



# The Mountain Top Echo

Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church, Byron MN

## Reaching Out ... Sharing Christ      January 2025

### *Living Under God's Grace of Time*

***Living Under God's Grace...*** We are now entering a new year, 2024 is turning into 2025. It is a year that will be in some respects the same as the old one, and in other respects, will not. There will be triumphs and defeats, joys and sorrows, satisfaction and disappointment. There will be all these types of experiences and many more. For it will be a year like no other. It will be a year to enjoy all those new adventures that God has planned for us. It will be a year that we will never forget. Yet it will be a year that will see and live with God's grace. Are you ready?

***Living Under God's Grace of Time....*** We are now entering a new year, 2025. It will be a year that we experience many things from birth to death and everything in between. We will encounter the good and healthy times as well as those times when things and life are not doing so well. We will have the joyful times when a new grandchild enters one's life as well as sorrow when a spouse, child, grandchild or parent is summoned home by a loving God. We will face those experiences yet unseen, but never alone. Our graceful God has told us in His Word that He will always be with us: ***"fear not, for I am with you;" (Isaiah 40:10)***. He will bless us with His presence as we seek shelter from the stormy blast of trials, temptations, and tribulations.

***Living Under God's Grace...*** yes, we are entering a new year, 2025. A year that will behold God's grace and mercy as He shines in our lives, in all that we accomplish, in all that we do in life, in all that we say to one another. The hymn writer, Isaac Watts put it so appropriately when he penned these words: ***"Our God, our Help in ages past, our hope for years to come, pour shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home!" (LSB 733)***. This hymn was written about 1714, not long before Queen Anne's death, when all of England was anxious about her probable successor. We have experienced much turmoil in our country for last few years before, during, and after elections. We have experienced different emotions in our personal lives as we encounter different and difficult times with death and dying and all other sorts of emotions during the holidays. Our Lord is informing each of us that He is our Help, He is our Shelter, He is our Hope, not only today, but every day of our lives.

***Living Under God's Grace...*** yes, we are entering a new year, 2025. Even though it will be a year that will be filled with many new and different things for all of us, we will not be alone. We enter this new year differently from each other. Some will enter this new year with apprehension, some others with anxiety and worry, while still others will enter this new year, just like years previously, whatever happens, happens. However, as we enter this new year, we enter as children of God who are filled with His love, hope, joy, and peace in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. May this God of hope fill you with His grace and love this day and always as you experience all that this life and year may hold for you.

The Lord's peace be with you all  
Pastor Fiege





## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship) Newsletter Article – **January 2025**

### Repenting of “Feasts that Know No Fast”

Fresh off the Christmas season and the retail frenzy that accompanies it, January brings a shot of frigid air into the lives of the people we know and love. This is not a meteorological statement either. While it is true that January is one of the colder months for those in North America, the cold front blast that hits us is the full force of credit card spending that fueled the retail frenzy. The bills for the gifts, the parties, the food and the travel have now come due. The credit card makes things convenient, but it also requires more discipline than many can muster. When the bills come in January for December’s celebration, it really puts a damper on things.

Congregations often make the same mistake in stewardship. We often charge forward in doing what we always do or starting new endeavors without counting the cost. But at the end of the month, or the end of year, when the bill comes due, the red ink on the congregational balance sheet smacks the people in the face like a stiff north wind in January. We hunkered down. We circle the wagons. We start to panic. The work of the Gospel suffers.

The fifth verse of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) addresses this January situation. The words penned by William Watkins Reid are very needful for us to hear as we start a new year, while dealing with the bills of past efforts and expense.

“Forgive us, Lord for feast that knows not fast ...” This hits us hard, doesn’t it? We love when the money is flowing, the parties are going, and things are getting bigger and better. But there is a time in life, and most especially in our spiritual disciplines, that we need to fast. The purpose of a fast is to step back, lay something aside for a time, and replace it with meditation on Scripture and prayer. This is designed to keep us from turning something that may well be good into an idol that separates us from the God who loves us in Christ.

“For joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul ...” In “The Parable of the Sower,” we hear Jesus talk about how the worries and cares of life choke out the growth of the seed of the Word that was planted. We know how this happens in our lives. Professional and youth sports do this. Materialism does this. Travel and leisure and do this. There is a list of things that we enjoy that starve the soul.

But it also happens in our congregations. When corporate stewardship is not managed in a responsible way, it can and does destroy individual stewardship. Is it good individual stewardship to support a ministry that doesn’t take its corporate responsibility seriously?

“For walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the Kingdom goal.” This is the ultimate end of the idolatry of failed stewardship. We build walls between believers within the church and hamper those who are outside from coming to the Light of Life that is Jesus. The wars we fight over money and its impact on ministry do the same. It eventually blurs our vision of what we are here to do: share the Good News of Jesus. When the wintry blast of January hits us in this fashion, we are called to repent.

When the Holy Spirit uses the cold front of the call to repentance, we meet the God who forgives and restores. That is what He does for individual and corporate stewards. When the bills hit, they call us back to Jesus. He is the One who indeed forgives us our shallow thankfulness and leads us into the bounty of His mercy yet again.



**Electronic Giving:** Our church invites you to consider our electronic giving program as a way to automate your regular weekly offerings. Electronic giving is convenient for you and provides much needed consistency for our church. If you are interested in participating in this program, speak with financial secretary, Tammy Vosberg. You may also contact Tammy with any questions at 507- 289-2850 or via email at dtvosberg@gmail.com



The next **LWML meeting** will be announced at a later date.



**Prayer Chain:** Ardi Gibbs is our Prayer Chain Leader. Please contact Ardi with your prayer requests or if you would like to join the prayer chain team. (507) 254-6564 / [ardig775@gmail.com](mailto:ardig775@gmail.com)

## JANUARY Birthdays

## JANUARY Anniversaries

Kaleb Klepel	January 5
Keith Richardson	January 6
Jackie Richardson	January 8
Dennis Karst	January 9

No January Anniversaries!

### Another year for God

Another year is dawning; dear Father, let it be,  
in working or in waiting, another year with thee...

Another year of progress, another year of praise,  
another year of proving thy presence all the days.

Another year of service, of witness for thy love;  
another year of training for holier work above.

Another year is dawning! Dear Father, let it be,  
on earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee.

—Frances Ridley Havergal

### Fun Fact

January is named after Janus, the ancient Roman god of gates and doors symbolizing endings, beginnings, and transitions. He's depicted with two heads: one head looking at the past and the other at the future.



### Special dates

- New Year's Day, *January 1, 2025*
- Epiphany, *January 6, 2025*
- Baptism of the Lord, *January 12, 2025*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, *January 20, 2025*
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, *January 18-25, 2025*



The Memorial Service for **Arleen Holey** will be at Mt. Moriah on Saturday, January 18, 2025. More specific info will follow.



### Leave the light on

“We’ll leave the light on for you,” a motel chain once promised. In other words, they were expecting you and looking forward to your stay.

During the time of the high priest Eli, “the lamp of God had not yet gone out” (1 Samuel 3:3). Eli oversaw the tabernacle, so some people say this refers to an actual lamp. But the passage could have a deeper meaning. Although Eli had turned a blind eye to his sons’ sins and neglected his duties, God knew that Eli could still be a divine instrument. God knew not to turn off Eli’s light. God was expecting Eli to still shine brightly for him, and eventually Eli figured out that Samuel, his young charge, was hearing God’s voice.

So if your light seems dim or even burned out, be assured that your pilot light remains on! God has left the light on not just *for* you but also *in* you.

—Julie Lee

### MLK on What Really Matters

Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.”

Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”



Date to put on your calendar – Feb 2 –  
Potluck and game day after church; more info to come.



Worship Assistant Schedule for January 2025	Altar Guild for Month of January – Kim Amundson
<b>1/5/2025 – 2nd Sun. after Christmas</b> Worship w/Communion - 10:00 a.m. <b>Pastor Fiege</b>	<b>Elder</b> – Shane Amundson <b>Reader</b> – Kristie Hahn <b>Music</b> – Ruth Benning
<b>1/12/2025 – Baptism of Our Lord</b> Worship – 10:00 a.m. <b>Pastor Fiege</b>	<b>Elder</b> – Don Vosberg <b>Reader</b> – Dave Welsh <b>Music</b> – Margaret Karst
<b>1/19/2025 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. after the Epiphany</b> Worship w/Communion – 10:00 a.m. <b>Pastor Fiege</b>	<b>Elder</b> – Brant Klepel <b>Reader</b> -- Kristie Hahn <b>Music</b> – Dave Welsh
<b>1/26/2025 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. after the Epiphany</b> Worship – 10:00 a.m. <b>Pastor Stam</b>	<b>Elder</b> – Don Vosberg <b>Reader</b> – Dave Welsh <b>Music</b> – Margaret Karst

Feast of the Epiphany

# Epiphany Crossword

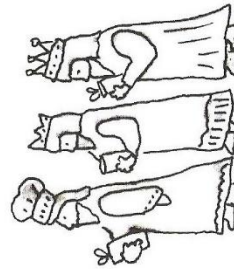
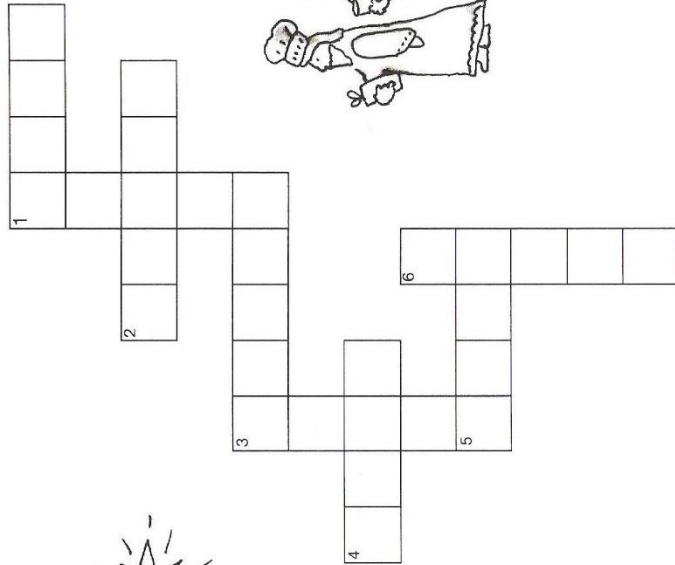
Test yourself by trying to do this crossword on your own. See how much you know about the story of the three wise men. If you have trouble with any of the answers, read Matthew 2:1-12 with a family member.

**Across**

- Another name for the three wise men.
- The jealous king who reigned at the time of Jesus' birth.
- Bethlehem is in the land of \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Magi came from the \_\_\_\_\_.
- They followed the \_\_\_\_\_ not to return to Herod.

**Down**

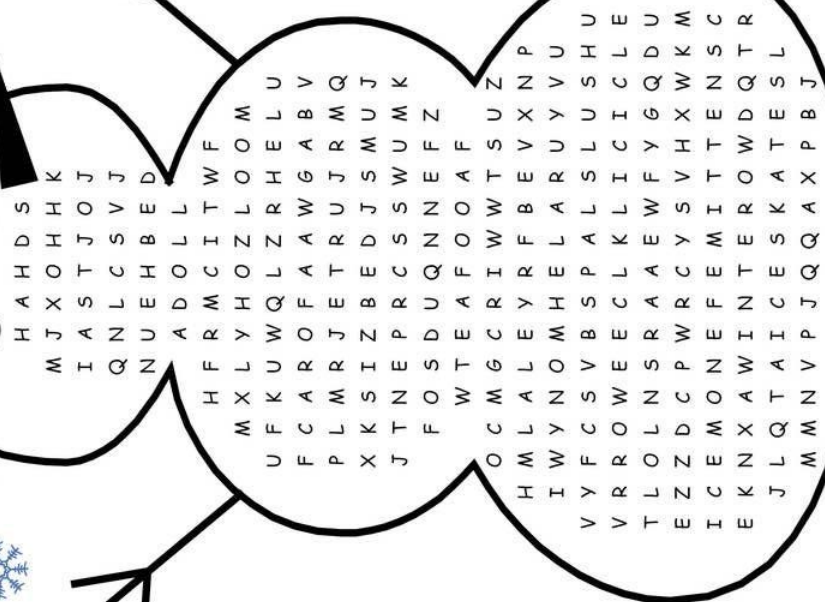
- The three kings gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and \_\_\_\_\_.



# Let it snow!



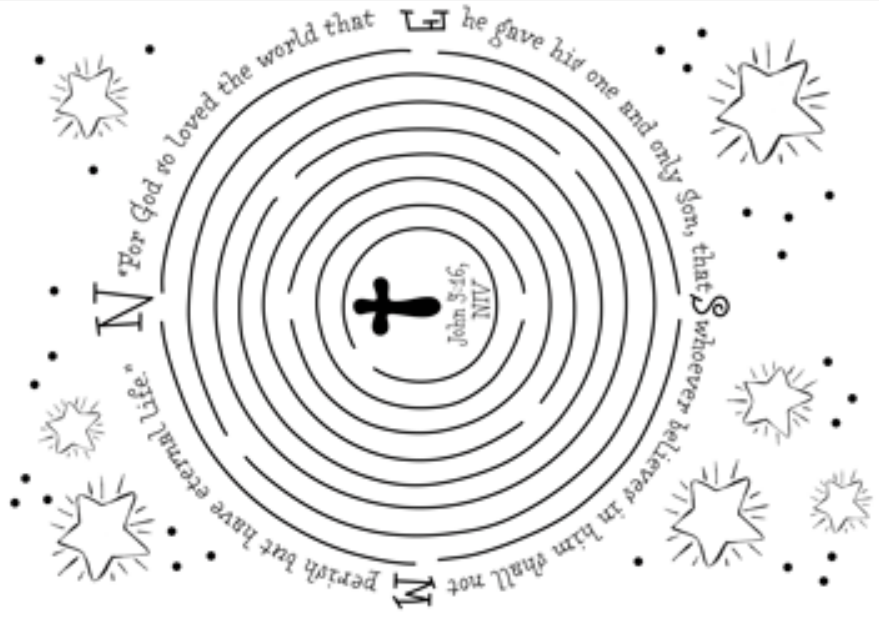
- BLIZZARD
- COAT
- COLD
- DECEMBER
- E ARMUFFS
- FEBRUARY
- FIREPLACE
- FLURRIES
- FROZEN
- GLOVES
- HOT CHOCOLATE
- ICE
- ICE SKATES
- ICICLE
- JANUARY
- MITTENS
- SCARF
- SHOVEL
- SLED
- SLUSH
- SNOWBALL
- SNOWFLAKE
- SNOWMAN
- SWEATER
- WINTER





# Puzzle!

Complete the maze to help people from all directions hear the good news. Then, starting at the N (north) and going clockwise, read John 3:16, NIV.



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