

“REMEMBERING JESUS RISEN FROM THE DEAD”

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my Gospel.” 2 Timothy 2:8

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

That is the greeting many of us as Christians have learned to say in the season of Easter. It’s one of many reminders of the joy that follows the resurrection of Jesus. When we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, what action do we take? Do we really rejoice? Are we really filled with joy? Or do we just say “alleluia” without really having much joy in our voices or in our lives? That might happen if we were on our own. But since Jesus is risen from the dead, we are not on our own. He is alive, and so all our actions tap into His almighty power. So, when we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, what action does God take in us? He raises us. He raises our hopes. He raises our joy. He raises our lips and our lives.

Do we sometimes forget God’s words of resurrection and live as though Jesus were still in the tomb? Since we are united with Christ, even buried with Christ as the apostle Paul says in Romans 6:4, do we live as though we were still in that tomb with Him, as good as dead? Paul puts all of this in excellent perspective in 1 Corinthians 15, his great resurrection chapter. *“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”*. That is the worst thing right there; to remain in our sins - separated from God - guilty of judgment - with no hope for eternity and

little hope for the present.

While the women and the disciples were sad; not remembering, not believing, Jesus caused them to remember. He opened their eyes to really see Him and then they were filled with joy. In Luke 24, angels told the women to remember. *“Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” And they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.”*

The disciples remembered something else Jesus had said. Going way back to the second chapter of John when they asked Him for a sign, Jesus said, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* They thought He meant the building, *“but He was speaking about the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken”*. The disciples remembered and believed. They remembered, and their lives were different because Jesus had risen from the dead, just as He said.

The thought may have crossed most of our minds that if Jesus appeared in person to us, it would be so much easier to believe and to rejoice in all circumstances. But Jesus didn’t appear in person to the women or to the disciples right away. It was an angel—a messenger of the Lord—who appeared to the women and said *“He has risen, as He said.”* Then that angel

told the women to be the next messengers: *“Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead.”* And they departed quickly *“with fear and great joy”* (Matthew 28:6, 7, 8). We also get the word of Jesus’ resurrection from a messenger: the Holy Bible. Hundreds of years later, the inspired Word of God is still telling us that Jesus *“has risen, as He said.”* We can also depart *“with fear and great joy.”*

What should we remember so that we continue to live in the joy of Easter every day? What does God cause us to remember by placing it in His Word? *“For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His”* (Romans 6:5). *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Colossians 3:1–3). There are so many reminders that we could spend every Sunday for the rest of the year with God’s Word causing us to remember the joy that Christ’s resurrection brings. In fact, that is what our worship is all about. Every Sunday is to be a little Easter, a time to remember Jesus risen from the dead.

Serving With Fear and Great Joy,
Pastor Riley



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE:



PALM SUNDAY

On Palm Sunday, April 14, we will celebrate Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem and the reading of the Passion. Holy Communion will be celebrated along with distributing Palms. Theme: "Do You Hear What These Children Are Saying?" Matthew 21:12-17

On Thursday, April 18, at Noon and 7:00 p.m. we will observe Individual Absolution and Holy Communion in remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. Theme: "Do This in Remembrance of Me" 1 Corinthians 11:23 -29

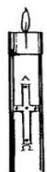


MAUNDY THURSDAY



On Good Friday April 19, at 7 p.m. we will remember the death of Jesus for our salvation with the Service of Darkness. Theme: "He Said, "I Will Rise Again" Matthew 27:62 -66

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EASTER VIGIL

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 20, Divine Service at 6:00 p.m.

Our Easter Celebrations begin with a Sunrise service at 5:45 a.m. at the Springfield Water Department atop of Provin Mountain.



Alleluia! He is alive!

The Festival Service for the Resurrection of our Lord begins at 10:00 a.m. Theme: "Why Do You Look for the Living Among the Dead?" Luke 24:4-8



LENTEN VESPERS & POTLUCK
April 7
3:00 p.m.

Featuring A Combined LCMS Choir

Join your brothers and sisters in the surrounding LCMS churches to celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent, traditionally entitled "Judica Sunday." Judica Sunday is derived from the first words of the Introit of that day: "Judica me, Deus" — "Judge me, O God" (Psalm 42). In honor of this, St. John's will be hosting a Vespers service in the Lutheran tradition. Rev. David Riley will preach on the historic lesson from the Gospel of John as we see Jesus go head to head with the religious leaders and not back down calling them out for their sins. We see Him proclaim Himself as Abraham's God and proclaim to the universe before Abraham was I AM. We see Jesus flee away from the temple where He hid, not because He was afraid of death, but because it was not time for Him to die. This Sunday is called "Black Sunday" in Germany because during the Gospel reading where it recounts "Jesus hid," the cross is veiled to show God had to hide from men to save men. The music for the Vespers will be led by a combined choir with members from the local LCMS churches. Following the Vespers, be sure to bring your favorite dish to share for a potluck in the fellowship hall!

April 13 at 2:00 p.m.



Come and join us in the WINGS room to watch *The Passion of Christ* at 2:00 p.m. This movie depicts the final 12 hours of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem during his crucifixion. If you have any questions, speak to Erika Slozak.

During this year's midweek Lenten services, Pastor Riley will examine some of the ironic aspects of the passion account to help us gain a deeper understanding of the unique and lasting significance of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.



Wednesday, April 3: "We Have No King but Caesar!" John 19:12-16 Divine Services at 11:00 a.m. followed by a light luncheon and at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10: "Don't You Fear God?" Luke 23:39-43 Divine Services at 11:00 a.m. followed by a light luncheon and at 6:00 p.m.

MISSION PROJECT for the Month of April is to help those who have been recently affected by the natural disasters and extreme weather in the United States. Those wishing to donate are asked to place your donation in the Mission Envelopes enclosed in your offering box or place in an envelope and mark it Missions.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Our Annual German Supper is Friday, May 3 at 5:30 p.m.. The delicious menu includes roast pork, hot dogs, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, bread, rolls, apple sauce and dessert.

Tickets are available after worship services or by calling the church office (568-1417) or Sally Sienkiewicz (562-3186). The cost is \$12.50 for an adult, \$8.00 for children (5-12 years), and children under five are free. Take-out available beginning at 5:00 p.m.

VOLUNTEERS are needed. Please contact Sally if you are able to help in any way: set-up, baking, cooking, serving, clean-up, etc.

This year, for the first time, we will celebrate the Easter Vigil at St. Johns with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Trinity Easthampton, First Lutheran Holyoke and Trinity Springfield. What is the Easter Vigil? If you're wondering the answer to that question, keep reading. This is for you.



The Easter Vigil is an evening service celebrated on Holy Saturday, the night before Easter. The beginning of the service is unlike anything else we do at St. John's. We will begin outside, gathered around a fire pit in the front parking loop of the church. Surrounded by darkness, this light symbolizes the light of Christ which breaks the darkness of sin and unbelief. From the fire pit, we'll light the paschal candle. That's the big tall white candle that normally rests on its stand by the lectern, which represents the presence of Christ with His people. Once the candle is lit, we will process into the church in darkness. As the pillar of fire led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the paschal candle leads us in to the church.

Once we're inside, we will each light individual candles from the paschal candle. At the Good Friday Tenebrae service, the sanctuary gradually was darkened to signify the darkness of sin and the solemnity of the crucifixion of the Light of the world. The Easter Vigil acts correspondingly. We begin where we left off on Good Friday, in darkness, but more light is gradually introduced into the sanctuary as we begin the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and his victory over sin and death. It will also be the first look at the sanctuary that is decorated for Easter. We come into darkness, but as the lights are lit, we get our first glimpse of the glory of Jesus' victory over the grave.

Next, there will be a series of readings. However, expect longer portions of Scripture than we typically hear on a Sunday. The Old Testament Israelites celebrated Passover to remember how God delivered them from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, even many generations after the Exodus. But, it was more than just cognitive reflection. By reenacting the Passover meal, they weren't just recalling something that God did a long time ago, they were remembering and reenacting *their* story, the story of God's salvation that he had called them into. Similarly, at the Easter Vigil we read of some of the key events in the history of God's people as *our* story, the story of salvation and deliverance from sin in Jesus that he has called *us* into.

After the readings, we will have a time of remembrance of our baptism. We were brought into the people of God, out of darkness and into light, by our baptism. In baptism we were buried and raised with Jesus to new life. The Easter Vigil is a wonderful time to reflect on our baptism, which made us a part of God's own people.

Then, we will have a time of responsive prayer, followed by a brief service of the Word including Easter hymns. We will remember that "Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7), as we celebrate the victory of his death and resurrection!

COFFEE HOURS

Volunteers are needed to help host coffee hours on Sunday Mornings following the worship service. The coffee, juice and half & half are provided. All the host needs to do is provide baked goods or snacks, serve after the worship service, and clean up. This time after church allows for wonderful fellowship among our members. There is a sign up sheet located on the coffee hour tables. For questions, please speak with Linda or Erika Slozak.



SPRING CLEAN-UP

Volunteers are needed to help with spring clean-up on Saturday, April 13, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Even if you can only come for an hour or two, your help is welcome. Many hands make light work, so the more that come, the sooner we can finish. Come help ready our church's grounds for the glorious Easter service. If you have any questions, please see Linda Slozak.

EASTER FLOWERS:

Due to a new supplier, orders for Easter flowers need to be handed in as soon as possible.



Lilies: Single - \$8.00

Double - \$15.00

Triple - \$20.00

Tulips: 6 inch pot - \$7.00

Daffodils: 6 inch - \$7.00

Hyacinth: 6 inch pot - \$7.00

8"Hydrangea - \$20.00 in blue, pink or white

If you would like to order flowers that will adorn the altar on Easter, in honor or in loving memory of a loved one, please fill out a flower form located on the round table in the church foyer or call Jane McClure (562-0492) to order or for any questions.



Radio Broadcast

If you missed church due to illness or another commitment you can still enjoy the service.

Just log onto <http://stjohnswestfield.org>;

links to the broadcasts and the weekly bulletins are on the main page. Broadcasts can be heard each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on WHYN (560 AM). The cost for the program is now \$125 per week. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast (or a part of a broadcast) in memory of or in honor of anyone please call the church or sign up on the sheet outside the office door. Donations of any amount are welcome. If anyone would like a CD copy of any radio broadcast, please contact Bill Schneeloch 860-604-5264.

Why I Give Through the Church

- ✠ Because I know that everything I have comes from God, and, by giving generously of my income to Him through the church, I acknowledge His ownership and my opportunity to be a faithful steward.
- ✠ Because the church is the best place I know through which my money can most profitably be used to extend God's kingdom.
- ✠ Because when I joined the church, I promised to support it, and I want to make that promise good.
- ✠ Because making a pledge and fulfilling it regularly remind me constantly that I have a definite and important share in the ministry of Christ.
- ✠ Because the preaching and teaching ministry along with the compassion ministries and missionary programs of the church have no source of support other than the gifts of church members.
- ✠ Because it is in the church when I can each week hear God's Word preached and taught and receive His body and blood at the Lord's Table.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I was baptized, confirmed, married, and will someday have my funeral service.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I'm blessed to have fellowship with fellow believers.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I have the opportunity to use my time and abilities to serve the Lord.
- ✠ Because giving my offering generously and cheerfully to the church keeps me from growing selfish and indifferent..