

The Messenger

May, 2017

From the Priest...

The great Feast of Easter has been celebrated again.
Once more we have rejoiced and given thanks for the incredible story
That reassures us of God's most *unique* gift and promise – *grace*.
Grace, you'll recall, is something that we cannot earn, never deserve,
And frankly, can't fully understand.
It is actually one of the most unique things we can even imagine,
At least in this world. Isn't it true that virtually everything surrounding us
Is literally counter to that unusual concept of the Christian faith?
It's a *get-what-you-pay-for* kind of world;
An *earn-your-way* set up that defines our place in society;
A *work-reward* equation that determines what we get out of our strivings.
You don't get something for nothing seems to be the operating principle of the realm.
So when God's *grace* is offered, it just seems way beyond what we know –
Or, at best, only something we can debate, discuss – perhaps even fantasize or muse about.
Put plainly, *nothing we experience in this world works that way*.

But Easter tells us that something does!

Easter tells us that God's unconditional love does! That's *Grace*.

And grace is indeed the **one** thing that defies all that our human experience
Informs us about what we *should* expect.

So – all that's left for us to do is **trust it**,

And, of course, **give thanks for it**.

Saint Paul pondered that almost amusingly in his letter to the Romans.

*Shall we continue to sin so that **grace** will abound?* (6:1)

Well, certainly not. That wouldn't be *trusting*. It would be *testing*.

Rather, for him, trusting would manifest itself in being so confident in God's love,
That our response would more likely be to live more fully and more faithfully.

How then do we **trust it**?

And, interestingly, that is also the primary way in which we express
Our deepest **gratitude for grace**.

In essence, that's how Easter goes on; that's how it is so much more than a spring festival.
As Christ rose from death, we too, as *Resurrection People* rise somehow
From the depths of our wickedness to newness of life through the sure and certain promises
Of God's **grace**. It is surely *grace upon grace* – received and shared –
Enabling us freely to love and thank God by loving one another, *as God has loved us*.

As the liturgy of the first worship on Easter says: ***Let this place resound with joy!***

Easter's **continuing** Grace and Peace to you.

Fred

Lectionary Readings for May, 2017

May 7 Easter IV

Acts 2:42-47 The believers' common life.

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd; be in want. I shall not.

1 Peter 2:19-25 Follow the shepherd, even in suffering.

John 10:1-10 Christ the shepherd.

Worship Leaders:

8:00 Joanne Parrott, Lay Reader and Chalice

Jennifer Quinn, Lector

11:00 Scott Barber, Lay Reader; Gaynell Jennings, Chalice, Diane Sawyer, Lector

May 14 Easter V

Acts 7:55-60 The martyrdom of Stephen.

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

1 Peter 2:2-10 God's people chosen to proclaim God's mighty acts.

John 14:1-14 Christ the way, truth, and life.

Worship Leaders:

8:00 Gayness Jennings, Lay Reader and Chalice,

Ginny Orvedahl, Lector

11:00 Chris Lehman, Lay Reader; Scott Barber, Chalice, Tony Short, Lector

May 21 Easter VI

Acts 17:22-31 Paul's message to the Athenians.

Psalm 66:8-20 Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard.

1 Peter 3:13-22 The days of Noah, a sign of baptism.

John 14:15-21 Christ our advocate.

Worship Leaders:

8:00 Joanne Parrott, Lay Reader and Chalice,

Jennifer Quinn, Lector

11:00 Scott Barber, Lay Reader; Pat Barnes, Chalice; Mary Wellman, Lector

May 28 Easter VII

Acts 1:6-14 Jesus' companions at prayer after his departure.

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds.

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 God will sustain and restore those who suffer.

John 17:1-11 Christ's prayer for his disciples.

Worship Leaders:

8:00 Joanne Parrott, Lay Reader and Chalice

Ginny Orvedahl, Lector

10:00 Pat Barnes, Lay Reader; Pat Barnes, Chalice, Tom Wellman, Lector

(Summer Schedule begins)



The Liturgy's Commemorations in May

One of the often overlooked parts of the Church's Liturgical Calendar is its *Commemorations*. These are days set apart to mark the lives and contributions of some of the great people and personalities in the history of the Church. Some of those names are familiar, but many of them are rather obscure because we don't always have a full grasp on the details of Christian history. The dates selected are often the known (or traditionally held) days of their deaths. The commemorations in the month of May bring to mind some very interesting characters in the historical drama and they represent a wide variety of service to God's Church. It might be interesting to notice them

May 1 - Philip and James, Apostles. Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus. He called Nathanael to "come and see." He later responded to an Ethiopian official's request for teaching and baptism. Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus. He's called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

May 2 – Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. Best remembered for defending the teaching that Christ was fully God against those who taught otherwise, Athanasius was an influential church leader around the time of the Council of Nicea. He was banished from Alexandria five times for his forthright views. His name is best remembered because one of the three "Ecumenical Creeds" of the Church bears his name – because he was well known for his defense of the *Nicene* theology of Christ's human/divine nature. It was likely not actually written by him, but is named for him because of his committed defense of the faith. Athanasius died in 373.

May 4 – Monica. She was the mother of Saint Augustine. Monica was married to a pagan husband who was ill-tempered and unfaithful, but whom she helped bring into the Christian faith. She repeated the influence on her son Augustine, who went on to become one of the greatest church teachers. Her death came in 387.

May 8 - Julian of Norwich. Known as *a renewer of the church*, she was about thirty years old when she (Julian or Juliana) reported visions that she later compiled into a book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, now a classic of medieval mysticism. The visions declared that love was the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love. She died in 1416.

May 8 - Victor the Moor, martyr, died in 303. Also known as Victor Maurus, this native of the northwest African nation of Mauritania was a soldier in the Roman Praetorian Guard. Under the persecution of Maximian, Victor died for his faith at Milan.

May 9 - Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, *renewer of the church, hymn writer*, died in 1760. When he was 22, a group of Moravians asked permission to live on Zinzendorf's land. He agreed, and eventually worldwide Moravian missions emanated from this community. Zinzendorf participated in these missions, and is also remembered for writing hymns characteristic of his Pietistic faith. His best known hymns are probably "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness" and "Jesus, still lead on".



Hymn Notes

Johann Niedling (1602-1668) wrote the hymn, *O Spirit of Life, O Spirit of God*. He included this hymn and other anonymous texts in his 1651 hymnal *Lutherische Handbuchlein*. It is now believed that Niedling was the author of the original German Text, "O Heiliger Geist, o heiliger Gott," as well as many of the other texts in that collection.

Niedling was a schoolteacher in Altenburg, Saxony (now a part of Germany), in addition to being a hymnwriter. His six collections of hymns used in the Lutheran tradition did much to promote hymn singing in the church, and his 1651 *Lutherische Handbuchlein* was widely used. This tune by an unknown composer takes its name from the opening line of the hymn, O HEILIGER GEIST, meaning "O Holy Ghost." Another name used in some hymnals is O JESULEIN SUSS, for the German Christmas text with which it is more frequently sung.

The *Geistliche Kirchengesang* was a German hymnal printed in Cologne in 1623. This particular tune was reprinted in a number of other hymnals and included by J.S. Bach in *Musikalisches Gesangbuch* (1736), which he edited for Georg Christian Schemelli in Leipzig.

A special features of this version of the hymn is its Bach harmonization. Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21, 1685, in Eisenach, Thuringia, Germany, into a large and distinguished family of professional musicians. His father, named Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a violinist and trumpeter, employed by the city of Eisenach. His uncles were church organists, court musicians and composers. His mother and father died before Bach was 10. As an orphan, he moved in with his eldest brother, J. C. Bach, an organist and composer, under whose tutelage Bach studied organ music as well as the construction and maintenance of the organ.

At the age of 14, Bach received a scholarship and walked on foot 300 kilometers to the famous St. Michael's school in Lüneburg, near Hamburg. There he lived and studied for 2 years from 1699-1701. It was there that he sang a Capella at the boys chorale. Bach's studies included organ, harpsichord, and singing. In addition he took the academic studies in theology, history and geography, and lessons of Latin, Italian, and French. With his studies of music, Bach had important exposure to the work of composers from other European nations; such as the French composers Jean-Baptiste Lully, Marais, and Marchand, the South German composers Johann Pachelbel and Froberger, and the Italians Arcangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi.

Bach wrote over eleven hundred music compositions in all genres. In Leipzig alone he wrote a cantata for every Sunday and feast day of the year, of which 224 cantatas survive. Some of his compositions were written on the same theme at different times in his life, like choral cantatas and organ works on similar themes with significantly reworked arrangements. His music became the essential part of the education for every musician. Bach influenced such great composers as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev and many other prominent musicians

Bach is by far the most performed and recorded composer in history. His 'Das Wohltemperierte Clavier' (The well-tempered keyboard) is the definitive work for all students as well as concert musicians. Bach's many chorales, especially the "Mass in B Minor" are considered the best works in the genre. His last work 'The Art of Fugue' is highly acclaimed. Bach's music was used in hundreds of films, thousands of stage productions, and continues being played all over the world.



A Moment for Liturgy

The Liturgical Calendar for the month of May this year will keep us in the **Easter Season** each Sunday. There are always seven Sundays in the Season (including Easter itself). May 28th is Easter VII. The numbers work that way because we are told by the New Testament that the Day of Pentecost came fifty days after Jesus' Resurrection. (Thus the prefix *pente*.) So the season celebrating the empty tomb continues until Pentecost. That's 49 days, therefore seven Sundays. The themes of those weeks focus on the meaning of that Resurrection, some of them including accounts of Jesus' actual presence among believers – such as the story of Thomas and the walk with the two men on the Road to Emmaus. The others recall Jesus' reassuring teachings such as the Good Shepherd; the Way, Truth and Life in God's Kingdom; the promise of the Holy Spirit; and the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus as recorded in John 17.

A kind of irony in the “numbers” is that Jesus' ascension occurred 40 days after Resurrection. Therefore, one of the Sundays of the Easter Season always comes after Jesus' departure from the earth. But even that carries with it the message that the Easter promise is intended to continue well beyond Jesus' actual earthly presence.

When the Festival of Pentecost comes (this year on June 4th) we have the fulfillment of Jesus' commitment to sending the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, the most mysterious manifestation of divine presence. It is in that presence that the Church lives out its days until the Kingdom is completed. Meanwhile, in the days of May we continue to celebrate Jesus' victory over death and the grave, and to revel in the joy of that miraculous deed.

Birthdays in our Church Family this month

May 15	Bobby Barnes	518 Arbutus Drive East	Roanoke Rapids, NC
May 20	Larry Perkinson	417 Roanoke Avenue	Roanoke Rapids, NC
May 24	Henry Long	1501 Dellwood Drive	Raleigh, NC 27607
May 26	Mandy Scanlon	719 Jackson Street	Roanoke Rapids, NC

We rejoice with those who celebrate their Birthdays. May it be a time of joy for them as well as an opportunity to recall that God is the Giver of Life and also the source of all that sustains us. We pray that God will continue to uphold them in faith and life and to bless them with goodness and grace.

SAINTS CUISINE - MAY 20

On Saturday, May 20 All Saints' fellowship group known as *Saints Cuisine* will gather at the home of Katie and Billy Green (512 Arbutus Drive East in Roanoke Rapids). The event begins at **6:00 PM**. It will be a time for conversation and interaction, **and** a terrific evening meal. Please bring an hors d'oeuvre to share and your favorite beverage. Sodas and mixers will be provided. Participants bring favorite dishes to be share on a buffet table. These gatherings are always enjoyed because of the informal setting that enables conversations, sometimes in groups, sometimes between individuals. The basic intent of this “movable feast” concept is to help our church members to get better acquainted with each other. It is especially helpful for getting to know newer members of the church family. All members of the congregation are invited to be part of these events. Put **May 20** on your calendars and plan to be a part of this next *Saints Cuisine* event.

Calendar for May, 2017

- 1 Monday** Handbell Rehearsal, 5:30 PM
Vestry Meeting, 6:30 PM, Lower Level of Office Building
- 7 Sunday** Holy Eucharist, 8:00 AM
Holy Eucharist, 11:00 AM
- 8 Monday** Handbell Rehearsal, 5:30 PM
- 14 Sunday** Holy Eucharist, 8:00 AM
Holy Eucharist, 11:00 AM
- 15 Monday** Handbell Rehearsal, 5:30 PM
- 20 Saturday** Saints Cuisine, 6:00 PM at home of the Greens
- 21 Sunday** Holy Eucharist, 8:00 AM
Holy Eucharist, 11:00 AM
- 28 Sunday** Holy Eucharist, 8:00 AM
Holy Eucharist, **10:00 AM** (Note that this is the Sunday that the summer
Worship Schedule begins!)

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THE MESSENGER

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