



LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS

+ Lent 2023 +

On the Cover:

Christ on Mount Olive

Emanuel Krescenc Liška

1886

Christ on Mount Olive is one of Liška's most popular paintings, and at the time its reproduction could be found in many a Czech household. Liška was a Bohemian (modern day Czech Republic) painter of the latter nineteenth century. He painted this picture in Rome for his patron Rudolf M. count Klár, who had the painting installed at the St. Raphael chapel of the Institute for the Blind at Klárov in Prague. Liška's concept of the praying Christ moves us not only with its fervour and emotional charge, but also with its sophisticated colours and illusive naturalism. In Liška's lifetime, the painting was frequently exhibited and reproduced also with the title "Thy will be done!" ■

Life in Christ

is the monthly publication of

Christ Lutheran Church, LC-MS

4423 I-55 North
Jackson, MS 39206

(601) 366-2055

www.ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org

Rev. George Fields
Sr. Sara Fields



Table of Contents

4 For but a Season: Lent

6 Transfiguration Potluck

8 Hymn of the Month

10 Ladies “Night” Out: Mardi Gras Edition!

12 Ash Wednesday

14 We Are All Catechumens

16 Endless Song of Praise: *Pax Domini*

18 Pure Days: A Brief History of Spring Cleaning

20 This Month at Christ Lutheran

For but a Season.

We are now well into the season of Lent, a season initiated with Ash Wednesday when we mark our foreheads with the soot of palm leaves from the previous Palm Sunday, and in so doing declare ourselves to be mortal and sinful before the communion of the Church. The same season ends with Holy Week, and in particular Easter, when we feast in rejoicing before the Lord who was *raised from the dead for our justification*.

Yet sometimes we do not really understand what Lent is, or why we observe it.

The origin of the word will not help us, for the word 'lent' is simply Old English for 'springtime,' since that is when this season of the Church Year usually falls.

In Latin, the season is called *quadragesima*, meaning 'forty,' a reference to the forty day length of the season. In most other languages of the world, the season is simply referred to as 'forty,' including Swahili.

In some eastern languages, such as Syriac and Russian, it is called 'The Great Fast,' for obvious reasons.

But why do we observe this springtime fast of forty days?

In the early church, an association between catechumens, that is, those studying to be baptized, and the temptation of Christ in the wilderness arose. In the same way that Jesus gave up the luxuries of the world to be tempted by the devil before returning to the world victorious, so the baptismal candidate would fast away from worldly temptations, purge himself of pagan desires, and, with the forgiveness given in baptism, return to the world having been reborn into Christ's conquest of sin, death, and the devil. Since Christ fasted in the wilderness for forty days, so the catechumen fasted for forty days.

Since baptisms generally happened on Holy Saturday, the forty days before Easter were set apart for fasting.

By the 4th century, such Lenten fasting, we are told by St. Athanasius, was 'observed by the whole world.' Including those who were already baptized. For during this season, we all return to being students of our Lord, humbling ourselves and learning from Him as we approach the day of the fulfillment of our salvation in the Resurrection of our Lord.

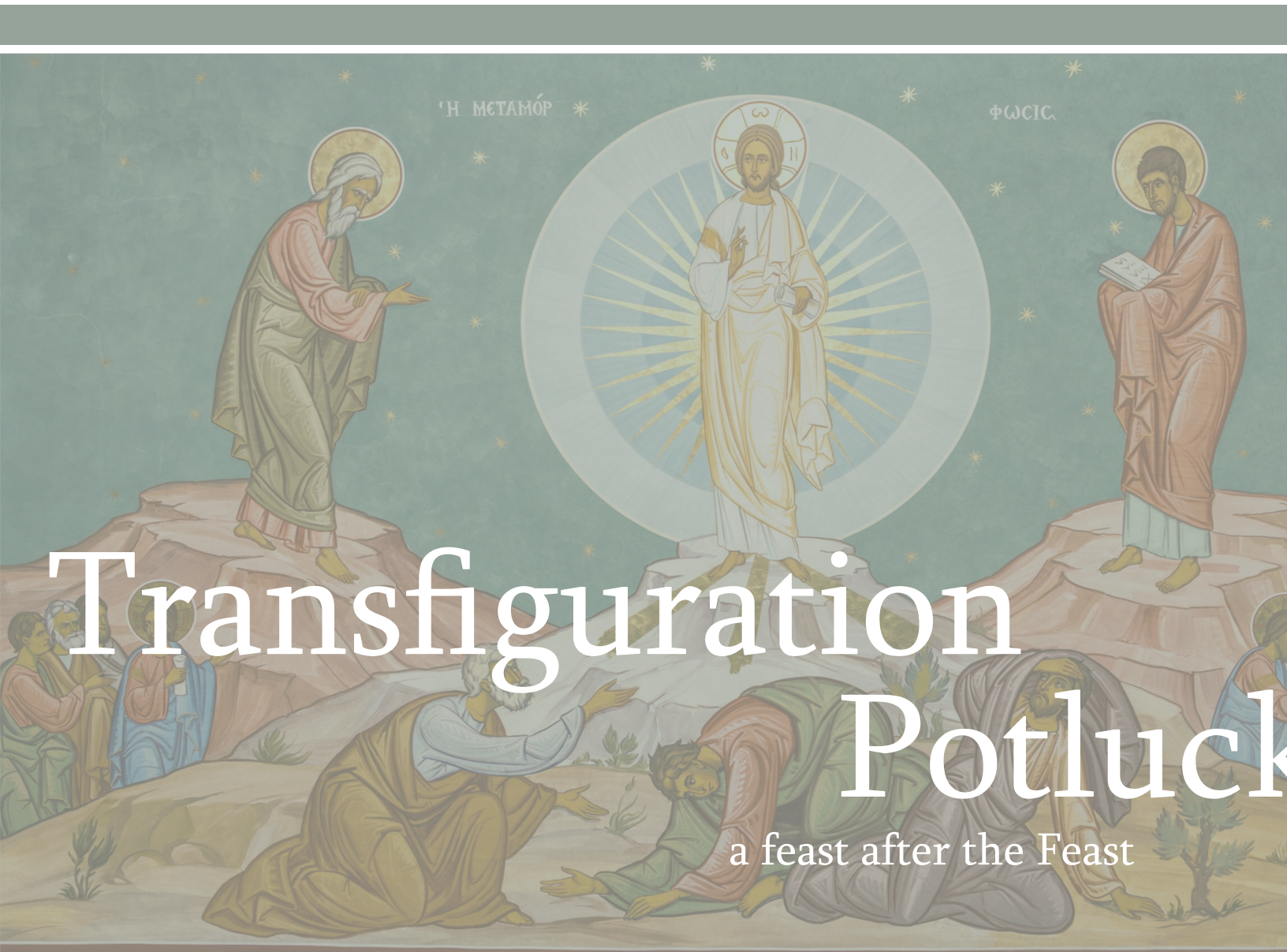
So, whether we strictly observe a fast or not during Lent, let us finish out this season with our eyes firmly fixed upon the cross, the grave, and our risen Lord. ■



LENT

Pastor Fields





Transfiguration Potluck

a feast after the Feast



After the saints' faithful attendance to the duties of the voters meeting on February 19th, they celebrated the Feast of the the Transfiguration doubly with a second feast: a potluck! The Transfiguration of Jesus marks the last Sunday before the beginning of Lent, when all feasting gives way to fasting and prayer. With this glimpse of the glory to which Jesus shall bring us in His death and resurrection, we bade farewell to the Epiphany season with one last feast. Salads and desserts, fried chicken and casseroles—and most importantly, fellowship! Thanks to all who brought food and to all who ate food on this happy day! ■

With a Synod convention approaching this summer, the voters decided on nominations and appointed representatives for the congregation.



With Gary ill, what brave soul would lead the charge for us??
Never fear, Rush is here!



Friends and food—two of God’s richest blessings!



Yummmmm!



Joand and Denee are at the kids’ table, apparently. A testament to their youthful spirit, naturally!

Hymn of the Month

Sister Sara

March—

Glory Be to Jesus

LSB 433

According to the manifold laws of the Old Testament, a sacrifice before God was only valid if the blood was separated from the body of the offering; that is to say, it was necessary that you must drain the blood from the animal whose throat you had just slit. Curious and even gruesome, at first glance—especially to a modern people so removed from the gritty realities of ancient sacrificial practices... you'd think that cutting the poor critter's throat would be enough! But it is sensical, if you think about it, for when blood pours forth from a body—no matter the cause—it is safe to assume that that body is losing life... that it will be dead without its blood. Indeed, “the life of the flesh is in the blood,” our Lord declares (Leviticus 17:11). He goes on: “I have given it [the blood] to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Truly, if we were to pay the debt of our own sin, it would cost our life, temporal and eternal. The payment is blood—*our* blood. But God in His infinite mercy provided a substitute, first in bulls and lambs and goats, and ultimately in the lifeblood of His own Son.

“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22).

As we sojourn through the forty days of lent, we ponder our Lord's sacrifice, when He was “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7). Our Lord gave the eternal riches of His own Blood as eternal atonement for our souls. This is the subject of our hymn's meditation this month.

It begins, “Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains Poured for me the lifeblood From His sacred veins.” From the very beginning, Jesus' sacrificial Blood is at the heart of this hymn. Stanza two makes the meditation personal, as though you yourself are gazing at the scene of your atonement; and indeed, you are, every Sunday as you approach the altar, that you may drink of the Cup of Salvation. Departing from the sacrament, as in rapture, the singer bursts out in stanza three's acclamation and praise of that redeeming Blood. The next stanza alludes to the story of Genesis recounted in the book of Hebrews, whose author notes that the Blood of Christ “speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). Stanza five depicts all the host of heaven and earth singing antiphonally (i.e., back and forth) in praise of the Lamb whose Blood was shed. And the last stanza is the culmination of our devotion: an outflowing of deepest gratitude. The “mighty flood” invokes the image of Revelation 7, when we see the saints washing their robes in the Blood of the Lamb. We implore this divine flood to swell, to wash over us, as we cry out, “Praise the precious Blood!”

Unlike many lenten hymns, whose melodies are written in somber, minor keys, “Glory Be to Jesus” is

You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-19

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Hebrews 9:11-14

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:22-24

set in a major key, which we usually associate with happier moods or occasions. That said, it is not a peppy tune, which would be totally disjoint from the lyrics. Rather, it is reflective: the Blood of which we sing is *salvation* to us, a supremely beautiful thing. And yet, it came at the highest cost, which is depicted in the music as it ever-so-briefly dips into a minor key midway through. This combination, along with its moderate, meditative tempo, gives the hymn a unique quality of contemplation and gratitude. How appropriate for this prayerful, lenten hymn.■



Ladies Night Out... **Mardi Gras Edition!**



Laissez les bons temps rouler! In the spirit of the season, our ladies celebrated Mardi Gras at their latest “night” out—on a lovely Saturday morning, of course. Two of our own Louisiana natives, Sabrina Goodlett and Anita Martin, hosted the bead-laced brunch in all its bayou glory. We donned necklaces, hats, and even masks as we visited the bar (thanks to our festive bartenders, Allen and Keith!) and sat down for a game of Mardi Gras trivia. And then the feasting began! Mini muffulettas, shrimp pasta, and glorious king cakes—we left very “mardi,” that’s for sure! Thank you so much to our hosts! It was a lovely celebration!

Our bartenders were decked out and ready for the occasion. Throw me something, Mister!



Enjoying our veritable feast! Thanks to Sabrina for her wonderful cooking and to Anita for the scrumptious king cakes!



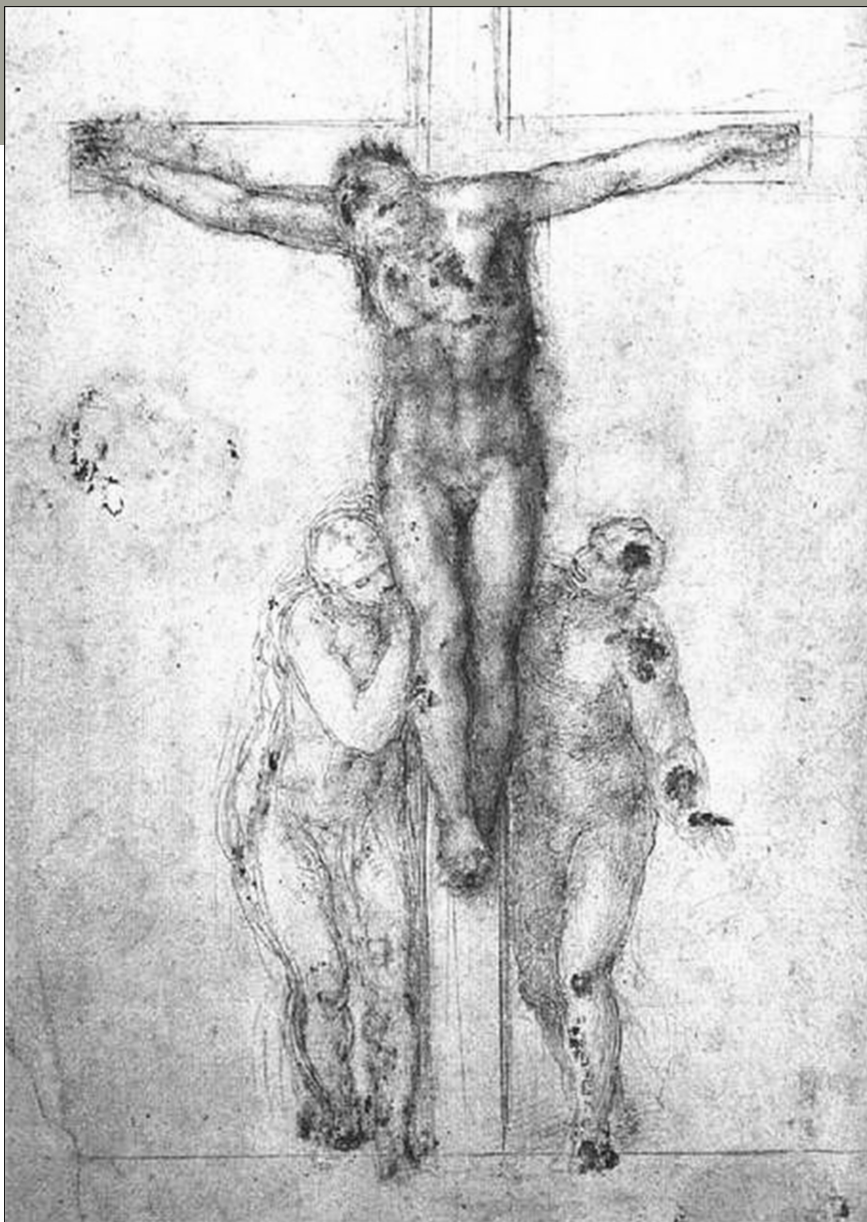
We played a round of Mardi Gras trivia, with questions about the history of the NOLA traditions, Christian practices, and the theology of that day.

If you would like to pick a restaurant for us to visit on Ladies' Night Out, please sign up on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. ■





ASH WEDNESDAY



“You are dust,
and to dust you
shall return.”

These ancient
words begin our
Lenten journey.

For forty days,
we pray and fast
together,
recognizing our
own fallen frailty
and following
our Lord to the
cross of our
salvation.

How are ashes made for Ash Wednesday? Last year's palms from Palm Sunday are dried and saved for the this year's lent. Once Lent approaches, Pastor burns the dried palms and mixes the ashes with oil. These are the ashes applied to your forehead on Ash Wednesday.



Thanks be to God, that though we spurned His love in our lust for death, He would not let us remain dust forever. To dust we shall return, it is true; but the living waters of baptism spring eternally, and have watered our parched, earthen frame. We repent in ashes now, but Easter is coming... ■





we are all catechumens

Pastor Fields

It is commonly said that, during Lent, we are all Catechumens; that is, we all go back to being students of the basics of the Christian faith. For this reason, during the midweek services past and the midweek services to come leading up to Holy Week, we will be studying the first great discourse of our Lord: the Sermon on the Mount. Please come and hear Christ's word, and learn His wisdom, for we are all but children in faith. ■



endless song of praise—
THE LITURGY

Sister Sara

Pax Domini

The Peace of the Lord

This month we come to the Holy of Holies, the place of communion between God and man. This month, we discuss the *Pax Domini*.

This little element of the liturgy is extremely easy to overlook, as it is a grand total of ten syllables long... unimpressive, right? But it is the summation and climax of all of history, temporal and eternal.

Pax Domini means “The peace of the Lord.” *Pax*, as in “Pax Americana” or “Pax Romana”: those eras in history marked by an uncommon cessation of warfare and strife, by a time of relative safety and prosperity. But this is not the Peace of America or Rome, it is the Peace of the *Lord*. Jesus has come proclaiming the Kingdom of God, for He has inaugurated the *Pax Domini* by His own Blood. In this new kingdom, this new and everlasting epoch, “they shall beat their swords into plowshares... neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4). In this kingdom, we dwell in peace and safety, enjoying the prosperity of our inheritance as the children of God.

This is all fine and well, for it is certainly true; but why does it not *feel* true? Even in this particular present moment, our nation wages a proxy war overseas while tensions mount with the Far East, not to mention the political strife at home among fellow neighbors. This would seem... less than peaceful.

But what is the peace that the Lord is talking about here? Well, it’s spiritual, you might say. Our hearts are at peace because we know that Jesus has saved us from the archenemy, the devil. Yes, that is true. But the devil still rages. No matter how peaceful our hearts are, we are still doing daily battle with sin, death, and Satan.

So, once more, *who* is at peace?

Our question can be answered if we simply lift up our eyes and see what Pastor is doing as he proclaims these words. Having just consecrated the elements on the altar, that they may be the Body and Blood, Pastor takes the chalice in one hand and host in the other. He turns around, elevating them both before us, for all to see. With these at the center of our attention, lifted on high, he declares, “The peace of the Lord.”

These actions and words are one. Pastor is showing us what—or rather, *Who*—the Peace of the Lord is: **Jesus Himself**.

Humor me for a moment. In ancient and medieval kingdoms, when two kings ended their warfare with one another, they sealed the truce by giving their children in marriage to one another. This was a guarantee of peace between the kingdoms, for the grandchild and eventual heir of these kingdoms would no sooner begin the war again than make war on his own family, his own flesh and blood; because he, in his own flesh, was a real, incarnate combination of the two monarchies. Both nations are “his people,” both sides are his kin, the best interest of both lands are his own...

In ancient times, man made war upon God. Man subverted the will of the Lord and declared his enmity with the Most High. Ever since, his wickedness has been great in the earth, and the thoughts of his heart have been only evil continually (Genesis 6, Romans 1).

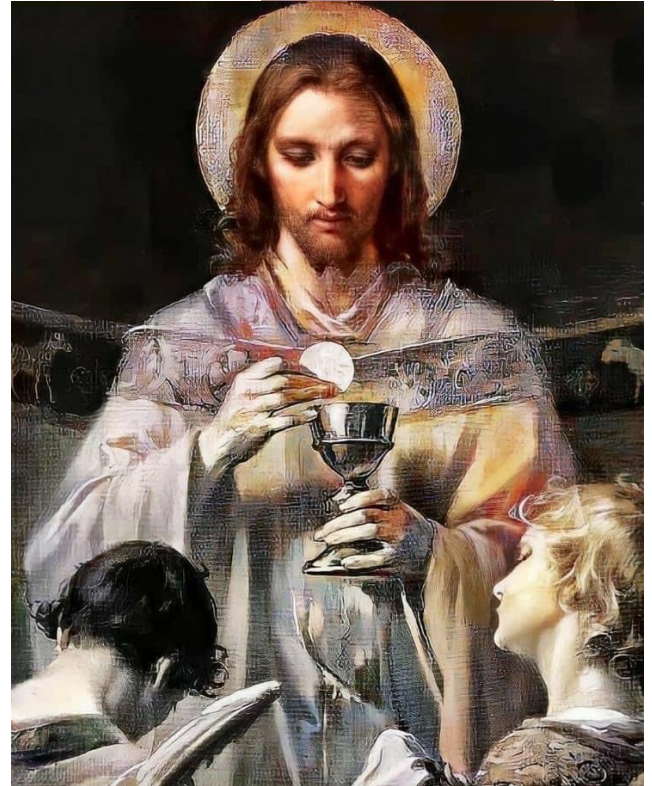
How many times did God extend His arms in reconciliation? How many words of longing did He give us in the mouths of the prophets? And yet, man would not have it, spurning the truth of God for a lie.

And so, God gave His own Son to be knit into our very flesh, that in Him the two kingdoms of heaven and earth, of God and man, might be made one. Jesus Himself is our peace, because He is God incarnate, He is mankind deified; He is the God-man, who would no sooner declare war once more than rend His own nature.

When Pastor holds Jesus before us, in his hand and in the chalice, he is showing us the Son of God and the Son of Man, the very incarnated peace between those once warring kingdoms.

Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

John 20:19



“The peace of the Lord be with you,” he declares. And we cry out, “Amen!” Yes, yes, it is so!

Immediately after this declaration, we proceed toward the altar and take this Son into our own bodies, becoming one with Him, and so bearing that peace within ourselves.

Let us, then, beat our swords into plowshares, our spears into pruning hooks; let us never again learn war. For we are forever reconciled to God, that we may live in the prosperity of His love.

So no matter how Satan may rage against us, no matter how the nations of the earth may roil with strife, no matter the suffering of this present age, we are at peace, for we are at peace with God.

May the *Pax Domini* have no end. ■

Pure Days

...a brief history of

Spring-Cleaning

Pastor Fields

Many Americans observe the practice, to varying degrees of stringency, of 'Spring Cleaning.' As the weather slowly starts to warm up, but before things get to hot and muggy, we bring new life to our homes: with a mop, a broom, and a vacuum cleaner.

Yet what most do not know is that 'Spring Cleaning' has its origin the Christian Church, in what used to be known as *kathara imera*, or 'pure days,' which generally began right around the first week of Lent, on a day called *kathara deftera*, that is, 'pure Monday.' In preparation for the season of Lent in general, and for Holy Week in particular, Christians were expected to not only cleanse their minds of sinful thoughts and desires, but also to physically clean their homes, as well as their local Church (see, Lent "work days" go back over a thousand years!). By so 'purifying' one's life both inwardly through fasting, penitence, almsgiving, and prayer, and outwardly by washing and tidying one's house, one's property, and one's church, one symbolizes the purification we receive through the sacrifice of Christ on Good Friday, and our justification through His resurrection on Easter.

So perhaps it is true, that 'cleanliness is next to godliness,' or at least Spring Cleaning is next to Holy Week. ■





THIS MONTH


At Christ Lutheran



Join us for
**Lenten
Suppers**

Wednesdays | 6 p.m.

CHURCH
WORK DAY



MARCH 25
8 a.m.

Artwork in This Issue:

Cover: *Christ on Mount Olive*, Emanuel Krescenc Liška, 1886.

Page 4-5: *Christ in the Desert*, Ivan Kramskoi, 1872.

Page 6: Icon of the Transfiguration.

Page 8: *Design for an organ*, Johann Georg Dirr, 18th century.

Page 12: *Christ on the Cross with Virgin and St. John*, Michelangelo, 1555-64.

Page 14: *The Catechism Lesson*, Jules-Alexis Meunier, 1890

Page 17: *Christ, Bread of Angels*, Unknown.



~ Altar Flowers ~

Sign up on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board to provide altar flowers in 2023. They are \$45, and you may take them home after the worship service.

Thank you for beautifying the Lord's house!



Spring
cleaning



at Christ Lutheran

adopt a room | clean at your convenience

Ladies Night Out

—Break for Lent—

Stay tuned for April!



PALM SUNDAY

+ April 2 +

10:30 a.m.



THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

+ March 25 +

(Observed March 26)

Calling All Quilters!

(And Non-Quilters, too!)

We will be quilting on

Saturday, March 11

Tuesday, March 28

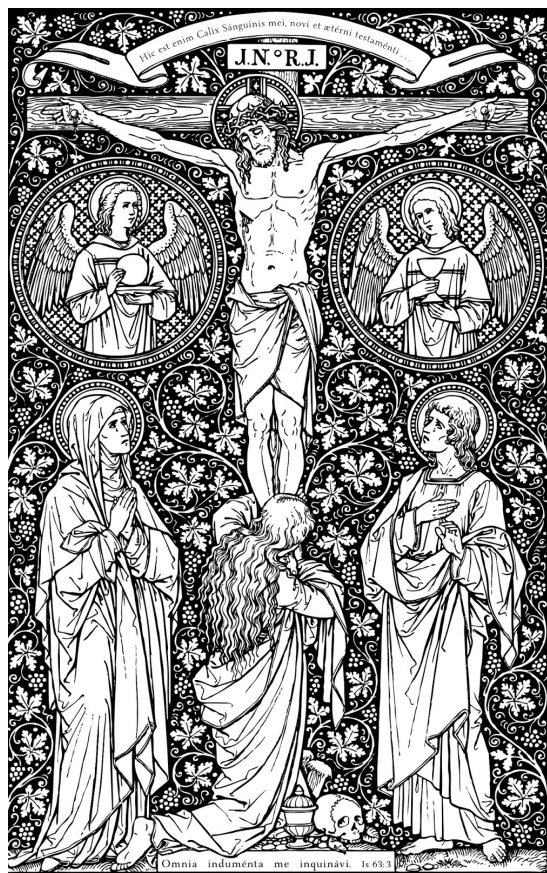
at 9:00 a.m.

Come for a relaxed morning
of fellowship.



Saints' Days in March

- 7 Sts. Perpetua & Felicitas, Martyrs
- 7 St. Thomas Aquinas, Confessor
- 12 St. Gregory the Great, Bishop & Confessor
- 17 St. Patrick, Missionary to Ireland
- 18 St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop & Confessor
- 19 St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus
- 24 St. Gabriel, Archangel
- 25 The Annunciation of Our Lord
- 25 The Good Thief
- 27 St. John of Damascus, Confessor
- 31 St. Amos, Prophet
- 31 St. Joseph, Patriarch



GOOD FRIDAY

+ April 7 +
7:00 p.m.



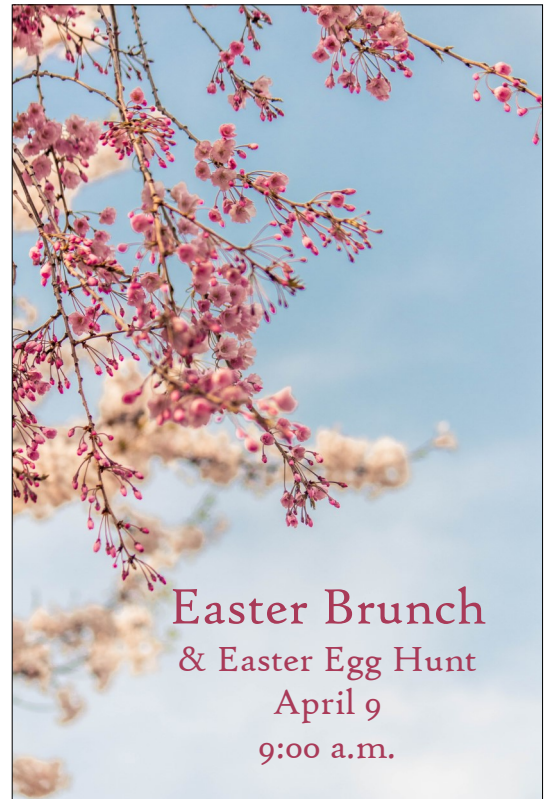
THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

+ April 9 +
10:30 a.m.

Issues, Etc.



Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio
www.issuesetc.org



**Easter Brunch
& Easter Egg Hunt**
April 9
9:00 a.m.

JOIN US FOR
BIBLE STUDY

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

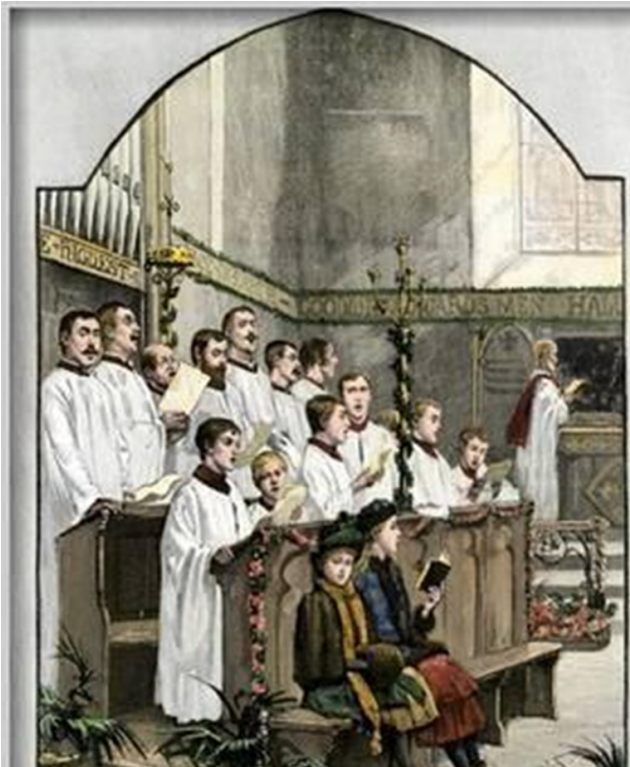


HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday | Maundy Thursday | Good Friday | Holy Saturday | Easter Sunday
10:30 a.m. | 7 p.m. | 7 p.m. | 8 p.m. | 10:30 a.m.

κοινωνία KOINONIA

Various & Asundry
— Topics for Today —
March 26
5:00 p.m.



Choir Returns!
Wednesdays @ 8 p.m.

Gemutlichkeit



Good News for Anxious Christians

Sunday
March 5
5:00 p.m.
Goodlett Home
Chapter 10-Conclusion

THE PREPARATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER



WERE STARTING TO TAKE A TOLL ON THE
PARISH ORGANIST

March 2023

PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bob & Sheila Pfaff 3—Bill Nelson 3—Jenny Merry	Serving this month: Elder—Gary Atchley Greeters—Rush & Allison Agent Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Mark Ochs						
Will Pickering 4	LENT II 5 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service <i>St. Jacob</i>	6 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	7 <i>Ss. Perpetua & Felicitas</i> <i>St. Thomas Aquinas</i>	8 6:00 p.m. Supper 7:00 p.m. Vespers 8:00 p.m. Choir	9 9:30 a.m. LifeLight	10 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	11 9:00 a.m. Quilting
	Ramsey Family 12—Bobby Springer 13—Sarah McKeown 14—Rachel Landrum	12 LENT III 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service <i>St. Gregory the Great</i>	13	14 6:15 p.m. Council Mtg.	15 6:00 p.m. Supper 7:00 p.m. Vespers 8:00 p.m. Choir	16 9:30 a.m. LifeLight	17 6:30 a.m. Bible Study <i>St. Patrick</i>
Laura Rawson 20—Merina Hansen 24—Keith Martin 24—Rush Agent	19 LENT IV 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service <i>St. Joseph</i>	20	21	22 6:00 p.m. Supper 7:00 p.m. Vespers 8:00 p.m. Choir	23 9:30 a.m. LifeLight	24 6:30 a.m. Bible Study <i>St. Gabriel</i>	25 8:00 a.m. Work Day <i>The Annunciation</i>
	Leslie Riddlehoover 26—Terry Hubmann 31—Sheila Pfaff	26 THE ANNUNCIATION (OBSERVED) 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia	27 <i>St. John of Damascus</i>	28 9:00 a.m. Quilting	29 6:00 p.m. Supper 7:00 p.m. Vespers 8:00 p.m. Choir	30 9:30 a.m. LifeLight	31 6:30 a.m. Bible Study <i>St. Amos</i> <i>St. Joseph the Patriarch</i>