

# THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church

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Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.



THE MISSION OF  
NEW JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH:

*We are a group of people who  
gather together in friendship and love  
to worship God, to spread God's Word,  
and to care for God's people.*



*[A]ll of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For whoever has died is freed from sin. – The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, Chapter 6:5-6*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As I prepared for the baptism of Kaia Noelle Harnish on March 8<sup>th</sup>, I thought about of all the instructions we hear daily about the importance of washing hands thoroughly so that we do not spread or contract COVID-19 and how, at church, we are making sure we not only have enough soap in our bathrooms and sanitizer in many locations, but are prepared in other ways.

The instructions for washing our hands say to use soap *and* water so that soap will help the germs slide off our hands. Once our hands are clean then we are free to continue our tasks, touch things, and perhaps even touch one another. The image of the water of baptism – which is common water *combined* with God's word/God's Spirit – is that of washing away our sin, having sin slide off of us. This image is often expanded to one of going into and then under the water as in a river or a large pool, even drowning there, and coming out a new person, freed from sin, freed to live a new life.

While the image of drowning sounds extreme, Paul uses this analogy to make a wonderful point: "Therefore we have been buried with him (Jesus) by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:4,5).

When you receive this newsletter, we will still be in the season of Lent, preparing for Holy Week, a time of great awe when we contemplate how God could love the world so much that God would send God's only, God's precious and beloved, Son to live our life. We contemplate with awe and thanksgiving Jesus' willingness to go to the greatest length, to death, for our sake.

But, we also know, death could not hold Jesus captive. On April 12<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the greatest mystery of our faith: that God literally raised Jesus from the dead. Just as death was not the last word for Jesus, so we believe it is not the last word for us. And so we proclaim and celebrate, "[I]f we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:5).

We know that our hands can quickly become re-contaminated with a variety of dirt and germs. In the same way we experience that, being human this side of eternity, we quickly become re-contaminated by sin. This may lead us to wonder whether baptism has the powers we claim it has. The promise of baptism, though, is that despite our return to sinful ways, God continues to claim us as God's beloved children and to consider us washed clean from sin. This is why we begin our worship with either a remembrance of our baptism or with a confession and announcement of forgiveness. We need to continually hear that God's Spirit is with us to help us steer away from sin and that God's love is greater than *anything* that would try to separate us from God. In fact, Luther urges us to begin and end each day with a remembrance of our baptism and, when we feel tempted or feel ashamed because we have strayed, to remind ourselves, "I have been baptized."

May your journey into and through April be one of good health in body and in spirit. Every time you wash your hands or wipe a surface clean, may you be reminded that for Jesus' sake, God declares you forgiven and promises that "[you] have been united with him in a death like his . . . [and] will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:5).

Easter Joy!

*Pastor Ruth*

# NEWS & EVENTS

## in New Jerusalem and the Synod

### COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The following items were discussed and decisions made at our council meeting on March 9:

- Church Music Sunday is scheduled for Sunday, May 17. We will also be dedicating the handrails at this service.
- We have a working doorbell with “speakers” in the fellowship area, office and downstairs.
- Began planning for responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

### ADDITIONAL COUNCIL MEETING – March 14, 2020

On Saturday evening, March 14, Pastor Ruth met with members of council and other leaders. The following were discussed and some decisions made:

- God is in charge, we do not have to fear. We have many examples in scripture and through history for how God accompanies us on journeys into the unknown such as we are facing now.
- The mission of the church and this congregation continues to:
  - Be a calm presence in witness to God’s love and abiding presence.
  - Show God’s compassion and care to those who are affected.
- We will continue to plan, adapt and communicate as well as review.
- Our trusted source of information is the CDC and health department.
- Services were cancelled through March 29.
- We will prepare bulletins for worship, including, as possible, a sermon. These will be distributed via email and posted on our website. They will be mailed to those who do not have such access, who are either homebound or have been attending worship at some frequency.
- We will explore ways to encourage and enable members to continue to contribute to our congregation as well as other reliable organizations.
- We will develop and promote ways to care for others.

- We began a “Care Chain” and encourage members to call others in our directory to check in and counter feelings of isolation.
- We began to think about how to support teachers, healthcare workers, etc.
- We will attempt to be forward thinking and proactive in ways we can respond.
- Staff may work from home when necessary.

### APRIL SIGN-UP SHEETS

*There is a current hold on signing up for these items.* Should we have worship, we will be in need of Flower sponsors for April 5 and 19, a Bulletin sponsor for April 12, a Sanctuary Candle sponsor, Communion Bread sponsors for April 9 (Maundy Thursday) and 12, Communion Set-up volunteers for April 5 and 12, and an Altar Guild volunteer. We also need Greeters for April 5, 9 (Maundy Thursday), and 12. Thank you!

**PASTOR RUTH** will **NOT** be on vacation in April.

**BIBLE STUDY** is postponed until further notice.

**THREADS FOR OTHERS** - Stay tuned.

### CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

The next meeting of the 7 local churches in conversation is will take place on **Tuesday, April 28, at 4:30 p.m.** You are always welcome to join us. Stay tuned.

### MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the April 2020 newsletter is **Sunday, April 19.** Please have all articles and announcements to the church office by this date.

### YARD SHARE

Staying at home? What an opportunity to “clean house!” Don’t forget to save items that are in good shape for the yard share, currently scheduled for **Saturday, April 25, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Tentatively we will be accepting donations starting the day after Easter, April 13, until April 19. Baked goods, hot dogs, and drinks will be offered. Interested in helping sort and set up on April 18? Speak with Ken, Ty, Josh, or Betty. Stay tuned.

## COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICES

The theme for this year is Lent in Plain Sight, inspired by a book by that name from Jill Duffield. Here is what *was* scheduled, but stay tuned for whether these will be held.

- March 25 Hope Lutheran Church, Bowers  
Preacher: Pastor Laura Stoneback
- April 1 Christian Congregation, Mertztown  
Preacher: Pastor Cheryl Meinschein
- April 8 **Spy Wednesday**  
St. Paul's Lutheran, Mertztown  
Preacher: Pastor Michael Combs  
(soup/salad meal from 5:30-6:30 p.m.)
- April 9 **Maundy Thursday**  
New Jerusalem Lutheran  
Preacher: Pastor Laura Stoneback
- April 10 **Good Friday (Service of Readings)**  
Christ Mertz Lutheran, Dryville

## FINANCES

Since we will not be gathering, but the work of the congregation goes on, please consider sending in your contributions.

Also, remember that we have a Local Care Fund handled confidentially by Pastor. Contributions can also be made through your envelopes.

## BAPTISM CONGRATULATIONS

We welcome Kaia Noelle Harnish as our new sister in Christ. Kaia was baptized on Sunday, March 8. Let us welcome her to New Jerusalem's family.

## CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY

The hope is that our Church Music Sunday service will be held on **Sunday, May 17**, and that you will be able to come and support our singers and musicians. If anyone is interested in providing music for this service, please contact Faye Dey. We also hope to dedicate the new handrails that were installed on the stairs leading up to the altar.

## SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Because of concerns regarding COVID-19, Synod Assembly 2020 has been postponed to October 22-24. Bishop Zeiser will continue to serve until a new bishop is elected. More information will be published when it becomes available.

## ELECTING OUR NEXT BISHOP

The dates for meeting and discussing the survey results will be rescheduled. More information to follow.

## HOW WILL WE WORSHIP IF WE CANNOT GATHER?

There may come a time when we are advised not to gather together for a while so as to prevent the spread of disease. Knowing how important it is for us to hear and share the word of God and pray for and support one another, even now I and church council are considering how we will worship if we cannot gather.

Here are some thoughts as mentioned previously.

- We can share by email or mail a bulletin for each Sunday, including the lessons and even the hymns.
- Pastor can share the sermon she would have preached.
- Each of us can pray for all the people on the prayer list in the bulletin, and call or email more names as you become aware of them. (Be sure to ask people you want put on the list whether it is okay with them.)
- We can also suggest Bible readings and devotions for everyday use that might be particularly pertinent and reassuring.
- Phone calls, texts and emails to one another can help us stay in touch. FaceTime is also a possibility.
- We can prepare an update on how folks are doing that can be emailed or sent out with the bulletin.

God has promised to be with us and God's promises are sure. Let's be sure to help each other lighten and brighten up. In a time like this it is important to stay calm and make sure any information we receive or pass on is accurate. We will do our best to pass that kind of information along.

Since a lot of the news may be more sober than usual and may concentrate on how numbers are going up, try not to stay attached or obsess about the news. Listen sporadically, don't leave it on all the time, especially if there are children around. It will also be important to remind ourselves and each other of the many gifts we have, things to enjoy, good books to read, things that are humorous, etc.

Meanwhile, as you are stocking up for possibly needing to stay in your home, make sure you know where your Bible is and don't hesitate to ask me or the office for one if you cannot find yours or do not have one. – *Pastor Ruth*

## DOES 20 SECONDS SEEM LIKE FOREVER?

Tired of singing “Happy Birthday” over and over? Irritated, grouchy, and thinking about the water you’re wasting? Could washing be a chance to slow down, breathe and be present with God? The Lord’s Prayer takes 20 seconds, so do a lot of our favorite hymns. What’s your choice?

## LOVE, HUMOR AND OTHER ACTS OF KINDNESS –

We’d love to hear what you are seeing and doing.

## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH KIDS

The health crisis can be scary. Here are some tips about talking with kids:

- \* Keep your own anxiety in check.
- \* Assess what your child knows, thinks and feels.
- \* Keep it simple and age appropriate.
  - If your child is under 6, you may not want to bring it up unless they ask.
  - If a child does ask whether they will get it, assure them that even if they do, most kids and adults aren’t getting very sick and if they do get sick, the world is full of grown-ups who will help. Also, check out the comic book by Malaka Gharib **Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus** on the NPR website.
- \* Don’t dismiss your child’s fears.
  - You can say something in a calm voice like, “That sounds pretty scary, I can see it in your face.” You can also tell a story from your own childhood about a time when you were scared. Later, after the child has calmed down, you can bring up coronavirus again.
  - Encourage your child to come to you with further questions and concerns. You might also say something like, “This illness is different than a cold because it’s new, but people are trying really hard to make sure it doesn’t spread, and they treat people who are sick. If you ever have questions, talk to me,” Dr. Heard-Garris said. You can also say, “Scientists and really smart people all around the world are trying to figure out how to keep people safe and healthy.”
- \* Emphasize good hygiene.
  - Make handwashing into a game or a competition. Brainstorm what takes 20 seconds to say or sing. If you have a little nose picker, pediatric specialist Dr. Rebecca Pellett Madan suggests

saying something like, “Do you remember when your friend was out sick last week? Being sick is part of being human, but when you’re picking your nose, you can get boogers on your fingers and they can spread germs to your friends.” She also recommended an episode of the show “Ask the StoryBots” on Netflix called “How Do People Catch a Cold?” for an age-appropriate explanation for little kids about how germs work.

- \* Frame school closures as a positive. You can even call it a “staycation,” and as more time at home where we can have fun!
- \* Try to maintain a routine as much as you possibly can.

In addition, make sure your kids get enough exercise.

- \* Other suggestions:
  - Having your kids keep a quarantine journal, where they can write or draw their thoughts and experiences, which can help keep them occupied and process their anxiety.

Finally, try to enjoy the time together as much as you can, without losing your mind.

Sources: Anya Kemenetz and Cory Turner 3/13/2020 [How should we talk about it with the kids?](#); Jessica Grose, [How to Talk to Kids About Coronavirus](#), 2/28/2020 ; Additional resource: video from [Coronavirus: How to Talk to Kids](#). (Nemours KidsHealth)



# NEWS & EVENTS

## in the Community

## IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

### BOY SCOUT TROOP EASTER EGG HUNT

As there appears that there is not a definite end in sight for the outbreak, Dan Blanchard, the Troop's Scoutmaster, and Paul Veet, Troop Committee Chair, have decided to cancel the Easter Egg Hunt for this year.

### SPIRIT ON TAP – This was the plan:

Charlie Zahm and Tad Marks present "Songs of the Earth and the Celtic Soul" on **Tuesday, April 21, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** at the DoubleTree Hotel, 701 Penn Street, Reading. Spirit on Tap's purpose is to encourage theological discussion, explore alternative views, and stimulate dialogue around issues of faith and spirituality. There is no charge and all are welcome. For more information, contact Dr. Harry Serio at 610.944.7032 or [HLSerio@aol.com](mailto:HLSerio@aol.com).

### SAVE THE DATE! – Another tentative plan:

Join with others from around the synod for the annual May Play Day at Bear Creek Camp, 3601 Bear Creek Blvd., Wilkes-Barre, on **Sunday, May 3, from 2:00-7:00 p.m.** It will be an afternoon of connections and camp awesomeness. Cost is \$4.00 for children under 12 and \$8.00 teens and adults. There will be high ropes, rock wall, boating, games, hiking, songs, and dinner. **Registration due April 24.** Registration forms are available on the bulletin board in the narthex.



### PRAYERS FOR AWARENESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

#### for Those with Limited Mobility or in Care

**Facilities:** Anna Angstadt, Bertha Bennecoff, Helen Fair, Verna Guinther, Shirley Hertzog, Leon Moyer, and Irene Noll.

### PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT

**Members:** Myles Angstadt, Dallas Bennecoff, Erma Guinther, Virginia Guinther, Amanda Herman, Patricia Keck, Penny Keller, Sheila Long, Forrest Merkel, Roy Merkel, Grace Miller, Linda Moyer, Betty Musser, Joanne Pauley, Joyce Rothermel, Elaine Seip, Gary and Vikie Seyfert, Dawn Wartzluft, and Cheryl Wiltout.

**Friends of the congregation:** Gayle Arndt, Carrie Bausch, Adam Bell, Carson Bosma, Bob Bright, Thelma Bright, Mark Derr, Gary DeWees, Randy Dreibelbis, Denise Ebelhar, Jennifer Engle, Eric Fox, Mamie Guinther, Shirley Hahn, Nancy Harnish, Corinne Hersh, Johnson-Agiri Family, Sue Kerny, Emily Kershner, Angie Kistler, Kelly Kline, Cayden Kresge, Michelle Kurtz, Anh La, Marie Leibensperger, Catherine Lenio, Ella Loose, Joe M., Doris Meadway, Rodney Muthard, Duane Petersheim, Ruth Ramsey, Rich Reimert, Roger Schollenberger, Patricia Sigfried, Robert Taylor, Leticia Weaver, Terry White, Diane Whitehead, Althea Young, Barry, and Pat.

**OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS:** We pray for our nation: our president, congress and judicial system, and leaders of our communities; an end for threats between nations; peace in the world; our military personnel serving around the world; areas enduring disaster; and migrants and refugees.

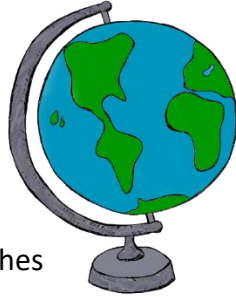
**LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST:** Millie Berger, Sandy Burkart, Don Gajewski, Erma Gajewski, Lorelai Gold, David Jenkins, Janis Kershner, Michael M., Michelle Meck, Nancy Meck, Tonya Petersheim, Arlene Reider, Leilani Rodriguez, Andrew S., Joshua S., Donna Schwoyer, The Spatz Family, Jack Stoudt, Jacqi Wagner, and Leah Wiest.

"I feel as if God had, by giving the Sabbath, given 52 springs in each year."

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

## EASTER AROUND THE WORLD

Easter traditions are important, but they vary widely. While Americans dye hardboiled eggs, Kenyans carve soapstone eggs and present them as gifts in banana-fiber boxes. In Bermuda, locals fly homemade kites on Good Friday—a tradition that began when a teacher illustrated Christ's ascension to heaven using a cross-shaped kite.



Ethiopian Christians observe a 56-day fast from meat and all animal products. On Easter they dress in white to worship in churches decorated with handmade fabric, then they feast with non-Christians on roast chicken, goat and rice.

In France, church bells are silent between Holy Thursday and Easter to observe Jesus' Passion. According to legend, the bells grow wings and fly to Rome to be blessed, returning on Easter with chocolate and presents. In one town's main square, chefs make a giant omelet with 4,500 eggs to feed 1,000 people.

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

## ALL THINGS IN COMMON

Just as the bread is made out of many grains ground and mixed together, and out of the bodies of many grains there comes the body of one bread, in which each grain loses its form and body and takes upon itself the common body of the bread; and just as the drops of wine, in losing their own form, become the body of one common wine and drink—so it is and should be with us.



Through the interchange of [Christ's] blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common.

– Martin Luther, *Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament*

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

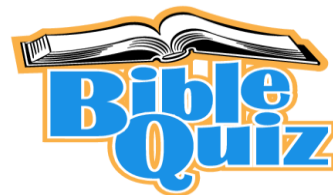


- 5 Sara Jane Beshore
- 5 Justin Rahn
- 18 Jayna Howell
- 19 Erma Guinther
- 28 Amy Hahn
- 29 Daniel Moyer
- 30 Dallas Bennecoff
- 30 Richard Carl



- 9 Jason and Tina Howell (9 years)
- 15 Alan and Sherrie Carl (31 years)
- 24 Randy and Tammy Cleaver (11 years)

*If your name or the name of someone you know didn't appear on this list, we apologize and hope you will let us know so we can make the necessary corrections.*



Three of the Gospels tell that when Jesus was crucified, darkness covered the earth from noon until three in the afternoon. Which Gospel does not mention this event?

- A. Matthew
- B. Mark
- C. Luke
- D. John



Answer: D (see Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19)

**STEWARD THE EARTH, OUR ONLY HOME**

*“The good leave an inheritance to their children’s children.” –Proverbs 13:22a*

Look at the babies in your congregation and your circle of friends and family. You want them to grow up in the same kind of beautiful, safe, abundant world you did, right? But that’s increasingly in doubt.

In the next 50 years, climate change and environmental crises will disrupt patterns of nature and civilization that have developed over millennia. Some scientists even wonder whether the planet will be habitable in 2120.

Australia’s horrific wildfires may be just a sample of things to come, along with worsening hurricanes, more-frequent tornadoes, rising sea levels, rapid desertification, and melting glaciers and icebergs. It’s not that our world did not already have serious problems with such issues as war, refugees, hunger, species extinction, pollution and extreme weather, but climate change is making them all much worse and much more complicated.

Christians trust in the Almighty, while we also recognize that God calls us to love one another and care for the only home God has given us.

“If we truly believe we’ve been given responsibility for every living thing on this planet (including each other) as it says in Genesis 1, then it isn’t only a matter of caring about climate change,” writes evangelical Christian and climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe. “We should be at the front of the line demanding action.”

This month we have much to celebrate in the new life we have through our resurrected Lord. We also celebrate spring, seedtime, and Earth Day on April 22. Let us commit ourselves to renewing and protecting the only home we have, the only home we will leave for our children.



—Rob Blezard

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**New Jerusalem Lutheran Church  
Statement of Accounts**

**February 29, 2020**

<u>Asset Accounts</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Memorial	\$ 22,716.61
Thrivent	8,625.25
Checking	6,322.86
Youth	405.31
Fidelity	92,141.90
Cash Reserve	33,176.22
Mission Investment	11,471.77
Local Care	1,881.43
	<b>Total \$ <u>176,741.35</u></b>

Total Balance of Asset Accounts  
from **February 28, 2019** \$ 201,266.79

**January 2020 – ‘Actual’ vs. ‘Required’ Income**

	Income Required	Actual	
<u>Income</u>	<u>Per Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Used For:			
Operating	\$ 9,565.00	\$ 5,100.00	\$ (4,465.00)
Expenses			

*Income Required per Month — Based on 2020  
Budget Passed by Congregation  
Less Budgeted Benevolence Contribution*

Parking Lot – Funds received to offset expenses  
for Driveway/Parking Lot Repaving

\$ 37,140.00 Total Expenses for Parking Lot  
Project

\$ 30,918.52 Funds Received to Offset Expenses

**CHRIST HAS TRIUMPHED!**

Tomb, thou shalt not hold him longer;  
Death is strong, but life is stronger.  
Stronger than the dark, the light;  
Stronger than the wrong, the right.  
Faith and hope triumphant say,  
Christ will rise on Easter Day.

– Phillips Brooks





## BRANDYWINE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

In the light of concerns about increased food needs in response to COVID-19 and possible challenges of delivering items to the food bank – *please consider a generous monetary donation.* We will keep you posted with info. from the food pantry. You can make out a check to “Brandywine Food Pantry,” and mail it to Brandywine Food Pantry, c/o St. Peter’s United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin St., Tipton, PA, 19562.

Plans are also being considered for alternative ways to find out who is in need and to distribute food.

**Donated Items in much need right now:** coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juices, breakfast cereal, pancake syrup and mix, mayonnaise, ketchup, soup of all kinds, spaghetti sauce, beef stew, Chicken-ala-King, canned meat (such as tuna, chicken breast or Spam), Manwich or sloppy joe mix, chili, Chef Boyardee canned items (such as beefaroni, lasagna, etc.), pasta or rice sides, snacks of all kinds (cookies, chips, pretzels, pudding, etc.), shampoo, bar soap, body wash, and laundry detergent.

**Gluten-free and sugar-free food is also greatly appreciated.**

**Please check dates on donated food products.**

Donations may be dropped off at New Jerusalem any time the church is open or at St. Peter’s during pantry hours or call to arrange a convenient time. Watch for further information.

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## A REASON TO LAUGH

The week after Easter, some churches observe Holy Humor Sunday – a tradition dating back to the fourth century. Early Christian theologians coined the term “risus paschalis,” or “the Easter laugh,” saying God played the supreme joke on death. Some believers celebrated Bright Monday, gathering the day after Easter to mock Satan’s defeat.

On the first day of April, remember that, “we are fools for Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:10, NIV). Then later in the month, take time to smile and laugh, knowing that victory is yours, thanks to Jesus.

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

## ECHOES OF EASTER

The Resurrection wasn’t a “one-off”; it was a spark that lit a flame that continues burning even today, especially where people minister in the Risen One’s name. One such outreach, Camp Noah, serves children traumatized by disaster. Nationwide, volunteers offer week-long experiences of kindness, love, listening and safety to kids who’ve recently survived a tornado, flood, hurricane, wildfire or shooting. Kids often open up for the first time to share their “storm stories” and begin a journey of healing.

Leaders at Camp Noah attest to God’s power to bring joy out of sorrow, trust out of fear and life out of death. A boy who initially was aloof dances with another camper at the closing worship; kids who arrived with uncertain expressions leave with smiles and regained confidence. Mental health counselors are part of camp teams, and referrals are made to continue care afterward.

Resurrection often happens in steps, not overnight. But wherever “ordinary” daily ministry takes place in Christ’s name, extraordinary echoes of the first Easter are evident.

– Heidi Mann

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

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## Did You Know?

### EAGLES

Eagles came to symbolize the Resurrection thanks to ancient legends that they renewed their youth, plumage or eyesight by flying near the sun, then diving into water. The eagle’s upward movement made it a symbol of Jesus’ ascension. John the Evangelist is represented by an eagle, for his “soaring” description of Christ’s divinity.



God’s care is likened to an eagle in Bible verses such as Exodus 19:4: “I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you myself” (ESV).

Reprinted from *The Newsletter Newsletter*

## THREE-MONTH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### April

	1	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service (P) ▪ Christian Congregation, Mertztown
*	5	10:00 AM	Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday (P) – Holy Communion
	8	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service (P) ▪ St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Mertztown
	9	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday (P) – Holy Communion ▪ New Jerusalem Lutheran Church
	10	7:00 PM	Good Friday ▪ Christ Mertz Lutheran Church, Dryville
	12	10:00 AM	Easter Sunday (W) – Holy Communion
*	19	10:00 AM	Second Sunday of Easter (W)
	26	10:00 AM	Third Sunday of Easter (W)

### May

*	3	10:00 AM	Fourth Sunday of Easter (W) – Holy Communion
■	10	10:00 AM	Fifth Sunday of Easter (W) ▪ Mother’s Day Breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.
	17	10:00 AM	Sixth Sunday of Easter (W)
*	24	10:00 AM	Seventh Sunday of Easter (W)
	31	10:00 AM	Day of Pentecost (R) – Holy Communion

### June

*	7	10:00 AM	The Holy Trinity (W) – Holy Communion
	14	10:00 AM	Second Sunday after Pentecost (G)
■	21	10:00 AM	Third Sunday after Pentecost (G) ▪ Father’s Day Breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.
	28	10:00 AM	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (G)

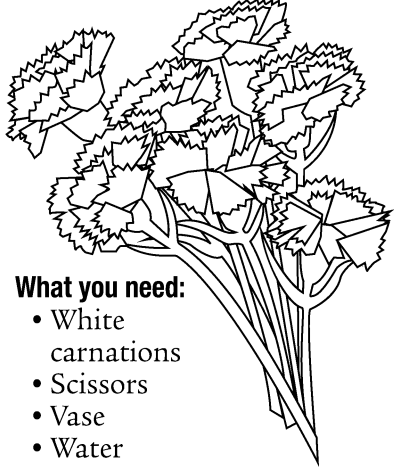
#### FELLOWSHIP DATES:

- ( \* ) Fellowship after worship  
( ■ ) Breakfast before worship



## Scripture AND NATURE

Conduct a simple experiment to illustrate Easter's meaning.



### What you need:

- White carnations
- Scissors
- Vase
- Water
- Red food coloring
- Bible

### What you do:

1. Cut the carnation stems (at an angle) to about 8 inches long.
2. Fill the vase halfway with water. Add 10 drops of food coloring. (More may be needed to darken the water.)
3. Add the cut flowers and observe what happens to the petals over time.
4. Discuss how this is like Jesus' work on the cross. Read 1 Peter 2:22-24 (NIV) and reflect on what his death means for us.
5. To learn more about this experiment, research capillary action.

## EASTER WORD SEARCH

O C Q F B P L K C G Y O B X O  
 H X R R F E W P H R N B M G Z  
 G L H O E L C J K O O V A N J  
 Y Q M M S S I I I B E W L G S  
 E R A A N S U X F N K K N A E  
 V E R N E F I R O I R I V W S  
 O T Y S S F Y I R L R I N S Y  
 L S G A I U T L Z E O C Y G C  
 Y O Q C R P S K O R C U A C I  
 S O U D M B C E Z H N T Q S L  
 W R J E B D E S J C H R I S T  
 C E D Q K S E L T S O P A O J  
 T E H L L T R Z T H O R N S N  
 R H S C J C D I K Z I G J D M  
 N O I T A V L A S V O K P T N

APOSTLES

CROWN

JESUS

LOVE

RESURRECTION

ROOSTER

SAVIOR

CHRIST

CRUCIFIXION

KING

MARY

RISEN

SACRIFICE

THORNS

CROSS

HOLY

LAMB

REDEMPTION

ROMANS

SALVATION

## APRIL WORSHIP ASSISTANTS & SPONSORS

DATE	GREETER	READER	FLOWERS	BULLETINS
4/5 – Palm Sunday	TBA	Dawn Wengert	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>	Cheryl Wiltrout
4/9 – Maundy Thursday	TBA	TBA	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>
4/12 – Easter Sunday	TBA	Sara Jane Beshore	Dan and Joanne Pauley	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>
4/19	Gladys Kline	TBA	<i>(sponsor needed)</i>	Elwood and Katie Ellen Cleaver
4/26	Josh Keck	Gladys Kline	Phyllis Fenstermacher	Gladys Kline

**ALTAR GUILD:** *(volunteer needed)*

**CHILDREN’S BULLETINS:** Anna Angstadt

**SANCTUARY CANDLE:** *(sponsor needed)*

**COMMUNION BREAD:** 4/5 – Gladys Kline, 4/9 – *(sponsor needed)*, 4/12 – *(sponsor needed)*

**COMMUNION SET-UP:** 4/5 – *(volunteer needed)*, 4/9 – Faye Dey, 4/12 – *(volunteer needed)*

**COUNCILPERSON:** Ted Eshbach

**COST:** Flowers - \$35.00; Bulletins - \$7.00; Children’s Bulletins - \$5.00; Sanctuary Candle - \$15.00

# APRIL 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Tentative Midweek Lenten Service, Christian Congregation, Mertztown	2	3 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	4
PLEASE NOTE: Bell Choir and Adult Choir Rehearsals are tentative at this point in time.						
5 Passion/Palm Sunday ▪ Holy Communion ▪ Fellowship after worship ▪ Confirmation Class	6 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	7 6:30pm-Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm-Adult Choir Rehearsal	8 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Tentative Midweek Lenten Service, St. Paul's Lutheran, Mertztown	9 7:00pm-Tentative Maundy Thursday, New Jerusalem ▪ Holy Communion	10 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Tentative Good Friday Service, Christ Mertz Lutheran, Dryville	11
12 Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Day ▪ Holy Communion	13 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Finance Committee Meeting 7:00pm-Council Meeting	14 6:30pm-Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm-Adult Choir Rehearsal	15 11:30am-Tentative Fellowship Luncheon at Airport Diner 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	16	17 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	18 Set-up for Yard Share
19 Second Sunday of Easter ▪ Fellowship after worship  Newsletter Deadline	20 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	21 6:30pm-Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm-Adult Choir Rehearsal	22 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	23  EARTH DAY	24 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	25 8:00am-2:00pm-Yard Share and Bake Sale
26 Third Sunday of Easter	27 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	28 4:30pm-Cong. Conversations 6:30pm-Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm-Adult Choir Rehearsal	29 12:45-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	30		

## PLEASE FILL OUT THE U.S. CENSUS, BUT BEWARE OF SCAMS

Unfortunately sin is still alive and active in our world and the presence and growth of many attempts to scam people is evidence. While the elderly seem most vulnerable, no one, not even people who consider themselves intelligent and savvy, is immune.

Most recently we are being warned about scams that claim to have some connection to the 2020 Census. This is a major problem since it is so important that each of us be counted in the official census so that our community and state will be appropriately represented in congress, and receive the amount of federal funds and other benefits to which we should be entitled, etc.

To avoid being scammed by things that seem to be about the census, be aware:

- The real government census forms are not being mailed out this year. Instead, you'll get a postcard asking you to go online to fill out a form and will be directed to the official Census Bureau website, [census.gov](https://www.census.gov). If you don't want to fill it out online or don't have internet access, there will be instructions on the postcard on how to request paper forms. You should have received one already since they were being mailed out between March 12 and 20.

- The real U.S. Census is clearly marked as "UNITED STATES CENSUS 2020" and is from the U.S. Census Bureau. It will clearly say U.S. Census on the outside envelope. It will come from Jeffersonville, Indiana. It asks four questions about your household:

- 1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?**
- 2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2020, that you did not include in Question 1.**
- 3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Include home equity loans. Is it owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)? Rented? Occupied without payment of rent?**
- 4. What is your telephone number?**

It will then ask a series of questions about each person who lives there, including gender, age, birthdate and race.

The Census Bureau will ***never*** ask you for:

- Your Social Security number.
- Money or donations.
- Anything on behalf of a political party.
- Your bank or credit card account numbers.

Additionally, **there is no citizenship question on the 2020 Census**. If someone claiming to be from the Census Bureau contacts you via email or phone and asks you for one of these things, it's a scam, and you should not cooperate. If you do not fill out a census form online or request that one be sent to you, the Census Bureau will follow up with you, either by phone or at your door. Workers will have photo identification with a Department of Commerce watermark and an expiration date. If you doubt whether a visitor or caller is legitimate, call the Census Bureau at 800-923-8282.

The official site reminds us that the Census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Sources of information: [2020census.gov](https://www.census.gov) and article by Paul Muschick in *The Morning Call* March 4, 2020.

## **BEWARE: SCAMS ARE ALSO POPPING UP AROUND CORONA VIRUS**

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warns individuals to remain vigilant for scams related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Cyber actors may send emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites to trick victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities or causes. Exercise caution in handling any email with a COVID-19-related subject line, attachment, or hyperlink, and be wary of social media pleas, texts, or calls related to COVID-19.

CISA encourages individuals to remain vigilant and take the following precautions.

- Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails and be wary of email attachments.
- Use trusted sources—such as legitimate, government websites—for up-to-date, fact-based information about COVID-19.
- Do not reveal personal or financial information in email, and do not respond to email solicitations for this information.
- Verify a charity's authenticity before making donations. Review the Federal Trade Commission's page on Charity Scams for more information.
- Review CISA Insights on Risk Management for COVID-19 for more information.

To repeat, do not give out personal information, make donations, purchase gift cards, etc. in response to phone or email solicitations *unless* you are absolutely certain the request came from a legitimate highly trusted source. Scammers can impersonate relatives and friends, may use an email very similar to a legitimate one, etc.

### **SPEAKING ABOUT SCAMS**

In the past two months our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has put out a number of alerts about email scams. Here are several alerts and tips, including some from Senator Bob Casey's office, AARP, and the synod.

- 1) Con artists force you to make decisions fast and may threaten you.
- 2) Con artists disguise their real numbers and make fake caller IDs. They may also disguise themselves behind emails that look very similar to those of people or organizations you know and are likely to trust.
- 3) Con artists sometimes pretend to be the government (e.g. IRS).
- 4) Con artists pressure you not to call friends and family.
- 5) Con artists try to get you to provide them personal information like your Social Security number or account numbers.
- 6) Before giving out your credit card number or money, or purchase gift cards, ask a friend or family member about it!

If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and please call the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging's Fraud Hotline at 1-855-303-9470. Call even if you aren't a senior citizen.

AARP reminds us that many of today's hottest phone frauds are based on fear. It works because "the mind is hardwired to react more strongly to negative than to positive things" (Richard Baumeister, social psychologist.) Historically, survival has depended upon reacting quickly to threats. "When a scammer calls to inform you that there is a crisis or major problem, your mind automatically goes into high gear, seeking a solution. So when this person tells you the problem can be solved with one or two easy steps, that sweeps you along." High-energy emotions like anxiety, anger or embarrassment can lead to judgment mistakes.

The best advice is to deliberately slow down, take your time, ask for a number to call back, make a list of pros and cons, especially the downside risks, talk with family or friends before taking action, etc. If, however, you realize you have fallen prey to a scam, immediately contact the state police, who may send out a trooper to interview you. Be aware that feelings of embarrassment and shame can be very overwhelming. However, it is not you who should be ashamed; it is the person who scammed you. Do talk about these feelings with a trusted person so that they do not fester or interfere with your sleep or other functioning. Do not isolate. Ask for financial help if you need it. Eventually you will be able to let the incident go as a lesson learned. Just so you know, I well remember a parishioner from another parish who had fallen prey to a scam and had sent the money she needed for a new furnace to "rescue" her grandson who was supposedly in danger in another country. This was an intelligent, alert woman who was vulnerable in the moment. Something similar can happen to any of us. Don't be afraid to talk with me if this or something similar happens to you. I will keep it confidential.

# SYNOD NEWS

## Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

### St. James, Pitman: Rural and Vibrant



St. James, Pitman, is a very rural congregation that maintains a vibrant ministry of outreach, Christian education, worship, and social ministry. The congregation recently dedicated its new ADA accessible restrooms and wheelchair lift with Bishop Zeiser and a packed house in attendance. The new restroom and wheelchair lift became a reality after the congregation received a significant bequest from a former member's estate. Making the building accessible was the logical way to open the doors and welcome in the community.

Each year, the congregation, which has 150 baptized members, crafts and ships nearly 200 quilts to Lutheran World Relief sites around the world. Locally, St. James raises thousands of dollars to help people within the community, while meeting its benevolence tithe to our Synod. When Bishop Zeiser learned that the quilts were shipped to places like Madagascar, Tanzania, and Indonesia, he said, "some people may think you're 'in the middle of nowhere', but for the people receiving the work of your hands you are very much somewhere."

The congregation's vision of reaching out and being a welcoming place has already borne fruit. The quilting group, open to anyone in the community, now has its largest membership ever and the quilt production has taken off. As word about the accessibility project has spread in the community, worship attendance has risen as well. For a little church 'in the middle of nowhere', many more are finding that it is really somewhere to be.





## St. Paul, Fountain Hill, NFL Canned Food Challenge Award

The Bethlehem-Easton Mission District Council challenged their congregations to participate in collecting canned goods for the food bank(s) of their choice. It was an effort to join forces; and with a bit of a challenge, to help others.

The goal was to collect a canned good for each point scored during the playoffs! Yes, that meant each congregation was asked to collect 523 cans. The prize was not revealed to the congregations ahead of time.

The suspense grew from week to week as the scores piled up and the cans were counted. Who would win the prize? As the points total grew, it seemed like an unreachable goal; yet many remained hopeful and determined.

After 11 play-off games, watching their canned goods pile up at their altar each week to be counted, St. Paul Fountain Hill was honored to receive a framed award for their "Mighty Effort" in the NFL Canned Food Challenge by surpassing the goal as they collected a total of 594 items. A total of 2,279 cans were collected & distributed to several food banks within the district.

Yes, the "Mighty 45" (as their Pastoral Care Provider Marlene Werkheiser calls them) stepped up to the challenge! As she told them that first week, "This is a great way for our small congregation to help others and to possibly win bragging rights to the prize." The challenge intrigued them enough to muster up an average of 13 cans per worshipping parishioner.

"I am beyond proud of them", said Werkheiser. "For a small congregation, they really wanted to show others that their congregation can (and wants to) participate in ministries that help to do God's work."

Pictured below is the "Mighty 45" on February 9, after they reached the goal.



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