

January, 2024

[illegible]

A Season that Deserves More Respect

Did you know that Saturday, January 6, is the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord? Some churches have special services for this feast day, but many, like ours, let this date pass by with little notice. Epiphany commemorates the visit of the magi to the Christ child. Yet we like to try to stick the nativity and epiphany together in our nativity sets, carols, and even the movies.

I think that Epiphany deserves more respect and recognition on its own right. The following is just a few facts about Epiphany which I hope will give a greater understanding of this important church observance.

- Matthew describes the event in the second chapter of his gospel. He refers to the visitors from the east as 'magi'. This was a Persian word for astrologers who studied the planets and stars to predict events on earth. They were well educated and usually counselors to the king. The belief was that the changes in the cosmos had the power to affect events on earth, and one would be foolish to take action without first consulting the stars. Many translations use the word 'wise men' to describe them. The fact that they were following a star may indicate it was an astrological sign as well as the star's brightness that drew their attention. Still today people read their horoscope as guidance.

We get the English words magic and magician from the word magi. Some early Christians observed Epiphany as “Three Kings Day”. It wasn’t until 1857 that Rev. John Henry Hopkins Jr., who at the time was serving as the rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, composed the carol, “We Three Kings of Orient Are”, no doubt in remembrance of this early tradition.

- While we traditionally assume there were three magi, Matthew's gospel does not specify. The number three most likely is associated with the three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. There is an early Armenian Church tradition identifying the "Magi of Bethlehem" as Balthasar of Arabia, Melchior of Persia, and Gaspar of India.
- Scholars believe that Jesus may have been as old as two years upon the arrival of the Magi. Matthew notes that the family was living in a house. When Herod heard about the birth of a king, he sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all children two years or younger. Fortunately, the angel of the Lord warned Joseph to flee with the Christ child down to Egypt for protection. Herod heard about the Christ child from the Magi who told him they were seeking the Christ child. So the two events happened about the same time.

- Epiphany is always 12 days after Christmas day. Thus we get the catchy little carol “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” The word Epiphany comes from the Greek meaning manifestation or appearance. The reason for this was that the visit of the magi was the first manifestation of Christ to the gentile world. Years later, people from all nations and languages would be called to come to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the true light to the gentiles.
- Epiphany provides a bridge between the observation of our Lord’s birth and the beginning of Lent. It is during this time that four important events manifest our Lord’s glory as the Son of God: the magi’s adoration of the Christ child, Jesus baptism in the Jordan River, the first miracle in which he changes water into wine, and the Transfiguration.

It is important to note that even before Jesus spoke his first words, God sent angels and wise men to proclaim the revelation of the Immanuel, God is with us. This is worthy of celebration and thanksgiving every day. May we follow the example of the magi and live in adoration of Christ who dwells always in our hearts.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Greg



CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FROM DECEMBER, 2023

OLD BUSINESS: The Internet has been switched to frontier. Saving the church a nice amount of money.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Worship and Music**- Christmas Eve service at 7 pm on the 24th with Dan Umholtz as guest organist. Organ was not tuned, because the furnace was not working when they were to come.
 2. **Parish Education**- Great Christmas program on Dec. 17th. Everyone did an excellent job.
 3. **Stewardship and Evangelism** – None
 4. **Social Ministry** – 18 families for the foodbank in December. Bread ministry is starting again. Need help for foodbank in the New Year.
 5. **Youth** – Snow tubing on January 6th. Signup sheet in the Narthex.
 6. **Church Property** – Furnace is now fixed.
 7. **Budget and Finance** – PPL Bill has been changed to a new rate for 2024 from \$.27 to \$.09 per kilowatt.
 8. **Fellowship** – Surveys are back and a tie between lunch & church at the park and church at church and lunch at park. Going to discuss with committee members to decide. Lasagna Dinner on January 14th after church.
 9. **Mutual Ministry** – None
 10. **Nominating** – John thanked all those going off council for their time and commitment to the church.
- New Business** – everyone got an updated constitution. Bill is going to call the sound guys to go over the soundboard to try and fix the losing of sound that has been happening on & off. Possibly just needs to be cleaned. Bill purchased 2 new microphones, 2 new microphone cords, and a new headset for Pastor Greg.

The Pastor's Time – None, Covenant carried to January meeting.

2023 GIVING

\$130,770.15

2023 EXPENSES

\$141,708.53

Difference between YTD Giving & YTD Expenses \$-10,938.38
{For General Operating Fund}

“VOICE OF SIMEON” RADIO MINISTRY SPONSORS**JANUARY 2024**

January 7 – Buffington/Reed Funeral Home

January 14 – Willing Workers

January 21 – James A. Reed Funeral Home

January 28 – The Erdman Family

We want to thank our faithful sponsors in continuing to help with this important ministry of our church especially during these trying times. God bless you and be safe.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FOOD BANK

stove top stuffing, mac & cheese, peanut butter, ketchup.

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

The Daily Devotionals for January-March, 2024 are available in the narthex. Pick yours up or have someone get them for you.

LASAGNA DINNER AND MEETINGS

a Lasagna Dinner will be held after worship in the Social Hall on January 14th, please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert. Come and enjoy good food and fellowship. Some Committees will meet afterward to plan for the upcoming year.

THE 2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2024 offering envelopes are now in the narthex. Please pick up yours, your family, and anyone else you might see. *They will not be mailed.* **Do not use them before January, 2024** because your number has probably changed.

PRAYER LIST

Members – Minerva Neagley, Julie Ferster, Celine Lenker, Sandra Matter, Sharon Hartman, Cindy Wolfgang, Janet Rumfelt, Barbara Klinger, Clair & Vivian Engle, David Hartman, Jim Neiswender

Northern Dauphin Nursing & Rehab. (Millersburg) - Kenneth Mace

Polk Apartments - John Kissinger, Martha Koppenhaver, *Charles Schoffstall*

Friends & Family – *Kenneth Lahr, Randy Rebeck, Blair Deitrich, Bruce Nace, Kathie Dresel, Dorothy Lettich Martin, Steve Dagen, Rahn Erdman, Marie Lahr, Christy Warfel, Jeff Latsha, Jim Troutman*

SERVING IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY

JANUARY 7, 2024

**BAPTISM OF
OUR LORD w/
HOLY COMMUNION**

Greeter: Dennis Barge

Reader: Barbara & Keith Klinger

Usher: Mike Hartman

Glasses: Sharon Erdman

Altar: Lynn Shadle

JANUARY 14, 2024

**2nd SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY**

Greeter: Deb Trautman

Reader: Cameron Smeltz

JANUARY 21, 2024

**3RD SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY**

Greeter: Barbara & Keith Klinger

Reader: Lynn Schadle

JANUARY 28, 2024

**4TH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY / Youth Sunday**

Greeter: Becky, Max, & Lincoln Hoover

Reader: Youth

FEBRUARY 4, 2024

**5TH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY w/
HOLY COMMUNION**

Greeter: Mike Hartman

Reader: Doris Flynn

Usher: Matt Ferster

Glasses: Doris Flynn

Altar: Dennis Barge

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

**TRANSFIGURATION
SUNDAY**

Greeter: John Novinger

Reader: Sharon Erdman

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

ASH WEDNESDAY

Greeter: Matt Ferster

Reader: Mike Hartman

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

**1ST SUNDAY
IN LENT**

Greeter: Doris Flynn

Reader: Samantha Boyer

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

**2nd SUNDAY
IN LENT**

Greeter: Virginia Moore

Reader: Becky Hoover

INSTALLATION OF NEW CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Members elected to Church Council: Sharon Erdman, Brenda Flynn, Deb Trautman, and Carl Slough.
Cemetery Board: Dave Strohecker and Gerald Wolfgang. Installation will be on Sunday, January 7, 2024 and there will be a reorganizational meeting after worship service to elect officers, etc.

SIMEON UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Church Website: www.simeonlutheran.org

YouTube channel: Simeon Church, Gratz PA

ELCA Website: www.elca.org

Lower Susquehanna Synod: www.lss-elca.org

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JANUARY, 2024

Monday, January 1 – Happy New Year

Wednesday, January 3 – Little Hands School first day back

Saturday, January 6 – EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Sunday, January 7 –Worship Service w/Holy Communion 10:15a.m. /Installation of new council members and cemetery board members /Food Collection

Saturday, January 13 – Food Bank Open 9-11 a.m.

Sunday, January 14 – Worship Service 10:15a.m. /*Fellowship dinner after worship*

Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Thursday, January 18 – Council Meeting 7 p.m.

Friday, January 19 – Deadline For February Newsletter!!!!!!

Sunday, January 21 – Worship Service 10:15a.m.

Sunday, January 28 – Youth Sunday Worship Service 10:15a.m.

FEBRUARY

Friday, February 2 - Happy Gound Hog Day

Sunday, February 4 - Worship Service w/Holy Communion 10:15a.m. /Food Collection

Saturday, February 10 - Food Bank Open 9-11 a.m.

Sunday, February 11 - Worship Service 10:15a.m

Monday, February 12 – Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Wednesday, February 14 – Ash Wednesday Service 7p.m. /Happy Valentine's Day

Little Hands Valentine's Day parties Wed. & Thurs Feb. 14 & 15

Thursday, February 15 – Council Meeting 7 p.m.

Friday, February 16 – Deadline For March Newsletter!!!!!!

Sunday, February 18 - Worship Service 10:15a.m /First Sunday in Lent

Monday, February 19 – Happy President's Day

Thursday, February 22 – George Washington's Birthday

Sunday, February 25 - Worship Service 10:15a.m /Second Sunday in Lent

CHRISTMAS HOUSE TOUR

It was an amazing event and we reconnected with some old friends and made some new ones. The weather was great, and we heard a lot of positive feedback from all who were able to tour. Thanks to the hosts for opening their homes for this great fundraiser:

Mr. & Mrs. Tyrone Troutman
Tarrah & Bob Miller
Ms. Bonnie Murry
Melissa & Garth Campbell
Raymond & Violet Hartman

Kim & Barry Williard Jr.
Mr. Dean Morgan
Colby & Jilliesa Keiffer
The Grand Entrance
Simeon United Lutheran Church

Chefs Corner



Chocolate Revel Bars

1 cup butter	2 cup brown sugar
1(14oz) can sweetened condensed milk	2 eggs
1(12oz) pkg. milk chocolate chips	2 tsp. vanilla
2½ cups flour	2 Tbsp. butter
1 tsp baking soda	½ tsp. salt
1tsp. salt	2 tsp. vanilla
3 cups quick oats	

In a large bowl cream 1 cup butter and brown sugar till smooth. Beat in eggs and 2 tsp. vanilla. Sift flour, soda, and 1 tsp. salt. Stir in oats. Stir dry ingredients into creamed mixture until blended and set aside. In microwave melt condensed milk, chocolate chips, 2 Tbsp. butter, ½ tsp. salt, and 2 tsp. vanilla 2 minutes at a time. Stir till smooth. Press two-thirds of the oat mixture in the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Spread chocolate mixture over dough. Dot with remaining oat mixture and bake at 350* for 25-30 minutes. Cool and cut into bars.

Orange Juice Bread

½ cup butter	1 tsp. baking powder
1¼ cup sugar	¼ tsp. salt
2 eggs	½ cup orange juice
2 cup flour	½ cup milk

Icing

1 Tbsp. lemon juice	1/3 cup sugar
1 Tbsp. orange juice	

Cream butter and sugar till fluffy. Beat eggs and then add. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix orange juice and milk. Add liquids alternately with dry ingredients and creamed mixture. Butter an 11x4x3 inch loaf pan or 2 small loaf pans. Line bottom of pan with wax paper and butter paper. Bake at 325* for 45 minutes. Combine lemon juice, orange juice and sugar in a sauce pan. Cook over medium heat and brush bread with icing as soon as they are taken from the oven.

Baked Spaghetti

2 lbs. ground beef	2 cans tomato soup
¼ cup finely chopped onion	1 can mushroom soup
½ cup finely chopped green pepper	2 soup cans milk
1 tsp. salt	2 cups sharp cheddar cheese
1 lb. spaghetti	1 cup mozzarella cheese

Brown hamburger with onion, pepper, and salt; drain. Break spaghetti into thirds and cook according to pkg. directions; drain well. In a large bowl combine hamburger mix, spaghetti, soups, milk, and 1½ cups cheddar cheese. Pour into a 9x13 inch baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and bake at 350* for 1 hour.

Music Notes



Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night, Be -
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When, lo, a - bove the earth Rang
3 Down in a lone - ly man-ger The hum - ble Christ was born; And

hold, through-out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

Refrain

Jubilee Singers since 1879. Some of the original stanzas were obscure, for spirituals, by definition, were unwritten songs passed from plantation to plantation and from generation to generation. The chorus, however, was crystal clear and highlighted the theme for the whole: “Go, Tell It on the Mountain / Jesus Christ is born.”

Intrigued by the chorus and melody, John wrote two new stanzas for this song and it became his custom before sunrise on Christmas morning to take students caroling from building to building, singing, “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” It was first published in 1907 in *Work's Folk Songs of the Negro as sung on the Plantations*.

John Work has been called the first black collector of Negro folk songs, a pursuit continued by his two sons, John Wesley Work II and Frederick J. Work. Both young men served on the faculty of Fisk University, working with the Jubilee Singers and collecting and publishing African-American spirituals and folk music.

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain” is classic in that genre. To black slaves in antebellum American, the birth of a liberating Savior was a message to be heralded from the highest mountains.

It still is, for us all.

Taken from the book “Then Sings My Soul” By Robert J. Morgan

Go, Tell It on the Mountain 1907

During the bitter days of slavery, black workers on American plantations, solaced themselves with song and created a unique form of American hymnology-the Negro spiritual. It was the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, that took the plantation songs of the Negro slaves to the entire world. One of the last “spirituals” to be uncovered and published was this unique carol, “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.”

How did it come about?

John Wesley Work Jr. was born in Nashville, on or about August 6, 1871. His father was choir director for a Nashville church who often wrote his own arrangements. John grew up singing in his dad’s choirs and when he enrolled in Fisk University, he became active in the music program, though his primary subjects were history and Latin. Returning to Fisk to work on his master’s degree, John was eventually hired as professor of Latin and Greek. But his greatest love was the preservation and performance of Negro spiritual.

Many of the spirituals had been published, but “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” was largely unknown, though it had been performed by the

PASTOR GREG'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!!!

After church on November 26, 2023 the Fellowship committee gave Pastor Greg a SURPRISE Birthday party. He was truly surprised. The fellowship committee supplied a delicious meal. Becky Hoover made a beautiful and delicious chocolate cake. A fun time was had by all.



THANK YOU ALL for the Wonderful Birthday Party and the many Gifts. I really was surprised and delighted. It is my Honor to Serve and to Share in Friendship with each of You.

Pastor Greg



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AND CHRISTMAS EVE

