



# The Jewels

January 2019

A publication of Crown of Life Lutheran Church, Sun City West, AZ

## Installation of Officers

On the weekend of January 5 & 6, the elected and appointed officers of our boards, committees, and organizations will all be recognized and installed into service for the year 2019. The Installation will take place at each of the three services and will include officers and leaders of our boards and Church Council, our auxiliary organizations and committees, and our care ministries.

Crown of Life is incredibly blessed with many talented men and women who have set aside a significant amount of their time and energy in providing the outstanding leadership Crown of Life has come to enjoy. We praise God for these people, and indeed do ask God's guidance and blessing on them.

## Worship Schedule

January through April

Saturday – 4:00 PM  
Sunday – 8:00 & 10:30 AM

## Don't miss Shroud Encounter!

January 20  
1:00 PM

*Presented by International Expert  
Russ Breault*

## Januarius! by Pastor Phill, Sr. Pastor

So, welcome to January, 2019. We take our calendar for granted, even though it seems to run so fast we can't keep up, because the calendar has always looked the way it does today ... Or has it?

Before Jesus' time, in the Roman calendar, Marcius was the first month of the year. The length of the year varied because the sharp eyed priests/astronomers, keeping track of the movement of the heavenly bodies for the sake of agriculture, determined to add or subtract days as needed. Julius Caesar decreed that from 45BC forward, the messy Roman calendar would be reformed, Januarius would become the first month of the year, the previous 10 month calendar would from then be a 12-month calendar of 355 days, plus additional days thrown in to get close to a solar year. Now, to get to that point, 46BC had 455 days, as before that Julius was off fighting wars and the calendar was allowed to drift - but that's another story.

The Hebrew calendar in use in Jesus' time was much more complicated, as rather than the solar year of the Roman (Julian) calendar, the Hebrew calendar was lunar. Months are 29 or 30 days long in that system, which throws the lunar calendar out of phase with the solar year. Critical to the culture into which Jesus was born was knowing the timing of the annual festivals God decreed in Leviticus, so long before Jesus was born a system of lengthening the year, or delaying the festivals, was created. If you're interested in all this, here is a website you might consult:

[www.haaretz.com/jewish/premium-the-secrets-of-the-hebrew-calendar-1.5304911](http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/premium-the-secrets-of-the-hebrew-calendar-1.5304911)

Different calendar systems continued in use for centuries after Jesus - fortunately for us in 1752 - a 355 day year - the European and British calendar systems were reconciled so that your new picture calendar for 2019 is the same as everyone else's. And what it says is, this month we celebrate two important events in Jesus' life, Epiphany on January 6, and His baptism on January 13.

*continued on back*

## Ushers Needed! by Ron Schumann, Head Usher

We are in need of additional people (BOTH men and women) to usher at our 8 AM or 10:30 AM Sunday Worship services. **Please consider getting involved in this part of our Worship services.** You will only be on duty one month out of every four. If you are an Associate Member we can use your help during the time you are here.

If this interests you, please call Ron Schumann (623-374-7809) to discuss your involvement in this ministry. Thank you!!!

## From Your President

### Your New Year's Resolution

This New Year I ask you to encourage – support – appreciate our Pastors.

Jan and I have had the opportunity to be members of numerous LCMS congregations. In one or more churches we encountered the following conditions:

- Pastor's sermon was too long
- Pastor was too weak on communion requirements
- Pastor was too strong on communion requirements
- Pastor was too liberal in interpretation of the Bible
- Pastor was overly compensated
- Pastor needs more compensation
- Pastor was a weak leader
- Pastor overrode a congregation's decision
- Pastor spent too much time on his family concerns rather than the concerns of the congregation
- So on and so on and so on

These and many other concerns are not exempt from any church. Pastors are human beings with issues and concerns that we all have. Therefore, in this New Year, we should encourage, support and appreciate our Pastors. They have a very special calling.

Jeremiah 3:15 "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Hebrews 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

God will reward Pastors as shepherds for their work, and there will be a harvest – both in their own lives and in the lives of their sheep.

Blessings to you all in 2019,

*Jay Nelson*

## Board for Community Outreach by Karen Block, Board Chairman

The Board for Community Outreach has scheduled a very exciting opportunity for Crown of Life members, friends, neighbors and youth. On January 20, 2019 at 1:00 PM Russ Breault will present and explain the Shroud of Turin.

It is said that the Shroud of Turin "is a length of linen cloth bearing the negative image of a man who is alleged to be Jesus of Nazareth". The cloth itself is believed by some to be the burial shroud that Jesus was wrapped in when he was buried after crucifixion. It is also said that it is the single most studied artifact in history. Mr. Breault has been researching and lecturing on the Shroud of Turin for over 25 years. His presentation makes use of over 150 superb images and unfolds like a CSI investigation. Immediately following a short break, a presentation on Unmasking Evolution will begin at 3:00 PM. Mr. Breault will discuss what science can determine regarding origins and what remains a matter of faith. This presentation should be especially informative for the youth of today. All are welcome to attend one or both of these sessions.

Also look for this upcoming attraction; Sounds of the Southwest Singers will perform their Sacred Program on March 3, 2019 at 3:00 PM.

As always, we would *love* to have additional members on our committee! If you are interested in joining, I would love to hear from you. The board meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 9:00 AM. Come join us or feel free to email me at [kblock50@gmail.com](mailto:kblock50@gmail.com).



## Your Mission Board at Work by Gene Axelson, Board Member

Our December meeting was the last meeting chaired by me as my term is up and the reigns were turned over to our newly elected Gene Kuebler to fulfill the duties for the next two years. Please welcome and support Gene as he will do a great job!

At our meeting the Board approved a financial grant of \$5,000 to be sent to the fire victims in Paradise, CA. This will be combined with additional monies received from the Men's Fellowship Friday morning Bible study group, together with other funds contributed by members of the congregation. Thanks to all!

The Board also approved a \$500 financial grant to be sent to the Urawa Lutheran School in Japan. We have helped support this school in recent years.



## **Worship With Us!**

Saturday – 4:00 PM

Sunday – 8:00 & 10:30 AM

## Are You Balanced? by Carol Steřicek, Parish Nurse

I will be holding a 4-week class on balance and safety beginning Thursday, January 24 from 1:00 to 2:00 PM in the Chapel. This class will cover:

- preventing falls and injuries
- home safety
- exercising to promote strength and balance

Sign up at the Information Center in the Narthex. Be safe!

## Renewed in Spirit and Purpose in the New Year

by Christine Escobar, GriefCare Coordinator

Getting through the Christmas season can be quite challenging and an emotional roller coaster when you are grieving the loss of a loved one. REJOICE! Through God's strength, the Holy Spirit within and the love, comfort and support of family and friends, you have made it to the start of a New Year.

At this time of the year, we turn our attention to renewing our purpose in life and resolve to live our lives as God, Christ and our loved one wish us to live. "... Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:23-24

With renewed purpose, God beside us, and with the support of our Church, friends and family, we learn that we can face and grow through anything that comes our way. We learn that we can live with loss, pain, and despair and eventually feel joy again.

This is the time of the year to reflect on the past year and consider goals for the New Year. Questions we may ask are: What gives my life purpose? What gives my life meaning? What am I living for this year?

To further clarify our thinking, we can ask: What am I passionate about? What has God given me a heart for? What skills and talents has God given me that I could use? What life experiences have I been through that God might be able to use to help others? How could my talents, abilities, passions and personality come together in the life of my church?

Experts also tell us to set "SMART" goals. This means set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

Examples of SMART goals include: scheduling a daily quiet time at the beginning of the day for spiritual readings, meditation and prayer (*Bible, Portals of Prayer*); attending one of our weekly Bible studies to learn more about our God and His will for us as well as to enjoy the fellowship of our Christian brothers and sisters; volunteer in one of our ministries here at Crown of Life; join our members in the many social events planned for 2019.

Perhaps at the start of this New Year you are struggling with the pain of a recent loss, or an unresolved loss. If so, your goal may be to gain comfort, understanding, perspective, and healing. God never intends for us to do anything alone. He is always with us and He also provides His healing through His children.

A specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely goal would be to attend our winter GriefCare group. Our winter group begins January 2, 2019. We will be meeting in the Chapel on Wednesdays from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. Please call Christine Escobar at 623-218-6793 or email griefcare@colchurch.com for more information and to register. You may also pick up a GriefCare pamphlet at the Information Center. We welcome Crown of Life members and non-members. If you know anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one, please reach out and let them know of our GriefCare group. Our group has helped so many people heal and move forward with purpose and joy.

*In His time, in His time, He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me every day, As you're teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say, in Your time.* (Diane Ball)

## Treasurer's Report

by Arlin Bates, Treasurer

The November financials show our budgeted income was projected to be \$701,537 with our actual of \$788,832. Expenditures were projected to be \$733,333 but expenses to date are only \$715,394. November by itself came in as follows:

	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Receipts	\$ 70,029	\$ 66,408
Expenses	\$ 67,875	\$ 72,414

## January Altar Flowers

6-7 Mike & Gracie Dill, in celebration of their 64<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary

## Thank You!

To the MANY MANY volunteers who helped make our annual Christmas Celebrations so beautiful ... THANK YOU!! This includes the countless hours of preparation expended by our choir, Ablaze, and musicians; add to the list our ushers, trustees, elders, greeters, decorators, altar guild, etc., etc. What a great team! Thank you all. You made our Christmas season extra special and we appreciate you!

*"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people..."*  
Titus 2:11

## Singing Glorious Praise by Roger Wayne Hicks, Choir Director

The Crown of Life Choir members enjoy turning their love of singing into glorious God-directed praise. They are a dedicated bunch of singers who accept choir membership as a special calling from God to serve Him through worship leadership. The reward which they receive for their service is of far greater value than any monetary benefit.

The Crown of Life Choir members encourage additional men and women to be alert to the voice of God that may be calling them to this very special ministry.

Ninety-minute inspirational rehearsals are conducted each Thursday at 3:30 PM beginning January 3. We would be delighted to welcome you!

## Christ Caring for People Through People

by Ken Grover, StephenCare

*"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*  
Matthew 11:28

Happy New Year! The year 2019 is here. What happened to the year 2018? Time goes by so fast. You know the phrase, "In with the new, out with the old" and we look forward to new adventures, new beginnings, new ideas, new opportunities, and new resolutions. But, there always seems to be a "but", because we still have the same, old circumstances and problems with which to contend. Our world is full of weariness, pain, hunger, debt, poverty, disease, and death. Through-out life we may experience sorrows for where there are no adequate answers. We want to know why, but we find more questions than answers. Yet, even as we struggle with "the why", God extends His unfailing love to us. When Job lost his children and his wealth in a single day, he became very angry and depressed. He resisted any attempted explanations by his friends, yet he held out hope that someday there would be an answer from God. In Job 23:10 Job said, "but He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold." Today as we face life's unanswered questions, we can find help and hope in God's love and promises. Do you need someone to help you in your daily struggles? Prayerfully consider, and then ask for a Stephen Minister for help. For more information about the Stephen Ministry program, contact Pastor Gary at 623-546-6228. May God continue to bless, protect and keep you in His grace.

*"This is the day the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad in it."*

Psalm 118:24

Reflections: "There will come one day a personal and direct touch from God when every tear and perplexity, every oppression and distress, every suffering and pain, and wrong and injustice will have a complete and ample and overwhelming explanation."

Oswald Chambers

## Thoughts by Pastor Gary

Twentieth-century air travel to distant lands, with all the attendant comforts, never ceases to amaze passengers. At international airports, flights to Cairo, Egypt, are announced as casually as bus trips to Cairo, Illinois.

Time was when trips to Egypt were slow, difficult, and dangerous. They were made on foot, on mule back, or (in Jacob's case, Gen. 46:5) "in carts." In at least two instances in Scripture, such trips were made because Egypt represented a haven of refuge.

The first of these trips was made to save the lives of some 70 people from starvation. These famine-driven pilgrims in flight were Jacob and his extended family.

The second flight to Egypt was equally urgent. At stake was the life of the infant Jesus, whom the Wise Men from the east had come to worship as king. This had aroused the jealousy and suspicion of King Herod who, as an angel of the Lord announced to Joseph in a dream, was "going to search for the child to kill Him" (Matt. 2:13).

St. Matthew links together the two flights to Egypt. He says that in Jesus' recall from Egypt after Herod's death, there was fulfilled the Scripture from Hosea 11:1: "Out of Egypt I called my Son." The statement applies in the first instance to Israelite nation, for the Lord directed Moses (Ex. 4:22-23) to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, 'Let my son go, so he may worship Me.'" St. Matthew properly applied the statement also to Jesus, for He was the substitute Son; He was the Son who in all things was obedient, where the Israelites, the first son, had been disobedient. Flight Two to Egypt was also a life saver – this time for us as well as Jesus. Because the life of the infant Jesus was spared, He was able to go on to lay down His life on the cross for our salvation.

Thank God that He spared Jesus' life so that Jesus could save ours.

## New Member Information Class Begins in February

On Sunday, February 17 Pastor Phill will lead a Bible study designed for people desiring to join our church as members. Current members are invited to attend this "Christian basics" refresher. As Lutheran Christians we have a unique view of scripture that informs our practice and theology, and the seven classes will introduce those topics. April 14 will be New Member Sunday for those who desire to become members of our church.

## Important Notice

Be sure to check your year-end giving report when it arrives. Please contact Sue Stuempfig, Church Administrator, if you have a discrepancy.

## Without Fail

I was once young and now I am old, but not once have I been witness to God's failure to supply my need when first I had given for the furtherance of His work. He has never failed in His promise, so I cannot fail in my service to Him.

## We've Got Mail!

Dear Members of Crown of Life Lutheran Church:

Thank you for supporting the recovery efforts of those working to bring hope to people who have lost so much because of Hurricane Michael. With your generous contribution we are supplying the materials to meet basic needs, such as food, diapers, formula, cleaning supplies, and personal hygiene kits. Please keep the Hurricanes Florence and Michael families in your prayers. God's blessings to you.

Rev. Dr. John R. Denninger, President  
Southeastern District, LCMS

My dear fellow redeemed:

I have been blessed to know people who experience profound life-changing JOY when they tell others about Jesus through their sacrificial giving. I pray you are one of them. There is something intensely personal and full of meaning in a gift like the one you have joyfully given. Thank you. God Bless all of you! Please let me know if there is anything we can do to serve you better. In service to our Lord, Jesus Christ,

Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, President  
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Dear Saints of Crown of Life Lutheran:

I wanted to personally thank you for your most generous and kind gift to our LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces to provide spiritual support to all those who serve or have served our nation in uniform. THANK YOU!! Ministry to the Armed Forces is only supported by designated offerings/donations sent by people like you. You are a blessing to us. Your sincere Christian care for our service members and their families is greatly appreciated. In Christ's Service,

Chaplain Craig G. Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN, (Ret)  
Director, Ministry to the Armed Forces

Dear Friends in Christ,

We thank all of you for your recent gift and partnering with us through prayer and financial support. Your prayers are an encouragement to our work and your generous support allows us to share the Good News to the people here. Thank you for sending us and making it possible for us to share the message of our crucified and risen Lord with the people of Papua New Guinea. In His Service,

Martin & Marie Dicke  
Missionaries serving Papua New Guinea

A very special thank you and blessings to those who participated in *A Musical Christmas Celebration*. It was a wonderful celebration of song and music. "Praise the Lord"! Roger Hicks - in Minnesota terms - "You betcha you did a mighty fine job." The Lord's blessings be with you.

Jay Nelson, COL President

Dear Pastor Robbins,  
Thank you for your continuous support to my seminary education. Last week I finished my first quarter of the second year of seminary. My classmates were correct, second year is much more difficult. Even so, I was able to finish all my classes well. Thanks be to God. Last weekend my family was able to come to Ft. Wayne to celebrate our baby shower. Meanwhile we continue to eagerly await the January 2<sup>nd</sup> due date. While my parents were here they were able to hear me preach at our home congregation. It was the first time my family heard me preach. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Tyler McMiller  
Adopt-A-Student Program  
Concordia Theological  
Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN

## Quilting Group Wraps up another Successful Sale

*by Marlene Peterson*

Thank you Crown of Life once again for a successful quilt and blanket sale held in November. We are almost finished with our "other project" and will be starting a new one sometime in February. Any member (old & new) interested in joining our quilting group, please contact me at 623-556-1055. We quilt the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Thank you again and have a Healthy and Happy New Year.



## Altar Flowers *by Florella Denzi, Flower Committee Chairperson*

Happy Epiphany! We pray you all had a new Epiphany of understanding during this season.

Our Church family did it again! The Altar was beautiful for our Christmas Worship services with your generosity! Please continue to sign up for your special 2019 dates in the flower book on the stand located in the Narthex outside the Parish Hall doors.

A Blessed 2019 to all!

## LWML Update

by Rita Grover, President

Thank you to the congregation for the gift cards given to The Angel Tree recipients: *Family Promise*. You never cease to amaze with your loving and kind giving.

LWML is a group of women who specifically: help each other draw closer to the Lord; encourage and equip one another to use their God-given talents in sharing God's love; and provide opportunities for service within the congregation and for outreach to the community and world. Please come and join us in the Chapel on the second Tuesday of every month October–April at 1:00 PM. Our next meeting will be January 8.

Last November at the Fall Celebration held in Wickenburg, Linda Gage, LWML National Gift Planning Counselor spoke. Linda assists couples or individuals to update or create their Christian gift/estate plan to transfer their God-given blessings to people they love and the ministries they care about. *Gifts of Love* is an official LWML ministry and provides these services for free to all (not just LWML members). Linda can provide resources and help to meet your specific goal for you, your family, and growing God's kingdom. What a blessing to your family when you are called to your eternal home. Linda Gage can be contacted at: [lindagage.lwml@gmail.com](mailto:lindagage.lwml@gmail.com).

### Upcoming Events:

Pacific Southwest District LWML will sponsor a retreat, GPS: Where are You Headed?

Date: Fri, Feb 8 – Sun, Feb 10, 2019

Place: Ontario Gateway Hotel  
2200 E. Holt Blvd, Ontario, CA 91761  
(For more information go to [www.psdlwml.com](http://www.psdlwml.com).)



## December in Photos



(Above) On the weekend of December 8 & 9, the Celebration Choir, Ablaze, along with brass, percussion, organ & piano, under the direction of Choir Director Roger Hicks presented *What Song Shall We Sing?* A Musical Christmas Celebration.



(Left) On December 6 in front of the Bashas Store in Sun City West Pastor Phill and Hollis, along with several Elders participated in the Salvation Army bell ringing. The bell ringing season starts each November and runs through Christmas Eve, when the red kettles are packed away for the season. Volunteers are the difference between an empty kettle and one that raises about \$30 per hour – enough to provide a family with two bags of groceries, or shelter an individual for a night.

SAVE THE DATE ... February 9, 2019

Grand Canyon District, LHM Rally  
Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Lutheran Hour Speaker  
At Apostles Lutheran Church  
7020 W. Cactus Road – Peoria, AZ

## Happy Birthday

- 1 Diane Thoene
- 3 Robert Thanepohn
- 4 Wilma Schwandt
- 4 David Wentworth
- 5 Desi Stewart
- 6 Don Abrahamson
- 6 Nancy Lorenzen
- 6 Donna Roeker
- 8 Connie Rau
- 9 Byron Brown
- 9 Sue Krischler
- 10 Gene Axelson
- 10 Marilyn Kurvers
- 10 George Maul
- 10 Dorian Pfeifer
- 11 Cheryl Bernhardt
- 11 Johanna Springman
- 12 Maria Winfrey
- 15 Martha Plapp
- 16 Larry Bublitz
- 17 Gloria Andersen
- 17 Ed Michel
- 18 Loretta Ebel
- 18 Carolyn Sauter
- 18 Denise Steffens
- 19 Pat Coyle
- 21 Sue Trevisan
- 22 Willard Mears
- 22 Richard Ziert
- 24 Harriet Krueger
- 25 Carolyn Goedecke
- 26 Sandra Barbeau
- 26 Judy Harwood
- 26 Otto Hass
- 26 Hollis Robbins
- 28 Lillian Holen
- 29 Bob Emerson
- 29 Sharon Michael
- 29 Karen Myers
- 29 Al Stoudemire
- 30 Diane Hammann
- 31 Kathleen Hauck
- 31 John Orr

## Happy Anniversary

- 6 Dan & Marge Heinrichs
- 19 Kim & Sue Warwick
- 24 Gary & Kimberly Gertsen
- 24 Ken & Jeanette Hagemann
- 25 Jim & Jan Drake
- 27 Rev. Ron & Anne Luedemann
- 30 Tim & Barbie Aden



### A New Year Prayer

Thank You Lord for giving me  
 The brand new year ahead.  
 Help me live the way I should  
 As each new day I tread.  
 Give me gentle wisdom  
 That I might help a friend,  
 Give me strength and courage  
 So a shoulder I might lend.  
 The year ahead is empty,  
 Help me fill it with good things  
 Each new day filled with joy  
 And happiness it brings.  
 Amen.

### Ushers (cont'd)

- (8:00) Bob Turk, Cap., Marsh Froland, Willie Lundquist, Ed Michel, Paul Naumann, Dorian Pfeifer, Dave Roberts, Al Stoudemire
- (10:30) Ron Schumann, Capt., Byron Brown, Marty Irwin, Carol Kleinschmidt, Frank Lohr, Duane Neal, Gordy Rieck

## January Servants

- Senior Pastor Rev. Phill Robbins
- Assisting Pastor Rev. Gary Smith
- Pastoral Assistants  
 Rev. Vern Ermeling, Rev. Roland Kroll,  
 Rev. Ron Luedemann, Rev. Ray Mirly
- ELDERS  
 (4:00) Ed Kristof, Harry Bernhardt,  
 Ron Mara  
 (8:00) Ed Kristof, Chris Beck,  
 (10:30) Ed Kristof, Ernie Schmidt
- TRUSTEES  
 (4:00) Larry Lienemann  
 (8:00) Myron Holen  
 (10:30) Dave Koelsch
- ALTAR GUILD  
 (4:00) Arline Orchowski,  
 Nada Workman  
 (8:00) Lola Leshney, Yvonne Stone  
 (10:30) Ruth Anderson,  
 Becky Schulzetenberg
- GREETERS  
 (4:00) Arline Orchowski, Marlene  
 Peterson, Karen Sheppard  
 (8:00) Flo Froland, Sharon Helling,  
 Clark McCaslin  
 (10:30) Jeanne Breese, Aleta & Don  
 Rasmussen, Karen Stein
- GUEST BOOK  
 (4:00) Pat Coyle  
 (8:00) Gretchen McCaslin  
 (10:30) Cora Weiss
- FLOWERS  
 Florella Denzin, Jan Drake, Vicki Jolin,  
 Sheila Mecham, Karen Murphy,  
 Darlene McAfee, Denise Tevarrow,  
 Jan Tvinnereim, Cora Weiss
- SOUND TECHNICIANS  
 Paul Stuempfig, Coordinator  
 (Sat) Joe Jellison, Dave Sawyer  
 (Sun) Bruce Borchert, Dave Brodzeller,  
 Gerry Harpt, Tom Mertins,  
 Ron Schumann, Paul Stuempfig
- SCREENS - Tom Mertins, Coordinator
- TELLERS - Ken Warren, MaryAnn Cate,  
 Sheila Mecham, Ben Snyder,  
 Marilyn Waldron, Chuck Wasem;  
 Subs - Ken Grover, Duane Neal,  
 Orv Neal, Sandy Warren
- VIDEO TECHNICIANS  
 Darlene & Wiley McAfee
- USHERS  
 (4:00) Al & Jan Knutsen, Evelin Lackey,  
 Dave Sawyer

# Crown of Life Lutheran Church

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Sun City West, AZ 85375  
www.colchurch.com

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## CURRENT RESIDENT OR . . .

January 2019

### Januarius! *continued from cover*

Epiphany, the day we recognize the arrival from the East of three men who followed a star to Jerusalem, reminds us that the One who came was prophesied even beyond the little nation into which He was born. Their arrival echoes Daniel's time and teaching in Babylon.

And then in January comes a recognition of Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan, a moment marking the beginning of His ministry on earth. The visible coming of the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove), and the audible expression of God the Father's satisfaction with His gift of a Son into a fallen world, reminds us that indeed there has always been a plan for the salvation of us all. That plan: faith, through His grace, and in that faith, forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life.

Think of the faith of the three men who, believing a prophecy from long before that the Holy One would come, undertook an arduous, even dangerous, journey from a distant land to witness the living Christ. Think also of our own faith, challenged not by travel into the unknown but by a changing culture, pervasive sin even in our own lives, the disappointments of health and relationship and fortune we all experience – which is the more difficult? I submit our journey is the more difficult, lifelong as it is, and not just a few years. But then consider the great advantages we possess: Scripture that teaches, sacraments that reassure, Christian friends that bolster our journey in faith, a church that nurtures. Our journey in faith is years longer than the wise men from the East endured but – they sought an unknown Christ, and we have him always.

Time to turn the calendar, and from our January vantage point look out into a year of faith through God's very real grace. May you and I recognize His very real blessings in this New Year of our Lord 2019!

**Pastor Phill**