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# St. Paul's Epistle

~January 2021



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## "Epiphany Is Serendipity"

*Matthew 2:1-11*

As presented on \*The Lutheran Hour® by the [Rev. Kenneth R. Klaus](#)

Nothing in this world, no other sight can compare with the love of God, which has come to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have God's Epiphany, which is serendipity. Epiphany is serendipity? Those are two words, one old and one new, that you may not have heard before. Let's take a look at them. Let's talk about the new one, serendipity, first. Have you ever started looking for one thing and wound up finding another, better thing? That's serendipity.

Epiphany is a celebration to remember the baby born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. Epiphany recalls how some time after Jesus was born, wise men, magi following a new heaven-sent star, showed up in Jerusalem to pay their respects to the next leader of the Jewish nation. The wise men had gone looking for one thing—an earthly king—and were led by God and a star to someone far better—a heaven-sent Savior.

Epiphany is the celebration of serendipity. We look for one thing; God supplies another. He does it all the time. The childless priest Zacharias set out to burn incense and, serendipity, ended up with a promise that his son would be the forerunner of the Savior. A Samaritan woman went to a well to draw water and, serendipity, found the Savior who gave her forgiveness and a new path to walk. Mary Magdalene sat before an open tomb and started a search to find her Teacher's dead body. The most wondrous serendipity of all, she saw her living, death-defeating Savior.

Christ is risen indeed! Thank you, God, for our Savior Jesus Christ! Amen.

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### PLEASE NOTE: WORSHIP SERVICE CHANGES

**There are NO in person worship services on January 3 or 10th. Due to the pandemic lockdown taking place in Ontario, Pastor is unable to be present for in person worship on those Sundays. Facebook and YouTube services will be taking place. Worship services will resume in person on Sunday, January 17th at 11 a.m.**



A Big Thank You goes out to all the congregational officers who are serving another term for 2021. Due to the pandemic, no election of officers was held, but the current officers all agreed to serve another year.

Our annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, January 24th. Our 2021 budget needs to be reviewed and approved. Church Council will be meeting on Thursday, January 14th.

Thanks to everyone for your patience as we strive to complete church business along with following all our safety protocols.

### News from the Lutheran Mission Association

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40) We have brothers and sisters in Haiti who we might consider 'least of these' because of their poverty- not of faith, but of material goods. Since this seems to be the time of year when many people are looking for places to give their money, might I suggest giving it to the Lutheran Mission Association? All gifts go directly to the churches in the Northern District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti and are tax deductible.

LMA has no overhead expenses. This has been such a difficult year for so many because of Covid-19, and it has struck Haiti, an already extremely poor country, in equally destructive ways. Pastors and teachers have not received wages, though churches and schools are open now with the same precautions we exercise in the States. Very few families have computers, much less internet, so it is impossible to have online classes. School is possible only with students attending in person.

Gifts may be sent to: Karen Lueth, Financial Secretary 33879 Co. Rd. 4 Park Rapids, MN 56470 Website: [lmamnn.org](http://lmamnn.org)

For additional information call Lori at 218-261-0937

### January Birthdays

*Happy Birthday to these members celebrating their special day this month!*

January 1: Monica Cash

28th: Dorlyn Desens

2nd: Audrey Winger

31st: Julia Quast

4th: Phyllis Kennedy

8th: Asher Hart

21: Meredith Kittleson

22nd: Jenica Whitbeck

24th: Liz Hams

26th: Rose Leerssen, Leona Larson & Cale Wright



*Dear friends in Christ:*

“By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

How would you describe this year, 2020? One social media platform decided to ask its constituents to put a name on it: “2020 in one word.” Within a short amount of time, they had 211,300 responses. Here are a few that I thought were interesting: supercalifragilisticexpialidonewiththisyear; DELETE; Skip; whyyyyyyyyyyy?; unprecedented; sour. Here’s a description that I read in an article: *annus horribilis* (horrible year). Let me add one more: separated. In July of 1969, the Apollo 11 Astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin left a plaque on the moon that says: “Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon, July 1969 A. D. We came in peace for all mankind.”

There is a rendition of the Christmas song, “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” that says: “I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old familiar carols play And mild and sweet their songs repeat Of peace on earth good will to men. And the bells are ringing (peace on earth) Like a choir they’re singing (peace one earth) In my heart I hear them (peace on earth) Peace on earth, good will to men. And in despair I bowed my head There is no peace on earth I said For hate is strong and mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men.”

Our world is tragically, miserably divided. Nation against nation; our country is separated; political party against political party; racial and gender divisions; ideological divisions; divisions in the church, at work, and within homes. There is bickering, quarreling, fighting, rioting, rebelling, revolting, destroying! Alienation from others is simply an extension of mankind’s alienation from God. Antagonism toward others is a reflection of our antagonism toward God. By nature, people live with the haunting, upsetting suspicion that the Someone up there doesn’t like us. From time immemorial people have been trying to find a solution to this problem. We have fought wars for the sake of peace. We have tried uniting the nations with little success. We have even sent people to the moon in quest of it. But in spite of all the amazing forward progress we have made, we have not found a way to inch us closer to one another. We separate in a myriad of ways.

God has a Word for us about all this division, dissension, and separation in our world. He deals with the problem by getting at its cause. He made Himself manifest in the flesh. He wants to drive out of our minds the notion that He doesn’t love us because that notion is driving us out of our minds. Bethlehem’s Child is the demonstration and the proof of His love. In the person of Jesus, He takes us into Himself and at the same time He gives Himself to us. Jesus became man to save us. He came on earth to reconcile God and man. He was forsaken, separated from the Father so that we would never be. Jesus came in peace for all mankind. He doesn’t offer it as just a future possibility. He makes it a present reality for you and me. He who was in the beginning with God is now with us and lives in our hearts by faith in Him.

That brings peace and should be enough to make our Christmas merry and bright even in 2020. “For God is not dead, nor does He sleep.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1,2, 14). No Christ...No Peace / Know Christ... Know Peace!

“Christ, our Lord and Savior dear, Be Thou ever near us. Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us” (390 v.4 LSB).

A blessed Christmas and a joy -full New Year to you and yours!

President Fondow - MN North District LCMS

