

Nbr. 66 – January, 2025

### **Epiphany Manifesto**

Epiphany is a great time to talk about evangelism and missions. Which season of the church year could be better?

Epiphany is “who is He?” time. Having received the best Gift of all at Christmas, we now see this Gift unwrapped, as it were. Week by week, we find out more and more of Who Jesus is.

The Magi – Gentiles! – come from afar to worship the Baby. A hymn well says, “And by their gifts their God confessed” (LSB 399:2). Who is Jesus? He is the newborn King of the Jews, yet He is for them.

When He is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him in bodily form, as a dove. God the Father identifies Jesus as His beloved Son in Whom He is well-pleased. This most striking manifestation of all three Persons of the Godhead in the entire Bible begins Jesus’ ministry. Who is Jesus? The eternal Son and also Suffering Servant.

He turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana. This was the first of His miraculous signs. “He showed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11). Who is Jesus? The One Whose works attest Him as the promised Messiah Who always provides plenty, more than we expect.

*See? WOW!* Is it any wonder that the church has loved to emphasize the Gospel going out during Epiphany every year? It goes out to unlikely people still today, bringing Christ in all His fullness. The Epiphany manifesto tells Who Jesus really is, the Son of God and Savior of the world. It is a message that primes us to consider evangelism and mission . . . which brings us to our subject in this special issue of *See? WOW!*

### **This issue**

Later this year, at the District convention, CID will face important decisions regarding especially the continuation of various forms of mission work in which it has been involved for years. These are not the kinds of decisions to be made lightly or quickly. They should be thought through on the basis of widespread information.

This issue aims to enlist your help in reminding the pastors and congregations of your Circuit to consider these matters. Details and alternatives will become increasingly available throughout the first half of 2025. January is not too early to start, though, so see page 2 of this issue.

### **Witnessing Helps “Teaser” Handouts**

Now added to the Witness and Outreach page of CID website are four “teasers.” Pastors can hand these out to people to stimulate their interest in CID’s new Witnessing Helps. These helps (featured as the lead item in the December CID *GatePost*) have been on the District website since October, along with promotional videos for each.

Now added to the sections for the four helps are links to one-page “teaser” fliers. Each flier fits on a standard size sheet of paper. It gives all or part of the first (the “A”) suggestion for beginning an evangelistic conversation, listening discerningly to a non-churched person, making a simple statement of the Gospel, or defending the resurrection. The “teaser” handout fliers all include URLs for the rest of the Witnessing Helps and the Synod’s Every One His Witness website.

Check all this out at

<https://www.cidcms.org/outreach-witness-ministry.html> And pass it along!



**Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers**

*Worth considering:*

### **CID Missions as Extensions of Evangelism**

The line between evangelism and missions should not be drawn with a wide-tipped marker. Both bring the Gospel to non-churched people.

Apart from new church starts at various times throughout its history, CID maintains a number of ongoing mission projects:

*Outreach in Spanish.* The great bulk of the ministry at Cristo Rey (Christ the King) Lutheran Church in East Moline is conducted in Spanish. Pastor Pablo Dominguez has served this mission church since its inception, for over 20 years. In 2018, Cristo Rey congregation formally joined the Synod. For a video on it, please take 4 minutes and see <https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-spanish.html>

Pastor Dominguez also travels twice a month to St. John Lutheran Church in Beardstown to conduct services and Bible classes in Spanish. The Latino work in Beardstown, which has been fostered in the past by several Spanish-speaking vicars and community liaison Maria Guijosa, has slowed but has not come to a standstill thanks to the dedication of Pastor Dominguez and the resolve of St. John congregation.

*Campus ministries* offer Word and Sacrament ministry on four key campuses:

- Eastern Illinois University, Charleston
- Illinois State University, Normal
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Western Illinois University, Macomb

These campus ministries also serve other nearby four-year institutions and community colleges.

Please view the various videos related to all four by scrolling down the campus ministry page on

the CID website at

<https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-campus.html>

*Deaf ministry.* CID finds itself at a turning point in deaf ministry upon the departure of veteran missionary to the deaf Pastor Tom Phillips. Our District-wide deaf parish will be meeting throughout 2025 for its accustomed monthly workshops at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sherman as well as conducting supplemental sessions via Zoom once a month with deaf missionary Rev. John Reinke from St. Louis.

For more information, please go to the short article at <https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-deaf.html>

*Prison Ministry.* Here, CID has already transitioned to a new model for ministry. Instead of two District-supported prison chaplains, between them serving 5 or 6 prisons, the effort now is to encourage congregations to “lend” their pastors for weekly ministry visits at nearby prisons. Dollars for Mission funds are available so CID can give congregations that do so \$5,000 a year in recognition and gratitude. A video to generate interest in this prospect is available at <https://www.cidlcms.org/outreach-missions-prison.html> Please scroll down to see it.

In addition, the Synod is developing a “pen pal” arrangement in which pastors and others can help with prison ministry without entering a prison. More information on this is forthcoming.

C-WOWs, please urge pastors and especially key lay leaders in your Circuit actually to follow the URLs above to view the various videos and articles. It’s a start at learning CID missions!

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