

The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Submissions 15th of the month
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Seasonal Variety

**Then [Jesus] led them out as far as Bethany,
and, lifting up his hands,
he blessed them.**

**While he was blessing them,
he withdrew from them
and was carried up into heaven.**

(LUKE 24:50-51, NRSV)

As I write this article we are in the middle of the ebb and flow of spring weather. On one day it is sunny and bright enough to get a sunburn while the next day it is windy, cold, and you are protecting your head from little round nubbins of hail.

Seasons, especially spring, are like that. As a society we have divided up the year into four seasons, and yet as we all know there is great variety within each of those quadrants. The seasons of the church year are similar in this way to the meteorological seasons. Sometimes we wish they were shorter or longer. We have favourite seasons. And, like this spring, seasons have variety within them.

The Easter season is fifty days long, which takes us from the Sunday of the Resurrection through to the Day of Pentecost. Within this season our Bible readings take us from the stories of discovering the empty tomb, to the formation of the early church, through to the Spirit descending on the believers in Jerusalem. The Season of Easter also contains the festival of the Ascension of Our Lord.

This festival is one of my favourites of the church year because it offers some variety to this season. Since Easter morning we have been rejoicing in Jesus' physical presence after he emerged from the tomb. But now, at this ascension moment, Jesus is not here.

He is not here, but his presence remains. As we are told a cloud took him out of sight, we may be reminded of all the times in Israel's history where the cloud is not a sign of going away, but a sign of God's presence. The promise to Noah is that a rainbow will appear in the sky among the clouds. The pillar of cloud leads the Israelites in their Exodus. The Lord comes to Moses in a thick cloud. Or at the dedication of the temple, the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

On May 18th this year, the day of the Ascension of our Lord, pause and look to the clouds. And remember that because of the acts that take place during this Easter season, because of the resurrection, and because of the ascension, we know that Christ's presence is with us.

Pastor Jordan Smith

MAY CALENDAR

SUNDAY MAY 7

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Service
Pastor Hilla Lahtinen (In-person & Zoom)

WEDNESDAY MAY 10

7:15 p.m. Council Meeting

FRIDAY MAY 12

10:00-11:30 a.m. Bible Class (Zoom)

SUNDAY MAY 14

12:00 noon Service of the Word
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

THURSDAY MAY 18

7:30 p.m. Worship & Music Meeting

SUNDAY MAY 21

12:00 noon Service of the Word
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

FRIDAY MAY 26

10:00-11:30 a.m. Bible Class (Zoom)

SUNDAY MAY 28 (DAY OF PENTECOST)

12:00 noon Service of the Word
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

Zoom Link to EPIPHANY LUTHERAN

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09)

pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09
Meeting ID: 989 080 0583 Passcode: 095565

Or by phone following the prompts:

+1 647 374 4685 Canada

Meeting ID: 989 080 0583 Passcode: 095565

Scent Free Sanctuary

Please refrain from wearing scented products to church. Sensitive noses thank you.

THANK YOU

Epiphany members wish to thank Pastor Jordan for volunteering to lead the worship service on Sunday April 23, his week off, due to Pastor Hilla's absence because of illness.



COUNCIL NOTES ~ APRIL 2023

- Our financial position remains stable; we thank Nalini Badley, our Treasurer for her timely reports.
- The property at Epiphany is in a "status quo" position (maintained and operational) now while the Visioning Committee works on the next step in our future planning process.
- Pastor Jordan makes membership visits; please contact him or leave a message if you would like to connect. Pastor Jordan also visits Livita Parkway Retirement Residence in Pickering, which may become a new community connection for Epiphany.
- Denise Dennis will take over Stewardship; many thanks to Geoff Crewe for his many valuable and thoughtful contributions
- The Worship and Music Committee is planning for the next church season.
- Next meeting: May 10, 2023

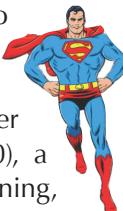


I have a question for you:

What is your superpower? Not everyone, I suspect, has considered the possibility of having a superpower. Is that because you don't believe you have one? Or because you think a superpower is just an imaginary quality from comic books and movies?

Well, truth be told, there are quizzes available that can help you determine your superpower. (I took a couple of those quizzes and, curiously, the result each time was the same. I wonder if you can guess my superpower?) Of course, this presumes everyone has some kind of superpower, which begs the question: how do you recognize a superpower in someone? One person quipped: I am a mother...what's your superpower? In another example, one person remarks, "I don't know how you persist in being so stubborn." "Oh," answers the other, "it's a superpower; I was bitten by a radioactive mule."

Kidding aside, I think most of us associate superpowers with fictional superheroes who choose to use those powers to defend we humans.



Some of the more familiar are Superman (1938) from the planet Krypton; he has super speed and super strength. The Flash (1940), a

regular guy, was struck by lightning, who, when he recovered was left

with super speed. Spiderman (1962), another earthly man, was bitten by a radioactive spider that gave him extraordinary spider-like powers.



Wonder Woman (1941) is a demigod, a daughter of Zeus, from a secluded island and



who has super speed and endurance. The Black Panther (1966), also from a secret and isolated place, possesses speed and endurance. More recently, the Power Rangers (1990s), are a teen group that possesses the power of strength and agility. The various superpowers of these characters may be

attached to them because of their place of origin, or, if you will, because they are aliens. For other characters



with superpowers, surviving a catastrophic accident leaves them with an extraordinary ability. Some act individually, and some, like the Power Rangers, work as a team to amplify their superpower. Does any of this sound like you?

Characters with superpowers have a long history in human culture. Think about the mythological Greek and Roman gods like Zeus and Poseidon or Jupiter and Neptune. These ancient gods possessed fantastical abilities, but they were still imperfect: think of Achilles, invulnerable except for his heel. And like these gods, the comic book characters are similar: they have special powers, and enemies, and must choose to use their powers to act for or against mankind.



If you choose to act against humans, you are dubbed an archenemy or a nemesis. Many archenemies also have a superpower, but it has been subverted to selfish and destructive ends. It's a bit like an alter ego, the shadow that haunts the superhero.

Psychology explains the appeal of these extraordinary men and women: besides their very cool costume, it's their zeal, their unending efforts to put things in order and dole out justice that enthralls us. According to psychologists, this appeal is universal, across time, across cultures, and across generations. The superpower is a way to imaginatively gain control over the chaos or imbalance that exists in our world, to improve man's existence on earth. Whether the battle is external or internal, superpowers are always focussed on very real situations and conditions in our everyday lives.

Let me suggest a relatable sort of exploration of superpowers in our readings today. From the Old Testament reading [1 Kings 19] I see the prophet Elijah acting with his God-given superpower. He must leave the security of the mountain – his home planet, his lair – to secure the justice that God has in mind for two kingdoms, Aram and Israel. Also, to ensure there will be a reliable voice for God, Elijah anoints Elisha as his successor – hands over the cape so to speak. Elijah carefully puts everything



in order by ensuring the chaos on earth is reduced with good government and a new messenger in Elisha.

So, how does all of this relate to us? We look to stories of heroes with superpowers to help us understand ourselves, to give us opportunities to experience emotions, to escape, and in some cases, even reach an epiphany. One psychologist, Dr. Travis Langley, has made a study of characters with fictional superpowers and what they tell us about ourselves. He believes the importance of these stories is to connect us with one another through the story of overcoming. Ultimately, he says, the story brings us together for a common mission with a common message of hope, especially in a time of exceptional diversity and to help us explore every facet of our psychological lives. And we all have stories to tell, from our trip here today, to something deeply impressed in our memory like buying a house or meeting a celebrity. Or consider your shared stories of immigration, of building Epiphany. And in all honesty, these are stories about us, about fallible human beings.

By extension, if superheroes are reflections of our inner selves, whether a Greek god, or a more modern superhero, then they can't be perfect beings. In the stories of their challenges, we can expect to see our own foibles, weaknesses, and struggles. Yet do we also see ourselves with a superpower?

With a superpower, you have a sort of armour, or protection against our very human weaknesses; a superpower is intended to help with our peace, both within and without. It's a specialized tool to help us live our best life; because remember, there is always a villain, a nemesis in these stories. The villain is the mirror image of the hero, a reversal of sorts, and we carry both within us. In the reading from Galatians [5: 16-18], it tells

us quite clearly that these two aspects of ourselves can war against one another and make life quite challenging.

Within each of us is the capacity for self-indulgence (of many sorts), the shadow part of ourselves, which, to overcome, requires a superpower to keep the shadow in check.

So, let me ask again: do you have a superpower? I think you do...and you might think I know this because of my supposed superpower. I guess now is a good time to tell you that by all accounts (those online quizzes), my superpower is: telepathy...mind reading! According to the "experts" on the internet – you know, those *highly* reliable sources (wink, wink) – I have an uncanny ability to know what people are thinking and feeling. You will be assured to learn, as I was, that I am unlikely to use this power for any evil intention.

If I turn on my telepathy, my mind-reading powers, I can see, feel, and perceive all the superpowers among



you and within you. I've learned some of this from the personal stories we share with one another. Importantly, though, I know that our superpowers are not from an alien planet or from surviving a catastrophic event. Instead, as someone has said, a superpower isn't a skill, it's a perspective. It's a perspective on our two separate aspects, or as Paul suggests to the Galatians, a perspective on our internal selves, our warring psyches: they are both there. But first, consider their origin: our superpowers are gifted to us through the love of Christ, and they are of the **most powerful** type known: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Yet, as Paul cautions, we need to exercise these God-given superpowers and "not use our freedom [from chaos] as an opportunity for self-indulgence," like the "archnemesis" side of ourselves would, but rather, create a different kind of life.

archnemesis

The stories of superheroes bring us out of ourselves, yes, to examine ourselves and our circumstances, and to connect us with something larger than ourselves, something universal. Interestingly, it is not without seeing our superheroes' struggles and triumphs, those battles with our personal archnemesis; through these we can see elements of our own struggles, but also the hope this engenders for our own triumphs.

I have suggested that each of you has a superpower, which, by extension, would make you a superhero. Did I read your mind to figure that out? No, of course not. Instead, I believe I can call each of you a superhero because, to paraphrase Disney's character, Zeus, a superhero isn't measured by his superpower, but by his heart.



Your heart, and mine too, if I dare, is filled by the power of love, the SUPERPOWER of love that is given to us freely through Christ. By listening to one another, hearing the stories that connect us, we can discern that superpower within each other, so that when we act individually or together we can achieve, well, MORE love. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, you will be able

to harness your superpower – it's your God-given gift, and you are meant to use it. We are meant to use our superpower to just...love...more. Amen.



Denise Dennis
June 30, 2019



The Bible and the Coal Basket

The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains of Kentucky with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible. His grandson who wanted to be just like him tried to imitate him in any way he could.

One day the grandson asked, "Papa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?"

The Grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water."

The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You will have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again.

This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was "impossible to carry water in a basket," and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough," and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See Papa, it's useless!"

"So you think it is useless?" the old man said. "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean. "Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out. That is the work of God in our lives. To change us from the inside out and to slowly transform us into the image of His son."

Take time to read a portion of God's word each day, and remind a friend by sharing this story.

Author Unknown

COUNCIL/COMMITTEE REPS

CHAIRPERSONS	(C) COUNCIL MEMBER
Council Chair	Geoff Crewe (C)
Council Vice-Chair	Denise Dennis (C)
Councillor-at-Large	Greg Furan (C)
Councillor-at-Large	Gord Munro (C)
Education Committee	Open
Finance Committee	Geoff Crewe (C)
Property Committee	Open
Seniors Group	Ute Wentzel
Stewardship Committee	Denise Dennis (C)
Worship & Music	Marg Crewe
Visioning Chair	Gordon Vollmer (C)

COMMITTEE REPS/LIAISON

Advertising Coordinator	Nalini Badley
AMMS Liaison	Ron Heino
Council Secretary	Margaret Fler (C)
ELW	Sigrid Engler
Envelope Secretary	Sigrid Engler
Mutual Ministry	Geoff Crewe (C)
Spiritual Society Liaison	Fred Kilian
Treasurer	Nalini Badley

**"Live Simply, Love Generously, Care Deeply,
Speak Kindly, Leave the Rest to God."**

TREASURER'S REPORT

MARCH 2023	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$2,350.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	1,660.31		
AMMS PARSONAGE PROPERTY TAX	2,746.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL UTILITIES	1,385.10		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	409.07		
GIC INTEREST RECEIVED	300.00		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$12,925.48	\$15,451.48	(\$2,526.00)
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$30,152.96	\$33,165.89	(\$3,012.93)
LESS AMMS FEB UTILITIES RECEIVED IN MARCH			(\$1,887.86)
NET INCOME FOR 2023			(\$4,900.79)
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT MARCH 31, 2023			20,238.10
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT MARCH 31, 2023			132,874.54
CIBC GIC 1 YEAR INVESTMENT TO MARCH 2024			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer