



From the Pastor



Learning How to Die from the Death of Martin Luther

During the season of Lent it is customary to pray the ancient Litany, a responsive prayer that was modified by Martin Luther to remove false teachings, such as prayers to Mary and other saints, but was otherwise highly regarded by Luther and retained by Lutherans in our worship. It appears in *Lutheran Service Book* on pages 288-289. One of the petitions in the Litany asks God to spare us *“from sudden and evil death.”*

Luther himself died at 3:00am on February 18, 1546. He had lived in the monastery at Wittenberg since on 1508, first as a monk, and following the Reformation with his wife Katie and their six children, when the monastery was dissolved and the building gifted to Luther by Elector Frederick the Wise to be his private home. So, Luther expected to die in this building, where he had lived most of his life. However, instead of dying in Wittenberg, the birthplace of the Reformation and location of many of his greatest accomplishments, he unexpectedly passed away in another city with great significance for him: Eisleben, the town of his birth.

Two weeks before his death, Luther had been called to Eisleben to help settle an inheritance dispute between two brothers who were both counts of Mansfeld. While there he preached in St. Andrew’s Church, less than a mile from the house where he was born on November 10, 1483, and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul just down the street from the Luther home, where he was baptized the day after his birth.

On February 15, 1546 Luther gave the last of thousands of sermons that he preached during his lifetime, and on February 17 he participated in ratifying the settlement between the counts that he had helped successfully negotiate. Complaining of chest pains, he was taken back to the house where he had been staying, just across the street from St. Andrew’s Church, where two days before he had given his final sermon. He ate dinner with his hosts and friends, then went to bed, but could not sleep. His companions sat with him reading Scripture and praying with him.

Historians know a great deal about Luther’s last hours because they were recorded in detail by his longtime friend and fellow pastor Justus Jonas, who rushed to Luther’s bedside when he heard that the great Reformer was close to death. He wanted to give a detailed account of Luther’s passing in order to counter false rumors that he anticipated would be spread by Luther’s opponents, and indeed later were.

Among the slanderous rumors was that Luther had died suddenly or in his sleep. As reflected in the prayer of the Litany to be spared *“from sudden and evil death,”* in the 16th century it was thought that if a person was wicked then they would die suddenly. For, this meant that they would not have time to confess their sins, because the Devil would come upon them suddenly and drag their souls to hell. Luther’s opponents also circulated the claim that he died in a state of terror, finally recanting his teachings and fearful that he would be eternally condemned. On the contrary, Jonas



Martin Luther on His Deathbed, Illustration from *“The History of Protestantism”* by James Aitken Wylie, 1878

recorded that Luther's last hours were lucid and conscious. He calmly confessed his sins, and resolutely affirmed his faith in Christ along with all that he had taught.

Sometime after midnight in the early hours of February 18 the chest pains became acute, and Luther's companions asked him, "Reverend Father, are you ready to die trusting in your Lord Jesus Christ and to confess the doctrine which you have taught in His name?" to which Luther, through his pain, replied, "Yes." After this exchange, he fell into an unresponsive coma, and at 3:00am the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther took his final breath.

In the Middle Ages, death was considered a terrifying thing, even for faithful Christians in a state of grace. Instead of comforting the dying, the medieval Church actually made death more terrifying, with the false teaching of purgatory. A complete fiction without the slightest support anywhere in Scripture, purgatory was supposedly a fiery realm where souls would undergo punishment, in order to be "purged" before entering heaven of punishments leftover from inadequate penance in this life. Preachers recounted horrifying visions of torture in purgatory at the hands of vengeful angels, meant to encourage people to mend their ways and practice stricter penance.

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*Trinity Lutheran Church
34868 Block Road
Paola, Kansas 66071*

*Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
Stacey Elkinton, Church Secretary*

*Church: 913-849-3344
Pastor's Study & Parsonage:
913-849-3711
Pastor's Cell: 913-594-9865*

*trinitylcms.org
facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock
pastorvogts@gmail.com
trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com
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By sheer coincidence, the houses in Eisleben, Germany where Martin Luther was born (above left) and died (above right), as well as the churches where he was baptized in 1483 and preached his last sermon in 1546, are less than a mile apart. To the people of Luther's day this would have been very significant, a felicitous sign that he had died a blessed death. Pastor and Terry Vogts visited these sites on their trip to Germany in 2017 for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and took these photos.



Baptismal font at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Eisleben, Germany, at which Martin Luther was baptized on November 11, 1483, the day after his birth. This church is just about a block down the street from the Luther family home where he was born.



Pulpit at St. Andrew's Church, Eisleben, Germany, from which Martin Luther preached his last sermon on February 15, 1546. This church is directly across the street from the house where three days later he passed away.

In contrast, Luther saw the death of a Christian as Christ graciously granting us final liberation from sin and death. As he writes in the Large Catechism: *"The work of salvation is finished and completed, Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by His sufferings, death, and resurrection . . . we await the time when our flesh will die and be buried . . . and we will come forth gloriously and arise to . . . a new, eternal life. . . completely freed from sin, death, and all evil."*

That was the Scriptural doctrine which Luther taught, and lived, and in which he peacefully died. That same Scriptural doctrine will also give you comfort as you face your own death.

May God graciously fulfill for you as He did for Martin Luther the desire that Luther expressed seven years before his passing, in his lectures on Genesis: *"I pray that what God promises concerning a pleasant old age and a peaceful death may happen to me."*

Pastor Kevin Vogts

Lenten Vespers

Our special services of Lenten Vespers are each Wednesday throughout Lent at 7:00pm, with a Lenten Supper before each service. The theme for this year's Lent services is *"Our Lenten Journey,"* looking at locations of the Passion events, including:

- "The Upper Room"* (March 2)
- "The Garden of Gethsemane"* (March 9)
- "The Judgment Hall"* (March 16)
- "The Way of Sorrows"* (March 23)
- "Mt. Calvary"* (March 30)
- "The Garden Tomb"* (April 6)

Pastor Vogts, who has worked as an archaeologist in the Holy Land and professional photographer, will illustrate some of the messages with his own pictures from Jerusalem.

"Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus . . . who endured the cross"
(Hebrews 12:2)



Ash Wednesday Lenten Supper

After two years suspension due to Covid we are again holding Lenten Suppers each Wednesday evening throughout Lent. Proceeds are used to support that group's activities or another worthy cause. Thank you to all those hosting these fun fellowship events!

- March 2 — Trinity Youth (Italian)
- March 9 — Twin Valley 4-H (Soup)
- March 16 — Thrivent (Potato Bar)
- March 23 — Miciah Carter
- March 30 — Blocktoberfest Committee
- April 6 — Ladies Aid (Beef Sandwiches)

MARCH Birthdays & Anniversaries

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

- March 1 Devan Boydston
- March 1 Vera Kaiser
- March 1 Guylene Klein
- March 1 Johnny Prothe
- March 1 Dave Trickett
- March 2 Lance Elliott

- March 2 Zella McCully
- March 3 Justin Hieber
- March 3 Addison Kettler
- March 3 Mark Minden
- March 5 Lorranda Baldrige
- March 5 Billy Green
- March 5 Joshua Pemberton
- March 5 Aaron Maisch
- March 6 Gary Prothe
- March 6 Sandra Schultz
- March 7 Andrew Thompson
- March 7 Jackie Thompson-Dillon
- March 8 Megan Prothe
- March 9 Faith Ordenez
- March 10 Jim Mueller
- March 11 Diana Deering
- March 12 Dylan Shoemaker
- March 13 Karen Garrison
- March 14 Darrel Rodewald
- March 15 Allyssa Henry
- March 15 Jacob Henry
- March 15 Kyle Kettler
- March 15 Judy Parks
- March 15 Randy Rausch
- March 17 Steve Cook
- March 17 Breanna Strawder
- March 17 Marcia Raines
- March 17 Roger Smith
- March 17 Robyn Weatherbie
- March 17 Emersyn Chapman
- March 18 Johnny Grother
- March 18 Jennifer Rethman
- March 18 Chris Smith
- March 19 Jordan Harper
- March 20 Paul Haley
- March 21 Rusty Morton
- March 21 Harry Stubbs
- March 21 Becky Stutzman
- March 23 Arnold Debrick
- March 23 Karla Debrick
- March 23 Elizabeth Kettler
- March 23 John Schlegel Jr.
- March 25 Laura Prothe
- March 26 Loren Windler
- March 28 Joyce Brown
- March 28 Zach Holtz
- March 28 Justine Prothe
- March 28 Tyler Tesar
- March 29 Wilda Bunch
- March 29 Lauren Wood
- March 31 Alvin Thoden
- Mar 6 Steve & Bobbi Debrick (23)
- Mar 7 Dave & Suzie Prothe (30)
- Mar 9 Rich & Sally Wood (31)
- Mar 10 Jim & Shelisa Mueller (43)
- Mar 20 Mike & Linda Giager (36)
- Mar 21 ... Sean & Robyn Weatherbie (24)
- Mar 28 Tom & Nancy Green (43)
- Mar 28 Arlin & Venita Prothe (57)



We have again arranged for Easter Lilies to be ordered through the Church Office from Price Chopper, for \$10 each. Sign up on the counter in the church office indicating that you wish to have these plants purchased for you, and put your payment in the offering plate marked "Easter Lilies."

The deadline to sign up for ordering through the Church Office is Palm Sunday, April 10. You are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts. Please still sign up on the list indicating that you will provide your own plants and drop them by the church the week before Easter Sunday. You are also welcome to take your plants home any time after Easter Sunday.

When you sign up, please indicate whom your plants are in memory or honor of, the way you want it printed in the newsletter.



Drive-In Easter Sunrise Service April 17

Because it all went so beautifully last year, there have been many requests to have a "Drive-In Sunrise Service" again this year, which we hold in our parking lot at 7:00am on Easter Sunday, April 17.

Our local area broadcast system allows those in attendance to listen to the service on their car radios, and it will also be broadcast over our outdoor sound system. Like last year, the drive-in service will include Holy Communion, with communicants coming from their cars to receive it in a continuous manner.

A second Easter service also with Holy Communion will be held inside the Sanctuary at the regular time of 10:00am. Both services will feature the same order of worship and message, "Easter: Good News for You!" based on Luke 24:1-12.



Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, April 10. A special service of Holy Communion commemorating the Last Supper will be held on Maundy Thursday, April 14, at 7:00pm. Pastor Vogts' message will be "This Is the Feast of Victory" based on Exodus 12:1-14.



On Good Friday, April 15, at 7:00pm we will have a traditional Tenebrae Service. "Tenebrae" (TEN-uh-bray) is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows."

The Tenebrae Service is marked by a gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights, symbolizing the death of our Lord, interspersed with readings, prayers, hymns, and other musical selections related to His Passion. Our Tenebrae Service will feature seven candles, gradually extinguished as we read Christ's seven last words from the cross.

Pastor Vogts' message will be "His Pain—Our Gain" based on Isaiah 53:4. Bring your family to meditate upon our Savior's sacrifice for your salvation!



Lent Devotional Booklets

Devotional booklets for Lent from Concordia Publishing House are available this morning, titled "Witnesses to Christ: People from His Passion." Spend time daily reflecting this Lenten season how God is calling you back to Him, focusing on the portrait of Jesus as seen through the eyewitnesses of His Passion in St. John's Gospel.



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

All our featured missionaries this month work in the region affected by the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine.

March 6

Rev. Sorin-Horia Trifa
Romania (See Article Page 6)

March 13

Rev. Cory & Jennifer Rajek
Latvia

March 20

Rev. Andrew & Megan Fedder
Ukraine

March 27

Rev. Jerry & Patty Lawson
Russia



A new member recently commented how much they appreciated the informal visiting at Coffee Hour following our worship services, and that was one thing that attracted them to join our congregation. The signup sheet to host Coffee Hour is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc. — most of 2022 is open!

March 6 & 27
Need Volunteers

March 13
Linda Prothe

March 20
Kathy & Paul Haley



Bible Class on the Church Year

Have you ever wondered about the origin, meaning and significance of the "Church Year"? In *The Year of the Lord's Favor* we are exploring such questions as how this system of celebrations and readings was established, what the annual cycle of these seasons means, why certain colors and symbols are used for the seasons and what they signify.

This class will help you to better understand and appreciate our worship, and its thematic organization around the Church Year. Join in Sundays at 9:00am in the Heritage Room as we explore *The Year of the Lord's Favor*.

Holy Week & Easter Schedule

Maundy Thursday Service

with Holy Communion
Thursday, April 14, 7:00pm



Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Friday, April 15, 7:00pm

Drive-In Sunrise Service

Easter Sunday, April 17, 7:00am
Second Easter Service at 10:00am
Both Services Include Holy Communion
and Same Easter Message



Easter Breakfast

Easter Sunday, April 17
8:00am

Sponsored by Generations

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!



Sunday Sermons for March

Complete videos of all our services, as well as audio and printed text of the sermon only, are available on our church website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons. Printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.

March 6
"We Preach Christ Crucified"
1 Corinthians 1:18-31

March 13
"Your Passport to Heaven"
Philippians 3:20

March 20
"When Bad Things Happen"
Luke 13:1-9

March 27
"The Incredible Parable of the Prodigal Son"
Luke 15:11-32

Ukrainian Lutheran Refugees in Romania

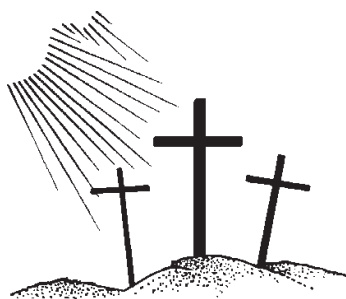
Rev. Sorin Trifa
The Confessional Lutheran Church
in Romania

I never thought that we could accommodate twenty people in our house! I was telling our guests (because I came to hate the word “refugees”) that I felt like in my college days — people sleeping everywhere, in beds, on the floor, on the couches, in the armchairs. Some sleeping, others eating, others making plans and children making an indescribable mess with their play. The kitchen worked non-stop! I've received the most appreciation in my life for what I've cooked. . . and I've been cooking continuously.

And yet it's not a student party! Sometimes in the midst of all the sad moments we find the strength to have some fun. We are especially amused when we discover that we Romanians and Ukrainians can communicate even without having a common language. We even managed to celebrate a guest's birthday! We found out unexpectedly that it was this girl's birthday, so I found a cake and a bottle of champagne in the store. She was very happy!

Sergiu Trifa of our church [smiling in top left picture] is the hero of these days! He has been constantly at the border crossing waiting for hours in the cold for groups of Lutherans from Ukraine, and helping other Ukrainian refugees. Once in Romanian territory our Lutheran guests were taken by Sergiu to be registered and have a hot meal, then travelled to us by bus. They intend to stay with us in Romania for at least a month, hoping that by then the war will be over.

Pray for Ukraine and for Ukrainians! Pray for Russia for having the wisdom to stop this war against Ukraine! Pray for Europe and the United States to be wise in dealing with this difficult issue! Pray for Romania to be able to help the Ukrainians immigrants who are coming to us! Pray for our Confessional Lutheran Church to be able to show mercy, love and to preach the Gospel to this people!



Our Lenten Journey

2022 Lent Sermon Series

For our special Wednesday services during Lent this year we are taking a walk with Jesus through the story of His suffering and death, visiting the places of the passion as we walk “*Our Lenten Journey.*” Pastor Vogts, who has worked as an archaeologist and professional photographer, will illustrate some of the messages with his own pictures from the Holy Land. Everyone is invited to join “*Our Lenten Journey*” on Wednesday at 7:00pm.

March 2 (Ash Wednesday)

“*The Upper Room*”

Mark 14:15

March 9

“*The Garden of Gethsemane*”

Matthew 26:36-39

March 16

“*The Judgment Hall*”

Acts 2:22-23

March 23

“*The Way of Sorrows*”

Matthew 27:27-33

March 30

“*Mt. Calvary*”

Luke 23:33

April 6

“*The Garden Tomb*”

John 19:38-42



With help from the LCMS the Confessional Lutheran Church in Romania has been busy welcoming Lutheran refugees from neighboring Ukraine. Nearly all are women and children, like the girl below clutching her teddy bear, since the men are staying to fight for their country.

