

Mt. Hebron Lutheran Church

February 2025

A note from the Pastor:

This month, we get to observe one of the more obscure festivals on our liturgical calendar. The Presentation of our Lord is celebrated every year on February 2nd, but it usually does not fall on a Sunday. Sadly, it is also overshadowed (pun intended) by a certain rodent who gets pulled out of the ground every year on the same day...

This festival commemorates the story told in Luke 2:22-40, where Mary and Joseph take baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem on the fortieth day from his birth. (Counting December 25th as day one, February 2nd is the fortieth day from Christmas.) The purpose is twofold: for Mary to make an offering for her purification post-childbirth, and for Jesus to be presented to God (and redeemed, or bought back), since he is a firstborn son. While there, they are met by two prophets, Simeon and Anna, who both have some startling things to say about Jesus: he represents God's salvation (verse 30), he is a light for revelation to gentiles and for glory to Israel (vs. 32), and in him there is hope for the redemption of Jerusalem (vs. 38).

But in the midst of all these hope-filled pronouncements, there is also an undercurrent of sadness. Simeon does not mince his words when he says to Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too." (vs. 34-35) In other words, even though the birth of this child is undeniably good news, that doesn't mean there will be a sudden end to all strife.

That's the way it works. Hope comes in the midst of sadness. Light shines in the midst of darkness. The stars in the sky are most visible in the pitch black of night, their bright light travelling for billions – or even trillions – of miles before they reach our eyes. The faint glimmering of the stars doesn't make the sky any less dark, but we can trust that the stars will be there nevertheless.

As Mary and Joseph enter the Temple, Simeon and Anna see a faint glimmering of hope for the human race: a tiny, six-week-old baby. How could such hope come from someone that seems so small and insignificant? And yet in the midst of a dark world lived under the oppressive thumb of the Roman Empire, drawing nearer to their own impending deaths, and facing the inevitable division and grief that this child will bring... Simeon and Anna have *hope*. Hope in God's promises. Hope in God's goodness. Hope in the redemption of all things.

Dear friends, let us hold fast to this same hope. And whenever life seems like nothing but gloom and doom, remember the Christ child. Remember what he came to do. Remember how deep God's love is for you, and for all humanity. That is most definitely cause for hope.

-Pastor Christopher

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



On Sunday, January 5th, Mt Hebron officially installed our new members of council: Amy Harman, Cathy Lindler, and Adam Shealy.

Thank you for your willingness to serve! Please join us as we pray for all members of our church council as they make decisions for the church throughout the coming year.

YOUTH GROUP



On Wednesday, January 29th, we held the first youth gathering of 2025! Students had a fun time learning more about discussing Jonah in our Bible study, eating snacks, playing games, and enjoying some fellowship.

The youth will continue to meet the fourth Wednesday of every month. All youth are welcome! Our next gathering will be Wednesday, February 26th at 5:00pm. Bring a friend!

Catechism class will meet February 2nd and 16th at 9:00am in the music room.

Church council will meet Sunday, February 9th at 8:30am.

WELCA will meet Thursday, February 20th at 6:00pm. All women are welcome!

Shrove Tuesday pancake supper will be Tuesday, March 4th. Stay tuned for more details!

Ash Wednesday worship service will be Wednesday, March 5th. Stay tuned for more details!



The Lutheran Men in Mission of Mt. Hebron met Sunday, January 19th at 8:30am. Breakfast casserole, grits, cinnamon rolls, and drinks were provided by Billy Derrick. Kevin Shealy led a time of devotion based on 1 Samuel 3:1-10, the calling of Samuel – Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved, and \$105 in dues were collected. Billy Derrick and Evan Derrick recently attended the 1st quarter meeting of the Western Conference of the LMM, and they provided a summary to the group. Plans were finalized for the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, which will take place Tuesday, March 4th. A love offering will be collected that night for the Circle Fire Department.

The next 5th Sunday breakfast will be March 30th. LMM plans to provide breakfast during the Sunday School hour.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be Sunday, March 16th at 8:30am.

AMEN FOR LUTHERAN MEN!

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Kellen Shealy is the son of Kevin and Carlin Shealy, and brother to Caleb. He has been a member of Mt. Hebron for all seven years of his life. He was born in this church, and all of his family goes to church here.

A special memory of his is the first time he got to serve as acolyte last year. Not only does he continue to serve in that role, but he also read one of the readings at the Christmas Eve service, and he helps bring up the offering from time to time. Kellen says his favorite part of the service is the final hymn, because that's when he gets to go put out the candles!

During the week, Kellen attends school as a second grader at Batesburg-Leesville Primary School. In his spare time, Kellen likes to ride the side by side, watch TV, and play baseball. Something interesting you may not know about him is that he loves turtles!

We are blessed to have Kellen as a part of this congregation, and excited to see how the Holy Spirit will continue to work in his life!

CHURCH HISTORY FROM A TO Z

B is for Bible, Christianity's holy book (from Greek *biblion*, meaning "book" or "scroll"). The Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament, written in Hebrew, tells the history of God's chosen people. It reached its final form a few centuries before Christ. The New Testament, written in Greek, begins with Jesus's birth. It reached its final form around the end of the 1st century. Many authors and editors contributed to the final form of the Bible as we know it.

B is for Bethlehem, a town in Israel six miles south of the capital Jerusalem. The name means "house of bread" in Hebrew. In Genesis, it is where Jacob buried his wife Rachel. The story of Ruth takes place in and around Bethlehem. It was the hometown of King David, and the prophet Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born there (Micah 5:2). Accordingly, the gospel writers Matthew and Luke record it as the birthplace of Jesus.

B is for baptism, a cleansing rite involving water. Since ancient times, Jews have used baths called *mikveh* to achieve ritual purity. This may be the origin of the rite of baptism. John the Baptist called people to be baptized in the Jordan River, in preparation for Jesus, as a sign of repentance. Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:20). New Christians are still baptized today, although various denominations differ regarding when is the appropriate age.

B is for bishop, a title given to certain leaders who hold a position of authority within the church. The bishop holds the highest office within their area of jurisdiction, and so has responsibility for all the other pastors or priests, congregations, and church members in that area. Some strands of Christianity are still organized around bishops (like the Catholic Church and the ELCA), while others are not. The bishop of the SC Synod is Rev. Virginia Aebischer, and the bishop of the entire ELCA is Rev. Elizabeth Eaton.



Bishop Aebischer (left) and Bishop Eaton (right)

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Memory Verse of the Month

Let's memorize scripture together!
Take time this month to memorize
the following verse:

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?"*

-Micah 6:8

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for Frances Shealy as she faces several health issues, and Jenny Brantley as she faithfully tends to her mother.

Pray for church leaders - congregational officers, council members, pastors, deacons, bishops, and others - as they seek to walk in the ways of Jesus.

During this time of year when there is much sickness going around, pray for healing for those who are sick, and that all would stay well and healthy.

Pray for the new administration in our nation's capital. Pray that our leaders would be guided by the Holy Spirit to serve all those in need.

Pray for those in long-term care facilities, their family and friends, and their caregivers, that each individual would feel your powerful presence supporting them.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2/3 - Myer Shealy
2/7 - Mildred Derrick
2/9 - Christopher Shealy
2/10 - Avery Worthy
2/11 - Elaine Derrick
2/12 - Megan Kneece
2/14 - Kay Oxner
2/17 - Garrett Barr

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

2/12 - Clay and Andrea Derrick

FEBRUARY HELPERS

Greeters / Ushers

Clay Derrick and Jim Worthy

Lectors

2/2 - Ethan Barr
2/9 - Glenn Harman
2/16 - Wade Oxner II
2/23 - Elaine Derrick

Tabulators

Cathy Lindler and Carlin Shealy
Alternate: Amy Harman

Altar Guild

Barbara Oxner and Laiken Brock

Acolytes

2/2 - Kellen Shealy
2/9 - Matthew Leaphart
2/16 - Ahyler Derrick
2/23 - Atley Derrick

Crucifers

2/2 - Ahyler Derrick

Torchbearers

2/5 - Garrett Barr and Matthew Leaphart

Flowers

2/2 - Christopher and Sarah Shealy
2/9 - Billy and Beth Derrick
2/16 - The Lindlers
2/23 - OPEN

Nursery

2/2 - Carlin Shealy and Sarah Shealy
2/9 - Benji Leaphart and Heather Worthy
2/16 - Amy Harman and Farrah Leaphart
2/23 - Denise Derrick and Kristin Derrick

Contact Pastor Christopher!

If you have a prayer request, questions, or would like to speak with our pastor, you can reach him at:

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