

The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

20 Old Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 3J5

416-284-5922 • www.epiphanylutheranchurch.ca

Pastor Jordan Smith • 416-356-3505 • revjordansmith@gmail.com

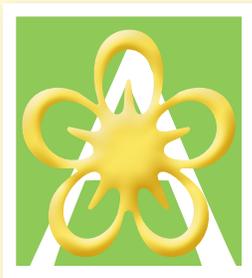
NO. 652 • APRIL 2023

Submissions 15th of the month
Layout: Sigi Sommer 416-264-9929
sigisommer@rogers.com

The Tradition of Celebrating

... So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

(MATTHEW 28:8-10, NIV)



As we approach Holy Week and then Easter Sunday, many families and households are making a very important decision. What will be the central part of our Easter Meal? Does your table usually center around a spiral ham, or a turkey, or maybe even lamb? Amid all the tasks that need to get done for the holiday celebration, choosing the main part of the meal is a decision that considers family tradition and the willingness to accept how much work the cook is prepared to do this year.

Three years ago, Easter was, in some ways, cancelled. For those who gather around the dinner table, or collect Easter eggs, or sing their favourite hymns in church, none of these activities took place in their normal way. Life looked different. Yet there was much that was still the same. As I looked through my photo library of pictures from April 2020, I saw images which showed many of the standard Easter traditions, just with less extended family. As I try to remember what we were feeling on that Easter morning, I think it was a little bit like how Matthew describes the women after being told that Jesus has risen.

We were afraid. The original plan for everyone to stay at home for just two weeks was clearly going to take longer. Medications and preventative measures were not helping the situation. We did not know when we would next see our loved ones in-person. But in those days there was also joy. My family did more puzzles together. We talked on the phone with our extended family more than usual. For at least a brief time, the public celebrated our front-line workers. And in new ways, in homes around the world, we celebrated Christ's resurrection.

The Easter story cannot be understood without that mixture of fear and joy. If the disciples and the women going to the tomb are not afraid of what will come next for them after his death, then they will not be ready to clasp his feet when they meet the risen Lord. In our times of fear, we become more aware of those things that support us and keep us strong.

Three years ago, all our traditions were changed in many ways. Church buildings may have been empty, but the people who make up the church still proclaimed their Alleluias on Easter morning. As you and your family prepare for this year's Easter, may you once again find the opportunity to worship with your church community, celebrating that Christ is risen.

Pastor Jordan Smith

APRIL CALENDAR

PALM SUNDAY APRIL 2

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

MAUNDY THURSDAY APRIL 6

7:00 p.m. Service at Emmanuel Lutheran
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)
(See Emmanuel link below)

GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 7

10:00 a.m. German Good Friday Service
with Holy Communion
Guest Pastor Ilze Kuplens-Ewart (In-person)
7:00 p.m. English Good Friday Service
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 9

12:00 noon Holy Communion Service
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

THURSDAY APRIL 13

7:15 p.m. Council Meeting

FRIDAY APRIL 14

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

SUNDAY APRIL 16

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

SUNDAY APRIL 23

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

FRIDAY APRIL 28

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

SUNDAY APRIL 30

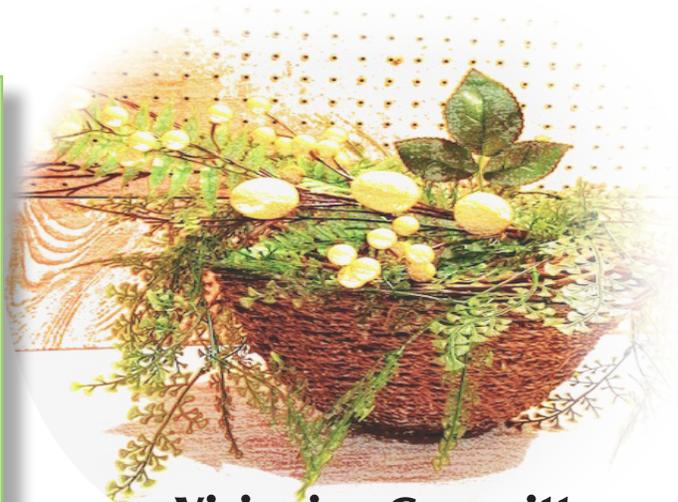
10:00 a.m. Lay Led Service (Zoom)

Zoom Link to EPIPHANY LUTHERAN

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

Zoom Link to EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84508884280?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84508884280?pwd=TC9ZMG1GWfhWNXISNUV6ZmhUS05QUT09)
[pwd=TC9ZMG1GWfhWNXISNUV6ZmhUS05QUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84508884280?pwd=TC9ZMG1GWfhWNXISNUV6ZmhUS05QUT09)
Meeting ID: 845 0888 4280 Passcode: 910257
Or by phone following the prompts:
+1 647 374 4685 Canada
Meeting ID: 845 0888 4280 Passcode: 910257



Visioning Committee

As discussed at the congregational Annual Meeting, February 26, 2023, we have had to change direction from going forward with Kindred Works for the redevelopment of the church property.

It was decided that it was in the best interest of the congregation, after various meetings with the Visioning Committee, Church council and discussions with our Synod advisor, Rev. Jennifer Hoover that we would enter into an agreement to explore the potential redevelopment of the property with our neighbours, The Estonian Relief Committee (ERC), operators of Ehatare.

This change was approved by Church council and a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March. The memorandum gives the ERC permission to formulate a redevelopment plan that includes the church property and provides Epiphany with a new church facility, including a worship area, meeting rooms, offices and any other space needs we feel necessary to continue our mission at this location.

Meetings will also be held with our current tenant, Absorbent Minds Montessori School, to discuss their space needs in the project.

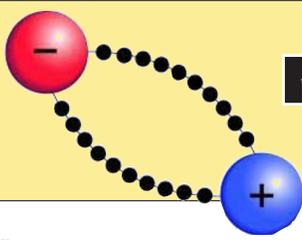
The ERC proposed uses include a long-term care facility, senior's retirement housing, health care services, food services, dining hall, meeting rooms and any other uses that would support ERC or ELC activity.

As stated, the initial agreement is non-binding, meaning that if Epiphany is not satisfied with the plan or its timing, we can terminate the agreement with no penalty. At the same time if ERC feels that a redevelopment is not feasible, they can terminate the agreement without penalty.

It is, however, hoped that this action will provide Epiphany with a workable plan that is acceptable to the congregation. The term of the agreement is 6 months with the ability to extend the agreement if we feel significant and acceptable progress has been made.

Please note that before any final decision is made, there will be a congregational meeting called that would lead to approval of a development plan, if the plan is acceptable to the congregation.

Gordon Vollmer



NEGATIVE GOOD?

MICAH 6: 1-8 • PSALM 15 • 1 CORINTHIANS 1: 18-31 • MATTHEW 5: 1-12

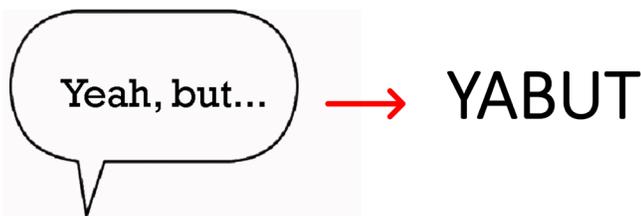
I was excited to learn we are reading the Beatitudes today, in no small part because my absolute favourite hymn, *Blest are They*, is based on this scripture in Matthew (5: 1-12). I am always moved by this hymn, so I'm taking this opportunity to figure out why it evokes such an emotional response from me. That said, this is a personal reflection that I hope it will resonate with you as well.

As I read and reread the four texts, I came across something unexpected. I noticed something in the readings that I will refer to as *Yabuts* and *Yands*. *Yabuts* suggest a dismal perspective on things, and admittedly may have come to mind because this past week was Blue Monday [January 16, 2023].



The third Monday of January, or "Blue Monday," is purported to be the most depressing day of the year. Almost 20 years ago now, Blue Monday was calculated by a psychologist to support an advertising campaign for a travel agency. The idea was to encourage winter holiday bookings that would, the company suggested, alleviate some of the misery now associated with Blue Monday. What began as a marketing gimmick (by a now defunct travel company) seems to have caught on in the public imagination. The reason, as explained by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, is that it rings true, especially in Canada: daylight is at a premium, nights are long and cold, holiday bills are arriving, resolutions may be broken.

Nevertheless, let me uncover those *Yabuts* I found. To be clear, this is a made-up "character," made from YEAH, or Yes, and BUT. In speech, and writing, and meaning, the positive YEAH is immediately retracted by the BUT. So, the *Yabut* effect is to negate, discount, or



disagree with what is being responded to. For example, "It's a lovely day." "*Yabut*, we know it won't last." Now, consider how Psalm 15 sets the standard for those

who would be in communion with God: these are folks who "lead a blameless life and do what is right... do not slander...do not evil to their friends... [or] cast discredit on a neighbour" (v. 2, 3).



Yabut, or YES, these are the prerequisites, BUT, if I'm honest, I'm afraid I often fail to do these things.

Then the Old Testament Micah reminds us that what the Lord requires is that we "do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God" (v. 8).



Yabut, despite my best intentions, I struggle to live in these ways. Paul, in his letter to Corinth points to those who are "wise...[or a] scribe...[or a] debater of this age" as being "made foolish" (V. 20).



Yabut, I have aspired to those ambitions! Even the beatitudes in Matthew's gospel describe, as one commentator puts it, "the ideal heart condition of a citizen of God's

kingdom" (Mary Fairchild). *Yabut*, I am often hard-pressed to live in any one of those states on any given day.

Now, what if we consider these readings from another perspective, and reconsider the **NEGATIVE ADVERTISING** vs **YABUT** *Yabuts* from the perspective of "negative advertising"? Unlike the made-up Blue Monday effect (that may ring true), some examples of "negative advertising" work because they don't shy away from the truth of the matter. Two good examples of this approach come from the automotive industry. The Volkswagen Beetle ads that first appeared in 1959 acknowledged the car as small, slow, ugly, and



uncomfortable in the back seat. That campaign increased sales by 385% over 7 years. The other example is from the car rental agency, AVIS. Their 1960s ads boasted about AVIS being number two in the rental business,



using this well-known status to declare they were working harder than the number one company. This campaign of turning a perceived negative

into a positive, made AVIS profitable for the first time in a decade. A marketing writer, Sarah Lybrand, cautions however, that so-called “negative advertising” must have a purpose, such as highlighting a feature, or informing, or assisting in some way; the result should be to reduce consumer alienation and improve trustworthiness.

Here’s how I think this applies to our four readings: these are texts that identify the truths or positive traits of what it takes to aspire to “membership in God’s family” (Psalm 15:1). Less like *Yabuts* and more like



“negative advertising,” one will hopefully find in these texts a way to be informed or assisted in turning a negative into a positive. “Negative advertising” doesn’t shy away from what seems like a less than favourable trait. It doesn’t suggest, as some ads do, that you or your life aren’t perfect, and their product can change that for you. Instead, we are encouraged to empathize and respond, in this case with our purchase of the service or product. So, perhaps where I found a *Yabut* might instead be pointing out truths, like we see in “negative advertising,” and it might allow us to see ourselves in a different light.

With that in mind, let’s reconsider Paul’s letter to those in Corinth (and us) using a translation from The Message. It reads this way: “Take a good look, friends,

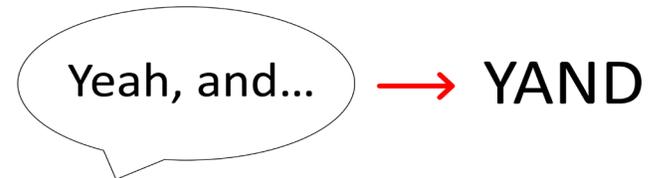
at who you were when you got called into this life. I don’t see many of “the brightest and the best” among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn’t it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these “nobodies” to expose the hollow pretensions of the “somebodies”?



That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. Everything that we have—right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start—comes from God by way of Jesus Christ. That’s why we have the saying, “If you’re going to blow a horn, blow a trumpet for God” (1 Corinthians 1: 26-31).

Well, I find this more helpful and hopeful: I’m not seeing those pesky *Yabuts*.

Well then, let me return to the Beatitudes. Each one speaks of a state of “blessedness” that is followed by Jesus’ promise of a future reward. As I said earlier, these ideals produce for me some worrisome *Yabuts*. Yet, how does this hymn that so beautifully iterates these verses from Matthew, move me to tears? Truly, though, they are tears of awe and deep joy. Perhaps it has something to do with that other made-up “character,” the *Yand*, made from YEAH, or Yes, with AND. This combination makes a declarative statement. It opens to possibilities! Using our weather example, it would be, “It’s a lovely day.” “Yand, let’s make the



most of it.” Let me share some similar examples from the Beatitudes using paraphrasing from Mary Fairchild and the scripture translation from The Message:

(Matthew 5: 5) *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

“You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. That’s



the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought.”

The meek are imitators of Christ who exemplifies gentleness and self-control.

Paraphrase: "Blessed are those who submit to God as Lord, [Yand] they will inherit everything he possesses."

(Matthew 5: 7) *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

"You're blessed when you care. [Yand] At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for."



We reap what we sow.

Paraphrase: "Blessed are those who show mercy through forgiveness, kindness, and compassion, for they will receive mercy."

(Matthew 5: 8) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. [Yand] Then you can see God in the outside world."



Outward righteousness can be seen by men, but inward holiness only God can see (MF).

Blest are they, the poor in spirit
Theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they, full of sorrow
They shall be consoled

*Rejoice and be glad!
Blessed are you; holy are you!
Rejoice and be glad!
Yours is the kingdom of God!*

Blest are they, the lowly ones;
They shall inherit the earth.
Blest are they who hunger and thirst,
They shall have their fill.

Refrain

Blest are they who show mercy
Mercy shall be theirs.
Blest are they, the pure of heart
They shall see God!

Refrain

Blest are they who seek peace
They are the children of God.
Blest are they who suffer in faith
The glory of God is theirs.

Refrain

Blest are you who suffer hate
All because of me.
Rejoice, be glad
Yours is the kingdom
Shine for all to see.

Refrain

So, where does this put us in my rumination over my favourite hymn? Well, I think we can agree that if there are *Yands* found in the scripture, then they can also be inferred in the verses of this hymn that faithfully repeats the Beatitudes in their given order. Interestingly, the hymn has a particular refrain that is repeated after every second beatitude: "Rejoice and be glad! Blessed are you; holy are you! Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God." That refrain speaks about being blessed in the ways described by each beatitude; and about

Blest are They: refrain

Rejoice and be glad!
Blessed are you; holy are you!
Rejoice and be glad!
Yours is the kingdom of God.



being holy or having a clean heart that God can see (Matthew 5: 8). It's tempting to see a *Yabut* or two here: *Yabut*, me blessed? *Yabut*, me holy? Significantly, that phrase in the refrain, "Rejoice and be glad," is related to the *Yand* in the last beatitude: "Yes, you may be reviled or persecuted for living the truth of Christ, [Yand] you can rejoice and be glad." However, there is more! The first "Rejoice and be glad" says I am blessed and holy. The second "Rejoice and be glad" in the refrain builds on the last *Yand* from verse 12: "Rejoice and be glad, [Yand] yours is the kingdom of God."



"Yours" is a possessive pronoun that refers to something that belongs to the one the speaker is addressing; we know from Matthew that this is Jesus speaking to each of us. So, the structure of this sentence is such that I hear this promise directed to me in a very personal way: Jesus is speaking, telling me, reassuring me, "The kingdom of God is YOURS."

This hymn's refrain is repeated five times, once after every verse, building in significance with each one. Interestingly, my emotions are mostly in check (perhaps because I am still sensing those *Yabuts*) until I get to the fifth and last verse. Here, for me, the *Yabuts* are absolutely obliterated because of the way the last verse puts things in perspective. I believe, for me, that unlike the *Yabuts*, and more like "negative advertising," there is the highlighting of a truth here. Although I am tempted to hang onto a *Yabut* or two from the previous stanzas, when I am told to "shine for all to see," (Matthew 5: 16)



it can only be understood one way. It must mean that for me to “shine” is to do so as myself, my flawed, striving self. Then, immediately following this revelation, that final refrain catches me in unexpected awe and wonder, emphasizing and driving home that



it is with this imperfect heart and mind that I am hearing Jesus’ promise and message of love spoken to me directly through

these words and music: “Denise, yours is the kingdom of God.” My heart expands, my throat catches, and tears well up from joy at the reassurance I hear each time.

It is reassuring, too, as Leslie Brandt says in his rewriting of Psalm 15 that “those who lovingly relate to God and fellowman will never be separated from the family of God.”

Let us rejoice and be glad! [Yand] Yours is the kingdom of God.

AMEN

**LOVE
GOD
LOVE
PEOPLE
REPEAT**

FAIRCHILD, MARY. “WHAT ARE THE BEATITUDES?” LEARN RELIGIONS, AUG. 25, 2020, LEARNRELIGIONS.COM/WHAT-ARE-THE-BEATITUDES-701505.

HTTPS://THECONVERSATION.COM/VOLKSWAGEN-CRISIS-BRAND-THAT-INVENTED-MODERN-ADVERTISING-IS-DENTED-48186

TREASURER’S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2023	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$2,925.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	0.00		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	128.68		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$7,128.68	\$9,898.37	(\$2,769.69)
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$17,227.48	\$17,714.41	(\$486.93)
PLUS AMMS FEB UTILITIES NOT YET RECVD			\$1,887.86
NET INCOME FOR 2023			\$1,400.93
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT FEBRUARY 28, 2023			23,214.89
CIBC INVESTOR’S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT FEBRUARY 28, 2023			136,843.82
CIBC GIC 1 YEAR INVESTMENT TO MARCH 2023			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer

 **Happy Easter, Happy Spring!**

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	Geoff Crewe (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



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