

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH



Messiah Messenger

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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, PART II

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PASTOR

THE REV. DR.
JOHN MARK GOERSS
PASTOR EMERITUS

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ORGANIST AND
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ANDREW BUCKWALTER
FAIRFIELD
OFFICE ASSISTANT

Christ is risen! In this Easter season, we ask God in our Eucharistic Prayer, "Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all."

In my February newsletter column, I wrote about "the holy catholic church, the communion of saints" of which we are a part. I return to that topic now to consider what it means to be *Lutheran* members of Christ's church – the communion of saints of every time and every place.

Sometimes people refer to Messiah as a pan-Lutheran congregation. By that they usually mean that many people who worship and attend come from non-LCMS Lutheran congregations, and that Messiah has tried to cooperate and maintain good relationships with Lutherans outside the LCMS. One concrete manifestation of that effort: Princeton University's Office of Religious Life recognizes one Lutheran Chaplain who oversees Lutheran Campus Ministry, and Messiah has for many years made its pastor available to serve in that capacity.

Describing ourselves as "pan-Lutheran," however, we can forget that Lutheranism does not encompass Christ's church, but is an evangelical (gospel-focused, gospel-motivated) movement within the holy catholic (universal) church. Today, Lutherans disagree among themselves about how we discern God's voice, and especially about how to apply the Bible to the life of the church (e.g. communion practice) and the lives of individual Christians (e.g. sexual ethics).

These issues are important for the whole church. When seeking partners with whom to confer and cooperate in evangelism, discipleship, and social action, therefore, we ought not let a pan-Lutheran vision become an exclusively Lutheran one. Becoming better acquainted with the church catholic, we may find ourselves in closer theological agreement with Christians who aren't familiar with the Lutheran Confessions than we are with self-identified Lutherans who, for example,

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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)

a) consider our lives to be our own, to be self-defined and lived according to an individual sense of spirituality rather than belonging to God and subject to God's Word (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, James 4:4-10, 2 Timothy 3:14-17)

b) consider Christianity to be an optional add-on to one's life – a U-Pick way to meet one's spiritual needs or to fulfill religious obligations, rather than as a radical change of our core identity through baptism: from self-appointed gods and masters of our fate to needy, dependent children of God; from being slaves to sin and guilt to being forgiven slaves to the righteousness that is true freedom (Romans 6).

c) interpret God's Word and live independent of the worship and fellowship of Christ's church – through the ages and across the world – through which the Holy Spirit works (John 16:1-15, Acts 2:37-42)

At its best, Lutheranism is a reform movement that keeps the gospel clearly in view of Christ's church and keeps the church clearly in view of those who have discovered the gospel. In Martin Luther's time, the Roman Catholic church presented itself to people as a sort of commercial agent of God's, authorized to dispense God's grace, righteousness, judgment, and salvation in a transactional way, often conditional upon receipt of compensation. The gospel – the good news of God's free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ – contradicted that presentation and made the church's position untenable. Excavating the gospel from church teaching and bringing it to light was therefore a major and a disruptive undertaking. Imagine someone discovering under the towers of the George Washington Bridge the well-preserved remains of an ancient civilization. Of course we'd want to excavate it. Imagine the mayhem that would cause and multiply by ten, and you'll have an inkling of why the Protestant Reformation is considered a big deal.

Today, the gospel is as important as ever, but having excavated it, it's easy for us to think that repeating it (or hearing it repeated) every Sunday is all there is to Christian life. Living as disciples of Jesus in today's world is often complex and difficult. Life offers us many choices, and for the church to limit its witness to telling people only, "Christ has set you free – anything not forbidden in scripture is permitted" is to grossly underserve them, and in a way that reflects poorly on the Gospel.

We need our sisters and brothers of the holy catholic church who bring varied and vital gifts that build up the church: prayer, peacemaking, mercy, music, community building, and obedience, for example. The church cannot and should not try to do everything, but there is a danger in reducing scripture or theology to gospel proclamation with no mention of sin, guilt, repentance, responsibility, moral gradation, or the need for change. God is not a cuddle toy. He does not fit into our hip pocket. God is not part of *our* lives – *we* are part of *his* salvation drama. We need to learn how to play our parts faithfully, and there are better and worse ways of doing that. Telling people that and working through the details with them is all part of the mission of the Church, and that big of a mission requires a big communion of saints. It's communion of which Lutherans are a vital part, and in which it is a privilege to count ourselves.

A blessed Easter to you!

Pastor Erhardt

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

NOTICES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Thanks to a generous donation from Diana Charnok, daughter of Mildred Coyner, we've completed our chasuble set!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 12, 7:00 PM

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 7:00 PM

Prayer Shawl Meeting

Friday, May 20, 6:00 PM

ISI Dinner

Sunday, May 22, 12:15 PM

Voters Meeting

Saturday, May 28, 9:00 AM

Men's Forum—Wegmans

Thursday, June 2, 7:00 PM

Executive Board Meeting

Sunday, June 5, 9:30 AM

Summer Worship Time Begins

Saturday, June 25, 9:00 AM

Men's Forum—Wegmans

Taize-style Evening Prayer

Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in the Princeton University Chapel weekly March 29—May 17. Please join us for a ~30 minute service of contemplative prayer, scripture, and song. All are welcome. Sponsored by Lutheran Campus Ministry. For more information about the Taize community, see www.taize.fr

MESSIAH HOLDS ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT COMPLETE WITH EASTER BUNNY

One of the high points of the year for the Sunday School is the Easter Egg Hunt which is held before services on Easter Sunday. We had a bumper crop of children this year, from Messiah and the neighborhood, and all of them came ready to make crafts and hunt down Easter eggs. They were welcomed by Messiah's special guest, the Easter Bunny, a mischievous six-foot critter who helped children find eggs and tried unsuccessfully to climb the trees outside.

With the help of Dan Baer, and Drew and Katy von Bargen, hundreds of Easter eggs stuffed with chocolates were hidden around the grounds. Most of them were hidden in relatively simple spots, but a few were hidden in such cleverly obscure places that they may never be found! (One turned up during weeding a flowerbed on our recent work day, a fitting reward for the volunteer who found it!)



The festivities started off with crafts, and of course, food! Patricia Oelrich brought delicious home-made sticky buns and quiches in different flavors, and other breakfast treats like croissants and mini-muffins rounded out the offerings.



The children eagerly decorated bags to hold their Easter egg finds, as well as hats worthy of any Easter Parade. Boys and girls alike uninhibitedly trimmed their chapeaux with fake flowers, butterflies, ribbons, and stickers galore. The bags were decorated with glitter, stickers, and flowers. Some enterprising children drew elaborate designs on their bags, including a Jurassic Park themed bag with dinosaurs wreaking mayhem with big smiles on their toothy faces.



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EASTER EGG HUNT (CONTINUED)

When the crafts were finished and the tables looked as though they had been hit by a tornado, with craft supplies, scissors, and left-over bits and bobs scattered everywhere, the children went outside for the piece de resistance - the Hunt itself. The youngest children were given a head start, and then it was a free-for-all. The Easter Bunny headed outside to supervise the mayhem. Everyone found lots and lots of eggs to take home; no one was disappointed. In addition, there were Easter baskets with small toys and goodies for the children to take home.

Then we gathered at the front of the church for the beginning of Messiah's Easter services, full of good spirits, gratitude, and joyful anticipation for the worship to come.

There are always (planned) leftovers from the Egg Hunt breakfast, and it is becoming a tradition to invite the congregation to come downstairs after services for an unofficial fellowship hour. Lots of people lingered to enjoy the sticky buns, quiches, et al. It was a wonderful finish to a wonderful morning.



Many thanks to Patricia Oelrich, Bill Oelrich, Debbie Baer, Dan Baer, Katy and Drew von Barga, Karen and Werner Hartl, and to Mark von Barga, who donned an uncomfortable Easter Bunny suit to make the event more fun for everyone. The Sunday School teachers and students are very grateful for all the generous help.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES EXPLORE THE NEW TESTAMENT

In Sunday School, we started out the year looking at some stories from the Old Testament, particularly accounts of the lives of Abraham and Sarah, but with Lent, the focus shifted to Jesus' life, first by looking at a list of the miracles he performed and reviewing many that we had touched upon in previous lessons. We had learned earlier about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, and we returned to the same family to learn about Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointing Jesus with a jar of nard, an incredibly expensive perfume, in a reference to Jesus' impending death and burial.

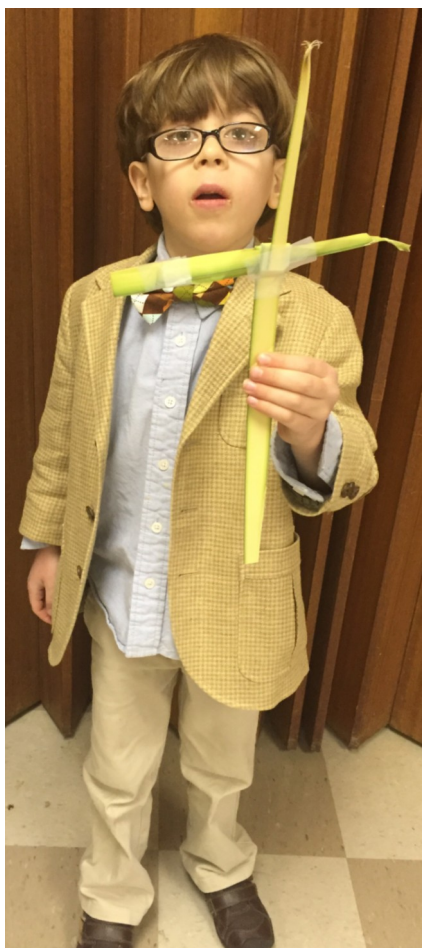
Lessons on "the fruit of the Spirit" made for good snacking; oranges, bananas, grapes, kiwi fruit, clementines, and apples were heaped up in a basket to symbolize the fruits as well as provide healthful treats. We played "Fruit of the Spirit" bingo (it was a tie, so everyone got prizes) and cut out a tree and various different fruits to pin on the bulletin board. We even made a fun folding memory aid with the nine fruits of the spirit and illustrations to go with each one.

We learned more about Palm Sunday after reviewing what we had studied last year, and then we decided to re-enact Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, with Mr. Ryan serving as a very good-natured colt (we promised not to call him a donkey!) and Roger Tabris riding him around as Jesus. Katy von Bargen and Ms. Miranda waved palms (generously and thoughtfully supplied by Carolyn Gishlick) enthusiastically and called out "Hosannah!" to get into the proper mood.



A good time was had by all, even Mr. Ryan. We rounded out the lesson by weaving palm crosses, and in Katy's case, also making a very fetching bow tie out of some fronds!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES (CONTINUED)



The class has been spending some time on the Apostles' Creed, studying what the statements mean, and trying to memorize it. We also have been discussing the different parts of Sunday morning services and locating them in the weekly bulletin, as well as the names for different parts of the church's architecture. A particular favorite is "narthex," reminding Katy of a song about narwhals, of which she gave a spirited performance. We had a mini scavenger hunt, with the children locating liturgical items in different parts of the church.

We try to incorporate games into our classes whenever we can, and some Bible stories offer great opportunities for running around and making a mess, two very satisfying activities. When we learned about Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, we went outside for a contest to see who could fill up a container with water from "their well" the most quickly. Then the water was splashed over chalk drawings we had made on the sidewalk illustrating sins for which we wanted to be forgiven. The chalk washed away, just as our sins are washed away.



There are only five more weeks of Sunday School; the last class is on May 22. We are going to try to pack as much learning and as much fun into the five weeks as we can. Alas, at the end of classes we will be saying goodbye to Ryan Spaude, who is graduating from Princeton University and leaving us. Words cannot express how much we will miss him, but "lots and lots and lots" is a beginning. He is an incredibly enthusiastic, talented, inspiring teacher, as well as an expert in thinking up nifty games that illustrate biblical principles and an all-around great guy. He has promised to visit, so at least we can look forward to seeing him again.

As always, if you have suggestions for lesson plans and activities, please let Miranda or Ryan know. We appreciate the input.

MESSIAH'S MANTLES: PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Group Hostess Schedule

May 19: Doris Schubert-Gerwers

No further meetings until September.

For date and time changes, check the church website
princetonlutheranchurch.org/shawl.html

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.

Please join our group of knitters/crocheters. We provide yarn, needles and a good spirit. If you haven't knit or crocheted for a while, don't get discouraged—we all will help you to get started.

NEEDLEPOINT GROUP: DAYS OF CREATION PANEL SERIES



Showing to the congregation on March 6, 2016.

Progress Report to
Mildred on June 19.
(Mildred can be seen in
the background)





UPCOMING READINGS IN MAY

EASTER, PENTECOST YEAR C	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Sixth Sunday of Easter May 1, 2016	Acts 16:9-15	Psalms 67	Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5	John 14:23-29
Seventh Sunday of Easter (Readings for Ascension Day) May 8, 2016	Acts 1:1-11	Psalms 47	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
Day of Pentecost May 15, 2016	Acts 2:1-21	Psalms 104:24-34, 35b	Romans 8:14-17	John 14:8-17, 25-27
Trinity Sunday May 22, 2016 First Sunday after Pentecost	Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31	Psalms 8	Romans 5:1-5	John 16:12-15
Second Sunday after Pentecost May 29, 2016	1 Kings 18:20-39	Psalms 96	Galatians 1:1-12	Luke 7:1-10

UPCOMING READINGS IN JUNE

PENTECOST YEAR C	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Third Sunday after Pentecost June 5, 2016	1 Kings 17:8-24	Psalms 146	Galatians 1:11-24	Luke 7:11-17
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost June 12, 2016	1 Kings 21:1-21a	Psalms 5:1-8	Galatians 2:15-21	Luke 7:36-8:3
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost June 19, 2016	1 Kings 19:1-15a	Psalms 42 and 43	Galatians 3:23-29	Luke 8:26-39
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost June 26, 2016	2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14	Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20	Galatians 5:1, 13-25	Luke 9:51-62

Readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary, available at library.vanderbilt.edu

GOOD SAMARITAN

A special thank you to Pastor and John Fischer for making it possible for Paul's theological library to find a new life, starting with the Princeton Seminary book sale. Pastor gave me all the information. John donated his time, strength and truck. Single-handedly, he carried and lifted 440 volumes, both after work and during his lunch hour the following day.

Paul and I are deeply grateful.

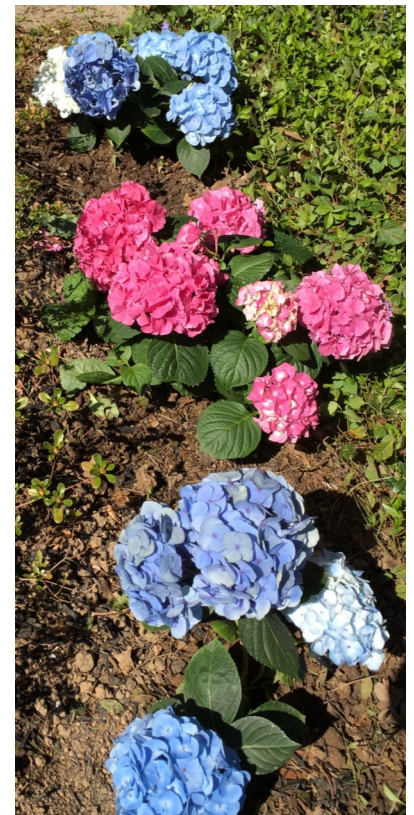
-Janice Hofreiter



CHURCH WORK DAY



Daffodils, tulips, Easter lilies, hydrangeas and day lilies were planted, beds were weeded, mulched, and watered. Esther spread grass seed over the bare spot on the side.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

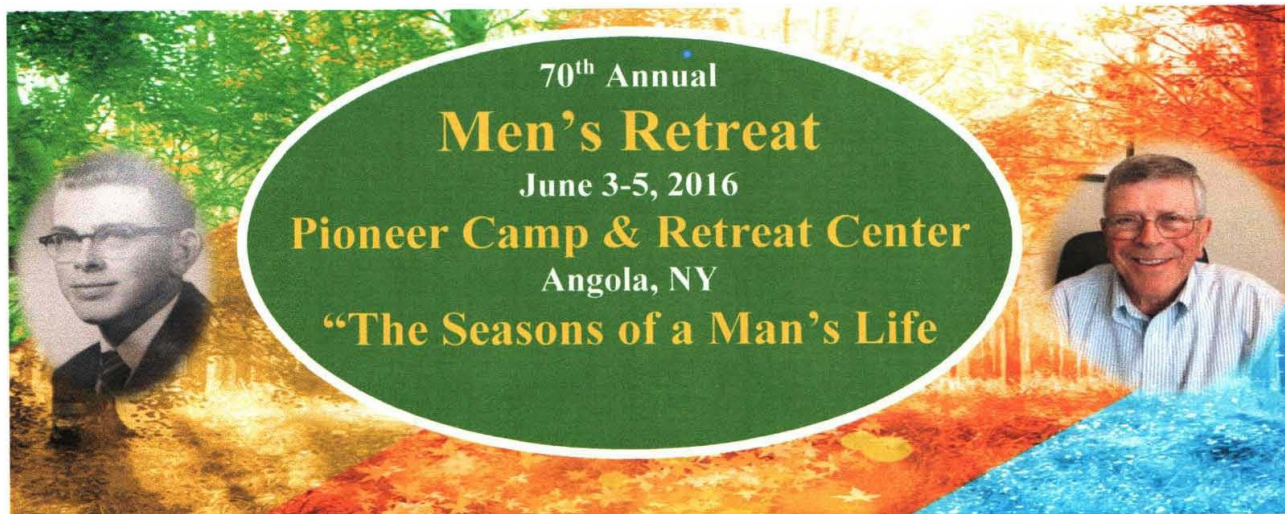
Look familiar?

Who can tell us who's shown here and when?



Photo courtesy of Messiah archives

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE MEN'S WEEKEND RETREAT



70th Annual
Men's Retreat
 June 3-5, 2016
Pioneer Camp & Retreat Center
 Angola, NY
"The Seasons of a Man's Life"

***The Seasons of a Man's Life with Rev. Dr. Peter Larsen:** Our lives are not a straight line. They are, for the most part, made up of seasons. Some short. Some long. As Christian men we believe that our God is involved in all our seasons. He is even involved in our rebellions and failures. At this retreat we shall study the lives of 4 "heroes" of the faith and see how their lives, like ours, experienced failure, and change, and opportunity. We shall learn something from each of them about life and about God. And then, in a time of personal reflection, we shall recall our own lives. And, as much as we can, we shall individually and personally design the next season of our lives—always, as James reminds us, saying "deo volente" (God willing).*

Dr Larsen was born in Wisconsin and raised in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. He is a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO and received his doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

Upon graduation from the seminary, Pete was sent to Jenison, MI, a suburb of Grand Rapids, to start a mission church. There he served Holy Cross Lutheran church for 33 years as it grew to an average worship attendance of 850 on a weekend.

During those years he was elected chairman of the Michigan District Mission Board and later served as the District Ministry Facilitator for the 75 Michigan churches worshipping at least 350 on a weekend. As Ministry Facilitator he assisted congregations with planning, governance, staffing, training and conflict management.

Upon retirement from full time District service, Pete took training in mediation and founded Unity Ministry, a mediation service of the Michigan District.

Pete and his wife Pat have 5 children and 13 grandchildren. In retirement he also serves the congregation he founded by calling on the home bound and by preaching as requested. Although he lived in Ann Arbor and 1 mile from the "Big House" for 17 years, Pete never wavered in being a loyal Buckeye fan.

Featured Activities

- Bible Study
- Beachfront
- Birding
- Campfires
- Chapel in the Woods
- Climbing Wall
- Country Store
- Entertainment
- Fellowship
- Golf
- Sunsets on the Deck
- Snacks & adult beverages
- Spiritual growth
- Steak Dinner
- Tennis
- Walking Trails
- Zip Line

May 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00am Christian Education 10:30am Holy Communion	2	3 7:30pm Taize	4 7:15pm Catechism 7:30pm Choir	5 Ascension Day	6	7
8 Mother's Day 9:00am Christian Education 10:30am Holy Communion (Ascension)	9	10 7:30pm Taize	11 7:15pm Catechism 7:30pm Choir	12 7pm Executive Board Meeting	13	14
15 9:00am Christian Education 10:30am Holy Communion (Pentecost)	16	17 7:30pm Taize	18 7:15pm Catechism 7:30pm Choir	19 7pm Prayer Shawl	20 6pm ISI Dinner	21
22 9:00am Christian Education 10:30am Holy Communion (Trinity) 12:15pm Voters Meeting	23	24	25 7:15pm Catechism 7:30pm Choir	26	27	28 9:00am Men's Forum— Wegmans
29 10:30 am Holy Communion	30 Memorial Day	31				

June 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	27pm Executive Board Meeting	3	4
5 9:30 am Holy Communion	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 9:30 am Holy Communion	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 9:30 am Holy Communion	20	21	22	23	24	25 9:00am Men's Forum—Wegmans
26 9:30 am Holy Communion	27	28	29	30		



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RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED
