

St. John's Journal

Volume 52, Issue 1

EPIPHANY – CHRIST AND HIS MISSION REVEALED

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The Epiphany of Our Lord is a church festival with a fixed date, January 6. This year we will observe it on Sunday, January 4. The word “epiphany” means “appearance” or “manifestation” or “revelation.” So Epiphany is the time of the Church Year when we focus on Jesus' appearance – the revelation of who He is and what He has come to do.

The visit of the wise men (Matt. 2:1-12) reveals both who Jesus is and what He has come to do. The wise men bowed down before Jesus in divine worship, revealing His identity as true God. They presented Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh – symbolic of His kingship, His deity, and His impending death and burial. And the wise men were Gentiles, revealing that Jesus' kingly life and death would be for the blessing of *all* people, not just the people of Old Testament Israel.

Epiphany therefore reveals Christ's mission, as well. He is the One sent (“mission” means “sending”) by His heavenly Father to bring about God's kingdom of grace by living and dying for all people. In other words, Christ's mission is to bring forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation to everyone. Christ accomplished His mission, of course, through His perfect life as our Substitute, His sacrificial death, and His glorious resurrection from the dead – all on our behalf.

And yet the mission of Christ continues to this day! Even now Christ is still accomplishing His mission by distributing the benefits of His salvation to all who believe in Him. Only, now He is doing this through the instrumentality of His church. The mission Christ has given to His church – to make disciples of all the nations by baptizing and teaching them – this is in reality the ongoing mission of Christ Himself.

The Epiphany season is a good time to give attention to this ongoing mission of Christ. We understand clearly that Christ has not called all His believers to publicly baptize and preach and teach. He has entrusted these responsibilities to His called ministers. Even so, Christ has called all His believers to participate in His ongoing mission. Here are a few things all Christ's people can and should be doing in support

of His mission:

- Bring your children to the Lord to receive His gift of Holy Baptism.
- Teach your children, and as you have opportunity, also grandchildren, the word of God at home. Read to them from the Bible or a good children's Bible or Bible story book. Help them memorize the chief parts of the Catechism. Bring them to Sunday School regularly, and when possible, enroll them in our Lutheran day school.
- Be in the Lord's house regularly to hear His word and partake of His Supper, so as to be strengthened in faith and built up for service in His kingdom.
- Speak to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, relatives, and other acquaintances about the saving love of Christ. Don't make yourself a pest; but “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15)
- Invite those people to church, and make arrangements to bring them with you. Sit with them in church, and help them along through the service.
- Cheerfully bring generous and sacrificial offerings in proportion to the way the Lord has blessed you for the support of those who labor in Christ's mission as full time church workers.
- Pray for Christian pastors, teachers, and missionaries. Become informed on what the opportunities and needs for mission work are, and pray for these things.

May this Epiphany be a time for all of us to grow in our appreciation of Jesus Christ and His saving mission to us. And may it be a time for us to grow in our willingness to serve Him as helpful instruments of His saving love as His mission continues.

- Pastor Bishop



Christian Education
Sunday School

Perfect Attendance

November 2025

Sixth Grade
Aiden Harms

**JANUARY
BIRTHDAYS**



Jan 01

Darian Becker

Jan 02

Mary Beck
Hunter Hall
Chelsea Hamlet

Jan 05

Nicole Hurst
Tiffany Matthews

Jan 06

Erica DeBoer

Jan 08

Brianna Nash

Jan 09

Sarah Adkins
Brianna Morrison

Jan 10

Sharon Becker
Nicole Kelley

Jan 11

Noah Dingerson
Carol Long
Donovan Warning
Danielle Watson

Jan 13

Megan Gaitros
Danny Sego

Jan 14

Tammy Gottman
Brock Norman
Erin Wilson

Jan 16

Hayden Jackson
Shannon Higdon

Jan 17

Aminta Liescheidt

Jan 18

Megan Walsh

Jan 19

Jaylah Dalton
Jesse Garmon
Michele Spelbring

Jan 20

Janet Lawson
Nathaniel Nelson

Jan 21

Sara Nafziger

Jan 22

Rhonda Bowman

Jan 23

Michael Sheckler

Jan 25

Donald Houge
Melanie Tiona
Ryan Widby

Jan 26

Jaxon Allen
Samantha Sego
Terry Swearingen

Jan 27

Pastor Glenn Niemann

Jan 28

Lincoln Ferguson
Kathryn Ford
Jeffery Gottman
Dane Hoover

Jan 29

Matthew Gruden
Jacob Kelley

Jan 30

Wade Peacock

**JANUARY
ANNIVERSARIES**

Jan 03

Michael & Leah Sipka

Jan 15

Donald & Mae Houge

Jan 27

James & Nona Buster



PARISH NOTES



Church Attendance

Nov 2025— **559—16** services
 Nov 2024— **514—13** services
 Nov 2023— **556—13** services

Sunday School Attendance Year-to-Date

Nov 2025: **1,428**
 Nov 2024: **1,404**
 Nov 2023: **1,494**

Communion Assistance

Jan 04
 8:00 Dave Drockelman
 10:30 Jon Bolt

Jan 18
 8:00 Vince Tennell
 10:30 Jon Bolt

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES are in the gym for those who have not picked theirs up yet. If you see a member of your family or a friend who has not picked up their envelopes, it would be appreciated if you would take theirs and deliver them for us.

Thank you for your help.

GREETERS: It is always nice to have someone greet us as we come into church. So we have put up sign-up sheets for January, February and March on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please consider being a greeter.

Acolytes

Jan 4 10:30 Kenna Donovan
Jan 11 10:30 Silas Gould
Jan 18 10:30 Aiden Harms
Jan 25 10:30 Kenna Donovan

January Ushers

8:00

James Lonergan Scott Stalter
 Merle Wiseman

10:30

Brian Ford Trent Hoover
 Brian Umbach

Videographer

Rod Bollinger

Worship

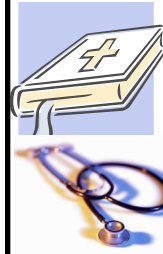
Brian Fuelberth

SHUT-INS for the MONTH: Even though some of our members cannot attend church, we want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers and let them know they are not forgotten. Please send a card or pay a visit to these shut-ins this month.

Shut ins for January are: Honor Deiss, Charter Senior Living, 2700 S. 14th St., Apt. 205, Pekin, Marcille Frevert, Charter Senior Living, 2700 S. 14th St., Apt. 203, Pekin and Darrell & Donna Hansen, 100 Santa Maria Ct., Pekin..

Thank you from your St. John's Ladies Guild

HOSPITALIZATIONS AND HOME COMMUNION VISITS



If you or someone from your family is hospitalized or scheduled to go into the hospital, please contact the church office, so that Pastor Bishop knows about it and can visit you in the

hospital. The hospitals do not contact us. Sandy calls the Peoria hospitals on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to find out if there are any St. John's members there. If you tell them when you are admitted that you are a St. John's member, you will likely be on their list, and we can usually find out. So please help us stay informed so Pastor can serve you.

If you or someone else you know in the congregation has difficulty getting to church and needs to be on the Home Communion list, even if just for a while, please contact the church office, so that Pastor Bishop can visit you. This is an important part of his pastoral work, and he wants to do his best to serve everyone in need.

Thank you for your help with this.

Transferred To The Church Triumphant

Donna Corso
 07-25-42
 11-14-25

Barb Theleritis
 02-10-44
 12-06-25

TREASURER'S REPORT

November 2025



	<u>November</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>
INCOME	\$243,122.48	\$610,733.50
EXPENSES	36,984.98	384,477.07
INCOME-EXPENSES	\$ 206,137.50	\$226,256.43
General Fund Accounts		
General Fund		15,754.36
General Fund CD #1192280		40,000.00
General Fund Schwab		218,001.29
General Fund Total		\$273,755.65
Educational Fund Accounts		
Educational Grant Fund Checking		1,948.56
Ed Grant CD LCMS 6/26		51,863.96
Ed Grant CD LCMS 12/22		51,835.93
Educational Grant Fund #2-Vanguard		65,549.47
Educational Fund Total		\$171,197.92
	171,085.28	
East Bluff Property		
East Bluff Property—Vanguard		39,910.66
East Bluff CD LCMS		53,741.35
East Bluff CD LCMS		53,770.40
Cat Stock at FMV		212,445.44
East Bluff Property		\$359,877.85
Memorial		
Memorial Fund Checking		21,879.62
Memorial Vanguard		98,104.59
Memorial—Busey CD #1192299		20,000.00
Memorial Fund Total		\$139,984.21
Building Fund Checking		27,103.33
Sunday School Fund Checking		8,438.24
TOTAL ASSETS		\$980,357.20
Checking Account Balance		
Checking Account Balance		75,124.11
TOTAL		\$ 75,124.11
LIABILITIES		
Payroll Liabilities		2,931.49
Misc. LCMS Orgs Fund		1,077.49
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$ 4,008.98
Fund Balance		
Net Income (Loss)		330,931.11
Capital Accounts		645,417.11
TOTAL FUND BALANCE		\$976,348.22
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE		\$980,357.20

HI-LITES OF ST. JOHN'S VOTERS ASSEMBLY

December 8, 2025

Ross Gould called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

The November Parish Report was reviewed. A motion was made by Dave Drockelman, seconded by Julie Wagner, to approve the November Parish Report. Motion carried.

The November meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Dorothy Sheckler, seconded by Bob Oliverius, to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Rod Bollinger reviewed the November Treasurer's Report. In November we had income of \$243,122.48, \$218,001.29 of which was due to the church being listed as the beneficiary on an IRA from a member who has passed. Excluding this donation, income for the month would have been \$25,121.19. Expenses for the month were \$36,984.98. The income from the IRA has been put into a separate account and Rod has asked the Voters to consider how they want to invest the money in the future. Items on the check register that are not normal monthly expenses were payments for envelopes for next year, gift cards for the Share Program, the purchase of a new microphone, the resurfacing of the parking lots, supplies for Friendship Sunday, and a payment for the annual lawn maintenance. Nancy Drockelman motioned, seconded by Diane Gould, to approve the November Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – Dave Kesselmayer reported that the board has filled all their open spots for next year. Sandy Ferguson has received a new computer and new software. Maintenance of the heating system will be done this coming Thursday. A & B Hunter cleaned the grease traps and drains. Maquet Plumbing will be coming out and checking the sewer lines with a camera to see what damage there might be to the pipes. The Trustees would like to proceed with the motion from last month's meeting to move forward with the planned updates to the cemetery property. Discussion took place as to the pros and cons of proceeding with this work. The Trustees motioned, seconded by Bob Oliverius, to approve taking no more than \$10,000.00 from the East Bluff Property fund to be used to complete the work at the cemetery to remove trees, excavate and lay down a gravel road. Motion carried.

Board of Elders – Dave Drockelman reported that the board is continuing to work on items on their agenda. The Elders are serving the meal before the Advent service this Wednesday. The Elders approved a request for help in the amount of \$200.00, which was approved.

Board of Finance – Rod Bollinger reported that the board met and finalized the budget for next year. Rod mentioned again that the board would like feedback from the Voters on how to proceed with the money received from the IRA.

Discussion took place with suggestions including putting the money in a money market, creating an endowment, investing with the Lutheran Church Investment Fund, investing part of the money and keeping some available for expenses that may be coming up on the building, or investing some of the money in the stock market. The board will take these suggestions under advisement.

Board of Christian Education – Laura Dobbelaire reported that the board has not met yet. The children are preparing for the Christmas program. Yesterday they participated in caroling to shut-ins. Good Shepherd collected about 600 cans during their can drive. Approximately half of the cans were donated to the Share Program here at church. They have started meeting to plan the auction for next year. Laura asked if anyone knew of any businesses that they could contact about possible donations.

John Neumann reported for Good Shepherd Lutheran School. The board will meet tomorrow night.

Board of Worship – Julie Wagner reported that the committee met on December 3rd. Julie noted that the board decorated the church on November 28th and 29th. Julie wanted to thank Pastor Bishop, Vince Tennell, Cheryl Taylor and Jacob Gould for their great help. The board is still looking for 2 members to complete their committee for next year. Julie also thanked Jim Lonergan for his service on the board over the past 6 years. The board hosted the first Advent dinner.

Board of Evangelism – Jennifer Kesselmayer indicated that the board will meet next Monday.

Board of Stewardship – No report.

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – No report.

East Bluff Property Committee – No report.

Constitution By-laws Committee – No report.

Unfinished business – Rod Bollinger reviewed the budget numbers. Overall, the budget is increasing by about 2.9% for the coming year. Ross Gould inquired as to whether it would be helpful to send something out to the congregation about giving and how expenses are increasing. Pastor Bishop indicated that it might be helpful. Bob Oliverius motioned, seconded by Dave Kesselmayer, to accept the budget as presented. Motion carried.

The slate of officers and board members was reviewed. There are many positions that still need to be filled. Diane Gould motioned, seconded by Dave

Drockelman, to close the nominations. Motion carried

New business – No new business.

A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Jennifer Kesselmayer, to close the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner
Secretary



A BIG THANK YOU TO THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO HELPED WITH DECORATING THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF OUR CHURCH FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

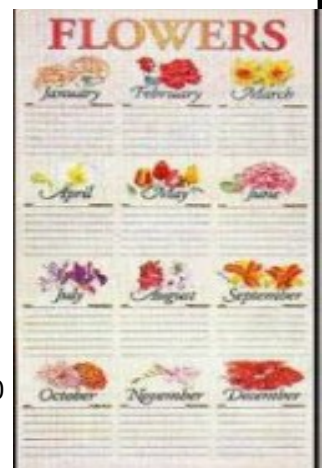


A SINCERE THANK YOU to everyone for all the prayers, cards, notes, gifts, and words of appreciation this Advent and Christmas. We deeply appreciate your Christian love and kindness. *Pastor Bishop and Deanna*

Lutherans for Life sent a letter thanking us for our donation to them.

The Flower Chart for 2026 is posted in the Narthex. Please sign-up for the Sunday(s) that you would like to provide flowers for the altar and **call the church office, 347-2136**, and let us know what you want in the bulletin.

If you would like a special arrangement for your date, please call Greenhouse Florist at 347-5921. There could be an additional cost. The cost for 2 vases is \$40 for 2 vases of flowers and \$10 for delivery, unless you order something special. Then we will let you know the cost.



Remember you can pick up your flowers after the 10:30 service (please leave the green liners) or Mon. to Fri. from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon.



Thank You

to all who gave a poinsettia
in memory of loved ones
or to beautify the sanctuary
during the Christmas services:



Don & Valerie Dobbelaire
Dave & Nancy Drockelman
Michelle & Zach Ferguson
Sandy Ferguson
Valerie Ferguson
Brian Fuelberth
Ross & Diane Gould
Hoover Family
Trent Hoover
Bob & Donna Hurst
Jimmy & Joyce Lonergan
Carol Long
Eric & Lisa Oller

In memory of Barb Theleritis
Rosetta Turner & Family in *loving memory of Larry*
Julie Wagner
Linda Wagner
Curt & Pam Woolsey

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Jan 5 No Student Attendance—Teacher Institute

Jan 6 Students return/Classes resume

Jan 16 PTL meeting 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 17 School Improvement Day Early Dismissal (Pre K
12 / K-8 12:30 pm)

Jan. 19 No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 30 School Improvement Day Early Dismissal (Pre K
12 / K-8 12:30 pm)

YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP (for ages 20-35) will meet
@ Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria
on Saturday, January 17, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Fellowship includes: food, games, movies, etc.
For more information regarding this, please see
bulletin board in gym.



LUTHERAN FOR LIFE “Did You Know”

by Peoria Area Lutherans for Life: Equipping Lutherans
to be Gospel motivated voices for life.

At week 6, the baby’s genitals begin to form. A baby is
male or female from the very moment of conception.
His or her sex is part of every cell that composes his or
her body. “You knit me together in my mother’s
womb.” Psalm 139:13 (NIV). God’s knitting project is
miraculous and Masterful.

Peoria Area Lutherans for Life is making preparations
for our important annual fundraising event, Pennies for
Life (Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026), and we need your help to
make it a success. Proceeds from this event help fund
our ongoing efforts to educate Lutherans to support life
from conception to natural death and by lending finan-
cial support to local pro-life organizations.

In Our Prayers

*If you know of anyone who needs to be added,
please let the church office know.*

Pastor Niemann	Sandy Morgan
Robert Rilea	Jeff Ferree
Peggy Farlin	Debbie Miller
Addie Burling	Julie Rilea
Eileen Tiona	Keith Gleason
Paula Jensen	Gabriella Kesselmayr
Suzanne Reising	Kellen Norman
Joyce Barnes	Lee Morgan
Ray Garber	Roy Dagit
John Durdle	Shirley Williamson
Bobby Gregory	Scott Ruschmeyer
Marilee Gregory	Megan Gould
Rosetta Turner	Melvyn Gentry
Bob Hurst	Michelle Watson
Pam Woolsey	Shirley Gentry
Tom Lappie	Cameron Conway
Honor Deiss	Marcille Frevert
Tina Williams	Vicki McKinley
Sandy Tennell	Donna Hansen
Bryan McGrath	Marlana Montgomery
Bob Oliverius	Janet Lawson

What did one wall say to the other wall?
I'll meet you at the corner!

Why is the moon always so hungry?
Because it's only full once a month.

St. John's Lutheran Church
711 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554

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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 270

Matt. 16:17-28

D	N	U	O	B	L	F	O	R	F	E	I	T	S	C
A	S	Y	E	K	D	I	C	R	O	S	S	B	H	R
N	D	N	I	H	E	B	T	R	U	T	H	U	B	E
G	R	L	S	U	S	E	J	W	E	D	R	I	E	T
E	A	U	S	T	O	N	O	A	E	C	N	L	L	E
L	W	O	E	N	O	R	C	S	H	D	T	D	D	P
S	E	S	O	M	L	H	I	B	F	A	T	H	E	R
C	R	T	I	D	E	A	D	P	L	G	G	M	R	H
S	O	S	S	R	R	E	Y	R	E	E	A	O	S	A
E	C	M	S	I	N	R	Y	I	W	K	S	T	O	N
D	G	Y	I	R	R	R	F	E	T	O	U	S	E	D
A	O	A	A	N	O	H	R	S	V	A	L	B	E	S
H	M	W	I	L	G	C	C	T	E	A	S	L	E	D
M	O	D	G	N	I	K	K	S	R	C	S	T	O	R
J	O	N	A	H	S	Y	N	E	V	A	E	H	E	F

Peter the Rock

BIND	ANGELS
BOUND	BEHIND
BUILD	BLESSED
CHRIST	CHURCH
CROSS	COMING
GAINS	ELDERS
GATES	FATHER
GLORY	FOLLOW
GOOD	FORFEITS
HADES	HEAVEN
HANDS	KINGDOM
JESUS	LOOSE
JONAH	PRIESTS
KEYS	REBUKE
PETER	REWARD
ROCK	TEACHERS
SAVE	RAISED
SIMON	TRUTH
SOUL	WARNED
TASTE	WORLD

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a
Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

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