



**St. James Lutheran Church
2040 Oakwood Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505**

We Grow, We Go, We Gather

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Glenn E. Schaeffer
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Epiphany/The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday
January 7, 2024

Divine Service, Setting Three (p. 184)

The Preservice Music, the Call to Worship, and Welcome

Hymn of Invocation: 900 “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love”

Remembering, Repenting, and Rejoicing in our Baptism

P: Dearly beloved, Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” In the last chapter of Mark our Lord promises, “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*” And the apostle Peter has written, “*Baptism now saves you.*”

The Word of God also teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own.

When we were baptized in the name of the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – our pastor traced the sign of the holy cross both upon our ✠ forehead and upon our ✠ heart to mark us as people redeemed by Christ the crucified.

P: Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin.

We pray that You would continue to behold us according to Your boundless mercy and bless us with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through the saving flood of our baptism all sin in us, which has been inherited from Adam and which we ourselves commit, is drowned and forgiven by You on account of Christ, Your Son. Grant that we be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all

believers in Your promise, we remain worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: May the Lord preserve our coming in and our going out from this time forth and even † forevermore.

C: Amen.

Our Baptismal Creedal Statement

P: Do you renounce the devil?

C: *Yes, I renounce him.*

P: Do you renounce all his works?

C: *Yes, I renounce them.*

P: Do you renounce all his ways?

C: *Yes, I renounce them.*

P: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

C: *Yes, I believe.*

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead?

C: *Yes, I believe.*

P: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

C: *Yes, I believe.*

P: Sisters and brothers in Christ, you were baptized in the saving name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Therefore, be assured of this Good News: the almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit, has forgiven you all your sins. May He continue to strengthen you with His grace to life † everlasting.

C: Amen.

P: Peace † be with you.

C: Amen.

A Hymn: 594, "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It"

The Prayer of the Day

The Old Testament Lesson:

Isaiah 60:1-6

A: The Old Testament Lesson is Isaiah 60:1-6.

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. ³And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

A: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle Lesson:

Ephesians 3:1-12

A: The Epistle Lesson is Ephesians 3:1-12

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles – ²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery

hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

A: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Lesson:

Matthew 2:1-12

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the second chapter.

C: **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

The Sermon Hymn: 397 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

The Sermon (During the sermon, children who are ages 3 through grade 2 are invited to participate in KIDZ Time. Children can make their way to the back of the sanctuary where the KIDZ Time teacher is waiting. The children will return to the service following the sermon.)

The Offering (Please sign the burgundy Friendship booklet and pass it to other people sitting in your pew. When completed, pass it back to the center aisle and be sure to greet the people next to you! Those sitting by the center aisle: please tear off the completed sheet and place it on the pew. Thank you!)

The Prayer of the Church & The Lord’s Prayer

A Hymn: “We Three Kings”

Verse 1

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain moor and mountain
Following yonder star

Chorus

*O star of wonder star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading still proceeding
Guide us to Thy perfect light*

Verse 2

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again
King forever ceasing never
Over us all to reign

Verse 3

Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh
Prayer and praising all men raising
Worship Him God on high

Sunday (1/14)..... Gizmo on FB - 8:00 AM
Worship Service - 9:30 AM
 Bible Study - 11:00 AM
 F.I.F Meeting - 11:00 AM
 LWML Meeting - 6:00 PM

Looking Ahead

Serving Today (1/7)

Officiant..... Pastor Glenn Schaeffer
 LectorCindy McAuliffe
 Organist..... Beth McKay
 Deacon(s)..... Bryan Ensing / Craig Popma
 UshersDale & Grace Rosema/Walt & Karen Kryzanowski
 Video/Sound/Recording Nathan Urbanski/John & Marjie Weiss
 January Altar GuildCindy McAuliffe
 KidzTime.....Cindy McAuliffe/Mary Ward

Serving Next Sunday (1/14)

Lector Carol Bifulco
 Organist..... Beth McKay
 Deacon(s)..... David Hood
 UshersOpen
 Video/Sound/Recording Nathan Urbanski/John & Marjie Weiss
 January Altar GuildCindy McAuliffe
 KidzTime -

Financial Discipleship:

Offerings for Dec. 20,24 and 25th	\$8,088.33
Offerings for Dec. 31 st	\$5,566.25

Announcements

Martin Luther called the Lord's Prayer the "greatest martyr" because it is often misunderstood, misused by people who do not understand its meaning, and spoken with little thought given to the meaning of the petitions. Pastor Schaeffer begins a course today following the worship service on "The Lord's Prayer." All are welcome to study this prayer given to us by our Lord Himself!

Poinsettias are available for FREE! The poinsettias that adorned the chancel are now available for you to take home. Anyone who would like a poinsettia(s), whether you donated one or not, can pick them up in the upstairs library/meeting room.

The Men's breakfast/Bible study is next Saturday, January 13th. Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. with a Bible study led by Pastor to follow. Please let Pastor know if you plan to attend by Friday at noon so that those preparing breakfast have an idea of how many mouths will need to be fed.

Sometimes Silence is Golden. Other times it is a relationship killer. Two people are estranged. Angry. At odds. A friend intervenes with the suggestion, "*Well, have you tried talking about it?*" Reconciliation takes conversation, verbal interaction, words. Under the theme *Love Talks: Daring Conversations Toward Reconciliation*, the 2024 Theological Conference is designed especially for laity of all ages. The conference, which will take place on February 3 in Lansing, will equip you to engage in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). The world around us needs us to engage with others in the ministry of reconciliation, both with people and with God. At the very heart of all reconciliation is the Word Himself, the Word made flesh, Jesus. Let's get started with daring conversations of reconciliation. After all, love talks.

WHEN? February 3, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WHERE? Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lansing 7910 E. St. Joe Hwy Lansing, MI, 48917

Early Bird Registration Cost (includes boxed lunch):

\$30 General Registration / \$35 after January 15

\$20 Students / \$25 after January 15

Livestream is free but you must register to receive the link.

For more information, visit: <https://michigandistrict.org/event/theological-conference-2024/#overview>. If interested in attending this conference, please talk with Pastor Schaeffer.

Thank you! Sandra and I thank you for your Christmas gifts and greetings! We appreciate and thank God for your love and support. It is my honor to serve as your pastor.

Epiphany and Its Season – It’s Significance

Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons in the Christian Church Year, second only to the Easter season. This season of lights emphasizes Jesus’ manifestation (or epiphany, from the Greek *epiphaneia*) as God and man. The earliest Christians called the Feast of the Epiphany the *Theophany* (“revelation of God”). When the Gentile Magi come to worship Jesus, they show that now everyone has access to God. Now all people, Jew and Gentile, can come to God’s temple to worship, because Jesus is the new temple: God in the flesh. The Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6) marks the celebration of the visit of the Magi, sometimes called, “*The Christmas of the Gentiles.*”

Epiphany, which begins with evening prayer on January 5th and ends the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, may include as many as nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter. Because Easter is early in 2024 (March 31st), there will be only six Sundays in the Epiphany season. The season is marked at its beginning and at its end by two important feasts of Christ.

On the first Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church celebrates the Baptism of Our Lord. The Father had sent His Son to bear the sins of the world. So, Jesus steps down into baptismal waters so that He can soak up the sins of the world: He is baptized into our sins, so that our Baptism might be into His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.

The Feast of Transfiguration is celebrated on the last Sunday in the Epiphany season. This festival commemorates the moment on the Mount of Transfiguration when three of Jesus’ disciples glimpsed their Lord in divine splendor, seeing Him as the center of the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Jesus proclaims to His disciples, then and now, that He is the long-awaited one who has come to die for the sins of the world and to be raised again in glory.

Dorcas Society January Gathering

All women of St James are invited to gather on Thursday, January 11 at 1pm in the Gathering Room. We will be reviewing and discussing an article on “Why churches need their senior members and what senior members want from their

church." This article appeared in the Lutheran Church Extension publication. We will also be writing greetings to several of our sisters in Christ who are no longer able to worship with us and join in our gatherings. Please come and enjoy this time together.

A Statement on Holy Communion

We rejoice in the celebration of the LORD'S Supper as the Lord Jesus comes to us in a very personal manner, giving to us His true Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in this sacred meal. St. Paul writes, "*A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) It is out of love and care for every individual who comes to the Lord's Supper that we ask those who are not instructed in the faith and/or doubt the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus in this Sacrament to refrain from attending the Lord's Supper.

Members of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations, who:

- Repent of their sin;
- Believe in Jesus as their Savior;
- Trust that they are receiving, not only bread and wine but also the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of their sins; and
- Intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live as forgiven sinners resisting the devil, saying no to sinful desires, and walking in the newness of life;

are invited to partake of this Holy Meal with us. We request that ALL guests who desire to commune, kindly speak to the Pastor before the service.

If you prefer to come forward for a blessing at the time of Holy Communion, please do so. We ask that you cross your arms over your chest so that Pastor knows you want to receive a blessing.

NOTE: We provide gluten-free communion host and non-alcoholic grape juice. Just let the Pastor and/or the assistants know when you come for Holy Communion.