

# Amaz<sup>ing</sup>!News

JANUARY // 2022



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM ZOAR LUTHERAN CHURCH | [WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM](http://WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM)

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## Feeding and Being Fed

BY KIMBERLY KNOWLE-ZELLER

*While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body' (Matthew 26:26).*

When I worked at an ELCA congregation, one of my favorite things to do was gather the children preparing for first communion and bake bread with them. We'd pour the ingredients, mix the flour, stir and bake. All the while we'd talk about communion: what it means, why we use bread and wine, what happens at the communion table, what words are shared and any other questions that arose.

Communion is a very tangible sacrament. We touch and taste, we hear the words "given for you" and "shed for you," and we see others receiving the same gifts. Much like group bread-baking, it's a community experience.

received bread and wine in worship. But that doesn't mean my husband and I don't talk about this sacrament with them. We tell them that, at its heart, communion invites God's people to be fed and to then go out and feed others.

When we gather at the Lord's table, we're reminded that there is always enough to share—grace, forgiveness, love—and that God desires a world where all are fed. Children can understand this concept whether or not they've taken communion.

This month, be intentional about how you gather around food. Any time we share food with our family is an opportunity to tell the story of God feeding God's people! Say a prayer for the people who provided the food, remember who made it and bless those hands. Take some time, too, to talk about how to share your food and feed others.

This article first appeared at [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org) on November 9, 2021. Length modified to fit page. Reprinted with permission. © ELCA.



# U.S. TORNA DOES DISASTER RELIEF

On the night of December 10, a devastating outbreak of more than 30 tornadoes swept through six states. Kentucky was impacted the most, with more than 70 people reported dead. Homes and businesses were destroyed, including a candle factory in Mayfield, Ky., where first responders are still searching for survivors. More than 330,000 people are without electricity across multiple states. The full extent of the damage is expected to become clear in the coming days.

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with partners in the affected areas, including the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, to respond to immediate needs. Given the initial damage assessments, recovery will likely take years, and Lutheran Disaster Response is prepared to accompany survivors until the response is complete.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response designated for "U.S. tornadoes" will be used entirely (100%) to assist those affected by tornadoes until the response is complete. Together, we can support those who are on the long road to recovery. Please give today.

*This article first appeared at [elca.org](https://elca.org) on December 12, 2021.*

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## WAYS TO GIVE:

### BY MAIL

Make checks payable to  
**Lutheran Disaster Response**  
Write "**U.S. Tornadoes**" on your  
check's memo line and send to:

Evangelical Lutheran Church  
in America  
ELCA Gift Processing Center  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

### BY PHONE

Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation  
with a credit card. Operators are ready  
to assist you Monday through Friday,  
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Central Time.

### ONLINE

Visit <https://community.elca.org/USTornadoRelief> enter in donation  
amount and designate to  
Tornadoes-United States.

## MORE WAYS TO GIVE

Become a monthly donor, make a planned gift,  
and more. Learn more at <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Ways-to-Give>





from  
**Pastor Paul**  
 Senior Pastor  
[pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:pastorpaul@zoarlutheran.com)

25 Now to the one who is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages, 26 but now made manifest and known through the writings of the prophets according to the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever, Amen. (Romans 16:25-27).

After the whole of arguably Paul's most theological epistle, the one which awoke in Martin Luther the understanding of the gift of God's grace and the understanding of simul justus et peccator (at the same time saint and sinner), Paul ends Romans not with a greeting or benediction he often uses to close; rather, Paul ends with a doxology, shouting Glory to God. And not just any god, but ...God! God revealed through the prophets; God who is the only true source of wisdom; God made known through the Gospel and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

And why, does Paul suggest, God has gone through all this effort? Why has God sent prophets to reveal mysteries, inspired the scriptures, and blessed the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ? For the sake of those who didn't even know what they were missing! For the Gentiles, all those of us who don't have a four millennia long relationship with the Author of the Universe. People who were so outside the relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the early church had to have a long discussion, argument, and prayer meeting just to decide whether it was even possible for them to become Christians!

And yet as we move from the time of Christmas to the time of Epiphany, the season of the light of Christ becoming manifest or made known, we begin on January 6th with Gentiles, the magi. After the night of the shepherds, almost no one saw Jesus for who he was, but these Gentile wise men saw signs in the heavens so compelling that they journeyed for long months to come worship the child-king. These magi who were foreigners from distant lands

impossibly recognized the importance of who Jesus was and that his life impacted them and the whole world. To quote one of my favorite movies, *The Princess Bride*, "Inconceivable!"

So through God, the impossible becomes possible; through the loving kindness of God, Christ is born, grows, teaches, does signs and wonders, suffers, dies, and rises again. So that not only those looking to the Lord for redemption might find it, but even those so far from faith that it was nearly inconceivable that they (we) could be welcomed into the fellowship of the faithful might find that same redemption. So to Rome, the heart of all things furthest from God's people, Paul echoes the words of the Christmas angels who brought the first Good News of great joy to the shepherd outsiders, Glory to God. Glory to God, the exile is ended. Glory to God who inspires faithful responses from the most unlikely corners. Glory to God who is Lord of all, now and forever.

Peace, Pastor Paul

**Think of us in this way,  
 as servants of Christ  
 and stewards of God's  
 mysteries.  
 1 Corinthians 4:1**

# JANUARY YOUTH UPDATE

**January 2** – 5th/6th Grade Epiphany Party! 4-5 PM

**January 9** – Mandatory Youth Gathering Meeting #2 3-4 PM  
7th-12th Grade Youth Group 4-5 PM Epiphany Party!

**January 16** – 5th/6th Grade Youth Group 4-5 PM Game Night!

**January 23** – 7th-12th Grade Youth Group Kickball Night 4 PM

**January 30** – Ice Skating at BGSU (5th-12th Grade) - Time TBA

## Changes to Youth Group in 2022

Youth group will be changing slightly starting in January of 2022! Starting January 2nd 5th/6th grade youth group will take place on the first and third Sundays of each month and 7th-12th on the second and fourth Sundays. On months with five Sundays a 5-12th Grade event will be held for all youth in those grades starting with Ice Skating at BGSU on January 30th! Youth are asked to RSVP before these dates by using the sign ups provided. FRIENDS are always welcome! Bring a friend along with you! Just make sure to sign them up so Amanda can plan accordingly. We can't wait to start a new year of fun!

## Epiphany Party

Join us for an afternoon of games, devotion and a gift exchange. Attendees are asked to bring a small wrapped item for a holiday gift exchange (\$5 or less). Come and celebrate the holiday season! **Take note: 5th/6th Grade Party - January 2nd and 7-12th Grade Party - January 9th**

## Mandatory Youth Gathering Prep Meeting Session #2

All youth attending the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering with Zoar are **REQUIRED** to attend Youth Gathering Preparation Sessions. Session #2 will be

**Sunday, January 9th from 3-4 PM.** We can't wait to continue working towards our journey to Minneapolis!

## 5th/6th Grade Game Night

Join us for a night of games and devotion: Sardines & MORE!

**January 16th at 4 PM!**

## Kickball

7th-12th grade youth are invited to join in an afternoon of competitive fun! Form a team, bring your friends and play some kickball! Team Sign up is required! See your weekly youth update for information on how to sign up! **Sunday, January 23**

## Ice Skating

All Youth (5th-12th) are invited to join us for an afternoon of Ice Skating at BGSU!

**Sunday, January 30 TIME: TBA** Watch for updates in your weekly youth update.



from  
**Amanda**  
**Director of Youth Ministries**  
ahoyles@zoarlutheran.com

Greetings Zoar Family and Friends, Happy New Year! May 2022 be filled with blessings, abundant love and joy for you all! I cannot wait to see what the year has in store for all of us!

I am most excited to travel to Minneapolis with our youth in July for the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering, to join our children and families in a fun week of Vacation Bible School and so much more!

We have so many things to be grateful for and so many exciting opportunities to grow in faith together! Let us carry this joy and hope of today, throughout the new year.

Love & Peace,  
Amanda Hoyles

# WORSHIP IN JANUARY

The following synopses and provocations have been adapted from our online resources (Sundays and Seasons.org) and the writings of Gail Ramshaw.

## JANUARY 2, CHRISTMAS II: A LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS

The Lectionary maintains the medieval idea that Christmas lasts twelve days. Christmas is not over yet—Christ is born in the hearts of believers each day. The promise that hope comes to us this day is reaffirmed in the Gospel of John. Hope comes not in the form of an infant as on Christmas Eve but in the form of light. We celebrate the radiant light that cuts through the darkness of this world and shines into our shadow-filled lives. It is the light of the holy presence of Christ in times of confusion and despair. It is the light of grace and truth shining into lives young or old, rich or poor, broken or whole. Merry Christmas!

## JANUARY 9, BAPTISM OF OUR LORD: THE VOICE OF GOD

Listen! God's voice comes from heaven to call us by name, speak to the earth, shake the wilderness, and to anoint "the Beloved." Listen! God's people speak words of covenant, commitment, and community in the liturgy of baptism. Listen! God's word surrounds this day with power and majesty and "in the temple of the Lord all are crying, 'Glory!'" (Ps. 29:9). In this season of epiphanies, today's miraculous encounter with the living God immerses us in the sound of God's voice and bathes us in God's baptismal promise. All who are splashed by this water gasp, cry, exclaim, sigh, and sing. Let all who have breath, praise the Lord!

## JANUARY 16, SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY: TALK ABOUT VARIETY!

First wise men from the east, then a dove from heaven and the voice of God, and now water into wine—all pointing to the glory and wonder of God-made-flesh. Just as we have been created and blessed with varieties of gifts, services, and activities, so too has God created and blessed us with varieties of epiphanies throughout human history. In our world that so often relies on an us-versus-them mentality, do we see the rich tapestry of differences as part of God's glory? Will we be able to look past our comfort zone, and familiarities to see the glorious diversity of God's revelation?

## JANUARY 23, THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY: LIVING "WORDS WITH FRIENDS"

Jesus reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus announces good news to those struggling economically, hope to those who are imprisoned, healing to those without sight, a lifting of the burden from those who are weighed down or oppressed, and even the in-breaking of a holy year of favor. Standing in a tradition of prophets and priests who speak, engage, and teach God's word, Jesus now offers one thing more—fulfillment. Let us take this as an opportunity to ground ourselves in the one Word that bears life. This Word offers us an invitation to see God at work among God's people.

## JANUARY 31– FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPHIPANY: CALLED TO DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

Jesus reads from the scriptures and is the talk of the town. At first, Jesus is seen as the hometown boy made good. Then something changes. Is it the mention of Jesus being the son of a local carpenter, Joseph? A little later Jesus angers the crowd and is driven to a cliff and probable death. What does it mean for this hometown boy to create a domestic, and more to the point, a holy disturbance? God's vision is certainly a challenge, and now Jesus, with the words of the prophets, is unleashing a disturbance in the domestic, tamed, controlled ways of the world. Today, we sense a call or mission that, even in the midst of danger makes us wonder: "Where is God calling us?"



from  
**Omaldo**  
Cantor

[operez@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:operez@zoarlutheran.com)

If we are anything alike, you may feel the strange and alluring power of the chronological "changing of the guard," the peculiar combination of feelings that comes with the passing of the old year into the new. It is as if we could sense ourselves stepping into the void of the future. Perhaps we are full of hope or feel with a mixture of joy and trepidation, but always in the context of deliberate reflection: we sum up past experiences, bid farewell to those we have lost, and commit ourselves to old friendships while making plans and resolutions.

And yet, the sun rises every day, offering us new opportunities. As Martin Luther would remind us, we remember our baptism every time we wash our faces and thus are strengthened by the covenant of companionship God has established.

Trusting in God's grace, I invite you to read the last lines of the poem "New Year's Morning," where Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885) elaborates on the idea that every day is full of Possibility:

Always a night from old to new!  
Night and the healing balm of sleep!  
Each morn is New Year's morn come true,  
Morn of a festival to keep.  
All nights are sacred nights to make  
Confession and resolve and prayer;  
All days are sacred days to wake  
New gladness in the sunny air.  
Only a night from old to new;  
Only a sleep from night to morn.  
The new is but the old come true;  
Each sunrise sees a new year born.

Peace and Joy,  
Omaldo



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Page 8: Paschal Debrunner via Unsplash

# WE WISHTO THANK OUR SPONSORS

Would you like to place a birthday announcement, congratulatory message, or advertisement in the Zoar monthly newsletter? Send an email to [communications@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:communications@zoarlutheran.com) for pricing and availability.

Deadline is the 2nd of the preceding month!

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**CURRENT RESIDENT OR:**

Pr. Paul Reichert  
Senior Pastor

Worship Times:  
Saturday: 6 PM  
Sunday: 8:30 & 11 AM  
Sunday School: 9:45 AM

*Be*  
**AmaZed!**



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In the same way, let your light shine  
before others, so that they may see  
your good works and give glory to  
your Father in heaven.

— Matthew 5:16

