

Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor David Eisenhuth

Christmas extends for a full 12 days, ending with the coming of the Magi to the Infant Jesus. Their visit is known as an epiphany, which means “showing forth.” The first visitors to the creche were Jewish shepherds, poor men ostracized from polite society by their profession. (Think: smelly sheep!) The Magi or Wise Men came from a distant land and were Gentiles. They also had the means to undertake a trip, to find out what the appearance of a star in the sky really meant. They were told upon visiting King Herod in Jerusalem that a king was to be born in Bethlehem, and so the star led them there. Their visit may actually have been some time after the birth, since Matthew records that they visited a “house.”

We also don't know very much about them, although church tradition has sketched a fanciful portrait of them, giving them names and assigning to them color. In any case, what is important is that they came and offered their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold represents the crown of a king, frankincense was used at the temple as a sign of prayer ascending to the Father. It was a very precious commodity. Myrrh is a spice used for anointing the dead—a reference to Jesus's death on the cross.

Our celebration of the Epiphany on Sunday, January 5, will begin with the chalking of the doors upstairs and downstairs with this sign: 2+0+C+M+B+2+0. It's the year with the initials of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Remember, the names are not given in the biblical account. Epiphany is the beginning of a new year in Christ. By entering our worship space under this sign on the door, we ask for the wisdom of Christ to know the truth, and upon leaving under the sign, we ask for the courage to be witnesses to the Gospel.

The church year is divided into two parts. The first six months represent the “Year of Our Lord,” and record the important events in the life of Jesus. The church year begins on the First Sunday in Advent. The second six months, beginning with the coming of the Holy Spirit on

Pentecost, lead us through the story of the Apostolic Church, where faith grows and people embrace the new message of hope and peace.

In tune with this compressed life of Jesus, we celebrate Jesus's birth and the visit of the Magi, and the following week skip over 30 years to Jesus's first public appearance at his baptism at the hands of his relative, John. On this day we usually renew our baptismal vows, but this year we will have an actual baptism at the 11 a.m. service. Wait and see.

Following the Baptism of Our Lord, we enter the season of growth, wherein this compressed life of Jesus, he calls disciples, teaches, preaches, and heals people. The color of this season is appropriately green. The length of the season is determined by the date of Ash Wednesday, which itself is determined by the date of Easter.



SUNDAY, JANUARY 5—EPIPHANY SUNDAY

Regular Worship Schedule

8:45 a.m. Praise Service in Fellowship Hall
11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

Annual Twelfth Night Concert

5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, featuring the
Captial Carillon Handbell Choir
in a Program of Seasonal Music and Readings

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Community Response to Outreach

June Habeck Holler

PRAYERS SUBMITTED BY OUTREACH GUESTS

Each year when Thanksgiving boxes are distributed, Carol Brashears and her team of volunteers give our community recipients an opportunity to fill out a prayer request as they leave. TLC members then pray for these people. Here are two examples of what we have received:

This is the first time I have had to ask for help and it's very hard. This is not really a prayer but a thank you because I did not believe I was about to lose my home that I worked very hard and something happened. So thank you. God bless you. Love, Taylor & Eric.

I pray to love God and I hope He loves me and everybody else. I hope, I hope. That's what I want to say.



with Catherine Feaga, DO, a family practice physician, and Kezia Ellison, MD, a Meritus family medicine resident, set up tables of food prepared for our outreach guests, using provisions provided to us by the Maryland Food

Bank. To taste and learn how to make healthy recipes with ingredients from the Food Pantry, guests were shown the products before use (in this case lentils, pork loin, rice, green peppers, peas), the recipes to follow, and then an opportunity to sample the dishes, which included lentil soup, lentil tacos, lentils and rice, pork stew, pork roast, and roasted peppers.

The result was wonderful warm samplings, appreciative guests, and a desire to continue this collaboration in 2020. Thanks to Tim, Jeff, and the team at Meritus for making the sharing of food with families more practical, healthy, and meaningful.

LETTER FROM GRATEFUL SCHOOL STAFF

June 2019

Dear Carol, Jeff, and volunteers of Trinity Lutheran Church,

At the end of another school year, we are taking time to reflect back and thank members of a community who have supported our students' needs. When communities and schools work together, students are more successful!

Eastern Elementary staff members are beyond appreciative of all the services that Trinity provided this past year to make our school a better place! We thank you for weekly nutritious Micah's food bags and the turkeys and Thanksgiving food boxes for our students and families in need. Thanks too for the testing mints and all the prize incentives for students who receive them for showing respect, readiness, and responsibility.

The generous support from individuals like you made it possible for our school to better meet the needs of our students and families. Again, thank you! You truly made a difference! Looking forward to continuing our partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Mannick, School Family Liaison

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Picking up a bag of lentils offered at our Food Pantry, the woman asked us, "How do I eat this?"

Often preparation of fresh foods given us by our local grocery is also questioned. So Tim Higgins (a dietitian, nutritionist, and chef at Meritus Medical Center) and Jeff Reed presented a three-day program at our Food Pantry, "Cooking for the Seasons," this past November. Tim, along

ON THE MOVE

As the number of hungry grows and as TLC volunteers continue to age, the Outreach Team, in collaboration with the Property Team, determined new room assignments to allow easier access to the tons of food moved into and around the church for distribution. Food that had been stored two hallways away from the Food Pantry is now more available to staff, located in Jeff's old office next to the Food Pantry. Jeff is down the hall next to the Literacy Council Room. Thanks to all who helped make the moving possible during the holiday break!

Also, many thanks to Ed and Jane Drawbaugh for putting new flooring over the asbestos tiles of the Food Pantry. It is a cleaner, safer, and padded(!) surface for volunteers to use.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Food Pantry needs cereal, chicken noodle soup, boxed desserts, and crackers. The Clothing Bank needs towels, blankets, sheets, toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, and shampoo.

CONSIDER THIS

"And this is it. This is the life we get here on earth. We get to give away what we receive. We get to believe in each other. We get to forgive and be forgiven. We get to love imperfectly. And we never know what effect it will have for years to come. And all of it. . . all of it is completely worth it."—Nadia Bolz-Weber, Lutheran minister

From the Organ Bench

Pastor Greg Shook

Dear Flock,

Composer Jean Sibelius noted, “Music begins where the possibilities end.” Nelson Mandela said, “Music is a great blessing. It has the power to elevate and liberate us. It sets people free to dream. It can unite us to sing with one voice.” Such is the value of music. Martin Luther offers us this: “Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.”

If you had to sum up what music means to you in a quote, what would you offer? I’ll bet that more often than not, you can define what music means to you by emotion more than words.

There have been many wonderful musical experiences for me over the past year, and I wanted to spend some time highlighting them.

The Parish Choir continues to be a bright spot for me. They are dedicated, work hard, and continue to serve and provide wonderful music on a weekly basis for our traditional worship service. They are a wonderful musical family for me and for our congregation. It is through their spirit and spunk that they continue to attract new members. A blessing, for sure.

The Joyful Noise outreach project has been a true joy. I remember years ago an Oldsmobile commercial that had the slogan, “This is not your father’s Oldsmobile.” Well, this is certainly not the children’s choir that we’ve all been used to having in our churches! Sometimes trying, sometimes frustrating, sometimes new and interesting . . . but always rewarding, always appreciated, and certainly spirited and Spirit-filled. The outreach is appreciated by the staff at the Boys and Girls Club, especially the staff at Elgin Station where we meet. Personally, I am grateful to Jane Drawbaugh, Marty Blake, Kathy King, and Barb Jones for their support and participation with the children. The children have finally started to respond positively, thanked us after the Christmas program, and even introduced us to their parents. Another blessing.

The organ project was finished up just before Christmas week. Peter Luley & Associates from Pittsburgh was chosen to undertake the project and they accomplished the task professionally and with great aplomb. The console was gutted inside, a new solid-state system to drive the organ was installed, and soon we will be scheduling some programs and projects to celebrate the renovation. Another blessing.

The Bach Festival was successful in March 2019 with local organists. In March 2020, the program will be part of the organ rededication year and will feature organists,



instrumentalists, and choral groups.

Our annual Twelfth Night Concert featured the Capital Carillon Handbell Choir in a program of seasonal music and readings.

Our Jazz Vespers and Taizé services have been successful and welcoming for our Tri-state communities. Hopefully we can add a few solemn vespers services for additional variety of music and worship.

The Choral Department of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts continues to use our church for their performances and choral workshops. We were so privileged to co-host the Schola Cantorum from Westminster Choir College this past year for an all-day workshop and concert.

Hagerstown Choral Arts continues to use our church for their concerts. Music To Be Cool is already in the works for a Summer 2020 concert series, which will once again include the Maryland Wind Festival.

We are indeed blessed with many musical offerings here at Trinity. If you’ve missed some (or all) of them, you have another year of musical offerings to enjoy. Watch upcoming Trinity Newsletters and Mini-Messengers for updates on future musical blessings to share. If you would like to sponsor a worship service, vespers service, or concert, please see Pastor Greg or Andy Wallace.

Old Testament scholar and theologian Walter Bruggemann offers these words:

We are people who must sing you, for the sake of our lives.

You are a God who must be sung by us, for the sake of your majesty and honor.

And so we thank you,

for lyrics that push past our reasons,

for melodies that break open our given,

for cadences that locate us home, beyond all our safe places,

for tones and tunes that open our lives beyond control and our futures beyond despair.

We thank you for the long parade of mothers and fathers who have sung you deep and true;

We thank you for the good company of artists, poets, musicians, cantors, and instruments that sing for us and with us, toward you.

We are witnesses to your mercy and splendor;

We will not keep silent . . . ever again. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Pastor Greg

Twelfth Night

Mark your calendars for 5 p.m., Sunday, January 5. The Capital Carillon Handbell Choir, under the direction of Karrick Baird, will return for our annual Twelfth Night program that will include seasonal carol arrangements, readings, and organ and instrumental music. Invite some friends to join you to get the New Year started with joyful music! The concert is free. A free-will offering will be received.

JAN 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01	02	03	04
			NEW YEARS DAY OFFICE CLOSED	6:30pm Praise Band		
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
EPHRAIM 8:45am Praise Worship 10am Sunday School 11am Trad. Service 5pm 12 th Night Concert	1pm Parish Life 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm Bible Study	10am Bible Study 1:30am Sr. Ministry 7pm Property	MINI-MESSINGER ARTICLES DUE 8:30pm Civitan Karaoke 6:30pm Christian Ed 7:30pm Parish Choir	6:30pm Praise Band		10am Worship and Music
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:45am Praise Worship 10am Sunday School 11am Trad. Service 5:30 Trinity Tasters Potluck	NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE 8:30pm Civitan 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm Bible Study	10am Bible Study 6:30pm Mutual Min. 6:30pm Personnel	MINI-MESSINGER ARTICLES DUE 6pm Crochet Group 7:30pm Parish Choir	5:30pm Exec Team 6:30pm Praise Band		10am Lay Visitation
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:45am Praise Worship 10am Sunday School 11am Trad. Service	MILK DAY	10am Bible Study 6:30pm Council	MINI-MESSINGER ARTICLES DUE 7:30pm Parish Choir	6:30pm Praise Band		
26	27	28	29	30	31	
8:45am Praise Worship 10am Sunday School 11am Trad. Service	7pm Boy Scouts	10am Bible Study	MINI-MESSINGER ARTICLES DUE 7:30pm Parish Choir	7p Jazz Vespers	Council Retreat	

Trinity Tasters

Scarlett Michael

Are you interested in good food and good conversation with good people? Well then, we're opening up Trinity Tasters just for you! We'll be meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, January 12, in Fellowship Hall to broaden the Tasters groups.

Our goal is to meet for dinner once a month in small groups, and hopefully include all of Trinity! On January 12, we'll start with a potluck meal—remember the good food with good folks? Sign up sheets are available in Fellowship Hall and in the Narthex. Please sign up—you'll get to know fellow church members even better. It's always a fun evening.

Questions? Contact Scarlett Michael at (301) 800-6666.



January Birthdays

* Under 10 years

** Over 75 years

- 1 Trudy Fox**
- 2 Julie Hammond
Andrew Higgins
- 3 Cinda Toms
- 4 Helen Ridenour**
Jeanne Riley
- 5 Bob Winebrenner
- 7 Inge Dudda**
Hunt Hardinge, III
- 8 Frederick Kreiger, III
- 10 Scott Minnich, Sr.
- 13 John Mills
- 14 Sarah Whitmore
- 15 Kevin Brashears
Mike Markle
- 18 Carol Brashears
- 19 Deborah Kelso
- 24 Virginia Martin
- 26 Laura Reed
- 26 George Lemen**
- 28 Cheryl Hershey
- 29 Karen Spessard
- 31 Cheyenne Little
Barbara Smith**

Micah's Backpack

Carol Brashears

Once again we will send boxes of Valentines Day cards home with students in their Micah's Backpacks. Children love sending and receiving Valentines in their classroom. We welcome boxes of at least 15 or more Valentines cards, so that our Micah's children may have cards to share. Please choose cards that could be used by girls or boys, since we do not have the ability to make sure the Valentines will go to a specific gender.

We will need the cards by February 2, so they can be packed and given to them the week before Valentine's Day. This way they can prepare them for their class.

Place the cards in the boxes provided in both Fellowship Hall and the Narthex. We are up to close to 70 students, so we will need lots of boxes of Valentines cards.

Thank you for your support of this project!

Brunch and Learn

Jeanette L. Brill

Meritus Medical Center's Spiritual Care Department hosts educational sessions for faith leaders, healthcare providers, and members of the wider community on the third Thursday of each month, from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. at the Parish Nursing Conference Room, 1799 Howell Road, Hagerstown. On January 16, 2020, the speakers will be Evelyn Kloos and Lori Sprecher, on the topic of caring for families dealing with miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss.

The program and refreshments are fee, but an RSVP is required. Please RSVP to Jeanette Brill at (301)790-8296 or jeanette.brill@meritushealth.com by January 10, 2020.

January Anniversaries

- 6 Chad & Carrie Brashears

Trinity Lutheran Church
15 Randolph Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 www.tlchag.org

Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages at 9:55 a.m.
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Food Pantry and Clothing Bank: (301)733-5651
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Washington County Literacy Council: (301)739-4208
Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

