

Aurora Lutheran Church

Feeding Body, Mind, and Spirit with the Love of Jesus

Happy New Year! Maybe I should say Happy Epiphany! January is the month of the Church year when we move from the end of the Christmas season into Epiphany. The season of Epiphany starts with the celebration of Jesus' Baptism and/or the arrival of the Magi who recognize Jesus as the Messianic King of the Jews.

The word Epiphany means, a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being or a moment of sudden revelation or insight. So, you might hear someone use the phrase, "I just had an Epiphany!" In the Christian Church, when we talk about Epiphany, we are generally referring to either Jesus' baptism or the revelation of Jesus as the Christ through the coming of the Magi in Matthew's Gospel. It is a revelation of Jesus as the Messiah and God's son.

Having the New Year start with Epiphany is a gift. God is doing a new thing by becoming incarnate, by becoming a human being to experience all things human. To experience it all; good or bad, painful or joyful, loving or hateful. God knows what it is like to be human.

God did not become human in the person of Jesus just for the sake of the experience or simply because He wanted to know what it was like. How it might feel to live and die, to love and be loved or hated, to feel pain and grief. God didn't need that experience. He did it for us. God knew we would not be able to come to him. Creation was not enough to bring us to him, the law was not enough to bring us to him, so He came to us in the person of Jesus Christ. To show us how God expects us to live with and for each other and to take away all barriers, even our own sin, that separate us from Him.

God loves us that much. He will do anything to be with us and not let us be separated from him, except to force himself on us. That is why the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a gift from God. No strings attached! Now that is quite an Epiphany to start the New Year with, isn't it? Do you think that will have any effect on your New Year's resolutions?

“And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17.

Grace and Peace to you all this New Year!

In Christ’s Loving Service,

Pastor Clark

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will resume January 7, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will be meeting 6:30 – 7:30 unless otherwise posted:

January 3: NO Class pastor gone.

January 10: Regular class – SC Sacrament of Holy Baptism

January 17: Regular class – SC Sacrament of Holy Communion

January 24: Regular class – SC Confession and Forgiveness

January 31: Regular class – Parents night - Recap of SC-Law & Gospel-Love your neighbor

CONFIRMATION PICTURES

Our confirmation picture board is almost complete. Thank you to everyone who gave pictures to Stefanie. To complete the picture board she is still in search of a picture from confirmation class of 2017. If you have a picture from this class, know who was confirmed in 2017 or have knowledge that maybe there wasn’t a confirmation in 2017. Please contact Stefanie Thurnau at 507-456-5845.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

A study on the book of Revelation based on Mark Allan Powell's book "Introducing the New Testament". We will meet after church on Sunday mornings at 10:00. The topic and conversation should be interesting. Come, join in on the conversation and learn about the last book of the Bible. **All are welcome**

COUNCIL MEETING

The council met December 13 at 6:30 see attachment for details.
Next council meeting will be January at 7:00.

DEADLINE FOR JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Please have all the information for the January newsletter to Kim Wilder by January 25. kawilder@charter.net or 507-213-9811

A REMINDER FOR CEMETERY RULES

1. Planting of trees and bushes are NOT permitted.
2. Existing trees and bushes that become overgrown or unsightly will be removed.
3. Artificial flowers will be removed by June 15 if they are not in above ground containers.
4. For safety reasons for mowing, glass or wire decorations are NOT allowed and will be removed and thrown away if found.

CONTACT PASTOR CLARK FOR A VISIT

This is a great way to get to know your pastor better. Please email, or call Pastor Clark for a time to visit. Also, if you or someone you know, is in need of pastoral care, please let Pastor Clark know.

Pastor Clark's contact information is:

Email – pastorclark.baldwin@gmail.com

Cell Phone – 563-929-6029

January

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			NO Confirmation			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Church at 9 a.m. Communion Sunday School 10 a.m. – 11:30 Adult Bible Study 10 a.m.			Confirmation 6:30			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Church at 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Adult Bible Study 10 a.m.			Confirmation 6:30 Council meeting 7:00			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Church at 9 a.m. Communion Sunday School 10 a.m. – 11:30 Adult Bible Study 10 a.m.			Confirmation 6:30	Deadline for February newsletter		
28	29	30	31			
Church at 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. – 11:30 Adult Bible Study 10 a.m.			Confirmation 6:30 PARENTS NIGHT			

Aurora Lutheran Church
Council meeting minutes, December 13, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Aurora Lutheran Church Council was held on December 13, 2023 at 6:30PM. Those present: Bob Thurnau, Pastor Clark, Cheryl Thompson, Brian Styndl, Stan Norland, Kim Wilder, Tim Johnson, Bill Lewison, Crystal Ripka, Dwight Jensen.

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Thurnau, Devotion by Pastor Clark.

Secretaries Report was approved as read.

Treasurers Report: Checking account balance as if Nov. 30, 2023: \$900.52
Approved subject to audit.

Sept. Offering: \$3,525. (**\$3,300 short of budgeted amount**) Memorial fund: \$8,272.90; Parsonage fund: \$18,788.30; Land Rent: \$39,477.15; Building fund: \$17,279.16.

Pastor Reports – see attached

Unfinished business:

1. Cutting down dead trees clean up date was set for Saturday, Dec 16 at 9am. We will be removing all the trees on the east side of the church as they are dead or dying. The hope is to plant new trees. Keep this in mind if you would like to dedicate one in memory of someone. More to come on that later. Dwight Jensen will bring skid loader; Brian Styndl will bring a lift truck. Bring a saw if you have one.

New Business:

1. We will be replacing the lights in the basement with all LED lights. Brad Thurnau will do this at the cost of apx. \$100 a light. Money to come out of Memorial fund. Stan noted that since we replaced all the upstairs lighting to LED the cost of electricity has gone down for the church.
2. The annual meeting of the church will be Feb 4 following church, apx 10AM.

3. Stewardship: the council has drafted a letter to send out to the congregation regarding the financial situation of our church. We are falling behind on our giving, about \$9,000 below our budget to date.
4. Thrivent Choice Dollars: Please, if you are a Thrivent member and have Choice Dollars, consider giving those monies to the church. It would surly help us. Contact Cheryl Thompson or your Thrivent representative for help designating those funds. This has no effect on your account, just free money for the church.
5. Use of the church: Kim Wilder will come up with a calendar and keep track of when people want to use the church. Contact her at the church web site: office@Auroralutheranchurch.org if you would like to use the church.
6. There is a piece of carpeting that is missing for the stage for the Sunday School Christmas program, Bill Lewison will take care of getting some new carpet.
7. Next council meeting will be January 17, 2024 at 7PM

Cheryl Thompson, council secretary

Pastor's Report December 2023

I continue to attend the Owatonna area text studies at Trinity Lutheran in town. We generally have five to six of the area pastors in attendance. Although, this past month we had two new pastors join. I will be attending the pastor's conference meeting on December 19th in Le Sueur.

Our confirmation class will be working on a service project at Community Pathways on December 13th. For those who don't know, Community Pathways functions as the food shelf for the Owatonna area and has a clothing ministry and thrift store. Our second parents' night had a close match of Jeopardy covering topics from the Small Catechism. We aren't sure who won but each right question gave everyone on the team a choice of a Starburst or Tootsie Roll. At the request of the students the teams ended up being parents on one side and students on the other. Five middle school and high school youth will be attending a Youthworks Mission trip to Rapid City South Dakota from June 16 to the 22nd next summer. We still have room for another three or four young people to attend. If you know of any that would be interested or can encourage one of our own youth to attend, please have them let Pastor Clark know. The youth will be doing various fund raisers including the Lenten soup suppers to help raise funds for the cost of the trip.

We completed an adult Bible study on the book of Philippians in November. After Christmas I plan to have a study on the book of Revelation based on Mark Allan Powell's book "Introducing the New Testament".

Our Christmas and Advent seasons are here or soon will be. We will be having our Sunday School Christmas Program on Sunday December 17th at 3:00 PM. Sunday Christmas Eve services will be held at 9:00 A.M. with a regular Communion service, and at 4:00 P.M. with a special candlelight Communion service.

I continue to provide monthly visits and communion to our shut-in members. A highlight of this month's visits was getting out to see two of our older members that have moved out of the area, Violet Wencil in Lakeville, and Helen Johnson in Cannon Falls. Both Violet and Helen send their greetings to all of you. We have had some hospitalizations and surgeries that I have done visits for this month in addition to the regular shut-in-visits.

Blessings, Pastor Clark