

Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> 2026

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany



**Connect. Grow. Multiply.**

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Bastrop, TX 78602**

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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 – Mark McClain  
Lay Reader – Jeremy Clifton  
Assisting Elder – Clayton Wolf  
Usher – Jeremy Clifton  
Acolyte – Calvin Monroe

## AS WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

### *The Righteousness of Christ*

Jesus warns that “*unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 5:20), but He also calls His imperfect people “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*” (Matt. 5:13, 14). That’s because the Lord Jesus came not to abolish the Law or the prophets, “*but to fulfill them*” (Matt. 5:17) in perfect faith and love. Since He does and teaches all of God’s commandments, He is “*called great in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 5:19). God manifests His “*demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” in “*Jesus Christ and him crucified*” (1 Cor. 2:2–4), and through the preaching of the Gospel He gives His “*secret and hidden wisdom*” (1 Cor. 2:7). Christ gives this perfect righteousness to His people, and it leads them to true fasting, which is “*to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free*” (Is. 58:6) and “*to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house*” (Is. 58:7).

### DIVINE SERVICE SETTING FOUR

**Prelude**

Selected Music

**Welcome and Greeting**

Pastor

**Announcements**

**Opening Hymn**

“*Rise, Shine, You People*”

LSB 825

*(stand)*

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

*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 119:9-16

**P** How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By guarding it according to your word.

**C With my whole heart I seek you;  
let me not wander from your commandments!**

**P** I have stored up your word in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you.

**C Blessèd are you, O LORD;  
teach me your statutes!**

**P** With my lips I declare  
all the just decrees of your mouth.

**C In the way of your testimonies I delight  
as much as in all riches.**

**P** I will meditate on your precepts  
and fix my eyes on your ways.

**C I will delight in your statutes;  
I will not forget your word.**

***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.*

**Kyrie**

*Mark 10:47*



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

**Gloria in Excelsis**

*Luke 2:14; John 1:29*



**C** 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;  
2 To You, O sole - be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;  
3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je - sus' birth!  
O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.  
For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor - shipped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—  
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,  
You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n - ly King.  
Where You in pow'r are seat - ed At God's right hand on high—  
In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

## 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.

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*(sit)*

## Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 58:3-9a

<sup>3</sup>“Why have we fasted, and you see it not?

Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?

Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to hit with a wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day  
will not make your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day for a person to humble himself?

Is it to bow down his head like a reed,  
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

Will you call this a fast,  
and a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup>“Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

<sup>8</sup>Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’”

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup>And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

<sup>6</sup>Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup>But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

**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 5:13-20

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

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

<sup>13</sup>[Jesus said:] “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the

kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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

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

*(sit)*

**Hymn of the Day**

*“God Has Spoken by His Prophets”*

LSB 583

**Sermon**

*A Faith that Keeps the Cross in View*

*1 Corinthians 2:1-12*

*(stand)*

**Nicene Creed**

**C** I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and

**the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and  
glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ✠ of the world to come. 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 meet, 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; for what had been hidden from before the foundation of the world You have made known to the nations in Your Son. In Him, being found in the substance of our mortal nature, You have manifested the fullness of Your 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*

**☩ 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**

*“Thy Strong Word”*

LSB 578

*(stand)*

# Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32



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**

*“Jesus Shall Reign”*

LSB 832

**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.

### TABLE OF DUTIES

#### *Pastors and Preachers*

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence...not a novice...holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convict those who contradict. 1 Timothy 3:2-4 and 6; Titus 1-9.

## SERMON NOTES: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

### *A Faith that Keeps the Cross in View*

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is God's wisdom revealed; the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ crucified is God's power to save those who \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the world is \_\_\_\_\_ to understanding and believing in only what can be observed with the \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. God's \_\_\_\_\_ is revealed by the \_\_\_\_\_ and only understood by the spiritually mature.
  4. Paul spoke the \_\_\_\_\_ from God's Word, a \_\_\_\_\_ centered on Christ crucified; we \_\_\_\_\_ should do likewise.
  5. God's \_\_\_\_\_ was revealed in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
  6. Our \_\_\_\_\_ is bound to a \_\_\_\_\_ that keeps the \_\_\_\_\_ in view.
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## 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.



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**10am Adult Sunday School:** Since God never sent us a specific list of what to include, who exactly decided the Bible should contain the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but not the Gospels of Judas, Thomas, and Mary? Join us as we continue with the third session of our video study, *Lost Books?*, next Sunday!

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**Ash Wednesday Worship and Wednesday Midweek Gatherings** during Lent will be held at Three Oaks location. Ash Wednesday service on 2/18 at 7pm; midweek gatherings at 6:30pm (light supper, video study) on 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18 and 3/25.

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Answers to Sermon Notes:  
1. The *cross* is God's wisdom revealed; the *message* of Christ crucified is God's power to save those who *believe*.  
2. The *wisdom* of the world is *limited* to understanding and believing in only what can be observed with the *senses*.  
3. God's *wisdom* is revealed by the *Holy Spirit* and only understood by the spiritually mature.  
4. Paul spoke the *truth* from God's Word, a *truth* centered on Christ crucified; we *Christians* should do likewise.  
5. God's *wisdom* was revealed in the *person* of *Jesus*.  
6. Our *salvation* is bound to a *faith* that keeps the *cross* in view.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** to help with the dedication service on Saturday, May 2. Contact Linda Hanson or Terri Rosser.

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**Thursday 6pm Zoom video study:** Join us for *Eyewitness Bible Series: James*. This study is 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. There is still 1 session left. Register: [bit.ly/ELC-James](http://bit.ly/ELC-James)

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**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 [kfu.org](http://kfu.org) and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social: @KFUOradio on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/KFUOradio), [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.

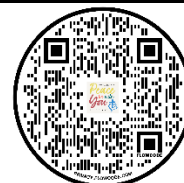


**ChristianBook Giveback Program:** Did you know that your purchases at Christianbook can help fund our congregation? Just visit [christianbook.com/apps/giveback](http://christianbook.com/apps/giveback) and enter the Giveback ID for Epiphany Lutheran Church: JQWHTN. After this one-time signup, we’ll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

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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).



## **THIS WEEK AT EPIPHANY:**

### **Sunday, February 8<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

### **Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup>**

- 6:00pm – Zoom Study – Eyewitness Bible Series: James

### **Sunday, February 15<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

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## **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...

- Rev. Andrew and Megan Fedder and their 5 children, Wesley, Beatrix, Charlie, Rosalind, and John-Paul - missionaries in the Czech Republic
  - Lisa Clontz
  - Fred Sager
  - Gert Schriner
  - Carl Sneck
-



## Connect. Grow. Multiply.

*Connect. Grow. Multiply.* This is our congregation's tagline, three words never intended as a clever slogan—it's a distillation of Jesus' own plan, lived out first in the 1st-century Church and still unfolding today.

When Jesus called fishermen, tax collectors, zealots, and skeptics, he began by connecting them to himself. *"Follow me,"* he said—and they did (Matthew 4:19). Around tables, along dusty roads, and in crowded homes, Jesus gathered people who had little in common except their need for him. After the resurrection and Pentecost, that same pattern continued. The apostles connected people not to an idea or an ethnicity, but to the crucified and risen Christ. Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women were drawn into one Body through Word and Baptism. The Church grew as Christ Himself connected sinners to Himself—and to one another.

Once connected, the Church grew. Growth in the first century wasn't about influence or numbers; it was about formation. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers"* (Acts 2:42). Believers were shaped by Scripture, sustained by the Sacrament, strengthened by prayer, and formed through shared life in Christ. This was slow, Spirit-worked growth—faith taking root across cultures, languages, and communities.

And then, inevitably, the Church multiplied. Those who were gathered and taught were sent. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19). Ordinary believers carried the Gospel into homes, marketplaces, prisons, and ports. Apostles crossed borders. Congregations were planted where the name of Jesus had never been spoken. Multiplication wasn't self-promotion; it was overflow. The Gospel could not be contained.

That same movement continues today. We **Connect** around Christ crucified, not personalities or preferences. We **Grow** as the Spirit shapes us through Word and Sacrament. And we **Multiply** as God sends us—into families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and cultures—with His message of hope, love, and forgiveness.

This isn't *our* plan. It's God's plan. And by His grace, we're part of it.