

Sunday, February 22nd 2026

The First Sunday in Lent



Connect. Grow. Multiply.

Mailing Address:

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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.



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.

SERVANTS DURING WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

Pastor – Rev. E.B. Holschuh
Musician – Leann McClain
Lay Reader – Jeremy Clifton
Assisting Elder – Clayton Wolf
Usher – Harlan Robb
Acolyte – Calvin Monroe

AS WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING:

Jesus' Righteous Obedience to the Father Leads to the Justification of All

Following His Baptism, Jesus is “*led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil*” (Matt. 4:1). As He takes upon Himself the curse of our sin and sets Himself against our enemy, He trusts His Father’s voice and waits upon His Father’s hand for all things. The devil questions His sonship, but the beloved and well-pleasing Son remains faithful and lives “*by every word that comes from the mouth of God*” (Matt. 4:4). Jesus patiently suffers hunger in His mortal flesh and returns to the dust whence man was taken, and by His pain He brings forth food for all the children of men (Gen. 3:18–19). By the sweat of His brow, we eat the fruit of His cross, even as our nakedness is covered by His righteousness. Although all people live in bondage to death through the trespass of the first man, Adam, all the more “*have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many*” (Rom. 5:15). His righteous obedience “*leads to justification and life for all men*” (Rom. 5:18).

DIVINE SERVICE SETTING FOUR

Prelude		Selected Music
Welcome and Greeting		Pastor
Announcements		
Opening Hymn	“ <i>O Christ, You Walked the Road</i> ”	LSB 424
	<i>(stand)</i>	

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.

Psalms 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 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.

C **Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—**

P no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

C **For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.**

P On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

C **You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.**

*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.

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; 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

Genesis 3:1-21

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of

the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle Reading

Romans 5:12-19

¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(stand)

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

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

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴But he answered, “**It is written,**

“**Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**”

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you,”
and

“On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

⁷Jesus said to him, “**Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’**” ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, “**Be gone, Satan! For it is written,**

“**You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.**”

¹¹Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

(sit)

Hymn of the Day

“A Mighty Fortress”

LSB 656

Sermon

The Sin Virus

Romans 5:12-19

(stand)

Nicene Creed

**☐ 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, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. 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:

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."

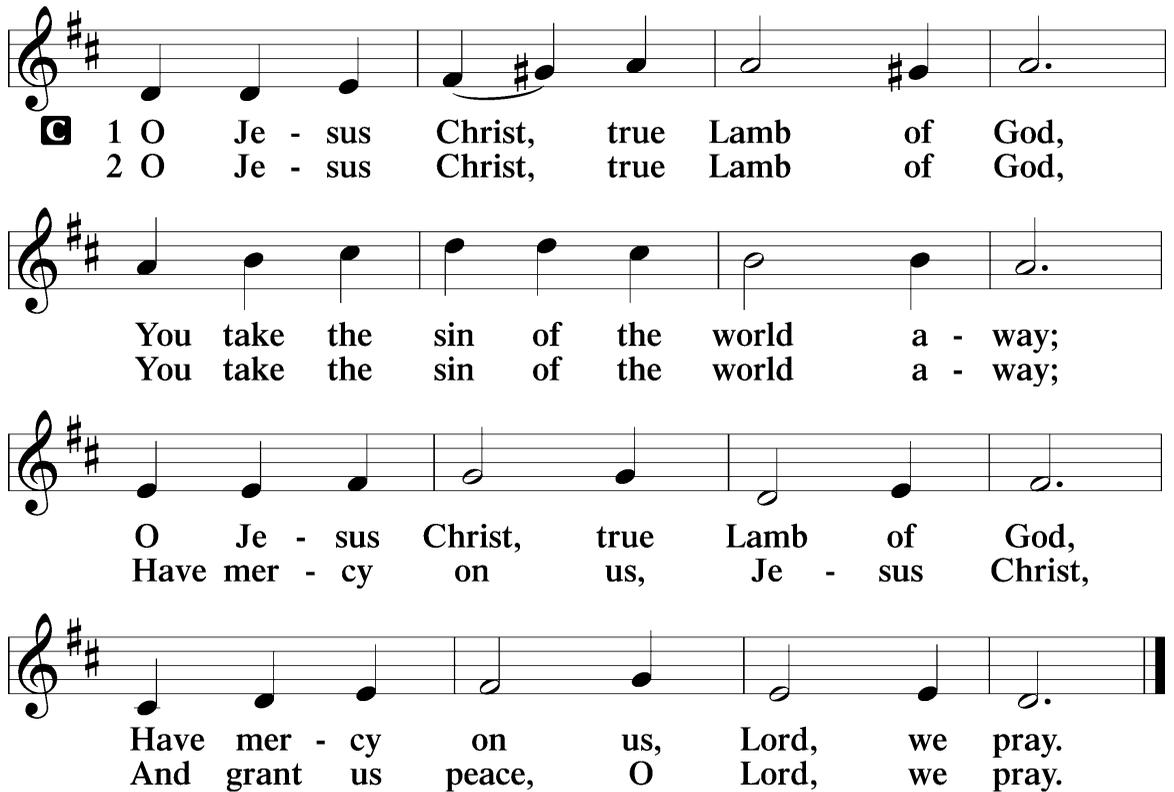
Pax Domini

John 20:19

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

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



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

“The Tree of Life”

LSB 561

(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

“On My Heart Imprint Your Image”

LSB 422

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

Civil Government

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you then want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who does evil. Romans 13:1-4.

SERMON NOTES: Romans 5:12-19

The Sin Virus

1. Adam and Eve gave into _____ and ate from the tree of knowledge, setting off a far-reaching _____ of _____, the first of which was expulsion from the Garden of Eden.
2. Adam and Eve carried the _____ into a fallen world, a _____, congenital condition that would leave no human untouched.
3. The “_____” Paul speaks of in verse 15 who died without the _____ were constituted sinners; in other words, the sin virus passed from _____ generation to generation.
4. All that Adam _____ by his _____ and disobedience, Christ _____ by His obedience and death on the Cross.
5. Martin Luther refers to Original _____ as the Old _____ in his _____ Catechism.
6. Lutherans believe that in _____ we are freed not from Original Sin itself, but from its _____ consequence—death; in the resurrection the sin _____ will be destroyed.

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.

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

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.



10am Adult Sunday School: Next Sunday we'll begin *Symbols of Our Savior*, a 5-week Lent video study that will explore how God uses simple, even surprising symbols to reveal the depth of Christ's saving work (a cross, a table set for sinners, broken bread, poured wine, and waving palm branches). Join us!

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

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

Voters' Meeting Next Sunday: We will have a brief Called Voters' Meeting on Sunday, March 1st after the service for the purpose of authorizing one ordained delegate and one lay delegate from our congregation to vote for the President of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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 for a link to listen to the Lutheran Hour live. You can also listen to The Lutheran Hour on the local Austin station KLBK (590 AM or 99.7 FM) at 7am on Sunday.

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 and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social: **@KFUOradio** on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/kfuo), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/kfuo), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/kfuo).

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 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 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.



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 (or just scan the QR code).



Answers to Sermon Notes:

1. Adam and Eve gave into **temptation** and ate from the tree of knowledge, setting off a far-reaching **chain of events**, the first of which was expulsion from the Garden of Eden.
2. Adam and Eve carried the **sin virus** into a fallen world, a **fatal** congenital condition that would leave no human untouched.
3. The “**many**” Paul speaks of in verse 15 who died without the **Law** were constituted sinners; in other words, the sin virus passed from **Adam** to generation to generation.
4. All that Adam **lost** by his **sin** and disobedience, Christ **regained** by His obedience and death on the Cross.
5. Martin Luther refers to Original **sin** as the Old **Adam** in his **Small Catechism**.
6. Lutherans believe that in **baptism** we are freed not from Original Sin itself, but from its **fatal** consequence—death; in the resurrection the sin **virus** will be destroyed.

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.

Please continue to pray for...

- Rev. Daniel and Kathy Conrad and their daughter Ana (now enrolled in college) - missionaries in the Dominican Republic
 - Tom and Marianne
 - Fred Sager
 - Gert Schriener
 - Elaine Ottinger
 - Sandy Giro
 - Shannon Kasper
 - Family and Friends of Pat Ketchum – Stacey Schmidt's Mother
-

THIS WEEK AT EPIPHANY:

Sunday, February 22nd

- 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

Wednesday, February 25th

- 6:30pm – Lent Midweek Gathering

Sunday, March 1st

- 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 Worship Service – Voters' Meeting
-



Why Aren't the Apocrypha in Our Bible?

From time to time someone notices that Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bibles contain additional books—such as 1 Maccabees or Tobit—that are not included in Lutheran editions. Why? Were books removed from the Bible?

The short answer is no. Lutherans receive the Old Testament as it was preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures—the same collection recognized within Judaism in the time of Jesus: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The additional books, commonly called the Apocrypha, were written in the centuries between the Old and New Testaments. They were widely read and valued, especially in Greek-speaking Jewish communities, but they were not part of the Hebrew canon.

When Martin Luther translated the Bible into German in 1534, he did not discard the Apocrypha. Instead, he placed them in a separate section with this helpful note: "These are books which are not held equal to Holy Scripture, but are useful and good to read." That sentence still captures the historic Lutheran position. These writings may provide helpful history—especially about the period leading up to the birth of Christ—and they contain wisdom and devotional reflections. However, they are not the foundation for doctrine.

Why the distinction? First, the New Testament consistently treats the Hebrew Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God. Jesus and the apostles quote from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms as Scripture. Second, some teachings found in certain Apocryphal books do not align clearly with the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Because Scripture interprets Scripture, books that do not harmonize with the prophetic and apostolic witness were not received as canonical.

It is important to understand that the Church did not create the Bible, but recognized the books that already bore the marks of divine inspiration. The Lutheran Confessions, particularly the Formula of Concord, affirm that the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures are the "only rule and norm" for faith and life. The canon was received over time as the Spirit led the Church to recognize those writings that consistently proclaimed the saving work of God.

This ought not trouble us. On the contrary, it should comfort us. Many ancient writings have been lost to history. Others were preserved for a time and later set aside. Yet the Lord has faithfully preserved the Scriptures that proclaim Christ crucified and risen. The books necessary for our salvation have not disappeared. They remain, read and preached week after week.

So when questions about the Apocrypha arise, we can simply say that while we value these writings as history and edification, but we confess the canonical Scriptures alone as God-breathed. And in those Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, the Holy Spirit gives us everything we need to know Christ and to be saved.