

THE EXPRESSION

FEBRUARY 2020 ~ NEWSLETTER



CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
5330 Old Logan Ferry Road
Murrysville, PA 15668
(412) 795-1212

Pastor Wayne Gillespie

Email: office@christsmurrysville.org

Website: christsmurrysville.org

Sunday School for Children & Adults: 9:00 am

Services

Saturday Contemporary – 6:00 pm

Sunday Worship – 10:00 am

From the Pastor's Desk



We have been traveling through a Season of the Church year called Epiphany in the last few weeks. The word epiphany describes a moment of sudden revelation or insight, and that's what we've been talking about. Jesus was washed by John the Baptizer on the day of His baptism. People saw the Holy Spirit touch Jesus. And people even heard a voice from the Heavens describe Jesus as "beloved." We've talked about the fact that as Jesus was beginning His ministry John the Baptizer kept saying, "Look! This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." That didn't go unnoticed either. In a few weeks, we are going to listen to a story about a day when Jesus went up to the top of a mountain and glowed as brightly as the sun. And, once again, in that epiphany (in that moment of sudden revelation and insight), we're going to be reminded again that the disciples heard a voice from Heaven that described Jesus as God's beloved. And, right after that, Jesus told them to tell nobody about what they had seen until He had been raised from the dead (which, of course, builds the perfect bridge into the Season of Lent).

But, in the Season of Epiphany, we're also challenged to think about who WE are. We have been touched by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and we've been called God's beloved. We have been sent

into the world to do the mighty works of God in our time; and, as we are doing that, it's important to thank each other and encourage each other and remind each other that, when we do God's work with our own hands, we help our world to become a better place for us all. And, while we're talking about who we are, we can't forget that Saint Paul tells us that we are not simply a group of individuals (individual parts of a body who simply do their own thing). We are the undivided Church of Jesus Christ. We are a vital part of a Church that extends far beyond to the walls of our own building, and that is joined to other Lutheran congregations and even to other Christian congregations across denominational lines. We are the Church of Jesus Christ together. That's who we are.

I've always been intrigued by the bridge that's built between Epiphany and Lent. We hear about who Jesus is and we're invited to think about who WE are. We see ourselves as people who are dearly loved by God and who can even see God at work in each other's lives. But what do we do with that bridge that carries us into Lent? Jesus reminds us that He came into the world with a purpose: to serve, to minister, to be killed and to be raised from the dead. John the Baptizer reminds us that Jesus came into the world to repair our broken relationship with God. And then, perhaps the hardest and most difficult part of the teachings of Jesus is that Jesus continues to call us to self-sacrifice, to be the last instead of the first, to give-up our own lives (think about time in our busy routines) for the sake of others and to give both freely and generously, so that the mission and the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ can continue to blossom, grow and bear fruit. Now that's a tough message to sell these days, isn't it? It's always been a tough message to sell.

Jesus, you might say, calls us to put some skin in the game. Our spiritual journey is not one that's meant to be filled with the types of consumption where we drift from place to place looking for a better teacher or pastor, for a more convenient worship time, for more diverse activities that we can simply attend, or for a more emotional

experience that can be created by carefully orchestrating worship experiences with flashing lights and music. Our spiritual journey is one that always leads us back to the Table of the Lord where we are forgiven, nourished and strengthened for the next part of our life. You might even say that the life of the Church, and even of individual Christians, is lived from Meal to Meal to Meal. We gather around the Table of the Lord, where Jesus promises that He will always be found, to be forgiven and fed - not simply because God wants us to walk away feeling that our “tank” has been filled for another week; but, rather, because God’s preparing us and equipping us to go out into the world as people who continue to put some skin in the game and do the work of God in our world - even when it’s not convenient and easy. Now, that’s a tough message to sell these days too, isn’t it? It’s always been a tough message to sell. But it’s the truth.

Let’s listen very carefully to the lessons that we read together during worship as we move through the rest of the Season of Epiphany and as we enter into the Season of Lent. Let’s think about “who we are” as individuals, as a congregation, as a part of our Synod and the ELCA, and even as a part of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. We are both loved and precious in the eyes of God. But we are, also, a part of something much bigger than any of us can ever be as an individual. We are the Church of Jesus Christ at work in the world to spread the Good News of God’s love and embrace, and to do God’s work with our own hands.

Pastor Wayne

Scott Ritenbaugh — President
Judy Bernardini — Vice President
Michelle Gravante — Secretary
OPEN — Treasurer
Bela Molnar — Financial Secretary

Cindy Lott
Ron Spagna
Joe Kelly
John Reed
Linda Paulovitch
Sandy Buehner

CHURCHCOUNCIL

Church Council Highlights

~ January 21, 2020



- Addressing Our Debt Discussions among the teams as well as the entire congregation
- Building Safety and Best Practices guidelines to be addressed
- Electronic Giving Update – ELCA app Tithe.ly up and running!
- Mission Partnership Congregational Needs:
 - Church Treasurer
 - Youth Coordinator
 - Altar Flower Coordinator
- Upcoming Events
 - Congregation Meeting - February 16, 2020
 - “Shrove Sunday” Gathering – February 23, 2020
 - Ash Wednesday - February 26, 2020
 -
- Next Council Meeting – February 18, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted:
Michelle Gravante
Council Secretary



The Caring Hearts and Hands group will meet at 9:00 AM on the **FIRST** Thursday of February, February 6th, at the church's downstairs kitchen. We will be preparing and packing soup lunches to be delivered to many members of our Caring List. If you know someone that might not be on our Caring List and would appreciate being included in this Caring gesture, please contact Romaine Miller at 412-996-4915.

You are welcome to join us in this fun endeavor!

The Sewing Group meets on Tuesdays at 9:00 am.

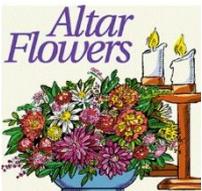
Come join us !

Please contact Leslie Sill at 412-793-2546 for additional information.



Mission Partnership Opportunity!

Altar Flower Coordinator Needed:



If you are interested in volunteering for this fun and easy monthly activity please contact the church office or Michelle Gravante at 412-596-2142.

Training and resources provided.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Please join us in extending the happiest of Birthday Wishes to the following Mission Partners who celebrate Birthdays in the month of **FEBRUARY**:

FEB 1-9

Dave Dutt
Jacob D'Ascenzo
Eric Waxbom

Fred Salenske
Susie Lasher

FEB 10-15

Alexis Paddock
Liam Suhadolnik
Paige Van Orden
Joann Hauger

Gianna Suhadolnik
Gail Byrne
Sally Dutzman

FEB 16-22

Cindy Dutt
Dan Martin
Tammy Wilson

Brianna Fink
Jenessa Porter
Neena Molnar

FEB 24-28

Lisa Tensuan
Kendra Cook
Janet Beall

Alex Dikun
Randi Mackeil
Jayne Gustafson

If you don't see your name, and you have a FEBRUARY birthday, please forgive the oversight and give the church office a call so that we can record your birthdate in our parish records.

Thanks, and have a



We kindly ask that you continue to pray for our CLC members, family, and friends of members who are included in our weekly bulletin prayer list. Thank you.

Damian Arenth - grandson of Holly Kirsch
Harry & Amy Ayres - friends of Inge Pizzica
Dorothy Beacom - CLC member
Ed Bertelsen - uncle of Judy Bernardini
Linda Bradish - mother of co-worker of Sandy Buehner
Ed & Sandy Buehner & Family - CLC members
Venita Cibak - friend of Kris Meade
Vicki Cohill - Pastor Wayne and Laurel Gillespie
Judy Daum - daughter of Shirley Daum
Beth Ann DeSimone - daughter in law of Gloria Frick
Marlene Earl - CLC member
James Eddy - son of Arlene Eddy
Chuck & Irene Evans - CLC member
Julie Fallin - friend of Dwight & Carolyn Schuetz
Bob Glunt - son of Nancy Glunt
Halsmer Family - family friends of Marion O'Donnell
John Heilman - brother of Jane Montgomery
Peggy Henry - CLC member
Donna Hubert - friend of Kris Meade
Abby Johnson - friend of Wally Utley
Anthony Johnston - friend of Sharon Pfeiffer
Patty Kelley - friend of Marianne Trainor
Holly Kirsch - CLC member
Gary Lemon - brother-in-law of Carol Tamenne
Will Lowe - brother-in-law of Mary Wentroble
David Little - son of Roger and Barb Little



Grace Lucas - CLC member
Emma Lyons - CLC member
Donna Magerl - friend of Sandy Buehner
Audrey Mauro - sister of Louise Fitz
Derek McClemens - son of Greg & Debby McClemens
Bill & Pam Mears - friends of Inge Pizzica
Christopher Molnar - son of a friend of the Marion O'Donnell
Jennifer Cohill O'Connor - Pastor Wayne and Laurel Gillespie
Michael O'Donnell - CLC member
Rich Radcliffe - former co-worker of Wally Utley
John Ring - brother of Mary Wentroble
John Russell - son of Theresa Russell
Theresa Russell - CLC member
Denny Saddler - brother-in-law of Denise Shanter
Tony Santacasa - friend of the Bernardini & McClemens
Vi Shipman - friend of Arlene Eddy
Pat Sisco - friend of Arlene Eddy
Patti Smith - daughter of Frieda Cushing
Mary Sorrells - request from Pastor Wayne
Wilma Stewart - mother of Tammy Scanga
Marion Surgent - daughter of Theresa Russell
Gerry Suter - friend of Kris Meade
Arlene Switzer - friend of Oren Keibler
Jeff Weber - friend of Nancy Sheehan
William Swope - friend of Marion O'Donnell
Dawn Werner - niece of Sue & Mike Werner
Bob Westerlund - CLC member
Gloria Zagorac - CLC member

Our Endowment Fund at Work

Some people with a dream got together many years ago, and they decided that it would be good for us to create an Endowment Fund that could help to support the mission and the ministry of our growing congregation. The dream was to create a pool of money that consisted of \$100,000 (or more), and to use the interest and dividends generated by that pool of money to engage in mission and ministry.

We had a generous matching-funds opportunity at the end of last year, and we were able to surpass the \$100,000 mark for the first time in the history of our ministry. And, when that happened, partly because of the continued rise in the stock market, the Endowment Fund Committee began to discuss ways to disburse the interest and dividends.

As you already know, we have been moving through a time of dramatic change – not only in our own congregation, but also in the Church as a whole. Attendance patterns have continued to change. Many good and faithful partners in our ministry have either become unable to attend worship services, or have died. Our congregation has continued to grow through it all as we've had the honor and privilege to welcome 100 new partners in ministry in the last six years. And yet, challenges continue to arise (as they always have in the life of the Church and in the life of our congregation) and we've needed to balance our financial resources while we've remained focused upon mission and ministry.

And so, the question that's been put before the Endowment Fund Committee has been both complex and challenging. How can we best use the interest and dividends from the Endowment Fund to support our growing ministry? How can we as a congregation stay focused upon mission and ministry in the midst of financial challenges that we need to address as a church? And, through ministry-focused conversations and a process of careful discernment, the Endowment Fund Committee, with the

support of our Council, has decided that it would be good to support the mission and ministry of our congregation by helping to underwrite portions of our budget that affect our life together and the lives of many other people.

Last year, we used interest and dividends from the Endowment Fund to support the ongoing ministry of Jeffrey Truscott, a missionary whose ministry we support and who is likely to visit our congregation this summer, and to help us to meet our Mission Support commitment to the Synod at a time when our Synod is going through a time of change because of a lack of funds. The Endowment Fund Committee also suggested that we use some of the interest and dividends to underwrite the cost of a much-needed project – the sealing of our parking lot. And if you’re wondering what a project like that has to do with our mission and ministry, think about the many different groups, our partners in ministry, that have the opportunity to offer support, care, and opportunities to gather in the building that we share every week. Our ministry is very complex; and, sometimes, we need to make an “at-home” investment to help our ministry remain strong and healthy.

The Endowment Fund Committee met, again, several weeks ago, and had a great chance to use interest and dividends from the Fund to support our mission and ministry. As you’ve already read above, our congregation is moving through a time of change. We have many people who have been faithful partners in ministry all of their lives who are not able to be with us in worship and to be a bigger part of what we’re doing. Of course, all of these people continue to be important to us.

The Executive Team and the Church Council discussed this time of change in our life as a congregation several years ago, and we decided to invite Pastor Steve to join hands with us in ministry, once again, as a pastor who helps with visitation. What a blessing that has been! Pastor Steve helps us to keep in touch with people who could very easily fall through the cracks as we continue to move forward. Pastor Steve also supports our life

together as a worship leader – regularly preaching at Saturday night services and even, periodically, helping to lead worship on Sunday. And, in an effort to support this ongoing and important part of our mission and ministry, the Endowment Fund Committee has decided to use some of the interest and dividends generated by the Fund to help offset some of the expenses associated with Pastor Steve’s continued ministry. This, of course, is a win-win for everyone! Those who are being visited by Pastor Steve will continue to experience the presence of Christ that he brings into their homes, and Pastor Steve can know that his ministry is both appreciated and financially supported by our congregation. We benefit from this decision as well, since underwriting a part of Pastor Steve’s ministry can take some of the heat off of our budget as we continue to work together to address the issue of our congregation’s debt.

Thank you for your generous contributions to our Endowment Fund and for your support of our ongoing ministry at Christ’s Lutheran Church. We have already proven that we can do incredible things as partners in ministry as our congregation continues to grow. And now, with the help of our Endowment Fund (which you can continue to support through generous gifts), we can move even more confidently into the future together.

2020 Catechism Class Schedule:

February 16, 2020
March 15, 2020

April 19, 2020

Classes will be held from 6:00—8:00 pm

WE PRAY FOR OUR MISSION PARTNERS:

FEB 2

Gloria Frick
Ron, Mikayla, Madison Fuehrer
Marlene Gerdes
Steve, Kristen, Kelsie, Madison Gestrich



FEB 9

Pastor Wayne and Laurel Gillespie
Eric Gipson and Amy Lederer
Ruth Goetz
Joe, Jennifer, Ashley, Amber Grabowski

FEB 16

Robert and Lynn Graper
Bill Gras
David and Bette Greenwald
Michele, Sydney, Haley, Marissa, Olivia Grieco

FEB 23

Gertrude Grooms
Linda, Cameron, Ethan Guercio
Jayne Gustafson
John, Erin, Grace Guzzie

This month's **SCRAPBOOKING** gathering will be on Friday, **FEBRUARY 14th** at 6:00 pm!



We usually meet on the second Friday of every month.

Please contact Betty Molnar at 724-327-3437 with questions.

Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday morning, **FEBRUARY 15th** at 8:00 am in the Lower Social hall.

Bring a hearty appetite and enjoy hanging out with the guys.



Remember to mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 16th immediately following the 10:00 am service.

A light brunch will be served.

If you can help out by bringing a dessert please let us know by signing up on the sheet in the narthex.

Thank you!"

Attention worship assistants and acolytes/parents:

Several robes have been cleaned. In an effort to keep them looking nice, please empty the pockets after wearing and check them for wine stains as well as for make-up and rings around the collars. If they have those stains and/or appear dingy, kindly launder and return to the closet prior to the next scheduled worship service time.

Electronic (Mobile) Giving Information

Our Electronic Giving option is designed to provide you with a convenient and easy way to support the ongoing ministry of Christ's Lutheran Church by using your Smartphone.

By just taking a few short minutes to set up an account, you can make regular or scheduled offerings, make contributions to our Memorial or Endowment funds, pay for the altar flowers that you've ordered, or even help us to reduce our debt.

Here's all that you need to do to get started:

- Open the app that you usually used to download new apps and type: **Tithe.ly Church App**
- You will find a number of apps. Download the app titled: **ELCA Giving Tool by Tithe.ly**. This logo will help you to identify the proper app:



- Open an account using your email address; and, then, enter a password that you will remember
- When you are asked to find a church, simply type the words: **Christ's Lutheran Church**
- Choose **Christ's Lutheran Church Murrysville** (You will recognize the picture of our steeple.)
- Select a payment option, and enter either a Credit Card number or details about a checking account from which your offerings can be deducted.
- You can, then, either make a one-time contribution to support our ministry or schedule your regular offering.
- If you have any questions or need help setting up your new account, please contact the Church Office.