

# Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church



## St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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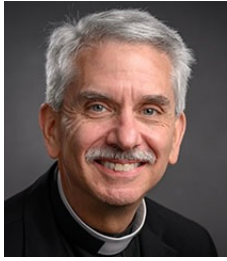
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**End of Church Year Newsletter**  
(October/November 2025)

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## From the Pastor AND Elders. . .

### *Catechesis*

For many months, the Elders of our congregation and I have been discussing how we catechize our youth - how it has been done in the past, how we have adjusted and adapted in the present, and looking to the future. The content of our catechesis does not change, but how we do so does. The end result of this has been to establish a new procedure to catechize our youth in response to the current challenges and needs of our day.

Your Board of Elders is an invaluable aid to me. We study together, discuss matters of importance to the spiritual life of the congregation, and they are trusted confidants and advisors. I am so blessed with them! And we decided that it would good to publish our new catechetical procedure here for all of you to read and digest, so that you can come to us with any questions or concerns you may have about it.

### **The Catechizing of Our Youth Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church**

The teaching of the faithful (catechizing) is one of the top priorities of the church and her pastors. It can never be taken for granted, but must be pursued with vigor and all seriousness. It is a life-long task for every Christian.

While the content of that catechization doesn't change, our world does. Timeless truths must be applied to new situations and needs. As such, while the content of our catechization doesn't change, our methods do. We simply cannot assume that the way we catechized 50 years ago will have the same effect today.

This is a great responsibility that different churches respond to in different ways. At Saint Athanasius, we are beginning to employ a new method in response to the changing needs of our youth and our congregation. The same Word of God in all its truth and purity will be taught. We will continue to begin the catechesis of our youth based on maturity, not age, when mutually agreed upon by their parents and the Pastor. But now, our procedure will be a bit different.

The catechization of our youth will be done in two phases:

First, the focus will be on teaching the Six Chief Parts of the Catechism and beginning to learn by heart its texts.

When this is completed, the Pastor, Elders of the congregation, and parents of the youth will meet and discuss the possibility of each youth beginning to receive the Sacrament of the Altar at this point in their catechesis. If all are in agreement in assessing that the youth can receive the Sacrament worthily (in repentance and faith) at this point, he or she will be welcomed to the Table with the understanding that their catechesis is not finished, but will continue, and they are committed to finishing. If this is not done, they may be asked to cease communing with us until they are finished.

At this point, the second phase of catechesis would begin. The focus in this phase is on returning to the Six Chief Parts of the catechism, seeing how they are derived from the Scriptures and reflected in the Liturgy of the Church. More time for Scripture, reflection, and application to current events and life will deepen and strengthen their Christian life and identity.

At the completion of this phase, the catechumens will have the opportunity to publicly confess their faith before the Elders and the congregation. This is not new, but will continue to give the youth a first opportunity to publicly put voice to their faith, which is something they will be doing the rest of their lives. This confession is usually done the morning of their participation in the Rite of Confirmation, for it is not a pass/fail examination, but their confession of faith.

This procedure for catechesis recognizes the need for our children to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. Life is difficult and not getting easier. Our youth are being catechized by the world and exposed to unchristian teachings at earlier ages than ever before. They need the strengthening of our Lord's forgiveness, life, and salvation given in His Body and Blood. This procedure seeks to do that responsibly and seriously at an earlier stage and time of life to strengthen and benefit them at this crucial time in their lives.

We also recognize the tendency to see Confirmation as graduation, and receiving the Sacrament of the Altar as an achievement or reward for finishing catechesis. Of course, this is not the case. Christianity is

not an examination on which we have to score 70% or above - it is a life lived in Christ and His forgiveness. Incorporation into that life in Baptism, Catechesis, Absolution, the Fellowship of the Altar, and Confirmation is all important. This procedure emphasizes that reality and the growth that takes part in the Christian all through life.

In addition, we will continue to affirm and stress the following:

- ✓ Catechesis is life long and never finished.
- ✓ The parents are the chief catechists of their children and need to be involved. Catechesis begins at home. Therefore parents need to know their catechism or learn it along with their children.
- ✓ The Christian life is lived from the Liturgy out, meaning, we receive our life in the Divine Service in Word and Sacrament, and then take that life out into the world in our vocations. Therefore, regular family attendance at the Divine Service is of the utmost importance and priority and should not be displaced by the pleasures and distractions of the world. If this family commitment cannot be made, then this is not the time to begin catechesis.
- ✓ Catechesis is a gift! It is not the same as school and should not be treated as such. It is of the Gospel, not the Law. It is to joyfully receive the Word of God and learn how it reaches into, affects, and defines our lives in ways that are meet, right, salutary, and God-pleasing.

His servants and yours,

*Pastor Douthwaite and the Board of Elders*



## It's Oktoberfest Time!

**Saturday, October 11th  
starting at 5:00 pm**

at the home of Pastor Douthwaite  
7920 Saint Dennis Drive, Springfield

Join your fellow Athanasians for a little time of good food and relaxation. We'll supply the meats, you bring a side, dessert, or some of your favorite beverages. Stay as long or as little as you can. *But please join us!*

**Thanksgiving Eve Divine Service  
Wednesday, November 26th, 7:30 pm**



## Food Baskets

We'll soon once again be collecting food for Thanksgiving Food Baskets for families in our area in need. ***Watch for information soon!***

## Second Saturday Fellowship

Our Second Saturday Fellowship opportunity for October is our Congregational Oktoberfest (see above). For November, we will have a Bible Breakfast get together on November 8th. Stay tuned for time and location. Mark your calendars and plan to join us!





## ASSIST PREGNANCY CENTER BANQUET

Our congregation is hosting a table at the Assist Pregnancy Center's annual Vision banquet on October 24. We have 10-12 seats available for anyone who would like to attend, enjoy a nice meal and conversation with fellow supporters of life, and learn more about the work the Pregnancy Center does to save babies, help women, and strengthen families. Please join us! Speak to Grace Killian or Caroline Trundle to reserve your seat or with any questions.

## NOVEMBER IS SEMINARIAN OFFERING MONTH #2!



We will again be receiving a special offering for our adopted seminary students (Nathaniel Hall and Erik Preus) all through the month of November to help them pay their Winter Quarter expenses. If you would like to contribute, please put your donation into the offering *specially marked* for our students.

And please remember - this is a *special* offering above and beyond your regular giving to the church. Don't reduce your regular giving! We need that for our regular expenses. Thanks for your generosity and love, both for our students and for the congregation they will one day be called to serve.

**And mark your calendars for this special opportunity!** Seminarian Nathaniel Hall will be with us and preaching for us on Sunday, November 23rd, the Last Sunday of the Church Year. Don't miss it!

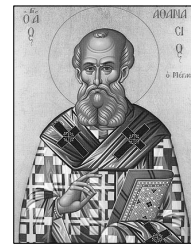


## From Luther . . .

*(Luther speaks of what we receive in the Lord's Supper as we eat and drink Christ's Body and Blood.)*

When you receive the bread from the altar, you are not tearing an arm from the body of the Lord or biting off his nose or a finger; rather, you are receiving the entire body of the Lord; the person who comes after you also receives the same entire body, as does the third and the thousandth after the thousandth one forever and ever. In the same way when you drink the wine from the chalice, you are not drinking a drop of blood from his finger or foot, but you are drinking his entire blood; so, too, does the one who follows you even to the thousand times thousandth one, as the words of Christ clearly say: "Take, eat; this is my body" [Matt. 26:26]. He does not say: "Peter, there, devour my finger; Andrew, devour my nose; John, devour my ears," etc.; rather, he says, "It is my body; take it and eat it," etc. Each person receives it whole.

[from "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament" [1544]  
in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38: *Word and Sacrament IV* © 1971 Fortress Press, p 292-93]

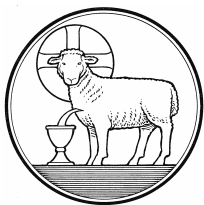


## From Athanasius . . .

*(Athanasius speaks of Christ's second coming in glory.)*

And you will also learn about His second glorious and truly divine appearing to us, when no longer in lowliness, but in His own glory, — no longer in humble guise, but in His own magnificence, — He is to come, no more to suffer, but thenceforth to render to all the fruit of His own Cross, that is, the resurrection and incorruption; and no longer to be judged, but to judge all, by what each has done in the body, whether good or evil; where there is laid up for the good the kingdom of heaven, but for them that have done evil everlasting fire and outer darkness.

(from "On the Incarnation of the Word", §56.3  
in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 4: *Athanasius*, p. 66)



## On the Catechism . . .

*As we come to the end of the Church Year and its emphasis on the end times, our Catechism focus is on the Lord's Supper – the gift of God which gives us forgiveness and strength of faith to endure these times, and which is also our “foretaste of the feast to come.”*

### What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine for us Christians to eat and to drink.

### Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.” In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

It is the Word, I say, that makes and sets this Sacrament apart. . . . With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say, “If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, should rush forward, crying, ‘How can bread and wine be Christ’s body and blood?’ and such, I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in His little finger” [see 1 Corinthians 1:25]. Now here stands Christ’s Word, “Take, eat; this is My body.... Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the new testament,” and so on. Here we stop to watch those who will call themselves His masters and make the matter different from what He has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard the Sacrament without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, by virtue of the words, it is truly Christ’s body and blood. What Christ’s lips say and speak, so it is. He can never lie or deceive [Titus 1:2].

[from The Large Catechism: The Sacrament of the Altar §10, 12-14  
in *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (first edition), © 2005 CPH, p 458-460]

## 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 October and November are listed below.*

### Pentecost 17 (October 5):

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:1–10 (The duty of a Christian.)

Office Hymn: LSB #587 “I Know My Faith Is Founded”

### Pentecost 18 (October 12):

Holy Gospel: Luke 17:11–19 (Jesus heals ten lepers.)

Office Hymn: LSB #846 “Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old”

### Pentecost 19 (October 19):

Holy Gospel: Luke 18:1–8 (Parable of the Unrighteous Judge.)

Office Hymn: LSB #754 “Entrust Your Days and Burdens”

### The Festival of the Reformation (October 26):

Holy Gospel: John 8:31-36 (The Word of truth and freedom.)

Office Hymn: LSB #555 “Salvation Unto Us Has Come”

### The Feast of All Saints (November 2):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)

Office Hymn: LSB #676 “Behold a Host, Arrayed in White”

### Pentecost 22 (November 9)

Holy Gospel: Luke 20:27–40 (The God of life and new life.)

Office Hymn: LSB #834 “O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth”

### Pentecost 23 (November 16)

Holy Gospel: Luke 21:5–36 (Signs of the end.)

Office Hymn: LSB #508 “The Day Is Surely Drawing Near”

### Last Sunday of the Church Year (November 23)

Holy Gospel: Luke 23:27–43 (Today in Paradise!)

Office Hymn: LSB #572 “In the Shattered Bliss of Eden”

### Advent 1 (November 30)

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:1–11 (Jesus’ triumphal entry.)

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

**Note:** The Liturgy for all services through the End of the Church Year is **Divine Service 2** (p. 167). Beginning on Advent 1 the Liturgy switches to **Divine Service 3** (p. 184).