

Our Savior Evangelical
Lutheran Church



The Crestview Lutheran

Newsletter
January, 2022

Feast of Epiphany



“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. . . When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:1-4, 10-11

For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

-M. Luther, SC

Inside this issue:

From the Pastor	2
Lectionary	6
Calendar	7
From the Treasurer	8
From the President	11
From the Deaconess	14

From the Pastor

Explanation and Guide to the Lutheran Liturgy¹

Making the Sign of the Holy Cross

I would guess that for many Lutherans, especially among those who attend congregations who have exchanged the historic liturgy for what is deemed a more “relaxed” and therefore “friendlier” form of worship, pastors and congregants making the sign of the Holy Cross in worship is probably the first liturgical action that really catches one’s eye. Many find the idea of making the sign of the Holy Cross in a Lutheran setting offensive because they judge it to be “Catholic.” Indeed, they judge rightly; it is catholic, but not strictly Roman Catholic. The term “catholic” understood properly, means that which is universally Christian and is,

“From Baptism until our Lord calls the Christian home, the Christian continually returns to the font where one was first called into the family of God, faith was born, and forgiveness given. For this reason it is appropriate for the baptized faithful to make the sign of the Holy Cross upon themselves in remembrance of the sign and faith first received in Baptism.”

therefore, a term which encompasses far more than any one church body or denomination, but is indeed, a designation for the whole of the Christian Church. Making the sign of the Holy Cross may be one of the oldest of liturgical

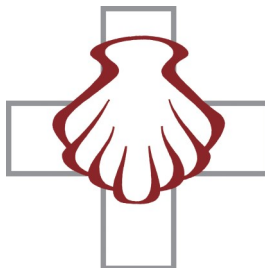
actions in the history of the Christian Church and there is evidence that it may even date to the time of the apostles.

The sign of the Holy Cross is mentioned no less than four times in the Evangelical-Lutheran Confessions.² The most famous is this rubric from the Small Catechism penned by the Rev. Fr. Martin Luther, himself: “In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the Holy Cross....” But that begs several questions: How is this sign of the Holy Cross to be made? By

whom? And under what other circumstances?

Liturgically, the sign of the Holy Cross is made in two distinctly different ways: by a person him or herself at the mention of the

Triune Name (or at some other customary point), and by the pastor over the people when giving a blessing. Blessing oneself or crossing oneself³ is very simply done. Using the fingers of the right hand, one touches first his forehead, then breastbone, then right shoulder, then left shoulder. Whether this touching is done with an open palm facing the person, with the thumb crossed over the forefinger, or with only two or three fingers held together is a matter of choice. Some have also been taught to complete the motion by returning to the chest though the last motion is not necessary. The Lutheran manner of crossing oneself is opposite of the Roman and Anglican rites where crossing oneself is done in reverse. Lutherans cross themselves in the same manner as the Eastern Orthodox rite. We Lutherans cross ourselves in such a manner because we consider the crossing of ourselves a faithful response to God's activity among us. In addition, since when the pastor makes the sign of the Holy Cross over the congregation with his right hand,



he makes the cross motion from his own left to right, the congregation mirrors that motion with his or her motion from right to left over the heart.

Consider then, Baptism where the pastor makes the sign of the Holy Cross for the first time and in the stead of Christ on the baptismal

candidate with the words: "Receive the sign of the Holy Cross, both upon the forehead and upon the heart, in token that you have been redeemed by Christ, the Crucified." In Baptism, the candidate is given "Christ the Crucified" and the sign of the Holy Cross is a "token" or sign of this truth. From Baptism until our Lord calls the Christian home, the Christian continually returns to the font where one was first called into the family of God, faith was born, and forgiveness given. For this reason it is appropriate for the baptized faithful to make the sign of the Holy Cross upon themselves in remembrance of the sign and faith first received in Baptism.

Continued on page 4

During the liturgy of the Divine Service or the various Divine Offices such as Matins and Vespers etc., there are several opportunities for the faithful to make the sign of the Holy Cross. One need only pay particular attention to the times the pastor signs the congregation. At such times it is appropriate for the congregant to sign oneself also. Other such appropriate times are at the Invocation, at the words "Our help is in the Name of the Lord" during the confession of sins, when the pastor pronounces Absolution, at the end of the Gloria in Excelsis, the conclusion of the Creed, at the words "deliver us from evil" in the Lord's Prayer, during the Sanctus at the words "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord," at the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ, at the Pax Domini ("Peace of the Lord"), before receiving both the Body and the

Blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, and at the Benediction. Making the sign of the Holy Cross on oneself is also appropriate when the Cross passes by during any procession, and at the mention of the Triune Name during any doxological stanza or hymn.

"...when employed as a remembrance of Holy Baptism and in thanksgiving for our Lord's Gospel, the sign of the Holy Cross is profound prayer and, at the same time, a clear and (at times) wordless confession not only to others but also to oneself of Our Lord's sacramental gifts."

During the Divine Offices, a person may also bless himself with the sign of the Holy Cross at the words "Make haste, O God, to deliver me," at the beginning of any canticle (the Venite, Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, etc.), at the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, and when the Blessing is given (or at the Benedicamus, if there is no blessing).

The Pastor also blesses himself at the points mentioned, as well as when he enters the chancel as the Introit is sung. But please note: the Invocation at the beginning of the Divine Service, or preceding and following

the sermon, is not a blessing over the people. Hence, the Pastor does not turn toward the people to make the sign of the Holy Cross over them, but should join the congregation in making the sign of the Holy Cross over himself.⁴

There are also points during the Liturgy at which one may make a smaller sign of the Holy Cross. During the Divine Service, when the Holy Gospel is announced, one may make a triple sign of the Holy Cross on the forehead, lips and chest. That cross imitates the cross made by the ordained man who, before reading the Gospel, makes the triple cross while praying, “The Lord be in my heart and on my lips that I may worthily and with dignity proclaim His Holy Gospel.” (When the hearers make the triple cross, they may say the same prayer substituting “hear” for “proclaim.”) This smaller cross is made with the fleshy part of the right thumb while the fingers are extended. In the same way, a single small sign of the Holy Cross may be traced on the lips during the Divine Office at

the words “O Lord, open my lips.”

Just like the words of the Lord’s Prayer or the entrance into the church, so also, making the sign of the Holy Cross can become either a prideful show or a meaningless routine. However, when employed as a remembrance of Holy Baptism and in thanksgiving for our Lord’s Gospel, the sign of the Holy Cross is profound prayer and, at the same time, a clear and (at times) wordless confession not only to others but also to oneself of Our Lord’s sacramental gifts.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Pastor Parent

¹Much of this series on the Liturgy of the Church is found in *Why? A Layman’s Guide to the Liturgy*, by Rev. Bur-nell F. Eckardt Jr., Repristination Press, (Malone, TX.), and first published in *Gottesdienst, The Journal of Lutheran Liturgy*, in a series by the same name between the years 1985-2005. Used by permission.

²Small Catechism, Prayers (Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch Lutherischen Kirche [BKS], 521.18; 522.3 = Tappert, 352, 353); Small Catechism, Baptism Booklet (BKS, 538.20); and Large Catechism, Second Commandment (BKS, 578.50 = Tappert, 374).

³The description by Charles Evanson in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (p. 405) is both helpful, and gives a little prayer to be said when making the sign of the holy cross.

⁴During the Invocation, the Pastor is not liturgically the voice of God, but is joining the voice of the Faithful (i.e., he is employing what has unfortunately been called the “sacrificial” posture, rather than the “sacramental” posture.)

From LWML

Thanks to all the monthly mite contributions. Mites collected for 2021 totaled \$145.03 and were sent to the Gulf States District LWML to fund district and national mission grants. Mite box Sunday is the first Sunday of every month. Thank-you.



Jeannie Harrison and Linda Urda will be attending the Gulf States District Retreat in Foley, AL January 28-30. Camp Dixie is a Christian camp for children ages 6-17. They depend on donations to keep the cost of camp and operations down. We are

having an In gathering of items on their Wish List for the below items:

Pine Sol Bathroom Cleaner, Toilet Bowl Cleaner, Lysol Spray, Crayola Markers, Permanent Markers, Basketballs, Volleyballs, Napkins, Batteries

AA,AA,D, Commercial Dawn Dish Soap, White Kitchen Trash Bags, Large 33Gallon Trash bags, Ziplock

Bags-Gallon & Quart, Plastic Silverware, Paper Towels and Three-Part Hefty Styrofoam Plates. A donation box will be in the fellowship hall January 2-27.

Linda Urda

OSELCLWML President

Sunday's Readings (Lectionary)

Date	Old Testament	Epistle	Gospel
Jan. 2	Gen 46:1-7	1 Pet 4:12-19	Matt 2:13-23
Jan. 6	Is 60:1-6	Eph 3:1-12	Matt 2:1-12
Jan. 9	Is 42:1-7	1 Cor 1:26-31	Matt 3:13-17
Jan. 16	Ex 34:29-35 or Amos 9:11-15	Eph 5:22-33 or Rom. 12:6-16	Jn 2:1-11
Jan. 23	2 Kings 5:1-15	Rom 1:8-17 or Rom 12:16-21	Matt 8:1-13
Jan. 30	Jonah 1:1-17	Rom 8:18-23 or	Matt 8:23-27

Coffee with Pastor

Coffee with Pastor is a great time to get to know Pastor Parent better and to have an enjoyable time talking about anything from recent events, sports— you name it. It's also a great time to ask him all those theological things you were wondering about! Go ahead, throw him your toughest questions!

Thursdays @ 9:00 am

Fellowship Hall

Women's Bible Study

Thursdays at 10:00

Study of

Psalms

Come join us for a good
time of learning and
fellowship!

Birthdays

Frank Sedmera	1/2
Evelyn Schmoldt	1/4
Alan Widener	1/4
Trish Hull	1/16
Hannah-Grace Ballard	1/20
Alex Franco	1/22
Sean Widener	1/22
Glen Philogene	1/24

Men's Group

January 18

7:00

Pastor Parent's house

All men of the church are invited
for a great time of fellowship.

(The Men's group will meet on
the 3rd Tuesday night of each
month.)

6481 Wallannee Way3

Laurel Hill

Sunday Mornings

8:00-8:45—Private Confession

9:00 Sunday School

10:00 Divine Service

Breakfast with Pastor

Thursday, Jan. 13 will be a special
Coffee with Pastor. Rich Urda is cook-
ing a breakfast of :

Country sausage gravy, biscuits, and
eggs.

9:00 a.m.

(Women's Bible Study following)

From the Treasurer

By the bountiful blessings of God and the faithful support of the entire OSELC congregation, we received all of the financial support it needed to meet our December financial obligations. For the entire year of 2021, your generous donations exceeded our budget by approximately 20%.

Currently, we are well-positioned as we enter 2022. We have no outstanding debts or tax obligations. And, we have enough in savings to cover all insurances deductibles that might be associated with a catastrophic loss to our facilities. Plus, we have an additional \$20,000 for unexpected expenses that the Voters could authorize if requested by the Church Council.

Unfortunately, I expect that inflation will increase our costs for almost everything in 2022. You helped to create and pass the 2022 budget, which tried to

anticipate these increases. Pray that God continues to bless our little church and its' ministry, to the furtherance of His kingdom.

Also, I wish to publicly acknowledge and thank our Financial Secretary: Jeannie Harrison. She works countless hours after the services and during the week inputting and tracking your donations. She does an absolutely fantastic job, and we should all be very grateful for her hard (and accurate!!) work.

As always: it is my fervent desire that OSELC's financial operations and situation be as transparent as possible to each and every member. If you have any question, concern, or suggestion about our church finances, please do not hesitate to bring it to me. I will gladly speak with you about it.

God Bless,

Brian

Pray that God continues to bless our little church and its' ministry, to the furtherance of His kingdom.

From the Board of Christian Life

I recently discovered that the LCMS website has a treasure of resources on this topic. Much to my surprise, though, I learned that this topic used to be referred to as “Stewardship.” After reading several articles, I think I may know why the change was made. For many Christians, the word “stewardship” leans heavily on what some refer to as our treasure, time and talent. It certainly does, but it is so much more; stewardship involves our entire Christian life. Because Jesus Christ died for us, for our salvation, we Believers live in an overflowing pool of mercy and grace. His mercy and grace is the source of our desire to live for Him and to serve our neighbor. We freely and joyfully serve our neighbor out of the abundant love God has for us. What does the Christian life look like? I have seen examples in the lives of my brothers and sisters at Our Savior: visiting the sick and shut-in, feeding the hungry, showing mercy when someone makes a mistake, listening to each other with patience and compas-

sion, being a considerate neighbor, and most importantly, sharing the Gospel with those we encounter in daily life.

Thoughts to ponder:

“Created in the image of God, humanity was intended to steward creation as a reflection of the Creator. The clenched hand of Eve stealing the fruit and Adam’s undiscerning eating

“Because Jesus Christ died for us, for our salvation, we Believers live in an overflowing pool of mercy and grace.”

of it wrecked a creation with death and stymied the stewardship of all that came after them. But the mercy of God revealed in Jesus re-creates. Baptized into this mercy, the redeemed child of God is restored to the office of steward... The steward, renewed in mind by the Gospel,

becomes a conduit of the mercy that is the Gospel.”

StewardCast, October 2021, LCMS.org

“God doesn’t need your good works, but your neighbor does.”

- Martin Luther

Jennifer Currid

Christian Life



**LUTHERAN
PUBLIC RADIO**

Sacred Music for the World

From the Board Trustees

After a flurry of projects in November, there wasn't much activity to report for December. One of the church sign's floodlight receptacles was broken off and has been replaced. And, parts have arrived to (hopefully) put the sanctuary's audio system back into operation.

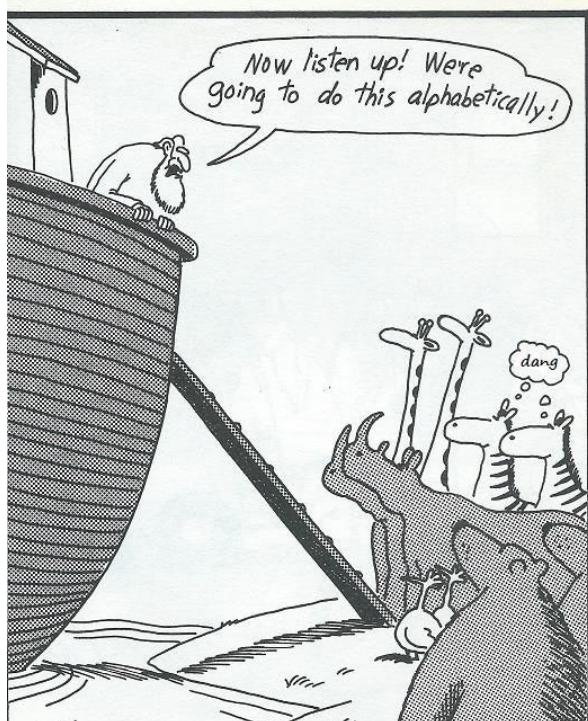
There are several projects which need attention in January and February. I will be asking for volunteers on multiple upcoming Saturdays to help repair the privacy fence, take down and cut-up trees

in the park, replace the fascia on the south side of the sanctuary, and replace all gutters on the sanctuary.

Thank you to everyone who continues to volunteer their time, talents, and resources to keep our facilities in order. There is always something that needs done, and I'm so appreciative that so many members take such an active role in accomplishing so many tasks.

God Bless,

Brian



From the President

Congratulations to the chairmen and officers that will be installed into their congregational offices during Divine Service on January 9th! We especially welcome our newest member of the council – Jennifer Currid, Chairman of the Board of Christian Life!

As Epiphany nears, fond memories of my childhood bubble up to the surface. As most of you know, I'm Cuban (yes, I was actually born there) and in that culture, the exchanging of gifts happened on Epiphany to commemorate the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus (and not on Christmas

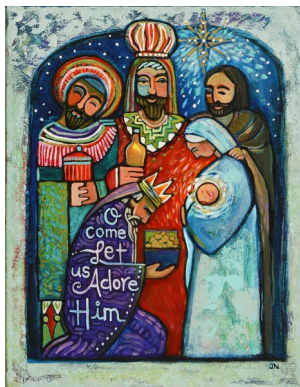
Day). The Nativity of Our Lord meant the same then as now, just minus the gift-giving. The only other difference for us was heading out to Church earlier than normal on Christmas morning so that we'd get a decent seat (churches were filled to the brim on Christmas back then).

When we emigrated from Havana to Chicago it was simply glorious for this 5 year-old...I received gifts both

on Christmas Day (to assimilate into the American culture) and on Epiphany (to preserve our Latin traditions)! As a kid, this was a double win-win...what a country! Inexplicably however, somehow over time our family switched to gift-giving only on Christmas Day and my brother and I never even noticed (because both of my parents were geniuses at parenting). Anyhow, Epiphany memories of a snow-blanketed Chicago and getting gifts (including of course, underwear and socks) have now given way to understanding the wise men in their worship of our Savior. I may not know how many wise men there were, or their exact origins, but it's

plain to me that they knew who Jesus is and spared no expense in the gifts or inconvenience in their travels (the camel caravan was the RV of their day, but much slower, smelly, and uncomfortable) to worship Him. Blessings to you this Epiphany season!

- Alex



Savior of all

Epiphany vividly reveals the reason the Son of God came among us as one of us. He has come as the fulfillment of God's promises to send a Messiah who would save all people, without any kind of exception, from sin, its condemning and life-controlling power, and to restore all kinds of people everywhere to the presence and power of God.

This salvation, which Simeon called "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of your [God's] people Israel," is also demonstrated by the visit of the Wise Men to the child Jesus. These Wise Men (or Magi) were not Jews. They were Gentiles whom God led to Jesus by a brilliant star in order to manifest that His saving plan is indeed for Gentiles as well as Jews.

In the epistle for the festival day itself, St. Paul discloses the revelation that Jesus has come not only for Jews, but also for Gentiles. He says that until it was revealed to Him by God, this truth was a mystery. But God has now made known "that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel."

Through St. Paul, God "has brought to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things." In words of

St. Paul to Titus, it is certainly true that "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

And how has Jesus carried out His saving mission for Gentiles and Jews? St.

"Salvation is for all of us through faith in Jesus Christ, God's own Son, and this message is the greatest splendor of Epiphany."

Paul reveals the way of salvation in these words: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

These comments remind us of other words of St. Paul about Jesus Christ. "[He] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do good" (Titus 2:14).

Because the Son of God was born as a human being, He has been able to suffer and die for our sins in our place. And because He is God, His suffering and death are sufficient to pay in full the debt we owe to God for our sinfulness and disobedience.

His resurrection from the dead, the greatest of all epiphanies, causes His victory to shine forth in radiant splendor. Salvation is for all of us through faith in Jesus Christ, God's own Son, and this message is the greatest splendor of Epiphany.

Excerpt from "The Splendor of Epiphany," *Lutheran Witness*, Jan 2007, witness.lcms.org

Getting Around OSELC

Flower sign up—Sign up poster in the fellowship hall

Refreshments sign up - Sign up sheet in the fellowship hall

Directories—on the back counter in the nave (where Service is held)

LWML mite boxes—on the back counter shelf in the nave

Serve as chairman of a board—See Alex Franco

Serve on a board—See that board's chairman (list is on the back of the newsletter)

Make Offerings Electronically—See Brian Hull

Subscribe to the Lutheran Witness magazine—See Trish Hull

Websites:

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—www.LCMS.org

Southern District—www.southeranlcms.org

From the Security Board

The security camera system and Schlage cipher locks have really contributed to the safety of our church property. Thank you to the individuals who obtained, installed and maintain these important tools!

If you have a need to access the church buildings other than at regular service or class times, please see Julie Blaylock, chairman of the Board of Security. She can program a 6 digit code for you that will allow you to unlock the door. Please provide to her

1. reason(s) you need access,
2. your preferred 6 digit code, and
3. the days of the week, range of hours and which building(s) you need to access.

Thank you, Julie Blaylock

From the Deaconess

Epiphany can easily slip by if the church year is not observed in its beautiful progression of church seasons. The “Three Wise Men,” or more accurately “Magi,” are placed quietly alongside the shepherds worshipping the Christ child in nativity scenes in homes and churches, parades and city squares. All things Christmas are then torn down December 26 or, in households which are eager to start the New Year, on the afternoon of Christmas day. After all, Christmas is over once the presents are open. . . or so it is to those unaware of the order of the centuries old church year. The beauty of following the seasons of the church is each season, each feast day, every significant day in the life of Christ and His Church are observed in due course. Savored and enjoyed for the sake of what each one brings. There is something quite comforting about the observance of the church seasons, each with their own purpose and atmosphere. The church year starts with Advent season where violet dresses the altar, and we anticipate the incarnation of our Savior. Christmas comes adorned in gold (or sometimes white) and brings the

elation of the long-awaited arrival of the Anointed One of Israel. The Lenten season, draped again in violet, allows for meditation, and Easter, dressed in Kingly gold and then clean, pure white, celebrates the glorious hope we have in the Resurrected Christ. In between, the season of growth is signified in the sanctuary with verdant green. But, these seasons, the feast days, especially the ones that land in the middle of the week, like Epiphany, can be overlooked even by those watching the calendar. So, now the church year brings us Epiphany arrayed in white. It ends the twelve days



of Christmas and brings us the pointed arrival of the Magi.

The Magi's appearance, their words and actions, have a purpose in Matthew's gospel. The arrival of these mysterious nomad men bearing kingly gifts is more than meets the eye. First, listen to what the Magi ask when they enter Jerusalem, "Where is the King of the Jews who has been born?" In asking where to find Jesus, they cited the very inscription which would later be etched above the place of his death:

“The King of the Jews”. In these words, we begin to see the path clearing, leading us to Lent (which is fast approaching in the church year).

The next significant act of the Magi are the gifts they bring; these are typical gifts of the day presented to a king. Except, Christ is not a typical king. This King is lowly in His majesty. The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh take on a different meaning when given to this King. Gold for Christ the King, frankincense for Christ our Priest, and myrrh for Christ the Sacrificial Lamb. So, the Magi, by the Holy Spirit, reveal Christ as King of the Jews to be Savior of the Jews, as well as Gentiles just like them. He is the Priest who sacrifices and the Sacrifice. The Father’s plan is revealed in this

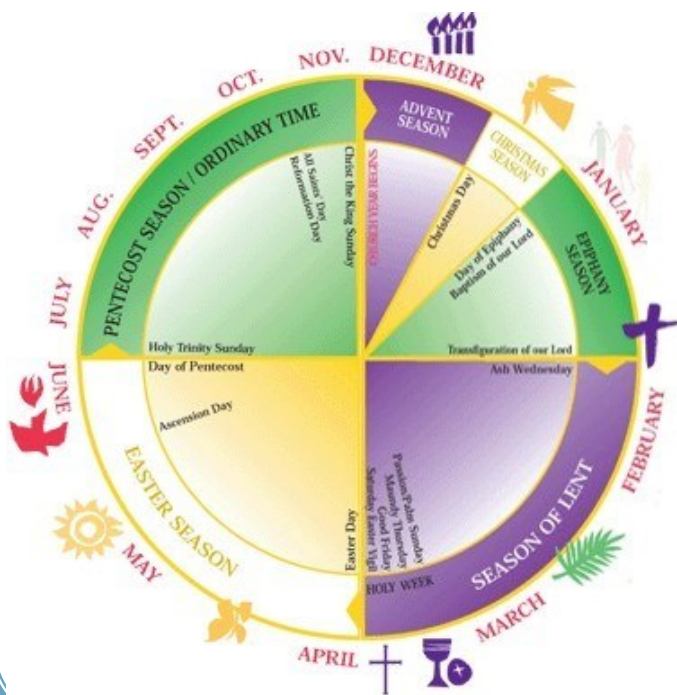
seemingly inconsequential visitation of the Magi.

These few points regarding the account of Magi are only scratching the surface. Think of all the richness we’d miss if we did not stop at the season of Epiphany to enjoy the treasure it holds.

If you would like to know more about the seasons of the Church year, turn to page x in the front of the LSB. There are also wall calendars produced by CPH which keep you up to date on what season we are in at-a -glance month by month. Also, in the front of the LSB is the Lectionary. This is the scheduled readings for the Church year. We observe the One Year Series on page xx. There are some modifications we use according to an older version of this

series. However, the Newsletter will reflect those changes in the “Sunday’s Readings.”

Blessed Epiphany season,
Pax Christi,
Deaconess Heather





Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church

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We're on the Web
www.Oselc.net

OSELC Staff, Officers, and Volunteers

Pastor Raymond Parent

Deaconess Heather Bien

Council President: Alex Franco

Council Vice-President: Brad Bien

Council Secretary: Trish Hull

Treasurer: Brian Hull

Financial Secretary: Jeannie Harrison

Board of Elders: Alan Widener

Board of Christian Life: Jennifer Currid

Board of Trustees: Brian Hull

Board of Education/Youth: Gervase Anthony

Board of Evangelism: Alex Franco

Board of Social Ministry: Becky Williams

Board of Security: Julie Blaylock

LWML: Linda Urda

Library: Jennifer Currid

Soup Kitchen Director: Becky Williams

Usher Director: Julie Blaylock

Organist and Kantor: Brian Hull