



# The Bethlehem Star

**Empowered by Jesus to be His hands and feet, Bethlehem is a caring Community called to be His compassionate presence in this world and to build community by reaching out with the life-giving Word to those in our neighborhoods who are wearied and burdened by life's demands and changing Circumstances.**

**BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
201 E. Watauga Avenue  
Johnson City, TN 37601  
Rev. Steven Harmon, Pastor

*January 2022, Volume XXII, No. 1*

**Reach Up, Reach In, Reach Out**



An epiphany is described as a new insight or “an intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking an illuminating discovery”. The Epiphany is a day or time of celebration for many Christian religions because it is the time that Jesus was revealed or shown to the world.

On the day Jesus was born, not many throughout the lands knew of this glorious event. Wise men, shepherds, and others came from far away lands to worship the baby Jesus. It took many days of travel for them to arrive at Jesus’ birthplace. Traveling during this period was slow and done by riding donkeys, camels, or walking.

There were several wise men that had been sent by King Herod to find the newborn baby Jesus. The wise men “Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (St. Matthew 2:9-11)

In some religions and some countries, Epiphany is a day of celebration and is held on January 6th which is the twelfth day after Christmas. The focus is on the actual mission of Jesus’ arrival on earth which is one of peace and salvation for all people. Jesus offered salvation to all on earth. It was and still is up to each individual to choose the direction for his or her own life. In the end, each will be held accountable for his or her choice.

Some countries in South America as well as in Europe call Epiphany day the Three Kings Day or Kings Day. The name comes from the three kings or wise men sent by Herod to locate the baby Jesus. In some religions and some countries, the twelve day period from the birth of Jesus to His revelation is considered a time for the celebration called the Epiphany. The period lasts from the birth of Jesus on December 25th through the day Jesus was revealed on January 6th. The entire period is a time for celebration in various ways.

Throughout the world, Epiphany Day is held mainly on January 6th of the New Year. In some cultures and religions, it is held on a different day. Throughout the world, different countries celebrate Epiphany Day in various ways. In some cultures and religions, there is baking or partying. No matter what culture, country or religion, the reason to celebrate the Epiphany remains the same: The celebration of Jesus’ revelation to the people of this world.



## Annual Chili Cook-Off

Sunday, January 30,  
After late worship service



The annual Chili Cook-off will take place on January 30, and we need lots of pots of chili for everyone to taste and select the winner in this fun event. This is another major fund raiser for the Youth Group and it seems the competition gets stiffer each year. We look forward to YOUR participation. This event will take place after the late service. If you don’t make chili, please plan to stay for lunch and cast your vote and bring your favorite salad or dessert.



## Notes from the Pastor's Desk

*We are Jesus' hands and feet.*

We stand at the beginning of a new year. I know that there are many who are hoping that 2022 will be different from 2021. Since change is really the only constant, I think we can be 100% sure that 2022 will be different. In what way it will be different is not so certain.

We could stand with the majority of folks and hope that 2022 will be better than 2021. We can hope that the COVID virus will cease to have a major impact on society – that mandates will become a thing of the past. That job security will not be threatened by choices people make. We can hope that will happen. But there's no guarantee that it will.

We can look at Revelation and come to the conclusion that 2022 will be different in a negative way – that evil will make itself more visible – that freedoms will become even more limited or disappear altogether. We can conclude that life will be more and more difficult (especially for the Church).

We can conclude that Jesus' second is right around the corner – that the times will become so evil that Jesus will return to keep His Church from being destroyed. It would be easy to come to such conclusions based on what transpired in 2021 and the potential for more of the same in 2022. But there is no guarantee that Jesus' second coming will happen this year or in our lifetimes.

In the midst of such uncertainty, it is good to focus on what we know for sure. We know that the Son of God came into the world so that the world might be saved through Him. We know that through His perfect life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection that the power of sin and death to destroy has been overcome.

We know that the tomb is empty (the guarantee that our future is secure). We know that through Baptism, we have been joined together with Jesus in His death and life. We have died with Christ so that we can also live with Him in the victory of His resurrection.

We know all of that is true. We also know that Jesus comes to us daily through the reading and hearing of His Word. We know that He comes through that same Word each and every Sunday. We also know that He comes to us in the bread and wine to invite us to join Him at His table. By that invitation, Jesus assures us that we have a home and a future that is secure.

So in the midst of uncertainty, we stand together with Christ in the new life that has been given to us through the forgiveness of our sin. We stand together with Christ in a relationship that can't be severed by anything in God's creation. We stand in the sure and certain hope that because He lives, so do we.

God comes and invites us to join Him in His house and at His table on a regular basis. As we answer His invitation, here is the schedule of worship times this month. See you there!

January 2 . . . 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas

**8:00 am**

SERMON TEXT: Ephesians 1:3-14

SERMON THEME: "In Christ"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 3 w/ Communion**

**10:45 am**

SERMON TEXT: Ephesians 1:3-14

SERMON THEME: "In Christ"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 3 w/ Communion**

January 9 . . . The Epiphany Observed

**8:00 am**

SERMON TEXT: Ephesians 3:1-12

SERMON THEME: "A Minister of God's Grace"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 4 w/ Communion**

**10:45 am**

SERMON TEXT: Ephesians 3:1-12

SERMON THEME: "A Minister of God's Grace"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 4 w/ Communion**

January 16 . . . 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

**8:00 am**

SERMON TEXT: John 2:1-11

SERMON THEME: "The Best for Last"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 1 w/ Communion**

**10:45 am**

SERMON TEXT: John 2:1-11

SERMON THEME: "The Best for Last"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 1 w/ Communion**

January 23 . . . Life Sunday

**8:00 am**

SERMON TEXT: Luke 4:16-30

SERMON THEME: "Making Demands"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 3 w/ Communion**

**10:45 am**

SERMON TEXT: Luke 4:16-30

SERMON THEME: "Making Demands"

LITURGY: **Divine Service 3 w/ Communion**

January 30 . . . 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

**8:00 am**

SERMON TEXT: Luke 4:31-44

SERMON THEME: "What Is This Word?"

LITURGY: **Blended w/ Communion**

**10:45 am**

SERMON TEXT: Luke 4:31-44

SERMON THEME: "What Is This Word?"

LITURGY: **Blended w/ Communion**



**JOHN**  
Chapter 2:1-11

The Church office is open

**Office Hours**

Monday – Friday  
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday:  
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Susan is off on Thursdays  
Pastor is off on Fridays  
Voice mail and e-mails  
are checked regularly.

**THANK YOU** – The staff wishes to thank everyone for the many Christmas gifts received. We truly appreciate your generosity and support. We look forward to an even better year in 2022. Pastor Harmon, Susan Burkey, David Nutter and John Oxendine

## THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY

the Esther-Mary Circle, from their Fall project collecting items for the VA, the following was received: 5 suitcases; 22 pairs of jeans; 13 belts; 54 pencil sharpeners, 16 deoderants and 21 under-shirts. These items were most appreciated by the recipients and your generosity was most appreciated.



**Happy January Birthdays to**  
Veronica Maupin & Barbara Fetzer (1st),  
Geri Swihart (3rd), Elizabeth Treece (6th),  
Elisabeth Wudtke, & Bill Cupp (7th),  
Grace Marshall (12th), Andy Tester (13th),  
Phillip Harmon (16th),  
Jan Miller & Haven Nutter (20th),  
Sandi Bailey (25th),  
Mary Lee Bowman, Ansley Nutter &  
Evan Harmon (27th),  
Vivian Marshall (29th)

## Statistical Report for December

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:45 a.m.</u>	<u>Offerings</u>	
December 5	44	60	General Fund	\$ 7,670.00
			Shaneyfelt Mission	\$ 50.00
			Lutheran Services	\$ 750.00
December 12	46	57	General Fund	\$ 6,842.19
			Shaneyfelt Mission	\$ 50.00
			Youth Ministry	\$ 50.00
December 19	40	58	General Fund	\$ 3,505.00
			Shaneyfelt Mission	\$ 50.00
December 26	25	45	General Fund	\$ 3,545.00
			Shaneyfelt Mission	\$ 50.00
Offerings received on December 27			General Fund	\$ 178.00
			Social Ministry	\$ 10,000.00
Advent Service, December 1	38		General Fund	\$ 450.00
Advent Service, December 8	52		General Fund	\$ 657.00
Advent Service, December 15	39		General Fund	\$ 467.00
Christmas Eve, December 24 7:00 p.m.	101		Combined Offering for both services	\$ 1,244.00
Christmas Eve, December 11:00 p.m.	40			
Christmas Day, December 25	41		General Fund	\$ 715.00
Checks received in the mail after 12-26-2021			General Fund	\$ 178.00
			Social Ministry	\$ 10,000.00
On-line giving			General Fund	\$ 2,220.00

Spending Guidelines for 2021  
Offerings needed each week in 2021

\$287,740.89  
\$ 5,533.48



We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas!!! We hope you liked our Christmas card that we placed in your mailbox. We had a great month of December. We are truly thankful for your prayers and support as we move into 2022. The month of December was a very busy one. On Sunday, December 5th, we raked the Baskin's yard following the 2nd service. Our youth participated in the Christmas Program that was on Sunday, December 12th. We also headed to Camp Linn Haven in North Carolina to deliver presents to the group of kids we served this summer at Crossnore School on Saturday, December 18th. Many of the recipients weren't able to be with their biological parents for Christmas. We were able to share the love of Christ through this simple act of kindness of delivering presents. Lastly, we went caroling on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> to the members of Bethlehem that aren't able to make it to our worship services. They were very appreciative. The following is what we have on the calendar for our youth group for this upcoming month. Happy New Year!!!

Month of January at a Glance:

- Sunday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> ..... Sunday School Class from 9:15-10:30
- Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup> ..... Youth Group Meeting at the Church at 6:30pm
- Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> ..... Sunday School Class from 9:15-10:30
- Saturday, January 15<sup>th</sup> ..... Leave for Youth Gathering in Pigeon Forge
- Sunday, January 16<sup>th</sup> ..... Return from Youth Gathering Sunday Evening & Sunday School Class from 9:15-10:30am
- Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> ..... Game Night with the Congregation at Bethlehem at 6pm
- Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> ... Sunday School Class from 9:15-10:30
- Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup> ..... Sunday School Class from 9:15-10:30
- Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup> ... Youth Sunday (Youth will be Ushers and Readers)

## Serving This Month

	8:00 a.m. ELDER OF THE MONTH: Ted Wilson & Larry Larson USHERS	10:45 a.m. ELDER OF THE MONTH: Frank deNobriga USHERS
1/2	Roy Knispel David Nutter Christian Nutter	John Port Silas Whaley Robb Whaley
1/9	Tom Watson Ann Larson Roy Knispel	Lee Talbert Tim Treece Dylan Treece
1/16	Roy Knispel David Nutter Christian Nutter	Lee Talbert Cary Allen Nicholas Leone
1/23	Ann Larson Larry Larson Maggie Howland	Lee Talbert Nicholas Leone Ben Wohlford
1/30	Youth Communion: Roy Knispel, David Nutter, Christian Nutter	Youth Communion: John Port Tim Treece, Dylan Treece

Altar Guild for January: Ann Larson and Marie Wilson



### THE AMERICAN HERITAGE SERIES

presentation will continue on February 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. In this session, we'll view how the economic system capitalism developed in conjunction with the influence of the political system of a Constitutional Republic in the United States. These presentations are open to everyone so bring a friend along.

# January

Live Streaming of the 10:45 Sunday service will continue each week as well as the Wednesday Night Bible Study Class.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>2</b>Worship, 8:00 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday School, &amp; Confirmation, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:45 a.m. Take Down the Christmas Decorations after the late service</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b> Hand Bell Meetings, 5:15 p.m. "Luke" Class, 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b> Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>9</b>Worship, 8:00 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday School &amp; Confirmation, 9:15 a.m. Remove everything from the sanctuary after the late service</p>	<p><b>10</b> Interior Painting begins</p>	<p><b>11</b> Ladies Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>12</b> Board of Directors, 6:00 p.m. "Luke" Class, 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> Sew Crazy, 10:00 a.m. Saturday—Sunday Youth gathering in Pigeon Forge</p>
<p><b>16</b>Worship, 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall Sunday School, Bible Class &amp; Confirmation, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall</p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b> "Luke" class, 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>22</b> Work Day to put the church "back together", 9:00 a.m. Game Night, 6:00 p.m.</p>
<p><b>23</b>Worship, 8:00 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday School, &amp; Confirmation Class 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:45 a.m.</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b> Ladies Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>26</b> "Luke" Class, 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b> Melting Pot</p>	<p><b>29</b> Men's Bible Study &amp; Breakfast, 9:00 a.m.</p>
<p><b>30</b>Worship, 8:00 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday School &amp; Confirmation Class, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:45 a.m. Chili Cook-off after the late service</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>					





Stephen ministers are lay members of the congregation who receive proven training regarding the personalized care for members and non-members experiencing difficult times in life, such as grief at the loss of loved one, divorce, unexpected loss of employment, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. These caring

individuals will received extensive preparation to go into our community and extend the love of Jesus to those who are hurting. The training is sponsored by Bethlehem but prior to committing resources to support the Stephen Ministers, it's imperative that there are sufficient individuals willing to give of their time in training and counseling to those in need. This is an excellent opportunity for Bethlehem to reach outside our walls. If you are willing to experience the joy of assisting another member of our community overcome the trials of life, contact Larry Larson.

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## Awesome Wonder

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The hymn writer famously wrote, "O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds thy hands have made I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder thy power throughout the universe displayed then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee how great thou art, how great thou art." Have we lost a sense of awe and wonder in this world? For most of us, a normal day of life doesn't leave us in awesome wonder. We pass by trees and grass, see the sun and moon every day, but they are altogether ordinary, not awesome to us.

The Scriptures teach us that the natural world is not only God's creation, but God's revelation. Psa. 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." In Rom. 1:19-20, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made."

Have you ever wondered why God created everything in this world from the smallest ant to the Appalachian Mountains? The natural world is not merely the result of random, unguided processes, but is the masterpiece of God. The Bible tells us that every created thing reveals the glory of God. It is a sort of language by which God communicates with people that he exists and that he is glorious. We ought to be moved to worship, seeing God's goodness, grace, power and creativity in the things around us. Nothing is ordinary in God's world. The next time you take a walk in the forest and smell the dead leaves, sink your teeth into a delectable cheeseburger, stare out the window at the sparkling snow, play with your dog, or listen to the gentle chirping of crickets in a summer night – stand in awesome wonder and let your soul sing, "How great thou art!". Peter Banfe

