

JANUARY 2026

THE LIGHT

A NEWSLETTER OF EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, BASTROP, TEXAS



From the Pastor's Desk

Taking the 'Angst' Out of Auld Lang Syne

Most English speakers in the world are familiar with the melody and, perhaps, the first few lines of *Auld Lang Syne*, that Scots anthem that rings in the New Year. At 11:59:50 on New Year's Eve, as the countdown starts, glasses and hopes are raised in cheer, a chorus of voices promises to not forget the faces and experiences of the year gone by ("Should old acquaintances be forgot, and never brought to mind..."). The year ahead sparkles and effervesces like all those champagne flutes raised overhead.

For most of my adult life, however, I have welcomed each and every New Year with some regret and faced the angst of whatever awaits me over the course of the months ahead. I habitually look back upon the year gone by, wishing I could change even just one of the wrongs I had committed or reverse even just one bad decision. While everyone resolved to lose 30 pounds or take up guitar or learn another language, I preferred to dwell for a time on what could have been and simply blink catatonically at what the future holds. Would the coming year leave me, as Tennessee Ernie Ford sings in *Sixteen Tons* (the pessimist's *Auld Angst Syne*), just "another year older and deeper in debt?" *Sigh*.

No! In 2026, things are going to be different. It's time for a new New Year's outlook and even a few resolutions, the first of which is to no longer allow ghosts of the past year to haunt me. We can't go back.

I know there were times in 2025 when I failed, when I wronged someone, betrayed a trust, or put myself first. Most regrettable are those decisions I made that didn't include God, when I selfishly grabbed the joystick from Him and played alone. Most of the world forgets that pastors are sinners, too.

I am resolved to recycle the bad, to let last year teach me how to better live in this one. I will put forth a sincere effort to try and right past wrongs, to give to God those that I can't, and, rather than stare into 2026 like a deer in the headlights, I will try and do the very best I can with all I have been given. I look forward to making my 41st year of marriage the very best so far, to new outreach ministry possibilities, to taking better care of myself and the world around me, to another year of trying to help folks who are grappling with an increasingly divisive, disordered, and dysfunctional world to get a grip on what's important.

Our Pastor



REV. E.B. HOLSCHUH
pastor@epiphanybastrop.org
Voicemail/Text: 512-798-3682

Services

@Bastrop SDA Church
3300 East State Highway 21

Sunday School 10:00 am
Fellowship 11:00 am
Divine Service 11:30 am

Church Council

Jeremy Clifton, President
512-309-5133
augustana@gmail.com

Dave Layland, Head Elder
512-332-2144
david@thelaylands.net

Tom Rosser, Treasurer
512-567-1306
rosser.tom@gmail.com

Esther Monroe, Secretary
847-848-5126
monroe.esther@gmail.com

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In fact, I think I can even help to make this New Year brighter for others, through something as simple as an expression of gratitude. I resolve to remember to thank those who serve and whose services I rely on every day—police officers and other first responders, servicemembers and veterans, grocery store clerks, my growing list of medical professionals, mail carriers, etc., and, of course, my wife. Most importantly, I will continue to daily thank God, who is at the top of a seemingly infinite list of those who do for me (and you).

This new 2026 and I still need to get to know one another a little better, but I have a good feeling about this one. No weight loss vows, no promises to learn to play the piano or speak Chinese (okay, I may have to put a little more effort into Gaelic...), no angst.

This New Year I'm taking the "angst" out of *Auld Lang Syne*!

Pastor E.B.



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



Epiphany At-A-Glance

Know someone who wants to know more about our church or Lutheranism? Share this QR Code to the "What We Believe" section of our website.

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Epiphany now has unlimited access to RightNow Media—the world's largest streaming library of video Bible study resources. This extensive library has more than 20,000 videos that can be used as part of a group study or for personal devotions, and many series include free discussion guides and handouts.



Epiphany has a podcast! It is available on popular podcast apps, or at peacebewithyou.podbean.com



OUR CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR IS ON OUR WEBSITE (EPIPHANYBASTROP.ORG); TO ADD AN EVENT, EMAIL SECRETARY@EPIPHANYBASTROP.ORG



Mailing Address:
489 Agnes St. - Ste. 112-117
Bastrop, TX 78602
Secretary: 512-907-0717

GIVE ONLINE BY SCANNING THIS QR CODE OR VISITING OUR WEBSITE



 epiphanybastrop.org
 church@epiphanybastrop.org
 Epiphany Lutheran Church
  [@epiphanybastrop](https://www.instagram.com/epiphanybastrop)

Yay God!

FIRST INDOOR SERVICE AT THE NEW PROPERTY - CHRISTMAS EVE



We will have an outdoor service and meal at 124 Three Oaks Lane on **Saturday, May 2, 2026** to dedicate our land, as well as commemorate the third anniversary of our congregation's chartering (5/7/23).

Birthdays

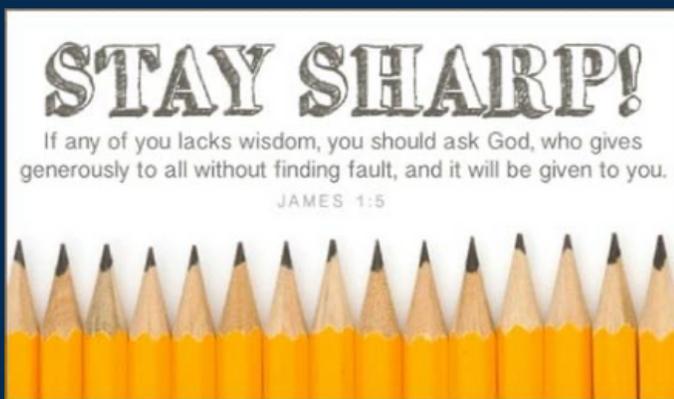
Erik Botha.	January 1
Deebo Kunze	January 4
Alex Monroe	January 9
Sandy Sneck	January 19

COMMUNITY NEWS

January 1 - December 31, 2026

This reading plan from The Bible Project is a smart-phone friendly plan to keep you in God's word for 365 days. Each day you'll read a few chapters as you make your way from Genesis to Revelation. Each day's reading also includes a Psalm for you to meditate on through quiet reflection and prayer. To get started, download the YouVersion Bible App.

One Story that Leads to Jesus
2nd Annual Spend the Year in Scripture Challenge



New Zoom Study

Eyewitness Bible Series: James

Thursdays, beginning January 8
6PM

6-session study composed of narrative accounts by Bible personalities of different topics discussed in James, such as Barnabas speaking of wisdom or King Solomon discussing foolishness, to provide an in-depth view of the main subjects in this short New Testament book Join us!

Register: bit.ly/ELC-James

Sisters of the Light

Wednesday, January 21

6:00PM

Fellowship House | 124 Three Oaks Ln

We will be wrapping up *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanna Weaver. Whether you have read or not, you're invited to join us in the discussion and fellowship.

Bring a salad or snack to share.

Twice monthly devotion and prayer gathering

MEETS 1ST/3RD TUESDAYS | 3PM

JOIN US FOR

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT

ChristianBook Giveback Program

Did you know that your purchases at Christianbook can help fund our congregation? Just visit christianbook.com/apps/giveback and enter the Giveback ID for Epiphany Lutheran Church: **JQWHTN**. After this one-time signup, we'll be eligible to receive 4% cashback on your purchases.



COMMUNITY NEWS



FAITH LUTHERAN
HIGH SCHOOL OF CENTRAL TEXAS



January 2026 Newsletter

FAITH LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL | 2025-26

BELONG



Thank you! Thank you!

There have been so many people, organizations, groups and churches who have contributed to the success and growth of FLHS this past semester. We are so incredibly thankful and blessed! Thank YOU!

End of Year Giving

Thank you for your support of Faith Lutheran High School during our End of Year "Forward in Faith" campaign. If the holiday season was just too busy or you simply forgot, we are still accepting donations to support the ministry at FLHS. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mrs. Kueck at (979) 242-2889.

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!

Contact us:

www.flhstx.org (979) 242-2889

Shadow Days

Shadow days are a great opportunity for prospective students to follow us for a day and experience what FLHS is all about. Parents, call us at (979) 242-2889 today to set up a shadow day for your child.

Scholarship Program

Have you ever had this thought? "Faith Lutheran High School sounds great, but my family can't afford it." We firmly believe that EVERY family desiring a Christ-centered education for their children should have the opportunity to attend FLHS. We have a Tuition Scholarship Program with funds available, and EVERY family who applies (through TADS) will receive some assistance. We'll do everything in our power to make sure that money isn't the reason you don't choose FLHS.

Free Wednesday mornings?

Join us for our weekly Chapel Worship Service every Wednesday, beginning at 10:30 am. Our teachers and local association pastors lead us in worship throughout the year.

Athletic Programs Underway

Our FLHS archery and basketball seasons are underway. Please watch the bulletins for updates and visit our website to see the full schedule. Join us and come cheer on our Falcons to victory!!





The Little Light

Children's Sunday School



Elementary (pre-K to 5th Grade)

We typically start together to learn our lesson of day, then split into two groups (pre-K to 2nd and 3rd to 5th) to finish the rest of our activities.

January 11 (Final Advent Lesson)

The Greatest Journey – Emmanuel, God With Us The manger was just the beginning – the gospel story continues.



ENDURING FAITH



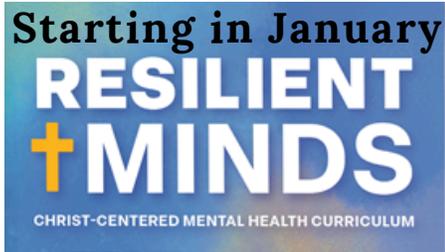
The Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum, by CPH features a Christ-centered, three-year chronological survey of Bible history with a goal of helping our children grow deeper in their understanding of God's Word. Unit 7 starts exploring the New Testament. This exploration continues into Unit 8.

January 18 (Lesson 6) “The Kingdom of Children” is this week’s lesson. The disciples try to prevent the people from bringing their children to Jesus. Jesus rebukes the disciples and draws the children near to Himself, using a child as an example of how believers receive the kingdom of God.

January 25 (Lesson 7) This week, we study “The Passion Prediction.” In the week before His crucifixion, Jesus goes to dinner in Bethany, the hometown of Lazarus, whom He had just raised from the dead. Martha serves as Jesus and Lazarus recline at table. Meanwhile, Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with expensive ointment while wiping them with her hair, preparing Him for burial. When Judas voices his objections, Jesus tells him to leave her alone and points to His upcoming death.

February 1 (Lesson 8) “The King Arrives” serves as the theme for this week’s lesson. Following Jesus’ unusual directions, two disciples bring a donkey and her young colt to transport Jesus into Jerusalem. Throwing their cloaks upon the colt, they proceed into the city. There, the crowds spread their cloaks on the road and cut palm branches to line the way as they shout, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9).

Middle School (6th to 8th Grade)



Christ-centered Mental Health Curriculum from Concordia Publishing House helps you equip your students with the resiliency and strategies they need for the ups and downs of life.

Prayers of the People

Have a Prayer Request? Please share any prayer requests on the Prayer Requests sheet as you enter for worship 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.

Please continue to pray for

- David - poor surgery outcome
- Nellie - breathing issues
- Tonya - tumor
- Deebo and Norma
- Charles - cancer
- Clayton - cancer
- Fritz
- Rev. Timothy Dinger
- Lauren - MS treatments
- Ray's Nephew
- Mrs. Gert and Anita
- Mrs. Kris Fisher
- Ebony and her Husband

400 Years of Silence

Christians often speak of the “400 years of silence” to describe the time between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament. That phrase doesn’t mean *nothing* happened—quite the opposite. It means something more specific and theological.

During this intertestamental period, there was no new prophetic word in Israel. The last voice had faded with Malachi, and the people waited—generation after generation—under foreign rule, with promises still unfulfilled. God had not abandoned His people, but He had chosen to be silent.

That silence was not emptiness. It was preparation.

In the quiet, God was shaping history; it was a time of significant political shifts (Persian to Greek to Roman rule) and cultural development, where new Jewish sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) emerged, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) was created, and writings like the Apocrypha appeared, all shaping the world into which Jesus would be born. The people learned what centuries of sermons could not teach—that salvation would not come through power, politics, or reform, but only by God’s own intervention.

Then, suddenly, the silence broke.

“The word of God came to John...” (Luke 3:2). After centuries without a prophet, God spoke again—not in a palace, but in the wilderness; not to kings, but to a man clothed like the prophets of old. John the Baptist did not bring a new message of self-improvement. He pointed away from himself and toward the One who was already standing among them.

The long silence teaches us to wait. It teaches us that God’s faithfulness is not measured by how often He speaks, but by whether He keeps His promises. And when God finally speaks, He does not merely send words—He sends His Son.

In our own seasons of silence, when prayers seem unanswered and heaven feels quiet, we are tempted to think God is absent. But the manger and the cross tell a different story. God is never late. The silence itself is often part of His mercy.

The “400 years of silence” was not divine absence, but divine restraint. God was acting in history, not dictating new Scripture.