



THORNHILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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GEMEINDEBRIEF – EPIPHANIAS 2022

NEWSLETTER – EPIPHANY 2022

***EASTERN SYNOD CANCELS PUBLIC WORSHIP
BISHOP MICHAL PRYSE RECOMMENDS A FOUR WEEK SUSPENSION***

In an episcopal message dated January 3, 2022, and forwarded via email to all congregations and pastors, Eastern Synod Bishop Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse addressed the current surge in the transmission of the COVID 19 pandemic’s Omicron variant. “Over the Christmas holidays, we have seen the tightening of restrictions in all four of our provincial jurisdictions,” Bishop Pryse stated. He went on to say, “I feel it is both prudent and responsible for Eastern Synod congregations to suspend all in-person worship and other gatherings effective immediately and for the next four weeks.”

Accordingly, via email communication, our congregational council has agreed to comply with our synod’s recommendation. Our 10:00 a.m. worship services will be limited to a live stream from our website (address above).

A PASTORAL WORD

Dear Christian Friends,

The old year now past has been challenging due to the resilient Coronavirus and its constant variants, identified by letters from the alphabet of New Testament Greek! And it seems the new year will be much the same – full of anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty. Some within our circles of family and friends have been infected; others, including ourselves, may become infected in the days, weeks, and months ahead; and all of us have been and will continue to be affected by the pandemic.

GEMEINDEBRIEF – EPIPHANIAS 2022

NEWSLETTER – EPIPHANY 2022

Even without the many and various other potential tragedies and trauma we may face in the new year, the temptation to live in fear remains strong, and with it comes the temptation to blame others – government officials, hospital administrators, foreigners or “anti-vaxxers” – somebody, anybody.

Christians know to blame, and fear offers no solution. But love and forgiveness do! You and I are living proof of the power of God’s love and forgiveness to change our attitude, behaviour, and perspective. As people of faith, we trust that the past, present and future are in the hands of God – the source and goal, the beginning and end of life, the Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) all creation and human destiny.

It is no accident that the transition from one year to the next occurs during the Christmas season. It is no coincidence that it unites New Year’s Day with the naming of the newborn Christ Child. The name “Jesus” promises what his birth reveals – God has come to be with us in the life of our world, to save us from the paralyzing power of fear. It cannot be a mere chance that the angel Gabriel’s salutation to Bethlehem’s shepherds, “Fear not,” is expressed 365 times in the Bible – one for every day of the year!

What better New Year’s resolution than to begin each new day by *echoing* God’s call to resist the temptation to fear and embrace God’s promise to give the joy and strength which reflect the whole and true meaning of our familiar seasonal salutation, “Merry Christmas.” No matter the circumstances, God is with us daily to bring comfort amid grief, get courage in the face of fear, and bring joy to the world!

Happy New Year!

Pastor Peter

Liebe christliche Freunde,

Das alte Jahr, das nun vergangen ist, war sicherlich herausfordernd, aufgrund des unverwüstlichen Coronavirus und seiner ständigen Varianten, die durch Buchstaben aus dem Alphabet des neutestamentlichen Griechisch identifiziert werden! Und es scheint, dass das neue Jahr ähnlich sein wird – voller Angst, Verwirrung, und Unsicherheit. Einige in unseren Familien und Freundeskreis sind bereits infiziert; andere, einschließlich wir selbst, können uns in den kommenden Tagen, Wochen und Monaten infizieren; und wir alle sind bereits und werden fortlaufend von der Pandemie betroffen.

GEMEINDEBRIEF – EIPHANIAS 2022 **NEWSLETTER –**
EIPHANY 2022 Auch ohne die vielen und verschiedenen anderen potenziellen

Tragödien und Trauma, die wir im neuen Jahr begegnen könnten, bleibt die Versuchung, in Angst zu leben, stark; und damit kommt die Versuchung, anderen die Schuld zu geben – Regierungsbeamte, Krankenhausverwaltungen, Ausländer oder „Impfstoff Gegner“ – einfach irgendjemand.

Christen wissen, dass Schuldzuweisungen und Angst keine Lösung bieten. Aber Liebe und Vergebung tun es! Sie und ich sind der lebende Beweis für die Macht der Liebe und Vergebung Gottes, unsere Einstellung, Haltung und Perspektive zu ändern. Als gläubige Menschen vertrauen wir darauf, dass die Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft in Gottes Händen liegen – die Quelle und das Ziel, der Anfang und das Ende des Lebens, das Alpha und Omega (die ersten und letzten Buchstaben des griechischen Alphabets) der gesamten Schöpfung und des menschlichen Schicksals.

Es ist nicht zufällig, dass der Übergang von einem Jahr zum nächsten in der Weihnachtszeit stattfindet. Es ist kein Zufall, dass der Neujahrstag mit der Namensgebung des neugeborenen Christkinds übereinstimmt. Der Name „Jesus“ verspricht, was seine Geburt offenbart – Gott ist im Leben unserer Welt zu uns gekommen, um uns vor der lähmenden Macht der Angst zu bewahren. Es kann kaum ein Zufall sein, dass die Botschaft des Engels Gabriel an die Hirten von Bethlehem „Fürchtet euch nicht“ 365-mal in der Bibel zum Ausdruck kommt – einmal für jeden Tag des Jahres!

Gibt es einen besseren Vorsatz für das neue Jahr, als jeden neuen Tag damit zu beginnen, Gottes Aufruf zu *wiederholen*, der Versuchung zu widerstehen, sich zu fürchten und Gottes Versprechen anzunehmen, die Freude und Kraft zu geben, die die volle und wahre Bedeutung unseres vertrauten saisonbedingten Grußes „Frohe Weihnachten“ widerspiegeln. Egal wie die Umstände sind, Gott ist täglich bei uns, um in Zeiten der Trauer Trost zu bringen, uns Mut zu machen angesichts der Angst, und um der Welt Freude zu bereiten!

Prosit Neujahr!

Pastor Peter

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IN MEMORIAM Our dear brother in Christ, **Fred Neizert**, died at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto on Wednesday, December 29, 2021. Details for his funeral are described in the following message from Fred's family. Please continue to remember Fred's family in prayer.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEITZERT FAMILY

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the outpouring of support that we have received following the passing of our Dad and Opa, Fred Neitzert. Please find below the obituary, which provides some initial details about the memorial service held on February 6, 2022, which is Fred's birthday.

<https://mountpleasantgroup.permavita.com/site/FredNeitzert.html>

Given the current restrictions, the live service will be for family members only but will be held virtually for those of you who would like to attend from afar. In addition, as the situation evolves, the service may open to some other attendees.

If you'd like to attend the virtual service, please click on the link below to access the form. You will also be notified of any updates if a live service becomes possible.

<https://forms.gle/Gg6Ewh33XvNGDCWd6>

Please don't hesitate to contact Tanya directly with questions about the service or confirm attendance.

With love,

Tanya, Christina, Monica and Frank

SAYING GRACE (submitted by Edith Schulbeck)

A visiting pastor was attending a men's breakfast in Midwest farm country. He asked one of the impressive older farmers in attendance to say grace that morning. After being seated, the older farmer began, "Lord, I hate buttermilk" The pastor opened one eye and wondered to himself where this was going.

Then the farmer loudly proclaimed, "Lord, I hate lard" Now the pastor was overly worried. However, without missing a beat, the farmer prayed, "And Lord, you know I don't care much for raw flour"

Just as the pastor was ready to stand up and stop him, the farmer continued, "But Lord, when you mix 'em all together and bake 'em up, I do love fresh biscuits. So Lord, when things come up we don't like, when life gets hard, when we just don't understand what you are sayin' to us, we just need to relax and wait 'till you are done mixin', and probably it will be somethin' even better than biscuits. Amen"