

# ALERT!

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

615 Grant Street ✕ Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

2024  
EASTER

VOLUME 78, ISSUE 2

## WHY DO YOU SEARCH FOR THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

Easter is without a doubt the highlight of the church year! As one of the most experiential celebrations of the church, Easter engages us in a different way than other holidays by tantalizing our senses with all the smells and bells! It's customary that we pull out all the stops, wearing even better than our Sunday best! Alongside our unique celebration as a church, we add family gatherings, festivities and cherished traditions. Easter really is exceptional!

As quickly as the thrill of Easter arrives it seems to fade away just as fast. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith. But as the weeks go by, our Easter eyes lose sight of God's abundant grace and the impact of the resurrection. We tend to resume focusing on our brokenness.

As Easter people, how do we intentionally live our daily lives in full awareness of God's love and mercy? The answer is both easy and challenging, keeping Jesus at the center of our lives. When we look to Christ, we see the love of God given to us freely, immeasurably, and unconditionally. How do we respond to such grace? By keeping Christ at the center of our lives through daily prayer, participation in the means of grace and faithful living. In this way we stay focused on what has the power to change our lives: love. This is how we hold on to Easter, **look to Christ**. When you fix your eyes on Jesus, you will never lose sight of God's love.

The story of Easter is one told time and again, and although many know the words by heart, it is hard to say that we've truly grasped the effect Easter has on our lives. Easter changes everything. The way we conceptualize our human lives, the way we understand God, the world around us, and how we contemplate our life and death. Easter reminds us that in our pursuit for answers we often find ourselves looking for Jesus in the wrong place. **"Why do you search for the living among the dead?"** We can sometimes allow our pain, sadness, worries, guilt, and insecurities to shadow over us like a sealed tomb. It often looks like there is no way out. Thanks be to God; Jesus broke the chains which hold us to these uncertainties. Jesus has triumphed over sin and death!  
**Alleluia! Christ is Risen!**

With all the distractions in our lives, keeping our eyes on Jesus is not always easy. As we journey forward with the Alleluia on our lips, let us do so with boldness, feeling freed and renewed in faith. When challenges arise, let us be reminded of those angelic words spoken to the women who came to the tomb that early morning, **"Do not be afraid."**

*Continued on p. 4...*



*The Rev. Joseph G. Murdy, OLF*

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## TAKE NOTE

The most holy week of the Christian Year and the most victorious day are upon us. From darkness to light, from sorrow to rejoicing, Holy Week, the Three Days, and Easter will be observed once again. And once again, these powerful liturgies will include offerings by our talented and faithful Parish Choir, and be further enhanced by guest instrumentalists.



*Sr. Cynthia A. Pock, OLF, AAGO*

### ***All glory, laud, and honor to you, Redeemer King***

The Parish Choir will sing on Palm / Passion Sunday. Our children and youth ensembles, Cantate and Bel Canto, will sing at the early service. Our worship will be further enhanced by instrumental music on flute and violin.

***“Jesus, I will ponder now on your holy Passion”*** The Parish Choir will sing for liturgies on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The Great Vigil of Easter will include the traditional chanted Exsultet, solo vocal selections, and congregational song as we move from darkness to the brilliant light of Resurrection.

***“Welcome, happy morning, age to age shall say!”*** Brass and timpani, and organ shall accompany joyful singing on this Feast of Feasts – the Resurrection of our Lord.

Spring brings with it new beginnings; the sacrifice of Jesus brings new life. Let us walk with him through his Passion and rejoice together at his ultimate victory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sr. Cynthia Pock, OLF, AAGO  
Cantor

(Right) The Gloria Dei Ringers enhanced worship on the first Sunday in Lent.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONGREGATION MEETING

Join us for our annual program meeting. The congregation will receive reports from all standing and special committees of the parish. Members will be elected to our Congregation Council.

All voting members of the congregation are encouraged to be present.

***Sunday, May 12 at 10:00 AM  
in Holy Cross Hall.***

## MARATHON SUNDAY



**MAY  
5<sup>TH</sup>**

**2024**

The annual Pittsburgh Marathon will take place this year on May 3 - 5. Due to the resulting street closures, we will have only **one liturgy at 11:00 AM on Sunday, May 5.**





## CHRISTIAN ED. CORNER

### SAVE THE DATE: ALL AGES EVENT

In lieu of regular Sunday Church School classes, on Palm Sunday, **March 24**, Christian Education will host an all-ages event featuring a Paschal candle craft project. Join us in **Holy Cross Hall at 9:45 AM** for fun and fellowship as we kick off Holy Week!

### SAVE THE DATE

Camp Downtown 2024 will take place **June 17 - 21**. Full details, including this summer's theme, will be announced soon!

### FLC YOUTH VOLUNTEER AT GREATER PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

On March 9, the youth of First Lutheran Church volunteered at the North Side distribution center of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank for their period market-style food distribution event. We cared for our neighbors in need by helping with setup / tear down, registering community members for services, and distributing food. See the photographs from the event at right.

## ADULT EDUCATION

### THE JEWS AND SIX EMPIRES: 722 BCE- 73 CE

During this period, the Jews were ruled by Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. The Old Testament and other historical sources chronicle wars, revolts, civil strife, destruction, exile and dispersion. For the adult Sunday School classes on **April 7, 14, and 21**, Chuck Torie will present a talk and an audio visual program describing the major events occurring in this time and place in history and the impact these events had on the identity, culture and beliefs of the Jewish people.

### A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE ATHANASIAN CREED

The Athanasian Creed, written in the sixth century, is one of the three creeds that most of Christianity professes to be true witnesses of the faith. Yet, it is by far the most underused and overlooked. Its complex structures and seemingly difficult formulas seek to speak

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*Andrew opens a case of eggs for distribution.*



*Pr. Evans leads the charge as youths from FLC volunteer at the Food Bank.*



*Peter finds himself on onion duty.*

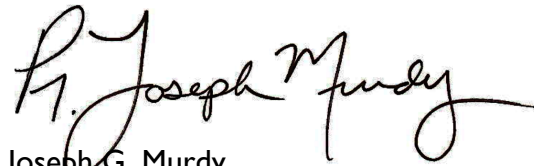




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Here at First, we believe that God has placed us on Grant Street and, by his Holy Spirit, works through us so that we might reach out in service and witness for the Living Christ. As we venture forward in this mission, let us do so with the certainty that Christ is Risen and will come again. With renewed vision, let us share the good news and invite others to **“come and see”** the living Christ.

With you in the risen Christ,



Joseph G. Murdy  
Interim Associate Pastor



## ELIZABETH RHEINFRANK ORDAINED

On Saturday, February 24, our former intern, Elizabeth Rheinfrank, was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament at Mount Lebanon United Lutheran Church. The parish family of First Lutheran Church rejoices with Pastor Elizabeth as she begins her ministry at Saint John's Lutheran Church in Perrysville.



Pr. Elizabeth and her husband, Todd.

## A NOTE OF THANKS...

Dear Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of our parish family for their prayers and visits; for sending cards, letters, text messages, and e-mails; and for providing meals for me during the past year. Your love and support have helped me get through this difficult time. Please continue to keep me in your prayers.

*Donna Graf*



## THE LEGACY OF THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA will celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with an ecumenical service of Holy Communion on **Sunday, April 7, 2024 at 6:30 PM** at House of Prayer Lutheran Church (2100 W Irwin St, Aliquippa) with The Rev. CeCee Mills (North Carolina Synod), preaching and Bishop Kurt Kusserow presiding. Preceding the event there is a discussion at 4:00 PM on this year's theme of "Fires of Freedom and Cloud of Witnesses." and a dinner at 5:00 PM. You can read more about it at [SWPASYNOD.ORG/CALENDAR/MLK2024](https://swpasynod.org/calendar/mlk2024)

Continued from p. 3:

to what is otherwise a mystery: the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Understandably then, we use it in the liturgy only once per year—Trinity Sunday. However, a deep dive into this creed uncovers intricate beauty, rich history, and the complex “dance” of the Trinity. Join Pastor Evans on **April 28** at 9:45 AM in Holy Cross Hall.



## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

MARCH 24-31, 2024

### **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**

Holy Communion with Procession of Palms from the US Steel Plaza	<b>8:30 &amp; 11:00 AM</b>
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### **HOLY TUESDAY**

Chrism Mass at Trinity Cathedral	<b>10:00 AM</b>
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### **HOLY WEDNESDAY**

Noonday Holy Communion	<b>12:10 PM</b>
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### **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

Holy Communion with Footwashing & the Stripping of the Altar	<b>7:00 PM</b>
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### **GOOD FRIDAY**

German Good Friday Service	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Service of Prayer and Preaching	<b>12:00 PM</b>
Stations of the Cross	<b>2:30 PM</b>
Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion & Death	<b>7:00 PM</b>

### **HOLY SATURDAY**

The Great Vigil of Easter	<b>7:00 PM</b>
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### **THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD**

Festival Holy Communion	<b>8:30 &amp; 11:00 AM</b>
Easter Breakfast	<b>9:45 AM</b>