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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH

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# Messiah Messenger

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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THE REV. DR.  
MARTIN K. ERHARDT  
PASTOR

THE REV. DR.  
JOHN MARK GOERSS  
PASTOR EMERITUS

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ORGANIST AND  
CHOIR DIRECTOR

### ASCENSION THEN AND NOW

Happy Easter! The rigors of Lent heighten my appreciation of Easter, and Easter joy mixed with the extra light and sunshine we're getting each day turns even watching my car accumulate pollen into a simple pleasure. Ascension Day will be May 14 this year and, partly because as the fortieth day of Easter it's always a Thursday, is a feast we often overlook.

Jesus ascension is well worth dwelling on, however. It's a source of wonder, joy, and encouragement for many reasons, which, if you're interested, you can learn more about by listening to the Ascension 2012 sermon I preached on May 20 of that year, available on the Messiah website. For now, though, I'd like to focus on one aspect of Jesus' ascension – it's novel, pathbreaking nature and what that means for us.

I love the book of Acts. The Acts of the Apostles, the full name of the book, picks up from the Gospel of Luke with a more detailed account of Jesus' ascension than the Gospel provides. Jesus ascends in Acts 1:9, and in verse 10 two men in white robes find his disciples gazing up after him into heaven. I like to think of the disciples at that moment, who, trying to wrap their minds around Jesus' resurrection, now have to rearrange their mental furniture once more to accommodate his ascension. I imagine they had had easier months.

But as bewildering as Jesus' post-mortem behavior must have been for his disciples, it was also encouraging. Jesus' resurrection and ascension introduced new and exciting alternatives to the conventional wisdom of their day (and ours) that says death is the end of the road.

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*The symbol in the upper left corner expresses by means of candle and messianic rose the worship of the Messiah and the Truth of Christ. The cross signifies His central deed and the five crosses in the rose the sacred wounds.*

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

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“Correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think that's been done before,” I imagine Thomas saying to Andrew after the ascension.

“How about Elijah?”

“Yes, but leaving aside that he hadn't died first, Elijah had wheels, which puts Jesus in a different class altogether.”

It's speculative, I know, but plausible. The important thing is that in his ascension Jesus, having taken on our human lot and reconciled us to God, broke a death-defying path for us to the presence of his — and now our — Father. He was doing a new thing and emboldened his disciples to get off the sofa and break some new ground themselves in light of his Resurrection & Ascension Reality. “Get out there – I'm with you” is one paraphrase of Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Acts is a record of the results – messy to be sure, but inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Like us, Jesus' first disciples didn't have a perfect idea of how to respond to his ascension. They tried things and learned by doing, evidenced by some of my favorite phrases in scripture:

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28, NIV)

“We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (Acts 19:2, NIV)

“If it's worth doing, it's worth doing badly,” seems to have been their motto, and it's one that encourages me when I reflect on my incomplete understanding, cowardice, and apathy in carrying out the Great Commission. “Sin boldly,” said Martin Luther, as an encouragement to fellow sinners to soldier on in their calling as ambassadors for Christ despite our Jonah-like character flaws and lack of enthusiasm.

Jesus is not only with us, but is ahead of us. His ascension visibly broke the glass ceiling between earth and heaven, between us and God, between a destiny of death and one of eternal life. Jesus bridged the gap we sometimes feel between the world of the Bible and the world we live in today by giving us the example of his inept, uncertain, and imperfect disciples. They are people to whom we can relate. We share their dubious credentials. We are recipients of the same grace and fellow members of God's improbable corps of ambassadors, inspired by the Holy Spirit to blunder boldly into the world God loves and came to save. In his ascension, Jesus the perfect pathbreaker opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Through the witness of his disciples then and now, he emboldens us to embark on the path he has broken.

Pastor Erhardt

**Visit our website to listen to audio recordings of Sunday Sermons.**  
**<http://www.princetonlutheranchurch.org/services.html>**

## CHURCH CALENDAR

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### TAIZE-STYLE EVENING PRAYER

**Every Tuesday at 7:30**

**April 14—May 19**

Princeton University Chapel

### TEMPLE SERVANTS

The June—September 2015 Temple Servants schedule will be posted on the church website on May 15, and will be available online and on the back pew. Thank you to those of you who give so generously of your time and talents. If you should need to make changes, please find your own substitute and let the church office know.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

***Saturday, May 2, 6:00 PM***

*Church Potluck and Slideshow*

***Friday, May 15, 6:00 PM***

*ISI Monthly Friendship Dinner*

***Sunday, May 17, 12:15 PM***

*Voters Meeting*

***Thursday, May 21, 7:00 PM***

*Prayer Shawl Meeting*

***Sunday, May 24, 10:30 AM***

*Confirmation & Reception of New Members*

***Thursday, May 28, 7:00 PM***

*Executive Board Meeting*





## UPCOMING READINGS IN MAY

EASTER, PENTECOST YEAR B	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Fifth Sunday of Easter <i>May 3, 2015</i>	Acts 8:26-40	Psalm 22:25-31	1 John 4:7-21	John 15:1-8
Sixth Sunday of Easter <i>May 10, 2015</i>	Acts 10:44-48	Psalm 98	1 John 5:1-6	John 15:9-17
Ascension of the Lord <i>May 17, 2015</i>	Acts 1:1-11	Psalm 47	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
Day of Pentecost <i>May 24, 2015</i>	Acts 2:1-21	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b	Romans 8:22-27	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15
Trinity Sunday <i>May 31, 2015</i>	Isaiah 6:1-8	Psalm 29	Romans 8:12-17	John 3:1-17

## UPCOMING READINGS IN JUNE

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST YEAR B	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Second Sunday after Pentecost <i>June 7, 2015</i>	1 Samuel 8:4-20	Psalms 138	2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1	Mark 3:20-35
Third Sunday after Pentecost <i>June 14, 2015</i>	1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13	Psalms 20	2 Corinthians 5:6-17	Mark 4:26-34
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost <i>June 21, 2015</i>	1 Samuel 17:32-49	Psalms 9:9-20	2 Corinthians 6:1-13	Mark 4:35-41
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost <i>June 28, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27	Psalms 130	2 Corinthians 8:7-15	Mark 5:21-43



Readings taken from [lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/)



## SPRING WORK DAY

### Messiah gardeners, your talents are needed.

The workday was a great success. Energetic, dedicated gardening volunteers dug beds to plant new shrubs, planted and mulched daffodil, hyacinth, tulip, and lily bulbs in the beds lining the front walk and around the side steps on Cedar Lane. Leaves and debris were raked up, and weeds pulled, leaving the grounds looking pretty spiffy.

Of course, there is always more to do! It was too early to plant annuals, which we will need to do, and we still have some shrubs and perennials to fill in various spaces. If you might have some time during the next two or three weeks to help out with additional gardening, please speak to me or email me at [mirandahempel@gmail.com](mailto:mirandahempel@gmail.com).

In addition, we always need volunteers to water the plantings during the week, and as for weeds, well, they grow with an enviable vigor and require constant, merciless vigilance.



With Carolyn on the loose with her saw, no wayward tree is safe!



A sticky situation.

## MESSIAH'S MANTLES: PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

**Next Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting:** *May 21*

**Hostess:** Lottie Coffin

Please check the church website [princetonlutheranchurch.org/shawl.html](http://princetonlutheranchurch.org/shawl.html) for date and time changes.

Contact any one of the knitters if you know of someone in need or if you would like to request that a shawl be knit for a loved one.

### NOTE FROM EVA GROVES READ AT THE MARCH 8 PRAYER SHAWL BELESSING

"I just wanted to say a few words about our Prayer Shawl Ministry.

We began our small group in 2006 (almost 10 years ago) and promptly named ourselves "Messiah's Mantles". Mildred Coyner offered her home as a meeting place, and we set a schedule to meet once a month for knitting and fellowship. Over the years, we have given away hundreds and hundreds of shawls, which is pretty amazing considering it takes 3 skeins of yarn and many hours/months to finish each one. The shawls are knit in patterns of (3) symbolizing the Holy Trinity knit 3, purl 3 (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).



This ministry is as therapeutic and comforting for the knitters - as it is for the recipients. Over the years, we have shared our joys and our sorrows in fellowship as we knit and pray for the receiver of the shawl(s).

As you saw today, our completed shawls were blessed during the worship service, and will then be given to the sick, the bereaved or anyone in need of comfort and prayers. Shawls are also given to thank, or to celebrate – the birth of child, a wedding, a graduation.

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## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY (CONTINUED)



April 16 Prayer Shawl Group Meeting at the new location,  
7 Westminster Court, Pennington

Please join me in thanking our knitters:

Lottie Coffin, Mildred Coyner, Esther Fischer, Doris Schubert-Gerwers, Renate Giller, Eva Groves, Karen Hartl, Pat Hlafter, Miranda Hempel, Siv Mitt, Eleanora Spain-hour, Suzanne Manczuk, Paula Hartman and Patricia Wolf for their commitment to this rewarding ministry.

We all were looking forward and hopeful to see Mildred this morning!

All we have left now, is saying 'Thank you, Mildred'.

With much love, Eva."

"OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE GIVEN AWAY HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF SHAWLS, WHICH IS PRETTY AMAZING CONSIDERING IT TAKES 3 SKEINS OF YARN AND MANY HOURS/MONTHS TO FINISH EACH ONE."





## PAT AND JON HLAFTER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Pat and Jon with our own Pastor Erhardt.



...just in case you were wondering what real love and commitment looks like. Congratulations, Pat and Jon!



## EGGS-CITING EASTER EGG HUNT AT MESSIAH

Messiah's annual Easter Egg Craft Party and Egg Hunt was scheduled to begin at 9am on Easter Sunday, but eager parents and children started arriving well before the official opening time.

Luckily, Sunday School teachers Ryan Spaude and Miranda Hempel were joined by several noble volunteers, Debbie Baer, John Wackerman, and Trish Oehlrich, and confirmation/Sunday School students Dan Baer, Jonathan Wackerman, and Drew and Katy Von Barga. Many hands make light work, so everything was ready to go when the onslaught began. There was a congenial mix of congregants and neighborhood families; regulars and newcomers who just happened to see the sign on the front lawn. Fourteen-plus children showed up with parents in tow.

Children and parents immediately settled down to the task of decorating bags for the treasures they would find in the hunt, and also decking out straw hats in lively colors with fake flowers, rhinestones, ribbons, and stickers. The room was filled with concentrated energy, as the children focused on the task at hand, with the occasional technical assist from a parent. Some of the boys opted to decorate hats as well, forgoing the lavender, pink, and yellow options in favor of fire-engine red.

In case anyone's energy started to flag, there was a spread of breakfast snacks including croissants, mini-strudels, muffins, grapes, and other easy to eat munchies. For the parents, Debbie Baer made coffee, which was much appreciated. Luckily, an absurd amount of food was purchased, on the theory of better too much than too little, and so although there wasn't a formal Fellowship



gathering after services, people were invited downstairs to polish off the remainders, which they did with an efficiency reminiscent of the Bible's locusts..

Katy, Drew, Jonathan and Dan headed outside while the younger children were working diligently on their creations to hide the candy-filled Easter eggs. When the time came for the hunt, there was an enthusiastic stampede out the door and the children scrambled to find the most possible eggs. All was good-natured mayhem, and when the last egg had been discovered and popped into a newly-decorated Easter bag, everyone headed back inside for some more refreshments and a final treat: baskets filled with toys and trinkets for all the children who came (including our selfless volunteers), which Trish Oehlrich provided.

What a wonderful prelude to the joy of Easter services! The Sunday School teachers are already looking forward to next Easter's event . . .





## SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS FIT THE BATTLE OF JERICHO, AND MORE

In the last two months or so, the Sunday School students have had a variety of experiences. They have tried fishing (even if they were only paper fish) after learning about Jesus appearing to the disciples after his resurrection and helping them with their fishing technique. They have made paper boats which float across buckets of water quite handily in homage to Noah, Jonah, the apostles, and Paul, among others, who all had memorable boating experiences the students read about. And the students created a cardboard Jericho, complete with Rahab's house, which they marched around, blasting away on plastic flutes (an affordable substitute for the trumpets actually used). They even made up their own songs featuring the names of the twelve apostles as an aid to memorizing them (it worked!)



During Lent, we studied the Gospel accounts of our Lord's passion and resurrection, continuing after Easter with the descriptions of his appearances to his followers during the forty days before his ascension. "Doubting" Thomas came in for some interesting discussion.

Currently, in addition to the new material introduced every week, the students are working on a paper mosaic representing all the stories and lessons from the year, an aesthetically pleasing way of reviewing what they have learned..



## BLAST FROM THE PAST

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Who are these rogues, and what are they up to?

Do you recognize the room they're in?

And why are they wearing those green bandannas?



*Photo courtesy of Messiah archives*

# May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 6pm Church Potluck
3 9:00 am Christian Education 10:30 am Holy Communion	4	5 7:30pm Taize-Style Evening Prayer	6 7:15pm Confirmation 7:50pm Choir	7	8	9
10 9:00 am Christian Education 10:30 am Holy Communion	11	12 7:30pm Taize-Style Evening Prayer	13 7:15pm Confirmation 7:50pm Choir	14	15 6pm ISI Dinner	16
17 9:00 am Christian Education 10:30 am Holy Communion 12:15pm Voters Meeting	18	19 7:30pm Taize-Style Evening Prayer	20 7:15pm Confirmation 7:50pm Choir	21 7pm Prayer Shawl Meeting	22	23
24 Pentecost Sunday 10:30 am Festival Service of Holy Communion	25	26	27 7:50pm Choir	28 7pm Executive Board Meeting	29	30
31 10:30 am Holy Communion						

# June 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7 9:30am Holy Communion	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 9:30am Holy Communion	15	16	17	18	19	20
			English District Convention			
21 9:30am Holy Communion	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 9:30am Holy Communion	29	30				





THE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF THE MESSIAH

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RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED

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