

THE PARISH NEWS

Newsletter of the Milton Lutheran Parish

APRIL 2019

because
HE BENDS DOWN TO
LISTEN
I WILL PRAY AS LONG AS I HAVE
breath

PSALM 116:2



Why Easter is called Easter, and other little-known facts about the holiday

This April once again, Christians will be celebrating Easter, the day on which the resurrection of Jesus is said to have taken place. The date of celebration changes from year to year. The reason for this variation is that Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. So, in 2019, Easter will be celebrated on April 21, and on April 12 in 2020.

I am a history enthusiast, and I love learning about the roots and origins of things. To help us to understand this holiday we call “Easter”, enjoy this article from Brent Landau, Lecturer in Religious Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

“I am a religious studies scholar specializing in early Christianity, and my research shows that this dating of Easter goes back to the complicated origins of this holiday and how it has evolved over the centuries.

Easter is quite similar to other major holidays like Christmas and Halloween, which have evolved over the last 200 years or so. In all of these holidays, Christian and non-Christian (pagan) elements have continued to blend together.

Easter as a rite of spring

Most major holidays have some connection to the changing of seasons. This is especially obvious in the case of Christmas. The New Testament gives no information about what time of year Jesus was born. Many scholars believe, however, that the main reason Jesus’ birth came to be celebrated on December 25 is because that was the date of the winter solstice according to the Roman calendar.

Since the days following the winter solstice gradually become longer and less dark, it was ideal symbolism for the birth of “the light of the world” as stated in the New Testament’s Gospel of John.

Similar was the case with Easter, which falls in close proximity to another key point in the solar year: the vernal equinox (around March 20), when there are equal periods of light and darkness. For those in northern latitudes, the coming of spring is often met with excitement, as it means an end to the cold days of winter.

Spring also means the coming back to life of plants and trees that have been dormant for winter, as well as the birth of new life in the animal world. Given the symbolism of new life and rebirth, it was only natural to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at this time of the year.

The naming of the celebration as “Easter” seems to go back to the name of a pre-Christian goddess in England, Eostre, who was celebrated at beginning of spring. The only reference to this goddess comes from the writings of the Venerable Bede, a British monk who lived in the late seventh and early eighth century. As religious studies scholar Bruce Forbes summarizes:

“Bede wrote that the month in which English Christians were celebrating the resurrection of Jesus had been called Eosturmonath in Old English, referring to a goddess named Eostre. And even though Christians had begun affirming the Christian meaning of the celebration, they continued to use the name of the goddess to designate the season.”

Bede was so influential for later Christians that the name stuck, and hence Easter remains the name by which the English, Germans and Americans refer to the festival of Jesus’ resurrection.

The connection with Jewish Passover

It is important to point out that while the name “*Easter*” is used in the English-speaking world, many more cultures refer to it by terms best translated as “Passover” (for instance, “Pascha” in Greek) – a reference, indeed, to the Jewish festival of Passover.

In the Hebrew Bible, Passover is a festival that commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, as narrated in the Book of Exodus. It was and continues to be the most important Jewish seasonal festival, celebrated on the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

At the time of Jesus, Passover had special significance, as the Jewish people were again under the dominance of foreign powers (namely, the Romans). Jewish pilgrims streamed into Jerusalem every

year in the hope that God's chosen people (as they believed themselves to be) would soon be liberated once more.

On one Passover, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate the festival. He entered Jerusalem in a triumphal procession and created a disturbance in the Jerusalem Temple. It seems that both of these actions attracted the attention of the Romans, and that as a result Jesus was executed around the year A.D. 30.

Some of Jesus' followers, however, believed that they saw him alive after his death, experiences that gave birth to the Christian religion. As Jesus died during the Passover festival and his followers believed he was resurrected from the dead three days later, it was logical to commemorate these events in close proximity.

Some early Christians chose to celebrate the resurrection of Christ on the same date as the Jewish Passover, which fell around day 14 of the month of Nisan, in March or April. These Christians were known as Quartodecimans (the name means "Fourteeners").

By choosing this date, they put the focus on when Jesus died and also emphasized continuity with the Judaism out of which Christianity emerged. Some others instead preferred to hold the festival on a Sunday, since that was when Jesus' tomb was believed to have been found.

In A.D. 325, the Emperor Constantine, who favored Christianity, convened a meeting of Christian leaders to resolve important disputes at the Council of Nicaea. The most fateful of its decisions was about the status of Christ, whom the council recognized as "**fully human and fully divine.**" This council also resolved that Easter should be fixed on a Sunday, not on day 14 of Nisan. As a result, Easter is now celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox.

The Easter bunny and Easter eggs

In early America, the Easter festival was far more popular among Catholics than Protestants. For instance, the New England Puritans regarded both Easter and Christmas as too tainted by non-Christian influences to be appropriate to celebrate. Such festivals also tended to be opportunities for heavy drinking and merrymaking.

The fortunes of both holidays changed in the 19th century, when they became occasions to be spent with one's family. This was done partly out of a desire to make the celebration of these holidays less rowdy.

But Easter and Christmas also became reshaped as domestic holidays because understandings of children were changing. Prior to the 17th century, children were rarely the center of attention. As historian Stephen Nissenbaum writes, “...*children were lumped together with other members of the lower orders in general, especially servants and apprentices – who, not coincidentally, were generally young people themselves.*”

From the 17th century onward, there was an increasing recognition of childhood as time of life that should be joyous, not simply as preparatory for adulthood. This “*discovery of childhood*” and the doting upon children had profound effects on how Easter was celebrated.

It is at this point in the holiday’s development that Easter eggs and the Easter bunny become especially important. Decorated eggs had been part of the Easter festival at least since medieval times, given the obvious symbolism of new life. A vast amount of folklore surrounds Easter eggs, and in a number of Eastern European countries, the process of decorating them is extremely elaborate. Several Eastern European legends describe eggs turning red (a favorite color for Easter eggs) in connection with the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Yet it was only in the 17th century that a German tradition of an “Easter hare” bringing eggs to good children came to be known. Hares and rabbits had a long association with spring seasonal rituals because of their amazing powers of fertility.

When German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries, they brought this tradition with them. The wild hare also became supplanted by the more docile and domestic rabbit, in another indication of how the focus moved toward children.

As Christians celebrate the festival this spring in commemoration of Jesus’ resurrection, the familiar sights of the Easter bunny and Easter eggs serve as a reminder of the holiday’s very ancient origins outside of the Christian tradition.”

So what are the takeaways for us from this article?

- It is a good and healthy thing to learn the historical roots of celebrations like Easter, so we can better appreciate their meaning, and learn how best to celebrate.
- Even though there are some pagan origins in holidays like Christmas and Easter, as we have them today, the Good News is

that God is the One God who brings life from death, transformation from the old to new. God can transform ANYTHING to God's glory

- The purpose of the Cross is an empty tomb.
- The Purpose of an Empty Tomb is God's checkmark of approval on everything Jesus said, did, and accomplished.
- The purpose of the resurrection is **our** transformation, so we can, from the Word and waters of baptism, "*walk in newness of life* (Romans 6:1-4)".

Because "CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED?"
Celebrate resurrection!

In Partnership, Mark Galbraith Intentional Interim Pastor





Volunteers Needed for **VBS**

June 17th - June 21st
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

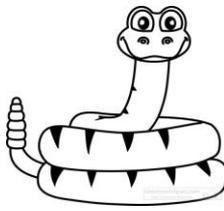
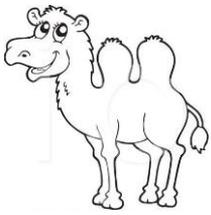
Looking forward to a great week of VBS, but we need

help to make this all happen. We plan to have a fun filled week and show God's love in many ways. Please pray about this and if you feel you are being called to serve contact Kay Dunn, Krista Yaiko, Shelly Sholley if you are interested. We have so many ways you could help and we work with you. You will receive a great reward as you see seeds of God's love being planted in the hearts of children.



Easter Candy

Easter candy is available \$8/dozen Peanut butter or coconut. All proceeds benefit the MS walk in May. Thank you! Will be for sale before church at Christ or contact Alyssa Byers, Penny Ulmer or Kim Mitch.



The Incredible Race

June 17th – June 21st

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Milton Lutheran Parish

Mark your calendars for an exciting time at VBS.

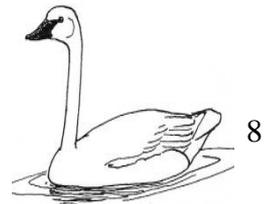
Children will experience God's love for every tribe, language, and nation.

No matter where we live, what shade of skin we have, or what language we speak, we are all part of the same race – the human race. God wants us to share the good news in kindness and love with our neighbors nearby and far away.

We will have so much fun with story time, music, crafts and of course games. Dinner and snack provided.



Bring your friends!





Quiet Communion

For those who are unable to make the regular Sunday worship services at Trinity or Christ there will be a weekly quiet communion at Christ. This will be every Wednesday afternoon at 3:00pm throughout the year. Come join us!

Free Community Meals

2019 Community Meal Schedule

Sunday, April 14th

Sunday, June 9th

Sunday, August 11th

Sunday, October 13th

Sunday, December 8th

The April free community meal will be held on April 14, 2019 at Christ. Trinity and Christ will be preparing the ham, scalloped potatoes, and green beans. Bethany United Methodist and Follmer Lutheran will provide the remaining items. We will need volunteers to help debone the ham at 10:00am on April 13th, at 2pm on April 14th to prepare the remaining items, and at 4:45pm on the 14th to help serve the meal. Trinity will provide the green beans. Sign up sheets for volunteers and for green bean donations will be placed on the bulletin board. If you have any questions please talk with Rose Handy, Penny Coup or Lynnette Weisner.



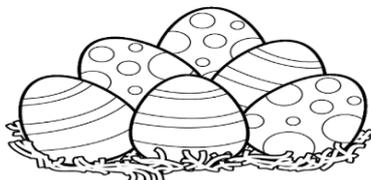
Upcoming Book Group

will be Apr.9th @ 10:00am

"Box of Butterflies"

By Roma Downey

New Members always welcome!



Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for **Saturday, April 6th**. We need individually wrapped candy(that will fit in eggs) or monetary donations by April 1st and help the night of the egg hunt is always appreciated! Contact Tiffany with any questions at 570-412-5838.



Volunteer Appreciation

Following the **May 5th, 2019** joint worship service in the fellowship hall at Trinity, the parish stewardship team is planning a volunteer appreciation meal to thank folks for all they do in serving the parish and our community. Look for more information in the April bulletins. A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin boards to help us plan the amount of food needed. Please save the date and plan to join us for food and fellowship!



Panther Packs

On May 1, 2019 from 7-8:30pm at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, members of Milton Lutheran Parish will be helping to pack Panther Packs.

Hunger has been identified as an issue for students within the Milton Area School district. Every weekend, Panther Packs provide a small bag of easy to prepare non-perishable foods that children can prepare on the weekends when school meals are not available. This program has been in place for several years with foods that are donated and various community organizations help to pack these bags. Packing is usually on the 1st Wednesday of the month. Currently, Panther Packs serves over 250 students at Montandon, Baugher, and White Deer Elementary schools. This is a very streamlined process, is fun, and a great way for us to help serve our community. For each packing night, 30 volunteers are needed. Currently, Milton Lutheran Parish is signed up for 8 volunteers but if more people would like to volunteer, we can change the number. Please consider joining us on May 1st. Sign up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board at each church.

Clothing Drive

Parish Stewardship Clothing Drive

The parish stewardship team will be collecting clean gently used **children's clothing** during the month of May. The clothes will be available for families to choose items they need for their children at the June free community meal. Any items not selected will be donated to Hand Up. Donations may be dropped off at either church during May.

Footpaths to Peace

To be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars- to be satisfied with your possessions but not content with yourself until you have made the best of them- to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice- to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgusts- to covet nothing that is your neighbors except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners- to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and every day of Christ; to spend as much time as you can in God's out-of doors- these are the little guideposts on the footpaths to peace.





Trinity Lutheran
Month of April

Head Usher:

Rick Coup

Ushers:

Tiffany Heimbach

Bonnie Heimbach

Linwood Hill

Chuck Stahl

Reader:

Noah Heimbach

Communion Assistant:

Bill Heimbach

Acolytes

Ryleigh Heimbach



Worship Helpers

Christ Lutheran

April 7

Ushers: Nancy Mensch, Donna Riccio

Acolyte: Kellie Brouse

Lector/Asst: Kellie Brouse

Server: Penny Ulmer, Tonya Wargo

Prayer Team Minister: Kellie Brouse

April 14

Ushers: Kim Mitch, Brent Mitch

Acolyte: Austin Mitch

Lector: Nancy Walters

Server: Donna Spear, Kay Dunn

Prayer Team Minister: Mae Jones

April 21

Combined Service At Trinity

April 26

Ushers: Peggy Fisher, Don Fisher

Acolyte: Penny Ulmer

Lector: Rose Handy

Asst. Rose Handy

Servers: Rose Handy, Rich Handy

Prayer Team Minister: Rose Handy

Milton Lutheran Parish Joint Worship Service Schedule 2019

The congregation councils voted to hold joint services the first Sunday of every month as well as the 5th Sunday of the months that have 5 Sundays. All services will start at 9:30am and will rotate between the two churches.

Apr. 7 – Christ
Apr. 21- Trinity
May 5 – Trinity
Jun 2 – Christ
Jun 30 – Trinity
Jul 7 – Christ
Aug 4 – Trinity
Sep 1 – Christ
Sep 29 – Trinity
Oct 6 – Christ
Nov 3 – Trinity
Dec 1 – Christ
Dec 29 – Trinity



Stewardship of God's 'very good' creation

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”-
Genesis 1:31

Six time while creating the heavens and the earth God pauses and sees that it is “good” (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 26). But when all is completed, God marvels and calls it “very good.”

Today that “very good” creation is under extreme strain from climate change, plastic waste, toxins in our air and water, species extinction and countless other factors. As God-appointed stewards of creation (Genesis 1:28), we have to admit we’re failing.

For these reasons, and because April 22 is Earth Day, this month presents the perfect opportunity to stress “Stewardship of Creation.” Here are some ideas:

- Pray. Ask God to show us, lead us and guide us to care for the earth.
- At church, celebrate April 28 as “Earth Sunday” or “Creation Sunday” with special hymns, prayers, classes and scripture.
- Form a congregational “Green Team” to educate, introduce new practices and advocate for better public policies.
- At church and home, establish or step up efforts to recycle all you can and reduce waste.
- Note the plastic in your church and home recycling and waste stream. Discuss the crisis that plastic waste is causing.
- Compost your family’s food waste. Discover how composting and recycling can reduce your trash stream.
- Cut down on driving. Walk, bicycle, or use public transportation. Install a bike rack at church.
- Examine your church and home’s insulation values. Have a professional tune up the heating and air conditioning systems for efficiency.

What other steps could help you and your congregation prioritize caring for God’s creation? It’s the only planet we have. As stewards, we must do better to keep it “very good.”

--Rob Blezard



Thanks Be To God

*I do not thank thee, Lord, that I have bread to eat
while others starve;*

*Nor yet for work to do while empty hands solicit heaven;
Nor a body strong while other bodies flatten beds of pain.
No, not for these do I give thanks!*

*But I am grateful, Lord, because my meager loaf I may divide;
For that my busy hands may move to meet another's need;
Because my doubled strength I may expend to steady one who
faints.*

Yes, for all these do I give thanks!

*For heart to share, desire to bear and will to lift,
Flamed into one by deathless Love -
Thanks be to God for this! Unspeakable! His Gift!*



***Members, Friends and Family of
Christ Lutheran Prayer List...***

***For those with ongoing health
issues/disability/illness:***

Wanda Aikey; Pam Belkins; Harry Berger;
Barbara Coup; Rose Deaner; Terry Deaner;
Peggy Drum; Matt Edinger; Deniene Enders, Terry Eisenhuth;
Robert Francis Jr., Patricia Gitschlag, Gerald Greenly; Valerie
Handy ;Doris Heffelfinger; John Heffelfinger; Mary Wagner Hines;
Evelyn Kelley; Danny Litzel, Nolan Francis-Miller; Bob Queen;
Lois Reimensnyder, Alice Roush; John Shaffer; Tim Simko; Gordy
Smith; Fran Valentine, Karen Walters; Shirley Wargo; George
Zeyn, ...



For those anticipating and recovering from surgery:

Florence Ishler; Laura Beck; Terry Deaner;
Caroline Jean Carter, Kimberly Handy, Nancy Walters

For those in sorrow: All who have lost loved ones; All those in our community and the world who are recovering from natural disasters & tragedies.

For those needing daily strength:

Rodney Bastian; Betty Baumer; Pat Bender; Betty Callenberger;
Charlene Francis; Rita Lenig; Nancy Mensch; Shannon Moll;
Kelly Packer; Helen & Leroy Reinard; Donna Riccio; Mike
Rudisill; Tim Simko; Keisha Trimble; Curtis Klodnikie; Darlas
Yost; Harold Webb.

For the imprisoned: Aundre Moten

For those adjusting to life changes: All those affected by political & religious oppression.

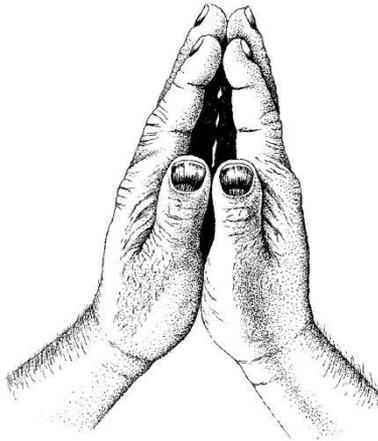
For the homebound and those unable to be at home:

George & Bebe Bolich; Betty Dotts; Doris Heffelfinger;
Connie Sholly; Nancy Weikel; Jeannine Wilkerson; Harry Berger

For those serving in the military: Kristen Bastian; Matthew Dorman;
Jeremiah Fisher; Stephen Himes; Anthony Nudson; Cody Pursley;
Cody Messinger; Trent Wargo

For leaders, guides, students, and workers: Pr. Mark;
Rev. Brian & Christine Palmer, missionaries; Bishop B.J. Collins,
Synod Staff; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton & ELCA Staff,
Authorized Lay Worship Leaders, Parish Call Committee

For activities and events, and for those who are traveling:
Our faith partners at Trinity; Mutual Ministry Team; Council;
Spiritual Growth; Stewardship; Christian Ed Ministry;
Children, Youth & Family Ministry





Prayer Requests

Names for healing prayers are printed for several weeks at a time, but can be lifted up again as requested. The Prayer Chain Team & others continue to pray for this Sunday list and other concerns daily.

HEALING Mary Billhime; Georgia Boyer; Judy Farr; Ken Gaugler, Brenda Whipple, Julie Benshoff, George & Joanie Fisher, Helen Fisher, Mary Jane & Melvin Crist, Dottie Leeser; Ray Leeser, Ed Nelson; Sheri Yingling, Ava Westhaupt, Mark Nolder, Brookson Lehman, Bob Smith, friends, David, Linda Parrish, Janet Timms, Donna Collins, Barb Smith, Henry Reinsborrow, Tracy Coleman, Carol Shurtz, Frank Dominick, Jonathan Noaker, Quentin Erb, Carolyn Beach, Erick Wood, Neil Hauger, Jaime Evock, Bill Lebard, Jim Evock, Gerry Cashner, Chris; Tom Martin; Karen, Martha Jean & Gary Gill, Aaron; Jean Shirk; Larry & Carol Shurtz; Barb; Ronnie; Lee; Gerald Greenly, Bill Rothermel, Glenda Arnold; Anthony Nudson; Annabelle, Craig, Noah, Colleen Cameron, Cathy Smith, Karen Bergan, Jean Matthews, Bobby, Ronnie Kessler, Nancy Brown, Nancy Walters, Jordan Deitrick, Travis Deitrick...

Seminarian: Marlene Phillips

*Here is the amazing thing about Easter,
Resurrection Sunday-
that Christ in the dying moments on the
cross gives us the greatest illustration of
forgiveness possible.*





Public Office Hours – 8am-3:30pm

Trinity- Mon.-Fri.- mornings

Christ- Mon.-Fri.- afternoons

Newsletter articles are due in office by the **15th of each month** (unless otherwise noted on newsletter calendar or bulletin).

Deadline for the next newsletter April 15. Any items received after the 15th of the month will not be in the newsletter.

Please e-mail Donna at **driccio@christlutheranmpa.org** or **tlcmilton@ptd.net** with any bulletin announcements or newsletter articles or drop them off at either church.

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Website – www.christlutheranmpa.org

1125 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847

Church Phone- 570-742-7473

Church E-mail – driccio@christlutheranmpa.org

Pastor Mark Galbraith -pastormarkpg@gmail.com

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Church Phone-570-742-4601

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Pastor Mark Galbraith-pastormarkpg@gmail.com