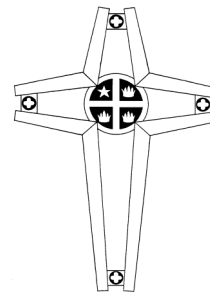


The Star

The Monthly Newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Epiphany
An ELCA Congregation



Volume MMXXIII
Number 9
September 2023

God calls us to: "**Grow** our relationship with God,
connect with each other, and **serve** the world."



Happy September, Epiphany Disciples!

A lot of activities start back in September, and I want to encourage you to jump right in. I'd like to talk about three different things:

-September Collection for LSC's New Americans Program.

One of our Congregation Council's goals for 2023 is to work with refugee resettlement in North Carolina. Bishop Tim Smith of the NC Synod has challenged 70% of congregations to do this and it's time for Epiphany to step up and help once again.

People and families from war-torn places like Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world are being legally admitted to the United States by the State Department after being highly vetted and screened. When they arrive to the United States, they often have very little. That's where we're going to begin our work in helping to welcome these new Americans to our country.

Our Women of the ELCA circles have been working with our partners at Lutheran Services of the Carolinas. LSC has divided basic household items into several kits they've called:

- Dining Kit
- Cooking Kit
- Bathroom Kit
- Hygiene Kit
- Cleaning and Household Supply Kit

Throughout the month of September, we'll be collecting items for each area as an extended service project for God's Work. Our Hands. emphasis that's happening in many Lutheran congregations. You can buy all the items in a kit, buy some of the items, or give a donation to Epiphany and let us know it's for the LSC kits. Our goal is to collect 20 different kits so we can provide for at least four families moving to North or South Carolina.

Women of the ELCA at Epiphany has already been hard at work collecting needed supplies and has committed to providing 5 of the 20 kits.

Finally, on Sunday October 1, we'll gather to assemble the items in the Fellowship Hall following worship.

More information will be in the Narthex throughout September.

-Organ Forum on Saturday, September 30 from 9am-Noon.

Earlier this spring, I shared with you some of the issues we've discovered with our beloved pipe organ at Epiphany. On Saturday, September 30, I want to invite you to come to an open forum on the organ as a part of our upcoming capital campaign.

We'll gather in the Fellowship Hall for an opening devotion, we'll head to the Sanctuary to hear a brief presentation from Patryck Nuss on the many important condition issues Epiphany's organ has. After his presentation, we'll discuss the various options and costs. This will be an important meeting and I invite as many Epiphany members as possible to attend.

In addition, I invite you to save the date for Sunday, October 22 after worship for the Building and Grounds Forum. (I'll share more about that next month).

-Encounter:Faith Begins Sunday, September 10

Encounter:Faith for all ages begins Sunday, September 10 at 9 am. Adults will gather in the Library, while children will gather in the EECC cafeteria area. Join the discussion!

As always, I'm thankful for your partnership in the gospel.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ruell



Hey There!

For those of you that I've yet to meet - I'm Liz, the new Director of Youth + Campus Ministries at Epiphany. I'm two weeks in here - and so excited about getting to know each of you - and our students! I'm tasked to grow the ministries specifically for those in 6th grade through college who are integral parts of the church universal and our church specifically.

I come to Epiphany after about 18 years in Winston-Salem - starting as a student at West Forsyth - and most recently serving for about 8 years with a local nonprofit called Love Out Loud.

Personally, I'm passionate about Inclusive, Trauma-Informed, Justice Oriented Ministry; Community-Centric Work; Youth + Young Adult Ministry; Processing Church-Hurt; and Creating Safe + Authentic Spaces. I'm excited to bring these passions to the work at Epiphany, and hear about the passions of our youth and college students.

I'm making the most of my 20-hours a week at Epiphany - in addition to that - I'm a second year Master of Divinity student at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa; an ELCA Fund for Leaders Recipient; a Candidate for Ministry of Word + Service (Pastoral Ministry) in the ELCA; part-time Chaplain at Baptist Hospital; mom to a 4-month-old kitten (Early) and 7-year-old Husky (Edna); and soon-to-be wife to Andrew (counting down to Sept 30th!), who you may have seen at Sunday Service with me.

As I'm getting my feet under me here at Epiphany, I'm working to reach out to all our current middle, high school, and college students and find out how I (and we as a body) can best support them. In addition to hopeful cups of coffee, ice cream, or Penny Path Crepes with you each soon, there's a couple ways you guys can engage:

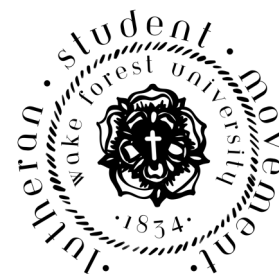


YOUTH MEET + GREET

Sunday, Sept 17th - 9am | Epiphany Youth Room / Office
Inviting all Youth Students (6th - 12th) and families to drop in for coffee + breakfast treats (maybe a sugar rush) during the hour before service on the 17th to get to know each other and see the youth space (which you're welcome to hang out in anytime!)

LUTHERAN STUDENT MOVEMENT MEALS

Tuesday Evenings Throughout the Semester
Our first meeting this semester with our WFU Campus Ministry is Tuesday, August 29th - Epiphany members graciously provide welcome and a bit of home for these students through meals each Tuesday during our meetings (which is dropped off at Epiphany beforehand). There are a number of weeks you can sign up to make or otherwise provide a meal for our students (about 10) [here](#).



I'd love for you to also follow us on social media:

[Epiphany Youth Instagram](#) | [Epiphany Youth Facebook](#)
[Wake LSM \(College\) Instagram](#) | [Wake LSM \(College\) Facebook](#)

Or Set a Meeting with Me [Here](#) or ldinkins@epiphanyws.org or 336-589-6879

Peace Be With Y'all!



Looking for easy ways to support Ibrahim Elementary School?

Link your Harris Teeter card to Ibrahim. Go to the Harris Teeter website and find the Together in Education link. Ibrahim's school code is 1944. You can link several schools each year, so don't forget to link EECC (# 5591)!

Also, several teachers at Ibrahim Elementary have submitted projects at Donor's Choose. Go to DonorsChoose.org and type in Ibrahim Elementary School and you will see teacher projects that need funding. Choose one or more that inspires you! Donations are tax deductible! Watch for major corporations to match your donation and double your support! Donations can be made in any amount. It truly makes a difference to these teachers when they see someone from Epiphany donating to their project!

Epiphany Reaching Out with Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee continued to do work over the summer with continued support for the CBC Food Pantry. This included several Epiphany members either driving U-Haul trucks to pick up food or by unloading and distributing the food at CBC. Some weeks they receive over 8000 pounds of food. Need some weight training?? Come help us.

The Outreach committee also met in August to begin planning for the upcoming school year with Backpacks and the Food pantry at Ibrahim. This is a foundational activity for Outreach. Jackie Pierson attended the Open House at Ibrahim Elementary to give information on these programs and to hand out applications to parents.

We have decided to add another school part-time to the backpack list (Smith Farm Elementary), so we will need a few more folks to help us pack them on Sunday mornings. We also need folks to help deliver them during the week to Ibrahim. Please ask Jackie Pierson how you can help.

We continue to support financially other agencies in our area. We are looking for ways to assist them with your hands as well-- specifically Samaritan Ministries and The Dwelling.

The committee is in the budget planning stage for 2024. We will be 'reaching out' to members of our congregation so that we can 'reach' farther into our community and the world.

YOU ARE INVITED

Who? All women of Epiphany
What? Women of the ELCA General Meeting
When? Sunday, September 24th, after worship
Where? Church Fellowship Hall

On Sunday, September 24, Epiphany's Women of the ELCA is holding our annual meeting in the fellowship hall following the worship service. We will supply a light lunch and have a very brief business meeting.

Our speaker will be Quinn Rizzo from Lutheran Services Carolinas. She will be giving us valuable information about the New Americans Program for refugee resettlement. Epiphany is becoming involved in this important work, and this gives us an opportunity to learn more about the program. Our circles have committed to assemble Welcome Kits for the New Americans program. The whole congregation will also be involved in making Welcome Kits. We hope that many of our Epiphany women will be able to attend this important meeting.

Dates-

September 12- Mary Martha Circle- Fellowship Hall- 10 am

September 12- Dorothy Circle- Campus Ministry Room- evening

September 14- Nora Deal Circle- Fellowship Hall- 11:30 am

September 24- General Meeting

September 30- Fall Gathering- St. Luke's, Tyro



Thanks to the generosity of Epiphany, \$425 was donated to purchase socks for our mission partners. The sock company gave us extra socks since we were helping the homeless. Over 800 pairs were given to:

Our Nora, VA mission
The Dwelling ministry
Christ Beloved Community
Samaritan Inn shelter
Bethesda Homeless Shelter

We are beyond grateful. Thank you for breakfast!
We appreciate all that you do to support teaching and learning at P.I.E.S.!

Tamatha L. Fullerwinder, Principal
Ibrahim Elementary School



The financial situation for the church is doing well. Our income is far surpassing expenses and is way ahead of income at this time last year. EECC also shows a favorable surplus.

Work continues on the Capital Campaign.

Dave Hinshaw has agreed to be the capital campaign chair. We will be developing a list of projects for the campaign. There will be an organ forum on September 30 and a building and grounds forum on October 22.

The church's outreach programs continue to be appropriately funded by the congregation. The backpack program and food pantry at Abraham Elementary School start back soon. We should all be proud of all that the congregation is involved in.

Mickey is nearing completion of the church directory.

Vicar Christiana's last Sunday was July 23. In early August, she interviewed with faculty at the Southern Seminary and NC Candidacy Committee. Both have strongly recommended her for ordination.

We will be collecting items for Welcome Kits for the Lutheran Services Carolinas New Americans Program (refugee resettlement) during the month of September. October 1 is God's Work Our Hands. We will assemble those kits after service.

Encounter: Faith starts back September 10 and Bible Study starts September 12.

We appreciate the ongoing efforts of all members of Epiphany to create and maintain a church that is thriving and contributing to the community through its many ministries.



**Next meeting: September 20, 2023,
1:30 pm
Fellowship Hall**



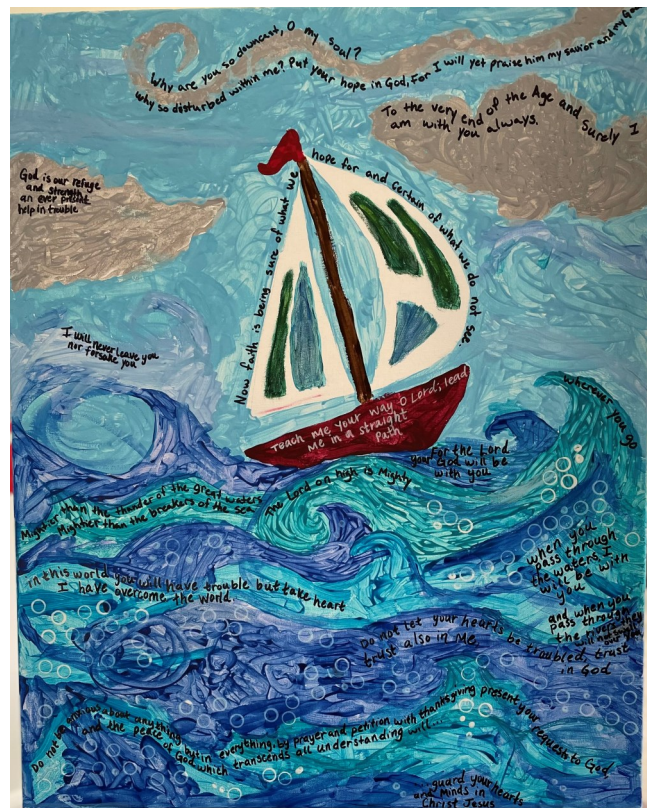
Dear Church Family,

The summer at EECC has been full of fun and learning. The Pre-K students are getting ready to make their kindergarten debut. We have enrolled some new children and are in the process of starting three new staff members to round out our team. The children are happy and energetic, creative and always moving and shaking, but have you seen their art?

The older three-year old class and their teachers made a beautiful painting together to complete their lessons on the sea. The teacher drew out the picture and each child had the chance to add their own unique touches to the water, while another teacher added the various inspirational quotes and scripture. Together it sums up the spirit of community and shared joy and memories that are made in preschool at Epiphany. Special thanks to Ms. Meg and Ms. Amanda and the children for the gift and inspiration from the summer of 2023. I just had to have it displayed for you all to see in the entry before we display it in the EECC hallway.

Keep us in your prayers and thank you for your love and support.

In His Service,
Lisa Nichols, Director





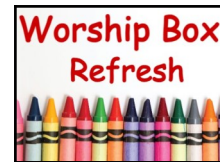
If you would like to volunteer with children or youth in any capacity this school year, please make plans to attend our **Child Protection Policy training on Sunday, September 3rd**

in the fellowship hall after worship. We'll go over the tenets of our policy and how we create an environment at Epiphany that is safe for children and youth to grow and explore their faith with trusted adults. If you would like to help in the nursery or with our middle/high youth this year, please make sure you attend a training session. We would love to have as many wonderful volunteers as we can this year! If you are unable to attend, Lauren Saldaña can meet over zoom or in person at a time that is convenient to you. Let Lauren know if you have any questions (lsaldana@epiphanyws.org). This training will include snacks and activities for little ones!

We'll be gathering back for fun, games, learning, and our favorite Whirl friends during Encounter: Faith (Sunday School) on **Sunday, September 10th at 9:00**. This year, we are continuing with Illustrated Ministry's Mini Revolutions curriculum which now has a digital component. But don't worry, we will still be checking in with our friends from the Whirl videos the kids love so much! We will continue meeting in the EECC cafeteria. Remember, Encounter: Faith is for all ages of children - we just ask that parents of preschool aged children stick around for the fun! All other ages can be dropped off until 9:45 to get ready for worship. Upcoming preschoolers/Kindergarteners/3rd graders will be receiving their new bibles, so if you have children going into those grades make sure to contact Lauren Saldaña if you are unable to attend Sunday Sept. 10th and we will find another way to deliver your bible.



We will be refreshing our children's worship boxes in September. Please make sure you take out any cherished drawings or creations by **Sunday, September 10th** to make room for new materials!



Our Lutheran outdoor ministry sites have some wonderful opportunities for family fun weekends this fall! If you think you would like to attend any of them, go ahead and register as rooms fill up quickly. Epiphany has scholarships for all who attend these events to make it even more affordable. Come join us in the mountains this fall! Here are two from Lutheridge and Lutherock that Epiphany families will be attending:

HARVEST FESTIVAL WEEKEND

PROGRAM INFO
YOUTH & ADULT

Dates
 October 6-8, 2023

Cost
 Weekend Stay: \$100 Adult, \$60 Youth age 3+
 Saturday Only: \$35 per person
 Sky Park Ropes Course: \$40 per person (Optional Add-On)

https://lutherock.org/fall_spring_programs/harvest-festival-weekend/



FALL FAMILY FUN

PROGRAM INFO

ALL

Dates

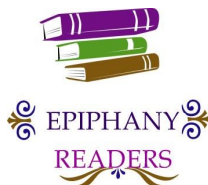
October 13-15, 2023

Cost

\$200 1st Adult
 \$50 2nd Adult
 \$10 Per Child
 \$80 extra room

https://lutheridge.org/fall_spring_programs/fall-family-fun/

The Epiphany Readers' next meeting by Zoom will be at 7pm on Thursday, September 28th. The book that will be discussed in September is *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyễn Phan Quê Mai. All are welcome to join in the discussion.



To Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://bit.ly/EpiphanyReaders>

Dear Pastor Russell and God's faithful at Epiphany,

I should send this thank you note more frequently. Your generosity deserves it. Please forgive my failure to thank you for the gifts you've sent in recent years designated to support the needs at Lutherock.

Your latest gift from Epiphany's endowment of \$3,000 is but the latest in a series of giving that helps strengthen and support the facilities and the programs offered at Lutherock. You helped us face the onslaught of inflated costs for everything camp-related this spring. A small bus for transporting our day camp teams and campers to outings was \$9,000 for 8 weeks; summer staff salaries had to increase; all of this above and beyond the annual operating needs for maintenance and site improvements. We, as you, face inflation as a daily factor. Parents faced the same inflated costs for everything – including a week of summer camp! They came in numbers that will give us (when next week ends) our largest summer camp ever! And we turned no one away for lack of funds to pay. We budgeted \$135,000 for scholarship support this year and will distribute it all by year's end. Every dollar comes by gifts and contributions like yours.

And my personal joy is the increasing number of unchurched, community kids who came to camp this summer, as they have in recent years, because a Lutheran congregation in their community reached out to invite them to camp. Hundreds of the 2,500 kids this summer were unchurched community children recruited by a local congregation with whom we partnered to provide scholarship funding. The challenges are great; the mission field is enormous; God's grace is boundless. I'm blessed to see the wonderful things God does at Lutherock and our other three sites with the blessings you provide to touch and change lives in the sites of NovusWay. Thank you for your faithfulness.

Thanks for your time, Pastor Russell, as I travel that way from time to time. It's a privilege to spend time with you.

Pastor Jan

The Rev. Dr. John L. (Jan) Setzler
 Senior Development Officer, Deployed
 NovusWay Ministries



NovusWay Ministries

If you have milestones to celebrate, please contact Mickey Miller.



Our Epiphany Family

Help us keep our prayer list current by letting us know if there are those who need to be included.



Take a look at our anniversaries list. Notice anything? There are three couples whose anniversaries are on September 7th. What makes this even more interesting is that they were all married in the same year and all are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this year!

Congratulations to these three couples for making it to their diamond anniversary! (And to all our members celebrating this month.)



<i>Clarence & Dottie Peoples</i>	9/4
<i>Wilbur & Sharen Bond</i>	9/7
<i>Bill & Lil Flichman</i>	9/7
<i>Bob & Darlene Martin</i>	9/7
<i>Guenter & Gretchen Pfitzner</i>	9/8
<i>Jonathan & Carrie Lichtenhan</i>	9/14
<i>Marc & Ann Shideler</i>	9/18
<i>Keith & Connie Queen</i>	9/29

We wish you many more years of happiness!



Thank you for all the cards and prayers. I'm feeling better each day, with God's love and blessings.

Ralph Pritts

GIFT OF THE MONTH ITEMS FOR SEPTEMBER

- CRISIS CONTROL MINISTRY** - Pasta, saltine crackers
- SAMARITAN MINISTRIES** - Apple and orange juice (46 oz. cans), disposable razors, toothpaste, hand lotion and soap (all sample sizes), high efficiency laundry detergent packs/pods
- RONALD McDONALD HOUSE** - Paper towels; 13-gallon trash bags; individual snacks & drinks; <https://rmhcpt.org/make-a-difference/wish-list/>
- TRINITY GLEN** - Hair bows, pins, scrunches for hair
- TRINITY ELMS** - Fronts of greeting cards, baby lotion, body wash, bath items, deodorant, snacks, note cards
- CBC FOOD PANTRY** - Volunteers to take food donations from church to CBC and to work stocking shelves/distributing food twice a month
- EECC** - Cheerios, raisins, applesauce (individual, plain)
- IBRAHAM FOOD PANTRY** - Diapers/pullups sizes 2-6

Ministers, All the People of Epiphany
Pastor, Pastor Russell Peek
 Email: pastorrussell@epiphanyws.org
Director of Music, Patryck Nuss
 E-mail: music@epiphanyws.org
Director of Youth & Campus Ministry, Liz Dinkins
 E-mail: ldinkins@epiphanyws.org
Director of Children's Ministries, Lauren Saldaña
 E-mail: lsaldana@epiphanyws.org
Early Childhood Center Director, Lisa Nichols
 E-mail: lisanichols@epiphanyws.org, 336-768-2140
Office Manager & Financial Secretary, Mickey Miller
 E-mail: epiphanystaff@epiphanyws.org
Monthly STAR Newsletter Editor,
 E-mail: epiphanystaff@epiphanyws.org
Epiphany - Phone: 336-765-6211 **Fax:** 336-765-1754
Epiphany E-mail: epiphanystaff@epiphanyws.org
Web Site: www.epiphanyws.org

2023 Congregation Council

Officers:	Non-Council Officers:
Chris Schultz, Pres.	Mickey Miller, Fin. Sec.
Betty Benardo, VP	Jackie Pierson, Asst. Tr. Payroll
Terry Wiley, Treas.	
Mark Tellefsen, Sec.	
Members:	
Patti Deal	Dan Meckley
Matt Imboden	Diana Stindt
Sarah Lischer	Pastor Russell Peek

"If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."
John 14:14, NRSV

LET US PRAY FOR...

Leaders of church & state, especially

<i>Our Congregation Council</i>	<i>Pastor Russell Peek</i>
<i>Christ's Beloved Community</i>	<i>President Joe Biden</i>
<i>Bishop Elizabeth Eaton</i>	<i>Governor Roy Cooper</i>
<i>Bishop Timothy Smith</i>	<i>Mayor Allen Joines</i>

All victims of war and any form of violence

Our sister congregations and our missionary in Mexico

Fr. Javier Arias and the people of Christ's Beloved Community
Pr. David Brondos and the Theological Community of Mexico
The people of Mupini Parish, Namibia

Active duty military personnel, especially

Travis Gerdes
Randal Middleton
David Schultz

For those who rejoice, especially

Patti Kaluzne and her family at the birth of her grandson, Lucas Nolan Walsh on May 5th. Parents are Lauren & Matthew Walsh.

The Meckley family at the marriage of Matthew and Kim Hughes on August 8th.

Rebekah Spain and Nick Mearite at the birth of their daughter, Kynneddy Leigh Mearite on August 23rd. Grandparents are Mike & Laura Spain and great-grandmother is Kay Conrad.

Family & friends of the congregation in need, especially

<i>Judy Allison</i>	<i>Jonathan Gomez</i>	<i>Karen Rose</i>
<i>Ashley Blackburn</i>	<i>Carolyn Graham</i>	<i>Shelly Saldaña</i>
<i>Thomas & Mary Cannon</i>	<i>Linda Grale</i>	<i>Janie Sapen</i>
<i>Clark Family</i>	<i>Pam Holcomb</i>	<i>Nora Schweitzer</i>
<i>Rose Debruhl</i>	<i>Robin Hoots</i>	<i>Liz Shumate</i>
<i>Ray L. Deal</i>	<i>Jean Jarvis</i>	<i>Sue Slezak</i>
<i>Paul DeJute</i>	<i>Katie Lippard</i>	<i>Michele Stanfield</i>
<i>Sylvia Ann Derrick</i>	<i>Chad Marion</i>	<i>Earl Taylor</i>
<i>AJ Devan</i>	<i>Linda McKenna</i>	<i>Laura Turlington</i>
<i>Carl Dubose</i>	<i>Terry McKinney</i>	<i>Alan Vestal</i>
<i>Laughlin Eddy</i>	<i>Stacey Morgan</i>	<i>Ellie Wellborn</i>
<i>Emily Ferriter</i>	<i>Allison Morris</i>	<i>Emma Wester</i>
<i>Howard Flichman</i>	<i>Annette Pardue</i>	<i>Nicole Williams</i>
<i>Tara-Lynn Flick</i>	<i>Robert & Mary Peak</i>	<i>John Wooding</i>
<i>Pat & Joanne Gill</i>	<i>Andy Powless</i>	<i>Leigh Yarner</i>

Members in need, especially

<i>The Rev. John Beeg</i>	<i>Jim Lippard</i>	<i>Ralph Pritts</i>
<i>Sharen Bond</i>	<i>Jean Mock</i>	<i>Wanda Rabb</i>
<i>Ann Cannon</i>	<i>Lisa Nichols</i>	<i>Peg Schmitt</i>
<i>Chad Kraft</i>		

Our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of

Barry Sheets
Lois Walters



Elizabeth Horton, Homestead Hills
Bert Joines, Homestead Hills
Doris Kent, Forsyth Court
Sue Muhler, Brookdale Senior Living
Carl Schlager, The Stratford, High Point

September Birthdays

Kimberly Artz	9/5
Carole Robins	9/5
Penny Mothershed	9/7
Donna Bridger	9/8
Teagan Caesar	9/7
Inez Eckard	9/9
Bonnie Bryant	9/10
Gene Deal	9/10
Janet Blank	9/12
Doris Kent	9/12
Marjorie Cassady	9/14
Casey Davis	9/14
Virginia Schmitz	9/15
Ryan Arens	9/19
Elizabeth Horton	9/19
Emily Matthews	9/19
John Wilcut	9/19
Cailee Wilcut	9/24
Julia Nicholson	9/28
Nancy Cope	9/29
Schuyler Darstein	9/29
Chuck Kraft	9/29

September Baptisms

Andrew Craft	9/1
Brad Hively	9/1
Debra Sloop	9/1
Mark Tonnesen	9/1
Lillian Robins	9/4
Janice Barnett	9/6
Debbie Christensen	9/8
Jean Darstein	9/8
Rachel Nicholson	9/9
Glenn Rabb	9/14
Cathy Henricks	9/18
Cashlynn Wilcut	9/23
Mark Tellefsen	9/23



For Teachers

God of wisdom, your Son came among us as a teacher. Send your blessing on all who are engaged in the work of education: give them clearness of vision and freshness of thought, and enable them so to train the hearts and minds of their students that they may grow in wisdom and be prepared to face the challenges of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(a prayer from ELW)

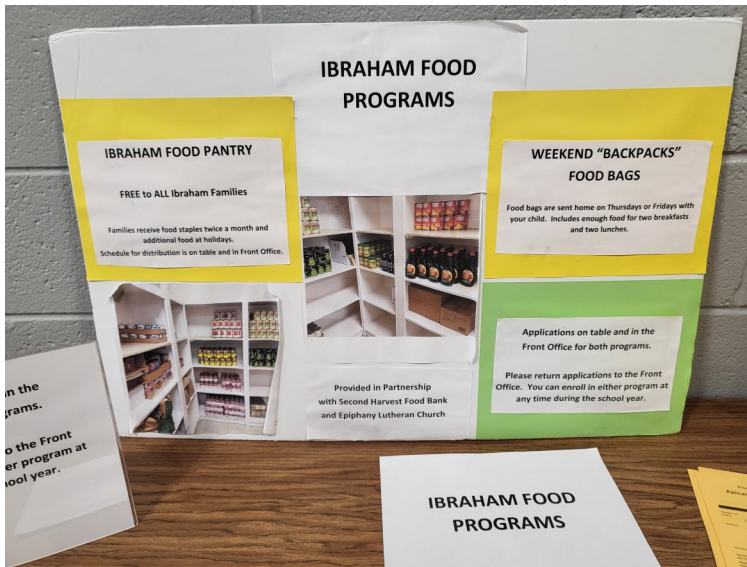


We received thanks from:

The Dwelling
 Habitat for Humanity
 Lutheran Services Carolinas
 Samaritan Ministries



<i>Bonnie Bryant</i>	<i>Virginia Schmitz</i>
<i>Cole Lippard</i>	<i>Robert Walker</i>
<i>Polly Rector</i>	



Outreach



Intergenerational VBS Water and the Word The Dwelling's Shower Trailer



Blessing of the Bookbags



Children's Message



EECC

Crazy Hair Day

Ms. Meg & Ms. Amanda's
Older 3's / Young 4's





A Seed from that Fateful Apple

First of all, I know very little about Artificial Intelligence, or AI. I do know that I have bishop colleagues in other synods who have picked a random selection of lectionary assigned texts—let’s say the 10th Sunday after Pentecost, year A—and asked the AI program to write a sermon to a Lutheran congregation for that day. These bishops say they have to admit that on a content level, the AI-generated sermon was theologically and exegetically probably better than they might hear in at least half of their congregations on a given Sunday. And to think, back in the 60s we thought the Dick Tracy telephone watch and the Jetsons’ robo vacuum were technological impossibilities!

One problem with Artificial Intelligence, in general, is that the gathering, storing, and sharing of information becomes a sort of object of worship in itself. Where, for instance, and by whose compass, is the moral aspect of such intelligence inserted to temper the pure information? Ultra intelligence or intellectual advantage without a conscience is a frightening prospect that could be and certainly has been easily weaponized. Think mad scientist, totalitarian demagogue, etc.

Interestingly, this is not a new dilemma, this “rule the world with intelligence but with no conscience and with no humility” pursuit. Theology and ethics, those disciplines that help inform and guide our moral deliberation, have always seriously lagged behind technology and trends. It seems in my short 63 years on this planet, the technological possibilities are racing forward at light speed while ethical and theological core principles for centuries are being replaced with the subjectivity of “my truth.”

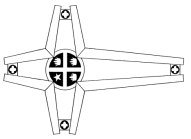
What that diminishes, of course, is “our truth,” that by which we live together in community with common expectations. Granted, often the “our truth” veiled as moral conscience in our past was merely a smokescreen to preserve privilege and advantage, but certain core assumptions of any hopeful culture seem to resonate across the centuries, across the globe, and across religion and philosophy. Things like truth, protecting the vulnerable, not stealing, etc. The 10 Commandments, for instance.

While knowledge is a blessed and necessary pursuit, theology and ethics remind us that it is not ultimate. The Hebrew scriptures underline this early on in Genesis. Remember the garden? And the forbidden tree? That tree had a name: the tree of knowledge of all good and evil. Which is, I believe, the ancient scripture’s way of warning us not to make knowledge our God without the clear safeguard of moral deliberation, a pivotal component of our “image of God”-ness. The serpent knew that would be an enticing temptation. “Did God say you would die? No! You won’t die if you eat of that tree. God knows if you eat that fruit you’ll be just like God because you’ll know everything!” It was the serpent’s lie that planted the seed of unchecked knowledge as the ultimate essence of God and thus our own pursuit.

How do we know that the people who control Artificial Intelligence have our best interests at heart? Does our being able to do something mean we ought to do that something? Who will ask, who will care about questions like “Is it kind? Is it true? Is it helpful?” But let’s not forget the very first commandment of the God revealed not in the accumulation or dissemination of knowledge and control so much as in deliverance for the captive and oppressed: “I am the Lord your God who led you out of the land of Egypt. You shall have no other gods before me.” Not self, not knowledge. Nothing. So let’s rejoice in the good AI will do. But let’s not allow it to go unchallenged and unchecked. Even though the disagreements and deliberations of conscience and faith lag way behind, we must never surrender them, lest we lose what we understand to be the essence of humanity created by God and redeemed in Christ.

Walking with you,

NC Synod Bishop



SEPTEMBER

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

<p>Every Sunday 9 am Adult Encounter: Faith 9 am Encounter: Faith 9:45 am Backpack Prep 10am Worship</p>					1	2
<p>3 After Worship Child Protection Policy Training (FH)</p>	<p>4 Labor Day Office & EECC Closed</p>	<p>5 11 am Bible Study 6 pm LSM 6 pm Handbells Information Meeting</p>	<p>6 10 am EECC Chapel 3 pm Staff</p>	<p>7 5:15-6 pm EECC Parent Orientation</p>	<p>8 5:00 pm Wedding Rehearsal</p>	<p>9 3:00 pm Wedding</p>
<p>10 Encounter: Faith Begins! After Worship Dorothy Circle (FH)</p>	<p>11 7 pm Executive Comm.</p>	<p>12 10 am Mary-Martha Cir. 11 am Bible Study 6 pm LSM 6 pm Handbells??? 6 pm Endowment</p>	<p>13 10 am EECC Chapel 3 pm Staff 6 pm Choir</p>	<p>14 11:30 am Nora Deal Cir.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 10 am Epiphany Quilters</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>18 7 pm Congregation Council</p>	<p>19 11 am Bible Study 6 pm LSM 6 pm Handbells</p>	<p>20 10 am EECC Chapel 1:30 pm Widows Might 3 pm Staff 6 pm Choir</p>	<p>21 6 pm Management Team</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 After Worship WELCA General Meeting (FH)</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 11 am Bible Study 6 pm LSM 6 pm Handbells</p>	<p>27 10 am EECC Chapel 3 pm Staff 6 pm Choir</p>	<p>28 7 pm Epiphany Readers</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 9 am-Noon Organ Forum (FH & sanc.)</p>