

# Historic Zion Lutheran Church

## DIVINE SERVICE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

9:00 am ..... Sunday, April 5, 2026

### RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT ZION

As intended by Christ and as practiced by the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church throughout her history, "Closed Communion" is observed in this congregation, in which the Lord's Supper is distributed only to those:

- (a) who have been **baptized** in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- (b) who have been **instructed** in the truth of Holy Scripture as taught in the Lutheran Confessions, who have been **confirmed** in this Lutheran faith, and who now confess the same doctrines that are taught in this congregation, holding membership in a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
- (c) who **believe that in this sacrament the real body and blood of Christ are truly distributed to them and orally received by them**, bestowing on them the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation;
- (d) who **sincerely repent** of all their sins, and desire to receive God's forgiveness in this holy meal.

Guests at our services, before receiving the sacrament, are requested to affirm these facts with one of our pastors. Thank you for honoring our practice. If you are looking for a church home, would like to be a member of Zion, or would like to learn more about the Christian Faith, please speak to one of our pastors about our membership classes.

✠ = *appropriate to make the baptismal sign of the cross*

*When "rise" or "kneel" is indicated, it is appropriate to sit if needed*

*The Congregation rises, turns towards the entrance of the nave, and faces the Cross of Christ, the reminder of Christ's promise to come and dwell among His people as they are gathered in His name.*

### Easter Acclamation

Christ is risen. Al-le-lu-ia! He is risen in- deed! Alleluia! Al-le-lu-ia!

### Invocation

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. .... Amen!*

### Processional Hymn ..... Now All the Vault of Heaven ..... Burgundy Hymn 465

### Kyrie

Lord, have mer-cy up - on \_ us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us.  
Lord \_ have mer - cy up - on \_ us.

### Gloria

*Glo-ry be to God on high: And on earth peace, good will •toward• men.*  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor-ship Thee, we  
glo-ri - fy Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glo - ry  
O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God \_ the Fa-ther Al - might - y.  
O Lord, the on-ly be - got-ten Son, Je-sus Christ, O Lord God,

Lamb of God, Son of the Fa-ther, that tak - est a-way the sin of the  
 world, have mer-cy up - on \_ us: Thou that tak-est a-way the sin of the  
 world; re - ceive our prayer Thou that sit-test at the right hand of God the  
 Fa - ther, have mer-cy up - on us. For Thou on - ly art ho - ly, Thou  
 on - ly art the Lord. Thou on - ly, O Christ, with the Ho - ly  
 Ghost, art most high in the glo - ry of God \_ the Fa - ther. A - men.

**Salutation**

*The Lord be with you.*

And with thy spir— it.

**Collect for the Resurrection of our Lord:** *Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

A ————— men!

[ Be Seated ] + **The Office of the Word of God +**

**First Reading** ..... **Acts 10:34-43**

[ After the reading ] *This is the word of the Lord.* ..... **Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle of the Day** ..... **Colossians 3:1-4**

[ After the reading ] *This is the word of the Lord.* ..... **Thanks be to God.**

[ Rise ] **Sequence Hymn .... Christians to the Paschal..... Burgundy Hymn 460**

[ As the Gospel is processed, the men of the Choir sing the "Choir" parts;  
 All join in to sing Hymn 459, as printed in the hymnal. ]

**Holy Gospel** ..... **St. Matthew 28:1-10**

[ The Gospel is announced. ]

[ The Gospel is proclaimed. ]

**Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord!**

**Praise be to Thee, O Christ!**

[ After the Gospel has been returned to the Altar, the congregation is seated. ]

**Hymn of the Day** ..... **Christ Jesus Lay** ..... **Burgundy Hymn 458**

[ All sing stanzas 1 & 2; Women sing stanza 3; Men sing stanza 4; All sing stanzas 5, 6, & 7. ]

**Sermon**

[ Rise for stanza 4. ]

+ The Office of Confession of Sins and Holy Absolution +

Having heard the Word of God, and as we prepare for the great gift of the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, let us confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness.

[ Kneel ]

Our help is in the name of the Lord ..... Who made heaven and earth. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. .... And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

O almighty God, merciful Father, ..... I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. .... Amen!

Confession of Faith (The Nicene Creed)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven

[ Bow ] And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sits at the right hand of the Father; And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one Holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Church

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs: [ After each petition ]:..., Lord, in Your mercy: ..... Hear our prayer.

[ After the final prayer ]:..., one God, now and forever ..... Amen.

[ Be Seated ] Offerings

Choral Voluntary ..... O Death, Where Is Thy Sting ..... G.F. Handel [ from the "Messiah" ]

[ Rise ] Offertory ..... Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from Thy pres- ence, and  
take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store un-to me the joy of  
Thy sal-va - tion; and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

+ The Office of the Sacrament of the Altar +

**Preface**

*The Lord be with you.*

*Lift up your hearts.*



And with thy spir-it. We lift\_ them up un-to\_ the Lord.

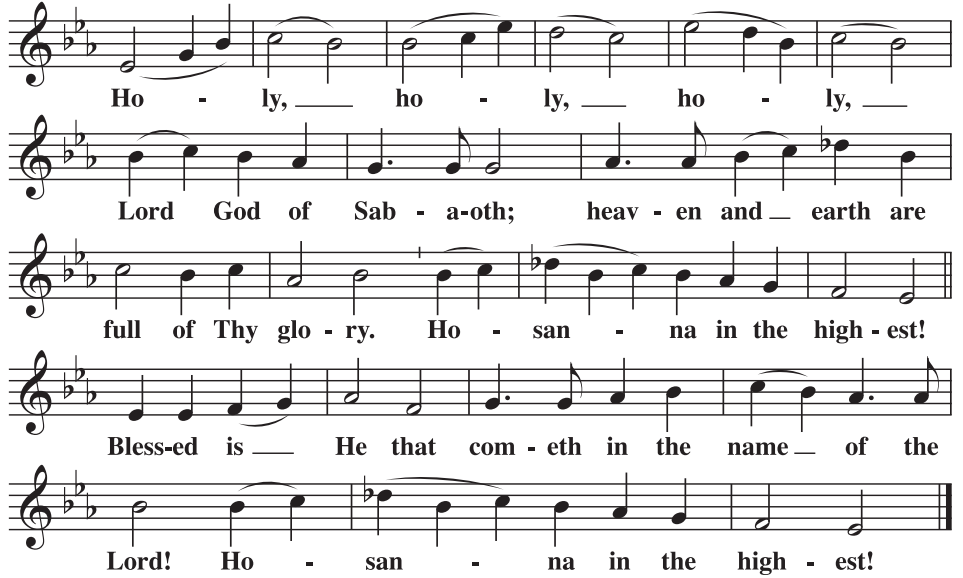
*Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.*



It is meet \_\_\_ and right so \_\_\_ to do. \_\_\_

**Proper Preface for Easter, Sanctus**

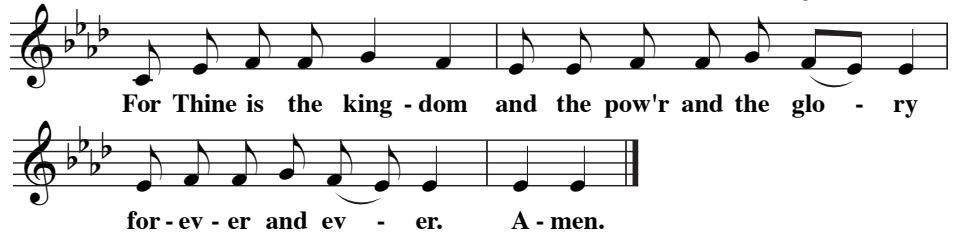
*It is truly meet, right and salutary . . . . . ever more praising You and saying:*



Ho - ly, \_\_\_ ho - ly, \_\_\_ ho - ly, \_\_\_  
 Lord God of Sab - a-oth; heav - en and\_ earth are  
 full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!  
 Bless-ed is \_\_\_ He that com - eth in the name\_ of the  
 Lord! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

[ Remain standing ] **Lord's Prayer**

[ Pastor chants: ] *Our Father who art in heaven; . . . . . but deliver us from evil.*



For Thine is the king - dom and the pow'r and the glo - ry  
 for - ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

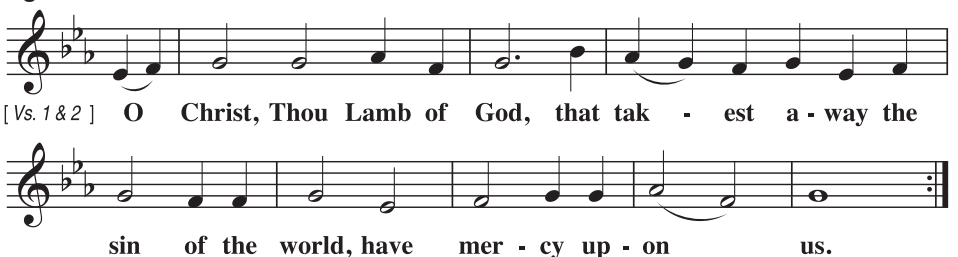
**Words of Institution, Pax Domini**

*The peace of the Lord be with you always!*



A - men

**Agnus Dei**



[ Vs. 1 & 2 ] O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the  
 sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.

[ Vs. 3 ] O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the  
sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. A - - - men.

[ Be Seated ]

**Distribution Hymns .... Christ the Lord is Risen Today.. Burgundy Hymn 469**

[ All sing stanzas 1 & 2; Men sing stanza 3; Women sing stanza 4; All sing stanzas 5 & 6. ]

**At the Lamb's High Feast ..... Burgundy Hymn 633**

[ All sing stanzas 1 & 2; Men sing stanza 3 & 5;  
Women sing stanzas 4 & 6; All sing stanzas 7 & 8. Rise for stanza 8. ]

**Eucharistic Benediction**

*The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting! ✠ Depart in Peace! ..... Amen!*

**Post-Communion Canticle ..... The Nunc Dimittis**

1. Lord now— lettest Thou Thy  
servant, de- part— in — peace, ac- cord- ing to Thy Word.
2. For mine\_\_ eyes have seen  
Thy Salvation,  
which Thou hast pre- pared\_\_ be— fore the face of all\_\_ people.

3. a Light to light- en the Gen- tles and the Glo- ry of Thy peo- ple Is - - - ra- el.

4. Glo— ry\_\_ be to the  
Father, and to\_\_ the\_\_ Son, and to the Ho- ly Ghost.

5. As it\_\_ was in the  
beginning, is  
now, and e- ver shall be, world with- out end. A- men.

**Post Communion Rite**

*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*

And His mercy endureth for - ev — er.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving ... now and forever.**

A — — — men.

The Lord be with you.

Bless we the Lord.

And with thy spir — rit.

Thanks be to God.

### Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

A-men, A-men, A - men.

Christ is risen. Al-le-lu-ia! He is risen in-deed! Alleluia! Al-le-lu-ia!

During the Recessional, the Congregation turns and faces the Processional Cross, the symbol of Christ's promise to remain with and lead His people as they now go and live in the world in His name.

### Recessional Hymn ..... Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem ..... [ St. Fulbert of Chartres ]

1. Ye choirs of new Je - ru - sa - lem your
2. Lo, Ju - dah's Li - on bursts His chain, and
3. He frees the pri - soned and op - pressed, he
4. From sin's de - vou - ring jaws the prey, a -
5. While joy - ful thus his praise we sing, his
6. All glo - ry to the Fa - ther be, all

sweet - est notes em - ploy, The Pas - chal vic - to -  
 storms death's ci - ta - del; He saves his own from  
 foils our fierc - est foe. Christ ga - thers those whom  
 lone, our Lead - er bore; His ran - somed hosts pur -  
 mer - cy we im - plore: In - to his pa - lace  
 glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry Ho - ly

ry to hymn in strains of ho - ly joy.  
 death's do - main, breaks down the gates of hell.  
 sin pos - sessed, His par - don to be - stow.  
 sue their way where he has gone be - fore.  
 Christ to bring and keep us ev - er - more.  
 Ghost to Thee, while end - less a - ges run.

Al-le - lu - ia! A-men.

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# **Readings for the Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord**

## **The First Reading is Acts 10:34-43**

Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

## **The Epistle is Colossians 3:1-4**

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

## **The Gospel is Matthew 28:1-10**

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” So they

departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

## Hymns for Easter Sunday, The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord

### LSB465 Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds

Paul D. Strodach

Text: © 1958 Augsburg Publishing House. Used by permission. LSBHymnLicense.net #100012381.

1. Now all the vault of heav'n resounds  
In praise of love that still abounds:  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear!  
Repeat their song of glory here:  
"Christ has triumphed! Christ has triumphed!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2. Eternal is the gift He brings,  
Therefore our heart with rapture sings:  
"Christ has triumphed, He is living!"  
Now still He comes to give us life,  
And by His presence stills all strife.  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3. O fill us, Lord, with dauntless love;  
Set heart and will on things above  
That we conquer through your triumph;  
Grant grace sufficient for life's day  
That by our lives we truly say,  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

△ 4. Adoring praises now we bring  
And with the heav'nly blessed sing,  
"Christ has triumphed! Alleluia!"  
Be to the Father, and our Lord,  
To Spirit blest, most holy God,  
All the glory, never ending!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

### Choir: LSB460 Christians, to the Paschal Victim

Wipo of Burgundy

### with Congregation: LSB459 Christ Is Arisen

German 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> cent.

Text: © 1969 Concordia Publishing House; Used by permission. LSBHymnLicense.net #100012381.

460.1 *Christians, to the Paschal Victim Offer your thankful praises!  
The Lamb the sheep has ransomed: Christ, who only is sinless,*

*Reconciling sinners to the Father.  
Death and life have contended In that combat stupendous:  
The Prince of life, who died, Reigns immortal.*

- 459.1 Christ is arisen From the grave's dark prison.  
So let our joy rise full and free;  
Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia!
- 460.2 *"Speak, Mary, declaring What you saw when wayfaring."  
"The tomb of Christ, who is living, The glory of Jesus' resurrection;  
Bright angels attesting, The shroud and napkin resting.  
My Lord, my hope, is arisen; To Galilee He goes before you."*
- 459.2 Were Christ not arisen, Then death were still our prison.  
Now with Him to life restored,  
We praise the Father of our Lord. Alleluia!
- 460.3 *Christ indeed from death is risen, Our new life obtaining.  
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!*
- 459.3 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Now let our joy rise full and free;  
Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia!

**LSB458 Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands** **Martin Luther**

1. Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands For our offenses given;  
But now at God's right hand He stands And brings us life from heaven.  
Therefore let us joyful be And sing to God right thankfully  
Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!
2. No son of man could conquer death, Such ruin sin had wrought us.  
No innocence was found on earth, And therefore death had brought us  
Into bondage from of old And ever grew more strong and bold  
And held us as its captive. Alleluia!
- W3. Christ Jesus, God's own Son, came down, His people to deliver;  
Destroying sin, He took the crown From death's pale brow forever:  
Stripped of pow'r, no more it reigns; An empty form alone remains;  
Its sting is lost forever. Alleluia!
- M4. It was a strange and dreadful strife When life and death contended;  
The victory remained with life, The reign of death was ended.  
Holy Scripture plainly saith That death is swallowed up by death,  
Its sting is lost forever. Alleluia!

5. Here our true Paschal Lamb we see, Whom God so freely gave us;  
He died on the accursed tree—So strong His love--to save us.  
See, His blood now marks our door; Faith points to it; death passes o'er,  
And Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!
6. So let us keep the festival To which the Lord invites us;  
Christ is Himself the joy of all, The sun that warms and lights us.  
Now His grace to us imparts Eternal sunshine to our hearts;  
The night of sin is ended. Alleluia!
7. Then let us feast this Easter Day On Christ, the bread of heaven;  
The Word of grace has purged away The old and evil leaven.  
Christ alone our souls will feed; He is our meat and drink indeed;  
Faith lives upon no other! Alleluia!

**LSB457 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today** Latin, 14<sup>th</sup> cent.; Charles Wesley, st. 4

1. Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!
2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!  
Unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!
3. But the pains which He endured, Alleluia!  
Our salvation have procured; Alleluia!  
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!  
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!
- △ 4. Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
Praise eternal as His love; Alleluia!  
Praise Him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

**LSB469 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today**

Charles Wesley

1. "Christ the Lord is ris'n today!" Saints on earth and angels say;  
Raise your joys and triumphs high; Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth, reply.
2. Love's redeeming work is done, Fought the fight, the battle won;  
Lo! Our Sun's eclipse is o'er; Lo! He sets in blood no more.

- M3. Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Christ hath burst the gates of hell.  
Death in vain forbids His rise; Christ has opened Paradise.
- W4. Lives again our glorious King! Where, O death, is now thy sting?  
Once He died our souls to save; Where thy victory, O grave?
5. Soar we now where Christ has led; Foll'wing our exalted Head.  
Made like Him, like Him we rise; Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.
6. Hail the Lord of earth and heav'n! Praise to Thee by both be giv'n!  
Thee we greet triumphant now: Hail, the Resurrection Thou!

**LSB633 At the Lamb's High Feast**

Latin, c. 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> cent.

1. At the Lamb's high feast we sing Praise to our victorious King,  
Who has washed us in the tide Flowing from His pierced side.  
Alleluia!
2. Praise we Him, whose love divine Gives His sacred blood for wine,  
Gives His Body for the feast—Christ the victim, Christ the priest.  
Alleluia!
- M3. Where the paschal blood is poured, Death's dread angel sheathes the sword;  
Israel's hosts triumphant go Through the wave that drowns the foe.  
Alleluia!
- W4. Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Paschal victim, paschal bread;  
With sincerity and love Eat we manna from above.  
Alleluia!
- M5. Mighty Victim from the sky, Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;  
You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light.  
Alleluia!
- W6. Now no more can death appall, Now no more the grave enthrall;  
You have opened paradise, And Your saints in You shall rise.  
Alleluia!
7. Easter triumph, Easter joy! This alone can sin destroy;  
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free, Newborn souls in You to be.  
Alleluia!
- △ 8. Father, who the crown shall give, Savior, by whose death we live,  
Spirit, guide through all our days; Three in One, Your name we praise.  
Alleluia!

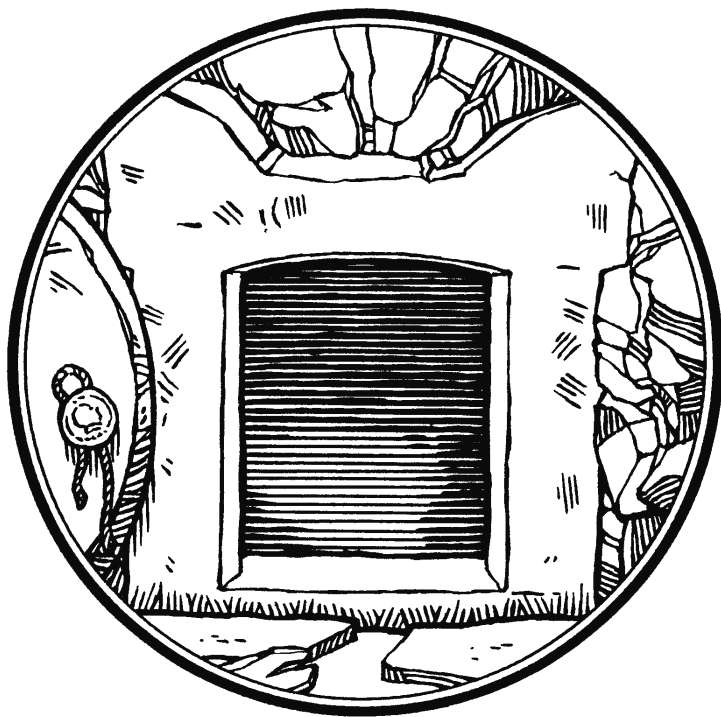
## Printed Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem

Fulbert of Chartres

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1. Ye choirs of new Jerusalem, Your sweetest notes employ,  
The Paschal victory to hymn In strains of holy joy.
  2. Lo, Judah's Lion bursts His chains, and storm's death's citadel;  
He saves His own from death's domain, breaks down the gates of hell.
  3. He frees the prisoned and oppressed, He foils our fiercest foe.  
Christ gathers those whom sin possessed, His pardon to bestow.
  4. From sin's devouring jaws the prey, alone, our Leader bore;  
His ransomed hosts pursue their way where He has gone before.
  5. While joyful thus His praise we sing, His mercy we implore:  
Into His palace Christ to bring and keep us evermore.
- △ 6. All glory to the Father be, All glory to the Son,  
All glory, Holy Ghost, to Thee, While endless ages run.  
Alleluia! Amen!

# The Resurrection of Our Lord



## Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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[pastor@zionfw.org](mailto:pastor@zionfw.org), [church@zionfw.org](mailto:church@zionfw.org) | website: [www.zionfw.org](http://www.zionfw.org)

Zion Lutheran Church is the body of Christ at Hanna and Creighton in Fort Wayne, Indiana that:

- Receives Christ's gifts in Word and Sacraments; and
- Responds to God's love in Christ by
  - Reaching out to those who do not know His love; and
  - Revealing His love in acts of kindness and mercy.

### The Pastoral Ministry at Zion

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Douglas D. Punke, MDiv (341-5397)

Field Workers:

Nathaniel Demlow, Joshua Fuchs

### The Teaching Staff at Lutheran South Unity

Principal:

Amber Bahr (744-0459; [www.lsusfw.org](http://www.lsusfw.org))

Teachers:

Yvonne Schwantz (8<sup>th</sup>, MS ELA), Michael Cullen (7<sup>th</sup>, MS Science),  
Chase Mertz (6<sup>th</sup>, MS Social Studies), Danielle Ramsey (5<sup>th</sup>), Abbey Kohler (4<sup>th</sup>),  
Rachel Wiegman (3<sup>rd</sup>), John Fink (2<sup>nd</sup>), Hannah Fink (1<sup>st</sup>), Michelle Madden (K),  
Natalie Reynolds (Art), Elisa Sawall (Music), Lee Buxton (PE), Cathie Wakeland (Literacy Coach),  
Arianna Blake (LSEM), Melissa White (FWCS) & Sarah Wheaton (EACS) (Title I Tutors)

### The Support Staff

Organist and Director of Parish Music:

Michael Hollman, MM

Church Office Manager:

Melvia Culpher

## PRAYERS FOR TODAY

- + For the church, especially those bearing the cross of persecution, including Bishop Juhana Pohjola and Dr. Päivi Räsänen (as they decide how further to proceed)
- + For those who serve our Lord at home and abroad, especially our teachers as they start of another academic year, our fieldworkers Nate Demlow and Josh Fuchs
- + For our nation; for our leaders; for our military, including James Hall & Thaddeus Cody
- + For our schools, especially Lutheran South Unity School, Concordia Lutheran High School, and Concordia Theological Seminary.
- + For those who travel
- + For the aged and the homebound
- + For those who are on hospice care or nearing death, especially Bob Ockree
- + For the ill, distressed, and those suffering affliction, including Henry Williams, Karen Coleman, Jim Teasdale, Darryl Kirtz, Yolanda Turner, Carl Albersmeyer, Estella Ramirez, Dick Hollman, Art Litke, Bill Weinrich, Dwight Bieberich, Damita Jordan, Jimmy Coffey, Al McFeter, Mike Ming, Elaine Seifert, Joe Harrison, Louisa Porter, Gary Phillips, David Groth, Gary Castle, Ron Rastl, and Robert & Jenny Hobby.
- + For God's blessing on all godly marriages
- + For the gift of life and for length of days and for pregnant mothers, Rachel Wiegman and Gabrielle Voss
- + For the gift of rebirth by water and the Spirit
- + For those who mourn the death of loved ones
- + In remembrance of the faithful departed
- + For our communicants and for a fruitful use of the most Blessed Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood

## IN THE SERVICE TODAY

Today is the Divine Service for the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord. Please complete an attendance communion card, including the names of all children, and indicate if you are communing. Non-members, please read the back of the card.

## CALENDAR

### **April 5, 2026 thru April 11, 2026**

<b>SUN.</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Divine Service</b>	<b>Church</b>
	10:45 AM	Easter Egg Hunt	Bauer Hall
		No Bible Class today	
<b>MON.</b>		No school (Spring Break concludes)	
<b>TUES.</b>	8:00 AM	LSUS resumes classes	Bauer Hall
	9:00 AM	Weekly Bible Study	Bauer Hall
<b>WED.</b>	9:30 AM	Men of Zion	Conference Room
	5:30PM	Wednesday Divine Service	Church
<b>THURS.</b>	7:00 PM	Council of Elders meeting	Conference Room
<b>FRI.</b>			
<b>SAT.</b>	9:00AM	LWML 3 Zone Ingathering	2131 Getz Road
	11:00 AM	Private Confession	Church

### **April 12, 2026**

<b>SUN.</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Divine Service</b>	<b>Church</b>
	10:30 AM	LWML Meeting	Church
	10:45 AM	Education Hour	Various

## ZION ANNOUNCEMENTS

**EDUCATION HOUR:** there is no education hour due to Easter. It will return next week.

**SPRING CLEANING:** The grass is getting greener, which means it's almost time for Zion's spring clean-up. Please join us Saturday, April 25, between 9 a.m. and noon as we turn mulch, rake leftover leaves, trim bushes, and do other chores needed to keep Zion beautiful. Bring shovels, garden rakes, tarps, and other needed equipment. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, call Kevin Leininger at 615-9896.

**THE GREAT AMERICAN CLEAN UP:** if you are interested in helping clean up the neighborhood on May 2, 9AM-11AM, please let Melvia know so that she can plan on having t-shirts, gloves, and snacks ready.

**LWML** will hold its Spring Three Zone Ingathering this Saturday, April 11, at St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2131 Getz Road, Fort Wayne, IN. Registration & breakfast is 8:30 – 9AM; the meeting starts at 9AM. The cost is \$7. Please let DaVanna or Melvia know if you will be attending.

**A HOPE CENTER'S** annual fundraiser banquet is April 21, 2026, at 6:30 PM. Doors open at 5:30 PM at the Allen County Memorial Coliseum. Guest speaker is recording artist and author Matt Hammitt. Melvia has reserved two tables; there are 15 seats open. It's free; donations are welcomed at the event. Please let Melvia know if you're interested in attending. Thanks.

**MEMORY VERSE CHALLENGE:** Romans 10:9-10— “Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Last week's verse was Romans 8:1.

**A GOOD GIFT PLAN WITHIN AN ESTATE** includes inheritance for family and gifts to ministry. Sometimes the family side of things can be a bit tricky to plan. Your children do not have identical lives or identical needs. What may be good for one might not be good for the other. Being wise about how much inheritance to give, how to give it and when to give it, are all important questions as you look to be a faithful steward of God's things. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can listen to your family story and offer some suggestions about how to care for your family the best. Contact Mark Muehl at 260-241-4845 or [mark.muehl@flnd.org](mailto:mark.muehl@flnd.org).

**CLHS** will be hosting Twilight Tours in April, and would like to invite prospective families to join them on April 9 or April 16. These evenings are a great opportunity to explore the campus, meet members of our community, and learn more about life at *Concordia*.

**CTSFW** to the Alumni, students, community members, and friends of CTSFW you're invited to their annual Golf Outing at Noble Hawk Golf Links in Kendallville, Indiana, on May 29, 2026. The event begins with registration and a warm-up at 10:30 a.m. Lunch is provided, followed by a shotgun start at 12:45p.m., with hole contests and prizes for flight winners. Proceeds from the event will help construct a new Food and Clothing Co-op for students and their families. For more details or to register, visit [ctsfw.edu/Golf-Outing](https://ctsfw.edu/Golf-Outing). **Also**, the two most-anticipated services at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), will be held on April 28 and 29, when students will find out where they will serve as vicars, deaconess interns, and pastors in the coming year. We invite you to join us in Kramer Chapel or via livestream for these exciting events. Both services will be livestreamed on [ctsfw.edu/callday](https://ctsfw.edu/callday).

**LSEM** is looking for a temporary maternity substitute position for a full-time resource room teacher position at St. John Lutheran School in Kendallville, IN. Applicants must hold a current Indiana Teaching License and have a special education certification/endorsement. Interested applicants looking for more information or wishing to submit a resume are asked to contact Richard Schumacher at (734) 748-5253 or email him at [rschumacher@luthsped.org](mailto:rschumacher@luthsped.org).

**For the family of God's Priestly People at Zion**

**God calls His own people a "Royal Priesthood." God makes us kings and queens, princes and princesses** who are bound together by the Holy Spirit in Baptism for the Christian benefit of each other. Priests **PRAY** — They talk to God about their neighbor! Priests **TEACH** — They talk to their neighbor about God! Priests **OFFER SACRIFICES** — They offer to God the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts; they offer their bodies and work as holy services to God for their neighbors. Join in this priestly work of prayer with your fellow members.

**Morning Prayer**

Matthew 28:1-10  
Hebrews 9:1-28  
Hebrews 10:1-18  
Hebrews 10:19-39  
Hebrews 11:1-29  
Hebrews 12:1-24  
Hebrews 13:1-21

**DAILY LECTIONARY**

Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord  
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday

**Evening Prayer**

Acts 10:34-43  
Exodus 15:1-18  
Exodus 15:19-16:12  
Exodus 16:13-35  
Exodus 17:1-16  
Exodus 18:5-27  
Exodus 19:1-25

**THE DAILY PETITIONS OF THE CHURCH**

[Daily] **O Lord, have mercy upon us. O Christ, have mercy upon us. O Lord, have mercy upon us.** Let us pray:

[S] For the joy of the Resurrection among us; for true and godly worship throughout the world; for diligent preaching and hearing of God's Word of Law and Gospel; for our pastors; for the teachers and students of our Sunday School; for our Bible Class leaders and their students; for our catechumens; Lord, in Your mercy, .....**hear our prayer. Amen!**

[M] For workers; for the unemployed; for farmers; for seasonable weather; for businesses small and large; for our leaders, federal, state and local; for the economic welfare of the nations on earth; for peace in our world; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[T] For the tempted; for the addicted and despairing; for the tortured and oppressed; for the lonely; for the sick, the hospitalized, and the needy; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[W] For fathers, mothers, and families; for those adults who must rear their children alone; the teachers and students of Lutheran South Unity School and Concordia Lutheran High School; Lord, in Your mercy, .....**hear our prayer. Amen!**

[T] For the Church and her pastors; for the training of ministers of the Word; for missionaries of the Church; for the leaders of the Church, including Matthew, our synod president, and Richard, our district president; for those who have not heard the Gospel; for the fruitful use of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood; Lord, in Your mercy, .. **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[F] For the preaching of the Cross; for those persecuted for the sake of Gospel; the confession of the orthodox Lutheran faith in our community; Lord, in Your mercy, .....**hear our prayer. Amen!**

[Sat] For faithfulness unto life's earthly end; for the revival of those who have withered in the faith or fallen away; for the dying; Lord, in Your mercy, .....**hear our prayer. Amen!**

[Daily] **The Our Father**

**TO PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY**

**The Second Sunday in Easter**

Acts 5:29-42

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31



# What Doctor Luther Says:

*About the Lord: My Strength, My Song, My Salvation*  
[Psalm 118:]14. *The Lord is my Strength and my Song; He has become my Salvation.*

Having listed the miracles with which God comforts and helps His people, the psalmist joyfully breaks into a short but beautiful song of praise and thanksgiving to spite, mock, and scorn his persecutors and to glorify and honor God. Whether they want to or not, they must hear that he and his God remain and survive despite their raging and blustering. It is the same song that Moses sings in defiance of the drowned Pharaoh (Ex. 15:2). Isaiah also sings it (12:2). Apparently this was a common song and proverb among the Children of Israel. Surely it deserves to be a common song and formula of praise among us also whenever we are delivered from troubles. While we have often sung it after deliverance in the past, we shall sing it more frequently in the future, even to the end. Amen.

Note the fine, threefold summary of the psalmist: The Lord is “my Strength,” “my Song,” “my Salvation.” The first indicates that he trusts wholly and completely in God, that God does, speaks, and quickens everything in him; and he will not boast of his own power, ability, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, or deeds. He will be nothing; in him God will be all and do all. ... Next, the psalmist cannot keep still about this. He turns it into a psalm and sings; he preaches, teaches, confesses, and declares what he believes about God. Faith cannot do otherwise; it always confesses what it believes (Rom. 10:10). ... In the third place, God is his salvation and will not utterly abandon the singer and his song. God helps him in life and death and grants him victory. Though all the gates of hell and the whole world rage and rave, God, in the end, will be our salvation; we and our psalm and teaching shall survive, and all the adversaries shall founder. The Word of God abides forever. No amount of raging, blustering, blasphemy, or cursing will change this.

*Luther's Works*, 14:77-8.



*Flower  
Dedications*

Given in loving memory of  
Carl & Myrtle Albersmeyer and  
Byrle & Joyce Greenamyer  
by Carl & Rosie Albersmeyer

Given in loving memory of my parents  
Donald and Berniece Allen  
by Bruce Allen

Given in loving memory of  
my wife Beth Bieberich  
by Don Bieberich

Given in loving memory of our mother &  
grandmother Beth Bieberich  
by Eric & Karen Bieberich family  
Heidi & Jon Adair family

Our Risen Lord & Savior  
Mike & Rita Davies

Given in loving memory of Donald Ganaway  
by his family

In memory of and rejoicing with Marilyn  
Shafter as she spends Easter in Heaven  
by Julie Ganaway

Given in loving memory of my  
mother Virginia Hollman and  
my grandparents Frank & Hulda Sonne  
by Beth Hollman

Given in loving memory of my  
beloved wife Virginia Hollman  
by Richard Hollman

Given in loving memory of  
Alonzo & Ora Edmonds, Alma Jackson,  
and Gerald & Amanda Stewart  
by Frank & Alanza Jackson

Given in loving memory of Georianna &  
Walter Ostermeyer from their thankful  
children Karen, Kim, Dave, and Kirk

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleuia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
by the children of  
Walt & Georgie Ostermeyer

Given in loving memory of Karen Kostoff  
Wood and Spiro & Anne Kostoff  
by their family

“Christ is Risen”  
by Rev. George & Lois Lange

Given in loving memory of  
Dr. Robert & Katherine Leininger and  
Fred, Betty, Teresa, & John Beckman  
by Kevin & Maribeth Leininger

Given in loving memory of  
Willie Manning & Betty Terlosky  
by Rose Manning

Given in loving memory of  
Robert & Loretta Manth,  
Albert & Caroline Manth,  
Ferdinand & Henrietta Bornkamp, and  
Mrs. Clara Tegtmeyer  
by Jennifer Manth

“You seek Jesus who was crucified.  
He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.”  
by Pastor & Marge Punke

Given in loving memory of Marcile Keck  
by her children  
Kristine, Peter, Philip, Jonathan, and Klare

Given in loving memory of  
William Wallschlaeger  
by Carolyn Wallschlaeger

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

*by André Woodard*

*Given in loving memory of my mother*

*Margaret Traschel*

*by Charlene Young*

Summary of meeting of the Council of Elders, February 5, 2026  
The following summary is being provided in accordance with  
the congregation's bylaws, §VIII)

Attendance:

Elders present: R. Lammert (chairman), A. Litke (secretary), F. Jackson, W. Krause, T. Muehl, J. Teasdale, K. Vlot.

Elder absent: (none)

Pastor present: Pr. Punke.

Pastor Punke led the elders in a devotion by continuing the reading of Article V of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.

In his report Pastor Punke updated the elders on health and other matters impacting members and friends of Zion, on the planned *Every One His Witness* workshop that was canceled for lack of attendees, on the upcoming Lenten season, on adult Bible study, and on various technology issues. He also reported on the congregational assembly held in January, on the upcoming circuit forum, on Lutheran South Unity School, and on Concordia Lutheran High School.

Frank Jackson reported that five members of Zion would receive CPR/AED training on Saturday February 7.

The elders reviewed their Goal #1: "In the current quarter of the calendar year, Zion will experience a 10% increase in average worship attendance over the same quarter of the previous year." The elders will make an assessment at the next meeting of attendance in 2025 compared to 2024, both for the entire year and by quarters.

The elders reviewed their Goal #2: "The elders will sponsor at least annually an opportunity for providing resources and training for members to gain confidence in inviting neighbors to Zion." The elders will schedule another *Every One His Witness*

workshop in the fall, possibly as a six-hour session on Saturday instead of a series of six weekly one-hour sessions.

The elders reviewed their Goal #3: “The Council of Elders will work through an ad hoc committee with the Administrative Council and Education Council to determine whether to proceed and how to proceed to respond to the results of the CADDs survey, with a report by January 31, 2026.” Frank Jackson presented the final report of the committee to the council. The elders passed a motion to accept the report and thank the committee for their work. This completes the goal.

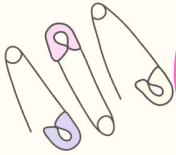
The elders adopted the following new goals to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the ad hoc committee:

(New) Elders’ Goal #3: “The Council of Elders will oversee the implementation of the recommendations regarding the ‘Family’ factor of vitality in the final report from the ad hoc committee on responding to the CADDs survey. The council will assign responsibilities to individuals and groups to carry out the recommendations, and will assess monthly the progress in each area of assigned activity.”

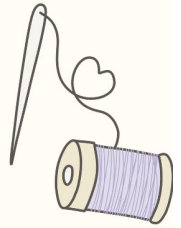
(New) Elders’ Goal #4: “The Council of Elders will oversee the implementation of the recommendations regarding the ‘Community’ factor of vitality in the final report from the ad hoc committee on responding to the CADDs survey. The council will assign responsibilities to individuals and groups to carry out the recommendations, and will assess monthly the progress in each area of assigned activity.”

The meeting was closed by praying the Office of Compline.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard A. Lammert, Chairman



# CRAFTING SATURDAY



Come and do a DIY craft with us or learn something from other crafters, or just come hang out with us there's always something for everyone. The first Saturday of every month.

CREATIVE DIY  
TECHNIQUES

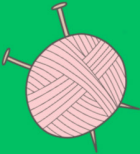
CRICUT  
DESIGN BASICS

PAPER CRAFTS  
& KNITTING

SEWING, CROSS  
STITCHING

PAINT, CLAY,  
FELT, JUTE

CANDLE &  
SOAP MAKING



SATURDAY,  
APRIL 18, 2026

9:00am - 12:00pm  
Bauer Hall

Due to Holy week Crafting Saturday was moved until April 18, 2026

ZION LADIES OF LWML



**SECOND-HAND**

# CLOTHING DONATION

**STARTING  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026  
EVERY 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF THE  
MONTH**

**DROP-OFF POINT:  
TABLE IN GREAT HALL**

**ALL DONATIONS  
WILL GO TO CTSFW  
SEMINARY STUDENTS**

**PLEASE DONATE  
CLOTHES THAT  
ARE...**

**CLEAN & FRESH**

Recently washed, free of odors.

**GENTLY WORN**

No major stains, tears, or fading.

**FULLY FUNCTIONAL**

Zippers, buttons, and snaps must work.



# 2026 LWML Spring Three Zone Gathering

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026

Power and Glory through Christ based on Ephesians 3:20-21

Location: St. Michael Lutheran Church

Address: 2131 Getz Road, Fort Wayne, IN

Registration and Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

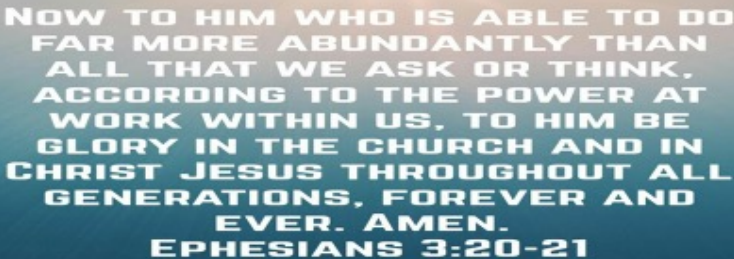
Meeting Begins: 9:00 a.m.

Registration Fee: \$7.00

Speakers: Rev. Jeffrey and Deaconess Gina Teeple

Gifts from the Heart In-Gathering: Monetary Gift in support of Rev. Jeffrey and Deaconess Gina Teeple's mission work in Eurasia and small Biblical children's books, (such as the ARCH books) and Biblical activity and coloring books for use in Missionary Care Packages.

Please RSVP to your congregational representative by April 3,  
2026



**NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO  
FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN  
ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK,  
ACCORDING TO THE POWER AT  
WORK WITHIN US, TO HIM BE  
GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN  
CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL  
GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND  
EVER. AMEN.  
EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

## LSUS NOTES

Praying for You!



**Please pray for these students/staff:**

Anthony	Sebastian
Grayson	Aaleyah
Kyu Kyu	Emeraude
Kiarah	Ximena
Daleyza	Mrs. Wiegman

---

### Student Chapel Offerings

Thursday Chapel Offerings collected by our LSUS students and families make a big impact around the world. March through May offerings will go to Camp Lutherhaven and Phil's Friends. The mission of Camp Lutherhaven is to reach out with the love of Christ by providing the setting and resources to strengthen the faith of individuals and complement the ministry of churches. The mission of Phil's Friends is to provide Christ-centered support and hope to those affected by cancer. Be on the lookout for more information about item donations to Phil's Friends care packages



**phil's friends**  
cancer is strong. hope is stronger.



**Camp Lutherhaven**



Registration is now open at Lutheran South Unity School! We are excited to continue providing a strong academic foundation rooted in Christ-centered values. If you know any families with elementary-aged children who are looking for a nurturing, faith-filled school community, please help us spread the word. Your invitation and support make a meaningful difference as we grow this ministry together!

**Early Bird Specials**

February 23rd–March 15th –\$60 with maximum of \$120  
 March 16th–April 30th \$80 with maximum \$160  
 May 1st–May 31st \$100 with maximum \$200  
 June 1st–June 30th \$120 with maximum \$240

**Regular Tuition**

July 1st–August 15th \$140 with maximum \$280

Registration must be paid within the registration discount dates for discount to apply

**Enroll Now**

**Contact Us** [lsus.org](http://lsus.org) 260-744-0459



**Lutheran South Unity Kindergarten Round-Up & Pizza!!!**

Registration for Kindergarten Admission for the new academic year is now open!!! Come join the fun!!!

**April 16th 6p-7pm**



5401 South Calhoun St  
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

**Encouragement Found in Scriptures:**

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

— Matthew 11:28



# APRIL EVENT SCHEDULE

FACEBOOK: BRIDGE 20/30 GROUP FT. WAYNE

**7**  
APR 2026

**MEETUP: THE ITALIAN CONNECTION**  
**7PM** DINNER MENU & LIVE MUSIC!  
\*\*\*\*\* 2725 TAYLOR ST, FT WAYNE

**14**  
APR 2026

**PORCH NIGHT**  
**7PM** THE HOLY CROSS YOUTH CENTER  
\*\*\*\*\* 3420 N. ANTHONY BLVD

**21**  
APR 2026

**BRIDGE DUCKPIN BOWLING NIGHT**  
**7-10PM** THE FAIRFIELD - PINHOUSE SOCIAL  
\*\*\*\*\* 1510 FAIRFIELD AVE, FT WAYNE  
**\$12.50 BURGERS & PINT BEER SPECIAL  
& FULL MENU!**

**28**  
APR 2026

**THE GARDEN - ANCHOR DEVOTION NIGHT  
WITH BRIAN LOESEL & BUNCO**  
\*\*\*\*\* 3308 N. ANTHONY BLVD, FT WAYNE



**The Shepherd's Hand**  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH CENTER

260-424-2224

shepherdshandfwed@gmail  
shepherdshandfw.org

# 5K RUN & WALK



## MAY 2ND, 2026

Time

9 AM - 10 AM

Location

1231 S Anthony Blvd.  
Fort Wayne, IN



Ready to join the 5K fun? Find race info and registration at

[runsignup.com/Race/IN/FortWayne/  
TheShepherdsHandCommunity5k](https://runsignup.com/Race/IN/FortWayne/TheShepherdsHandCommunity5k)

## LIFE NEWS—APRIL 2026



**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**

[lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)



### Life Newsbytes

**Päivi Räsänen, a Christian lawmaker and Member of Parliament from Finland, was convicted on March 25 of a hate crime for a 2004 church pamphlet citing biblical teaching on human sexuality.** The conviction came even as the nation's Supreme Court unanimously cleared her of charges for quoting the same Scripture on social media. Räsänen, a member of Parliament with the Christian Democrats since 1995 and a former interior minister who is solidly pro-life, and Lutheran Bishop Juhana Pohjola were found guilty in a 3-2 split decision under the "war crimes and crimes against humanity" section of Finland's criminal code. The conviction stems from the pamphlet "Male and Female He Created Them," which Räsänen wrote and Pohjola published for their church. The court ruled that they had made available to the public "opinions that insult homosexuals as a group on the basis of their sexual orientation." Justices acknowledged the content "did not incite violence or hatred" and described the conduct as "not particularly serious," yet still held the pair criminally liable ... "I am shocked and profoundly disappointed that the court has failed to recognize my basic human right to freedom of expression," Räsänen said. Source/read more: [www.lifenews.com/2026/03/26/christian-mp-convicted-of-hate-crime-for-quoting-bible-verse](http://www.lifenews.com/2026/03/26/christian-mp-convicted-of-hate-crime-for-quoting-bible-verse).

### Speaking up For Life

"Friend, you have a good word to speak to your neighbor. You have God's Word of life to share—with your spouse, your children or grandchildren, your co-worker or friend. You can tell them that their life is sacred, a gift of God, and that their life matters to you." *Rev. Robert Mohns, Lutheran Church—Canada*

"Commit to seeking opportunities to be a light to those living in darkness. Do not place that responsibility on the full-time leaders of the Church. This is your mission in life. God has uniquely placed you in the exact situations, locations, and relationships to make the Light of the world visible and concrete. You are the look of Christ's face. You are the tone of His voice. You are the touch of His hands. You are the physical representation of His light in a dark world (Ephesians 5:8). How bright will you shine this year?" *Paul David Tripp, author and speaker*

"Perhaps as our culture seems to be increasingly more challenging, it may help to think of hope as the complete opposite of despair. Hope is not optional for the believer. Our hope is secure because, as we all say again, 'Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!'" *John Stonestreet*

Order LFL  
Resources



Concordia  
Publishing House

at  
[cph.org](http://cph.org)

# FOR ALL WHO WILL BELIEVE

BY REV. DR. ARIC FENSKE



In the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of his Gospel account, St. John gives us a front-row view of our Lord's final moments before being arrested and sentenced to death. In these last hours, we see Jesus doing something remarkable. He's praying. That may not sound all that surprising at first—until we see who He was praying for. In the face of torture, ridicule, and death, Jesus didn't pray for Himself, He prayed for His disciples and **"for those who will believe in Me through their word"** (John 17:20).

In those last agonizing moments, Jesus prayed for His Church, for the generations of believers who would come to faith after His resurrection and ascension through the ministry of the apostles. In other words, Jesus spent His last hours praying for you! Before He offered up His life as a ransom for your sins, He prayed that one day you would hear this Good News, believe it by faith, and receive His salvation unto everlasting life.

I don't know about you, but it is both humbling and awe-inspiring to know that Jesus was thinking of me and of my salvation as He walked that lonely road through the valley of the shadow of death. What love He must have for me!

Of course, that love is not just for me, or for you, but for all **"who will believe"** in Him. Jesus shows His love for every one of His precious sheep in this prayer. He prayed for countless others whose faces and names are known only to Him—unborn children, single mothers, the diseased and the dying. Jesus prayed for them all before He died because He died for them all.

And that means that you were not only the subject of Jesus' prayer that night in the garden of Gethsemane; in a way, you are also the answer to that prayer because God, in His grace, has chosen you to be His hands and feet and mouths to love and serve those countless unborn babies, troubled mothers, and sick and dying children of God. You do this in your own homes and congregations by reflecting Christ's love to those around you, and you do this by supporting our work at Lutherans For Life through your prayers and financial gifts.

I thank God for you all. I am thankful that He has preached His Word to you and has created faith in you by the power of His Holy Spirit. And I am thankful that He has motivated you to share that Word with others, that they too might know the love of Christ and the promise of life that is found only in Him.

I pray that our meditation on the suffering and dying of our Lord will be a blessing to you and that those blessings will continue to extend from you to all your neighbors.

