



THE STORY

APRIL 2023

St. John Lutheran Church

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CELEBRATION OF EASTER IN ISRAEL

Easter is one of the most important Christian festivals. It is celebrated with great pomp and show in all the parts of the world where the followers of Christianity reside. As this festival is celebrated in order to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ after crucifixion, this is held in high regard by all the people of this community. Much beyond feasting and celebrations, this festival is one of the most holy days for the Christians around the world.

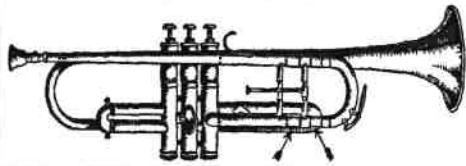
Easter celebration in Israel assumes special significance because a number of Christian rituals have roots in Jewish traditions. The celebration of the Jewish festival of Passover, which commemorates the exodus of Jews from captivity in Egypt, has been intertwined with Easter from the beginning and the Hebrew word Pesach, originally meaning Passover, came to mean Easter as well.

Christian worshippers from all over the world gather in the Holy Land of Jerusalem for Easter celebration. Pilgrims congregate for an Easter sunrise service at the Garden tomb in Jerusalem. Easter mass is celebrated at the ancient Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's walled Old City. Priests and monks in white robes chant the liturgy, as fragrant incense rise above the tomb Christians believe to be the place where Jesus rose from the dead.

In mainland Israel, orthodox Jews celebrate the Passover while Messianic Jews celebrate Easter like the rest of the Christians around the world. The different celebrations arise from the fact that Orthodox Jews do not accept Jesus Christ to be the Messiah sent from God, and therefore they do not celebrate his Crucifixion or his return from the kingdom of death.

During Easter, many processions are held in Israel. These processions travel the route of Jesus Christ's journey to Golgotha. The route is referred to as the 'Twelve Stations' of the Cross. Many tourists from different parts of the world also come to take part in this procession. **Participating in this procession** is considered to be a holy practice for the Christians. So, generally it witnesses a lot of crowd. Processions gather at the holy tomb of Jesus.

At one o'clock in the afternoon on Easter day, the church leader goes into Jesus' tomb and the doors are closed after him. The lights of the entire city are lit off and later the church bells ring and the church leader comes out with a burning torch. The torch is said to have been lit inside the tomb on its own without any external source. So everyone present in the procession at that time, lights their candles from the holy fire, enlightening the entire church premises. Easter celebrations assume more religious significance in Israel than feasting and celebrations.



HEAR YE HEAR YE

- *Please have all items in the office for the May newsletter by April 17th. PLEASE!! Thank you
- *Check out the puzzles in the free book section in the education lobby. Have puzzles you would like to donate, just add them to the shelf. Great pass time as the weather starts to get cooler. New books have also been added.
- *Worship Choir wants your voice, Please join us for practice at 8:30am on Sundays, no experience needed. ;)
- *We invite you to share flowers for the altar area - to celebrate a special day/person or just to share some beauty with the rest of the congregation. Call the office for details. 524-3615
- *Church Basement ladies are looking for containers for left overs. Most any size will work. Just drop them off in the Kitchen. Thank you!!!
- *Confirmands are asked to attend both the Maundy Thursday Service as well as the Good Friday Service. They also will be a part of the Easter Breakfast, the monies received will be put towards youth events.
- *If you have "those snack sets" (plate and cups). And would like to store them somewhere else, WELCA would love to have them for future events. Questions please contact Rita.

WE HOLD IN PRAYER: Ashlyn Bennett, Larry Albrecht, Ron Swift , Dick & Ann Kuball, Arleen Hanson, Michelle Birr Straumann and Gloria Schuett

HOMEBOUND MEMBERS: David Treanor, Robert Krengel, Cheryl Bergemann, Betty Borsoski, Arlene Tolzman, Betty Aschlager, Orville Halverson, Audrey Annis and Eloise Ward

Prayers



We thank you Father, that you see and care for each one of your children. We thank you that we are all equally valuable to you. Remind us of your love when we feel lost among the crowd. Amen

Blessed Lord and God, we come to you, aware that you have pierced our world. You became flesh, you dwelled among us, you saw us in our fallen state, your reached in and pulled us out. Your offered us forgiveness. Amen

April

Linda Annis

Church Council

Members

April

Patti Krengel

Paul Osmundson

May

Josh Isbrand

Patti Krengel

PASTOR'S PAGE

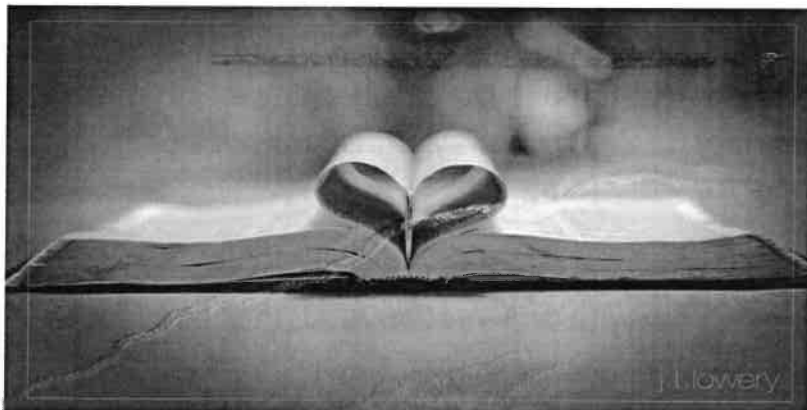
Our relationship with one another

At the last supper, on the evening of Jesus' arrest, Jesus gave his followers a new commandment: to love one another as he had loved them. He reinforced this commandment with a striking example of humility – by washing his disciples' feet (John 17:1-17). It was customary in those days for a servant to wash the feet of their guests, so the fact that Jesus took on this servile role was shocking to the disciples. It's difficult to find a social custom that is a parallel to this, but it would be a bit like arriving at a dinner party with meals-on-wheels! How can we possibly love one another as Jesus has loved us? Well, we can't – but we should try.

Nothing at all

Jesus was described as 'the lamb killed from the foundation of the world' (Rev 13:8, a reference to the Jewish feast of Passover, where a lamb was killed to remember the Exodus from Egypt). So, these three days that changed the world have been in the mind of the Creator from before the creation, so we pre-destined to happen (to take nothing away from Jesus exercising his freewill in the giving of his life). In the same way, Christians have been chosen from before the creation to be pre-destined for glory (Rom 8:28-32).

Jesus' perfect life, obedient death, and glorious resurrection change the relationship of mankind with God, change our relationship with one another, and offer hope for us all.



St. John Information

CONTACT/CONNECT

Email: stjohnslutheran.mapletonmn@gmail.com

Berkeland.stjohnslutheran@gmail.com

Website: www.stjohnlutheranelca.com

Streaming: Go to www.youtube.com (type in St. John's Mapleton in the search box). From there you will find all the services.

Items for the newsletter can be emailed to:
thestory.stjohnlutheran@gmail.com

Spiritually Speaking

Please check out our congregation's Facebook page and "like" us. Check us out every few days and "like" some of the inspirational and encouraging pictures and share an-



nouncements about events with your friends. This is one easy way to share information about our church and God's Word with others.

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APRIL 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>Join us for Coffee Hour following Worship The Stories are amazing!!!</p>						1
2 Palm Sunday	3 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm	4	5	6 Maundy Thursday Service @ 6:30pm	7 Good Friday Service 6:30pm	8
9 7:30am First Light Service / communion 8:30 Easter Breakfast 9:30am Festival Worship/ communion 10:30am NO Sunday school	10 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm Church Office Closed	11 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm	12 Confirmation 6:00pm	13 Church Council 6:30	14	15
16 8:30 Worship Choir practice - 9:30am Worship / Children sing 10:30 Sunday School	17 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm News Letter deadline	18 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm	19 Confirmation 6:00pm	20	21	22
23 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship / communion 10:30am Sunday School	24 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm	25 Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm	26 Confirmation 6:00pm	27	28	29
30 8:30 Worship Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:30am Sunday School	May 1st Quilting 10:00am -3:00pm					



Just a Little Humor

If you are not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there. Martin Luther

Easter

An elderly man in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough."

"Pop, what are you talking about," the son says.

"We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old man says.

"We're sick and tired of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Chicago and tell her." And he hangs up.

Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone.

"Like Heck they're getting a divorce, she shouts. I'll take care of this."

She calls Phoenix immediately, and screams at her dad,

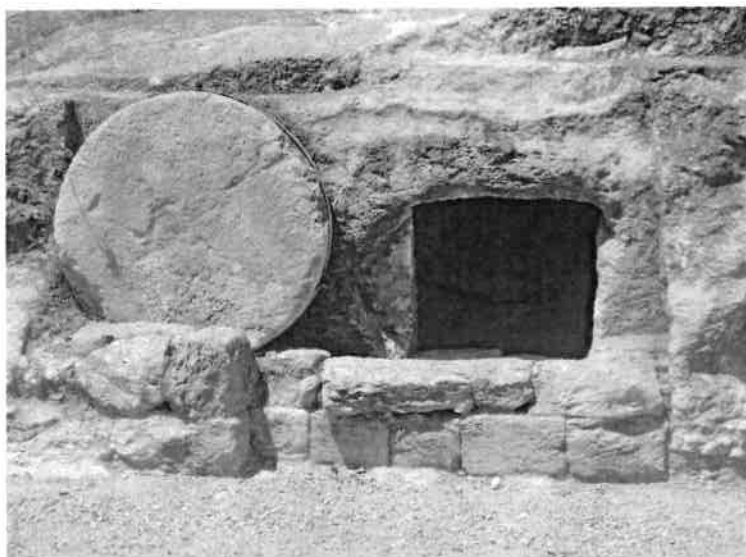
"You are NOT getting divorced! Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then don't do a thing, DO YOU HEAR ME?" And she hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone, smiles and turns to his wife.

"They're coming for Easter and paying their own way."



LOVE IS AN OPEN DOOR



EASTER BLESSINGS TO ALL



Daily Discipleship

From Luke 23:32-24:12 (CSB):

Two others — criminals — were also led away to be executed with him. When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." And they divided his clothes and cast lots.

The people stood watching, and even the leaders kept scoffing: "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is God's Messiah, the Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked Him. They came offering Him sour wine and said, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" An inscription was above Him:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at Him: "Aren't You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? We are punished justly, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

The Death of Jesus

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three, because the sun's light failed. The curtain of the sanctuary was split down the middle. And Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I entrust My spirit." Saying this, he breathed his last.

When the centurion saw what happened, he began to glorify God, saying, "This man really was righteous!" All the crowds that had gathered for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, went home, striking their chests. But all who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

The Burial of Jesus

There was a good and righteous man named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, who had not agreed with their plan and action. He was from Arimathea, a Judean town, and was looking forward to the kingdom of God. He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Taking it down, he wrapped it in fine linen and placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever been placed. It was preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed along and observed the tomb and how His body was placed. Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Resurrection Morning

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground.

"Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" And they remembered his words.

Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things. But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.

FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP

Guided By His Word - by Joyce Meyer

I love the Word of God. It is the Lord's love letter to us and His instructional manual for life. When it comes to hearing God's voice, this is the very first place we should begin.

The Bible has the answers for every single question we can ever have. It is full of truths, stories, and parables to instruct us in every area—our behavior, our relationships with God and others, how to grow spiritually, how to discern right from wrong, ways to fulfill God's calling for our lives, and so much more.

I really like the way 2 Timothy 3:16-17 puts it:

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

I often tell people that if they want to hear God's voice, they need to commit to being a student of God's Word. Why? Because God uses His Word as the primary way to speak to us. It is filled with His wisdom, instruction, and commands—it is full of information about His will for our lives.

The more we read, study and fill our minds with God's Word, the more intimately acquainted we become with Him...and the easier it becomes to hear His voice.

In John 14:26, Jesus says the Holy Spirit ...will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.

When we fill ourselves with God's Word—when we take the time to really know what it says—we are cooperating with God to hear from Him. When we encounter various situations in life and require His wisdom and direction, the Holy Spirit will help remind us what His Word says to do.

I can't tell you how many times the Lord has given me direction or spoken a word of encouragement by reminding me of His Word at just the right time.

There was a season in my life when God used Galatians 6:9 to help me persevere and not give up. Over and over, the Holy Spirit kept reminding me,

"Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you don't faint or give up!"

This message from the Lord helped me to push through that season without quitting. I'm so glad I had taken the time to know what His Word said so the Holy Spirit could encourage me with it at just the right time!

FAITHFULNESS

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP

Continued from page 3

God's Word also changes us from the inside out. Look with me at Hebrews 4:12. It says:

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword...exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.

Wow! God's Word is alive, and it has the ability to change us—our desires, the way we think, the way we see ourselves, and even the way we view God and other people. The more we meditate on God's Word, the more become like Him and begin to desire the same things that God desires...we have a greater passion to do His will!

Easter Story Scriptures

All four of the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John, give account of the Easter Story. It's good to read from all four because each account adds to the story!

Matthew Chapters 27 & 28

Mark Chapters 15 & 16

Luke Chapters 23 & 24

John Chapters 19 & 20

Seeds In Need Of Living Water



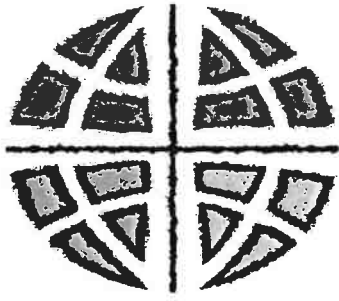
When you think about it, you can place a seed in the sunlight, but nothing will happen. You can stick it into dry dirt, but nothing will happen. Oh these are important, but it isn't until the seed comes into contact with water that life begins!

This is such a picture of us and salvation! We have potential for eternal life; Ecclesiastes 3:11 and Romans 1:19 both tell us God has placed it within us. We can see and absorb the sunlight of His Word and that is important, and we can be placed within the fertile soil of a church, but it is not until we come into contact with the Living Water, Jesus Christ, that eternal life begins!

Once our heart, soul & mind have been submerged in the life-giving blood of Christ and His forgiveness washes over us, we are changed!

Yes, then the soil of the church is important to give us support as we grow, and the sunlight of His Word is necessary to provide food for spiritual growth...but it is Jesus only, the Living Water, Who brings and sustains eternal life within us!

Any time you see or plant a seed let it remind you of the truth of this salvation lesson.



Gods Work Our Hands

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

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Bits and Pieces: In other words things to remember ;)

2023 LENT @ ST. JOHN'S

April 6 (6:30 pm) Maundy Thursday Worship (with First Communion)

April 7 (6:30 pm) Good Friday Tenebrae

April 9 (7:30 am) Early Light Easter Worship

EASTER YOUTH BREAKFAST sponsored by the youth following.

(9:30 am) Festival Easter Celebration

Compassion.. Commitment.. Community.. In Christ!