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# COUNTRYSIDE NEWS

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Volume 1 Issue 5

A Publication of Countryside Cooperative Ministry

January 2003

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Calvary, Barnum; Faith, Harcourt; Fulton, Roelyn; Trinity, Boxholm; UCC/Congregational, Moorland; Zion, Gowrie

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## EPIPHANY

Christians in the Northern Hemisphere have long associated midwinter's decreased amount of natural light with the gloom overcome by Christ's birth.

Matthew's story of the magi traveling to Bethlehem guided by a star is certainly one biblical event that encourages our use of the light metaphor in this season whenever we speak of Christ's effect on the world. Epiphany is a time to celebrate the presence of Christ as light. It is also a season for focusing on a few central teachings of the Christian faith. By doing so, we hope to

discover what is most important in our faith and in the Christian mission throughout the world.

The arrival of the magi at Jesus' home (Matthew 2:1-12) established his worldwide significance. Isaiah 60:1-6 (the first reading for the festival of Epiphany) proclaims, "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn" (v. 3). Jesus fulfills this ancient promise. Though born in Judea, Jesus became a treasure for the whole human race.

How Epiphany came to be

*Continued on page 2a*

### Countryside Cooperative Ministry Council

Byron Chalstrom, UCC/Cong.  
Loretta Daisy, Fulton  
Larry Fatka, Trinity  
Marc Greenfield, Faith  
Steve Julius, Calvary  
Larry Krakau, Trinity  
Steve Lane, Zion  
Shannon Miller, Zion  
Ned Palmer, Zion  
John Samuelson, Faith  
Richard Silvey, UCC/Cong.  
Everett Underwood, Fulton  
Ron Walrod, Calvary

### Countryside Cooperative Ministry Executive Committee

Byrum Chalstrom, President  
Shannon Miller, Vice-president  
Steve Lane, Treasurer  
Loretta Daisy, Secretary  
Rev. Jim Davis, Administrative  
Pastor

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## Countryside Cooperative Council Minutes

November 25, 2002

The Countryside Cooperative Ministry met Monday November 25, 2002 at 7:00P.M. at Faith Lutheran in Harcourt. Everett Underwood, Marc Greenfield, Ned Palmer, John Samuelson, Larry Krakau, Shannon Miller, Steve Lane, Richard Silvey, Larry Fatka, Byron Chalstrom, Loretta Daisy, and Pastor Jim Davis were present.

President Byron Chalstrom

called the meeting to order and Pastor Davis led us in devotions.

The secretary's report was read and corrected. The financial report was reviewed and approved.

### OLD BUSINESS

Larry Krakau reported on workman's compensation. Information was not conclusive. Larry and Steve Lane will meet again with the insurance agent

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The longer I live the less future there is to worry about.

– Author Unknown

A keen sense of humor helps us to overlook the unbecoming, understand the unconventional, tolerate the unpleasant, overcome the unexpected, and outlast the unbearable.

– Billy Graham

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*Minutes - Continued from page 1b*

and report at the next meeting. Putting all of the members' policies under one name should be a savings to each church.

### NEW BUSINESS

Pastor Jim reported on staff changes. Pastor Wahlgren has been added to the staff for 4 hours per week. Pastor Frerking has suffered a stroke and has been moved to Nebraska for therapy. Pastor Rod Meyer will not become rostered. A short discussion followed. Excess contributions were discussed. Due to the leaving of Pastor Snyder, we find ourselves with extra money. A motion to send the excess monies back to the member churches was made by Larry Krakau and seconded by John Samuelson. The motion carried on a 12 - 1 vote.

Names for the Countryside newsletter were distributed by Pastor Davis. A vote was taken and counted. The newsletter will be called Countryside News.

March 2nd was chosen for our annual Cooperative worship.

The survey taken to identify our needs was reviewed. The results showed that our members were interested in hiring someone to help with the ministry to young families and high school age children. The need for someone to help with our layman's ministry was also discussed. Ned Palmer made a motion that Pastor Davis pursue the availability of people to fill our staff and identify the areas in which they might serve. Shannon Miller seconded it and the motion unanimously carried.

President Chalstrom reminded us to be sure to add the amendment to our annual meetings agendas. Everett Underwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Steve Julius seconded it. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Loretta Daisy, Secretary

consideration.

The spotlight continues to stay on Jesus as we move throughout the season after Epiphany. The biblical scenes in the weeks after Epiphany keep pointing us back to the person whom the magi came to worship in Bethlehem. Jesus is the center of attention; the spotlight keeps focusing on him and on his mission. All of these events lead to the main part of the drama: Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' birth, baptism, and the beginning of his public ministry represent act 1. The coming weeks will take us into act 2. The spotlight will again be focused on Jesus, with more intensity and brilliance.

Can we stay with the story as it unfolds? Can we also focus all of our energies as congregations on proclaiming Christ to the world? Week in and week out, it is Christ who is the center of our focus. He is our gift, our leader, and our teacher. Come, and see what he provides. See where his light leads us to serve others who are in darkness. Invite others to join you as you gather around the light.

*Epiphany - Continued from page 1b*

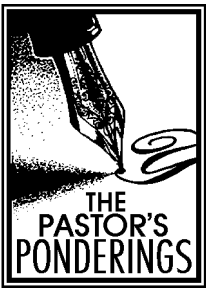
known as the festival celebrating the revelation of Christ to the nations, and more particularly the arrival of three kings, is a peculiar development. Perhaps associating the Isaiah 60 passage with the Matthew 2 story gave Christians the notion that the magi were kings (the story in Matthew does not mention that they were). Furthermore, Matthew's account of the magi does not indicate how many of them there were, though Isaiah 60:6, which speaks about camels

coming from Midian, Ephah, and Sheba, may have suggested to people that there were three. The three gifts presented to the Christ child in Matthew 2:11 (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) may have led to a tradition that assigned one bearer to each gift. Regardless of its accuracy, a story about three foreign kings coming a long distance to bow down and worship before a child has drawing power. That a child of such humble origins can be the focus of so much attention asks for our wonder-filled

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So, where do we go from here?

“Where do we go from here?” is the question the Cooperative Council has been

addressing since the departure of Pastor Snyder. We have discussed options, surveyed member congregations and prayed about it, but we are still uncertain as to where God is leading us.

There are many different staffing configurations and forms that ministry can assume in our individual congregations and the Cooperative Ministry. The challenge we face lies in

discerning which direction God is leading us.

It seems, from my perspective, that the crucial decision deals with whether our ministry is going to be staff-based or lay-based.

The traditional form of ministry in most of our congregations is staff-based. In staff-based ministry, pastors are seen as the ministers of the congregation. Their primary responsibilities are to provide programming and pastoral care for congregations. While a staff-based ministry has been the traditional form of ministry in our congregations, it is becoming an increasingly difficult form to maintain. A shrinking pool of pastors, the difficulty of attracting pastors to rural areas, and financial concerns are all factors in the decreased viability of this form of ministry.

A lay-based ministry emphasizes using the gifts of all God’s people to provide for ministry in congregations and communities. Lay-based ministry challenges each and every one of God’s people to identify their gifts, discern how God is calling them to use those gifts and then offer those gifts in service to family, church and community. While a staff-based ministry is seen as the traditional form of ministry, lay-based ministry is where the church began and where the church has always been the most effective.

The struggle, however, with moving toward a lay-based ministry is in dealing with people’s attitudes about what

ministry is and who does it. It is very difficult to change to a

lay-based ministry when all one has ever experienced is a staff-based ministry. While it may be easier and make people happier to attempt to maintain a staff-based ministry, I wonder if that is where God is really calling us.

I do not believe we will be able to discern where God is leading us and where we go from here without making a choice between a staff-based or a lay-based ministry.

Please join your Cooperative Council in thinking, talking and praying about where God is leading us. We need your help in discerning where we go from here.

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## COOPERATIVE WORSHIP

A Cooperative Worship service will be held at Zion, Gowrie on Sunday, March 2 at 10:30 a.m.

Executives from denominational judicatories will again join us for an ecumenical worship service.

A Cooperative Choir will be formed for this service.

This will be the only worship service offered in Cooperative congregations on this Sunday.

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for an inspirational worship service.

More details will be available in the February issue of *Countryside News*.

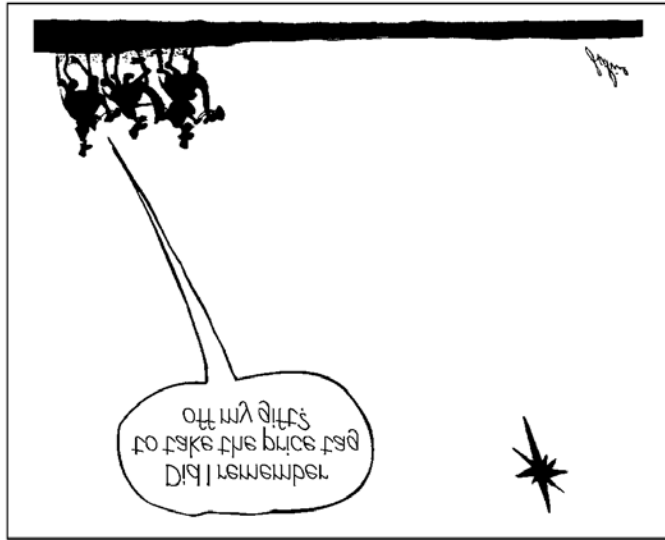


Sound Familiar ?



## NEED A VISIT?

If you or anyone you know of could use a pastoral visit, please contact the Cooperative office at 352-3645 so a visit can be scheduled.



Box 63  
 Gowrie, IA 50543  
**CountrySide Cooperative Ministry**

**Cooperative Phone Numbers:**

Cooperative Office		352-3645
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	Home	352-5261
Rod Meyer	Office	846-6227
	Home	354-5224
Rev. Wahlgren	Office	352-3645
	Home	352-5245

**Cooperative Email Addresses:**

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 Rod Meyer: [rodmeyer@mail.lvcta.com](mailto:rodmeyer@mail.lvcta.com)

**Cooperative Worship Times**

Calvary, Barnum	10:30 a.m.
Faith, Harcourt	10:30 a.m.
Fulton, Roelyn	9:15 a.m.
Trinity, Boxholm	9:00 a.m.
UCC/Cong., Moorland	8:00 a.m.
Zion, Gowrie	10:30 a.m.
1st and 3rd Saturdays	5:00 p.m.

