

THE LIGHT

A Newsletter from Epiphany Lutheran Church: January 2024



from the pastor's desk: a Question of Faith

In the little more than 6 years I've been a pastor, I've learned a lot of things (that they never taught in seminary). And I've made a number of observations about people—in or out of church, Christian or not—and their faith...

Pastors get asked a lot of questions; for example, I've been asked "Is there really a hell?", "What happens when we die?", "Will God restore this planet? If not, where will heaven be?", "Can those in heaven look down and see us?", "Where does it say in the Bible that homosexuality is a sin?", "I'm baptized, so am I saved?", "What will our resurrected bodies look like?", "If a person's remains are cremated, will that mean they won't have a resurrected body?", "Do we become angels in heaven?", "If we're married until 'death do us part' and as Christians we have victory over death, does that mean we're married forever?", "What about second marriages?," "What about miscarriages, stillbirths, and aborted babies? What happens to them?" The list goes on and on, but there's a common denominator that connects every question: God in His Word doesn't always provide an explicit answer; sometimes we have to read, re-read, and dig deeper to search for the truth.

The problem with our questions is that they inevitably lead to more questions...and less answers. That we are human only makes matters worse. God isn't restricted by bias, culture, tradition, ethics, reason, intellect, guilt, or time and space; nor does He need to be liked on social media, have marital problems, work deadlines, an inferiority complex, gender dysphoria, addiction issues, or xenophobia. The point here is that too often when we consider the divine, we are, well...blinded by the light.

Typically I get asked questions because folks know I'm a pastor, but very recently someone I'd never met asked me a question to which many don't know the answer. Some months ago, my wife and I were walking into Walmart just as this well-intentioned, very forward gentleman was pushing his basket out. After catching sight of me, and without so much as a how-do-you-do, he asked "Are you saved?" (I have to say that I don't get that question very often...) When I answered "yes," he had a follow-up. "How do you know?" I told him that I was a Lutheran pastor, a Christian saved only by God's grace through His gift of faith (see Ephesians 2:8-9), then thanked him for his concern before accepting a proffered tract that he authored, entitled *Vampires, Fallen Angels, and the Jupiter Invasion*, the apocalyptic gist of which is that "fallen angels will come to earth as vampires via the planet Jupiter" signaling the end of this world.

In a society where anything goes, it's nearly impossible to find any truth, much less the truth we're searching for... Most of the questions I get are a reflection of the asker's desire to know more about God and his/her place in the world. God's own Word creates the faith by which the baptized sinner is certain of His promise of life made to us in Christ 2,000 years ago. I can appreciate the good intentions behind asking a stranger (who likely won't understand the question) "Are you saved?"; however, an attempt to shoehorn a confession of faith is hardly a noble act.

God's love, active in the world around us and as close as a Bible, is within reach for every man and woman on this planet. However, our sin is like a large colander—a sieve—through which we strain our perceptions (and I mean that two ways) of this world and God's world, the past and the future, as recorded in Scripture (where you'll find no mention of Jovian vampires, nor the phrase "fallen angel").

When it comes to questions of spirituality and conscience, interpretations and false teachings abound. Yet God's Word clearly teaches that those who believe can be assured of victory over death and the devil.

Whether we're saved or not— is simply a question of faith.



EPIPHANY

LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

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OUR PASTOR



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Bible Study
+ Sunday School

10:00am

Fellowship
+ Coffee

11:00am

Divine
Service

11:30am

EPIPHANY HAS A NEW PASTOR!

Reverend E.B. Holschuh was installed as the first pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church of Bastrop on Epiphany, Jan 6. The installation occurred at the historic Refectory in Bastrop State Park, where Epiphany's Charter Service was held in May 2023. Epiphany praises God for the growth of our congregation, charter, and installed pastor, since our first service on February 6, 2022.

CALLED TO TEACH SUNDAY SCHOOL?

If you are interested in teaching a week of Sunday School or getting in a rotation of teachers, please contact Terri Rosser. We currently have a regular attendance of 4 eager learners.

Birthdays

Deebo Kunze: January 4
Alex Monroe: January 9



epiphanybastrop.org



church@epiphanybastrop.org



Epiphany Lutheran Church



[@epiphanybastrop](https://www.instagram.com/epiphanybastrop)

COMMUNITY NEWS



Brothers pictured here are from left (front row) Revs. Gary Johnson, Bernie Schey, Thomas Obersat, Bill Knippa, John Austin, (second row) Isaac Schuller, Jonathan Meyer, Ryan Ogradowicz, Mark De Young, J. Brown, Ross Davis, Bryan Wolfmueller, Dale Bohm, (back row) Richard Mittwede, David Mumm, Tom Peterson, John Schmidt, Nate Hill, E.B. Holschuh, Jason Kaspar, David Woelmer, Carl Roth, and Nathan Wendorf.



COMMUNITY NEWS

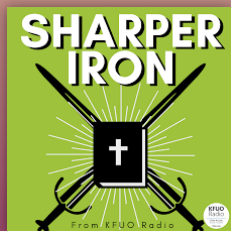


Bingo for Seniors meets the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00pm in the fellowship hall at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Everything is provided at no cost, including bingo supplies, prizes, and food. If you need assistance with transportation, please contact the Immanuel church office (979) 542-2918. For all other information you may contact Mrs. Brittany Behrens 979-540-0181.

The **Texas Wendish Heritage Museum** has openings for part-time paid positions to be filled this summer in preparation for Wendish Fest in September.

If you or someone you know is interested in any of the positions below, please contact Chelsea Beck at chelsea@texaswendish.org or (979)366-2441.

Positions include Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator; Director or Co-Director of the Museum; and Garden Maintenance.



KFUO RADIO, a media ministry extension of LCMS congregations, shares worship services, Bible studies, podcasts, and sacred music for anyone, anytime, anywhere. Find these programs and more on-demand at kfu.org or wherever you get your podcasts. Follow @kfuoradio on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Texas Wendish Heritage Society's

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER MEAL

DRIVE THRU ONLY

PICK UP 10:00am-12:30pm
at St. Paul, Serbin Picnic Grounds

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

All proceeds benefit the TWHS Scholarship Fund

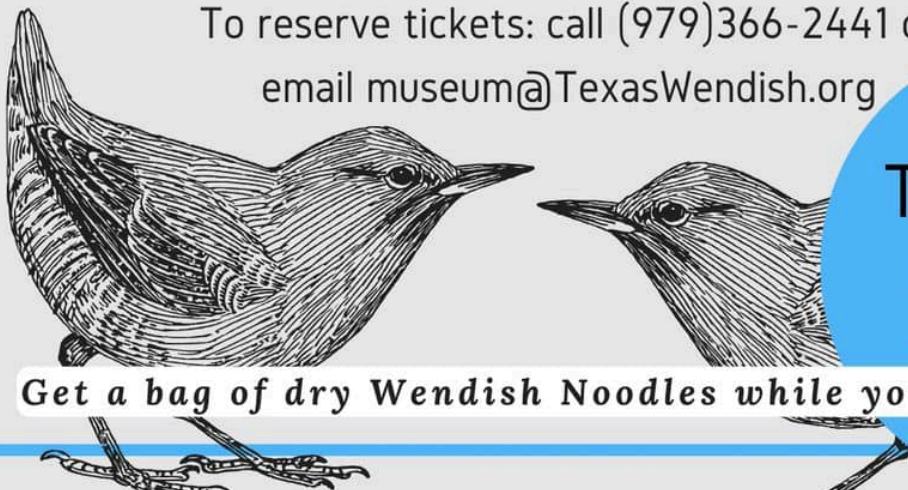
MENU:

Grilled Pork Steak
Cup of Bird Wedding Soup
Wendish Noodles- Green Beans
Corn- Pickles

PRE-SALE ONLY

Available for purchase through Wed., January 17th
at The Wendish Museum or First National Bank of Giddings

To reserve tickets: call (979)366-2441 or
email museum@TexasWendish.org



TICKETS
\$15

Get a bag of dry Wendish Noodles while you're here!

COMMUNITY NEWS

GriefShare®

Grief Support Group

*Help and encouragement
after the death of a loved one*

A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. At this 13-week group, you'll receive valuable guidance and tips, leading you to relief, comfort, and peace of mind.

Contact Us Today

Thursdays 6:00 -8:00
January 18 - April 18
Immanuel Lutheran Church
300 N. Grimes Giddings
(512) 461-5442

griefshare.org

COMMUNITY NEWS

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT



FAITH LUTHERAN
HIGH SCHOOL OF CENTRAL TEXAS

RAFFLE ITEMS

The Spring Raffle is just around the corner. The Board of Directors is currently looking for valuable items or monetary donations to be used in the raffle. Please contact Nikki Kueck if you have something to donate! Thank you!

FREE WEDNESDAY MORNINGS?

Join us for our weekly Chapel Worship Service every Wednesday, beginning at 10:30 am.

END OF YEAR GIVING

Thank you for your support of Faith Lutheran High School during our End of Year giving. We were blessed through generous contributions from many of you. We are still accepting donations if you missed out but would like to support the ministry and growth of FLHS.

THANK YOU!

Everyone at FLHS is blessed by each gift that we receive from our supporters. It's not about the size of the gift, but the cheerful attitude that gives thanks to God (2 Corinthians 9:7). Whether your gift seems big or small, it is greatly appreciated and makes a bigger impact than you know!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

With a new school year underway, you may want to see the exciting things happening inside here on a daily basis! By "liking" our Facebook page and "sharing" our posts, you will be in the loop on all the great things happening and you can share them with your friends!

THE LITTLE LIGHT

Here you'll find news and updates relating to the children's ministry of Epiphany Lutheran. We hope parents will find this newsletter section helpful!

The Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum, by CPH, features a Christ-centered, three-year chronological survey of Bible history with a goal of helping our children grow deeper in their understanding of God's Word.

- In Year 2, we will be exploring the Old Testament.
- Our new unit (4) will look at how God calls a nation.



**ENDURING
FAITH™**



Lesson 1 (NEW UNIT): "Handmade" (January 14)

God creates man in His own image with His own hands and breathes in him His own breath. Formed from the dust of the ground, Adam needs more than just animal companionship. So our heavenly Father makes the perfect complement to man, creating woman from Adam's rib, and places them in the garden.

Lesson 2: "A Sign and a Promise" (January 21)

God reassures Abram of His promise to bless the earth through Abram's offspring. God changes his name and institutes circumcision as the sign of His continued covenant with Abraham. Despite advanced age, God promises they will have a son of their own.

Lesson 3: "A Laughable Promise" (January 28)

The Lord and two angels appear to Abraham in human form, promising the birth of a son to Abraham and Sarah within the year. Sarah conceives and gives birth to Isaac, as the Lord fulfills His promise of generations to come and the promised future Offspring—the Savior, Jesus.

prayers of the people

- Praise God for the installation of Pastor Holschuh. Pray for our pastor as he begins shepherding our flock and reaching out to the surrounding community.
- Kathy Achterberg - pray for God's guidance and healing as she receives treatments.
- David Goeke - he had back surgery that did not go well and he has lost the use of his legs. We pray for understanding and peace.
- Nellie Gonzalez - prayers as she deals with breathing issues associated with COPD.
- Tonya Hettler - has an inoperable brain tumor and is receiving radiation treatment at this time. We lift her up and ask God to comfort her and her family.
- Deebo and Norma Kunze
- Karen McDougal - sister of Mark McClain.
- Dr. Charles Wukasch - we ask God to cover him with peace and grace as he deals with stage 4 prostate cancer.

Please share any prayer requests which you would like added to this list by sending an email to secretary@epiphanybastrop.org.

If you have confidential prayer requests for the pastors eyes only, please send an email to pastor@epiphanybastrop.org.

What is Worship?

*Elements of the Divine Service:
Service of the Sacrament:
Post-Communion Canticle*

At the close of Holy Communion, as the pastor closes the sacred vessels and covers them with a veil, the congregation stands to sing the **Nunc Dimittis**. The Nunc Dimittis is Simeon's prayer of thanksgiving for being allowed to see the Messiah before he died.

With the incarnate Christ in his arms, Simeon rejoiced and made his confession.

Nunc Dimittis

Latin for "now let your servant depart."

One of the great hymns of scripture, the use of Simeon's Song as a post-Communion Canticle is a unique element of Lutheran liturgy. Having seen Christ in the sacrament- receiving Him in our mouths and so into our souls- we join Simeon in his inspired song.



“[Simeon] took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence
of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

Luke 2:28-32