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Rev. Joseph and Deaconess
Dr. Jennie Asher

Did you know?

- *Spargel* (white asparagus) is a spring treat in Germany and is arriving soon in our stores and farmstands.
- On Easter Saturday, an *Osterfeuer* (Easter bonfire) is lit. The fire is a symbol of light in the darkness and is also a tradition to welcome spring. This year there will not be *Osterfeuer* due to restrictions on gatherings.
- An *Osterlamm* (Easter lamb), a delicious cake baked in the form of a lamb, is a special treat. (Jennie will have her first try at baking one this year!)
- A braided sweet bread is served for breakfast on Easter weekend. The dough is divided into three strands symbolizing the Holy Trinity and is braided together.



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Staying Safe

Just like the evening news or your daily newspaper, this newsletter's "top story" is about the COVID-19 crisis. Many of you have asked how we've been doing and what life is like here in Germany right now, so we want to give you an update.

Germany has been very proactive about both preventive measures and care for those who are ill. Testing sites were set up quickly and hospitals prepared to receive the sick. But most people, like us, have been most impacted by the preventative measures put in place.

Our restrictions on gatherings have become increasingly strict, with the law now stating that no more than two people (except immediate family members) can gather at any time or place (including in one's own home). We recently had to turn down an invitation to a member's home for dinner because gathering with another couple would have meant we were breaking the law!

Most businesses are closed, with only "essential" businesses remaining open. Restaurants may only do take-out or delivery. We are still allowed to go out for "essential" tasks, like exercise, getting groceries, buying gas, or going to the pharmacy. Businesses remaining open have put plexiglass "windows" by their cash registers to avoid contact with customers. While in the store, one must maintain a distance of at least 11/2 meters from other people. In our local bakery, only three people can be inside at a time, with the rest waiting



Jennie prepares to go to the grocery store with her mask and gloves.

outside.

We are settling into a new routine. We are able to go outside each morning for our daily walk in the woods. Joe continues to spend much of his time writing sermons, preparing for confirmation class (held through video conferencing), and writing Bible studies in preparation for when we can gather again. We have also been continuing correspondence and communicating regularly (through email and telephone) with our members.

Since March 15 we have had worship services online. A bulletin is sent out to all families, and over 20 family units each week have "tuned in" at 8:30 a.m. for a live worship service. We will continue this until the restrictions on gatherings are lifted, including for Holy Week and Easter services. We long for the time when we can gather as a church family again but thank God that we are still able to tell the Good News of Jesus through technology.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Our safety during this crisis.*
- *Our catechumens who are preparing for confirmation in May.*
- *The technical production of our worship services, that it would go smoothly.*
- *Our vicar, Ryan Schnake, who has returned home to Wisconsin as he completes his education and prepares for his upcoming wedding.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *All of our members to date are healthy, with no confirmed cases of COVID-19.*
- *Our university students, Raja and Jeba, who are helping with the technology for worship services during this time.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us.*



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

Teaching the Faith

Even in these challenging times a priority for us at Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) is teaching the faith to both young and old. While all of our face-to-face classes have been suspended, Joe continues to teach via video conferencing.



Joe teaches a class through video conferencing

Every Monday afternoon, seven Jr. High students "tune in" to their confirmation class. They follow along in their catechisms, read from the Bible, and discuss the material just as they would do in their "regular" class. When it comes time for a test, Joe will send it to their parents to administer. So far this has worked very well, with students very active and engaged in the discussions. We are praying that we'll be able to be together again for a confirmation service in May.

Joe is also instructing three adults in the catechism and the Gospel of John. He does these sessions by email with a "back and forth" for questions and answers. Students read their assigned material and send Joe questions they have on their reading. Joe then responds with explanations.

Jennie has gathered lesson leaflets and crafts for all of the Sunday School children. These, along with teacher's guides from Concordia Publishing House will be given to the parents for "home school" lessons.

Please pray that all of our students continue to grow in their faith even during these unusual lessons.

Update on Vicar Ryan Schnake

It seems like only yesterday when we were introducing you to our "new" vicar, Ryan Schnake. We are sad to report that on Saturday, March 28, we took him to the airport in Frankfurt for his trip back to the U.S. At the request of the St. Louis Seminary, it was determined that, due to the COVID-19 crisis, he should leave Germany at this time and return home to Wisconsin. It was especially hard for members to not be able to say "good-bye" or have a going away celebration for him.

Ryan is spending a two-week self-quarantine at a family cabin in northern Wisconsin before he will return to his parents' home near Milwaukee. He will be preparing for his upcoming wedding and for a return to St. Louis in the fall for more classes. We thank God for Ryan's service with us and pray God's richest blessings on his future endeavors.

To support the LCMS through the work of Joe Asher, 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 "Support of - Asher." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at lcms.org/asher.

You may also send your gift to:
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