

# The first “AGAPE” of 2023

## Epiphany

A “BLOG-LIKE” NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH



**ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, CALGARY AB**

**January 4, 2023**

Epiphany greetings, dear friends of SMLC! And Happy New Year! Ein frohes neues Jahr!

Christmastide is coming to an end, as I write this first Agape of the year. Christmastide is the time from the evening of December 24 to the evening of January 5<sup>th</sup>. You guessed it: these are the twelve days of Christmas...long after the world has forgotten all about Christmas right on boxing day! We celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Epiphany means “manifestation”, and we read about the many different stories and events that showed Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. One of the first stories in epiphany tells us about the men that came “from the east”.

In the New Testament, Matthew related the coming of the wise men to Bethlehem. Matthew 2:1 reads “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.”

Nowhere in this report of the coming of the wise men are they named or counted. And their origins are left unknown. The only clue to the number of wise men lies in their gifts. There were three: gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew reported that they went to Jerusalem and gained an audience with King Herod. They asked him the whereabouts of the King of the Jews because they had seen his star. The purpose of their journey was to honor the new King.

Now Herod did not take this well. As far as he was concerned, he was the king of the Jews and any competition was definitely not welcome. But he was a sly man. He told the wise men that he would find out where the child was. Calling his advisors to him, he demanded to know where this king was. They pinpointed Bethlehem because the prophecies had predicted that a ruler would come forth from Bethlehem to lead the people of Israel.

Herod then questioned about the length of time since the Star had appeared. He told them to go to Bethlehem and find this child. Then he asked them to report back to him so that he could go and honor the new king as well.

These apparently politically naive magi went on to Bethlehem and determined that the Star was directly over a house. Inside they found the baby Jesus and his mother, Mary. They presented their gifts. Then they all had dreams in which they were warned not to return to Herod so they headed for home without returning to Jerusalem.

Herod was upset when the magi did not return. Since the magi had not identified the Christ Child for him, Herod ordered that all male children in the area between newborn and age 2 years be slaughtered. But Joseph, Mary, and Jesus had been warned. They had already fled to Egypt by then.

The Bible does not say anything more about the three magi after they came to honor the Christ child and left for home. But in the Old Testament there are prophecies recorded that seem to mention them. Here Isaiah appears to be foretelling the coming of kings to the birth of Christ. Why don't you open your Bible on Isaiah 60: 1-6 and think about this prophecy.

This passage seems to indicate that the wise men (or kings?) bearing the gold and incense (frankincense) would come from a land where there were tribes named Midian and Ephah. And these tribes existed in the northwestern part of what is now Saudi Arabia.

Some scholars think that Psalms 68:29 is another prophecy of the magi: "Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto Thee." If so, it is not very clear. Psalms 72:10 seems to be much more relevant:

"May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles bring tribute to Him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts."

In any case, they knew about the prophecy and went to meet their Saviour and worshiped him with all reverence and devotion. You will discover much more stories of the epiphany of our Lord by joining us in worship on Sundays and in our Bible studies, since we will be studying mainly the gospel of Matthew.

And to wrap up, here's a treat for you. If you read the Agape on an electronic devise, you may click on the picture (right) to



listen to a very **interesting podcast** by Dr. Paul Maier (from Issuesetc.org of the Lutheran Church Missouri), speaking about the visit of the wise men. You will enjoy it!

**MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR!**



**Jan 4 (Wed):** Bible study on zoom, at 7 p.m.

**Jan 5 (Thurs):** Confirmation class (online) at 4:30 p.m.

**Jan 5 (Thurs):** Board of elders' meeting at 7 p.m.

**Jan 6 (Fri):** The Epiphany of our Lord

**Jan 7 (Sat):** Funeral service for Minna Leicht @ Fosters Garden Chapel at 2 p.m.

**Jan 8 (Sun):** The Baptism of Our Lord. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m. Baptism of Bennet Richards

**Jan 10 (Tues):** Online Youth Bible Study @ 7 p.m.

**Jan 11 (Wed):** Bible study on zoom, at 7 p.m.

**Jan 12 (Thurs):** Confirmation class (online) at 4:30 p.m.

**Jan 15 (Sun):** Second Sunday after Epiphany. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m. Installation of Peter Graumann as elder.

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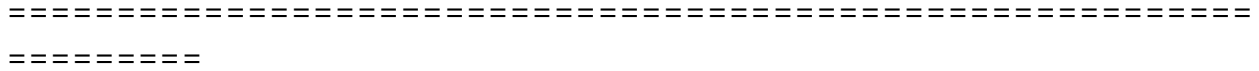
**WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY (Online)**

We are studying the Gospel of Matthew this year and the readings for each upcoming Sunday from the lectionary used in worship. Our Bible studies are a good opportunity to ask questions, study and learn about God's word and increase fellowship with our SM family. If you haven't been to our studies and you want to give it a try, let us know. We will be glad to send you the invitation to the zoom meeting. We meet every Wednesday on zoom, from 7 to 8 p.m.

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**WORSHIP TERMINOLOGY: CONFESSION OF SINS**

A general prayer where the pastor and congregation confess their sins committed against God and neighbour, asking for God's mercy and forgiveness on account of Christ paying the price of our sins by His bitter sufferings and death.



**HIGHLIGHTS & CHRISTIAN RITES** – births, baptisms, confirmation, weddings & funerals

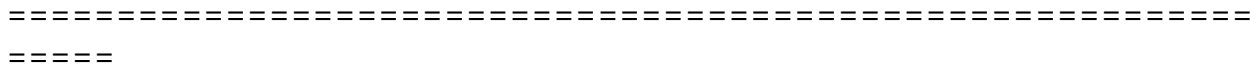
**BIRTHS:** Ryan and Samantha Stewart welcomed her baby girl Sarah to their lives this last summer. Filipe and Deise welcomed their first baby girl, Sara to their lives this last December 16th. We rejoice with them and pray that God blesses both “Sarahs” and both families.

**BAPTISM:** We will baptize little Ben Richards on January 8<sup>th</sup>. It will be in both English and German languages. We welcome Ben and his family as they visit our church – his godparents are coming from Germany just to witness the sacrament!

**CONFIRMATION:** Our five confirmands are in the final stretch with their classes, getting ready for the day of their confirmation, on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, when they will promise their faithfulness to God and confirm the faith in which they were baptized.

**WEDDING:** We blessed the union of Andrew Claeys and Jennifer Hazel in holy matrimony on last December 31<sup>st</sup>. We wish them God’s presence in their new and exciting journey!

**FUNERAL:** We say goodbye to Minna Leicht, long-time member of our German congregation. She was 92 and was called to glory on December 26<sup>th</sup>. The funeral service will take place on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. at Foster’s Garden Chapel.



**FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

Randy Haynes has resigned as an elder, he is serving on other boards. We thank him for his faithful service as an

elder for all those years.

Peter Graumann will be installed as our new elder on January 15<sup>th</sup>. He was always part of the board as the chairman (*ex-officio*) and now he will be blessed as an elder. We thank Peter for all those years serving as our chairman and welcome him as a new elder and wish his God's blessings.

Currently, our five elders are: Dana Salter, Bernd Kubke, Brent Warren, Ernie Schulz and Peter Graumann.

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## DIE DEUTSCHE ECKE

Wenn die Schrift im Artikel auf der nächsten Seite zu klein zum lesen ist, und wenn Sie dies auf einem elektronischen Gerät lesen, können Sie auf dem Titel (unten) klicken und im *Albertaner* diesen Artikel besser lesen. Es war ein sehr schöner Abend und wir hatten über 300 Leute in unserer Kirche! Wir danken Marianne Jost für den Artikel und vielen Dank Arnim Joop für die Veröffentlichung! Der Albertaner ist „die Stimme der Deutsch-Kanadier in Alberta“.



## **“O Tannenbaum”**

**Deutsch-Kanadier in Calgary haben am 26. November mit einem “Tannenbaum Lighting Festival” den Beginn der Adventszeit gefeiert.**

**Bei dem Festival sangen drei deutsch-kanadische Chöre traditionelle deutsche Weihnachtslieder.**

**Foto: Die Solistin Hannah Pagenkopf erfreute mit den Liedern “Ave Maria” und Mozarts “Alleluia”.**

**Bericht und mehr Bilder auf Seite 9.**

**Foto: Teresa Stocke**



## Ein festlicher Abend mit traditioneller deutscher Weihnachtsmusik

Nach dreijähriger Pause konnte in diesem Jahr erneut das *Tannenbaum Lighting Festival* in der St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Bridgeland in Calgary am 26. November – dem ersten Advents-Wochenende – stattfinden. Die Veranstaltung begann um 17.00 Uhr mit dem Glockengeläut der Kirche und den Klängen des Organisten Johnson Philip. Der deutsche Honorarkonsul für Alberta und die Northwest Territories, Hubertus Liebrecht, war Schirmherr der Veranstaltung, und Pastor Zeuch von der Kirche war der Gastgeber, der mit Musik und Erläuterungen der vier Kerzen am Adventskranz die rechte Stimmung erzeugte.

Drei deutsch-kanadische Chöre waren eingeladen: die Singgemeinschaft Calgary unter der Leitung von Andrea Todt, mit den Liedern *Fröhliche Weihnacht, Still, Still und Leise rieselt der Schnee*; der German Ladies Choir of Calgary unter der Leitung von Anne Stollbert mit den Liedern *Der Christbaum ist der schönste Baum, Welcher Jubel, welche Freude und Christrosenlied*; und der German Canadian Male Chorus of

Calgary unter der Leitung von Susan Woodward mit den Liedern *O Tannenbaum, Brennende Kerze und Petersburger Schlittensfahrt*.

Die Solistin Hannah Pagenkopf erfreute mit den Liedern *Ave Maria* und Mozarts *Alleluia*.

Der von Swantje Macke-Monteiro geschmückte Weihnachtsbaum wurde nach einem gemeinsamen Countdown erleuchtet, und der Nikolaus beschenkte die anwesenden Kinder mit einer Überraschungstüte.

Das Festival wurde abgerundet mit den Liedern *O du fröhliche, o du selige* und *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und Frieden auf Erden* – gesungen von Hannah Pagenkopf, begleitet von Marianne Jost am Flügel, und dem Lied *Joy to the World* unter der Begleitung des Organisten.

Es war mit Sicherheit niemand in der Kirche, der nicht von der Weihnachtsstimmung erfasst wurde.

Abschließend lud Pastor Zeuch alle Gäste zu deutschem Kuchen und Plätzchen, Kaffee, Tee und heißer Schokolade ein.

Marianne Jost & Beatrix Downton



Der Nikolaus (Wolfgang Woellenstein) beschenkte die anwesenden Kinder mit einer Überraschungstüte.

Fotos: Teresa Stocke



Der German Canadian Male Chorus of Calgary war einer von drei Chören, die beim "Tannenbaum Lighting Festival" gesungen haben.



Pastor Markus Zeuch von der St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Calgary begrüßt die Teilnehmer bei der festlichen Weihnachtsveranstaltung.



Marianne Jost erhielt einen schönen Blumenstrauß für die Organisation der festlichen Veranstaltung und musikalische Begleitung auf dem Klavier.

## A little humour:

I wonder if the Three Wise Men said to Jesus: "Just to be clear, these gifts are for your birthday AND for Christmas".



Thank you for taking your time to read this first edition of the Agape in 2023. I do hope you enjoyed it. May the Lord Almighty grant you a wonderful new year with lots of blessings to you and your loved ones. My standing invitation to you: come join us for worship on Sundays and join us in the weekly Bible studies as well, if you have access to a computer.

In His service,

**Rev. Markus Zeuch**

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Him

