

# The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

**EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Submissions 15th of the month

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## The Waters of Life

**In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."**

(MARK 1:9-11, NRSV)

**T**he cold days of January, with memories of skating on frozen ponds and snowball fights outside our homes, hardly feels like the time of year to be thinking about baptism in the outdoors. Yet this is where our lectionary readings take us in the days after Epiphany. We move directly from Jesus' birth being revealed to the Magi and the Gentiles on to Jesus' baptism in the waters of the Jordan, and his identity as God's Son being revealed.

I think that our annual remembrance of Jesus' baptism is especially important for us who grew up in Lutheran churches because most of us don't have memories of our own baptisms to look back on. You were likely brought to the church as a young child, maybe only days old, and promises were made by your parents and godparents. That they would teach you how to live your life of faith. Each time we are fortunate to witness the baptism of yet another child we are reminded of an event that happened to us years earlier.

Mark's telling of Jesus' baptism reminds us that entering the water and then emerging is a powerful event. We may not have doves that descend on us or a voice from heaven offer a proclamation, but in each baptism that takes place today God is most certainly present. Martin Luther writes in the Large Catechism that "To be baptized in God's name is to be baptized not by human beings but by God himself. Although it is performed by human hands, it is nevertheless truly God's own act" (Concerning Baptism, par. 10).

As Jesus emerged from the waters and heard the voice of God, he was reminded and assured that his ministry was beginning and that he was God's Son. As we emerged from the waters of our baptism, we were assured that we are saved. The water that dripped off of our foreheads, or swirled around our bodies, is the sign that we cling to, a sign that we have been forever joined with God and prepared to enter into Christ's kingdom.

Very few of us will remember our baptism day, but on January 7th, when we hear of Jesus' baptism, we will be sprinkled with water from the font so that we may all remember that we are baptized, claimed by God, and loved by God's Son.

*Pastor Jordan Smith*

## 2024 JANUARY CALENDAR

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD (WHITE)  
12:00 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

### THURSDAY JANUARY 11

7:15 p.m. Council Meeting  
(In-person & Zoom)

### FRIDAY JANUARY 12

10:00-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (Zoom)

### SUNDAY JANUARY 14

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (GREEN)  
12:00 noon Holy Communion  
TBD (In-person & Zoom)

### SUNDAY JANUARY 21

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (GREEN)  
12:00 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Jordan Smith (In-person & Zoom)

### FRIDAY JANUARY 26

10:00-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (Zoom)

### SUNDAY JANUARY 28

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (GREEN)  
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](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

## VISIONING UPDATE

*The following is reprinted from an email sent on behalf of Gordon Vollmer for the Visioning Committee.*

I thought it might be helpful to provide everyone with a brief summary of the Visioning Committee's activity over the past few years, and how we got to where we are now.

The current Visioning Committee's work on a plan for the future of the congregation started 4 or 5 years ago. I know there have been other Visioning Committees, but the focus on an updated or new Vision Statement and congregational Core Values began in earnest in 2019.

Late in 2019 and through 2021, we worked with the Synod and Karen Bjerland, a Synod advisor, to arrive at Epiphany's Vision Statement and Core Values.

The Vision Statement and Core Values are there to guide us, and to provide a foundation for Epiphany to work towards a path that reflects the congregation's spirit or feelings towards our mission with existing members and outward to the community around us.

The congregation approved the following:

**Epiphany's Vision Statement** (*what it will be in the future*): A caring and inclusive Christian community, working to make a difference through prayer, worship and open engagement.

**Epiphany's Core Values** (*guiding behaviours and attitudes*): Epiphany's core value is love, which is expressed through grace, faithfulness, welcoming new people and ideas, social justice and stewardship.

Working on the Vision Statement and Core Values led Church Council, the Visioning Committee and various Town Hall congregational meetings to discuss the major issues within the congregation and the future direction of the congregation.

In the end, as everyone knows, the congregation is ageing, the church building needs repairs and, while Pastor Jordan is doing a great job, at some point we will still need to find a permanent replacement. All in all it was felt that we needed to come up with a plan to find a way to stabilize or grow the congregation within a building that would last – either through renovation, or redevelopment. All this within the context of our Core Values and Vision Statement.

Working with Karen, the next step was to come up with how we could resolve the physical issue of needing to repair or replace the church building. We settled on 3 scenarios – a Merged/Shared Ministry with other Lutheran congregations; work with our neighbours the Estonians

in their desire to expand their existing building, Ehatare with LongTermCare & Retirement Housing; work with a United Property Resource Corporation, a United Church sponsored organization, on a market apartment building with some affordable or subsidized units, market units and potentially seniors housing. As this process started, Karen Bjerland, unfortunately, needed to leave her position and we started working with Dr Mark Harris as our Synod support person. He continued to guide us through the options for the congregation's future and the potential property redevelopment.

After reviewing the various options and many meetings, including talking to other Lutheran congregations that were encountering some of the same issues, Dr Harris led us to the point in March 2022, when the congregation approved a redevelopment scenario for the church property that allowed church council to search for a development partner.

At that time our work focussed on two groups who could act as our development partner – Ehatare or the Estonian Relief Committee and UPRC – United Property Resource Corporation, now known as Kindred Works.

Going back in my files and reviewing congregational handouts and meeting summaries, as early as June 2021 there were discussions about seniors and LTC housing, and the pros and cons of working with Ehatare or UPRC (Kindred Works). This phase of the work ended with the Voters meeting in March 2022, when the Visioning Committee was asked to explore the potential redevelopment of the property, which could include a new worship space, an area to accommodate AMMS, the Montessori school, and potentially the construction of multi residential housing that could accommodate seniors, subsidized housing and/or long term care rooms.

Through 2022 we continued working with Dr Harris on better defining a redevelopment scenario. This phase ended in September 2022 when we agreed to work with Kindred Works. To move forward, Kindred Works was asked to provide a letter agreement for the congregation to sign outlining Kindred's services to the congregation and the responsibilities of Epiphany.

Unfortunately, it was at about this time that Dr Harris retired and we started working with a new Synod advisor, Jennifer Hoover.

With Jennifer we continued working on what we, as a congregation, needed to do and what we could do, all within the guidelines of the Core Values and Vision Statement. There were a series of internal meetings and discussions at Council and Visioning Committee and numerous meetings and discussions with Jennifer and Kindred Works.

In the end, we waited for Kindred to provide us with a Letter Agreement or contract, binding us together and outlining the steps to move forward. For unknown reasons, other than they were busy, Kindred did not provide a letter agreement.

In January 2023 we were again approached by our neighbour, the Estonian group. Given the lack of communication from Kindred Works, we discussed at Council and Visioning Committee how we could or should move forward. We met again with Kindred asking about the letter. Given no letter/no commitment from Kindred, in February 2023 the decision was made to go and try working with the Estonian group and a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) or letter agreement was signed in March 2023. We had given Kindred close to 6 months to prepare a letter. At the time Kindred was advised and understood the change. It seems they were just very busy and lacked the staff to handle all potential clients. It was left that we could go back to them if necessary.

The Estonian group or ERC began their work to first determine the level of support from the Province and City for a residential project that included LTC beds, retirement or seniors housing.

The concept was met favourably and ERC began investigating financial sources to pay for the development – provincial or city grants, loans, interest rate subsidies, rental rate subsidies etc. The MOU with the ERC was extended in September 2023 to December, 2023.

We currently receive progress updates monthly. It is a slow process, but there does appear to be some movement forward. Covid, the current interest rate market, inflation and the economy in general have not helped, but the demand for senior housing or LTC facilities continues to be strong.

Today, ERC continues to work with the provincial Ministry of Long Term Care and other groups responsible for LTC and Seniors Housing. There is a positive response. They have also met with municipal groups, including those responsible for planning and development and again received positive feedback. At the same time they have met with financial groups – banks and private lenders to obtain the necessary funds to build the project. Again slow, but positive progress.

At this point the ERC vision is to expand their existing number of LTC rooms and to provide senior or retirement residential units at market and/or subsidized rent. There could also be commercial space in the building for a drug store, doctors, physiotherapy, and perhaps a coffee shop.

AMMS, the Montessori school, has advised that they would remain in the development, expanding to at least double their current size.

And of course Epiphany would also be part of the new building with new worship, meeting, social and administrative space. It should be noted that whatever space we require would be paid for from proceeds we would receive based upon the value of our land. It could be an outright sale, land rent from a land lease or some other financial structure that recognizes or uses the value in our land parcel.

For example if the land allocated to ERC and the project is valued at \$5 million, and we need, say \$2,000,000 to build our new church, ERC would need to give us cash or some form of credit or trade in kind for the difference of \$3,000,000.

In other words, for a new worship facility Epiphany would need to trade a portion of the land's value to pay the development and construction costs. Given our current land value, this would still leave us with a considerable amount of funds for outreach programs, rent subsidy programs, grants, scholarships or other congregation approved uses.

Also, depending on how involved we want to be in the new facility, Epiphany could get involved in the ownership of the AMMS space in the building and receive rent or we could let ERC build and pay for the AMMS facility and collect all rent.

These are decisions left for when we have a better idea of whether or not we want to work with ERC or go in a different direction.

In terms of who would have access to the LTC rooms or Seniors / Retirement apartments it is our understanding that for the LTC units, tenancing is controlled by what is known as the LOCAL AREA HEALTH NETWORK here in Scarborough. The beds are allocated to the community at large, with no input from ERC, other than the potential opportunity for existing tenants in the retirement home be given priority to move into a LTC room. As long as funds or financial support comes from the Province or other government sources the home does not become an Estonian, Lutheran, German, Austrian or Scottish home. It is 100% community housing, with tenancing controlled by the province.

With respect to Seniors / Retirement housing, the owners and or managers of the property may exercise some control over tenancing. This could be based upon the funding sources or who is providing capital. It may be based upon a condition or guarantee of rooms to the group that is behind the funding. Funding could come from other ethnic groups, say Baltic or German, other community groups or the City of Toronto. If Epiphany would like to have input on who has access to apartments, we would need to provide funds or negotiate our involvement by making it a condition of letting ERC use our property for the development.

The same would happen if market rental units were to be built. Say if Kindred Works developed the property as a market building, market rental rates would be required to generate the funds needed to pay for the cost of construction and financing of the development with, and in Kindred's case, their desire that as many as 33% of the units are subsidized rental units and available to the market. Much of this depends on the source of funds and the funds needed to satisfy operating and financing costs and if the funds are from municipal or provincial sources these entities could have some say as to tenancing.

As everyone should be aware, there is no sale or development plan until there is a presentation to the congregation and the congregation has given their final approval of the redevelopment plan.

Any decision on the development and future use or tenancing would be part of the negotiation with ERC and could be a condition of the ongoing involvement of Epiphany with ERC.

As we near a decision it will become necessary for the congregation to work through what we want built, the size, the form, the design, the spaces we feel we need to operate and fulfill our worship and outreach needs to the community. This would include the worship area, offices, meeting rooms, social areas, kitchens, storage, parking etc. Some of these spaces could be shared with the other existing uses in the development, some space will be for our exclusive use.

So, the process has begun, but there is still a ways to go. If we were to have all permits, financing, design, planning and architectural work done by next year, with God's help, construction could begin by late 2024. We could arrive at a completed building, at the earliest, sometime in 2026.

There is much work ahead.

*Gordon Vollmer, on behalf of the Visioning Committee*



@reallyillusory, on Instagram

## German Worship Connections

We are happy to share opportunities for our German speaking members to worship and hear occasional sermons in your native tongue.

Pastor Katharina from St. George's in downtown Toronto will hold an occasional prayer and social gathering in Scarborough at the Schwabenclub. The next dates are scheduled for January 25 and March 21. Please speak to Ute Wentzel for more information.

Pastor Annika from Martin Luther Church has a weekly devotion that airs on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on CHLO Radio AM530 and which is also posted on their website.

Please follow these links if you wish to hear her devotion.

**AM530 Website:** <https://am530.ca>

**Martin Luther Church Website:** <https://martinluther.ca/worship-services/radio-devotions-podcasts/>

## Stewardship in the new year

*You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (JAMES 2:22)*

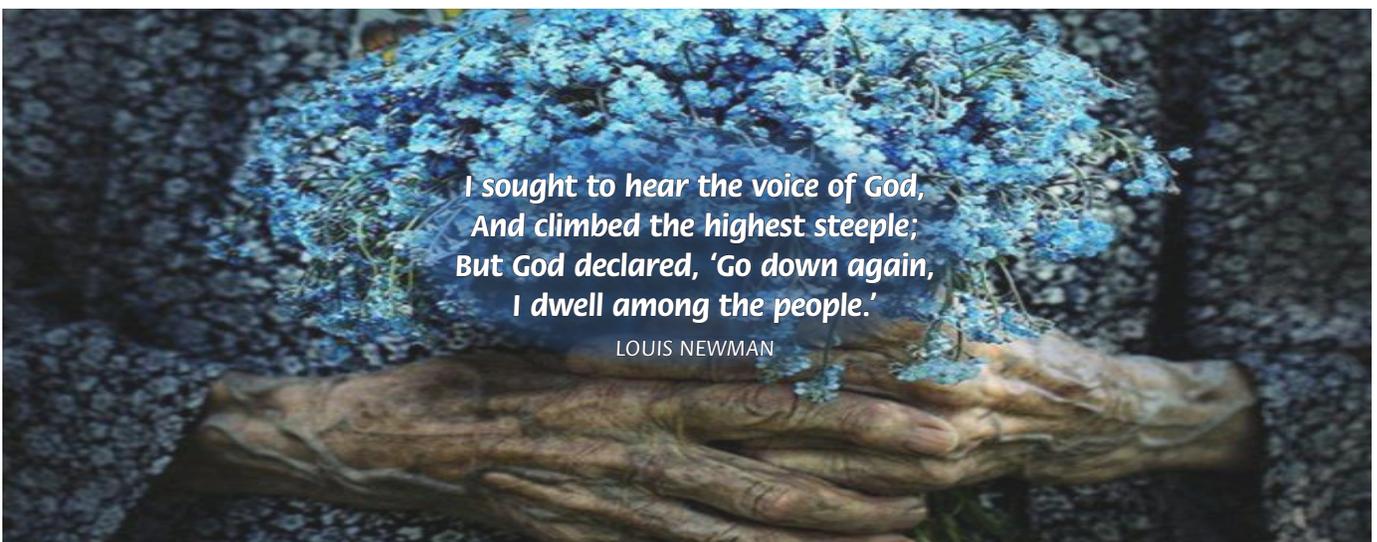
**Stewardship**, as defined by the dictionary, is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care (m-w.com). How do we at Epiphany describe that "something"? Many congregations use the axiom, Time, Talent, and Treasure, to encourage a stewardship perspective.

Over the next year, I'd like to explore with you some ways (actions) to respond to God's love and grace in our lives, both within our faith community of Epiphany, and in the physical, local community of which Epiphany is a part, using what has been entrusted to us: our time, our talent, and our treasure.

It is my hope that we will grow together, in spirituality and in stewardship.

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (JOHN 15:5)*

Together in faith,  
Denise Dennis



LOUIS NEWMAN

## 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	Ron Heino
Treasurer	Nalini Badley

## TREASURER'S REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$4,295.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	4,075.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	840.94		
AMMS PARSONAGE PROPERTY TAX	1,195.00		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	72.66		
MEMORIALS	1,765.00		
<b>CURRENT MONTH TOTALS</b>	<b>\$12,243.60</b>	<b>\$9,130.08</b>	<b>\$3,113.52</b>
<b>YEAR TO DATE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$119,979.17</b>	<b>\$116,257.56</b>	<b>\$3,721.61</b>
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT NOVEMBER 30, 2023			26,680.54
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT NOVEMBER 30, 2023			129,427.52
CIBC GIC 1 YEAR INVESTMENT TO MARCH 2024			30,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer



**findingawareness**

The more you rush, the later you arrive.  
The slower you go, the **sooner** you arrive.  
Anxiety can't touch a mind that never speeds up.  
Anxiety never leaves a mind that can't slow down.

Speed creates stress and resistance.  
The more false urgency there is in our life, the more resistance we create and the **slower** we go.  
We create more problems and then waste more time trying to fix them, which builds up Anxiety.

Speed is Anxiety's best friend, slowness is its mortal enemy.  
This is why the slower you consciously act, the less anxious you feel and the easier life seems.  
For instance, breathe, read this slowly.

What's the rush?

If you think and act 10% slower, you stress 10% less, avoid unnecessary mistakes along the way, and so arrive a little sooner.  
What's more, your inner world remains **calm, serene** and **secure**.

And if you go so slow that it almost feels like you have found stillness, then you have nowhere else to be, for you have **already** arrived.

@findingawareness, on Instagram

**CALL TO BOOK A TOUR TODAY!**

647-931-1514 or EMAIL [info.parkway@livinglivita.com](mailto:info.parkway@livinglivita.com)



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2024 Prayer ~ May God's grace fill our hearts with love, the world with peace and mercy. Amen