

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church



St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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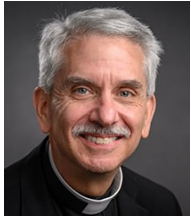


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Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Newsletter
(December 2024/January 2025)



From the Pastor . . .

A New Philosophy

As we start a new Church Year with the beginning of Advent, I am changing my philosophy about the hymns we sing in the Divine Service . . . *just a little!*

Ever since I came to Saint Athanasius, I have striven to use a great variety of the hymns in our hymnal. I want you to be familiar with the rich and varied hymnody that is available to us. To accomplish this, it has been my practice to try not to sing any one hymn more than twice a year. That way, we get to sing a greater variety of hymns. The exceptions to this have been the Lord's Supper hymns we sing during the distribution of the Sacrament.

But part of the tradition of the Lutheran Church is also the recognition that there are some hymns worth singing more often (*kernlieder*), so that you get to know them better and even commit them to memory. I was discussing this recently with our Board for Evangelism and Outreach, and we decided this would be a good practice to start in our church. So I am changing my philosophy . . . *just a little!* We will now sing some hymns more often.

So, *which* hymns, you may be wondering? For this year, it will be Luther's catechetical hymns. We'll sing these six hymns in rotation as one of the distribution hymns each week (with a few possible exceptions). Over time, you'll get to know these hymns well as they imprint upon your heart and mind, which is what catechesis is all about.

So watch for these hymns to start appearing with the beginning of Advent. And I hope this new practice is a blessing for you.

His servant and yours,

Pastor Douthwaite



Pastor's Open House

When: Saturday, December 14th
Time: 3:00-7:00 pm

As is our custom, Laurie and I would like to open our home to you, your family, and your friends for a holiday Open House. ***Please bring nothing but yourself*** – we will provide food and beverages for all! (Healthy and unhealthy!) And stay as little or as long as you like! This is simply our way to share some Christmas cheer and to say thanks to all of you for all the love and care you have shown us this year. We hope you will be able to come!

FREE Online Advent Calendar

Simply scan the code
or go to: <https://t.ly/GCMyg>
(Link also on our website)



Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 15th 12:00 Noon - 2:00 pm

For the past few years, a group from our church has sung Christmas Carols at the Freeman House in Vienna. This enables us to meet our neighbors, sing the Word of God to them, spread some Christmas (and Advent!) cheer, and let them know about our church. We'd love for you to join us this year! The more, the merrier! We also have gifts to hand out to folks as they come by. It's a lot of fun. So put this on your calendar and plan to join us for a bit.

March for Life

Friday, January 24th



Join hundreds of your fellow LCMSers and thousands of people from all around the country for the annual March for Life on the National Mall on Friday, January 24th. This year, the LCMS has a significant role in the March as our Synod President and representatives from all 35 Districts (including our Pastor representing our SELC District) will close the pre-March rally with prayer and the singing of the Common Doxology.

The day begins with a Divine Service at Immanuel in Alexandria, followed by brunch at the congregation. The rally on the Mall starts at 12 Noon, and the March around 1 pm. If you would like to attend, LCMS Life Ministries requests that you register with them ahead of time, so they know how many to expect and can contact you via email or text with vital information or last minute changes you need to know. Go to lcms-life.org to register. And if you would like more information or have any questions, speak with Pastor.

The theme this year is "Every Life: Why We March," because abortion effects not just the baby, but the mother, the father, and the family - every life! We want to care for all the lives our Father in heaven created, for they are valuable and precious.

Every Life:
WHY WE MARCH

Why not plan to attend this year? If you never have, you won't regret it! And as I repeat every year, this is not an angry protest march, but a joyous celebration of the gift of life. Hope to see you there!



Annual Congregational Voters Meeting and Pot Luck Lunch

Sunday, December 8th
11:30 am *(after church)*

This is the annual business meeting of our congregation. Not exciting, but important! **Please plan to stay.** We need all of you! We'll . . .

. . . hear how we did financially this past year, our budget plans for next year, and adopt the budget for 2024,

. . . hear about plans and ideas for next year and beyond,

. . . and other business of the congregation.

Come give your thoughts and ideas! We'll have a **Pot Luck luncheon** this day as well, so after church we'll grab our lunch and eat *while we meet*. Hope to see all of you there!



New Church Directories are available for you. Please make sure you get one - or more than one if you need! We always have lots of changes in the congregation. And please use this directory to help support, encourage, pray for, and stay in touch with your fellow Athanasians!

Holiday Service Schedule



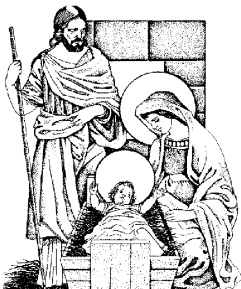
Advent Midweek Evening Prayer Services

Once He Came in Blessing
Wednesdays, 7:30 pm

The word *advent* means coming. This season focuses on our Saviour who came for us, comes for us, and in coming again for us. For our midweek meditations this year we will use the Advent hymn *Once He Came in Blessing* (LSB #333) as our theme. Even though this is a very busy time of year with many extra things to do, do not consider this another item on that list, or that you are too busy to come. Rather, use these services as an opportunity to stop the rush, slow down, and spend time focusing on our Saviour and all that He has done for you. It may just be exactly what you need!

December 4: v. 1 - All Our Ills Redressing
December 11: v. 2 - Now He Gently Leads Us
December 18: v. 3 - Joy Beyond Comparing

The Nativity of our Lord



Christmas Eve Divine Service
Saturday, December 24th, 7:30 pm

Christmas Day Divine Service
Sunday, December 25th, 10:15 am



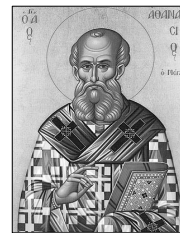
From Luther . . .

[Luther puts the First Commandment into his catechetical hymn, These Are the Holy Ten Commands (LSB #581).]

These are the holy Ten Commands
God gave to us by Moses' hands
When high on Sinai's mount he stood,
Receiving them for our good.
Have mercy, Lord!

"I am alone your God, the Lord;
No other gods shall be adored.
But you shall fully trust in Me
And love Me wholeheartedly."
Have mercy, Lord!

[from: Lutheran Service Book #581 (vs. 1-2) © CPH 2006]



From St. Athanasius . . .

(St. Athanasius speaks of the order of creation as testament to the existence of one true God.)

Since then, there is everywhere not disorder but order, proportion and not disproportion, not disarray but arrangement, and that in an order perfectly harmonious, we needs must infer and be led to perceive the Master that put together and compacted all things, and produced harmony in them . . . to perceive their Ruler, Arranger, and King.

For in like manner as if we saw a city, consisting of many and diverse people, great and small, rich and poor, old and young, male and female, in an orderly condition, and its inhabitants, while different from one another, yet at unity among themselves, and not the rich set against the poor, the great against the small, nor the young against the old, but all at peace in the enjoyment of equal rights, — if we saw this, the inference surely follows that the presence of a ruler enforces concord, even if we do not see him; . . . so in the order and harmony of the Universe, we needs must perceive God the governor of it all, and that He is one and not many.

*[from: "Against the Heathen," §38.1-2
in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 4, p. 24]*

On the Catechism . . .



During the Advent season we hear of John the Baptist and his proclamation of preparation and repentance. Therefore during this season, a catechism focus on the Ten Commandments is appropriate.

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Let the following point be made to the simple; then they may well note and remember the meaning of this commandment: We are to trust in God alone and look to Him and expect from Him nothing but good, as from one who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all necessities of both temporal and eternal things. He also preserves us from misfortune. And if any evil befall us, He delivers and rescues us. So it is God alone (as has been said well enough) from whom we receive all good and by whom we are delivered from all evil. So, I think, we Germans from ancient times name God (more elegantly and appropriately than any other language) from the word Good. It is as though He were an eternal fountain that gushes forth abundantly nothing but what is good. And from that fountain flows forth all that is and is called good.

[from: The Large Catechism, Part I. The First Commandment §24-25
in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, First Edition (Concordia © 2005), p 387]

How to confess from the First Commandment: In what or whom do I trust above all else? In what or whom do I trust most for financial security, physical safety, or emotional support? Do I fear God's wrath, avoiding every sin? Is my love for and trust in God evident in my daily living? Do I expect only good from God in every situation, or do I worry, doubt, complain, and feel unfairly treated when things go wrong?

Preparing for the Divine Service

To give you the opportunity to look ahead and prepare for our Divine Service each Sunday, the Office Hymn, Holy Gospel, and Theme of each week for December and January are listed below.

Advent 1 (December 1):

Holy Gospel: Luke 19:28–40 (Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.)

Office Hymn: LSB #332 "Savior of the Nations, Come"

Advent 2 (December 8):

Holy Gospel: Luke 3:1–20 (How do you prepare for Jesus?)

Office Hymn: LSB #344 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

Advent 3 (December 15):

Holy Gospel: Luke 7:18–35 (Is Jesus the one?)

Office Hymn: LSB #345 "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"

Advent 4 (December 22):

Holy Gospel: Luke 1:39–56 (Mary rejoices in the Lord.)

Office Hymn: LSB #357 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Christmas 1 (December 29):

Holy Gospel: Luke 2:22–40 (How to depart in peace.)

Office Hymn: LSB #360 "All My Heart Again Rejoices"

The Epiphany of our Lord (January 5):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 2:1–12 (The visit of the Magi.)

Office Hymn: LSB #395 "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright"

The Baptism of our Lord (January 12)

Holy Gospel: Luke 3:15–22 (John baptizes Jesus into His death.)

Office Hymn: LSB #407 "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord"

Epiphany 2 (January 19)

Holy Gospel: John 2:1–11 (Jesus loves wedding feasts!)

Office Hymn: LSB #408 "Come, Join in Cana's Feast"

St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor / Sanctity of Life Sunday (Jan 26)

Holy Gospel: Luke 10:1–9 (Jesus teaches and acts with authority.)

Office Hymn: LSB #585 "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide"

Note: The Liturgy for all these Sundays is **Divine Service 3** (p. 184ff).