

RIVER OF LIFE *STREAMS*

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"It's not polite to point, Billy"

Dear Members and Friends,

I was probably told that a number of times. I don't remember how old I was, but I have a recollection of being in downtown Houston. We went to downtown often in those days because that's where the stores and shops were. I pointed at a beggar on the sidewalk when my Mother reminded me, *"It's not polite to point, Billy."* You may have heard it from your parents or said it when your children were very young and hadn't learned all the etiquette of life.



Pointing at objects is not considered rude. In fact, pointing at things like stars in the sky or magnificent mountains can be good. Pointing when giving directions can be helpful.

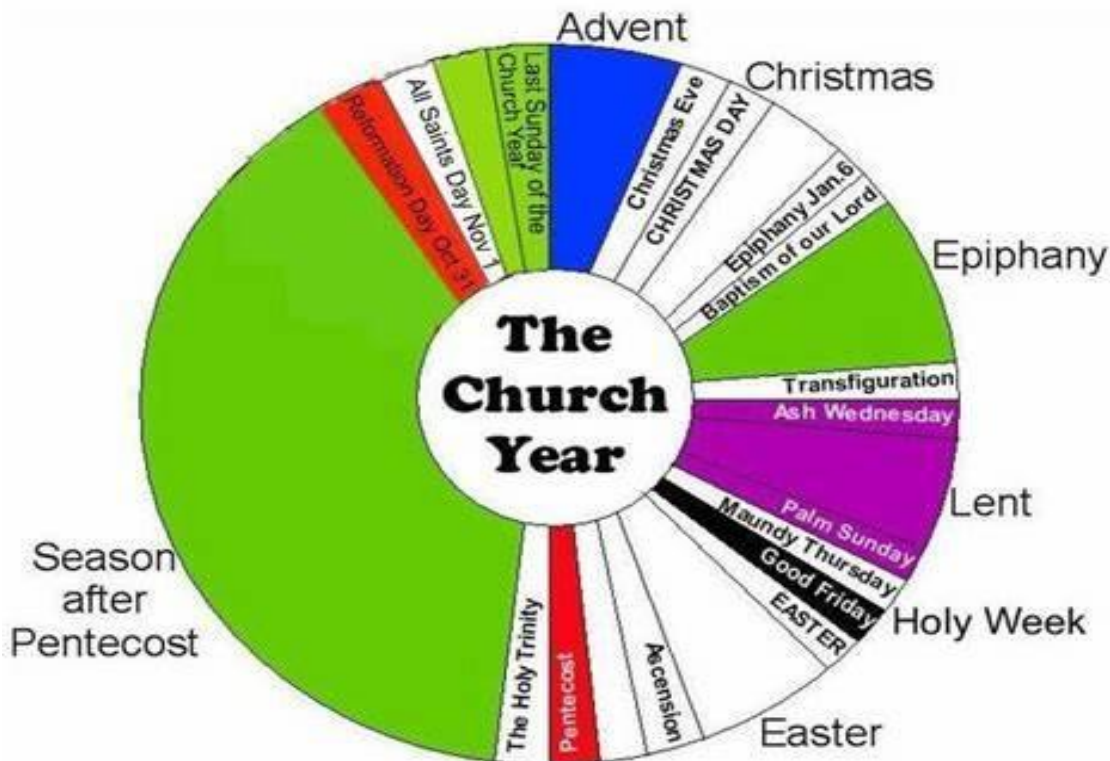
In our Gospels in Epiphany we have read of some good pointing. I don't know if John the Baptizer pointed when he identified Jesus to the crowd with his famous statement, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." "Behold" is an Epiphany word. It means "look at" or "I want you to look at", to see Jesus". We also had the Gospel when Andrew and John (the unnamed disciple) were sure they had found the Messiah and pointed him out to Peter.

Epiphany means "manifestation" or "showing forth," that is, "making known." In Epiphany Christ begins His Ministry. The Scripture Lessons show that Christ, born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph, is the Son of God. The Last Sunday in Epiphany is Transfiguration. The Gospel gives us the story of when Jesus took Peter, James and John up on the mountain and there Jesus was shown to them in all His glory.

After Jesus' resurrection, Peter, James and John and Andrew and the rest of the Disciples became Apostles those sent out by Jesus to tell His story, His love for all, and His plan of salvation.

Mother was right. "It's not polite to point." Except then it comes to Jesus. Then you and I are called to point to Him in all we do. We are called to point to Him as Lord and Savior of our lives. We are called to point Him out in how we live and how we treat one another and those who are different. We are called to point Him out in how we care for the poor and less fortunate. By word and deed we point to Jesus as Savior and Lord.

In Christ, Greetings,
Pastor Mitschke



What determines the changeable dates of The Church Year?

The date of Pentecost and dates of the seasons of Lent and Easter and *the Holy Days within those seasons* are changeable.

The Epiphany Season began January 6 this year and continues until Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. The Epiphany season has between four and nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter.

This February we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22. This is 40 days, not counting Sundays, before Easter.

In 325 A.D., the Council of Nicaea established a formula for the date of Easter as the Sunday following the paschal full moon, which is the full moon that falls on or after the spring equinox. In practice, that means that Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls on or after March 21. Easter can occur as early as March 22 and as late as April 25.

The paschal full moon can fall on different days in different time zones, which can present a problem when calculating the date of Easter. If people in different time zones were to calculate the date of Easter depending on when they observed the paschal full moon, then that would mean that the date of Easter would be different depending on which time zone they lived in. For that reason, the church does not use the exact date of the spring equinox but an approximation, March 21. The actual vernal equinox can occur on March 20th in certain time zones. For calculation purposes, the full moon is always set on the 14th day of the lunar month. The lunar month begins with the new moon. For the same reason, the church sets the date of the spring equinox at March 21. These two approximations allow the church to set a universal date for Easter, regardless of when you observe the paschal full moon in your time zone.



**EPIPHANY
And
LENT**

**Services
11:45am**

Feb. 5 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
"Salt and Light"
Matthew 5:13-20

Feb. 12 Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
(Super Bowl Sunday)
"Jesus and the Ten Commandments"
Matthew 5:21-37

Feb. 19 Transfiguration
"The Revealing of Jesus"
Matthew 5:21-37



February 22.....Wednesday at 6:30 pm

1 Peter 3:15 "The Gospel in Seven Words"
Ashes will be offered for all who wish
Holy Communion will be celebrated

Feb. 26 First Sunday in Lent
"The Two Temptations"
Genesis 3:1-21, Matthew 4:1-11

RIVER OF LIFE LENTEN SERVICES

MID-WEEK WEDNESDAYS

Lenten Suppers – 5:30pm

Lenten Services – 6:30pm

“The Gospel in Seven Words”

Imagine what a friend or family member who is unfamiliar with your Christian faith asks you to summarize your beliefs. She or he isn't looking for a list of doctrines. They have no interest in hearing you recite the Apostles' Creed. They want to get to the heart of the matter, "In seven words or less" they say, "tell me what you believe as a Christian."

What would you say? How would you put it?

Would you like help in confessing your faith in Jesus? We trust this series for 2023 will be beneficial.

In 2023 River of Life will participate with six churches from three circuits for Wednesday Midweek Services. Participating from our circuit are Channahon and Joliet.

Pastor Mitschke will introduce the theme: *“The Gospel in Seven Words”* on Ash Wednesday. On each of the five Wednesdays in March a different pastor from the participating churches will come to River of Life to be our guest pastor.

The Wednesday dates, themes and names of the pastors will be included in the March Newsletter. Two are known to us, Pastors Estby and Rock. In addition, we will be meeting and getting to know three other pastors.

We think the series and weekly guest pastor will be a plus. Feel free to bring guests to the dinners and services.





Thanks to **Doris Anderson** and Joanne **Morris** for their service on the Altar Guild and faithfully setting up and putting away our Communion vessels and elements each week.

Thanks to Pam Vermeulen for sending cards to our shut-ins and those with medical issues!



Judy Bremer
1215 Burns,
Minooka, IL 60447

Sandra Krause
North Aurora Nursing Home
310 Banbury Rd
Aurora, IL 60542

Bill Richardson
StoryPoint, Room 355
605 S. Edward Dr.
Romeoville, IL 60446

Vince Zitella
6105 E. Hilltop Dr.
Coal City, IL 60416

Julianne Zitella-Grell
650 S. Broadway St. Apt. 2F
Coal City, IL 60416

Roger Feiertag
1610 Augusta Lane
Shorewood, IL 60404

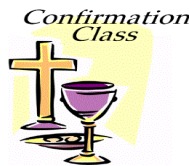
Pastor Mark Willig
Recovering from a stroke
Friends in Christ Lutheran Church
513 E Main Street, Morris, IL 60450

Pastor David Daniel
In treatment for Colo-Rectal Cancer
Zion Lutheran Church
Ottawa, IL



Sunday School...

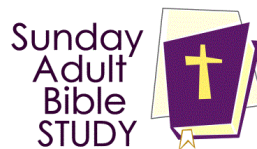
Sunday School is at 10:45am each Sunday in a Classroom #2



See or call Pastor Mitschke about Confirmation class.

Youth Group...

Plan on attending all events if possible, for some fellowship and to help our youth group!



Bible Study is at 10:45am each Sunday in Upstairs Classroom #1



Chairman and 1 Usher – Vacant (If interested in serving see Bob Grimm)

If you need to use the LIFT, let an Elder or Usher know to assist you!



Head Elder Dave Hall and the Elders have been in touch with Pastor Ryden and are working with him in regard to looking for a pastor.

A Poster Found in a Church...

"When you enter this church, it may be possible that you hear "the call of God". However, it is unlikely that He will call on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving."

Swaddling Clothes

Our outreach ministry for families!

Open on the 2nd Saturday, and the 4th Tuesday of each month.

February 11

9 am – 12 pm

Contact Amanda Graves for any questions.

February 28

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

If you're interested in helping, please contact Amanda Graves.

Contact Pam Sterle if you want to help some mornings.

The more, the merrier!

Please consider donating your time to this worthwhile ministry.

Help is always needed and appreciated.

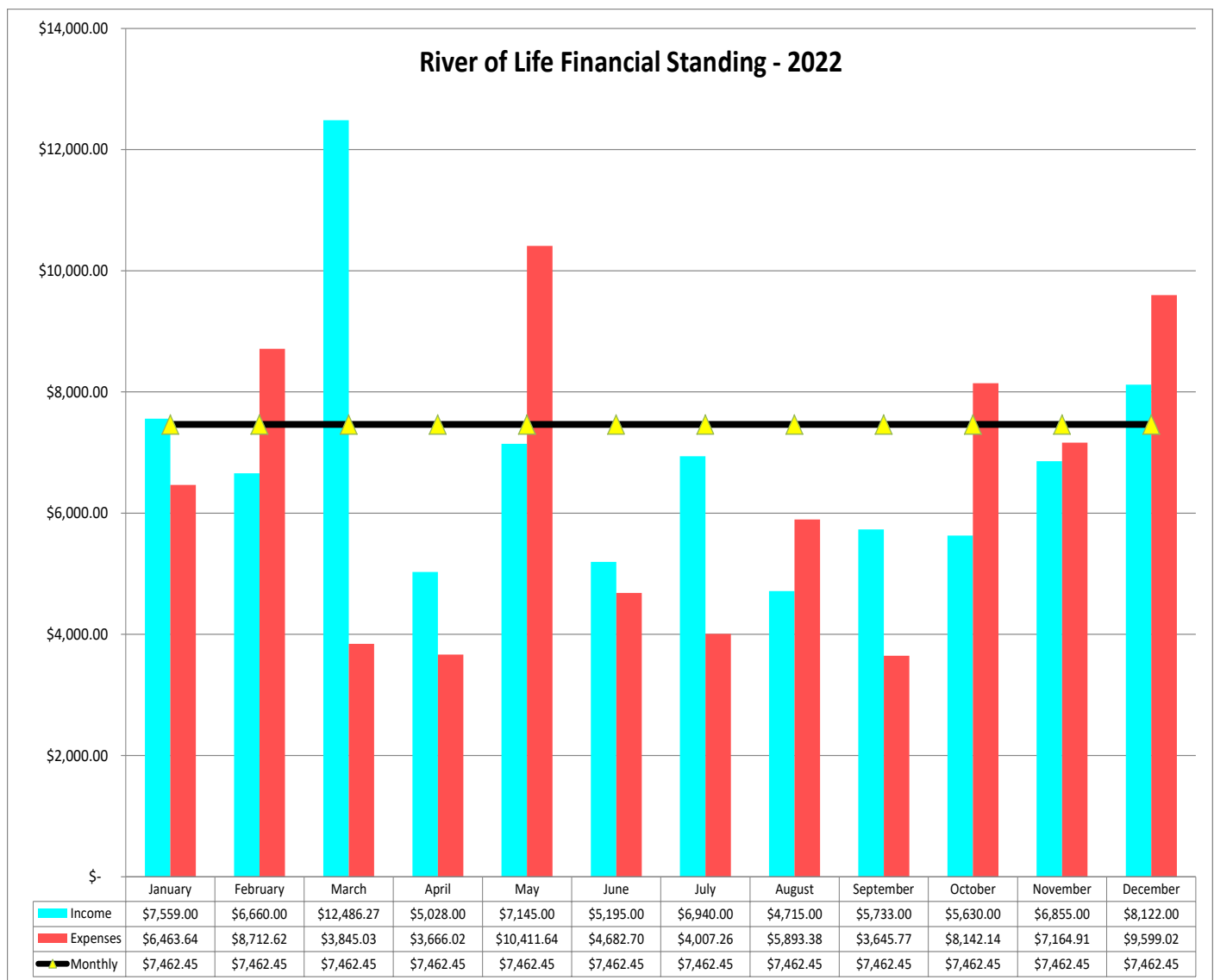
Donating to a charity using a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

If you are age 72 or older, IRS rules require you to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) each year from your tax-deferred retirement accounts.

Learn how by taking your RMD as a QCD and donating directly to a charity it will not be considered as taxable income. (Consider River of Life Lutheran Church)

Check the website listed below for an explanation, or you can ask Vince on how it all works.

<https://www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/retirement/qcds-the-basics>



Giving	\$ 82,068.27
Expenses	\$ 76,234.13
	\$ 5,834.14



Holy **COMMUNION**

The Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is received reverently among us. With COVID-19, our reception of the Sacrament is still affected.

Social distancing is practiced coming forward. Communicants come to receive the Sacrament as singles or a family. As the first family/single leaves the Communion Table, the next single or family comes forward.

In our distribution of the wine and the bread in the Sacrament, there is now no contact between the pastor/elder and the people.

The bread and wine are in individual cups touched only by the communicant(s). As the pastor says, "*Take eat*" . . ., each communicant takes his own cup with bread, "*Take drink*" . . ., each communicant then takes his own cup with wine. The pastor then speaks the dismissal.

We followed suggestions and introduced these new precautions long ago. If you have comments or suggestions, please feel free to share them with an elder or pastor.

We appreciate the service of our Altar Guild for their beautiful service and add an extra thank you for their special work currently.

Dave Hall, Head Elder

