



SPRUCE RUN

Fellowship

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Epiphany 2021 Vol. 66, No. 1

Pastor's Corner



Blessed

Have you ever thought about what it means to be blessed? Sometimes we casually say, "be blessed" as a stand in for "good luck." In some cultures, the proper response to the question, "how are you doing?" is "Blessed and highly favored." The common response to a sneeze is, "Bless you!"

For that matter, one of the activities Christians have been doing for centuries is blessing their homes on Epiphany (January 6th). This is done with chalk and prayer (see "A House Blessing for Epiphany"). But what exactly are we doing? What are we asking? What are we hoping will happen?

We are asking for two things: for Holiness and for Goodness.

We are asking for God to enter into our everyday reality. Now, of course, God is everywhere and always, but we're asking for an awareness of God, an inkling of heaven here on earth.

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A Message from Council

Peace to ALL from your Congregation Council,

In this 2021 Epiphany season, we all have reason to pause for the wonder of the workings of the Holy Spirit. I really believe our eyes have been opened. Even though we cannot meet for worship as usual, our ministry has grown! The Holy Spirit through the COVID fallout has challenged us to move on-line and we have done it successfully. The combined views from Facebook and YouTube have consistently week-on-week been over 100 viewers. Pastor Chris has initiated Zoom bible studies and has posted videos of the Key Points of Lutheranism as well as a new series: 'A Theological Q & A'. What seems like an inconvenience, taking communion in the parking lot, is actually a blessing in disguise because now everyone driving by can see us communing, it is no longer hidden behind doors. The parking lot, Facebook, and YouTube have become a megaphone for the Holy Spirit in Glen Gardner. Your Congregation Council fully supports these efforts and would be happy to consider any others that might be proposed.

The Council would like to thank all of the talented musicians who made the Christmas service a success. Our music ministry too has increased beyond the walls of our church. The Nativity of our Lord service with the music prelude had 142 views on YouTube alone. This is so wonderful!

A big "THANK YOU" to everyone who supports the Food Pantry. It is important to feed the souls and the bodies of those in our community. We have a dedicated core staff who coordinate the Food Pantry effort led by Gail Vajda and Janet Ledoux with regular support from several others.

Also, a "THANK YOU" to everyone who pledged support for the parsonage renovations. The finishing touches on the planned work are being made and I hear that Pastor Chris and Lisa are settling in nicely. Good work, Erik, for serving as our general contractor for this effort.

Lastly, a big "THANK YOU" to Karen Smith who now has two jobs. She is of course our administrator and assistant to Pastor Chris, but she has also taken on the responsibilities of recording, editing, and posting all of our on-line ministry content. It is a big job and Karen is doing it very well.

Please plan to sign-in to the Annual Meeting that will be held over a Zoom link on Sunday, January 24th. The exact time will be communicated at a later date prior to the 24th.

Respectfully,
Your Congregation Council



The Annual Congregational Meeting will take place on
Sunday, January 24, 2021
with a snow date of Sunday, January 31, 2021.

Additional details will follow soon.

January and February Celebrations

As we go through lists for the Fellowship, we find that there are names of people who have moved away or who have not attended worship or any church activities. "Celebrations" is not meant to be an official membership list. If there is a name of someone who wishes that their name be removed, please let us know.

Birthdays

January

- 1 Emily Smith
- 3 Mary Lomerson
- 4 Kaitlyn D'Alessio
- 7 Emily (Groendyke) Iacucci
- 10 Shaun Adickes
- Maggie Desch
- 11 Christine Jones
- 15 Emalina Ascenzo
- 23 Louise Fraser
- 24 Anthony Jones
- Janet Monroe
- 25 David Glahn
- 28 Richard Henry
- 30 Lillian Balzer
- 31 Roslind Jensen

February

- 1 Rebecca Fraser
- 3 Denise Fishburn
- 6 Timothy Peare
- 7 Lisa Halverson
- 8 Joseph Codis
- 9 Dale Monroe, Jr.
- 19 Jennifer Mansilla
- Bernice Mayer
- 21 David Adickes
- 26 Frank J. Schmelz
- 27 Debbie Eustace



Baptism Anniversaries

January

- 13 Cecelia Ossi
- 29 Paul Smith

February

- 8 Cadence Grieder
- 15 Emily Smith
- 24 Vienna Rose DiRe
- 28 Andrew Curtis



Wedding Anniversaries

January

- 9 Janet & Dale Monroe, Sr.
- 17 Rosemarie & David Adickes
- 19 Pastor Chris & Lisa Halverson

February

- 20 Lori & Jim Terry
- 28 Nancy & Walter Bibinger

SPRUCE RUN LUTHERAN CHURCH

MILESTONES

We rejoice with the family of Sue and Jack O'Brien about the birth of their grandson Ronan John Clark born on November 27, 2020. Ronan joins big sister Elise.

Thank you to all who participated in the virtual caroling and Christmas Eve prelude! You all helped continue the special music traditions of Spruce Run Lutheran Church.



North Hunterdon Food Pantry

Our Thanksgiving, December, and Christmas distributions were a huge success thanks to the support of our faithful donors and volunteers.

ShopRite generously donated all the turkeys for both our Thanksgiving and Christmas distributions as well as potatoes, carrots, celery, and onions for our clients to make a wonderful dinner. The other donations that we receive throughout the year made it possible for us to provide an additional bag of food with the Christmas distribution to help clients even more.

We are grateful to the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts from Pack 190, Troop 121, and Troop 200 who provided us with a much needed supply of canned goods.

We are also thankful for everyone who participated in the Reverse Advent Calendar box program. Your generous donations will help us continue our mission to make sure our clients have the food they need.

Thank you again,
Gail Vajda



CONGREGATION COUNCIL

President: George Creasy
Vice President: Jeff Smith
Secretary: Sonia Cordova
Treasurer: Gail DeRemer
Financial Secretary: Paul Henriksen
Janet Ledoux
Danielle Beyers
Gail Vajda
Anthony DiRe
Gene Armbrecht
Rosemarie Adickes
Rich Balzer
Bob DeRemer
Erik Henriksen

COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND LIAISON

Service
Sonia Cordova

Witness
Sonia Cordova

Finance
Chair: Jeff Smith

Learning
Janet Ledoux

Building Use/Management
Erik Henriksen

Property
Erik Henriksen

Mutual Ministry
Janet Ledoux

Stewardship
Council Liaison: George Creasy

Worship and Music
Sonia Cordova

Altar Guild
Chair: Gail DeRemer

North Hunterdon Food Pantry
Gail Vajda
Family Promise
Chair: Wendy DiNapoli

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent
Laura Mortensen

Music
Candice Peare
Jason Steiner

Pre-K and Kindergarten
Lisa Ficano

First and Second Grade
Andrew Fielding

Third and Fourth Grade
Beverly Fielding

Fifth and Sixth Grade
TBD

Seventh Grade (Confirmation I)
George Creasy
Rob Ossi

Eighth Grade (Confirmation II)
Pastor Chris Halverson

STAFF

Pastor Chris Halverson
Music Director: Candice Peare
Director, Handbell Choir: Jason Steiner
Secretary: Karen Smith
Sextons:
Rosemarie Adickes
Sara Armbrecht

FELLOWSHIP EDITORIAL STAFF

Jane Creasy
Karen Smith

WEBSITE

Mark Creasy
Karen Smith

We ask for such sight, even as we always “see through a glass darkly,” to quote the Apostle Paul.

We are asking for the profound to enter into the mundane. This is no small thing; think of Jacob, who limps for the rest of his life after encountering the Holy at the Jabok river, or Moses whose life's course was forever changed by the sacred burning bush, or Paul dismounted and blinded by the divine, chased out into the desert to reconsider everything he thought he knew.

The sacred is strange. God doesn't let us go on as we were before. God causes us to see the world around us differently and transforms us. That's a part of blessing.

Fear not, however, blessing not only disorders our connection to creation, it also reconnects us to it. In fact, it calls us back to that profound point made at the very beginning of scripture—God has declared the world good.

It often doesn't seem so, does it? Well, that's part of what we are wrestling with when we ask God to bless something or someone. It is as if we are a child asking a loving parent to take a look at a malfunctioning Christmas gift, “Make it work like it is supposed to!” Make it good again, O' Lord!

Think of it, when we do a pet blessing we are asking that the animal be what it was created to be, that its natural goodness, the original blessing of creation, would shine forth—may fido truly be a good boy! Or when we bless people who have particular vocations (roles and relationships) we are asking God to help them be a doctor or student or council member in a way that is genuinely good! So too, the homes we bless, may the time we spend in our homes this coming year be truly good! May they

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A House Blessing for Epiphany

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, who spreads forth the heavens like a tent, who shelters our lives, who comes to make a home with us.

Amen

Today we remember the Magi arriving and finding the Christ Child by asking God's blessing on our home for the sake of all who dwell here and all who may come as guests.

From the east came the Magi to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasures they offered precious gifts: gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial. May Christ Jesus dwell with us, keep us from all harm, and make us one in mind and heart, now and forever.

Amen

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling place among us. It is Christ who enlightens our hearts and homes with his love. May all who enter this home find Christ's light and love.

Amen

Peace to this dwelling and to all who enter here.

Mark in chalk:

20 - Christ Bless this Home - 21

Amen

be places of safety and welcome, recreation and care!

This second sense of blessing is perhaps best exemplified by the German equivalent of "Bless you" *gesund-heit* literally wishing the other person health-hood. Bless you; may it be good for you!

May you experience your Creator in a profound life altering way, and may you show forth the goodness of creation! That is what we ask when we ask for a blessing.

And those two things are fully present on Epiphany—the day when we celebrate the beginning of Jesus' revelation to the whole world. That all the world might be met by the Creator in Christ, and might see the goodness of creation in all its glory in Jesus. That the entire world might be blessed.

In Christ's Peace,

Pastor Chris



Ask the Pastor

Have you always wanted to ask a question, but didn't want anyone to know it was you asking? Do you have questions about being a Christian, a Lutheran, about God, or about life in general? You can submit a question anonymously and each week, Pastor Chris will answer one question. You can submit as many questions as you want using separate forms. The questions and answers will be posted on the website, sent in email and on Facebook.

[Submit a question here](#)

Bible Study on Paul

Want to join a 3 session Zoom Bible study? Exact times will be determined after a group has been set. Fill out the form below to let us know you are interested and your general time preference.



[Bible Study Interest Form](#)



Outdoor Holy Communion

On January 17, 2021, at 10 am and 11am, we plan to gather in the parking lot for the reading of the Gospel and the Words of Institution, followed by the distribution of Holy Communion. This gathering will take place in the upper parking lot. All participants will either remain in their vehicles or stand at the end of their vehicle, allowing for social distancing. After the Words of Institution, family groups will be invited forward one group at a time to receive Holy Communion. In order to help us plan properly, we need to know if you will be present.

Outdoor Communion Registration Form

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND DRIVE UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that we have received a pledged total of \$42,740 toward the goal. So far, we have received \$15,742 of that pledged amount. We met our pledge goal and Council will monitor the progress of donations toward that goal over the next 3 years. If you haven't pledged, but want to, it's not too late! Additional new donations are always welcome, since pledges are planned giving that can change.

Faithfully yours,
Fund Drive Committee



Parsonage Renovation Pledge Card

Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church

Name			
Street Address			
City			
State		ZIP Code	
Telephone			
E-Mail			

I (we) pledge a total of: \$ _____ over the 3 year period. This will come as a
weekly _____ monthly _____ annually _____ one time _____ contribution.

According to Tradition, You Should Leave Your Tree Up Until January 6.

If you've been looking for a reason to keep your Christmas decorations up a bit longer, this is it.

By Emily VanSchmus January 03, 2020

Better Homes & Gardens (Holidays&Celebrations@mail.bhg.com)

When it comes to holiday decorations, there are two kinds of people: Those who take down their Christmas trees down on December 26, and those who aren't quite ready for the season to be over. And while taking down the tree is usually less fun than putting it up, there's actually another good reason people wait to do it. If you've been looking for an excuse to keep

listening to Christmas music and admiring your festive decor, you're in luck: Tradition says you should be celebrating Christmas (and leaving your decorated tree up) through January 6.

You're probably familiar with the song about the 12 days of Christmas—but you may not have known that the 12 days don't actually start until Christmas Day, meaning there are almost two full weeks of celebrating to do after Santa arrives. According to Christian tradition, January 6 marks the day the three kings actually arrived in Bethlehem and signals the end of the Christmas celebrations.

This day is called The Feast of Epiphany, The Twelfth Night, or Three Kings Day, and in some parts of the world, it signifies a celebration that's just as big as the one on Christmas Day. And while we'll welcome any excuse to leave the ornaments and lights up a little longer, tradition says it's actually unlucky to take your tree down before this date. When you do finally take down the tree, don't just leave it on the curb; you can actually recycle live Christmas trees by finding a recycling program or having them chipped into mulch for your garden.

While the Christmas festivities technically end on Epiphany, the holidays aren't over just yet. The day also marks the official start of the Mardi Gras season, so it's tradition to serve King Cake on January 6. The tradition of Three Kings Day is actually where the name "king cake" comes from—and why there's a tiny plastic baby hidden inside.

King Cake

From: BHG.COM Recipes and Cooking

Decorated in traditional Mardi Gras green, purple, and yellow, King's Cake is first served on January 6, Twelfth Night. Whoever is served the hidden pecan becomes the king or queen for the week and bakes another King's Cake. This festive ritual continues each week until Mardi Gras, the day before Lent.



Prep: 40 mins

Rise: 2 hrs 30 mins

Bake: 25 mins at 350°

Servings: 12

Ingredients:

3 ½ – 4 cups all-purpose flour

1 package active dry yeast

½ cup milk

⅓ cup sugar

¼ cup butter or margarine

½ teaspoon salt

3 eggs

½ cup diced candied citron

1 pecan half

1 cup sifted powdered sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla

Milk

Green, purple and yellow-colored sugar

Directions:

Step 1

In a large mixer bowl combine 1-1/2 cups of the flour and yeast. In a saucepan heat milk, sugar, butter or margarine, and salt until warm (115 degree F to 120 degree F) and butter or margarine is almost melted, stirring constantly.

Step 2

Add heated mixture to flour mixture. Add eggs, Beat with an electric mixer on low speed for 1/2 minute, scraping bowl. Beat 3 minutes on high speed. Stir in citron. Using a spoon, stir in as much of the remaining flour as you can.

Step 3

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in enough of the remaining flour to make a moderately stiff dough that is smooth and elastic (6 to 8 minutes total).

Step 4

Shape into a ball. Place in a greased bowl. Turn once to grease surface. Cover. Let rise in a warm place until double (1-1/2 to 2 hours). Punch dough down. Cover. Let rest 10 minutes.

Step 5

Press the pecan into the dough. Shape dough into a 30-inch-long roll. Join ends to form a ring about 10 inches in diameter. Place on a greased baking sheet. Cover and let rise until almost double (about 1 hour).

Step 6

Bake in a 350 degree F oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden. If necessary, cover loosely with foil after 20 minutes to prevent over-browning. Cool on a rack.

Step 7

In a small bowl beat together powdered sugar, vanilla, and enough milk (1 to 2 tablespoons) to make a thin frosting. Spoon the frosting over cooled cake. Sprinkle the colored sugar in 2-inch rows, spoke fashion, alternating colors around the top of the cake. Makes 12 to 16 servings.

Nutrition FactsPer Serving:

137 calories; total fat 3g; saturated fat 2g; cholesterol 32mg; sodium 83mg; carbohydrates 24g; fiber 1g; protein 3g; vitamin a 146IU; vitamin c 0mg; calcium 10mg; iron 1mg.



CARING MEANS DOING

‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me... and just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’
(Matthew 25:34-46)

We Act on Our Mission

Spruce Run Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church is 246 years young. Our legacy has been one of serving the community through Christian education, music, and service; and we have been doing a very good job of keeping to our mission. Until recently, we opened our doors for worship every Sunday with social distancing and have upgraded our sanctuary to current standards for indoor air quality. An additional response to the pandemic has been learning and expanding to a concurrent on-line ministry that some denominations have been practicing for decades, but we have just begun. We have continued our Sunday School and Confirmation Classes through the on-line Zoom platform. While our singing has been reduced, our talented music and bell choir directors still fill the sanctuary with sound. We also still lend our facility to groups that are trying to do better and we do that safely following current guidelines. We also still support our local community with much-needed food. Despite the pandemic, we have continued to act on our mission.

Our Mission requires “doing”

What we have maintained in service and stewardship is a testimony to our collective faith, but these past accomplishments cannot continue without ongoing support. We are fortunate to have a new pastor, Pastor Chris Halverson, to lead us in worship, prayer, and doing. Now more than ever, our church should stand tall and visible in our community as a body of both spiritual and material support for those around us who are in need.

Please make a pledge so our “doing” can continue.

George W. Creasy
Stewardship Chair

[Click here for the 2021 Stewardship Pledge Card.](#)

Our Mission

For over two centuries, Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church has existed to draw people into a community of faith which proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

As we move into the next century, our sense of hope, strength, and grace – our Lutheran heritage – will nurture our Congregation and we will reach out to the community through Christian education, music, and service.



Fellowship

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www.SpruceRunLutheran.com

Subscribe to the Spruce Run Lutheran Church YouTube Channel

Find us on Facebook at @SRELC

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen
upon you.”*

- Isaiah 60:1