



Landstuhl, Germany

March 28, 2023

Dear friends,

It's hard to believe, but on February 3rd, our dear Agatha turned one year old. My mother took advantage of the direct St. Louis to Frankfurt Lufthansa flight to join in the celebration. On February 2nd, we had a Divine Service at Church for the Purification of Mary and Presentation of our Lord (when Jesus was presented at the Temple 40 days after He was born). After the service, we had a little birthday party for Agatha with carrot cake. How wonderful to celebrate with our church family on the eve of Agatha's birthday. Agatha also enjoyed spending time with her grandma.

On February 19th, we had the pleasure of visiting with LCMS missionary Mark Winterstein, who is based in Leipzig, Germany. Mark is a friend of one of our members, which brought him to this side of the country. Mark was a linguist for the US Navy and now puts his skills to use for the Kingdom of God by helping Persians in Leipzig compile a Farsi-language Lutheran Hymnal. Mark presented his work to our Sunday Bible Study, including sharing a recording of the Nunc Dimittis sung in Farsi. By coincidence, we just happened to be studying the Persian empire, King Cyrus, and the return of the Jewish exiles to the Holy Land! What a great point of connection with the tremendous work happening with our LCMS missionaries in eastern Germany. I encourage you to read about Mark and his work here: <https://www.lcms.org/winterstein>.

Just before Lent began, Emma, Agatha, and I took a trip to Memmingen to visit SELK pastor Mark Haessig and his wife, Barbara. I knew Pastor Haessig from my vicarage in Kaiserslautern, but we hadn't seen each other since then. Pastor Haessig served as pastor in Strasbourg, France, in South Africa, and in Canada before coming to Germany. Serving in four different countries for all those years has given him quite an interesting perspective. We enjoyed visiting for six hours before we continued on to visit the cloister at Andechs, a monastery not too far west of Munich known for its beer-brewing tradition. It was important to take some time away for refreshment before the beginning of Lent.

The week before Lent, we finished our study of the Formula of Concord at our weekly study of the Lutheran Confessions. Well, in a way. We actually started on Article VII on the Lord's Supper, so after Easter, we will continue with Articles I–VI.

After church on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, a group of us went to a member's home (the Hester family) to make the ashes. We used palm branches from last Palm Sunday (and wine corks, which we discovered last year make a really fine, dark ash!). We also ate LENTil stew and ribs, because of the connection with "dust you are and to dust you shall return" and God forming Eve from Adam's rib. We are blessed with some creative members at KELC!

The season of Lent then began on Ash Wednesday. We had the imposition of ashes, a service of corporate confession and absolution, and a regular Divine Service. I was also able to introduce our Lenten midweek sermon series on the "Hexaemeron," the six days of creation. In the Early Church, the season of Lent was catechetical in nature, preparing new Christians for the rite of Holy Baptism at Easter Vigil. A common theme for this catechesis was the six days of creation, and several Church Fathers picked up on this idea, for example, St. Basil, whose sermons I have been consulting for inspiration. Our Wednesday services begin

with a supper (taco supper, soup supper, casseroles, etc.), followed by a service of Vespers where I preach on a day of creation, tying that day to other parts of Scripture, especially to Christ and the new creation. The series will culminate on Easter Vigil when I preach on the Sabbath Day, the seventh day of creation, when God rests—foreshadowing Jesus’ rest in the tomb before He rises from the dead on the eighth day. After each midweek service, we’ve also been having choir rehearsal to prepare some pieces for Holy Week. Our choir director, Mr. Brian Jefferies, is teaching us so much! Due to a scheduling conflict at church, we also enjoyed meeting in a member’s home for one midweek service.

One of the highlights of our Lenten season was a Divine Service for the Annunciation of our Lord on March 25th, when the Church celebrates Jesus’s conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. We were especially glad to have some visitors, including one of our regular Syrian guests, who brought two of his Syrian cousins along. After the service, we observed a Scandinavian tradition of eating waffles on Annunciation Day. That’s because the Swedish word for “Annunciation Day” (vårfrudagen) sounds like the word “waffle day” (våffeldagen).

Early in March, I finally made contact with the US Army chaplain at Sembach prison (United States Army Regional Correctional Facility-Europe). One of the highlights of my vicarage in Kaiserslautern back in 2018–2019 was teaching a weekly Bible Study at the jail. I’ve been trying my best to make inroads there again since we’ve arrived, but there was so much personnel change and continued COVID restrictions lasting much longer than anywhere else that I ran into continued difficulties. I was finally able to personally meet up with the Roman Catholic chaplain at Sembach and discuss ideas and possibilities for teaching a weekly Bible Study again, which is looking quite promising!

Our “Winkel,” or LCMS clergy meet-up, is continuing more regularly. We all became so busy last summer that we fell out of our monthly routine. But it is so important for the LCMS clergy in this area to meet up with each other for mutual conversation and consolation. In January, we met at Pastor Schuschke’s parsonage in Frankfurt. In February, we met in Kaiserslautern. In March, we again met in Frankfurt, but this time at the McDonalds at the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof (main train station). That way, Pastor Tiews could take the train down from Hamburg, meet with us for a few hours, and then take a train back to Hamburg that afternoon. We wanted to take advantage of all the precious time we had with one another. I learn so much from my brother pastors here!

Blessings to you all on your observance of Holy Week and the Resurrection of our Lord!

Jesus be with you,

Rev. Nathaniel Jensen

The Jensen Family



To support the LCMS through the work of Rev. Nathaniel and Emma Jensen, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Jensen-Germany Support.” Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/jensen.

You can also support the Jensen family through:
MISSION CENTRAL: 40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034-7105
Mark checks: Nathaniel Jensen #A10798-69485



Day trip to Strasbourg, France.



Agatha with Pastor and Mrs. Haessig in Memmingen.



Agatha with her dear friend, Christina Peterson, on Ash Wednesday.



Midweek Lenten Vespers at the Ponziano home.



Winkel with Pastor Tiews, Chaplain Ayers, Pastor Schuschke, and Stephen Guzik.