

The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Pastor Rasma Caune • 647-382-5093 • epiphluth@bellnet.ca

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Submissions due 15th of the month

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Pastor's MESSAGE

How many times have you moved from apartment to house and house to apartment, moving boxes that were packed up years ago rather than sifting through them? I would like to challenge you to venture into that box as if it were a gift waiting to be opened in order for you to find that gem, which might be worth keeping.

I have been reorganising my file cabinets at home and have shredded many old papers and notes, yet have also found those long forgotten gems worth keeping. I found two bulletins and the sermon I preached at Epiphany in April of 1993 when I was but a seminarian. I did not know I had kept them. I also found a reflection entitled "Pedalling through Life," which I had written years ago in my last parish, something I felt was worth keeping. In it I speak of having bought a new bicycle, and the memories of my first ride; when I was still learning in the back alley behind my childhood home;

when Georgie held the back of the seat for some stability; and the trials of opening the garage door at age 50 and getting on the bicycle again. I would like to share a part of that reflection.

"Isn't life just like a bicycle ride? More goes into it than we really ever considered: the right equipment, accessories, preparation, perseverance, patience, and discernment of our abilities.

Just as Georgie had held my bicycle in balance then, so God holds our lives in balance. Our baptism equips us with the right accessories for the ride of our lives: faith, belonging, forgiveness, and hope in that which is still to come just around the next turn. Allow God to help you discern what you are capable of doing. It is not just up to you. God knows. God will help, protect, strengthen and encourage. Let God control the pedals, steer the handlebars, put on the brakes, which allows us to make mental preparations, strategies, and choices for our lives and see how they influence our relationships with others.

That is not to say that we will not encounter moments of self-doubt, and question our own faith and beliefs, but God is there to reassure and push us beyond our own understanding of what we are capable of doing and capable of being. We will have our uphill battles and our downhill slides, but God in Christ Jesus is there to lift us up, set us on our bicycles again—on our right paths once we've fallen or missed a turn or two. Even if we might struggle to trust ourselves, or others again, we can replace our wobbly, insecure steering with God's hands and we will discover that, though not easy, it will be a trip worth taking.

God will help us pedal at a speed we can handle, and he will remove our fears and will encourage us to keep on going—to accept our limitations and even the distance we are able to ride. God will press the garage door opener and park the bicycle securely and let us rest—but that is up to him to decide when that might be."

A "Pedaller's" Prayer

God of the journey, help me to discern which route to take.

When I make the wrong turn, show me the way back to you.

Protect me and keep me safe.

When I become wobbly in my faith and begin to doubt, take hold of the handlebars and steer me along.

When I pedal downhill and pedals seem to get out of control, adjust my gears and redirect me.

When molehills become mountains, challenge me and give me energy to reach my goal...

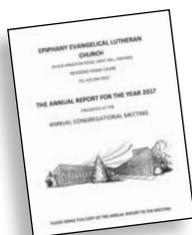
SPECIAL NOTICE

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2018 following a Joint Service at **9 A.M.** The earlier start is to accommodate the rental of the sanctuary in the early afternoon.

Please bring your hard copy of the annual report with you to the meeting. Note that the starting time differs from that shown on the cover of your annual report. Due to the earlier start time, we will not be pausing for our customary brown bag lunch.

Your attendance and input is important to help direct the operation of your church during 2018.

Ron Heino, on behalf of Council



Pastor's MESSAGE *continued...*

And when the time comes,
when my strength begins to fade,
help me to deal with my limitations.

When you decide
that I've ridden enough,
grant me rest in the comfort
of your arms. Amen.

Also among my treasures I found a poem which a seminary buddy of mine had written in an email sent at Christmas in December of 2001. Though it accompanied a Christmas greeting, I believe it might help us to move into the Lenten season as well, a move from a season of celebration and greeting into one of contemplation and introspection.

*If you were Jesus, God's own Son,
God's Wisdom and Holy One,
Would you give up your place on high
In order to serve and suffer and die?*

*If you were Jesus, would you come
To raise the dead and heal the dumb?
Would you take on the human plight
And give your life to set things right?*

*Why would you want to renounce your due,
Knowing what people will do to you?
Why would you leave your heavenly throne,
Knowing you'd suffer all alone?*

*If you were, Jesus, it might not make sense
To teach and heal among people so dense;
You might have left people on their own,
To gnash their teeth and weep and moan;
But Jesus had something else in mind—
Peace with God for humankind;
He could have watched from up above;
Instead, he came to earth in love.*

L.L.H 12/01 (LYNNE HUTCHISON)

Pastor Rasma

New Faces

A few months ago Epiphany was approached to consider sharing our church with a small congregation looking for a new home. Like many churches in our community we felt we can accommodate a second congregation in our church. To this end, council has worked out the details of a rental agreement so that, starting this month, Bethel Holiness Pentecostal Apostolic Ministries may enjoy the use of our sanctuary for their services on Sundays from 1:30 p.m., as well as some Thursday evenings for Bible Study. Let's make our new friends welcome. **Sigrid Engler, on behalf of Council**

Into A New Year

As we head into a new year, with new expectations, I want to thank members of Epiphany who have shown their support for our current Council members who are completing terms, and for your continued support for those who will make up the next Council.

Please consider how you might be able to use your gifts here at Epiphany, and whether a part or a roll on Council might be something you are able to offer.

We must use the gifts we have, not bemoan the ones we do not, or feel envy or even defensiveness or repulsion, at those with other gifts. God's view is the one that counts, and it may be quite different from ours. He may value the janitor sweeping the floor of a homeless shelter with dedication and love, practically unnoticed by everyone else, over one of title.

We must do the best we can with what we are given, and God will judge us by our hearts and spirit, not by our earthly status.

Consider 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4-11: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." **Greg Furan, Council Chair**

During LENT...

Midweek Soup Suppers and Lenten Services will be offered on Wednesday evenings beginning February 21 through Lent.

MIDWEEK SERVICES THEME — Open My Life, Lord: My Eyes, My Hands, My Ears, My Heart, My Life. All are welcome to these intimate services of dialogue and contemplation.

SOUP SUPPER is served at 6:30 pm; LENTEN SERVICE at 7:30 pm.

Kindly add your name to the soup supper sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to help us better prepare; or if you wish to volunteer a pot of soup.

FEBRUARY: FOOD OF THE MONTH

Canned Fish



If you wish to provide flowers for the altar,
please let the Altar Guild member
for that Sunday know.



ALTAR GUILD

1st Sunday of the Month
Ute Wentzel • 416-439-7996

2nd Sunday of the Month
Josie Tedes • 416-283-0895

3rd Sunday of the Month
Paulette Correia • 416-414-4497

4th Sunday of the Month
Hildegard Kinder • 416-283-1836

5th Sunday of the Month
Erika Haebe • 416-266-8660

EPIPHANY COUNCIL

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**DENISE DENNIS – Mutual Ministry
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**PASTOR RASMA CAUNE –
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TREASURER'S REPORT

DECEMBER 2017	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
CURRENT	\$19,880.81	\$14,262.36	
BENEVOLENCE	1,334.00	1,334.00	
AMMS RENTAL INCOME	3,775.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	2,804.95		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL UTILITIES	423.16		
REFORMATION BAGS	290.00		
CURRENT MONTH TOTALS	\$28,507.92	\$15,596.36	\$12,911.56
YEAR TO DATE TOTALS	\$157,291.02	\$154,702.39	\$2,588.63

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer

Calendar Switch?

**“Come near to God and he will come near to you.
Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts,
you double-minded.” JAMES 4:8 NIV**

Iwonder if January and February might be better reversed in the calendar?

January is often regarded as a month of “fresh starts,” a time and place to change old behaviours and attitudes for better ones: healthier habits for body, mind, and spirit. Some of us might even over-indulge in December because of the anticipated annual ritual of “stop” (doing the old or former thing) and “start” (doing the new thing). While the point is to initiate change, some of us decide such a new year's resolution is too difficult to sustain, and simply do what we always do.

As for February, it turns out this month is so named because of the ancient Roman custom of *februum*. This is the ritual of purification – or Februa – celebrated on February 15. The practice of purification involved a time for sacrifices to the dead to banish evil spirits, and atonement for past froward deeds. As with other pagan festivals and rituals, Christians adopted this date to celebrate Candlemas. Candlemas is a reminder of the Jewish tradition of purifying the mother 40 days after the birth of her child. For Christians, Candlemas is about the Virgin Mary's purification following the birth of the Christ Child, and his presentation at the temple. In addition, Candlemas has evolved to include blessing the candles (that represent Christ) that will be used throughout the year. So, although the practice of *februum* is more broadly applied to the general population than just new mothers, both Februa and Candlemas focus on purifying, or washing and cleaning.

Current practices of *februum* remain linked to purification, but in the “spring cleaning” sense of purifying one's mind and spirit. Both past and current practices of *februum* are associated with the mid-month phenomenon of the full moon, which, curiously, does not always occur in the month of February. The last time there was no full moon in February was 1999, and it will happen again in 2018. Does this nullify the annual purification?

Nevertheless, I am drawn back to my question of switching February and January. It might make sense to begin the new year with a purification ritual! Instead of a too-easily abandoned resolution to switch one behaviour for another at the beginning of January, perhaps a specific day, set aside for the specific purpose of “purification,” might make sense. Imagine if we came together as a society, or even as a congregation, to purge the past and begin anew with “clean hearts” and “right spirits.”

This year, though, there will be no mid-month full moon to announce the time of purification. In addition, just one day before Februa, we celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14. This year, too, Ash Wednesday falls on February 14. Like the full moon, Ash Wednesday does not always occur in February, making this year special on several counts.

I think Ash Wednesday can be regarded as a type of purification, an opportunity to clean away those wearying

aspects of our lives that weigh down our hearts and minds. Indeed, some of us choose to “purify” our habits by cleaning away or “giving up” something for Lent, which can in turn clear our minds for deeper reflection on our relationships with God and one another. So, is it merely coincidence that Ash Wednesday falls on that annual day to celebrate “love”? On Valentine’s Day, many of us make some special effort to express our love for another, perhaps under a full moon’s gaze, or with some other pink and sweet testament. It is certainly a day that invites a

purification of our emotions and our actions into a singular focus on the hopefulness of love.

So, knowing that God invites us to have “regularly scheduled” festivals and celebrations, it seems rather wonder-full that this year we can mark Februa, Ash Wednesday, and Valentine’s Day in a kind of mid-month purification, or “renewal through love” opportunity, full moon or not.

Now...should we switch February and January?

Denise Dennis

Participating in the Christ Consciousness Lay Spiritual Retreat - April 6-8, 2018

@Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario

www.easternsynod.org

Host: Bishop Michael Pryse

Spiritual Director: Rev. David Maginley

Worship Leaders: Rev. Hilla Lahtinen and Rev. Riitta Hepomaki

Retreat Director: Dorothy Frook
Telephone: 519-881-2798
Email: dbfrook@wightman.ca

Registrar: Prijna Gingrich
Telephone: 519-208-5652
Email: anp.gingrich@rogers.com

*Rev. David Maginley is a spiritual counsellor with the cancer, palliative and ICU programs at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and author of *Beyond Surviving: Cancer and Your Spiritual Journey*. David has also survived cancer four times, which resulted in a profound near-death experience and explorations in the nature of consciousness and the connection of body, mind and spirit. He knows what it's like to have cancer from both sides of the hospital bed, and has a sense of this life from both sides of the veil. David is ordained with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, a specialist with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, member of the Canadian Association for Psychosocial Oncology, and the International Association for Near-Death Studies. He is also featured in the upcoming documentaries, *Here Right Now*, and *When You Die*.*



Community, conversation, contemplation, worship and renewal.

The agenda and registration form are available at:

<http://easternsynod.org/event/2018-04-06-220000-2018-04-08-170000-lay-spiritual-retreat>

Winter ~ Kindness for all Seasons

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13 AT 10 AM



We send our best wishes to the Women of Epiphany that 2018 will be a gentle year offering much joy and good health, with hopes that you will be able to participate in and enjoy our monthly gatherings and seasonal socials. We start the year on Shrove Tuesday, February 13th, and since it's the season of St. Valentine's, let us continue with a custom of dressing in as much RED as possible. We do have our annual budget and programming to address. For this, we call on the women of the congregation to submit to any ELW member your opinions and suggestions even by phone or email if unable to attend in person. We would be grateful.

Applications have been made and approved by FaithLife Financial for \$300 Matching Grants for each of the following 2018 ELW activities; a Springtime (Strawberry Social) event and a Falltime (Applefest) event.

Thanks to Erika, Ute and Norbert for their help with the Coffeetime when Pastor Peter Lisinski was presiding and to the set up and clean up crew, and for your contributions towards the "goodies". Please keep in mind when baking that there are people with allergies and gluten free requirements, so if you are able to label, we thank you.

The women of Surinam have organized the 2018 World Day of Prayer program. St. Dunstan's is our area host on Friday March 2. Epiphany will require a volunteer to read an assigned segment of the program and we will offer a sign-up sheet as well as a carpool for those interested to attend. Lately, a daytime timeslot has been offered. Particulars will follow.

The Toronto Area East Lutheran Women will meet March 12 at Christ the King, Whitby to organize a local 2018 gathering. Peace, Pickering hosted the inaugural session. It will be up to either Scarborough, Whitby, Oshawa or Peterborough to host this year (estimated 20-25 women). If you have any suggestions for a program that would interest you and others, please notify us a.s.a.p. We would welcome all and any ideas.

I look forward to the midweek Lenten soup suppers and services, especially at this time of year when we seem to have more emotional energy to reflect and meditate. If you could find it in yourself to offer a pot of soup for one of the Wednesdays, kindly sign up on the bulletin board or notify Pastor Rasma or Marg Crewe.

"The simplest of gestures can mean so much: a compliment sincerely spoken, a door held open, or as my friend frequently does, random baked goodies left at the door. Acts of compassion, kindness, and tolerance, even small ones – especially the small ones – are what make us human. They are not small things, because they reaffirm our humanity, elevate our spirits, give meaning to our existence and make every day bearable, for the giver and the receiver. When the opportunity arises, choose kindness. Always choose kindness!"

Looking forward to having you join us February 13th, Shrove Tuesday and it's up to you if you want to bring some pancakes to go along with our morning coffee!

Lilli Kilian, kilianlf@gmail.com; 416-267-5300

Our Seniors

Hello Seniors! Hope to see all of you back on the 6th of February. Our January meeting was actually cancelled, however somehow it was listed in the MORNINGSTAR. Therefore I had no choice but to go and lo and behold: 8 seniors showed up! We had a nice afternoon with a little help from a glass of wine.

Wilhelm Wittemeier



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February 2018

♥ Our best chance of finding God is to look in the place where we left him. — MEISTER ECKHART

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 5th Sunday of Epiphany <small>GREEN</small> 9 AM German Worship Service 10:30 AM English Communion Service	5	6 1:30 PM — German Seniors	7 11AM -2 PM Church Office	8 7 PM — GTA East meeting at Christ the King, Whitby	9 10-11:30 AM — Bible Class 4:30-7 PM — Use of Sanctuary & Classroom for AMMS	10
11 Transfiguration of Our Lord <small>WHITE</small> 9 AM German Communion Service 10:30 AM English Worship Service	12 1 PM — Craft Circle	13 10 AM — ELW Meeting	14 Ash Wednesday 7:30 PM <small>PURPLE</small> — Joint Communion Service with Imposition of Ashes <small>VALENTINE'S DAY</small>	15 7:15 PM — Council Meeting	16	17
18 1st Sunday in Lent <small>PURPLE</small> 9 AM German Worship Service 10:30 AM English Communion Service	19 <small>FAMILY DAY</small>	20	21 11AM -2 PM Church Office 6:30 PM — Soup Supper 7:30 PM — Lenten Service	22	23 10-11:30 AM — Bible Class	24
25 2nd Sunday in Lent <small>PURPLE</small> 9 AM Joint Communion Service followed by Epiphany's Annual General Meeting <i>(Please bring your copy</i> <i>of the Annual Report)</i>	26 1 PM — Craft Circle	27	28 11AM -2 PM Church Office 6:30 PM — Soup Supper 7:30 PM — Lenten Service	March 1	2 Collate Morningstar	3

