



# LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

*The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS*

+ Easter 2022 +

About the Cover:

*Descent into Limbo*

Andrea Mantegna

1492

Mantegna, an Italian artist of the 1400's, depicts in this painting the victorious descent of Christ into hell. Many artists illustrating the same subject include such details as Jesus' standing on the toppled gates of Hades as He leads the saints forth, often with the doors comically crushing a devil underneath. Mantegna forgoes these tropes, opting instead for a somewhat realistic depiction. Hell is not shown as the gaping mouth of medieval nightmares, nor do we see demons clawing after their lost prey. Instead, Mantegna sets the focus on Christ and His beloved saints.

In this painting, the Savior is turned away from the viewer, His sole focus to free the captives. He bears in His left hand the banner of His victory, scarlet cross emblazoned on the fluttering fabric. He treads upon the jagged ground with naked feet, just as Adam once walked upon edenic earth. Implicit is the confession that what Satan has destroyed, the Son of Adam has now set aright; even the barren, rocky soil is tame beneath His feet. With His right hand, Jesus reaches for the redeemed, drawing them forth from the pit of death. And hell is shown to be just that: a black, unending pit. The prisoner below reaches out in heartbreaking gesture—for he finally beholds, with ancient longing, the face of his Savior. The crowd of people already rescued includes aged men and youth alike, a symbol of our forefathers long past and those of our own generation. Now they are all adorned in the white robes of salvation. And among them is a woman: she who was the first deceived by the serpent, but now truly “the mother of all living,” Eve herself. Jesus has saved not simply mankind, but His first mother, reversing the course of death passed down by her to all generations, and giving Life to her and her children. Now her skin is white and pure, and she watches with joy and expectation as the fruit of her womb is redeemed.■

*Life in Christ*

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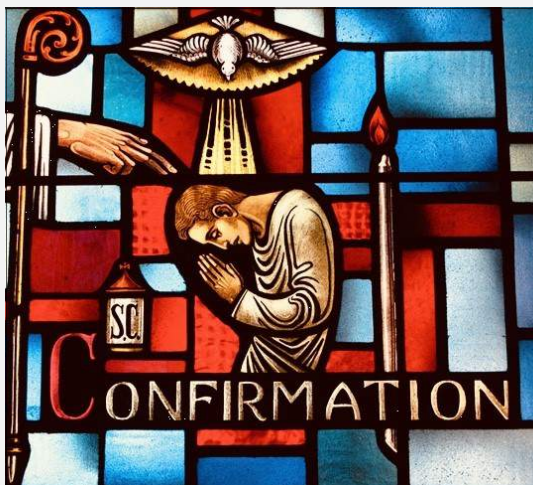
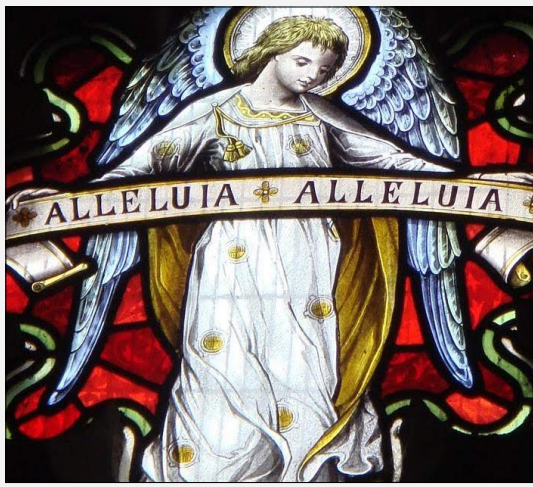
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# SAYING BACK ALLELUIA

*Pastor Fields*

It is often noted by people new to the Liturgy, to Lutheranism, or to the Western Rite in general, that there is a lot of pre-written responses, a lot of memorized words that we repeat. Some judge this as being bad, since it is likened to the vain repetitions of the Pharisees. Some, I would say rightly, appreciate it, as a constant confession of our faith. If our faith, like God, never changes, then our confession should never change. God is one, and our faith is one, so our confession is one, however often it is confessed. It never changes, so our confession never changes.

The word 'catechumen' is used to describe those who are learning the faith in preparation for Confirmation. Literally, the word means, 'the repeat back,' that is, to confess back that ancient faith that all Christians have believed since the time of the Apostles. We invent nothing new; we invite no novelty. Rather, we ask those who partake of the Sacraments to merely say for themselves what the Apostle Thomas said for himself when he touched the wounds of our Jesus, 'My Lord and My God.'

On Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, we confirmed four Catechumens, four people who would confess back the faith once said by Apostles. It was a wonderful day, or I should say a wonderful, and rather long, evening. But these Catechumens were, on that day, invited to join all those who would make the same confession as the ancient Christians; to 'say back' that ancient faith.

Now they will be invited to do a lot of 'saying back' in the Liturgy on Sunday and in their life. They will say back all the responses printed in the hymnal; and when the time of temptation comes, whether in private or before crowds, they will 'say back' this confession, and prove themselves soldiers of Christ, and princes of heaven. 'My Lord and My God says....' And let that silence the senseless noise of the unthinking world around us.

During Lent, we refrain from saying the word alleluia as a sign of our fear of God, and of our repentance. But now in the days of Easter and all that follow, we proudly say it, for God is indeed praised, as our risen and eternal Savior in Christ our Lord. This we say against the devil, and this we say against our sinful nature, and this we say against the passing fashions of this world; we who confess the Eternal; we who love the Eternal; we who trust in the Eternal; we sneer at all passing things, for we are devoted to the Eternal alone, that is Christ, who has overcome death and mortality, and has given to us immortality. Alleluia means 'God be praised.' And indeed, the children of God will ever praise their Father. For by Christ's resurrection, we are drawn out of this world, that is always passing, with all its controversies, petty arguments, politics, wars and rumors of war, and into the kingdom which has no end.

Again I say, Alleluia. ■





ELUIA + ALLELUIA



# Ladies Night Out



What a wonderful, dixie day! Our ladies made a daytrip out to Vicksburg for April Ladies' "Night" Out. Their destination was the Walnut Hills Restaurant, where they dined on delicious food and, yes, decadent slices of cake. Many thanks to Anita Martin for being our April hostess! ■



# Christ Lutheran Quilting



The Christ Lutheran Quilters strike again! Amidst the indoor and outdoor work days, our quilters met on April 9 to continue their diligent work. They even let Pastor Fields tie some knots!

When our quilters finish a stack of quilts, we usually ship them off to Memphis, TN, for Lutheran World Relief; but our industrious sewers make enough quilts that we occasionally donate them to local charities as well, such as the Stewpot and Gateway Rescue Mission. In this way, we are impacting both the local community and our Lutheran brethren abroad by something as simple as tying knots on a Saturday morning.

And you can join the cause! You don't even need to be an expert sewer—if you know how to tie a knot, you can quilt! And if you can't make it on our monthly Saturday mornings, you can donate fabric: anything from bed pads and sheets to old draperies.

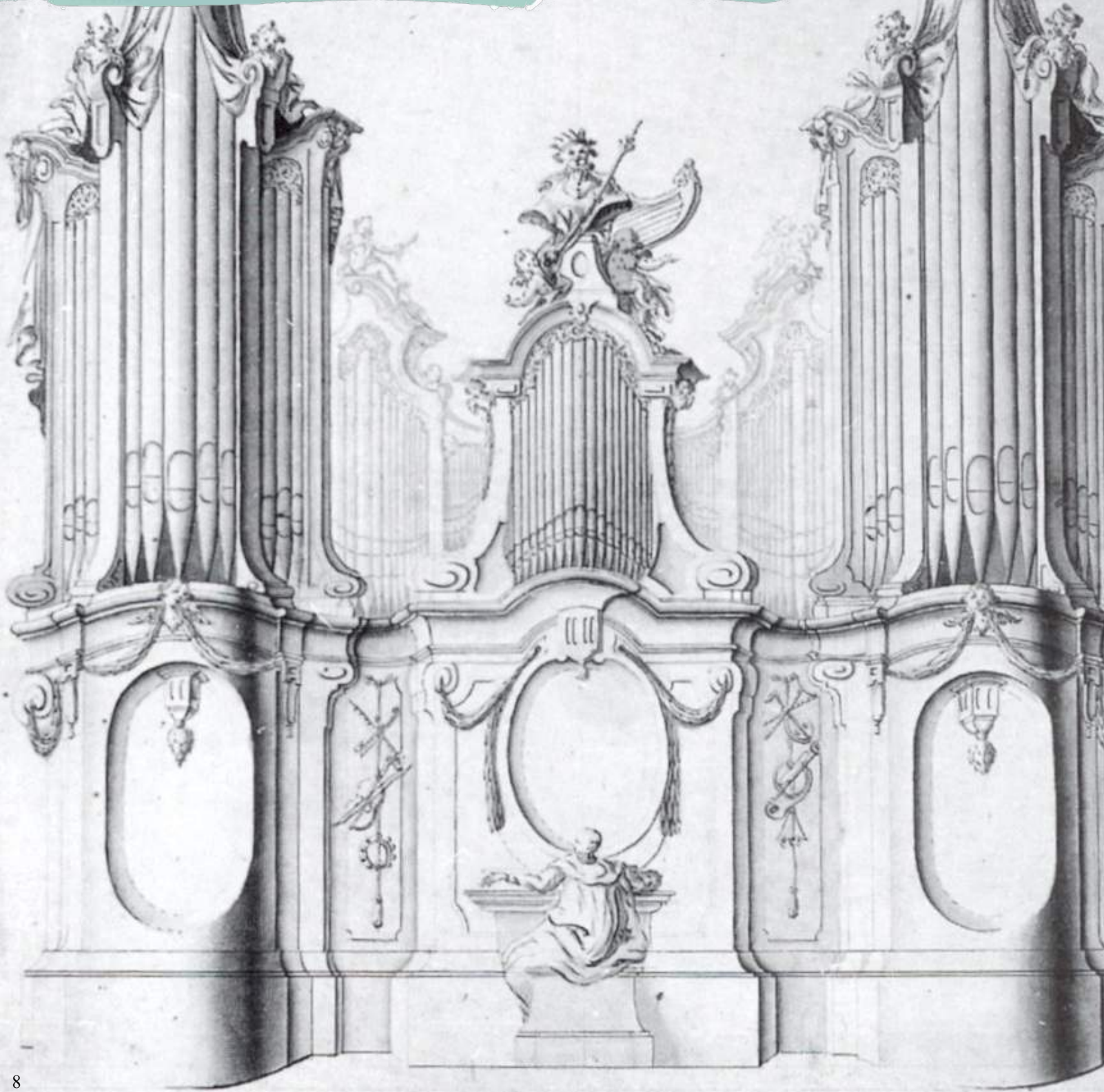
Thank you to our quilters, thank you to those who support them with your donations, and thank you to the good Lord who lets us show love through something so simple as coffee and quilting! ■





# Hymn of the Month

*Sister Sara*





This month's hymn is simultaneously replete in festal joy and ferocious in conquering might. I suppose that only makes sense, because it was written by the same guy who penned "Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle." That guy was none other than Venantius Fortunatus, a cultured man of the AD 500's, who eventually became the bishop of Poitiers. His friend Felix of Nantes, bishop of a region in northwest Gaul, successfully converted a throng of fierce Saxon pagans; and as has been the ancient practice, they were to be baptized at the Easter Vigil.

Fortunatus joined Bishop Felix for this joyous occasion. Being a man of poetry, he wrote "Hail Thee, Festival Day" to be used at the baptismal rite of that Vigil.

This hymn was originally a 110-line Latin poem. In fact, the line we use as the hymn title doesn't appear until a solid third of the way through the poem. As you can imagine, it was a little lengthy for regular use, but by the 10th century had been cut down into a standard hymnic version, which is basically what we use today. As time went on, various lines were added to make it appropriate for more feast days. But enough prologue; let's talk about the content of the hymn!

Fortunatus begins his poem with what, for the literature of the time, was an original thought: he compared the coming of springtime with the new life of the Resurrection. Long dormant in the death of winter, life bursts forth in the radiant color of violets, herbs, vines, and myrtle; these are merely Creation imitating the very death and life of her now-Risen Lord. These florid lines finally swell into the rapturous, "Hail Thee, Festival Day!" This day, the day our of Our Lord's Resurrection, is a "blest day," which is "hallowed" (i.e., made holy), for it is the "Day when our Lord was raised, *Breaking the kingdom of death.*" What a magnificent line.

Keep in mind as we examine the stanzas, that Fortunatus was writing this poem as a story for

the newly baptized (remember those Saxons?). He was showing the meaning of Jesus' death, conquering of hell, and resurrection to those who were now entering into that story.

We see in the first Easter stanza the poetic beauty of nature mentioned above; on the second page (yes, there are two pages... more on that later), the image is linked to the One who created that very nature, Jesus Himself, rising from the winter of death into New Life.

The Ascension stanza ponders the cross: once lifted upon that tree to die, our Lord is now exalted upon it as His throne. Fortunatus likens that instrument of death to a flowering tree, for now it blossoms with unending life, daily growing in loveliness.

Finally, we have the Pentecost stanza, which speaks of the Holy Spirit descending "Bright and in the likeness of fire" upon the apostles.

The last stanzas arise as a doxological prayer inspired by the proclamations of the previous stanzas. We beseech God the Almighty Lord to guard us from harm and evil; we invoke Jesus, who has created and redeemed us; and we plead that the Spirit of Life, font of our being, flow in us unto life everlasting.

Now to tackle the hard part: this hymn may seem scary at first glance, because it spans two pages, has multiple refrains, weirdly numbers its verses, and has rhythmic changes halfway through. *But it's worth a second glance!* It is actually not that hard. You just read it from the top of the first page, all the way through to the bottom of the second. Wash, rinse, repeat. The only thing you have to know beforehand is whether we are celebrating Easter, Ascension, or Pentecost. And voila, there you are, singing a fantastic hymn the church has sung for over a thousand years! ■

May—

Hail Thee, Festival Day

LSB 489



# Moralia

A Lesson from the *City of Ladies*

*Pastor Fields*

Morals are something that Christians are accused by non-Christians of talking too much about. With that said, morals are something that, among Christians, we don't talk about much at all. This is not to say we never talk about it. We speak of the Law, and its requirements, and God's will, but we often speak of it just to say how we have failed to keep the Law so we can get on and get to the Gospel of forgiveness by grace alone through faith alone in Christ.

Christ is the center of our faith, and the sole source of our salvation, and we are right to focus upon Him above all else. For we are 'in the world, but not of the world'; we are of a 'kingdom not of this world.'

With that said, we are still in the world, which means we need to know how to live in the world, and sometimes that requires concrete instructions.

We receive many such instructions when we learn the Small Catechism. Sadly, like many things, because of our sinfulness, we grow bored of what is old, the teachings of our childhood, and look for something new.

I am sorry to inform you that there is nothing new. God's will is God's will, and it never changes. What was taught in the Catechism of your youth remains true now and will remain true until the life of the world to come.

That being said, it does not hurt to hear how some have elaborated on this eternal moral truth, and applied it in their own context.

Some have heard that 'pride is the mother of all sin.' This comes from the Apocrypha which states, 'Because of pride did Satan fall.'

Christine de Pizan, a noble princess in the Middle Ages wrote a book setting out the moral behavior she thought proper first of noble women, but also of all women, and by extension all people, since all people are born of women. The book she wrote was called 'The Treasure of the City of Ladies.' It was a sequel to a book she previously wrote called simply 'The City of Ladies' where she imagines building a city along with God and God's daughters, and then populating it with the great women of history. The 'treasure' mentioned in the sequel is the morality of that population, and the very first aspect of that morality, which makes this perfect city function in a godly, pious, and devoted manner, was humility. Pride was the greatest of sins for anyone; humility, the first of virtues.

Therefore she writes: 'Ladies raised to high estate, come to the school of wisdom, in spite of your greatness, and do not be ashamed to humble yourselves, for according to the word of God, whosoever humbles himself will be raised up.'

This indeed is the first lesson of Christian Morality, that we should, before all else, consider ourselves nothing before God, and as less than our neighbor, that we may serve them faithfully, whether they be above us in status, or below us. For God washed the feet of humans. So should we also serve one another, and show our love for one another, thinking not of our own pride, but of our neighbor's needs.

Perhaps this is not the morality we always see in Disney princesses, who often seem to only seek to 'be themselves' and find their own happiness. But it is the morality that we see in a real princess, and taught by a real princess. A true lady, in the City of Ladies. ■





Et commence le livre de la Cité des Dames du quel le premier chapitre parle pour  
quoy ce par quel mouvement se dit livre fu fait .j.

**S**elon la maniere que j'ay en dis-  
te et a quoy est disposé le  
recueil de ma vie cest assa-  
voir en la frequentacion de  
saintes de lectures du jour et  
en se foyse soient en ma cele aujourdhuy de  
saintes volentes de diverses manieres me  
commencement a celle heure auques trouue  
la de moult la pesanteur des sentences  
de divers auteurs par moylongue piece  
esprouve d'icay mon desage en sus du lieu  
volentiers pour celle fois laisser en par de  
la subtilite et meslages et regarder au  
cune repensite des dieux des poetes et come  
adont en celle entente se occidasse entour  
mes d'icay pour l'heure en ce temps me  
dout d'icay de l'heure estourme nomme

de medecines qui avec autres livres maniere  
este l'adite s'icay en garde adont ouuert ad  
l'icay de by en l'icay l'icay que et se clamoit ma  
thodius Lors en soude vaine pour ce que une  
ques ne l'icay deus et manies fois en-  
ce auoye quantes les autres livres cellue  
pudie a la residence des femmes me per  
suy quon maniere de s'icay le desicoye ma  
regarde neles moult lone espere quant ce  
f'us appellee de la femme me que porta po  
prendre la resfection au fuyper dont leue  
estou ra d'icay par quoy p'icay l'icay  
l'icay l'icay l'icay a celle heure le matin  
en l'icay l'icay en mon estourme si que l'icay  
de l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay  
le d'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay l'icay  
l'icay de maniere adont par al'icay l'icay







Psalms Sunday greeted us with bright blooms and great excitement. Ready your palm branches and cry out, "Hosanna!"



The Altar Guild rehearses the Stripping of the Altar, which takes place during the liturgy on Maundy Thursday.



The ladies prepare communion on the night when our Lord instituted His Supper.



On Maundy Thursday, we begin the Triduum with the invocation... words we will not hear again until Easter morning. Likewise, it is the last time we taste the Lord's Supper until He is risen triumphant over the grave.

While most of us are blessed to experience Holy Week from the pew—listening to the rich harmonies, watching the processions and seeing the change of paraments, holding our candles and bathing in the light—this week could not be done without the many people who help “behind the scenes.” Cantors and instrumentalists rehearse, the Altar Guild works overtime, processions robe up and practice their movements, ushers strategically time the lighting of the sanctuary...





# HOLY WEEK



This sacred week is an elaborate choreography with many people involved, and we could not do it without them. Thank you to all who participated, whether behind the scenes or from the pews. The Body is made of many parts, and all together, we do our part to celebrate the victory of our God over death and the grave!

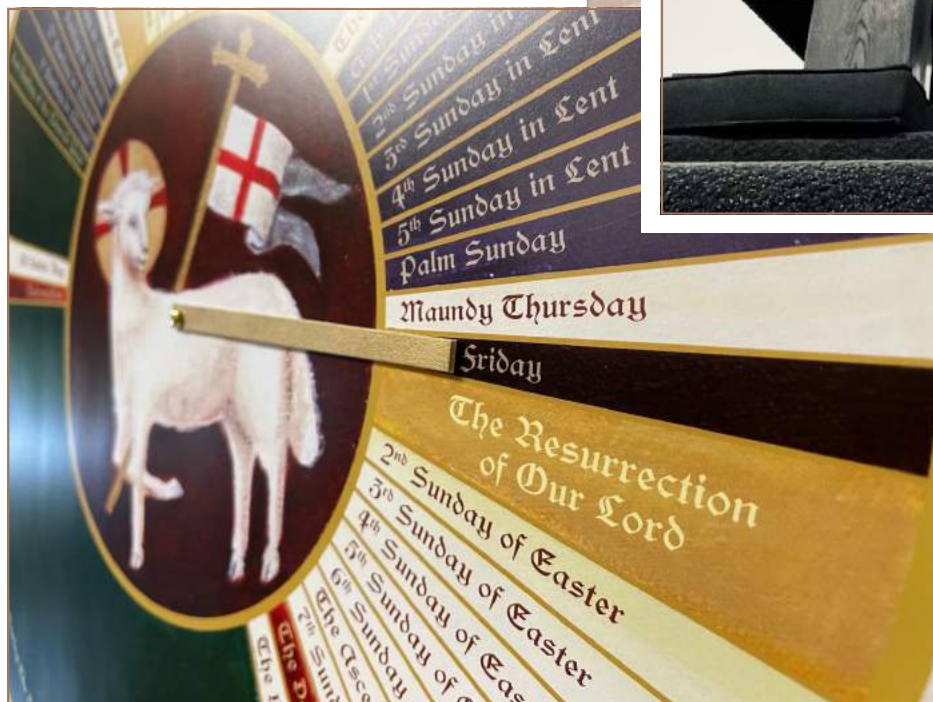
**H**oly Week, the week of our Lord's Passion. This week is set apart from all other weeks; these days are the holiest of days. On Palm Sunday, the Messiah is greeted in Jerusalem with palms and shouts of "Hosanna." On Maundy Thursday, the night of the Passover of God, Christ the Lamb gives us His own Flesh to eat and Blood to drink. And, having given Himself for our salvation, He is delivered into the hands of wicked men, betrayed and flogged for claiming to be the Son of God. Our Lord is lifted high upon the cross on Good Friday: a shame before the eyes of men; but to those who see, the cross is His throne and the thorns, His crown. Descending to the heart of Hell on Easter Vigil, Jesus proclaims His triumph over the Kingdom of Death, binds the strong man, and leads the saints out in His victorious train. It is because of all this, our Lord's dear sacrifice and glorious victory, that we and all the redeemed may cry,

**"Christ is risen! Alleluia!"**



“What have I  
done to you,  
O my people?”

The paraments of Maundy Thursday lay  
as grave cloths... they too patiently  
await Easter, when they will again adorn  
the altar in radiant white.



The Church traversed the Triduum during Holy Week: the three days  
of our Lord's betrayal (Maundy Thursday), death (Good Friday), and  
descent into Hell (Easter Vigil).

The altar is stripped at the end of Maundy  
Thursday, standing stark and bare on Good  
Friday.



Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle!





We wait outside before Easter Vigil.



Emily the acolyte, Eric the candle bearer, Keith the crucifer, and Jake the censor.



During the Service of Baptism, four of our students were confirmed in the Baptismal Faith.



The Light of Christ! Thanks be to God!

**Christ is risen!  
He is risen, indeed!  
Alleluia!**

The altar is adorned, the music swells, Pastor reenters clad in white!  
“Christ is arisen from the grave’s dark prison!”■



We end Holy Saturday with the Easter Vigil... a service which begins outside in the darkness, slowly illumined with the Light of Christ as we process into the House of God.







Easter Triumph  
**Easter**  
**JOY**





Easter joy reigned supreme when we gathered together for the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord! The sanctuary thundered with jubilation as almost a hundred voices cried “Jesus Christ is risen today!” Lilies adorned the chancel and radiant white draped every surface. Shouts of “Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!” filled the air.

As Christ Lutheran celebrated the triumph of our God, food multiplied across the tables of the Fellowship Hall during our Easter Burnch. Everyone ate heartily, exchanged happy greetings, and feasted together. There was even cake for breakfast—confirmation cake! Our four confirmands were congratulated on successfully completing their catechetical studies and joining the saints at the communion rail.

Afterward, kids big and small braved the rainy sprinkles outside for an Easter egg hunt. If confirmation cake wasn't enough sugar to excite you for the festivities, why not add some chocolate!

The joy was infectious, as well it should be. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!







Many thanks to everyone who helped make this day special—from the food and decorations, to the lawn and gardenwork, to the music and worship. And above all, thanks be to our Lord and Savior, who has given us such reason for celebration!



Parker and Savannah plunder the bushes!



Our kids enjoyed the annual Easter egg hunt!





Food and fellowship abound!



Showing off her treasure!



All the scrumptious food—where would we be without Gary to lead the charge?? ■



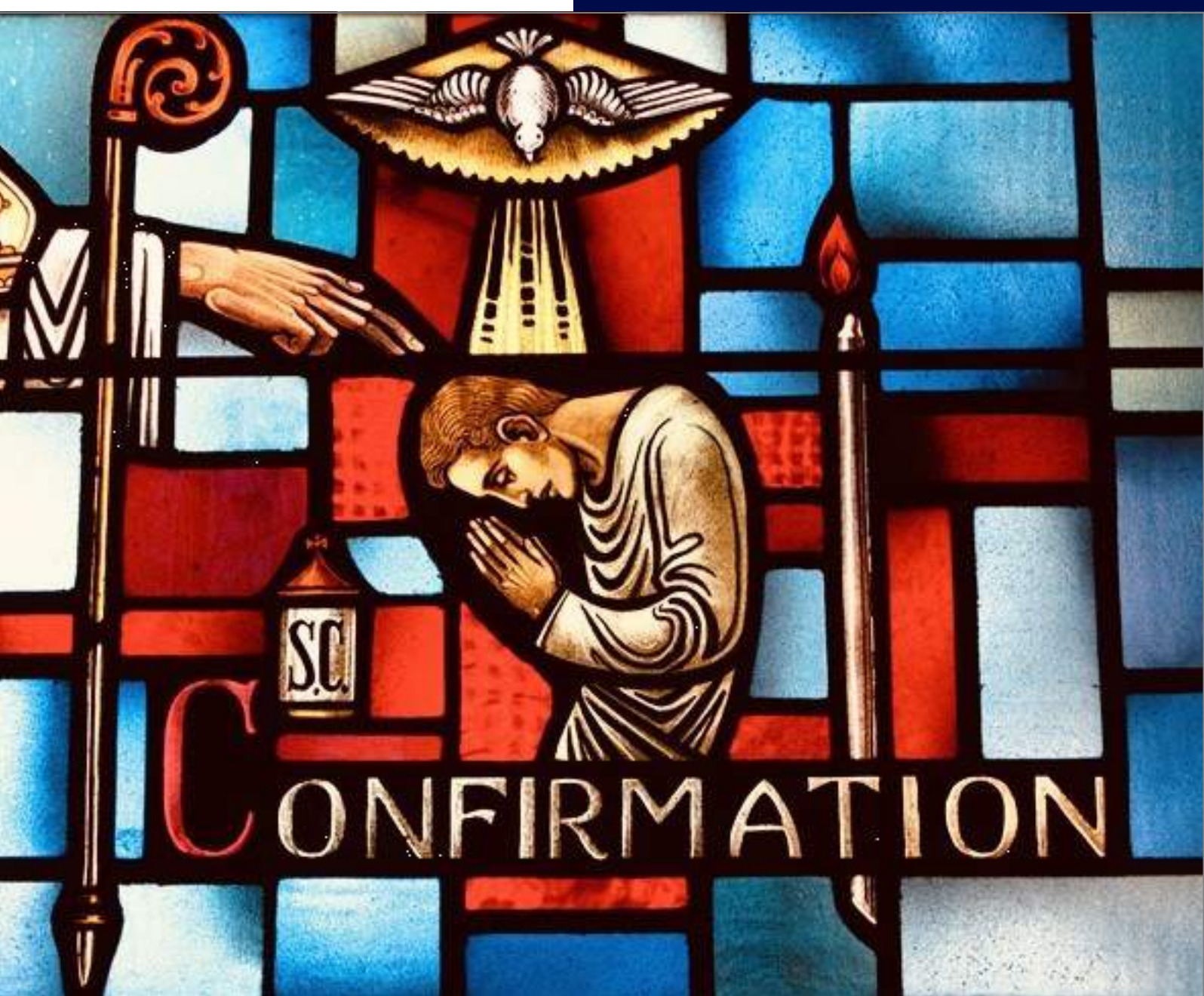




“We rejoice with thankful hearts that you have been baptized and have received the teaching of the Lord. You have confessed the faith and been absolved of your sins. As you continue to hear the Lord's Word and receive His blessed Sacrament, He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ .”

These words were spoken during the rite of confirmation, a part of the Service of Baptism in the Easter Vigil. In accordance with the ancient tradition, the Church baptizes new members during that service, for it is on that night that we remember Jesus' salvific work, His sack of hell, His redemption of His saints from the pit of death. Those who have been baptized confirm their baptismal vows on this same night. Having been catechized in the Faith and examined by the pastor, they are now admitted to the Lord's Supper as mature members of the Body of Christ.





On Holy Saturday, April 16, 2022, Pastor Fields performed the rite of confirmation of Emma Agent, Miles Agent, Nathan Burkhalter, and William Held. Having been confirmed in the Faith, they became full participants in the Church's sacraments, tasting the Lord's Supper for the first time on the night of the Vigil. And how appropriate an image, that they began the service in darkness, remembering the darkness out of which Christ has called them, and ended in the fullness of His light as they partook of His Body and Blood.

“Almighty and most merciful Father, in the waters of Holy Baptism You have united Your children in the suffering and death of Your Son Jesus Christ, cleansing them by His blood. Renew in them the gift of Your Holy Spirit, that they may live in daily contrition and repentance with a faith that ever clings to their Savior. Deliver them from the power of Satan and preserve them from false and dangerous doctrines, that they may remain faithful in hearing Christ's Word and receiving His body and blood. By the Lord's Supper strengthen them to believe that no one can make satisfaction for sin but Christ alone. Enable them to find joy and comfort only in Him, learning from this Sacrament to love You and their neighbor and to bear the cross with patience and joy until the day of the resurrection of their bodies to life immortal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”





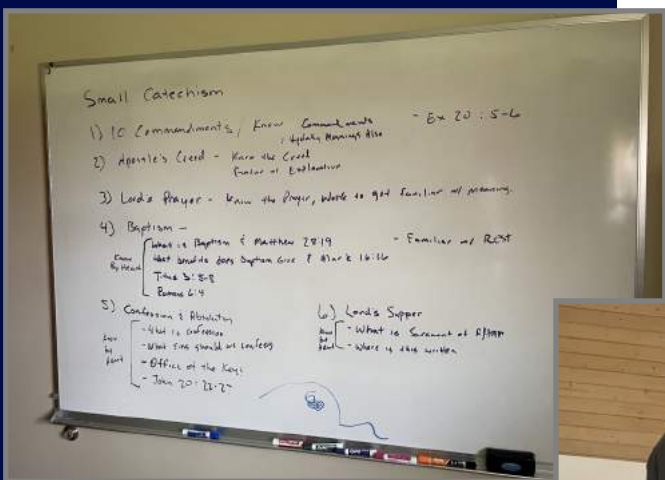
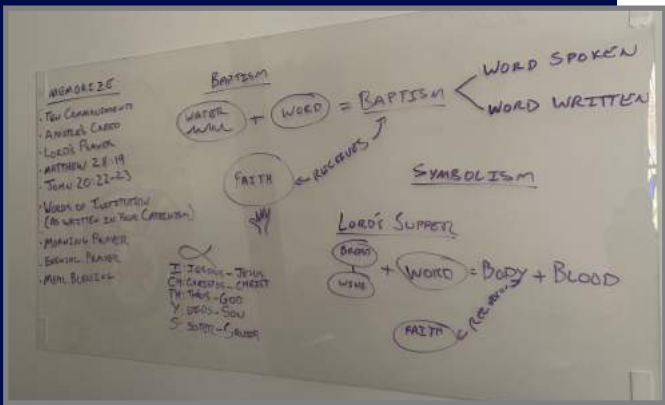
So, what is involved in catechesis, anyway? Catechesis is the word the Church uses to refer to teaching the Faith; it literally means to “sound/call back,” or to echo. The idea is that we teach the Faith by saying back what is given to us. We hear the Word, we “read, learn, mark, and inwardly digest it,” and through so doing can then confess it. Learning the Faith begins at baptism, which for many of us happened as a baby; from there we learn Bible stories; and as we continue to grow, we are taught the summary of the Faith in the Small Catechism.

One of our elders, Eric Held, has been working with the confirmands to study the Small Catechism during their Sunday school. At home, their parents faithfully taught them and helped them to memorize the Six Chief Parts. Finally, Pastor Fields held a six-week catechetical intensive during Lent, which is historically the time when catechumens prepare for entry into the Church. At the end of Lent, Pastor examined each catechumen individually, asking them about the Faith into which they have been baptized, that they have grown up into and studied, and which they now prepared to be confirmed. And they all passed the examination!

Once they passed, each confirmand got an opportunity to practice for partaking in communion by tasting an unconsecrated host and wine. All that was left was to wait for their confirmation! And indeed, they were finally confirmed at the Triduum, the Easter Vigil.

Although there is never a bad time for celebratory cake, 10:00 on the night before Easter is perhaps not preferable. And so, we celebrated with our confirmands at the brunch on Easter morning, complete with cake and presents. Each one received a Lutheran Service Book from the congregation, with their name inscribed on the front.

We praise God for His good gifts, most of all the precious Faith by which He has saved us. And now, we thank Him for His goodness in bringing these, His children, to the banquet table of the Feast of the Lamb. Let us pray for their continued growth and preservation in the Faith unto Life Everlasting!



Above: Lent catechesis with Pastor Fields, plus the whiteboards filled with notes for study...

Right: Each student got to practice how to receive the host and wine (unconsecrated, of course!). It was good preparation for when they partook of the Lord's Supper for the first time at the Easter Vigil.





William, Emma, Miles, and Nathan pose with their cake, presents, and certificates on Easter morning!



Nathan shares a laugh with Pastor Fields after the Vigil.

Above: Pre-Vigil confirmands...  
Left: Post-Vigil confirmands! ■







# endless song of praise— THE LITURGY

*Sister Sara*

## The Sanctus

The *Sanctus*. The song of angels and men. An eternal song.

This month we examine this curious and mystical canticle. To unpack all its richness, we need to be familiar with three key Scripture passages: Isaiah 6, Psalm 118, and Matthew 21.

The scene for the *Sanctus* is set by Isaiah 6, wherein you may recall the story of God's calling Isaiah as a prophet. The chapter begins with a vision of the heavenly throne room, splendid in radiance and filled with the presence of God; even the doorposts tremble at the sound of His voice. Six-winged seraphs fly around the throne singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!" Isaiah, undone, cries out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!" Indeed, sinful man cannot bear the awesome holiness of God, and live. All would be lost for Isaiah, but for the mercy of the Lord: one of the seraphs flies down to Isaiah with a live coal from the altar of God, and lays the coal on his lips, saying, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."



Next, we need to think on Psalm 118. This is a “Psalm of Ascent,” one of fifteen psalms the Jews sang as they approached the Temple mount in Jerusalem. These psalms were used liturgically, as the Levites (the priestly class) gathered slowly closer and closer to the Temple itself; but they were also sung by Jewish pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for the three big annual feasts (like Passover, for example). Because of this, the movement toward the place where God has promised to be with His people is heavily associated with these psalms.

Lastly... Matthew 21. It is in this chapter that we read of Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. This was Jesus’ last trip into Jerusalem before He died; in fact, it was during this very trip that He instituted the Lord’s Supper and was crucified. He had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, as all good Jews did. But this Passover was different, because the people greeted Jesus as the Messiah, and they laid down their cloaks and palm branches, shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” Keeping in mind that *hosanna* is the Hebrew word for “save us now,” we see that this is a quote from Psalm 118: “Save us, we pray, O Lord! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (verses 25-26). As we learned in the previous paragraph, the Jews would have been singing this psalm during their ascent toward the Temple for the Feast of the Passover, so it makes sense that they would hail Jesus’ entry with such a greeting.

Now, how do all these tie together in the *Sanctus* of our liturgy? What commonality do these disparate passages share?

To find the answer, first remember when it is that we sing the *Sanctus*: we have begun the Service of the Sacrament, and are just about to hear the Words of Institution—which are the very words that Jesus spoke on the night of the Passover, after He had been hailed on Palm Sunday with shouts of “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:25-26). In the Service of the Sacrament, we will see the Lord, partaking of His Body and Blood, and so as we approach, we cry out the same words of the crowd greeting Him in Jerusalem, “Hosanna!” *Save us now!*

This is especially appropriate when you consider that, in the communion liturgy, we physically process closer to the altar of God, until we finally reach it when we kneel at the rail. In so doing, we approach Mount Zion, the place of sacrifice, the Temple Mount! The *Sanctus* is our psalm of ascent, that we pilgrims sing as we travel through this fallen world to the place where God has promised to be with His people: the Lord’s Supper. He promises to come to us *in the flesh*, and He waits for us upon the altar—an even holier place than the Temple itself.

But wait! Woe are we! For we are men of unclean lips! Sinful man cannot enter God’s presence and live. Just as Isaiah, we stand in God’s holy presence, and we must despair in our utter unworthiness. But behold, a man in robes comes to us as a seraph, taking a “live coal” from the altar, and he puts it to our lips. As Pastor lays the Body upon your tongue and rests the cup against your lips, recall the words of the angel: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” The live coal is none other than Jesus Himself, purging our sin and redeeming us unto salvation.

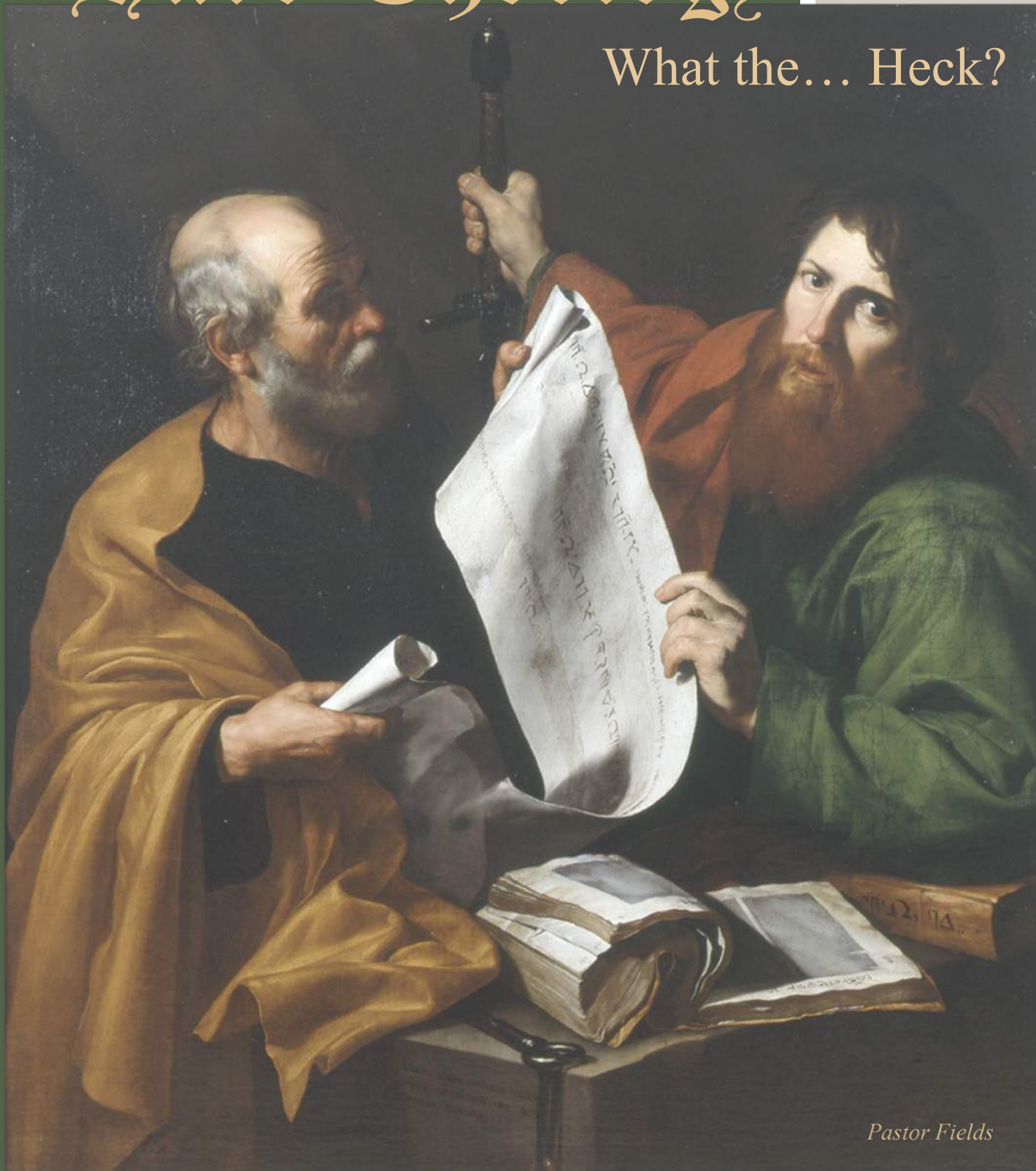
We sing the *Sanctus* because it is the eternal song of our redemption. It unites the vision of Heaven with the Passion narrative, and it draws us into that union. At communion, we partake of Jesus’ sacrifice, through which we are made worthy on His account to stand before the Holy and Almighty God. So sing, sing the song of the angels (Isaiah 6), sing the psalm of ascent (Psalm 118), sing with those who hailed Jesus’ coming (Matthew 21), and come to the altar. For these are given and shed for you, for the remission of sins. ■





# Hard Theology

What the... Heck?



*Pastor Fields*



We have written before about why the punishment of hell is eternal, and we have written about why such a punishment is just. It is not my pleasure to dwell too much on the subject of hell, but my pleasure has never been that important anyway, so I will write what I think may be interesting.

In the last article, we learned that eternal punishment in hell is the natural result of the rejection of God's love. Love is what makes you want to be near someone. Reject that love, and the natural result is that you are far from

them. That 'farness' we call 'hell.'

This brings up a related question, though: is hell a place that God created beforehand for faithless heathens, predicting their faithlessness? Or, in some sense, are we the 'cause' of hell?

That is to say, did God want some people, from the beginning, to be in hell?

The great Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard answers the question as such:

*'Now follows the efficient cause of hell. But what efficient cause shall we assign to hell? Difficulties arise on every side, but we shall try to surmount them in whatever way we can. If hell is taken in the first sense as eternal death, it must be said that the meritorious and therefore proper, immediate, and exactly suited cause of hell is the apostasy of the rational creature from its Creator God. "God is light, and within Him there is no darkness at all." Therefore when creatures turn away from God and from His only Word and highest light, they fall into darkness and therefore into hell, for hell is that darkness.'*

By 'efficient cause' he means the 'thing that makes it.' The efficient cause of a table is a carpenter. The efficient cause of a TV show is Hollywood. And, as Gerhard would argue, the efficient cause of hell is not God, but us. Not that God made hell because we sinned, but that our sinning made hell. This is what he means when he says that the cause of hell is 'the apostasy of the rational creature.'

God is light, He is blessedness. He is heaven. And hell is merely the lack of those things, which is why by Bible describes hell as 'the outer darkness' where there is 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.' It seems simple. If you walk away from the light, you enter the darkness. If you make a point of walking away from the light as a matter of principle (that is apostasy, which is a way of saying rejecting God) then

you will forever walk into the darkness. That darkness, into which people choose to walk forever into, is called hell.

Now darkness is the absence of light. In a sense, it has no existence of its own. It is just the perception of what does not exist, that is, light. So to perceive darkness is not to perceive something, but to perceive nothing. And yet, by perceiving it, it becomes something that we give a name to, namely 'darkness.'

In the same way, if one turns from the heavenly light of God, and walks away, one walks into the darkness of His non-presence. That non-presence has no existence of itself, but, just like darkness, once one is there to perceive it, it becomes something to us, and that something is what we call hell.■

#### Appendix: The Origin of 'Heck'

Most of us know 'heck' as a more polite way of saying 'hell' when we are not using the term in its strict theological sense. But where does that come from? Specifically, that 'eck' part? The answer is we both know and don't know. During the 1800's, when many words that were considered blasphemous were slightly altered to make seem less blasphemous (saying 'Gosh' instead of 'God' or 'Darn' instead of 'Damn') 'Heck' was a part of

this. During the mid-1800's, many immigrants came to the US from northern England and Scotland where a colloquialism for 'hell' was 'ecky,' likely a reference to a volcano, since both seemed hot. This seemed to pious Americans a good alternative to cussing using the term 'hell' since at the time it seemed both foreign and benign. From 'ecky' combined with 'hell', we likely got 'heck.' ■



Watch out—Chuck is coming for you!



Allen takes on the lawn... have you ever noticed how much grass there is at church??

**Time for spring cleaning at church!** We held our annual Easter Work Day on April 9, just in time for the beginning of Holy Week. A small band of hardy laborers hacked away the weeds and sliced through the dust. This year's work day included both outdoor and indoor efforts, resulting in an all-around sparkling church!

In addition to the outdoor crew's garden care, blowing away natural debris, mowing, and washing, the indoor team scrubbed down Sunday school rooms and changed out a few old furnishings. And even the pews got touch-ups (thanks, Merina!).

God has surely blessed us with His house, the room we have for fellowship, and the beautiful churchgrounds. Thank you for being good stewards of His blessings! ■

Once upon a time our sidewalk was a daaaark shade of gray. Who knew that beautiful white lay underneath?





Mary and Allison catch a breath after they exorcize the lounge.



Margaret gives the Sunday School room a much-needed scrub-down.



Jake gives the garden a little TLC.







# Issues, Etc.

The 2022 Issues, Etc.  
“Making the Case” Conference

Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25, 2022  
at Concordia University Chicago



William Barr



Dr. Albert Mohler



Dr. Päivi Räsänen



Dr. Joel Biermann



Rev. Chris Rosebrough



Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller



Rev. Will Weedon

**Registration  
Now Open!**

For more information, visit [IssuesEtc.org/2022-conference/](https://IssuesEtc.org/2022-conference/)





# THIS MONTH

*At Christ Lutheran*



**FEAST OF ASCENSION**  
+ Thursday, May 26 +  
6:00 p.m.



Christ Lutheran VBS  
this summer!  
**July 19-21**  
Tues-Wed-Thurs  
Mark your calendars!

## VOTERS' MEETING

### May 22

The regular bi-annual Congregation Voter's Assembly will convene immediately following the worship service **Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022** to approve the slate of council officers. All members are encouraged to attend.

## Men's Whiskey

— Sip & Swill —

Yenish Home  
Saturday, May 7  
1-7 p.m.

Bring a whiskey to swill-and-share.  
And an appetite... there will be  
pulled pork.



## Artwork in This Issue



- Cover: *Descent into Limbo*, Andrea Mantegna, 1492.
- p. 8: Design for an organ, Johann Georg Dirr, 18th century.
- p. 10-11: Illustrations from *The City of Ladies*, 1405.
- p. 26: *Saint Peter & Saint Paul*, Jusepe de Ribera, 1616.





**FEAST OF PENTECOST**

+ June 5 +  
10:30 a.m.

**κοινωνία  
KOINONIA**



**SAVING  
LEONARDO**

*A Call To Resist The Secular Assault On  
Mind, Morals, & Meaning*

Dickens Home  
May 29  
5:00 p.m.

*Ladies Night Out*

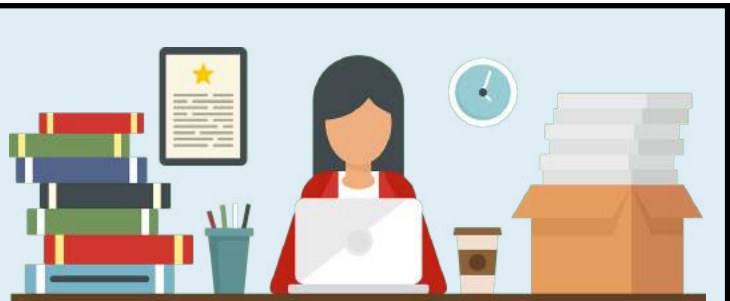
Plato Feliz Bar & Grill  
Livingston, MS  
Wednesday, May 18  
6:00 p.m.

*Please RSVP to Allison Agent*



**HOLY TRINITY**

+ June 12 +  
10:30 a.m.



**Secretary Wanted  
Hired!**

Christ Lutheran has officially *hired* a secretary!  
We look forward to welcoming Taunya Smith  
in the office this May!



# Quilting

**Saturday**  
**May 7**  
**9:00 a.m.**

Join us for a relaxed morning of coffee and quilting!

# JOIN US FOR BIBLE STUDY

bible & breaky | fridays @ 6:30 a.m.

## ge·müt·lich·keit

Let us come together for Gemütlichkeit once more! Our monthly book study will reconvene this June. If you are interested in hosting, please contact Sister Sara at [sistersara@christlutheranjacksonms.org](mailto:sistersara@christlutheranjacksonms.org)!

## Saints' Days in May

- 1 Sts. Philip & James, Apostles
- 2 St. Athanasius, Bishop & Confessor
- 4 St. Monica, Mother of Augustine
- 4 St. Friedrich Wyneken, Pastor & Missionary
- 5 St. Frederick the Wise, Christian Ruler
- 7 St. C.F.W. Walther, Theologian
- 9 St. Gregory Nazianzus, Bishop & Confessor
- 9 St. Job, Confessor
- 11 Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs
- 21 Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler
- 21 St. Helena, Mother of Constantine
- 24 St. Esther, Queen
- 25 St. Bede the Venerable, Confessor & Theologian
- 31 The Visitation

## Saints' Days in June

- 1 St. Justin Martyr, Martyr
- 2 St. Blandina of Lyons, Martyr
- 5 St. Boniface of Mainz, Missionary to the Germans
- 11 St. Barnabas, Apostle
- 12 The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, AD 325
- 14 St. Elisha, Prophet
- 24 The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
- 25 Presentation of the Augsburg Confession
- 26 St. Jeremiah, Prophet
- 27 St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop & Confessor
- 28 St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Bishop and Martyr
- 29 Sts. Peter & Paul, Apostles





After the Service...



Cartoon by William Held



During the lockdown, Christ Lutheran worship services were livestreamed on Facebook. Now that the lockdowns are [thankfully!] long past, services will be in-person only, beginning this Easter season. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Fields, Sister Sara, or the elders.




# Derby Day

## CRAWFISH BOIL

Goodlett Home | Saturday, May 7 | 3:30-6:00 p.m.



# May 2022

PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Agent Family</b> 1—Sister Sara	<b>EASTER III</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service <i>Sts. Philip &amp; James</i>	<b>2</b> <i>St. Athanasius</i> 5:00 p.m. Kitchen Mtg. 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <i>St. Monica</i> <i>St. Friedrich Wynecen</i>	<b>5</b> <i>St. Frederick the Wise</i>	<b>6</b> 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	<b>7</b> <i>St. CFW Walther</i> 9:00 a.m. Quilting 1:00 p.m. Men's Whiskey Derby Boil	
	<b>Gary &amp; Mary Atchley</b> 9—Nancy Teal	<b>8</b> <b>EASTER IV</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	<b>9</b> <i>St. Gregory Nazianzus</i> <i>St. Job</i>	<b>10</b> 6:15 p.m. Council Mtg.	<b>11</b> <i>Sts. Cyril &amp; Methodius</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	<b>14</b>
<b>Bruce Bodkin</b> 16—Andy Evers 16—Mimi Bradley 17—Elysia Fields 17—James Hansford 18—Ben Rudsenske	<b>15</b> <b>EASTER V</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:00 p.m. Ladies' Night Out	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	<b>21</b> <i>Emperor Constantine</i> <i>St. Helena</i>	
	<b>Cheryl Bodkin</b> 28—Carolyn Yenish	<b>22</b> <b>EASTER VI</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 11:30 a.m. Voters Meeting	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>St. Esther</i>	<b>25</b> <i>St. Bede the Venerable</i>	<b>26</b>  <b>ASCENSION</b> 6:00 p.m. Divine Service	<b>27</b> 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	<b>28</b>
<b>Bowman Family</b> 30—Alaena Ramsey	<b>29</b> <b>EASTER VII</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <i>The Visitation</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Serving this month:</b> Elder—Gary Atchley Greeters—Rush &amp; Allison Agent Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Mark Ochs</p> </div>				



# June 2022

## PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS

### Bowman Family

- 1—Celia Weidner
- 2—Parker Haines
- 4—Jake Everly

**Serving this month:**  
 Elder—Gary Atchley  
 Greeters—Rush & Allison Agent  
 Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Mark Ochs

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <i>St. Justin Martyr</i>	2 <i>St. Blandina</i>	3 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	4
<u>Mimi Bradley</u> 5—Beulah Nunnery	5 <b>FEAST OF PENTECOST</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service <i>St. Boniface</i>	6 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	7	8	9	10 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	11 <i>St. Barnabas</i>
<u>Burkhalter Family</u> 13—Sabrina Goodlett	12 <b>FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Gemutlichkeit <i>The Council of Nicaea</i>	13	14 <i>St. Elisha</i> 6:15 p.m. Council Mtg.	15	16	17 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	18
<u>Bill Cookston</u> 22—Brian Atchley 22—Joan Cowards 24—Joshua Landrum	19 <b>PENTECOST II</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	20	21	22	23	24 6:30 a.m. Bible Study <i>Nativity of St. John the Baptist</i>	25 <i>Presentation of the Augsburg Confession</i>
<u>Charles Cowards</u>	26 <b>PENTECOST III</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia <i>St. Jeremiah</i>	27 <i>St. Cyril of Alexandria</i>	28 <i>St. Irenaeus of Lyons</i>	29 <i>Ss. Peter &amp; Paul</i> 6:00 p.m. Ladies' Night Out	30		