter of Charles (Chip) and Kim Young, was baptized on Sunday 30 November at Christ Church Lutheran.

William Jon Woestehoff, son of Matt and Mary Woestehoff, was baptized on Sunday 7 December at Christ Church Lutheran.

Once again, we had a little too much fun at the Pick-Up Pageant on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. More photos on page 7.
Finances Update

The finance committee wants to provide you with the most current information about our congregation’s finances. In addition to other communications, we will provide a quick report on the state of our operating budget in each issue of The Courier.

Our finances are in fairly good shape. We are running a small operating deficit, which we hope will be wiped out by generous Christmas giving. Thank you for giving generously this year so that we can continue expanding our ministry of sharing Christ’s love.

|                               | ACTUAL       | BUDGET (11 mos.) | DIFFERENCE |
|                               | $239,333.52  | $252,502.25      | ($13,168.73) |
| Member Giving/ Envelopes      | $79,639.42   | $69,241.34       | $10,398.08  |
| Other Income                  | $318,972.94  | $321,743.59      | ($2,770.65) |
| Total Income                  | $322,111.60  | $321,742.65      | $368.95     |
| Total Surplus (or Deficit)    | ($3,138.66)  | $0.94            | ($3,139.60) |

Helping Hands

January/February

- John and Virginia Buegel
- Ted Buegel and Amanda Jenkins-Buegel
- Bob Farlee
- Donna and Pete Gawreluk
- Roger and Liz Gomoll
- Paul Hanson
- Kay and Greg Madson
- Robyn and Marcus Nooney
- Rita and Ken Schoenike
- Cathy Sieving

January Birthdays

1/2 Raymond Peters
1/4 LeAnn (Bergquist) Marudas
1/6 Evelyn Wermager
1/10 Meyer Schoenike
1/11 Alayna Young
1/18 Amanda Jenkins-Buegel
1/19 Micah Buckley-Farlee
1/20 Daniel Holmgren
1/21 John Christianson
1/26 Caleb Jenkins-Buegel

If you are named in the above helping hands chart, please help with Sunday morning coffee fellowship in the form of set up, clean up, or treats. Contact Michael Jefferis for details.michael.jefferis@gmail.com.

Thanks to Michael Jefferis for his presentation of treats each Sunday during coffee fellowship. Michael has hosted us well for years. We are very grateful. We love the surprise spread of treats each week. Michael, in your retirement from serving as coffee fellowship host, we hope you have time to visit over coffee. We are looking for someone to take over this position beginning in January 2015. Contact Joanne Seltz or Mary Bode for more information.
The council has been busy since the last Courier came out. This report covers four meetings. We delayed our November meeting by a week due to a rash of illnesses, so the December Courier went to press before that gathering. We held an extra little meeting at the very beginning of December and then our normal December council meeting. December also included our regular congregation meeting to approve next year’s budget and elect officers. It’s been a busy month, but here are the highlights.

November Council Meeting: We began with devotions, reflecting together on the text for Thanksgiving Day and what it means to be thankful. Then we approved various meeting dates. The important ones to report here are the dates for two congregation meetings. We are calling a special meeting on 11 January to present the Second Century Campaign to the congregation. We set February 22 as the date for our regular congregation meeting for receiving reports and dealing with old and new business.

Next we turned our attention to an unexpected bill for upgrading and maintaining the kitchen. A visit from the fire marshal prompted this expense. The total bill was $6,650. The council decided to use funds remaining from the Ole and Lena Gas Fund, money raised during the cold winter last year when it looked like our natural gas bill would significantly exceed budgeted amounts. Fortunately, the expense wasn’t as great as we thought it would be.

Next we heard from two task forces. The sustainability task force brought recommendations for projects that would reduce our energy use or move us toward greener, more sustainable sources of energy. These recommendations will be added to the list of possible projects to be funded by the proposed Second Century Campaign. The organ task force reported that they had made a preliminary decision about an organ builder. They are seeking a proposal from this person in order to be prepared if the congregation approves the Second Century Campaign in January.

The finance committee presented a draft budget for the 2015 fiscal year. Our stewardship drive this year was a great success, and pledges went up by 13%, but commitments a year ago to call an associate pastor and to work to bring the rest of the pastoral staff up to synod compensation standards have increased expenses for next year as well. After extensive discussions we managed to balance the budget by closing a gap of about $16,000 between expected expenses and a reasonable estimate of giving for the coming year. We received reports from our pastors and from various committees and were reminded once again how much is happening at Christ Church Lutheran. It’s an exciting time. We closed the meeting with the Lord’s Prayer.

After some email exchanges, we reconsidered some of the budget decisions we made and convened again briefly after Advent worship on 3 December to modify our plan. Some expenses were cut or designated to be paid with appropriate non-budget funds, and we decided to slow the rate at which we move the expense of the associate pastor’s salary away from funds from endowment earnings. We also decided to slow the speed with which we move the salaries of other pastoral staff members into alignment with synod guidelines, spreading the increase over four years rather than three.

December Council Meeting: We were back in action just a week later, meeting on 9 December. Dan Mueller led devotions, introducing a text about the final judgment from Matthew 26. We talked together about the connections between loving “the least of these” and the idea of judgment.

Before turning to normal business, we took some time to step back and try to take a longer view of the needs of the congregation. We talked together about the changes that are happening. We are seeing many new faces, and more and more children are present for Sermon on the Steps, Godly Play, and the time in the Red Room during the middle portion of Sunday worship. The changes are exciting, but changes bring challenges. How can we anticipate the coming needs and stay ahead of the curve? We plan to meet together for a council retreat in early February.

On to business. We approved a request for $500 of visioning funds for the Music Series. Hilary Gebauer presented a revised sabbatical plan from the pastoral support committee. She outlined some details and expenses for a sabbatical for Pastor Carlson and for the congregation. The council approved the plan and voted to fund it with $19,950 from the recent gift to the congregation by Betty J. Anderson.
We added Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s programs of outreach to homeless teens to the list of proposed recipients for the mission component of the Second Century Campaign. We approved sending a letter to Minneapolis Areas Synod Bishop Ann Svennungsen expressing our interest in hosting Pastor Helge Voigt for one year beginning next August in a pastoral exchange between our Minneapolis synod and the Leipzig Synod of the German Lutheran church. Finally, we heard reports from Pastors Carlson and Haaland and from various committees and task forces. Much good work is taking place. We adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer.

December Congregation Meeting: On Sunday 14 December the congregation gathered in the sanctuary for our regular meeting to elect officers and council members and to adopt a budget. After Pastor Carlson opened the meeting with prayer, we turned to the business at hand. On behalf of the nominating committee, Jason Bergquist presented the following candidates: Bob Victorin-Vangerud, President; Hilary Gebauer, Vice President; Colin Watkins, Treasurer; Pat Baehler, Secretary; Marcus Nooney for Member at Large. Jason explained that in spite of vigorous efforts by the committee, they were still seeking two at-large candidates. The congregation voted to elect the presented candidates and refer the question of the two remaining spots to the council for a decision.

The meeting next approved the budget recommended by the council and the meeting adjourned. Pastor Haaland closed the meeting with a prayer.

That’s the news from the council. As you can see, it was a busy month.
Dorothy Hanson—long-time member of Christ Church, now home-bound—receives the eucharist as part of our Eucharistic ministry program. Dorothy sends warm greetings to all her friends at church.

Lights of welcome shine in the courtyard this Advent-Christmas season.

Will Stark presents building needs at a December educational forum as we consider the Second Century Campaign.

Going Home: A Longfellow Mardi Gras Celebration
Sunday 15 February, 3:00pm
Christ Church Lutheran

Featuring the Longfellow Jazz Sextet with special guest vocalist Judi Donaghy Vinar—a benefit concert for Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota’s Metro Homeless Youth Program.

Laura Caviani, piano
Bill Simenson, trumpet
Pete Whitman, sax
Pete Enblom, trombone
Bruce Heine, bass
Dave Schmalenberger, drums

A group of jazz musicians, many of whom are residents of the Longfellow neighborhood, join together at Christ Church Lutheran for this concert of music with the Mardi Gras spirit. This pre-Lenten celebration will feature music from the roots of American jazz and new pieces that reflect the spirit of today.

Although this concert is free, a collection will be taken for Lutheran Social Service’s Metro Homeless Youth program, which provides essential services to youth in our neighborhood.

A note about the concert title, “Going Home”—Bill Simenson is planning to write a piece based on Antonín Dvořák’s tune used in the song “Going Home.” Dvořák visited Minnehaha Falls in the mid 1890s and was inspired by this Longfellow landmark.
Living in Community
Mission Series, Part 1

This past October the mission committee sponsored what we called a “visioning forum.” April McMillan and Rachel Mann led us through a process designed to discover our interests and passions as a congregation, especially as related to needs and struggles in our community. The mission committee has spent time with the results of that conversation and has discerned five areas in which we as a congregation seem to have shared passion and concern:

- a sense of isolation experienced by so many in our community,
- grief over inequality and the effects of racism,
- The pervasiveness of hunger and homelessness even in our affluent society,
- a desire that elders be cared for and not forgotten, and
- care of creation.

The mission committee decided that one way to keep this conversation alive is to publish a series of articles in The Courier beginning this month. Here is our first reflection.

The category we termed “isolation” encompasses a number of issues raised at the forum. Many in our community feel isolated and disconnected from their neighbors. (In truth, even families struggle to find time together.) There’s a sense that the bonds of community are fragile and that too many people feel isolated and alone. Additionally, we all know friends and family who struggle with despair—perhaps we ourselves struggle with despair. We wonder: is the rise in depression and other mental health issues related to this pattern of isolation? Is there anything we can do about all of this?

In these reflections, we hope to point to ways in which our life as a community of faith serves as a sign of healing and hope. In this case, our very existence serves as such a sign. We don’t often think about this, but the simple fact that we gather together each week is an unusual (and stunningly beautiful) thing. On any given Sunday morning it is easy to find all kinds of reasons to stay in our homes and do our own things. But our practice of making our way to church and gathering for worship is itself a practice that counters patterns of isolation. Where else do young and old gather together? Where else do people from all walks of life share a morning together?

Yet we also should ask: What else can we do? Are there ways we can be more invitational, opening up this experience of Christian community to more and more people? Are there ways we can learn to speak more openly and honestly about the struggles so many face with despair and mental illness? Are there ways we can better learn to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2)? Are there new ways we can foster a sense of connection and care in Longfellow and in the other communities and neighborhoods in which we live? We hope the conversation continues.

—Pastor Haaland

Plymouth Christian Youth Center
Christmas Gift Sale

The PCYC Gift sale was held on Saturday 13 December at their main building in North Minneapolis. Two hundred volunteers helped children, kindergarten through eighth grade, “shop” for Christmas presents for their families.

Once again, thanks to everyone at Christ Church who contributed to our gift drive. Because of your generosity we were able to collect many gifts, as well as $1,200 in cash. Our own “super shopper,” Luann Skrivseth, was then able to turn that money into 120 additional gifts for children and their families. We’re grateful to be able to support Plymouth Christian Youth Center and this wonderful program for children in our community.

—Pastor Haaland
Christ Church Cookie Bake
Fifty containers of cookies were lovingly mixed, rolled, baked, and decorated by Christ Church volunteers with the mission to raise $500 for Meals on Wheels.

Baking in the church kitchen started before Thanksgiving and was completed in time for cookie distribution on Sunday 14 December. Mission accomplished.

Thank you to the organizers—MariLu Peters, Rita Schoenike, and Karen Woestehoff—and to the bakers and buyers. Merry Christmas!

Stewardship Update
Thanks to all who participated in Christ Church Lutheran’s fall 2014 stewardship campaign “Sharing the Light.” This congregation is blessed with generous people who, this year as in years past, are committed to participating in God’s ministry to the neighborhood and the world through Christ Church Lutheran.

We celebrated our congregation in fine style with a stewardship brunch on Sunday 9 November, with over one hundred people in attendance (see photo below). It was a wonderful opportunity to rejoice and reflect together on what this congregation means to us and why we support it while enjoying a delicious meal prepared by Joanne Seltz, Mary Bode, and many others. Thanks also to the panelists who led us in our reflection: Pastor Carlson, Council President Bob Victorin-Vangerud, and Denise Morelock.

The total amount pledged for 2015 is $236,188. We are especially grateful to note that this year, forty households have increased their pledges for 2015. We are also excited to report that fourteen households made a pledge to Christ Church Lutheran for the first time this year.

Christ Church Lutheran is a diverse group of people, joined together by faith and called to shine forth the light of Christ. We are grateful to everyone who has committed to helping Christ Church share this light in 2015.

—Stewardship Committee

Naming and Claiming Your Strengths
A Morning Retreat at Christ Church
Saturday 21 February, 9:00am–12:30pm

Is there anything more satisfying than doing something that you’re proud of, you’re good at, and you enjoy? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you could live that way all the time? While that’s not possible all the time, if you haven’t taken time to explore these questions, you may be less likely to know your strengths and be deliberate about using them.

Christ Church is delighted to again sponsor this experience of Dependable Strengths, led by Dick Bruesehoff. Together we’ll explore the gifts and strengths we each have demonstrated in our day-to-day lives. All ages—younger and older—are welcome. All you need to bring is yourself and your own life story.

Breakfast will be provided. For more information, please contact Pastor Haaland.
We are sad to announce the recent death of architect and friend Steven B. Edwins, principal of SMSQ Architects in Northfield. He was seventy-one years old. Steve and others in his office consulted with this congregation on a number of building issues, including the design and creation of our family-friendly, accessible main floor restroom. A teacher at Saint Olaf College, Steve also brought classes to tour our church. He specialized in church architecture and historic preservation. A celebration of his life was held at Saint John’s Lutheran Church in Northfield this past Thursday. Pastor Carlson and others from Christ Church Lutheran attended and expressed the gratitude of this church community for his good work. Rest eternal grant him, O God, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Pick-Up Christmas Pageant 2014
Lectionary Readings
January 2015

Sunday 4 January
Epiphany of Our Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday 11 January
Baptism of Our Lord
Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

Sunday 18 January
Second Sunday after Epiphany
1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

Sunday 25 January
Third Sunday after Epiphany
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Upcoming Educational Forums
Sundays 11:15am

4 January
Epiphany Sunday
No Forum

11 January
Special Congregational Meeting
On this day the congregational will gather in a special meeting to vote on launching the “Second Century Campaign”—a capital campaign to raise funds for a new organ, important building projects, and giving to the wider community.

18 January
Sacramental Practices at Christ Church, Part 1
Description below.

25 January
Sacramental Practices at Christ Church, Part 2
Over the course of these two Sundays, the pastors and cantors will lead a conversation about sacramental practices at Christ Church. What does it mean to say that “all are welcome” to receive bread and wine at Christ’s table? Why do we baptize both infants and adults? What does it mean to affirm the “real presence” of Christ in these practices, which are at the center of our life together? Come, learn, and join in this important conversation.

Upcoming Godly Play
Our Sunday School program for children ages 3–12 resumes on Sunday 11 January at 11:15am to 12:15pm.

Editor Wanted
The communication committee is seeking an editor for The Courier, a monthly communication of our rich life together at Christ Church Lutheran. Familiarity with InDesign is helpful. If you are considering this volunteer position, contact Pastor Carlson.

Orthodox icon of the Baptism of Jesus Christ
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<td>MLK, Jr. Day Building Closed</td>
<td>7:00 PM Exec. Board 7:30 PM Council</td>
<td>10:00 AM Arts</td>
<td>7:00 PM Choir</td>
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<td>Jason Bergquist</td>
<td>Lynne Larson</td>
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<td>Gary Wahlstrom</td>
<td>Melody Pauling</td>
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<td>Lyman Mattill</td>
<td>Gene Bruss</td>
<td>DeNae Lagerquist</td>
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<td>Simo Sarkanen</td>
<td>Jason Bergquist</td>
<td>Jan Radloff</td>
<td>Phyllis Mattill</td>
<td>Bob Davis</td>
<td>Jeff Weispfenning</td>
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<td>Mary Bode</td>
<td>Lucille Buelow</td>
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<td>February 1</td>
<td>Jason Bergquist</td>
<td>Sarah Brunsvold</td>
<td>Chuck Merrell</td>
<td>Phyllis Mattill</td>
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Volunteer Schedule - 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Worship Services - 9:30 a.m.