



# THE EXAMINER

The Newsletter of Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Richmond, VA

## May 2015

*You are invited to join us at the*

### **CONGREGATIONAL SPRING BANQUET**

**HONORING OUR CONFIRMANDS, CONFIRMATION MENTORS**

**AND SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING TEAMS**

On **May 17**, the young people who have spent the last two years in special study for the affirmation of their baptism, will be confirmed.

In celebration of this event, a congregational banquet hosted by the first year class is being planned to honor them and their mentors. We will also recognize those who served on Sunday School Teaching Teams.

All are invited to the banquet which will be in Price Hall immediately following the 11 am service.

Please make your reservation for the banquet by using the reservation sheet in the Commons or by contacting the church office at 282-6066, or [churchoffice@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:churchoffice@epiphanyelca.org) by May 11.



---

**SPRING/SUMMER WORSHIP TIME BEGINS ON MAY 24 AND CONTINUES  
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 6!**

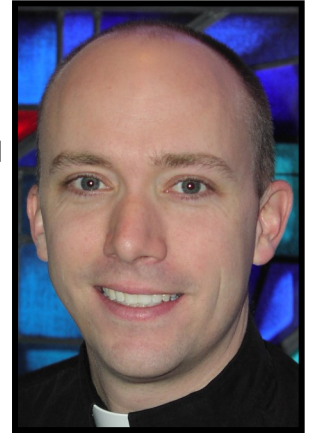


Early Service remains at 8:30 am

Late Service begins at **10:30 am**

## Words from Pastor Phillip

One of the ministries which I heard people name as one of Epiphany's strengths throughout the transition and call process for senior pastor in 2013 was confirmation ministry. Many of those who had participated in some way in confirmation ministry told me they appreciated its focus and thoroughness. Over the past two years I've tried to develop a program that would carry on that tradition. Like the ones that previous pastors' used, I have based the curriculum on the main portions of Luther's *Small Catechism*: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. Some of the instruction is given in a class-like setting with PowerPoint presentations and videos. Other components of the program involve conversations between the youth and their confirmation mentors. Still other aspects, like theological reflection on service projects and sermon summaries, are left to the confirmands, themselves. The efforts of Caren Sizemore, the lay catechist, have been critical in helping it all hold together.



In the process of developing this curriculum I've discovered that by far the best component of the confirmation isn't the curriculum, the requirements, or the teaching at all. It's the students! Unlike most Lutheran congregations, Epiphany conducts confirmation ministry with high school students. High school youth are able to engage confirmation material on a fairly deep level. In most cases they are able to form tight bonds of friendship and camaraderie with their fellow confirmands. This helps the subject matter take root in their lives.

I hear people ask, "But aren't high school students more involved with sports and other after-school activities? Doesn't that create scheduling conflicts?" Yes, it does. Lots. However, to be honest, I don't know if Epiphany high school students are any more or less involved than Epiphany middle school students. My experience is that our youth, from 7<sup>th</sup> grade and up, are very active in things like drama, band, tae kwon do, soccer, horseback-riding...you name it. Today's youth are also increasingly burdened with more hours of homework. Finding time to attend confirmation classes during the week (or the weekend) would be a challenge for *any* age of youth. Even with the number of scheduling conflicts, the level of commitment from our high school youth in terms of attendance and the completion of class requirements is impressive, and I have no reason to think that will change in the future.

So, as the congregation prepares this month for another group of high school students to profess their faith, let us be thankful for their commitment and presence. Let us be thankful for their willingness to complete the expectations of the course. Let us also be grateful for the commitment that our parents and grandparents have to Epiphany's confirmation ministry. Studies show again and again that the biggest influences on a young person's faith happen not in a confirmation class or in a church, but in the home.

Perhaps what we can be most thankful for, however, is the questions that the students bring to the classes. One thing that I have discovered over the past two years is that, more often than not, the youth are asking questions about faith and God and life that are different from what I think needs to be taught. It has been very eye-opening for me, and I've often had to shift course mid-lesson to adjust! As we prepare our young people to be witnesses of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus in a world that does not automatically validate the gospel message or want to hear it, it is extremely important that we listen to how they are wrestling with the teachings of the church and the themes of Christian faith, how they are striving to respond to Jesus as Lord. In the end, we will all be built up by this process together, a group of people who are seeking to know more about and trust with greater confidence this God who creates, redeems, and makes us holy.

Yours in Christ's service,  
Pastor Phillip

# Stewardship Ministry

---

Stewardship is often defined as the utilization of our time, talents, and treasures for the Glory of God. Epiphany has been blessed with many individuals who use their time and talents to support and lead the various ministry programs that are essential to the worship services and all supporting activities.



This past autumn the members of the congregation were asked to complete a Time and Talents Survey. On it, one indicated a desire to use their time and talents to serve on various Ministry Teams in the church or community. As a result of this survey, nine individuals indicated a desire to be a “teller” to count the weekly offerings in addition to the current tellers. There are now five teams of three tellers who process that weekly offerings. The addition of the new tellers has allowed four of the previous tellers to “retire” after 25 plus years of counting the weekly offerings. We are very thankful for all of the tellers and offer a congregational “thank you” to all who have served and /or are currently serving.

Have you wondered about the total amount pledged on Consecration Sunday? This year we received 205 pledges with a commitment of \$499,681 for 2015. This is compared to 195 pledges with a commitment of \$461,075 for 2014. The average commitment for 2014 was \$2364 compared to \$2437 for 2015.

Over the years, Epiphany has been a strong supporter of ELCA mission programs. This year Epiphany committed to provide \$2250 to the ELCA Good Gifts program. It is designed to stock a medical clinic in a developing nation with basic supplies such as antibiotics, bandages and other medicines. The funding for the program came from our Lenten offerings with the amount over \$2250 placed in our fund to aid seminarians from our congregation. Thanks to your generosity, the Lenten offerings totaled \$8894.

**Bruce Garringer** (Financial Secretary)

## **Endowment Fund Expenditures Update**

Last December, Church Council voted to use its annual allotment (not the principal) from the Endowment Fund to enhance our ministries in the Lord’s service. To date, monies from the Fund have enabled us to:

Prepare Grace Street House for residence, update the fire/alarm system for the entire building, provide a flat screen monitor for the Upper Room, obtain a device for podcasting sermons, provide the treasurer with a laptop computer, provide new headset microphones and refurbish our handbells

Approved uses of the remaining funds include: Providing a flat screen monitor for the Commons, updating our phone system, redecorating the Parlor

# Music Ministry

---

## NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY, KEVIN BARGER

### Time change for worship

Please note that our Sunday worship will move from 11:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. from Memorial Day (May 24 weekend, 2015) through Labor Day weekend (September 6, 2015). The first service time remains at 8:30 am

### Children's Choir Notes

The Cherub Choir will rehearse on May 6 from 6:30 – 7:00 p.m. Singing Saints Music Olympics occurs that same night (see below). Cherubs will participate in worship on May 17 at both services and Singings Saints will participate on May 3 (as part of Youth Sunday).

The Junior Handbell Choir rehearses on May 6. Please note that due to other activities, the time is a little different – we will meet from 7:30 – 8:00 p.m. This group will participate in worship on May 10 at both services.

### Music Olympics...Pass the Torch

All Singing Saints are reminded that our Annual Music Olympics will take place on Wednesday, May 6 from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Note the extended and different times). This is a fun culmination to a great year of learning.

### Sundaes on Wednesdays

To celebrate our music ministry together for this year, we invite all music ministry participants and their families to "Sundaes on Wednesday" on May 13, 2015 in Price Hall from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Please come out and enjoy this fellowship and celebration opportunity with your many co-musicians! There is a sign up sheet on the board outside the Music Room. Please sign up by May 10 so we can plan accordingly. There is no cost for this event.

### It's Summertime already?

Members of our music groups take a well-deserved break during the summer months. We thank all participants in music ministry for their many wonderful contributions to our worship life over the past months.

As has been our custom, we encourage musicians to share their talents with our congregational family during the summer months. Those of you returning from college, students studying an instrument, those wanting to sing special solos, duets, other ensembles, etc. are invited to be active participants in our summer music ministry. Please contact Kevin Barger at 746-5756 to indicate your willingness. There will also be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the Music Room beginning this month. We look forward to these marvelous contribution





# Children's Faith Formation

---

## Summer Bible Adventure

All are invited to join us this summer, May 24 through September 6, from 9:45 am—10:15 am, in Price Hall as we hear about each Sunday's scripture readings from worship. Each week we will gather to hear a story, discuss what it means to us today, and share in an activity.

We are looking for at least two people to lead each week one to share the story and the other to lead the activity. Materials will be provided for each leader.



Please contact Christy Huffman at [cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org), or sign up in the Commons, if you are willing to serve. We look forward to seeing you there.

## Sunday School Teachers, Helpers and Assistants

### A Word of Thanks



**"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," Ephesians 4:11-12.** Each week over 40 adults gather to share the story of God with children of all ages. They spend hours each year preparing lessons, telling the story and walking with children and youth on their faith journey. We, at Epiphany, are

thankful for the many ways these servants equip our children to be the body of Christ in their daily lives.

On Sunday, May 17, join us for the Congregation Spring Banquet as we will honor all those who served in our Faith Formation activities.

# Children's Faith Formation

---



## Vacation Bible School—Camp Discovery

**July 20-24, 2015, 8:45 am—12 Noon**

We are off to a great start with our registration for participants and volunteers. Chester, the squirrel, is looking forward to seeing many of you there.

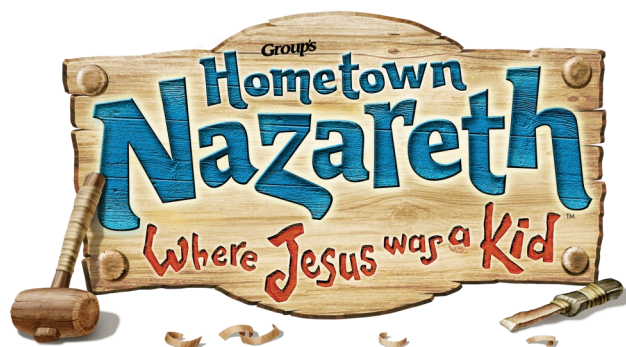
We still need more volunteers, both youth and adults, to serve during this week to make it a success. Also if you are unable to serve during the week, be on the look-out in June for our “Needed Supplies” list in the Commons. It takes many people behind the scenes to make this a great adventure.

**Volunteer Training** Make plans to join us either May 31 or June 14 at 9:30 am in the Chapel to receive your materials for your activity site or age group.

## Our First Family Vacation Bible School—Hometown Nazareth

**August 2-6, 2015, 5:30-7:30 pm with dinner included**

Have you registered? We are excited for this new experience for families of all ages and sizes later in the summer. We will have a chance to gather with Tribes to hear the stories from Mary and travel through the Marketplace in Nazareth. There is a family registration form on our church's website, as well as paper copies in the Commons. There is a \$25 registration fee per family, which is due by August 2.



Would you be willing to serve as a shopkeeper during the week or sponsor one of the dinners? If so, please contact Christy Huffman at [cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org). There are leader guides to provide information about the different shops in Nazareth's marketplace.

We need your help to transform our building into Nazareth as it was in Jesus' time. Do you have a canopy/tent we could borrow to transform the Commons into a marketplace? Do you have throw rugs, large throw pillows, plastic plants, or baskets we could use in the marketplace or sanctuary? If you have any items we could borrow to build Nazareth, please contact Christy Huffman at [cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org).

# Adult Faith Formation

---

## Sunday Morning Offerings

**New Member Class** Pastor Phillip Martin welcomes new(er) members and guests interested in membership at Epiphany to join us in Price Hall, May 3 and 10. We will continue to explore Lutheran beliefs and learn about the community here at Epiphany.

**New Adult Class** will meet in the Chapel May 3, 10, and 17. Join us to find out what we will explore together.

## Monday Evening Offering

**Twenty-Somethings Bible Study** Meets weekly for food, fellowship, and study. We continue reading through the Acts of the Apostles at Sharon Nye's house on Mondays from 8pm until about 9:15pm: 1112 Roseneath Rd. #4 RVA, 23230.

## Tuesday Morning Offering

**Twelve Extraordinary Women** We continue our study of 12 women in scripture who share and model God's story for us at 10:30 am in the Chapel. We are looking at women in the New Testament. Our study concludes May 19.

## Wednesday Evening Offering

**Twelve Extraordinary Women** We continue our study of 12 women in scripture who share and model God's story for us at 6:30 pm in the Chapel. We are looking at women in the New Testament. Our study concludes May 20.

## Thursday Morning Offering

**Moms' Bible Study** Join us Thursday mornings at 9:30 am in the Chapel. We meet to share in the study of God's Word and a time of fellowship with moms. We continue our study of *Bless These Lips*. Childcare is provided. Our study concludes June 11.

## May Baptism Birthdays



one FAITH,  
one LORD,  
one BAPTISM.



# Epiphany Youth Group

## Youth Sunday

As I have continued to learn about Epiphany in the last six months, people young and old say that one of their favorite events of the entire year is Youth Sunday, because they get a chance to hear the Word from seniors who are graduating and headed off to new adventures, because the service is so full of energy, and because our youth are so gifted and Spirit-filled.

This year Youth Sunday will be May 3 at both services and we will hear sermons from Rachel Bracken, John Dietrick, Emma Sparks, and Emily Bartholomew. The youth has prepared special music and many songs that we typically sing during our Sunday youth gatherings in the Star Lodge. We are so looking forward to leading worship!

We hope the youth will please remember to stick around for a party in the Star Lodge on Youth Sunday, after the service with lunch and celebration!



## Graduation Party for Class of 2015

On Wednesday, June 3, we hope all seniors and their families will join EYG, grades 9-12 and Timothy Ministers at Scott, Laura, and John Deitrick's home, 9140 Covington Ridge Court, Mechanicsville, VA 23116. Supper will be grilled hamburgers and hotdogs. Drinks will also be provided. Timothy Ministers are invited to bring a side item to share.



# Community Service Ministry

---

## Habitat for Humanity Work Day, May 16

Our Spring 2015 work day for Habitat for Humanity is scheduled for May 16 in Ashland. We hope you can join us. We will have our specific assignment of jobs by May 11. You do not need to be skilled to work with us, but must be at least 16 years of age. Our work day begins at 8:30 AM at the site and continues until 2:00 PM. Carpooling will be available from the church.

If you are not able to work on the site, perhaps you can volunteer to provide lunch for our volunteers.

Sandwiches and cookies are prepared for our workers.

Sign up sheets are posted in the Commons.

As stated in the mission statement for Hanover Habitat for Humanity, “we are seeking to put God’s love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope!”

For additional information, please contact Marilyn Gloyer at [gloyerm@yahoo.com](mailto:gloyerm@yahoo.com) or 804-363-0196.

## HHOPE NEWS

### 5 Year Anniversary

HHOPE, Epiphany’s food pantry, is celebrating its fifth anniversary this month. With your help and support we have been able to provide food and non-food items to our guests the second and fourth Saturdays of each month for the last five years. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU for making this possible!

### Distribution Report

February 2015

26 households served

88 people (18 seniors, 40 adults, 30 children)

938 lbs. of food distributed

March 2015

32 households served

126 people (14 seniors, 57 adults, 55 children)

1,088 lbs. of food distributed

### Month of May/HHOPE Collection Month

During the month of May, the HHOPE ministry team will be collecting non-food items such as deodorant (for women and men), shampoo, toothpaste, liquid dishwashing detergent, clothes detergent, and soap. These items are offered to our guests on the “extra table” when we have them available and are very popular with our guests. In addition, we also provide diapers and baby wipes to our guests every distribution. We are currently in need of size 2, 3, 4 diapers, 4T-5T pull-ups, (Kroger’s brand is fine), and packages of baby wipes. On Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Sunday May 10<sup>th</sup>, members of the HHOPE ministry team will be handing out bags with a suggested list of items attached to them. As always we thank you for your continued support of this important ministry.



# Community Service Ministry

---

## CARITAS

Epiphany will be hosting 40 homeless women from May 30 until June 6. We will need substantial help from the congregation to help make these women feel welcome and safe. Please consider volunteering a couple hours of your time during this week. We have jobs for all kinds of talent and gifts. Options include making help with set up, making lunches, preparing and serving a meal, staying overnight, helping with towel laundry etc. This is a great way to meet others in our congregation and studies show that helping other increases happiness and your faith. Look for sign up sheets in the Commons. If you have any questions please call Kim Johnson at 282-1603 or Andrew Blair at 357-8567.

## LAMB's Basket

Epiphany delivered Easter Baskets to 97 young people in need of special care this Easter. Thanks to all who helped share the joy of Easter through coordinating, filling and delivering the baskets.



## EPIPHANY GARDEN BLESSING! May 3 @ 9:45 am

Join us for a Blessing of the Garden, (complete with a blessing of worms with the little children!!) at 10:00am on Sunday, May 3. Meet at gardenside. All Sunday Schools will begin at 10:00am to make this special event available for everyone to attend!

## Thank You

---

### Malaria Campaign-Nets for Nets

A huge thank you to everyone who came out to support the ELCA/VA synod's appeal to fight Malaria! We collected \$1568.75 that day with more pledged. That is over 150 malaria nets!! Thank you to all those we helped setup, take down, brought baked goods, helped with bake sale, announced, and all the other tasks that made it such an enjoyable event. It truly is amazing to me that God can work through a basketball hoop to help those in areas that are in desperate need. World Malaria Sunday is April 26 so there is still time to give. Again, thank you for being the face of Christ to others.



Thank you for your generous gift to Malaria Campaign at the end of this past year! Your gift allows for us to support dynamic projects that seek to educate and empower those most impacted by malaria across Africa. Thank you for your caring support and for responding to this important issue.

In Peace Kelly Merck at [www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria)

# Women's Ministry

---

## LADIES' SPRING LUNCHEON

JUNE 9 – 11 AM

Please join us for our annual meeting and luncheon  
and a special program

“WET AND WILD, attracting birds with water”  
Presented by Bob Schamerhorn

Box Lunch from Apple Spice Junction to include sandwich, chips,  
pickle, Frog Eye Salad and cookie - \$9

Choose your sandwich from these 4 options:

Office Favorite -13 Grain Bread – Roast beef, sliced turkey,  
ham and Swiss cheese w/side of signature sauce

Herb Roasted Chicken – Olive Oil & Herb Bread –

Herb marinated sliced chicken, Swiss cheese, pesto mayo on side

Egg Salad – Sourdough Bread – A great combo of egg salad, Swiss cheese and avocado

Vegetarian – Olive Oil & Herb Bread – Mushroom, tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado, peppers & sprouts,  
provolone & cheddar cheese w/pesto mayo on side



Indicate your choice of sandwich on your check. Your check is your reservation.

Make check out to WELCA and give to Tatter Hartmann or place in envelope on Women's section  
of bulletin board in Commons by June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

H.H.O.P.E. will be our charity recipient.

You may bring your donations of either canned food items or cash  
to the meeting.

## **ALL WOMEN OF EPIPHANY ARE INVITED**

### WELCA Circles Meet

**Margaret Miller Circle** Annual Pot Luck Luncheon May 12th 10:00 at Donna Josephson's., 804-883-5955.

**The Heidi Michaelson Circle** will meet at Tatter Hartmann's home on Thursday, May 14 at 6pm. If you are interested in joining this evening circle, please contact Tatter at 804-741-0276 or [tatterh@hotmail.com](mailto:tatterh@hotmail.com)





# Fellowship Ministry

---



## Beginning of Summer Picnic!!

Sunday 6/14      3:00 - whenever!

Dunncroft Park , 4901 Francistown Rd

Glen Allen, 23060

Bring your own meat to grill and a side dish OR dessert to share!

Games will be played, friends will be made and fun will be had!

Contact Marcie Perryman [m.perryman@yahoo.com](mailto:m.perryman@yahoo.com) or 270-0866 w/ questions.

---

## Memorial Day Weekend Youth and Family Camping Trip at Bear Creek Lake State Park May 22 – May 24



Thanks to the many of you who have signed up in the Commons. Now for the next step. Please send \$15 per person/night or \$30 for a family of 3-5/night to be paid to Hanne by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Or join us for the day on Saturday for meals, games, worship, and singing around the campfire!



# Opportunities to Serve

---

## Children's Worship Bags

**Time Commitment: 1-2hours/Season; 4 times/year for 2 years**

Our Children's Faith Formation Team is looking for someone to gather the worship bags (about 15 of them), remove (and purge, if needed) items from the previous season, and restock with items for the upcoming season (Supplies are provided).

There are 4 seasons:

(by Ash Wednesday ... in February or March, June 1, September 1, and December 1).

Contact Beth Barger if you are interested.

## HHOPE Shopping Assistants

**Time Commitment: 2hours/trip 1 trip/month for 1 year**

HHOPE is looking for someone to help our Food Bank shopper on Monday mornings. We end up putting so much in the cart that a second person is needed to help gather, load and unload the boxes.

Would you be willing and available to help on either the first, third, or fifth Monday of every month?

Meet at the church at 9:45am.

Ride over to CVFB together.

Load car with food.

Unload once you get back to the church.

You may not be needed every time, and we can switch things around if something comes up with your schedule.

Of course, if you'd like to go more than once a month, we can look into that, too.

Contact Beth Barger if you are interested.

---

**LAMB's Basket** -- Epiphany sends volunteers each month to the Community Food Pantry, located at **8419 Oakview Avenue**, near Staples Mill and Hermitage Roads. Contact Beth to volunteer or sign up in the Commons, and call the pantry at 565-8007 for additional information.

Epiphany's dates in May

May 13, Wednesday, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

May 19, Friday, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

# Notes to Know

---

## CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

President—Jim Yucha '16

Vice President— Stephanie Paget '17

Secretary—Matt Greenshields '17

Treasurer—Georgianna Hahn '16

## Council Members

Jim Johnson '16

Carole Alfriend '16

Joe Potter '17

Ramona Schaeffer '18

Lyle Gleason '18

## Baptism

April 26, 2015



## OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday 9 am-3:30 pm

Friday - 9 am—Noon



## CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – The Rev. Phillip W. Martin, Jr., [pastorphillip@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:pastorphillip@epiphanyelca.org)

Pastor – The Rev. Joseph L. Bolick, [pastorjoseph@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:pastorjoseph@epiphanyelca.org)

Diaconal Minister – Christine V. Huffman, [cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:cvanolinda@epiphanyelca.org)

Visitation Pastor – The Rev. Tom Bosserman, [pastortom@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:pastortom@epiphanyelca.org)

Director of Music Ministry – Kevin Barger, [kevinbarger@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:kevinbarger@epiphanyelca.org)

Administrative Assistant – Hanne Hamlin, [churchoffice@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:churchoffice@epiphanyelca.org)

Coordinator of Volunteers – Beth Barger, [bethbarger@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:bethbarger@epiphanyelca.org)

Youth Ministry Assistant – Mark Schuetze, [markschuetze@epiphanyelca.org](mailto:markschuetze@epiphanyelca.org)

## MEMBERS IN OUR PRAYERS

***During illness or recuperation*** ~ Mac Alfrend, Carl Erickson, Ed Frese, Dana Froom, Eleanor Gibbs, Teresa Gigante, Cheryl Hamm, Ron Hansen, Nancy Hartnett, Mary Lee Leigh, Bob Mason, Linda Reckenbeil, Joan Reynolds, Russell Reynolds, Brenda Swartz, Marv Ulmer, Charlotte Ulrich, Jane Vernon, Chick Walters, Eddie Westin and Dean Zellmer.

***For those serving in the Armed Forces*** ~

Please continue to keep all those serving our country to keep us safe and free, in your prayers.

***Family and Friends in our Prayers***

Sylvia Brown-Howard's son, Chad  
Joel and Carol McKean's son, James  
Bill Stafford's brother, John  
Florence Wingard's granddaughter, Heather

***For the families and friends of those who died*** ~

***Rest eternal grant them, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon them*** ~



Rainbow at church on Earth Day.  
God's promises...from the cross to the columbarium. Throw in a dogwood tree, too. From life to death and life again.  
God is good.

# From the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA

## Worship is the heart of all we do

### Given competition, is it ‘hub of our week, space of our regrouping’?

There is a Seattle-based caffeinated beverage company that goes to great lengths to provide excellent customer service. Its campaign is to make itself everyone’s “Third Place.” “First Place” is home, “Second Place” is work and “Third Place” is the local coffeehouse. There is meticulous training for employees, relentless market research and creative adaptability employed by the company to retain customers.

Employees practice the “hand-off plane” where they are taught to make eye contact when handing over the vente mocha latte to the customer. This is so the customer will have a transformative experience while sipping a cup of joe. And it works. In a letter to thank the staff a woman wrote: “You are the hub of our week, the space of our regrouping,” and she went on to describe a multigenerational, multicultural, multi-socioeconomic community where she and her family found comfort and a sense of belonging.

This is our competition.

We are church. At the heart of what we do is worship, and at the heart of our worship is the crucified and risen Christ. Everything else we do is formed, nourished, sustained and transformed by our life as a faith community gathered around word and sacrament, abiding in the love of God. Without this intentional, regular communion with God and each other it’s not possible for us to speak an authentic word of hope to a broken world — the world God so loves.

When we gather for worship we hear God’s word of promise; we confess our helplessness; receive forgiveness; we pray; and we welcome new brothers and sisters through baptism, promising to support them in their walk in faith. We are fed with the bread of life and receive our Lord poured out for us. And then we are sent back into the world. Worship is essential for the church’s life and service.

But how much attention do we pay to the preparation and execution of our corporate worship? Is it the “hub of our week, the space of our regrouping”? Do we expect to have a transformative experience? The Third Commandment (Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy) and Martin Luther’s explanation (We are to fear and love God so that we do not neglect his word and the preaching of it, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it) remind us that worship is central in the life of faith. Worship is not just another item on the list of programs and activities in a congregation. It is the heart.

Sometimes worship can become a sort of lived-in room — everything has become so familiar that we don’t notice the frayed furniture. What if we entered worship as if it were our first experience of it? What if we saw the congregation and the liturgy through the eyes of a guest? Is the building clean? Where is the real front door? Does anyone greet us? Is the bulletin easy to navigate? Where are the nursery and the restrooms? Are instructions for communion clear?

And what about the worship service itself? We are a liturgical church. There is a certain humility and beautiful communion in not trying to reinvent the service each time, but to join with brothers and sisters throughout the world and across the centuries. And please, please do not rewrite the creeds. It took the church a couple of centuries to come up with the Nicene Creed. Why do we think we can do better knocking it out on our laptop?

This has nothing to do with styles of music — there is a breadth of hymnody in Evangelical Lutheran Worship and related resources. Gospel, Bach, contemporary and world music are all powerful ways of hearing God’s word and singing praise. It’s good to be fluent in the musical vernacular of our communities and to try those of others.

Most of all we should come to worship expecting to be changed. We are touching, tasting, feeling, hearing and seeing the one who knows us and loves us completely. Our lives are restored. We are set free. Fed for the journey we are set loose to go in peace and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton





# Epiphany Youth Group

Dear Youth and Parents,

We hope you're getting excited about the National Youth Gathering!

To help our group have the best possible experience, we are offering 4 "getting ready" gatherings for those youth who will be going to Detroit in July.



These 4 getting ready gatherings will be Bible studies and a time of preparing for what we'll see and experience in Detroit. Everyone may not be able to attend every session, but we hope that you can attend as many as possible. I have taken three groups of youth to three different National Youth Gatherings and have always felt that doing the foundational, getting ready work helps focus the group and enables us to get the most out of the week.

There were slightly more responses in favor of our four "getting ready" gatherings happening right after worship so these events will happen on four Sunday afternoons from 12-2pm.

Sunday, May 31

Sunday, June 7

Sunday, June 28

Sunday, July 12

Please bring 5 bucks as you are able to help cover the cost. We would love parents to attend the first meeting (where we'll be talking some about the logistics of the trip) and invite you to attend all the rest of the sessions as well (but there's no need for you to)

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1400 Horsepen Road  
Monument Ave. at Horsepen Road  
Richmond, VA 23226  
Phone: 804-282-6066  
Fax: 804-282-6067  
www.epiphanyelca.org

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. Postage Pd.  
Richmond, VA  
Permit # 711



*a congregation of the ELCA*

### **Worship Times**

**Sunday 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.**

**(May 24-September 6,  
8:30 and 10:30am)**

**Wednesday Healing/Holy  
Communion 11:00 a.m.**



**[www.facebook.com/EpiphanyLutheranRVA](https://www.facebook.com/EpiphanyLutheranRVA)**

**Follow us on Twitter! @EpiphanyELCA**

### **From The Archives**

**May 15, 1951** - the Rev. Peter C. Schroeder, retired army chaplain, assumed duties as mission developer in Richmond, Virginia for the West End Chapel (later to be named Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church).

**Audio recordings of sermons** can be located on our website from our main page "For sermons, click here". Links to the pastors' sermon blogs may also be found there.