### Paster's Paragraphs

he "Gentile Christmas," better known as The Epiphany, brings down the curtain on our Christmas celebration. It's the Twelfth Day, celebrated every January 6th. The Epiphany directs each of us to the message of the angels at the Nativity. This good news of the birth of the Savior is joy for all the world! The magi (read: Babylonian astrologers) have no Jewish blood or heritage, but have traveled to greet an infant King. They found Jesus and offered him princely gifts before returning another way. I wonder if they later discovered the true identity of the Child they discovered. We know! The Babe of Bethlehem grows to be the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord to be introduced to all the world. [By the way, the Greek Orthodox faith, The Eastern Catholic Church, celebrates Christmas on 6 January. The root of this difference with the Western Catholic Church is grounded in the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1582, a twelve day difference, hence the twelve days of Christmas.] We will celebrate The Epiphany for the next number of weeks, focusing on the revelation of Jesus as the King, the Son of God. Listen carefully to the revelations about Jesus.

can almost hear a collective sigh of relief at the end of the holiday season because of the longing to get back to some sort of routine after the disruptions of the last number of weeks. Returning to routine gives us opportunity to reflect and look ahead. By the way, the month of January traces its name to Janus, a two-faced Greek god, one who looks backward and forwards at the same time! Pause amid returning routine to ponder the blessings of 2016 and also to recognize our abject failures to follow Jesus. It is for both of these that our God continues to search us out...to bless us and to forgive us to renew our efforts at living as his children. We know he does because his Son has revealed the will of the Father to us and then demonstrated how it works in his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Live January wisely!

unday morning worship in the sanctuary affords each of us a dedicated, sacred time and place to connect with our God. We arrive battered and sullied by our own sinfulness lived out during the preceding six days. Now to confess and have the load lifted by being forgiven as from Christ himself. We know we will meet our God every Sunday as we share his word and listen for his will. We respond in praise and song for his revealing himself to us. Most Sundays we encounter our resurrected Lord in bread and wine, connecting to the Life-Giver. We burst forth in song, "Thank the Lord and sing his praise." We can be assured that our God will show up for his time and place. Worship on any Sunday morning has its ebb and flow, as do the seasons of the Church year. Nevertheless, our Father awaits our coming. "I was glad when they said let's us go to the house of the Lord!" Make the resolution to meet your waiting Father every Sunday at his place!

The season of Epiphany is a time when the Church celebrates God revealing Himself by becoming one of us — the long-promised Christ — Jesus of Nazareth — true God and true man. Jesus is revealed to Magi from the East. The Father reveals Him as His own Son during His Baptism. Jesus reveals His divine nature through miracles — healing the sick, casting out demons, controlling nature. And Jesus gave the greatest revelation of the love and mercy of God offered to all people through his death and resurrection on the cross for the sins of the whole world. In his Word and Sacrament, the Christ has been, and continues to be revealed to you. Because God has revealed himself to you through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit you are now being equipped to be the revealer, to be God's instrument as you reflect the love of God in Jesus Christ through your words and in your actions. May others who do not yet know Him, have the Christ revealed to them through you!

His Peace Be with You, Pastor Jon

#### STEPHEN MINISTRY

A new year is always about that which is new. In January, Stephen Ministry at Hope will begin a "new" training class. I wish to say "thank you" to those who have prayerfully considered, and who will now begin training. Now starts the hard work of 50 hours of training and study leading up to commissioning as a Stephen Minister. May God bless your studies and your efforts as you begin your journey in one-on-one caring ministry.

#### **CONFIRMAITON**

New Year, new semester. Before you blink twice, we will already be talking about retreat and the Rite of Confirmation. Pray for our catechumens as they grow in faith, knowledge, and fear of the Lord.

#### **NERF WARS**

Junior High Youth — Saturday, January 7th beginning at 6:00 p.m. Friends are absolutely welcome. Save the date and prepare to do battle!

#### **SMALL GROUPS**

The beginning of a new year is a great time to join a small group at Hope. A small group helps you connect and build relationships within the congregation. A small group is a safe place to share your worries, struggles, or burdens. A small group is an opportunity to give and receive care through the joys and sorrows of life. A small group is a conduit to invite friends and neighbors into our congregation. The study of God's Word among God's people is a means by which your God gets closer to you.

Which small group to join? Look on Hope's website for a list — as well as the Welcome Center in the Narthex, or contact me.

Notes from Pastor Jon

# Music Ministry

Happy Epiphany! With the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas coming, I would like to thank all the musicians who served in our Advent and Christmas celebrations!

During the season of Advent, special thanks to Amanda Gonzales, Carissa Petersen, and Don Hite for serving as the musicians for Holden Evening Prayer.

Thank you to the staff, Sunday School teachers, and parents who helped make Shepherds, Sheep and A Savior a wonderful program. A special thanks to Penny Thomas, our leader of the preschool angels.

The Service of Lessons and Carols had special music provided by the Sanctuary Choir, Hope Jubilate and Celebration Bells, and Hope Festival Orchestra. A special thanks to conductor Robert Davis. Thank you so much for that wonderful celebration of the story of the Nativity.

Thank you to Holly Brewer for serving as our flutist for worship on December 18th.

The Christmas Eve 7:30 p.m. service had special music provided by the Sanctuary Choir, Hope Festival Orchestra, Hope Jubilate Bells, and a special thank you to our conductor, Robert Davis. Thank you so much for using your musical gifts to celebrate Christmas.

Thank you also to our Christmas Eve 5:30 p.m. soloist, Penny Thomas; and our 7:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. soloists: Rachael Hibbs Coleman and Michael Coleman.

Spring rehearsals begin in January. Woodwinds and Strings, Brass, and Jubilate Bells begin on Tuesday, January 10th. Children's Music, Celebration Bells, and Adult Choir begin on Wednesday, January 11th. We would love to have any ringers, singers, or instrumentalists join us.

If you have any questions about music or rehearsal times, please contact me at spoyner@hope -lutheran.org.

Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord! Stephanie Poyner Director of Music



# Youth Ministry

Can you hear it? The calm? The still? The rush is over, the wrapping paper is ripped away, the tags removed, the returns are done, there's only one stale cookie left in the jar — can you hear the peace? Me either. January seems to pick up right where December left off, a new year, a new season simply means a new calendar full of events, meetings and deadlines. It's competition season for more than one high schooler and, of course, there's the ominous STAAR testing schedule looming on the horizon. What keeps you balanced in the rush? What stabilizes you when everything else is chaos? What brings you to that still, quiet place where you can hear God's whisper to your heart? Is it music? Time in worship? A family devotion time? Is there anything? I find it challenging to dig into God's Word on my own. My time together with others in Bible study pushes my understanding, holds me accountable and opens new insights — I treasure that time and even on the not-sogreat days (there are times when leading a Bible study to sleepy eved teens can feel less than rewarding) I walk away blessed. Of all the new resolutions you have to choose from make this a priority — find that place, that time, those people who draw you deeper into God's presence. You will be amazed how if affects EVERYTHING else.

Upward Concessions are open! Saturday mornings with the sound of basketball pounding, whistles blowing and fresh coffee brewing — stop by and say hello, grab a water bottle and a snack and support our summer mission trips!

There's still room! Wanting to serve this summer? We still have openings on our San Antonio mission trip, June 11-16 and families with older children are welcome to join us. We will be working together to offer VBS for a small mission church, seeking out service opportunities in the city and cooking our meals family style! Contact Robin Groeper for more information, registration closes January 30.

Parents of youth — 8th grade through senior high, we will have a parent/youth meeting in the Great Room on Sunday, January 8, following the late service to talk about all things youth ministry! Come join us and be in the know.

Coming soon! Spaghetti Lunch! A buffet of delicious sauces to top your spaghetti along with breads, salad and desserts — watch for date! Parents of graduating high school seniors, we will meet during the Bible study hour on Sunday, January 8 in the office conference room — please join us to discuss opportunities and blessings for your grad!

#### Thank you very much. .

The Christmas musical was a wonderful celebration of Christ's birth. Thank you so much to Mrs. Penny, Mrs. Alisa, and the preschool parents for working so hard with our preschool angels.

Thank you to the cast parents for faithfully bringing your children to practice, and thank you to all the wonderful children who were a part of the program. Our cast and chorus did a fantastic job sharing the good news of Jesus' birth.

We are also very grateful for our light and sound team — Hannah King, Hunter Hovorka and Don Schneider!

A big thank you to everyone who set up for, and cleaned up after the program. You helped make a big task easy to handle both before and after our musical.

Finally, thank you to Mrs. Hobratschk, Ms. Stephanie, and all the wonderful teachers and substitutes teachers who served throughout 2016! We couldn't make our Sunday morning programs work without you. Thank you for your time to help grow the faith of our Hope children.

Wishing you all a blessed 2017, Krista Beken Director of Children's Ministries

#### Upward Basketball ~ Get in the game!

Upward basketball games begin Saturday, January 7th. We will welcome over 200 players and their families to our campus. YOU can be a part of this great outreach ministry.

- \* Referees are needed for both Friday night and Saturday games. Male or female; no experience needed. The more help we have, the less time any one person has to commit. Each game lasts only one hour. Contact Krista Beken, Chris Riggs or Mathews George for more information.
- \* Help us feed those Saturday referees and the other folks who are here throughout the day. The meal should feed 10-12 hungry people. Meals in the past have included lasagna, chicken spaghetti, sloppy joes, hamburger helper meals, and tacos. If you are interested in providing a meal, please contact Robin Groeper or Krista Beken

#### **Upcoming Events**

- ⇒ Upward practices resume January 2nd; games begin January 6th & 7th
- ⇒ January 11th SWAT resumes

#### A Final Note

Check this out — a good resource for some fresh new attitudes and family habits this new year:

http://www.imom.com/10-things-your-family-can-focus-on-in-the-new-year/#.WD3NnLIrKUk



#### 2017 Coffee Hour!

The time is here to sign up for those volunteering in 2017 for Coffee Hour! First, our thanks for all those who helped serve in 2016. You are much appreciated. For 2017, the sign up is available in the Narthex.

Get your groups together and help host our special time for fellowship; the Coffee Hour! If it is 1 week, 2 weeks, or 1 month, we would love to have you host. Detailed directions are given.

Many opportunities are still available. Those dates are: March 19 & 26, May 21 & 28, the entire month of July, August 27, September 20, the entire month of October, November 19 & 26 and the entire month of December.

This ministry does not exist without your help. That means, without volunteers on the dates above, there will be  ${\bf NO}$  coffee or donuts. So please. . . .won't you consider volunteering to make this happen.

Questions?? Comments!! Let me know. Debbie Hasty (dhasty@hope-lutheran.org)

#### New Year, New You!

January comes as a blank page and our new experiences are yet to be written, but Ladies Guild is ready and eager to "Serve the Lord with Gladness" as is our mission.

The transition from Christmas to a New Year is quite a shift, not only in special events and activities, and can bring a sense of renewal, new resolve. Christmas is over, being packed away for another time are boxes, bags, ribbons and tags. The enjoyment of getting ready, buy gifts and baking is fading, along with memories of long lines, traffic and crowds.

Now when friends get together, the conversation will change from "how will you spend Christmas" to "how did your Christmas go?" Lots of answers here. . .new toys, books, games, special candies, neckties and socks, and things that need to be assembled or find with "no batteries included."

Yes, Christmas is over. But is it? The Christmas that believers got came not from stores, or cards, or abundant meals. It came from a deeper, heartfelt place. It came from remembering a star, shepherds working the night shift, oh-so-wise men traveling from far away and angels singing a new song. . .and a Gift for us all —Jesus Christ.

Lowly born and welcomed by these few, for the moment, and now throughout all the world. This is what we got for Christmas! Faith renewed, forgiveness, salvation and promises for a one-day already prepared mansion in eternity. There we too will then be presented in person. Faith comes not wrapped in a beautiful wrapped package or found under a tress and is not for only one day a year. . .it is our gift from God. And it is found in the heart.

This is what we got for Christmas. Thanks be to God!

Christmas forever continues in 2017 as Hope Ladies Guild meets on January 10th at 6:30 p.m. Terri Wenzel, our past President, will be our hostess and present the devotion and prayer as we discuss, plan and begin our service for 2017.

May God also continue to bless you with a Happy New Year.

#### Columbarium Committee

#### Background

The 1960 census of Friendswood stated that there were 960 people. Today, there are 40,000 people and Friendswood has become "HOME" to a large contingency of people. There are limited places available for a final resting place for those who may desire to remain in this area in perpetuity.

The Friends Church Cemetery is restricted to members of the faith or to people who lived in Friendswood prior to 1960. In 2015 the Episcopal Church installed a Columbarium (a place to permanently store cremated remains) on their property for their members.

The traditional church cemetery had, for centuries, served as the ideal place of burial for its congregational members. Members were born in the church and spent their lives involved in the church community. After death, members remained a part of that community by interment (ground burial).

The 20th century trend has been to choose a secular cemetery and this trend has caused a lack of church cemeteries. Additional reasons for the lack of church cemeteries on church properties has been lack of space, being land locked and large cost for additional property for a cemetery.

The LCMS has no official position on cremation. Cremation is increasing in favor, in part because of space limitations in some cemeteries, and because of health considerations. The primary reason for the increase in cremations is economic, however, since it avoids such costs as purchase of coffins and cemetery plots and substantially lowers the expense of a funeral.

In their textbook Pastoral Theology (used at our Synod's seminaries), LCMS Pastor Norert H. Mueller and George Kraus offer this perspective: "Not too long ago, the church viewed cremation negatively. Because the general public associated the practice with heathen religions and/or an attempt to disprove the possibility of the resurrection, Christians were reluctant to consider it. In itself, the practice has no theological significance and may be used in good conscience." Synod's Lutheran Service Book Agenda, approved by the LCMS in convention, includes instruction (rubric) for the committal of a person's ashes, encouraging burial or interment and discouraging the scattering of the ashes. (1)

#### Committee

A Columbarium Committee has been formed to investigate the feasibility of providing a Columbarium at Hope Lutheran Church. Committee members include Harold Benson, Margie Riley, Katherine Kohn and Bruce Hunter. The committee is considering a number of items associated with installation of a Columbarium including:

- Legal/regulatory requirements
- Columbarium manufacturers and design options
- Potential locations
- Construction/maintenance cost
- Policies and procedures
- Other church installations

Currently the Committee is planning to present information and recommendations to the Board of Directors in February and to the congregation at the annual Voters' Assembly on March 19, 2017.

(1) LCMS information is an extract from LCMS Frequently Asked Questions page 4 Cremation.

#### Flower Chart

The 2017 Flower Chart has been moved to the Center for Faith Development (bulletin board by mailboxes). Many opportunities are still available: March 26, June 11, July 9, and December 31. Please take a minute to look the chart over to see where you would like to sign up. **Your help is needed!** 

Questions? Contact Katherine Kohn or Debbie Hasty at 281-482-7943. Thank you.

#### Offering Envelopes

Your Offering Envelopes for 2017 are in the Grand Hallway. Pick yours up today. They are in numerical order. If you have forgotten your number, an alphabetical list is on the table. Thank you.

#### Mailboxes

When was the last time you actually looked at your church mailbox?? I do realize that the majority take time every week to keep their mailbox clean. There is a small minority that haven't looked at them since last year when I said those all to famous words "Clean out your Mailbox, Please!"

It's that time again. This gives you notice — if it's not cleaned out by the middle of the month, it will be tossed.

Thanks for your help!! Debbie Hasty



#### Stephen Ministry

Decorations and celebration are being packed away. Old and new feelings can come front and center as the joy of the season is replaced with a bit of emptiness, a "what comes now" wondering after such a busy time. Time now to go back to former routines, or maybe try to work on the new year's resolutions.

If you have ever felt overwhelmed by difficult times in your daily life, brought on by issues in family, with health or grief, or relationship, chances are you as a Christian feel these concerns deeply. Again, we are here to offer Stephen Ministry as a means to allow God to bring care and focus to you. Your fellow Hope members, men and women, who bring their life experiences and their training, spend private time with you.

We realize that sharing very personal feelings requires trust in the listener. Be assured that all sharing is confidential and never fault-finding. Focus fining is the intent, a focus on God's guidance is upmost. If you did — or will — resolve to accept His help, a call to Pastor Jon begins the caring.

#### Thank you

The Staff of Hope Lutheran Church would like to thank each of you for the generous Christmas gifts. Your continued support of the Staff and what is accomplished at Hope is a blessings.

## Financial Mews

Fiscal Year (04/01/16 - 03/31/17) As of November 2016

	ANNUAL PLAN	Y-T-D PLAN	Y-T-D ACTUAL	% OF PLAN	
Operating Receipts	\$1,025,075.00	\$660, <mark>4</mark> 62. <mark>85</mark>	\$5 <mark>81</mark> ,611.95	88.06%	
Early Childhood Tithe	\$36,000.00	\$28,500.0 <mark>0</mark>	\$28,500.00	100.00%	
Total Receipts	\$1,061,075.00	\$688,962. <mark>85</mark>	\$610,111.95	88.56%	
Outreach	\$73,600.00	\$50,2 <mark>68</mark> .0 <mark>1</mark>	\$48,997.95	97.47%	
Education	\$9,250.00	\$5,058.34	\$3,655.62	72.27%	
Children	\$4,450.00	\$567. <mark>6</mark> 0	\$262.87	46.31%	
Youth	\$11,520.00	\$5,908 <mark>.14</mark>	\$2,994.48	50.68%	
Music	\$5,500.00	\$4,235.91	\$2,124.02	50.14%	
Assimilation	\$2,600.00	\$400.47	\$74.93	18.71%	
Misc. Ministries	\$9,000.00	\$7,256.99	\$3,772.76	51.99%	
Personnel	\$592,515.00	\$427,1 <mark>62.61</mark>	\$414,636.33	97.07%	
Finance	\$107,500.00	\$37,03 <mark>6.64</mark>	\$36,319.91	98.06%	
Facilities	\$1 <mark>94,15</mark> 0.00	\$148,5 <mark>52.35</mark>	\$113,185.33	76.19%	
Office & Worship	\$ <mark>44,</mark> 540.00	\$25,748.56	\$21,934.09	85.19%	
Omnibus	\$6,450.00	\$5,830 <mark>.97</mark>	\$ <mark>1,249.0</mark> 6	21.42%	
Total Expenditures	\$1,061.075.00	\$718,026.59	\$649,207.35	90.42%	
Income Less Expenses	3 (1) 14 (1) 14 (1)	(\$29,063.74)	(\$39,095.40)		

**Debt:** \$1,239,814.02

Lobaugh, Jennifer	1/1	Eaves, Andrew	1/15
Riley, Abby	1/1	Tieman, Jennifer	1/16
Singh, Sanjay	1/1	Kerch, Joshua	1/18
Wenzel, Terri	1/1	Prince, Deena	1/18
Cunningham, Karen	1/2	Schnell, Stacy	1/18
Rebstock, Kristine	1/2	Williams, Jack	1/18
VanEycken, Virginia	1/2	Sweeley, Courtney	1/19
Alff, John	1/3	Watlington, Tyler	1/19
Battenfield, Donna	1/3	Lobaugh, Austin	1/20
Alff, Allyssa	1/4	Castille, Miria	1/21
Mankowski, Trisha	1/4	Garcia, Karys	1/21
Zimmerman, Robert	1/4	Havard, Gloria	1/21
Riggs, Christopher	1/5	Heideman, Claudia	1/21
Leveritt, Chad	1/7	Pirker, Rosa	1/21
Pond, Vira	1/7	Gisch, John	1/23
Gebhardt, Carson	1/8	Monk, Lindsay	1/23
Castleberry, Missy	1/9	Rebstock, Linda	1/23
Centeno, Analise	1/9	Burkhardt, Joe	1/24
Kuehnle, Rachel	1/9	Sieraski, Larry	1/24
Lott, Chris	1/9	Butler Jr., Gerald	1/25
Pfleeger, Joyce	1/9	Haverty, Katherine	1/25
Van Chau, Rachel	1/9	Pampell, Sharon	1/25
White, Kizzie	1/9	Stiles, Nancy	1/25
Kramer, Owen	1/10	Blankenship, Joey	1/26
Jones, Terri	1/11	Kroesen, Beverly	1/26
Paulder, Jamie	1/11	Matthijetz, Michael	1/26
Suarez, Lidia	1/11	Pirker, Rachel	1/26
Weiss, Adam	1/11	Stitt, Abigail	1/26
Breaux, Marshall	1/12	Taylor, Madison	1/26
Currie, Paul	1/12	Miertschin, Ruth	1/27
George, Mathews	1/13	Guzman, Marlene	1/28
Heinlein, Amy	1/13	Huning, Steve	1/29
Horak, Jessica	1/13	Butler, Saleena	1/30
Engle, Leslie	1/14	Huning, Nicole	1/30
Chapin, Breanna	1/15	Norris, Caleb	1/30

Kevin & Robin Groeper	1/2				
Paul & Jessica Kroesen	1/2				
Karl & Sarah Mertens	1/2				
Patrick & Shalyn Watson	1/2				
Bradley & Karen Cunningham					
Kirk & Jennifer Dippel					
Steve & Vicki Hartzell					
Jordan & Kristine Rebstock	1/4				
Owen & Terri Jones	1/5				
Rodney & Sharon Pampell	1/5				
John & Adel Alff					
Mike & Amy Haverty					
Don & Lidia Schneider					
Forrest & Brook Williams	1/28				





# This Month at Hope

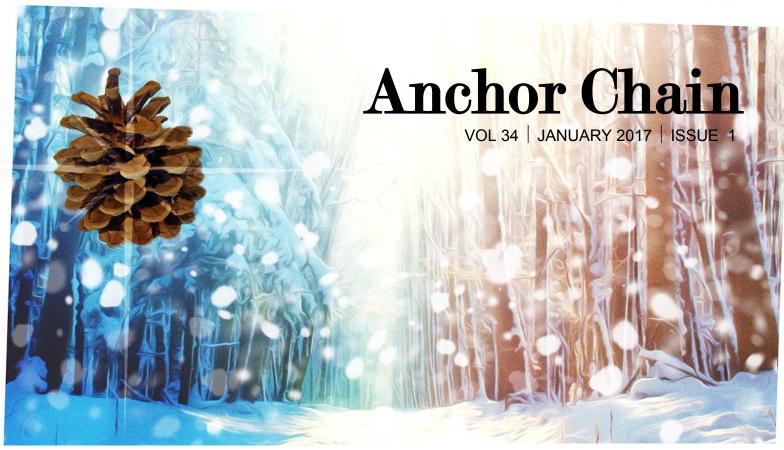
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TAFCDAY	1/8/2017	Preschool / MDO Upward Practice	1/10/2017	IH 8 B	Ladies Gaild Jubil ste Bells	1/17/2017	11/2/2017 Newaletter Deadline Pre School / Mino Upward Predice Upward Predice Hope Brass Jubilete Bells	TOTAL		Transport / MDO Hope Woodwinds Hope Brass Jubilete Bells
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¥\$dvoW	1/2/2017	Office Closed Braille Small (Croup (Henderson) Upward Practice Small Group (Huning)	1/9/2017	PreSchool / MDO Staff Meeting Quilting Girl Scouts	Upward Practice Stephen Ministry	1/16/9017	Staff Meeting Small Group (Hendreson) Upward Practice Stephen Ministry Training Small Group (Hunng)	TOTOTOT	PreSchool / MDO Quiling Quiling Staff Meeting Grif Soouts Upward Preactice Stephen Ministry Training	PreSchool / MDO Staff Meeting Stephen Minietry Training
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HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH 1804 S. Friendswood Dr. P.O. Box 1076 Friendswood, TX 77549

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Ralph W. Hobratschk, Senior Pastor

Jonathan E. Petering, Associate Pastor