



EPIPHANY STAR

Epiphany Lutheran Church
Carbondale, Illinois
February 2025



Pastor Brian Coffey

Notes from the Pastor

Beloved in Christ,

Welcome to the second month of the new year! January was challenging for most people in Southern Illinois with back-to-back ice and snowstorms within a week. At Epiphany, some of our members were without power for an extended time. Many were also suffering the effects of various illnesses circulating in the population. Our lower January worship attendance reflected these realities. Remember that **services are recorded and available** on YouTube, Zoom and Vimeo if you would like to watch them. Links to these are included every week in the eHappenings email.

Our church property sustained minor damage from the ice and snow including many downed branches, a dislodged vent pipe stack on the roof and an ice dam that brought water into the music room and hallway – damaging the insulation and ceiling tiles. Thanks to the hands-on leadership of **Patrick Seger**, our Church Council leader for Property, these items were taken care of quite expediently and at minimal cost.



Thank You,
Mary Kelly

In the office, **Olise Mandat** (Business Manager) and I are keeping up with the weekly workload while adjusting to no longer having **Mary Kelly** on staff. Mary was diagnosed with cancer in late December and tendered her resignation effective January 1st. Mary faithfully served the people of Epiphany as Office Secretary for 14 years, and in the past two years had taken on additional duties to prepare worship slides and the abbreviated bulletin. I'm most pleased with the fact that Mary, Olise and I worked very well as a team and enjoyed a light-hearted office atmosphere together.

An important topic on the minds of many people is how to live one's Christian faith in polarizing times. As Lutheran Christians within the ELCA, there are resources and communications available to help inform our individual and corporate decision-making (see www.elca.org). We are not called to be of the same mind, but rather to respectfully engage with one another and society at large as we live from a faith-informed perspective. Our **adult forum on Sunday mornings at 8:30** is a good time to practice this as we talk through the weekly lessons used in worship. It's an engaging group of 10-15 people, and all voices are welcome!

Blessings to you as we journey together through this Time after Epiphany during February and anticipate the beginning of Lent in March.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Brian

“Love creates, love liberates, and love heals.”

Dear Friends,

I want to share some reflections from my recent trip to Louisville for the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza. This gathering of children's and youth ministers and lay leaders like myself reinforced why our congregation's commitment to youth ministry is so vital to our shared future.

One of the most captivating for me came during a presentation by **Rozella White**, who happens to be a friend and colleague of one of my ELEA board members. Her words, "**Love creates, love liberates, and love heals,**" deeply resonated with me as I thought about our broader community and our congregation's role in it.

As we witness the evolving needs in our community, I'm reminded that we have a **unique opportunity – and responsibility** – to respond with love in action. This could mean expanding our youth programs to welcome more neighborhood children, creating intergenerational mentoring opportunities, or developing new initiatives addressing our local families' specific challenges.

I returned from Louisville feeling inspired to explore how we can transform Rozella's powerful message into tangible programs that serve both our congregation and our neighbors. Whether we're supporting our youth programs, reaching out to new families, or gathering for worship, we have daily opportunities to let love create new possibilities.

I'm grateful to serve a congregation that understands and embraces this power of love. Let's be bold in developing programs that meet our community where they are.

In faith and service,

Cory Newman

Photo from Theology Pub Trivia Night at the Extravaganza

Cory's team, 'SchooledYou' took 2nd place.



Cory Newman
Church Council
President

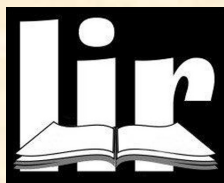


February Birthdays

Ian Langan	February 1
Devin Miller, Jr.	February 1
Betty Dunbar	February 4
Abigail Lee Person	February 9
Kathy Sime	February 11
Wayne Griffith	February 20
Kari Finck	February 25
Lynn Smith	February 25



Southern Illinois Learning In Retirement



**S.I. Learning
in Retirement**

Wildlife Monitoring in the Shawnee National Forest

Our monthly speaker for February will be **Mark Vukovich**, who has worked for 20 years with the USDA Forest Service on a variety of game and non-game projects.

He enjoys learning new techniques and methods in wildlife surveys. Highly enthusiastic about his work, Mark has authored more than 25 scientific publications.

His presentation will be at 10:30 am on Wednesday, February 19, here at Epiphany Lutheran in the Fellowship Hall. The program is free and open to the public and follows the 9:30 am coffee hour.

A lot goes on in the Shawnee National Forest and Mark's presentation will discuss how wildlife is surveyed in the Forest, why such monitoring is important, and how it informs the management of natural resources. Those surveys help us understand habitat changes and trends over time and how wildlife is impacted by them. Moreover, with thousands of acres to watch over and manage, federal biologists are eager to engage citizens to participate in community science.

If you have any questions about SILIR membership, please call the Events and Outreach office at SIU (618-536-7751), email silir@siu.edu, or consult the webpage found at conferenceservices.siu.edu/silir



Mark Vukovich

A Message From Our Bishop: “Prayer is not passive; it's an act of hope.”

Dear Church,

On Monday [*January 20*], our nation witnessed the peaceful transfer of power central to our democracy, followed by sweeping actions by the incoming Trump administration. Facing such changes, we receive guidance through Martin Luther's words in the Large Catechism.

In the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, where we pray “Give us this day our daily bread,” Luther writes about the importance of praying for our leaders, asking God to grant them wisdom and strength. He also speaks to the responsibility of leaders to provide stability, sufficiency and equity, saying, “[I]t would be very proper to place in the coat-of-arms of every pious prince a loaf of bread instead of a lion, or a wreath of rue, or to stamp it upon the coin, to remind both them and their subjects that by their office we have protection and peace, and that without them we could not eat and retain our daily bread.”¹¹

This past week has been one of rapid and cascading change, from the inauguration of a new president and vice president to the flurry of activity in government orders and regulations. The policies and decisions reflected in this week's executive orders and regulatory changes have the potential to profoundly impact our lives, the well-being of our neighbors and the future of the planet. Therefore, I am concerned about the ways that many of the executive actions have created uncertainty and fear in our communities among neighbors struggling to survive, neighbors struggling to provide for their children, and neighbors struggling to be seen.

As a church, we are called to speak up when the government distorts or denies the image of God in each person by endangering access to protection, peace and daily bread. Where harm or inequity occur, we are called by God to respond with love and advocacy.

Luther also writes that in asking for daily bread, we are to pray for our leaders. We should pray that they act wisely and justly, protect all people and not cause harm.

Prayer is not passive; it's an act of hope. Prayer reminds us to ground ourselves in God's promise. We pray for strength, to love unconditionally and to serve one another. As we lift up our petitions, we must also act—advocating for policies that affirm the dignity of every person and standing against actions that demean or exclude.

This church is committed to upholding the humanity of everyone, regardless of who we are or where we come from. We are a church called to love our neighbors and accompany all people in their joys and struggles. We must remain steadfast in this calling. As the ELCA, we will continue to proclaim the radical inclusivity of Christ's love. And we will deepen our local and global partnerships with those working to build a just and compassionate society, especially through our ecumenical and interreligious networks.

I commend to you the social message “[Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy](#),” which states on page 7: “To evaluate how well agencies of government are doing their proper work of providing for the safety and well-being of those within their borders and/or jurisdiction, Lutherans ask one simple but all-encompassing question: Is the neighbor being served?”

I encourage our congregations to use the resources of the [ELCA Witness in Society Team](#) with advocacy networks on the state and federal level. And get involved with [AMMPARO](#), the ELCA's strategy toward just and humane policies affecting migrants.

As we move forward, let us hold fast to our faith and to one another. Let us be bold in our witness to the gospel, steadfast in our prayers for those in authority and tireless in our efforts to seek justice for all.

May God grant us courage, wisdom and peace in these days.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop



Congratulations to Kaelyn Viernum and Connor Gulbrandsen



Connor Gulbrandsen

Kaelyn and Connor, both juniors at Carbondale High School, recently received awards as members of the National Honor Society.

There are multiple components in the selection of students for these awards including scholarship, character, leadership, and service.

Congratulations!

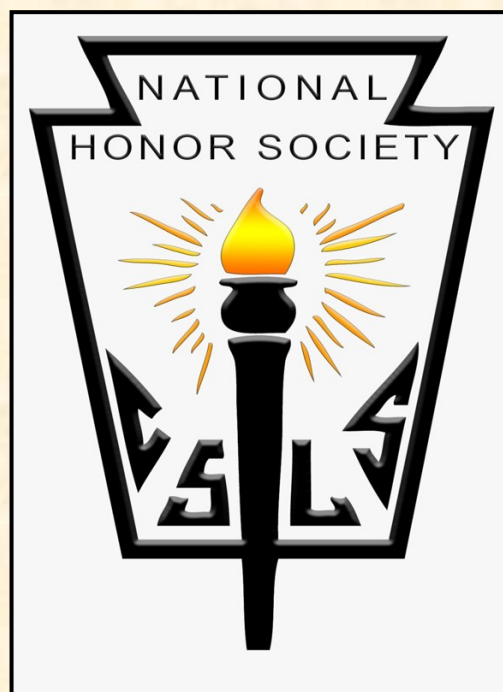
... and be sure to thank your folks. They are especially proud of you too!



Kaelyn Viernum

What is the National Honor Society?

It is a national organization which was founded in 1921 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals for the purpose of honoring students who excel in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership, and service.



JAZZ VESPERS: 5:00 PM ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025

Second Sundays at 5:00P
Epiphany Lutheran Church
Carbondale, Illinois

Jazz Vespers

an Evening Prayer Service led by *Pastor Brian Coffey*

with members and guests of the *New Arts Jazztet*—Bob Allison, trumpet;
Mel Goot, piano; Phil Brown, bass; and Darlene DuFay, drums—**February 9, 2025**

works by *Phil Brown, Ray Bryant, George Cables, Pat Metheny, Wes Montgomery, and Gerry Niewood*
streaming at <https://www.facebook.com/JazzVespersatEpiphany>

Yes! Our 50th Annual "Sale to Fight Hunger!"



Nan Gher

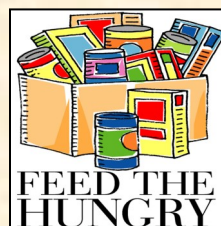
Believe it or not, spring is coming, and so is the **50th annual Sale to Fight Hunger!**

Dates of the sale are May 2 and 3, so start saving your donations. We also need volunteers, especially for the days before and after the sale. Setting up and taking down require many hands. Or, if you feel you can handle a bit bigger job, please talk to **Nan Gher or Lori Fink**. You might also suggest a friend who has a talent for organizing! This sale, sponsored by Church Women United, has grown steadily through the years. **Our last sale provided \$22,000 to aid those who are food challenged.** The volunteers are diverse, friendly, and fun to work with. Join us!

Nan Gher

618-203-1121

nangher43@gmail.com



2025 February

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Sunday, February 2 - Epiphany 4

- 8:30 am - Children and Adult Christian Education
- 9:30 am - Worship
- 11:00 am - Confirmation class

Sunday, February 9 - Epiphany 5

- 8:30 am - Children and Adult Christian Education
- 9:30 am - Worship
- 11:00 am - Confirmation class
- 5:00 pm - Jazz Vespers

Friday, February 14

- Valentine's Day

Sunday, February 16 - Epiphany 6

- 8:30 am - Children and Adult Christian Education
- 9:30 am - Worship
- 11:00 am - Confirmation class

Tuesday, February 18

- 6:00 pm - Church Council

Sunday, February 23 - Epiphany 7

- 8:30 am - Children and Adult Christian Education
- 9:30 am - Worship
- 11:00 am - Confirmation class

Epiphany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

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Olise Mandat, Business Manager

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Facebook: *Epiphany Lutheran Church*



Newsletter Editor: Jim Womack

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2024-2025 Epiphany Church Officers:

Cory Newman	Council President
Tim Fink	Vice-President
Chalmer Post	Secretary
Kevin Bame	Treasurer
Lynn Smith	Financial Secretary
Olise Mandat	Business Manager

Epiphany Church Council Members:

Jan Womack	Christian Education Committee
Cory Newman	Communications/ IT Committee
Beth Bivens	Evangelism Committee
Ann Mays	Fellowship Committee
Patrick Seger	Property Committee
Chalmer Post	Social Ministry Committee
Trish Welch	Stewardship Committee
Tim Fink	Worship Committee
Devin Miller	Youth Committee