

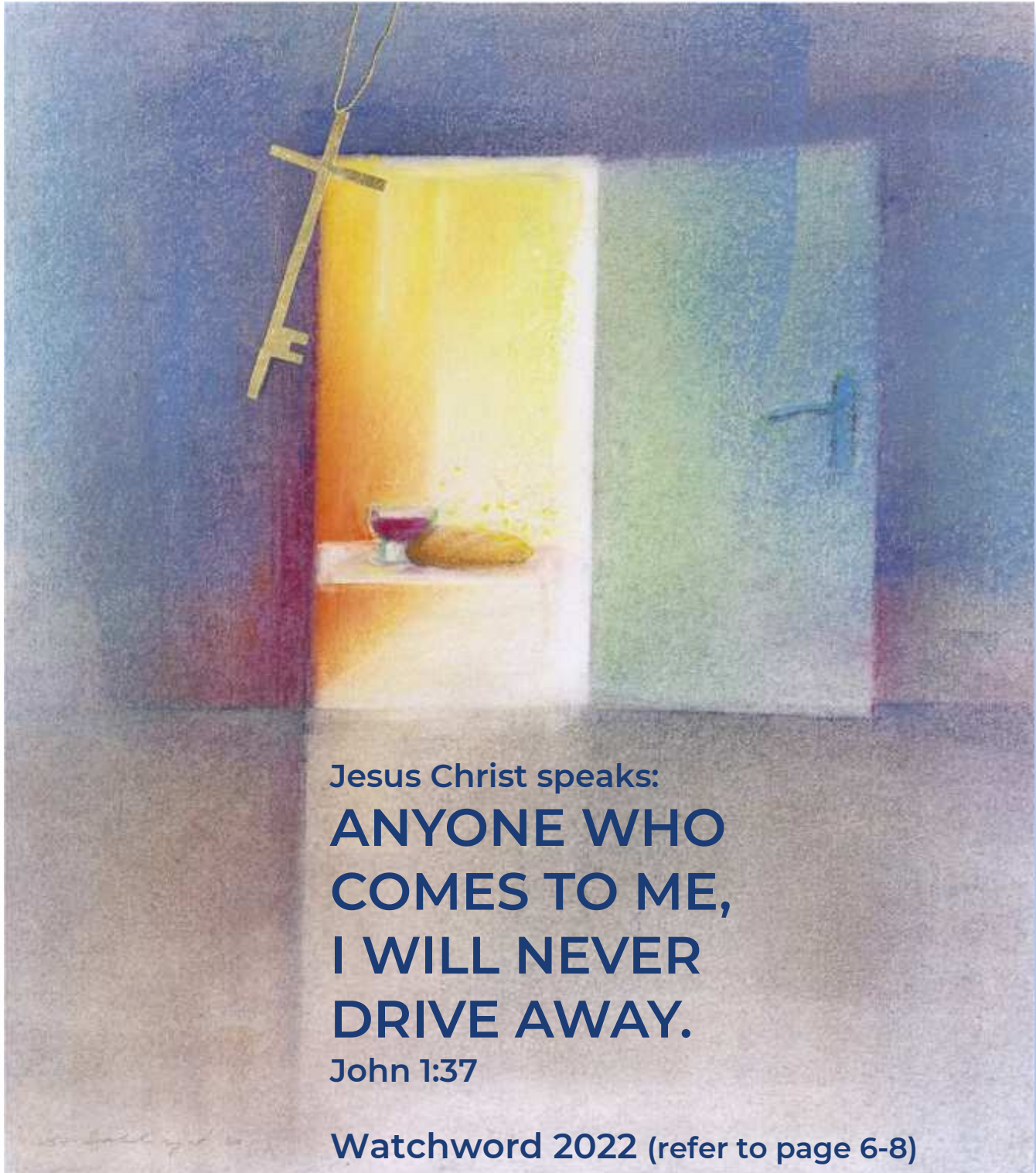


LUTHERAN PORT ELIZABETH
Friedenskirche Church of Peace



No: 2022.01e

Newsletter January 2022



Christ and His Church invite you!
Christus und Seine Kirche laden Dich ein!

Greetings for the New Year



**Don't let your hearts be troubled !
Trust in God and trust also in me !
John 14,1**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

*"Don't let your hearts be troubled!
Trust in God and trust also in me!"
John 14:1*

Toward the end of a year, the newspaper and TV usually review the year that just has passed. By doing that they remind us of the good and bad things that happened during the year. In a short overview they show the crisis that took place, be it the Covid pandemic, be it the crisis in the property, finance and economic markets. They show the faces of wars and tragedies, of poverty in the world and our own country. All this brings closer to home the realities that accompanied us during the past year. Unfortunately Fear and terror are used to curtail all that which democracy once did achieve. Long ago we were welcomed travellers when we boarded a flight, and today we are viewed as potential terrorists and treated accordingly. That indeed is terrible.

In view of the new year, I ask myself: How will all this continue? Better? Worse? That which is behind us we know, but whatever is ahead of us, we don't know, and that troubles our hearts.

In a situation like this, a time of transition, Jesus says these words: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me!" John 14,1 These are Jesus' farewell words addressed to his disciples. He knows how difficult the new situation will be for them. They now have to live and continue their lives without him being present. They will be shocked, that he will take upon himself suffering and death, they will be mocked, persecuted and some of them will be killed. Jesus prepares his friends for something new.

How does he encourage them and us? Jesus does not push worries and troubles aside by saying some lovely consoling words or words of encouragement, like, come on pick yourselves up. Or don't worry alles sal reg kom! Jesus knows what he is talking about. He had experienced great disappointments. He cried when his friend Lazarus died. He took upon himself, rejection, pain, fears around and concerning death and dying and even taking upon himself a rather cruel and painful death on the cross. That was more than a troubled heart. However, what gave him the

Greetings for the New Year

strength? This strength and trust he wishes to hand on to the disciples, you and me: "Trust in God!" It is this faith that brought him closer to God during suffering. When Jesus says to us: "Don't let your hearts be troubled!" then he doesn't promise us a time without suffering or pain. No, he promises blessing right in the deep of our real needs, worries and fears, in the frightful experiences within this world.

Nothing can help against these frightful experiences, no careful calculations, no forecasts or annual reviews. There is only one thing that can really help us in our sometimes really frightful reality, and that is our faith/our trust in God, that alone can help. Hence Jesus says to us at the beginning of a New Year: **"Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away."** (John 6, 37)



**Anyone who comes to me
I will never drive away
John 6,37**

When we were kids our parents told and taught us certain things about and when thunder struck real hard. But all that was really worthless, wasn't it. What helped us really then was mom's and dad's closeness, that gave us courage and faith.

"Don't let your hearts be troubled! Trust in God and trust also in me!" This deep rooted faith and trust in God, stands twice in this word. It is our faith in God and our trust in Jesus words about a close God, whom we can experience. It is this faith/trust which will help us through all farewells and carry us through the beginnings of and through a new year. I wish you all this proximity/closeness of God and the strength and power of faith and thus an untroubled heart for and during the New Year. May you face the new year with untroubled hearts and tackle the challenges the new year will bring. "Don't let your hearts be troubled! Trust in God and trust also in me!" then the new year may bring along whatever it will, and remember Jesus words to you this year words: **"anyone who comes to me I will never drive away."**

I wish you all a blessed, healthy and wonderful New Year

Yours in Christ's service

Pastor em Andreas Wernecke

COVID –Thoughts

Doing it right

There has been so much fear-mongering on social media and elsewhere throughout the world, one can become unsure of how this covid pandemic may play out in the future. We are now into the third year of the pandemic. Some countries are, according to the statistics, in trouble. The Omicron variant has brought its own type of disruption to the world. Although reportedly not causing as serious a reaction, it is transmissible at a rapid rate. Patients needing ICU and oxygen have been less. It would seem that again there is this notion that as many have had the “jab” already and that the Omicron is “not so bad”, sticking to proven individual basic prevention behaviour and practices can be relaxed or abandoned altogether.

This could not be further from the truth. The soaring number of new infections every 24 hours, in the thousands in some countries, bear this out. In some cases, larger patient numbers needing isolation have caused reduced employees reporting for work - including medical facilities. In some parts of the world reduced staff numbers for example in public transport, have resulted in some regular services to be cancelled or



curtailed due to skilled staff being quarantined off work, once again putting severe strain on available staff. A new variant reported from France is called the IHU variant scientifically named B.1.640.2. So far only 12 cases in France are known of. One tends to think, “ah well, that’s is in France which is far away from me - and there are only 12 reported cases.” Is this not how covid spread in the first place over two years ago?

If we follow the science we know how Covid is transmitted from one person to another. When the threat of severe illness does not seem so bad and many millions worldwide have been vaccinated, it is only human to think that the danger is no longer there and the longing to be close to family and friends starts to cloud logic. It is precisely at such times where it is vital not to abandon the proven measures that are known to minimise infection. Wear your mask, sanitise your hands often and maintain a

COVID – Information

Dear members, dear friends

Under the present COVID-level regulations we are able to offer **live services at our Church of Peace**, but for those who cannot come, we publish handouts so that you can celebrate the service also at home.

These are available at our WhatsApp-Group: **Lutheran Congregation**
If interested, send sms to Henry Newman

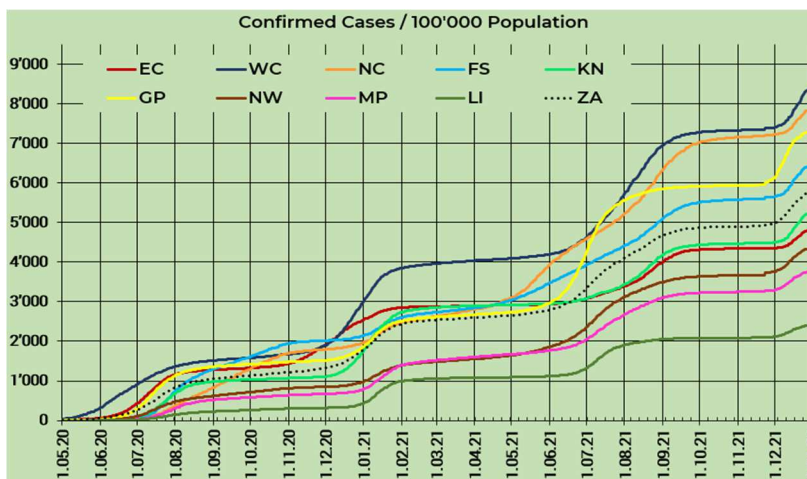
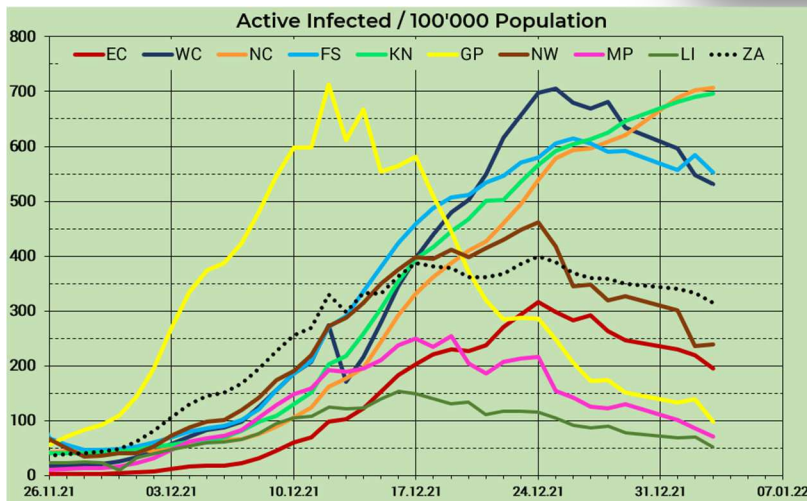
078 703 7003

Bring and wear your **face mask** the whole time. **Sanitize** and sign the **Register**.when entering the church



The following regulations apply:

- ❖ Max. 45 persons per service
- ❖ 3 persons per pew (1-1-1) or for couples (2- -1), larger families from the same household can sit together in one pew
- ❖ Every second pew remains free
- ❖ Foyer and Mezzanine have additional chairs 1.5 m apart
- ❖ The Organ will play and you can sing the hymns. The lyrics will be projected (no hymn books).
- ❖ Communion is received individually (disposable cups)
- ❖ No gatherings before/after service.in the Foyer



Opposite is an overview of the number of people actively infected with the Corona virus every day for the last few weeks (26.11.2021 till 03.01.2022), as well as the total number of confirmed cases since the beginning of the pandemic (period: 1 May 2020 to 3 January 2022).

Eastern Cape (EC red) and the adjacent provinces Western Cape (WC dark blue), Northern Cape (NC orange), Free State (FS light blue), KwaZulu Natal (KN neon green), and for comparison Gauteng (GP yellow) and total South Africa (ZA black dotted). For a better comparison, the data was scaled to cases per 100,000 inhabitants.

Satans's Strategic Meeting

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said, "We can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their saviour. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken."

"So let them go to their churches; let them have their covered dish dinners, **but** steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do," said the devil: "Distract them from gaining hold of their Saviour and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" his demons shouted.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered.

"Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles."

"Keep them from spending time with their children. As their families frag-



**Do not be overcome by evil,
but overcome evil with good.**

ment, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work!"

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice.

Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive. To keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly."

"This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ. Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards."

"Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogues, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes.."

Satans's Strategic Meeting

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Keep the wives too tired to love their husbands at night. Give them headaches too!"

"If they don't give their husbands the love they need, they will begin to look elsewhere. That will fragment their families quickly!"

"Give them Santa Claus to distract them from teaching their children the real meaning of Christmas. Give them an Easter bunny so they won't talk about his resurrection and power over sin and death."

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted..."

"Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect on God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead."

"Keep them busy, busy, busy!"

"And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences. Crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus."

"Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health

and family for the good of the cause."

"It will work!"

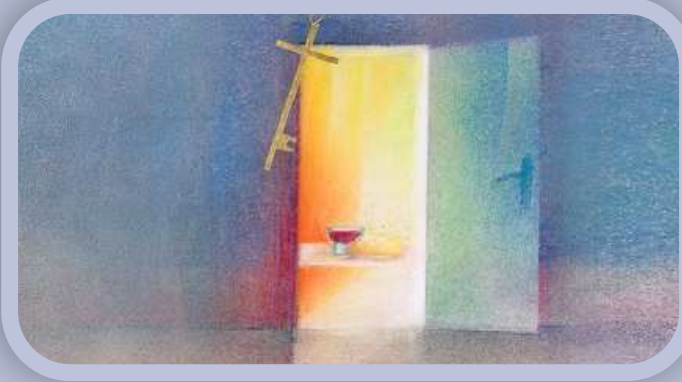
It was quite a plan! The demons went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busier and more rushed, going here and there. Having little time for their God or their families. Having no time to tell others about the power of Jesus to change lives.

I guess the question is, has the devil been successful in his schemes?

You be the judge!!!!

Does "**BUSY**" mean:
Being **U**nder **S**atan's **Y**oke?

Annual Watchword 2022



**Anyone who comes to me,
I will never drive away**
John 11:37

We all know the feeling of standing in front of a door and not knowing who will receive you and how, and what awaits you behind it. Every door can trigger different feelings in us. Are we standing in front of the office of a government agency, the front door of a friend's house, the consulting room door of a doctor's office or are our children or grandchildren about to burst in? We experience countless "door moments" in the course of our lives - behind and in front of doors. Wonderful and unpleasant ones. Doors can separate and connect. Mostly it depends on both sides - in front of and behind the door.

Jesus and the people around him also know "door moments". Jesus ties in with such experiences when he says to them, **"Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away."**

This time they also spared no journey across the Sea of Galilee to see him.

They had witnessed the day before how Jesus fed over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. If he is not the long-promised prophet, the Messiah, for whom their fathers and mothers hoped, then who is? What prevents them from making him their king immediately?

But Jesus escapes to the other side of the lake to Capernaum. In vain! Those who travelled after him assail him with questions like: "What must we do to please God?" "What other signs can you give us so that we can believe your words? Give us the proof!" Jesus does not evade their questions. His answers culminate in a simple and at the same time provocative assertion: "Before you stands the answer to all your questions: It is I! You have heard my words, seen my deeds and yet you do not believe me! Where I am, you will find God. Come to me, trust me, only I can satisfy your hunger and thirst for life. Even beyond this life!"

The Evangelist John describes many such conversations and introduces his Gospel with the words: "He came into the world that was his. But the people there did not receive him. But to those who did receive him, he gave the right to become children of God - that is, all who believe in him." (John 1:11, 12)

God is drawn to us humans and he

Annual Watchword 2022

does everything he can to draw us to himself. But he does not force himself on us. Whoever allows himself to be drawn, Jesus' promise applies to him: **"Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away."**

So he follows his Father's command and tries to explain it to those around him: "For this is what I have come down from heaven to do: Not to do what I myself will, but what He wills who has commissioned me. And this is the will of him who commissioned me: I am not to lose any of those whom he has entrusted to me. Rather, I shall raise them all from death on the last day. For this is the will of my Father: all who see the Son and believe in him will receive eternal life." (John 6:38 - 40)

Again, Jesus' words provoke strong reactions: "This is going too far! What an imposition! He totally overestimates himself. We know his parents! We'll be on our way!" Opinions are divided over Jesus' claim. Until today.

His words are also beyond my imagination. How am I to understand that we can only come to Jesus if God addresses us first, if he "entrusts" us to his Son? What happens when God's word does not reach our heart? Better: when his invitation does not reach us? How does God's will connect with ours so that we can hear and follow his invitation? We cannot

resolve this tension, nor do we need to. Like an invitation, faith is not at our disposal and remains a gift. Even more: it remains a mystery. An inexplicable expression of divine love.

There is also mystery in Stefanie Bahlinger's graphic. An open door arouses my curiosity: who opened it and for whom? I only see a small section of the room behind it. No one there? Who and what await me when I approach? May I enter?

There is a loaf of bread on a table, a glass of wine close to it. For whom? The table is only hinted at, it seems to float. Otherwise there is no furniture to be seen, neither a cupboard nor chairs, not even a back wall. Only warm, inviting light that falls into the room from behind and spreads outwards. Where does it come from? The cone of light looks like a path. Access is barrier-free, entry is free - no entrance control. Will the door stay open or will it fall into the lock at some point? An oversized golden key in the shape of a cross dangles from a chain from above. The cross as the key to life ... Looking more closely, I also discover a delicate golden cross on the bread. Likewise, the red of the wine in the chalice could correspond with the red on the left door frame.

Otherwise, pastel blues dominate the upper half of the picture, mingling with the delicate browns and greys of

Annual Watchword 2022



**Anyone who comes to me,
I will never drive away**
John 11:37

the lower half. Sky colours meet earthy tones. The place seems to hover between heaven and earth.

Where can I find this space with its mysterious vastness, this place where I could feel at home and secure? Is it a place of longing that could open up anywhere, perhaps even in my heart?

It seems to me that the artist has not only painted a place in her graphic rich in symbolism, but at the same time the host himself, who invites us to himself and promises: **"Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away."**

This also applies to Jesus' invitation to the Lord's Supper. Bread and wine form the centre of the graphic. In them Jesus himself is present. Just as we take bread and wine into ourselves at the meal celebration, Jesus also wants to be taken into our hearts and be close to us already in the here

and now. Nothing and no one can separate us from him and his love. Not even death.

It touches me that Jesus stands at my door and only enters if he is not rejected. He does not even ask about my "host qualities". But he does not conceal his own. In his "I Am Words" he presents himself as the one sent by God. They are full of images and comparisons, which Stefanie Bahlinger takes up and "quotes" in her graphic: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will hunger no more. And whoever believes in me will never thirst again." (John 6:35)

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will no longer wander in darkness. Rather, he will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will go in and out and find good pasture. I have come to bring them true life -life in all its fullness." (John 10:9, 10b)

I am the way, the truth and the life. There is no other way to the Father but me. (John 14:6)

"I am the resurrection and the life! He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in me will not be separated from God for eternity. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25,26)

What an offer, what an invitation! And yet the enthusiasm of many people, then as now, is limited. Often it remains unheard or ends up unread in the wastepaper basket. Perhaps also

Birthdays January 2022

1 January

Chad | Human
Leonard | Rosendahl
Péter | Heineke
Sharon | Tessendorf

6 January

Genia | Lokotsch
William | Bürger

7 January

Anne | Tessendorf

9 January

Hagen | Krieg

10 January

Elise | Schaberg

13 January

Robin | Arends

14 January

Stefan | Jachens

15 January

Leona | Breitfeld
Rosi | Seifert

16 January

Arnold | Tessendorf

19 January

Ruth | Rohrmoser

22 January

Leah | Septoe

23 January

Justin | Köpke
Michael | Koch

26 January

Charlotte | Andrews

27 January

Auke | Brand
Reinhard | Walle

4 February

Jan | Heineke
Karla | Arends
Melita | Bagshaw

Divine Services January 2022

2 January 2022 09:30 (D)
First Sunday after Christmas



Watchword (John 1:14b):

"We have seen His glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

The encounter with the child in the manger can change people. In him the hope of salvation is fulfilled. Simeon and Hannah sing of this in the Gospel. With Jesus, the light has come into the world. Again and again, people have recognised this in amazement - like Simeon, who trusted the old promises and was allowed to see the Saviour with his own eyes. He has grown old and grey. But his eyes are young and shining into the distance. "You're crazy!" say some. "Give it a rest. Nothing will change." Friends have turned away shaking their heads, others have died bitter. Quietly, patiently, he continues to wait, trusting in God who does not forget his people. Year after year, day after day. As he holds the child in his arms, he opens his eyes in sudden recognition: He has

Sermon

9 January 2022 09:30 (E)
First Sunday after Epiphany



Watchword (Romans 8:14):

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God."

The birth in the stable was not just a dream. The story of Jesus continued, at first slowly and unnoticed. And yet, He was a man of God's Spirit. The First Sunday after Epiphany is all about the baptism of Jesus. This is at the beginning of his ministry. With it, God confesses to Jesus: This man is my beloved son, He has my spirit. Encouraging this word from the old days: He, who does not break the weak, and will not break a bruised reed, comes from God. He is God's choice. Even if He shows weakness according to worldly standards. She or he who lives in His spirit, who is baptized in the name of God, is a child of God.

Sermon

Divine Services January 2022

16 January 2020 09:30 (E)
Second Sunday after Epiphany



Watchword (John 1:16):

"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

On the second Sunday after Epiphany, we hear about the story of the wedding in Cana, where Jesus made water into wine so that the festivities could continue. We celebrate Jesus as the Lord of gladness on this Sunday. We cannot see God directly, but we can see how God works in the world, as He has shown us through the life and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. We also see the Cross itself on which God himself died for us in Jesus Christ. In this way God's Love in Jesus Christ becomes visible and accessible to every person. It can fill us with deep joy that God meets us even in the utter depths of our fear and despair. It can also help us to be able to love and accept one another as we are all saved by the Cross of Christ.

Sermon

23 January 09:30 (E)
Third Sunday after Epiphany



Watchword (Luke 13:29):

"Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God."

God's love knows no limitations. How fascinating it is when Christians come together from all over the world: people from Korea and Nicaragua, Tanzania and all of Europe who confess Jesus Christ. Nowadays, The Bible has been translated into almost 2,500 languages. The Christian message does not stop at ethnical and national borders. It applies to all people without exception. (This is the theme of the third Sunday after Epiphany.) Already Jesus and his disciples have turned themselves to the neighbours of the people of Israel, healed foreigners and debated with Samaritans. Jesus' ancestors are also international like the Moabite Rut, who moved to a foreign

Sermon

Divine Services

30 January 2022 09:30 (E, Fam)
Last Sunday after Epiphany



Watchword (Isaiah 60:20b):

"The Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you."

There are moments, when I see things very clearly; my life seems to be illuminated by light. I know exactly who I am and where I am going. "Mountain experiences" are those that are fully clear. The last Sunday after the Epiphany speaks of a bright light experience. On a mountain, the disciples see Jesus transfigured and realize: This is the Son of God. "It's good to be here", says Peter. "Let us build huts." They are enlightened by God, just like Moses was, whom God called from out of the fire, and like the seer John on Patmos. But with such an experience nobody can simply stop there. Everyone has to return to everyday life, often enough into struggle and suffering. But everyone will carry the bright glow that encourages them to live in God's light.

Sermon

Exodus 34:29-35

6 February 2022 09:30 (D)
Fourth Sunday before Lent



Watchword (Psalm 66:5):

"Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals."

"The water is up to my neck." Sometimes fear makes it difficult for me to breathe. When the storm time is up, when a loss pulls the ground under my feet, then I seek hold. Then I need someone who stands like a rock in the surf and the waves stopped. Jesus is master of the forces of nature and storms of life, as the Fourth Sunday before Lent shows. Where God seems to leave us alone, where we think we need to shake him awake, he is very close, soothed, comforting, smoothing waves. Even the biggest flood came to an end. "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" Jesus asks when it's all over. And you, do you have faith?

Sermon

Matthew 14:22-33

Prayercards January 2022

1 Jan Aiden Groenmeyer

2 Jan Aria Noël Thompson

3 Jan Benjamin Burger

4 Jan Brunhilde Koch

5 Jan Charmaine Human

6 Jan Dominique
Thomas

7 Jan Esther Siegmund-
Heineke

VATER
UNSER IM HIMMEL
GEHEILIGT WERDE
DEIN NAME

DEIN REICH KOMME DEIN WILLE GESCHEHE
WIE IM HIMMEL SO AUF ERDEN
UNSER TÄGLICHES BROT GIB UNS HEUTE
UND VERGIB UNS UNSERE SCHULD
WIE AUCH WIR VERGEBEN UNSEREN

SCHULDIGERN
UND FÜHRE UNS
NICHT IN VERSUCHUNG
SONDERN ERLÖSE UNS
VON DEM BÖSEN
DENN DEIN IST DAS REICH
UND DIE HERRLICHKEIT
IN EWIGKEIT AMEN

8 Jan Igor Lokotsch

9 Jan Jan Heineke

10 Jan Jarrid Angloher

11 Jan Joan Burgdorf

12 Jan Jordan Visagie

13 Jan Justin Köpke

14 Jan Karla Arends

15 Jan Karla Lentz

16 Jan Leon Human

17 Jan Leonard Rosendahl

18. Jan Linzi Thompson

19. Jan Lucas
Letsholonyane

20. Jan Luke Human

21. Jan Melita Bagshaw

22. Jan Molatelo
Rapetsoa

23. Jan Ophelia Coko

24. Jan Patrick Septoe

25. Jan Rene Koch

26. Jan Robin Arends

27. Jan Ryan Meyer

28. Jan Shereez Visagie

29. Jan Tony Thomas

30 Jan Wayne Böttcher

31 Jan Willie Lokotsch

Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayer,
intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all people.
1. Timothy 2:1

Third Advent

Carols , Coffee, Cake



This past year has been full of challenges. This past 3rd Sunday in Advent we were once again able to have the joy of singing Christmas carols together in our newly refurbished hall. In preparation for the annual Carols, Coffee and Cake Carol, Penny, Henry and the team decorated the

smell of freshly brewed coffee permeated the hall.



There were freshly baked cakes and Christmas fare to go with the coffee.

Brian provided the perfect musical accompaniment to the carol singers. After having missed out the previous year due to Covid, it was good to hear the



hall tables in festive preparation.

beautiful carols being sung once again.



The beautifully decorated Christmas tree stood next to the piano

On the day, Henry and Alvarito manned the coffee table and the inviting

It was a joyous occasion in the real spirit of Christmas.



Christmas Services



Our Church Bell

After a long period of not hearing the sound of our church bell ringing at Services, finally the bell mechanism has been repaired and the bell was able to be rung again



Christmas Eve

The sound of the bell was once again heard on Christmas Eve during the Service that was celebrated in both German and English. Thank you to Henry Newman and Colin Lentz who



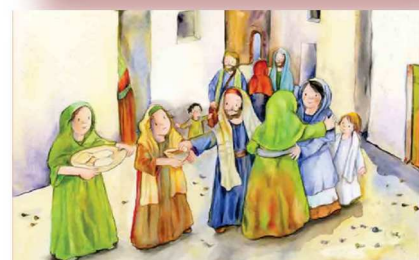
Christmas Day

Kid's Page

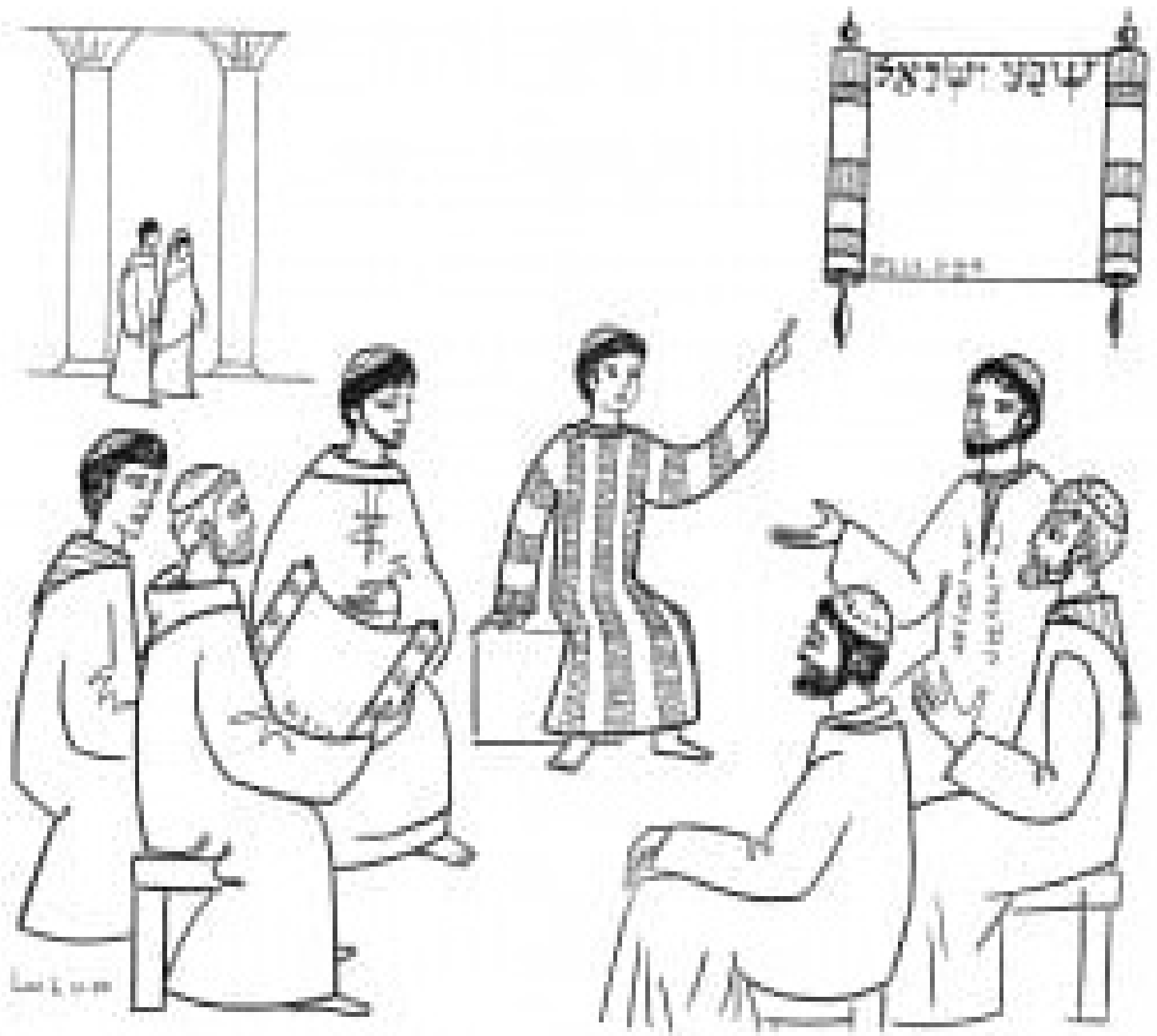
Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When Jesus was 12 years old, they went to the feast as they always did. When the fest days were over, they went home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Joseph and Mary travelled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with them in the group. Then they began to look for him among their family and friends, but they did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there. After three days they found him. Jesus was sitting in the Temple with the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and wise answers. When Jesus' parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, „Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were very worried about you. We have been looking for you.”

Jesus asked, „Why did you have to look for me? You should have known that I must be where my Father's work is,!” But they did not understand the meaning of what he said.

Jesus went with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. His mother was still thinking about all that had happened. Jesus continued to learn more and more and to grow physically. People liked him, and he pleased God..



Colouring page:



Together with his parents, Jesus sets out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In the temple he discusses with the scribes and feels particularly close to God. When Mary and Joseph set off again, they assume that Jesus is somewhere in

the group of pilgrims. But he is not there! Desperately they search for their son and finally find the twelve-year-old in the temple. Jesus does not understand their concern. In the Temple, in his Father's house, he feels right.



**Jesus Christ said to them:
'Come and see.'**

John 1:39a

There is not much to see in January. In the shop centres, in the pedestrian zone and also at my house: the Christmas decorations are put away. I put the Christmas tree by the road; the nativity scene goes into the attic; we look at the children's handicrafts to see what should be saved for the next Advent season. And then everything is gone. Sobriety spreads.

There was a lot to see in December. Everything was decorated - in some places a little too much for my taste. But after all, it was to celebrate a birth: a little glamour is all right.

Jesus Christ is coming into the world - that was visible everywhere (even if not always recognisable); no one could close their eyes to that.

In January, the party comes to an end. The state of emergency is over. Everyday life begins again. When the

decorations are cleared away, voids become visible. Emptiness offers space for perspectives: Vacant spaces are waiting to be redesigned. Where there is nothing, creativity can unfold.

January is the month of the outlook: We look ahead to the year that still lies untouched before us. What will come? What will it be like? Where will we be at the end of the year? As a teenager, I always found January (and especially New Year's Day) very auspicious: a new adventure was beginning - and I was right in the middle of it. Now, the anticipation and curiosity is increasingly mixed with uncertainty: the years fly by - but what remains?

"Where will you stay?" This is what Jesus is asked by his disciples - at the very beginning, when they are not yet his disciples at all. They want to know what it is about him: where he comes from, where he goes and where he stays. Jesus does not tell them. But he invites them to see for themselves. "Come and see!" Jesus says - and with that he makes them his disciples. The men came to him. They let themselves be taken in by him. The familiar is over; something new is beginning - and they are in the middle of it. I imagine that they are

Watchword January 2022

curious; certainly also a little insecure. Perhaps they bring with them longings and good intentions. The encounter with Jesus opens up a new perspective for them.

The new disciples see something that convinces them. What exactly it is, is not told - perhaps there is not much to see. I imagine that they have to look very closely. And probably something different catches each of their eyes. But they all have one thing in common: in what they see, they recognise who Jesus is.

A spirit of optimism spreads. All uncertainty is removed. The disciples now know where they are going. They leave the old behind - they set out in a completely new way and full of confidence. They do not know where the path will lead them. No one can foresee how life will play out. But the disciples know where they belong.



They came and saw, and they remained with him that day.

John 1:39b

"Come and see!" Maybe at first glance there is not much to see at all - like now, at the beginning of a new year. Silly season, some say; everyday life returns; January, as usual!?. And yet: what began at Christmas continues. Jesus came into the world - and now he calls us humans to himself.

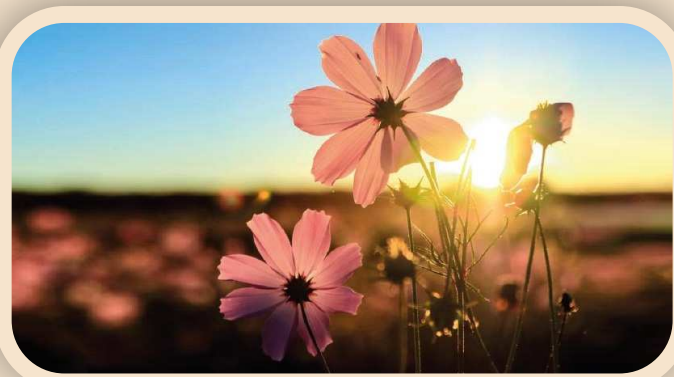
"Come and see!" No one knows beforehand how he will reveal himself to us. Perhaps it is something quite ordinary, not worthy of further mention. Perhaps it is quite inconspicuous. That is why it is worthwhile to look closely.

God shows us humans how to get through time well: He points the way when we make decisions; and when we stumble, he catches us. Life does not become easier - but it gets a new perspective. No one can foresee what is coming; but those who recognise him know the way.

"They came and saw, and remained with him that day" (John 1:39b) - and perhaps the whole of this year.

Claudia Erfeld
www.herder.de

Messengers of Hope



**Hosianna! Gelobt sei, der da kommt in
dem Namen des Herrn!
Markus 11:1-11**

New Year's greeting from the LWF General Secretary

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,
Jesus says: "Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37)

On the threshold of the new year, we halt for a moment in order to cross over the threshold with hope and new encouragement.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still not over, although there are new possibilities to dam, hold off or even defeat the disease. However, a lot still needs to be done to make the vaccines and medication available in all parts of the world. Millions of people have died, and we pray for their dear ones: May God comfort all people who are grieving and all those fighting the

pandemic and its consequences. With our sisters and brothers, we also mourn all those, who died of other diseases.

We see new conflicts around the globe, where political issues have turned for the worse within the recent year. Some old and "frozen" conflicts have been fuelled. Sometimes it is not easy to say how and why, sometimes this seems quite clear.

We pray that God may lead those who instigate conflict to repentance, dialogue and peace building, and deliver from evil those who are ready to take up arms. As we enter the new year, we pray for an end to violence, injustice and oppression in the new year.

We see the destruction of God's creation. Climate change, catastrophes and desolation of vast areas of formerly intact ecological systems. We know, creation is not for sale, but it seems to be a long way for us human beings to change our attitudes. We ask for forgiveness and the right attitude toward the beautiful world God has created.

We are standing on the threshold of the new year in prayer, bringing all

Messengers of Hope

our concerns and sorrows before God, asking to be empowered to be the messengers of hope in today's world, to put our faith into action. In the watchword for 2022, Christ gives us a promise: His door is open for us. We are not cast out, if we come to him. His threshold is not a high one. He will receive us with our prayers, our concerns and our sorrows, he gives us hope and empowers us.

Christ encourages us to boldly cross the threshold of 2022. Carried by his love we enter the new year, knowing that he is with us every day.

Freed from fear and desperation we will be able to share the gifts we have received, with others: to be light in and for the world, to serve the neighbour, to spread peace and reconciliation and to stand up for human dignity wherever we are, however the circumstances may be, whatever it takes.

We are to welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed us (Rom 15:7) without casting us out or driving us away. We are called not to be messengers of exclusion, but inclusion; not the ones who contribute to fragmentation but who strive for unity.



New General Secretary, Rev. Anne Burghardt

On the threshold of 2022, let us pause for a moment in prayer. We feel received with all our needs by Christ's mercy, encouraged by his love. Then we boldly take the first step. May God guide us and bless us in this year!

Rev. Anne Burghardt
LWF General Secretary



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The congregation's Levy is paid to the Cape Church each month. The recommended contribution per family is **R 550** per month, however, all contributions, small or large help to our commitment. Please make your payments to the church by means of a deposit into the church's bank account or via electronic fund transfer (EFT) and provide **your details under the reference**

Table of Contents

Newsletter January 2022

Picture for Watchword 2022	1	Prayer Cards Jan 2022	15
Greetings for the New Year	2-3	Carols, Coffee, Cake	16-17
COVID Thoughts / Information	4-5	Christmas Services	17
Satan's Strategic Meeting	6-7	Kid's Page	18-19
Annual Watchword 2022	8-10	Watchword Jan 2022	20-21
Birthdays Jan 2022	11	Messengers of Hope	22-23

