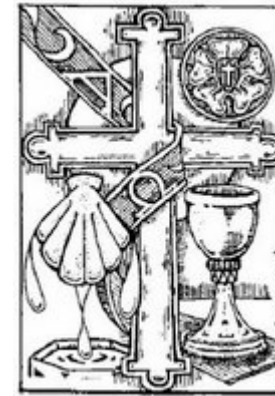


# Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church



## St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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[www.hopeandhelp-foryou.blogspot.com](http://www.hopeandhelp-foryou.blogspot.com)

[www.thesoberpeasant.blogspot.com](http://www.thesoberpeasant.blogspot.com)



**Epiphany-Lent Newsletter**  
(February/March 2023)

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## From the Pastor . . .

### *Your Lenten Journey*

The season of Lent begins on February 22 with Ash Wednesday. Lent is a 40 day journey, even though the season itself is 46 days. (Did you know that?)

This is because Sundays don't count in the count of days! Sundays are IN Lent, not OF Lent, for Sundays are always connected to the resurrection of Jesus, regardless of the season.

I used the word *journey* in describing the 40 days of the Lenten season. For we have a goal and a destination to which we are journeying - to come to the Easter feast after a season of repentance, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to celebrate with great joy and "break our fast" with all the fullness and richness of Easter.

But what about this journey? Maybe it will be a hard journey for you this year, maybe a lonely one, or a fruitful one. But the thing about journeys is that they change us. When we complete them, we are not the same as when we started. Maybe the only change for you is that you will be 40 (or 46!) days older. But I hope not.

Think of the many journeys we are told of in Scripture. Abraham's journey from his home in Haran to the land God promised to give him (and with a few detours on the way!). There is also Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land (with a really BIG 40 year detour in that one!). And the journey of the Magi to see the child Jesus. Think about how Abraham changed on his journey as he waited for God to fulfill His promise to give him a son, how Israel changed during those 40 years in the wilderness, and (possibly) how the Magi changed as they got closer and closer to Jerusalem. Did their faith waiver on the way? Did they get stronger? More joyous? But in the end, journeys really do change us.

All of you reading this have been and are on journeys. Journeys through life - through childhood, through marriage, through ➡ ➡

struggles, sadness, and joys. And each of these journeys has changed you. Or maybe better to say, God has used each of these journeys to change you. To strengthen you in faith. That you rely on Him more. That you learn to look to Him in any and every need.

Our Lenten journey has that goal. That through His Word and Spirit, God would change us according to His will. Maybe that change will not be easy or pleasant, but it will be what we need. So the 40 days of Lent are like a mini-time of life when each year we can take some time to, if not stop, then at least slow down a bit and think about the journey . . . and the detours God has used, and has planned for you for the future.

So this upcoming Lenten season, I encourage you think on this and take a journey this Lent. First and foremost a journey in the Word of God. Add more Scripture reading to your daily routine. Come to Morning Prayer every morning. Come to our midweek Vespers. Use Scripture in your prayers. Whatever you decide, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

And then also think about your own journey. How has God led you to where you are now? What people did He use? What events, both good and bad? What challenges, joy, sorrows? What detours? And where are you going? How is God guiding you now? What encouragements and discouragements are forming you and directing you? Are you going your own way? Are you resisting His directing? How? Why? Do you think that is good? Maybe this Lenten season can point you in a better direction . . .

But always remember this, too: our ultimate destination is the one God wants most for you, and that is life with Him forever. To come to the Feast of heaven which has no end; the Feast that makes all other feasts pale in comparison. Always remember you are on that journey, and let that one shape and define all the rest. Happy Lent!

His servant and yours,

*Pastor Douthwaite*



## Ash Wednesday Divine Service and Lenten Midweek Prayer Services

On **February 22nd** we will begin the Lenten season with a Divine Service for **Ash Wednesday** at 7:30 pm.

After that, our **Lenten Midweek Vespers Services** will be held at the Church **every Wednesday at 7:30 pm**, beginning on March 1st. We will be reading through a harmony of the Passion of our

Lord, drawing from all four Evangelists, with the following meditations:

March 1st: *What Will You Give Me?*

March 8th: *One Man. Alone.*

March 15th: *Truth and Consequences*

March 22nd: *Clash of Kingdoms*

March 29th: *Crosswords*

Take some extra time this Lenten season to meditate on the Word of God and for prayer. Life always seems so busy, so it is more important than ever to budget some time to stop and receive from our good and gracious God what we need to face the challenges and struggles of this life. Join us!

## Special Opportunity

Rev. Robert Kieselowsky of Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries will be with us on the First Sunday in Lent, February 26th to lead Bible Class, preach for us, and tell us what is being done in spreading the Word in Philadelphia at a pot luck after church. Pastor Kieselowsky is one of the missionaries we support every year from your offerings. So plan to be with us that Sunday to hear from Pastor Kieselowsky, meet his family, thank him for his work, and give him a hearty Saint Athanasius welcome.



## The Imposition of Ashes

On Ash Wednesday, we will again offer the imposition of ashes for all who would benefit from this rite of repentance. If this is a new thing for you and you're not sure about it or have questions, we have an explanation and the answers to some frequently asked questions on our website. Simply go to **[saint-athanasius.org/Ashes.html](http://saint-athanasius.org/Ashes.html)**. And if you still have any questions or concerns, please speak with Pastor.

## Directory Updates



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## Private Absolution

Since Lent is a penitential season, Private Absolution will be offered every Sunday during Lent. Pastor will be in the sanctuary from 8:00-8:30, before we begin setting everything up. Come take advantage of this opportunity to hear the forgiveness of God spoken directly to you by name.

## February Is Seminarian Offering Month

We will again be receiving a special offering for our seminary student all through the month of *February* to help with his Spring quarter expenses. If you would like to contribute, please put your donation into the offering or make an electronic donation *specialy marked* or designated for our seminary students.

And please remember - this is a *special* offering above and beyond your regular giving to the church. Don't reduce your regular giving! We need that for our regular expenses. Thanks for your generosity and love, both for our students and for the congregation they will one day be called to serve.



Lenten Life Calendar

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church

Lent 2021

## 2023 Lenten Life Calendar

We will again be creating a “Lenten Life Calendar” for your use during the season of Lent. We’ll be changing up our themes, Scriptures, and prayers this year, but it will have the same purpose and goal - to assist you in your Lenten disciplines of being in the Word and

from the Word with your prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

We will again be offering this calendar to you online, so that (1.) you can use it through your preferred electronic device, (2.) to make it easier for you to share with others, and (3.) so we can provide more resources for you. We hope you’ll make this a part of your daily routine during Lent, and that you’ll send the link to family, friends, and neighbors. And *thanks for your support of life!*

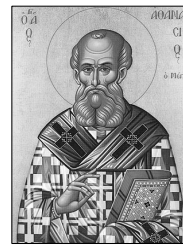


## From Luther . . .

*(Luther speaks of Christian faith and life.)*

Every one must himself know and be armed with the chief things which concern a Christian. . . . In the first place, we must know that we are the children of wrath, and all our works, intentions, and thoughts are nothing at all. . . . Secondly, that God has sent us his only-begotten Son that we may believe in him and that whoever trusts in him shall be free from sin and a child of God . . . Thirdly, we must also have love and through love we must do to one another as God has done to us through faith. . . . Fourthly, we also need patience. For whoever has faith, trusts in God, and shows love to his neighbor, practicing it day by day, must needs suffer persecution. For the devil never sleeps, but constantly gives him plenty of trouble. But patience works and produces hope, which freely yields itself to God and vanishes away in him. Thus faith, by much affliction and persecution, ever increases, and is strengthened day by day. A heart thus blessed with virtues can never rest or restrain itself, but rather pours itself out again for the benefit and service of the brethren, just as God has done to it.

[from: “Eight Sermons at Wittenberg, 1522: Invocavit Sunday” in *Luther’s Works*, Volume 71, © Fortress Press 1959, p. 70-72]



## From St. Athanasius . . .

*(St. Athanasius speak of Christ doing away with all the power of the enemy.)*

For now that He has come to our realm, and taken up his abode in one body among His peers, henceforth the whole conspiracy of the enemy against mankind is checked, and the corruption of death which before was prevailing against them is done away. For the race of men had gone to ruin, had not the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God, come among us to meet the end of death.

[from: “On the Incarnation of the Word, §9.4 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father*, Vol. 4: *Athanasius*, p. 41]





## On the Catechism . . .

*During the Lenten season we focus on all that God has done for us and for our salvation. Therefore during this season, a catechism focus on the Creed is appropriate. This year we consider the Second Article:*

**And [I believe] in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

*What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord . . .*

What do you mean when you say, "I believe in Jesus Christ"? Answer: I mean by this that I believe that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has become my Lord. How? By freeing me from death, sin, hell, and all evil. For before I had no king and lord; the devil was our lord and king; blindness, death, sin, the flesh, and the world were our lords whom we served. Now they have all been driven out and in their stead there has been given to us the Lord Christ, who is the Lord of righteousness, salvation, and all good. . . . Therefore, you must believe in Jesus, that he has become your Lord, that is, that he has redeemed you from death and sin and received you into his bosom. Therefore I have rightly said that the first article teaches the creation and the second redemption. For after we had been created, the devil deceived us and became our Lord. But now Christ frees us from death, the devil, and sin and gives us righteousness, life, faith, power, salvation, and wisdom.

[from "Ten Sermons on the Catechism (1528): The Creed"  
in *Luther's Works, Vol. 51: Sermons 1*, © Fortress Press 1959, p 164]

## Preparing for the Divine Service

*To give you the opportunity to look ahead and prepare for our Divine Service each Sunday, the Office Hymn, Holy Gospel, and Theme of each week for February and March are listed below.*

### **Epiphany 5** (February 5):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20 (Jesus fulfills the Law for us.)

Office Hymn: LSB #578 "Thy Strong Word"

### **Epiphany 6** (February 12):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:21-37 (Jesus teaches the depths of the Law.)

Office Hymn: LSB #394 "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

### **The Transfiguration of Our Lord** (February 19):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9 (Jesus reveals His glory.)

Office Hymn: LSB #415 "Jesus on the Mountain Peak"

### **Lent 1** (February 26):

Holy Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11 (Jesus is tempted by satan.)

Office Hymn: LSB #656 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

### **Lent 2** (March 5):

Holy Gospel: John 3:1-17 (Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God.)

Office Hymn: LSB #571 "God Loved the World So that He Gave"

### **Lent 3** (March 12):

Holy Gospel: John 4:5-42 (Jesus gives living water.)

Office Hymn: LSB #824 "May God Bestow on Us His Grace"

### **Lent 4** (March 19):

Holy Gospel: John 9:1-41 (Jesus heals a man born blind.)

Office Hymn: LSB #708 "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart"

### **Lent 5** (March 26):

Holy Gospel: John 11:1-53 (Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.)

Office Hymn: LSB #430 "My Song Is Love Unknown"

**Note:** The Liturgy for all services of Epiphany and Lent continues to be **Divine Service 3** (p. 184ff).