

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 2025

Second Sunday in Advent



**Connect. Grow. Multiply.**

**Mailing Address:**

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Bastrop, TX 78602**

**Physical Address:**

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(on the SDA campus)  
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## WELCOME TO EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH!

“How lovely is Your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!”  
(Psalm 84:1) We are thankful that God has brought you here with us this morning to hear His Word and receive His gifts! You’ll find everything you need for the worship service in this bulletin and in *Lutheran Service Book*, our hymnal. If you have any questions about our worship service, our congregation, or what we believe, please ask our pastor or any of our members.

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### OUR COMMUNION POLICY:

The Lord’s Supper is celebrated at this congregation by baptized believers in the confession and glad confidence that, as he says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but his very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with him and with one another. Our Lord invites to his table those who trust his words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as he forgives and loves us, that they may show forth his death until he comes.

Because those who eat and drink our Lord’s body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, any who are not yet instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the sacrament, are asked first to speak with the pastor.

For further study, see Matthew 5:23; 10:32; 18:15-35; 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

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### SERVANTS DURING WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

Pastor – Rev. E.B. Holschuh  
Musician – Susan Michael  
Lay Reader – Alison Parker  
Assisting Elder – Alex Monroe  
Usher – Dave Layland  
Acolyte – E.J. Clontz

## AS WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

### *By the Preaching of Repentance, We Are Prepared for the Coming of the Lord*

*“John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent’”* (Matt. 3:1–2). His preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins prepared people for the coming of Christ into the world. St. John’s work was historically complete with the incarnate advent of Jesus, but his vital ministry continues in preaching Law and Gospel. The Son of God has come in the flesh, *“a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots”* (Is. 11:1), and continues to bear the fruits of righteousness. His good tree of the cross is *“a signal for the peoples”* (Is. 11:10), by which He calls the nations to repentance. *“With the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips”* (Is. 11:4), He slays the wicked and brings the dead to life, making sons of Abraham out of lifeless stones. So also the *“root of Jesse”* comes to us, *“even he who arises to rule the Gentiles”* (Rom. 15:12), that *“we might have hope”* and be filled *“with all joy and peace in believing”* (Rom. 15:4, 13).

## DIVINE SERVICE SETTING FOUR

**Prelude**

Selected Music

**Welcome and Greeting**

Pastor

**Announcements**

**Opening Hymn**

*“The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns”*

LSB 348

*(stand)*

## CONFESSIO AND ABSOLUTIO

*The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

*Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]*

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** who made heaven and earth.

*Psalm 124:8*

**P** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

**C** **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** *Ps. 130:3-4*

**P** Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner. *[Luke 18:13]*

**C** **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

**P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen.**

*[John 20:19-23]*

## **SERVICE OF THE WORD**

### **Introit**

Psalm 105:4-8

**P** Seek the LORD and his strength;  
seek his presence continually!

**C** **Remember the wondrous works that he has done,  
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,**

**P** O offspring of Abraham, his servant,  
children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

**C** **He is the LORD our God;  
his judgments are in all the earth.**

**P** He remembers his covenant forever,  
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

**C** ***Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.***



**C** Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

### Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

*2 Timothy 4:22*

**C** And also with you.

**P** Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*(sit)*

### Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 11:1-10

<sup>1</sup>There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,

and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup>They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup>In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—  
of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

## **Epistle Reading**

Romans 15:4-13

<sup>4</sup>Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup>May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup>For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, <sup>9</sup>and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and sing to your name.”

<sup>10</sup>And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

<sup>11</sup>And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples extol him.”

<sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,  
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;  
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

<sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*(stand)*

### Alleluia and Verse



**C** Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



**C** These things are writ - ten that you may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

*John 20:31*



**C** Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

### Holy Gospel Reading

Matthew 3:1-12

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the third chapter.

**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup>For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’”

<sup>4</sup>Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup>and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup>But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup>And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup>Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup>“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>12</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C Praise to You, O Christ.**

*(sit)*

**Hymn of the Day**

*“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”*

LSB 344

**Sermon**

*Unconditional Surrender*

*Matthew 3:1-12*

*(stand)*

**Apostles’ Creed**

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

### **Passing of the Peace**

*(sit)*

### **Prayer of the Church**

**P** Lord, in Your mercy  
**C** hear our prayer.

### **Offering**

Usher

*(stand)*

## **SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT**

### **Preface**

**P** The Lord be with you.

*2 Timothy 4:22*

**C** And also with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** We lift them to the Lord.

*[Colossians 3:1*

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

[Psalm 136]

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

## Sanctus

*Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9*



**C** Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

**P** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. By His death, He has redeemed us from bondage to sin and death, and by His resurrection, He has delivered us into new life in Him.

Grant us to keep the Feast in sincerity and truth, faithfully eating His body given into death and drinking His life's blood poured out for our salvation until we pass through death to the promised land of life eternal.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

## Lord's Prayer

*Matthew 6:9-13*

**C** **Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## The Words of Our Lord

*Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24  
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

**P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My **✠** body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

**P** In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new covenant in My **✝** blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

## Pax Domini

*John 20:19*

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** Amen.

## Agnus Dei

*John 1:29*



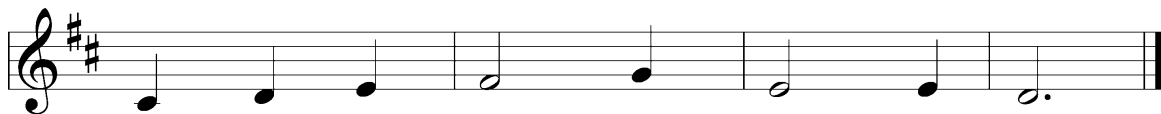
**C** 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;  
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.  
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

*(sit)*

## Distribution Hymn

*“Arise, O Christian People”*

LSB 354

*(stand)*

# Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32

**C** 1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -  
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All  
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the  
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the  
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:  
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;  
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -  
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is  
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your  
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -  
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.  
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

## Post-Communion Collect

**P** Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Benedicamus and Benediction

**P** Let us bless the Lord.

*[Psalm 103:1]*

**C** Thanks be to God.

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

*Numbers 6:24-26*

**C** Amen.

*(sit)*

**Closing Hymn**

*“When All the World Was Cursed”*

LSB 346

**P** Go in Peace!

**C** Serve the Lord!

**Postlude**

Selected Music

*Initial and ongoing funding for Epiphany Lutheran Church has been received through a grant made possible by the Roy D. and Ingaborg G. Randolph Memorial Endowment Fund.*



## CATECHISM CORNER | *Bite-sized teachings from Luther's Small Catechism*

Written in 1529 in Q&A format, the Small Catechism explores the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar.

### What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

The Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink.

### Where is this written?

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, together with St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"

## SERMON NOTES: Matthew 3:1-12

### *Unconditional Surrender*

1. Fully yielded to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_'s message was a handful of words: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. These will be the exact same words proclaimed by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Yielding oneself fully to \_\_\_\_\_ means living a life of \_\_\_\_\_ that's grounded in trusting in the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord, to love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
3. John's preaching of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God has a message for the nominal \_\_\_\_\_ fully in the grip of a broken, dysfunctional, and disordered world, "Where are the fruits, the deeds, the works, the \_\_\_\_\_ of a true and genuine repentance?"
4. John \_\_\_\_\_ to produce \_\_\_\_\_ in his hearers, to cause the \_\_\_\_\_ to turn back to God.
5. God will not \_\_\_\_\_ us by asking whether we are called \_\_\_\_\_ or whether we have been \_\_\_\_\_. He will ask each one of us, "If you are a Christian, then tell me, where are the fruits that demonstrate your faith?" (Martin Luther)
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ fully yielded to \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't begin with heroic \_\_\_\_\_—it begins with the mustard-seed moment of turning back to the One who has already yielded everything for us.

## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

The first step to becoming a member of our congregation is to speak with our pastor.

We believe, teach, and confess that we are all broken sinners in need of God's salvation, which He freely gives through His Word and Sacrament. Church is not a club for the sinless– it's a hospital for sinners!

You may become a member of Epiphany Lutheran Church by transferring your membership from a sister congregation of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) or you may receive instruction from the pastor and become a communicant member of Epiphany and the LCMS through Adult Instruction Class or through a profession of faith.

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**Epiphany Events Calendar:** Our congregation calendar is on our website ([epiphanybastrop.org](http://epiphanybastrop.org)); to add an event, please email [secretary@epiphanybastrop.org](mailto:secretary@epiphanybastrop.org).

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**Offering:** Should you wish to make your regular tithe or offering online, you may do so at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZKYH/home> or scan this QR code.



**New 10am Adult Sunday School Series!** Join us next Sunday for the start of a 6-week video study, *Drive Thru History: History of the Bible*, as we explore how the Scriptures have been preserved, translated, and passed down through generations.

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**Voter's Meetings:** Our regular Voter's Meeting of the year will be held on **Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>** after the service. At this time, the two agenda items for this meeting are 1) electing officers and 2) approving our 2026 budget. Please make plans to attend these two very important meetings!

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**Advent Midweek Gatherings:** Join us for the next two Advent Wednesday evening gatherings at our new property (124 Three Oaks Ln) at 6:30pm for light dinner fare and an Advent video study on Dec. 10 and 17.

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**Thursday 6pm Advent/Christmas Zoom video study:** Join us for the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of *Things They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School* on December 11! Register: [bit.ly/ELC-ChristmasThings](http://bit.ly/ELC-ChristmasThings)

***The Real St. Nick: Leader, Legend or Lie*** is the title and the topic of the next one-hour, one-time FLASH STUDY on Zoom on Monday, December 8, at 6pm. Join us for a closer look at the man who, next to Jesus Christ, is the most visible figure during the holidays, St. Nicholas (or Santa Claus as we know him in Western culture). Register now: [bit.ly/ELC-StNick](http://bit.ly/ELC-StNick)

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**Epiphany Sisters of the Light:** We are taking a break from meeting during Advent and the Christmas season. Join us at 6pm on Tuesday, January 13 for a discussion of *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanna Weaver. We will share a light supper, fellowship, prayer, and key takeaways from the book. Plenty of time to start reading! Need a book? Contact Carole at (817) 614-3916.

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Epiphany Lutheran Church has a podcast! Our ***Peace Be With You*** podcast is available on popular podcast apps, but you can always find it at [peacebewithyou.podbean.com](http://peacebewithyou.podbean.com) (or just scan the QR code).



**Lutheran Radio:** Hear The Lutheran Hour each Sunday on station KBUK-FM 104.9 at 7:00 a.m. or on station KANJ-FM 91.5 at 12:30 p.m. or go to [lhm.org](http://lhm.org) for a link to listen to the Lutheran Hour live. You can also listen to The Lutheran Hour on the local Austin station KLBJ (590 AM or 99.7 FM) at 7am on Sunday.

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**KFUO Radio**, the broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, shares Christ for you anytime, anywhere on **KFUO.org** via worship services, Bible and theology studies, practical talk programs, and sacred music. Find programs on demand at [kfuo.org](http://kfuo.org) and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social: [@KFUOradio](https://www.facebook.com/KFUOradio) on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/KFUOradio), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/KFUOradio).

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**RightNow Media:** Every person in our Epiphany family has (and can share) free access to over 25,000 biblical video series for adults, youth, and kids—**RightNow Media** has a free app that's available on all major streaming devices so you and your family can access content anywhere, anytime. Visit [app.rightnowmedia.org/join/elcb](http://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/elcb) or scan the QR code.



## THIS WEEK AT EPIPHANY:

### Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

- 10:00am – Children’s Sunday School (Fellowship Area)
- 10:00am – Adult Sunday School (Sanctuary)
- 11:00am – Fellowship / Coffee Time
- 11:30am – Worship Service with Communion



### Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>

- 6:00pm – Flash Study on Zoom: *The Real St. Nick*

### Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

- 6:30pm – Advent Midweek Gathering

### Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>

- 6:00pm – Advent/Christmas Zoom Video Study

### Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>

- 10:00am – Children’s Sunday School (Fellowship Area)
- 10:00am – Adult Sunday School (Sanctuary)
- 11:00am – Fellowship / Coffee Time
- 11:30am – Worship Service with Communion
- Immediately Following the Service – Voter’s Meeting

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## ***The First Annual Epiphany Lutheran Church Spend the Year in Scripture Challenge*** reading schedule through next Sunday:

- Day 335 - Mon 12/1: Galatians 4-6
- Day 336 - Tue 12/2: Ephesians 1-3
- Day 337 - Wed 12/3: Ephesians 4-6
- Day 338 - Thu 12/4: Philippians 1-4
- Day 339 - Fri 12/5: Colossians 1-4
- Day 340 - Sat 12/6: 1 Thessalonians 1-5
- Day 341 - Sun 12/7: 2 Thessalonians 1-3

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Answers to Sermon Notes:  
1. Fully yielded to **God, John's** message was a handful of words: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* These will be the exact same words proclaimed by **Jesus**.  
2. Yielding oneself fully to **God** means living a life of **faith** that's grounded in trusting in the **promises** of our Lord, to love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
3. John's preaching of the **wrath** of God has a message for the nominal **Christian** fully in the grip of a broken, dysfunctional, and disordered world. "Where are the fruits, the deeds, the works, the **marks** of a true and genuine repentance?"  
4. John **baptized** to produce **repentance** in his hearers, to cause the **sinner** to turn back to God.  
5. God will not **judge** us by asking whether we are called **Christians** or whether we have been **baptized**. He will ask each one of us, "If you are a Christian, then tell me, where are the fruits that demonstrate your faith?" (Martin Luther)  
6. A **life** fully yielded to **God** doesn't begin with heroic **obedience**—it begins with the mustard-seed moment of turning back to the One who has already yielded everything for us.

## PRAYERS AT EPIPHANY

**PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please share any prayer request on the Prayer Requests sheet as you enter on Sunday. You may also email a prayer request, as well as a request to become a part of Epiphany's prayer chain, to [secretary@epiphanybastrop.org](mailto:secretary@epiphanybastrop.org).

Please continue to pray for...

- Benjamin and Rebecca Helge and their son, Viktor Emil – Missionaries in the Eurasia region
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### The Root of Jesse: Hope That Grows Where We Least Expect It

Isaiah paints a picture that is at once bleak and breathtaking. Jesse's family tree—the royal line of David—has been reduced to a stump.

Once mighty, now cut down. Once flourishing, now lifeless. Israel had forfeited her own flourishing through idolatry and injustice, and judgment had come. Only a stump remained.

Yet Isaiah asks us to look again: *"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit"* (Isaiah 11:1). From the very place where all hope seemed lost, God causes new life to spring. This is His way—bringing resurrection where death thinks it has the final word.

The "Root of Jesse" is not merely a poetic image; it is a Person. It is Christ Jesus, born in humility, raised in obscurity, appearing in the very line of David—a king who comes not with swords or chariots but with righteousness, wisdom, and the Spirit of the Lord. Isaiah says, *"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,"* and He will judge with righteousness, defend the poor with equity, and strike the wicked with the breath of His mouth. He is the King we desperately need.

And yet Christ is not only the shoot that rises from Jesse's stump. Isaiah calls Him the *Root*—the very source and origin of life itself. The One who comes after Jesse is also the One who was before Jesse. He is David's Son and David's Lord. The kingdom grows from Him, depends on Him, and flourishes through Him alone.

Paul takes this prophecy and opens it wide for the Gentile world. In Romans 15 he declares: *"The Root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."* The Root of Jesse is not simply Israel's hope—He is the world's hope. Jew and Gentile alike find their life in Him. The promises given to Abraham were never for one nation alone; they were always meant to spill over into the nations, to gather all people into the mercy of God.

But notice how Paul uses this promise. He doesn't simply say, "The Root of Jesse has come." He says, in effect, "Because He has come, *you can have hope right now.*" He writes: *"Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* The prophets were not meant to remain on the page. Their words are meant to reach into your present struggles and plant hope like a seed that refuses to die.

Where in your life do you see only a stump—something cut down, worn out, or broken? A relationship? A dream? A season of faith that feels dry? Advent reminds us that God does His best work in stumps. He brings life where we see only loss. He makes a way where we see no way at all.

May the Root of Jesse—your Savior, your King, your Hope—cause new life to spring up in you, and may the God of hope fill you "with all joy and peace in believing," that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope!