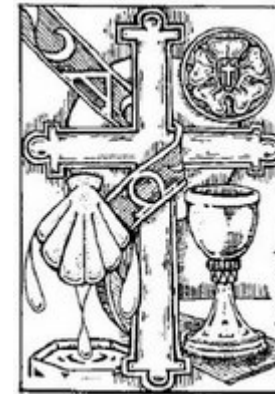


Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church



St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

703.455.4003

www.saint-athanasius.org

Meeting at:

114 Kingsley Road SW
Vienna, VA 22180

Mailing Address:

3057 Nutley Street Suite 822
Fairfax, VA 22031

www.saintathanasiuslutheran.blogspot.com

www.hopeandhelp-foryou.blogspot.com

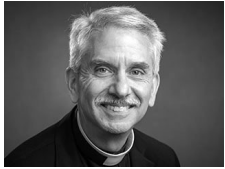
www.thesoberpeasant.blogspot.com



Epiphany-Lent Newsletter
(February/March 2024)

Rev. James A. Douthwaite

Cell: 703.861.4359
revjdoc@gmail.com



From the Pastor . . .

Virginia March for Life

There is another March for Life coming up, this one in Richmond - the Virginia State March for Life. Since the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision sent abortion decisions back to the states, these smaller state marches are more important than ever. And here's why: the *very first bill* that will be presented in both houses of the Virginia legislature this term will be to enshrine the right to abortion in the Virginia State constitution.

But this isn't just about abortion.

Taking the lives of little boys and girls in their mother's womb is an important issue, to be sure. But this is a symptom of the increasing disregard for life in general, whether it is babies, the elderly, the disabled, the needy, or others who are inconvenient or costly. Do we sacrifice one life for another? Do all lives matter? Are some lives not worth living or loving? If we do not speak the biblical truth that all lives are precious, valuable, and important, who will?

Now, you may not think this issue pertinent to you, but do not be deceived. Who gets health care dollars? Who gets denied treatment? Who gets left behind? It may start with babies in the womb, but who's next? The rates of euthanasia and assisted suicide are rapidly increasing - what is this telling us?

We have the answer to this growing problem: the cross of Jesus. His forgiveness and life is for all people. So on February 21st, I invite you to join me and go to the Virginia State March for Life, join thousands of others from across the state and with your presence say: *life matters*. All life. The littlest, the biggest, the youngest, the oldest, the weakest, the strongest, the most able, and the least able. Jesus loves and died for all.

His servant and yours,

Pastor Douthwaite



Ash Wednesday Divine Service and Lenten Midweek Prayer Services

On **February 14th** we will begin the Lenten season with a Divine Service for **Ash Wednesday** at 7:30 pm.

After that, our **Lenten Midweek Vespers Services** will be held at the Church **every Wednesday at 7:30 pm**, beginning on February 21st. We will be considering the number 40 in the Bible, a number used for a time of journeying or passage. These 40 days of Lent (not including Sundays) are about our passage from death to life in Jesus. The stories in the Bible that include 40 days or 40 years can teach us of this passage, and how we are passing from death to life.

February 21st: Noah - Cleansing for Life

February 28th: Moses - God's Presence for Life

March 6th: Israel - God's Discipline for Life

March 13th: Jonah - Repentance for Life

March 20th: Elijah - Food for Life

Take some extra time this Lenten season to meditate on the Word of God and for prayer. Life always seems so busy, so it is more important than ever to budget some time to stop and receive from our good and gracious God what we need to face the challenges and struggles of this life. Join us!

And if there is enough interest, we'll revive our simple pre-service Lenten soup suppers. So if this will help you come and attend our Vespers services, let us know!





The Imposition of Ashes

On Ash Wednesday, we will again offer the imposition of ashes for all who would benefit from this rite of repentance. If this is a new thing for you and you're not sure about it or have questions, we have an explanation and the answers to some frequently asked questions on our website. Simply go to saint-athanasius.org/Ashes.html. And if you still have any questions or concerns, please speak with Pastor.



Private Absolution

Since Lent is a penitential season, Private Absolution will be offered every Sunday during Lent. Pastor will be in the sanctuary from 8:00-8:30, before we begin setting everything up. Come take advantage of this opportunity to hear the forgiveness of God spoken directly to you by name.

February Is Seminarian Offering Month

We will again be receiving a special offering for our seminary student all through the month of February to help with his Spring quarter expenses. If you would like to contribute, please put your donation into the offering or make an electronic donation *specially marked* or designated for our seminary students.

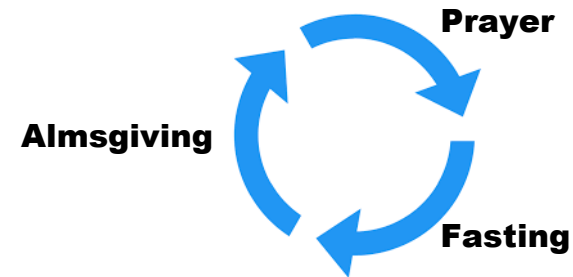
And please remember - this is a *special* offering above and beyond your regular giving to the church. Don't reduce your regular giving! We need that for our regular expenses. Thanks for your generosity and love, both for our students and for the congregation they will one day be called to serve.



2024 Lenten Life Calendar

Our Lenten Life Calendar is returning for its **fourth year!** This year, we'll be thinking about the many mistaken ways our world thinks about life and what the Bible has to say about them. We will once again be online this year so that (1.) you can use it through your preferred electronic device, (2.) to make it easier for you to share with others, and (3.) so we can provide more resources for you.

The purpose of this calendar is to help you with your Lenten discipline of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Now, a lot of people have a mistaken notion about this. So, how does it work?



As you can see, these three lead into one another. As we **pray** this Lenten season, we consider whatever is getting in the way of our relationship with God and living the Christian life. We **fast** from this so that we can spend more time in the Word of God and prayer and rely on God to provide what we need. The money we save from refraining from a food or an activity we can give to those in need as **alms**. Then, finally, as we contribute to others we **pray** for them and the circle continues. This practice is not to please God or earn anything from Him (He already gives us everything!), but to help our Christian walk and life, of living by faith in God and with love toward our neighbor. Try it! And use our Lenten Life Calendar to help you with this.



Holy Week Service Schedule

Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday / Passion Sunday
Divine Service, 10:15 am

Monday, March 25: Holy Monday Vespers, 7:00 pm
[Livestream only]

Tuesday, March 26: Holy Tuesday Vespers, 7:00 pm
[Livestream only]

Wednesday, March 27: Holy Wednesday Vespers, 7:00 pm
[Livestream only]

Thursday, March 28: Holy Maundy Thursday
Divine Service, 7:30 pm
(with the stripping of the altar)

Friday, March 29: Holy and Good Friday
Tenebrae Service of Darkness, 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 30: Great Vigil of Easter, 7:30 pm

Sunday, March 31: Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord,
Divine Service, 10:15 am

* **NOTE:** The services for **Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday** are *online only* on our YouTube channel. The services for **Thursday, Friday, and Saturday** will be *in person*, at the church **if it is available**. When we hear from the Adventists, we will let you know. Stayed tuned!

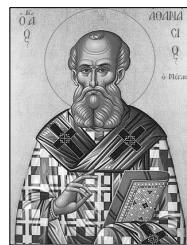


From Luther . . .

(Luther speaks of the Holy Spirit coming to us inwardly through the outward means God has given us.)

Now when God sends forth his holy gospel he deals with us in a twofold manner, first outwardly, then inwardly. Outwardly he deals with us through the oral word of the gospel and through material signs, that is, baptism and the sacrament of the altar. Inwardly he deals with us through the Holy Spirit, faith, and other gifts. But whatever their measure or order the outward factors should and must precede. The inward experience follows and is effected by the outward. God has determined to give the inward to no one except through the outward. For he wants to give no one the Spirit or faith outside of the outward Word and sign instituted by him, as he says in Luke 16[:29], "Let them hear Moses and the prophets." Accordingly Paul can call baptism a "washing of regeneration" wherein God "richly pours out the Holy Spirit" [Titus 3:5]. And the oral gospel "is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" (Rom. 1[:16]).

[from: "Against the Heavenly Prophets" (1525)
in *Luther's Works, Volume 40*, © Fortress Press 1958, p. 146]



From St. Athanasius . . .

(St. Athanasius speak of Christ drawing all people to Himself on the cross.)

Again, if the Lord's death is the ransom of all, and by His death "the middle wall of partition" is broken down, and the calling of the nations is brought about, how would He have called us to Him, had He not been crucified? For it is only on the cross that a man dies with his hands spread out. Whence it was fitting for the Lord to bear this also and to spread out His hands, that with the one He might draw the ancient people, and with the other those from the Gentiles, and unite both in Himself.

[from: "On the Incarnation of the Word, §25.3
in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father, Vol. 4: Athanasius*, p. 49]



On the Catechism . . .

During the Lenten season we focus on all that God has done for us and for our salvation. Therefore during this season, a catechism focus on the Creed is appropriate. This year we consider the Third Article:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. . . .

“But how does He [make us holy] . . . ?” Answer, “By the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For in the first place, the Spirit has His own congregation in the world, which is the mother that conceives and bears every Christian through God’s Word [Gal 4:26]. Through the Word He reveals and preaches, He illumines and enkindles hearts, so that they understand, accept, cling to, and persevere in the Word” [1 Cor 2:12]. Where the Spirit does not cause the Word to be preached and roused in the heart so that it is understood, it is lost [Matt 13:19]. This was the case under the papacy, where faith was entirely put under the bench. No one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier. That is, no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has gained this treasure for us, without our works and merit [Rom 4:6], and made us acceptable to the Father. . . . For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord.

[from the Large Catechism, Part II. The Apostles Creed in
Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (First Ed.) © CPH 205, p 429-30]

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 February and March are listed below.

Epiphany 5 (February 4):

Holy Gospel: Mark 1:29-39 (Jesus healing and preaching.)

Office Hymn: LSB #398 “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”

The Transfiguration of Our Lord (February 11):

Holy Gospel: Mark 9:2-9 (Jesus reveals His glory to His disciples.)

Office Hymn: LSB #413 “O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair”

Lent 1 (February 18):

Holy Gospel: Mark 1:9-15 (Jesus is tempted in the wilderness.)

Office Hymn: LSB #656 “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

Lent 2 (February 25):

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:27-38 (Losing your life to save it.)

Office Hymn: LSB #708 “Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart”

Lent 3 (March 3):

Holy Gospel: John 2:13-25 (Jesus cleanses the Temple.)

Office Hymn: LSB #824 “May God Bestow on Us His Grace”

Lent 4 (March 10):

Holy Gospel: John 3:14-21 (Jesus lifted up to save a world cast down.)

Office Hymn: LSB #571 “God Loved the World So That He Gave”

Lent 5 (March 17):

Holy Gospel: Mark 10:32-45 (What is the glory you are seeking?)

Office Hymn: LSB #430 “My Song Is Love Unknown”

Palm Sunday / Sunday of the Passion (March 24):

Holy Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47 (The Passion according to St. Mark.)

Office Hymn: LSB #454 “Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle”

The Resurrection of Our Lord (March 31):

Holy Gospel: Mark 16:1-8 (Jesus is not in the tomb!)

Office Hymn: LSB #458 “Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands

Note: The Liturgy for all services of Epiphany and Lent continues to be **Divine Service 3** (p. 184ff).