

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church



St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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Easter Newsletter
(April/May 2024)

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From the Pastor . . .

This Joyful Eastertide

*This joyful Eastertide
Away with sin and sorrow!
My love, the Crucified,
Has sprung to life this morrow;
Had Christ, who once was slain,
Not burst His three-day prison,
Our faith had been in vain:
But now has Christ arisen, arisen, arisen;
But now has Christ arisen! (LSB #482 v. 1)*

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

You'll probably get this newsletter before we get to proclaim those words in church on Easter. That's okay. As you read these words, look forward to that day and the great joy that is ours on Easter. It is a festival unlike any other.

And as the hymn I included above says, *This Joyful Eastertide*. The great high feast of Easter is one day, but *Eastertide* is 50! That is, Easter is so great that we cannot just celebrate it one day, but have to celebrate for 50 days. It is the foundation and lynchpin of our faith, as the hymn above states: *Had Christ, who once was slain, not burst His three-day prison, our faith had been in vain*. That's is pretty much a quote from 1 Corinthians 15:14. But Christ has arisen! And therefore, so will we, with Him, to everlasting life. So we sing Easter hymns every Sunday in the Easter season (not *only* Easter hymns, but including Easter hymns), all the way, this year, through May 12. Some may think that strange. That's fine. Let them think that! We will rejoice and continue to rejoice in this great victory of our Saviour.

The Easter season, though, has a rhythm and a pattern to it. Not every Sunday is the same. The **first three Sundays** focus on the risen Jesus and His appearances to His disciples. In these appearances Jesus not only proves to the disciples that He is

really and truly risen and alive bodily, He also teaches them what His resurrection means. He sends them out with the forgiveness of sins that He has also given to them, and He opens their minds to understand how He has fulfilled all the Old Testament so they can go and preach the same thing.

But then on **the Fourth Sunday** of the Easter season we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday and hear those comforting words that Jesus cares for, tends, and nourishes us as His sheep. And not just now, in this life, for a time - but risen from the dead, He is our forever shepherd! Good news indeed.

And then for **the final three weeks** of the Easter season, our attention turns from looking *back* to what happened on Easter and what it means, to looking *forward* to the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised He would send to His church after His ascension. This year we will hear of being connected to Jesus as the branches to the vine, and how fed by Christ and with His Spirit we produce the good fruits of faith that mark those who have died and risen with Christ in Holy Baptism. And united to Christ and one flesh with Him, as our heavenly Bridegroom, He will keep us until He comes again in glory, to take home His Bride, the church.

That's a lot to celebrate! *All* that Christ has done for us! So even after you've put away the Easter baskets, all the candy is eaten, and the world has moved on to other things, we'll still be basking in the joy of Easter in church. I hope you all will join us! That our church will be filled with all of you - not just on Easter Sunday - but every Sunday of Eastertide.

*Alleluia! Now we cry to our King Immortal,
Who, triumphant, burst the bars of the tomb's dark portal.
Come, you faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness!
God has brought His Israel into joy from sadness!*

(LSB #487 v. 5)

His servant and yours,

Pastor Douthwaite



Announcing our *Seventeenth* Good Shepherd Seminar

Teaching Our Children: The Wittenberg Way

- When? Saturday, May 4th, 10:00 am until 3:30 pm
(Doors open at 10 am; Matins begins at 10:15 am)
- Where? Courtyard Marriott Hotel
6710 Commerce Street, Springfield
(near the Springfield Mixing Bowl)
- Cost? **Free for members of Saint Athanasius**
Suggested donation for others: \$15
(All proceeds to go to the Seminary's student aid fund.)
- Who? Rev. Dr. Jon Bruss, presenter
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology,
Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
- Lunch? Catered by Malek's Pizza Palace

Education has been in the news a LOT the past few years. *How* are we teaching are children? *What* are we teaching them? How has education changed over the years? Have these changes been good? How did the Reformation affect education? What do we need to know? Even if your children are grown, you'll learn a LOT from this seminar.

Take advantage of this special opportunity to hear and learn from one of our seminary professors. And please pass the word to any of your friends and neighbors you think might want to attend. **It is open to all.** Space is limited, so please RSVP to Pastor Douthwaite if you will be attending, so we make sure we save a place for you and have plenty for lunch. **Thanks!**



2024 Walk-Run-Ride for Life

The Walk-Run-Ride for Life is one of Assist Pregnancy Center's biggest fundraisers of the year. Our congregation has participated in this for a number of years now - **is this YOUR year to join us? Why not?**

It's easy! To sign up, go to our church website and click on the "2024 Walk-Run-Ride for Life" link right there on the front page. That will take you to our Lutherans for Life fundraising page. Sign yourself up and start asking friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, classmates - anyone! - to sponsor you. And, if you would like, sponsor our team or anyone on the team.

We'll set up a time when we can walk, run, or ride together as a church family (and with whoever would like to do this with us), and maybe have a meal together afterwards. Probably in May. Stay tuned for more details about that!

But the important thing is that we'll be helping mothers, fathers, families, and babies. Life is a precious gift from God and we need to help those in need keep and care for their baby. Thanks for your support!

The mission of Assist is to promote life through Christ to those vulnerable to abortion.



2024 St. Mark's Conference Sacraments, Liturgy, and Mission

April 22-23

Hosted by Our Savior Lutheran Church,
Baltimore, MD

For more information or to register, go to:

<https://www.oursaviourbaltimore.org/conference/>

***The Saint Mark's Conference concerns the confessional,
sacramental, and liturgical life of the Church of the Augsburg
Confession.***



Mission Donations

Because of your generosity and love, our congregation once again was blessed with a budget surplus at the end of 2023. When that happens, your Executive Board designates most of those funds be put into our Building Fund, but also gives a portion back to the Lord who has so blessed us. This year, two donations were made:

(1.) The Bernhard Seter Scholarship Fund to help pastors in East Africa attend seminary and become pastors for their home countries.

(2.) Redeeming Life Maternity Home in Dundee, IL, to support single expectant and postpartum mothers in the love of Christ, providing a safe and stable home for them and their babies, and providing opportunities for growth in their relationship with their Savior, as well as career, parenting, and life skills education.

How blessed we are to be able to help others! Thank you!



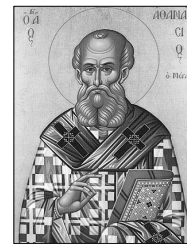
From Luther . . .

[Luther speaks of what it means to pray the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer.]

When you pray this petition you must look askance at a gang, which is called the devil and his mates, who would hinder the kingdom of God. . . . What we pray is: Dear Father, defend us from the devil and his cohorts and from our lazy flesh which would hinder thy will, and grant grace that thy gospel may go forth unhindered. . . . Today we see the whole world raging against the gospel, and even many among us do not have the gospel. Therefore the name of the Father is constantly being profaned. This should move us Christians. When you feel that your own flesh, your slothfulness, avarice, fornication, and passion is hindering you, then say: "Thy will be done!"

[from: "Ten Sermons on the Catechism" (1528) in *Luther's Work*, Vol. 51: *Sermons I*, "On the Lord's Prayer." Fortress Press © 1959 Fortress Press, pp. 175-76]

From St. Athanasius . . .



[Athanasius speaks of the example of Christ and our rejoicing in His great Easter victory.]

Oh! my brethren, how shall we admire the loving-kindness of the Savior? With what power, and with what a trumpet should a man cry out, exalting these His benefits! That not only should we bear His image, but should receive from Him an example and pattern of heavenly conversation; that as He hath begun, we should go on, that suffering, we should not threaten, being reviled, we should not revile again, but should bless them that curse, and in everything commit ourselves to God who judgeth righteously. For those who are thus disposed, and fashion themselves according to the Gospel, will be partakers of Christ, and imitators of apostolic conversation, on account of which they shall be deemed worthy of that praise from him . . .

[from: "Festal Letters," Letter II (Easter 330), §5 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 4, p. 511]



On the Catechism . . .

During the Easter season our Catechism focus is on the Lord's Prayer, for having been buried with Christ through Baptism into death, and then raised to new life with Him, we now call upon "Our Father" for all that we need, "as dear children ask their dear father."

The Third Petition: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done? God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will.

If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and count on having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies [Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9]. They will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where God's Word is preached, accepted, or believed and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be missing [Acts 14:22]. And let no one think that he shall have peace [Matthew 10:34]. He must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam [Ephesians 4:22]. The test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience [James 5:7–8] in whatever way we are assaulted, and to let go whatever is taken from us [1 Peter 2:20–21]. . . . Grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured because of Your Word and kingdom, so that our poor flesh may not yield or fall away because of weakness or sluggishness.

[from *The Large Catechism, Part III. The Lord's Prayer* in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (first ed.)*, © 2005 CPH, p. 442]

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 April and May are listed below.

Easter 2 (April 7):

Holy Gospel: John 20:19–31 (Jesus appears to His disciples.)
Office Hymn: LSB #470 "O Sons and Daughters of the King"

Easter 3 (April 14):

Holy Gospel: Luke 24:36–49 (Jesus has fulfilled the Scriptures.)
Office Hymn: LSB #483 "With High Delight Let Us Unite"

Easter 4 / Good Shepherd Sunday (April 21):

Holy Gospel: John 10:11–18 (Jesus is the Good Shepherd.)
Office Hymn: LSB #709 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

Easter 5 (April 28):

Holy Gospel: John 15:1–8 (Jesus is the vine, we the branches.)
Office Hymn: LSB #633 "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"

Easter 6 (May 5):

Holy Gospel: John 15:9–17 (Abiding in Jesus' love.)
Office Hymn: LSB #556 "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice"

Easter 7 (May 12):

Holy Gospel: John 17:11b–19 (Jesus unites us to Himself in love.)
Office Hymn: LSB #482 "This Joyful Eastertide"

Feast of Pentecost (May 19):

Holy Gospel: John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15 (Jesus promises the Spirit.)
Office Hymn: LSB #497 "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord"

Festival of the Holy Trinity (May 26):

Holy Gospel: John 3:1–17 (Trinitarian salvation!)
Office Hymn: LSB #822 "Alleluia! Let Praises Ring"

Note: The Liturgy for all services in the Easter season and the beginning of the Pentecost season is **Divine Service 1** (p. 151ff).