

“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting Rock.”  
Isaiah 26:4

# THE ROCK

Issue No. 4

April 2010

## Special Dates

- March 28 Palm Sunday
- April 1 Maundy Thursday—Worship
- April 1 Bible Study
- April 2 Good Friday—Service
- April 4 Easter—Sunrise Service; Easter Breakfast; Festival Worship; Eater Carnivale/Egg Hunt
- April 5 Office Closed
- April 5 Ladies Bible Study
- April 6 Elders Meeting
- April 6 Book Club
- April 7 Confirmation resumes
- April 8 Ukraine team meets
- April 10 Discipleship Workshop
- April 15 Bible Study
- April 15 Church Council
- April 16 3rd Friday
- April 19 Ladies Bible Study
- April 20-22 Tri-Circuit Pastors Conference
- April 22 Ukraine meeting
- April 24 Discipleship Study
- April 25 Youth Night
- April 27 Ladies Guild

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## Easter

As with almost all "Christian" holidays, Easter has been secularized and commercialized. The dichotomous nature of Easter and its symbols, however, is not necessarily a modern fabrication.

Since its conception as a holy celebration in the second century, Easter has had its non-religious side. In fact, Easter was originally a pagan festival. The ancient Saxons celebrated the return of spring with an uproarious festival commemorating their goddess of offspring and of springtime, Eastre. When the second-century Christian missionaries encountered the tribes of the north with their pagan celebrations, they attempted to convert them to Christianity. They did so, however, in a clandestine manner.

It would have been suicide for the very early Christian converts to celebrate their holy days with observances that did not coincide with celebrations that already existed. To save lives, the missionaries cleverly decided to spread their religious message slowly throughout the populations by allowing them to continue to celebrate pagan feasts, but to do so in a Christian manner.

As it happened, the pagan festival of Eastre occurred at the same time of year as the Christian observance of the Resurrection of Christ. It made sense, therefore, to alter the festival itself, to make it a Christian celebration as converts were slowly won over. The early name, Eastre, was eventually changed to its modern spelling, Easter.

### The Date of Easter

Prior to A.D. 325, Easter was variously celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In that year, the Council of Nicaea was convened by emperor Constantine. It issued the Easter Rule which states that Easter shall be celebrated on the first Sunday that occurs after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. However, a caveat must be introduced here. The "full moon" in the rule is the ecclesiastical full moon, which is defined as the fourteenth day of a tabular lunation, where day 1 corresponds to the ecclesiastical New Moon. It does not always occur on the same date as the astronomical full moon. The ecclesiastical "vernal equinox" is always on March 21. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25.

### The Lenten Season

Lent is the forty-six day period just prior to Easter Sunday. It begins on Ash Wednesday. Mardi Gras (French for "Fat Tuesday") is a celebration, sometimes called "Carnival," practiced around the world, on the Tuesday prior to Ash Wednesday. It was designed as a way to "get it all out" before the sacrifices of Lent began. New Orleans is the focal point of Mardi Gras celebrations in the U.S.

### The Easter Bunny

The Easter Bunny is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit.

The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.



## What Does the Resurrection Mean to You?

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Every month or so I receive theological journals from our seminaries in St. Louis and in Fort Wayne. And they are often filled with such useful articles as “The Redactional Interpretation of Discontinuity in Prophetic Texts,” “Ancient Rhetorical Criticism,” “A Paradigmatic Conflict of Dogma,” “Toward an Ecclesiology of Catholic Unity and Mission in the Borderlands,” “Vertical Typology and Christian Worship,” or “Christological Trinitarian Theology.” I’d be happy to loan these out. They can be useful if you find it hard to fall asleep at night.

In truth, they are a blessing and help keep me from slipping into a mental rut. And just this month I enjoyed a little one page article in the St. Louis *Concordia Journal*, “Why Philipp Melanchthon Did Not Fear Death.” 2010 marks 450 years since the death of Philipp Melanchthon. Melanchthon often gets lost behind the bright light of Luther. But it was Melanchthon who wrote the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Apology*, and with Luther was a strong voice in the Reformation.

The journal article simply translated a few lines Melanchthon wrote on a little page of paper just a few days before his death on April 19, 1560 (if you would like the original Latin version, just ask):

### Reasons Why You Should Not Fear Death

You will be freed from sin.

You will be liberated from hardships, and

From the raging of the theologians.

You will come into the light.

You will see God.

You will gaze in astonishment at the Son of God.

You will learn those wonderful mysteries that in  
this life you have not been able to  
understand.

Why we are formed as we are.

In what the union of the two natures in Christ  
consists.

From the simple to the sublime – “liberated from raging theologians” to “gaze in astonishment at the son of God.” Basic thoughts on the wonders of faith in Christ Jesus’ death and resurrection which we celebrate this month. I hope I haven’t been “raging” too much through these weeks of Lent. But my Easter hope is that together we will come into the light, see God, gaze in astonishment at the Son, learn those mysteries that in this life have sometimes left us confounded. Such simple notes jotted down from the author of our magnificent *Augsburg Confession*. Such encouragement passed down now for 450 years.

We need not fear death. Because we live right here and right now in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and in His promise that He is with us both now and through eternity. May that joy be yours this Easter and forever.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,  
PASTOR RON

## Library—Monthly Featured Item

*"Though None Go With Me"* - DVD (100 minutes running time)

This movie is based on a book by the same name by the author, Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the "Left Behind" series. It's a heartwarming and inspirational story of Elizabeth Leroy Bishop. She is a remarkable woman whose faith is tested with each tragedy endured on an extraordinary life journey. The setting of the movie is small town America and starts in the 1950s when America is caught up in the Korean War. Elizabeth is in her early 20s and the events that follow, alter Elizabeth's life forever, and truly test not only her faith and inner strength, but her resilience as well. The movie stars Cheryl Ladd.

Reminder for a previously featured Easter/library item: "Christ in the Passover" DVD. The DVD shows the link between the ancient Jewish Festival of Redemption and Christ as the Lamb of God. The demonstration is visual so you can actually see a table set with traditional Passover items and their connection to Christ.

### *More Library "News" -*

As most of you know, we only have a very small "library" in the church basement. It consists of a collection of books, CDs, videos, audiotapes, and DVDs on several bookcases outside of Troy's office. We are not a "high-tech" enterprise with the use of the Dewey Decimal system, but the shelves are divided by card designation of "Devotions", "DVDs", "Fiction", "New Testament" and "Old Testament" materials, etc.

Because of the openness of the collection, we must rely on the honor system for check-outs and returns. There is a small metal box on the upper bookshelf outside the Youth Room to place the check-out card for anything borrowed from the library. Each item in the library should have a library card in it but, if it doesn't, please let us know. The check-out cards for the DVDs are "inside" the DVD plastic cases. When returning items, you can either replace the check-out card into the borrowed item and return the item to the bookshelf **OR** leave the returned item by the metal box and the library volunteer will replace the card and put the item back on the shelf for you. There is no set check-out time, but we would like for all people to use discretion about the amount of time they keep items they borrow, so items can be available for others.

Before this newsletter went to print, there were a few items currently missing from the library: the DVD "The Passion of the Christ" and the one fiction book by Paul Meyer "*A Skeleton in God's Closet*". No check-out cards were left for these items in the metal box. These possibly were borrowed by people who were not aware of our check-out system. "The Passion of the Christ" is particularly relevant during this Lenten season of the church and might be sought by others at this time. If you may have borrowed either of these items, please either fill out the card and put it in the metal box or, if you are finished with the item, please return it to the library. We appreciate your interest in the library and your help in finding the "lost items".

We are also always be on the look out for anyone who might be interested in selecting something for the library and willing to write a note about the item for the newsletter. Please talk to either myself or Kay Scharf if you would like to help out in this way.

Blessings,  
Sandy Coggeshall



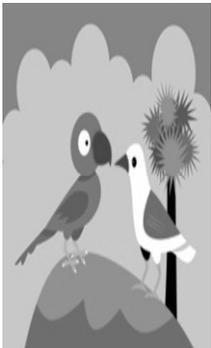
## Where is Jesus?

As our ladies' Bible Study has worked through the book of Acts, this question has come up over and over again. After Jesus ascended into heaven, where did he go? Sure, he is seated at the right hand of the Father as we confess in the creed. But he also is present every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, every time we baptize, every time two or three gather in His name, and he promises to be present with us to the very end of the age. It is part of the mystery of the incarnation that Jesus in his divinity can be omnipresent even in his human nature!

While we can recognize the fact that Jesus is truly present everywhere doctrinally, I wonder how well we realize this in our everyday lives. For example, we have this beautifully illustrated book at my house that sings "Jesus Loves Me" when you open the cover. It has three verses of the song. The first two verses have a friendly Jesus welcoming a group of children, then holding them tightly in a giant hug. It is truly a beautiful picture of Jesus' love. Then, the third verse goes "Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way. Wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live." Such great words; and the pictures have modern children enjoying God's creation- with gorgeous flowers, butterflies and birds. But, there is no Jesus! Where did he go? How can we illustrate that Jesus is truly with us today, in a very real way?

The truth is that we don't get to actually "see" Jesus per se. We don't get to hear words from his mouth, curl up on his lap for a good cry, or enjoy a bear hug from our Lord and Savior. Or can we? Sometimes as we go forward for communion I want to hug everyone coming back, smelling deeply the aroma of the blood/wine- Jesus! Sometimes as we bow our heads to pray, I yearn to reach out and touch a hand- Jesus! Each time we read the Word, we hear His precious voice, speaking to us. Yes- Jesus is here!

*Deaconess Sarah*



## LWML/LADIES GUILD

A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME TO SAVE THE DATE!

*SPRING SALAD SUPPER - TUES MAY 4<sup>TH</sup> 6PM  
ROCK OF AGES*

NEXT MEETING: TUES APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup> 7PM ROCK OF AGES

## Sunday School News

### *Hello Everyone!*

Just a quick note from Sunday School... This winter has been a blast. We did 2 overnights with groups up at LVR this last month and 1 lock-in here at the Church. We are gearing up towards Summer Sunday School which will start at the end of May. This year's theme will be "Dinosaurs" with the conclusion of a T-Rex themed Rally day with all the favorite Dinosaurs.

We will be celebrating Easter this year with a very special "Easter Day Celebration" which will include an Easter Egg Hunt, Craft Booth, and Games. Please join us for this special celebration! It will be from 10:30 – 11:30

IN HIS NAME!  
Karen B



## Parish Ministry Assistant

Grace, Peace, and Mercy from our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” Galatians 5:16-26*

Living by the Spirit. It’s not easy. We can try to do what the Apostle Paul says, but we always come back around to sin. I know most people want to be nice, friendly, congenial--but eventually nastiness, selfishness, arrogance and many other not so pleasant things emerge again. I know I’m not always chipper and fluffy. None of us are. We are sinners. I’d like to think people won’t go out of their way to hurt others physically, emotionally, spiritually--but the reality is until Jesus returns, this isn’t going to stop. Living by the Spirit seems unattainable, and the devil laughs.

That would be the case if we were left alone in the world to fend for ourselves. But we have a Savior. One who loves us when others deliberately choose not to. One who sticks by us closer than a brother. One who promises to never leave us or forsake us, sending His Holy Spirit to us sustaining our faith.

In a mean world our Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. He defeated the powers of evil and has taken our sins away. For a while longer we will continue to be sinners/saints but when He returns to take us who believe in Him to Heaven, we will only be saints--through Him and His atoning sacrifice for us.

For now, in our lives, we must suffer the pain of sin. But we can still--through faith in Jesus--in our minds live by the Spirit knowing we have an advocate with the Father. Through faith in Christ we can say no to the devil’s schemes and choose NOT to treat each other with whatever contempt sin entices us to feel. Living by the Spirit wounds may even heal up and relationships may be restored. It can happen. All things are possible in Christ. Amen.

In His Spirit,  
Troy Dieters, PMA

## Vacation Bible School

***“Egypt—Joseph’s Journey from Prison to Palace”***

***July 12 through 16***

*Imagine living in ancient Egypt—the Nile drifts past Pharaoh’s palace...sounds of a busy marketplace echo through crowded streets...and you hear whispers about a former slave Pharaoh’s plucked from prison and put in the palace!*

*Help us take our Vacation Bible School children on this exciting journey!*

**"TRUST IN THE LORD FOREVER, FOR THE  
LORD GOD IS AN EVERLASTING ROCK."  
ISAIAH 26:4**

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## Newsletter Deadline February 17, 2010

### LUTHERAN HOUR TIME

Sun. 7:30 a.m. KZNT 1640 AM

## Holy Week Services

March 28th—Palm Sunday—9:00 a.m. Festival Worship  
with Holy Communion

April 1st—Maundy Thursday—7:00 p.m. Worship with  
Communion

April 2nd—Good Friday—7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service

April 4th—Easter—6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service

7:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast hosted by the Elders

9:00 a.m. Festival Worship with Holy Communion

10:30 a.m. Sunday School Easter Carnival & Egg Hunt

April 5th—Easter Monday—

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

## Young At Heart

### DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

the purpose of this organization is to promote Christian fellowship, cultivate friendship among members of area churches and present programs that are both educational and entertaining.

We pledge that, after paying operating expenses, the remaining dues collected plus other acquired funds will be used to assist such worthy organizations and/or activities as elected by the membership.

Young At Heart meets the first Monday of the month at 11:30 a.m. Our dues are \$10.00 for the year.

### Last Month . . .

We had a very nice lunch at "Taste of China" restaurant last

month. All you can eat, drink and gratuity for under \$8.00. There was no program but as usual we enjoyed visiting with one another and had a lot of laughs.

Our next meeting will be at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 11:30 a.m. on Monday April 5th. It will be a catered (home cooked) lunch. Our speaker will be a photographer from the Gazette. Mark Reis has been to the Olympics seven times—this program should be interesting. Come join us! I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

If you have any questions, please call me at 632-1701

Rose Blunt  
Secretary for Young At Heart

## Rock Of Ages Book Club

Our next selection is *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson, this is the one talked about in the "Featured Library Item of the Month" on page 3. If you choose to read this selection, please plan to join the ROA Book Club on April 6th at 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. where we will discuss this book and explore our own thoughts and feelings about the topics that the book brings up.

Our next selection will be *The Shack* by

All are welcome. March's book is in the church library, the Pikes Peak Library; available at Christian and secular bookstores or online. If you have any questions, please ask Deaconess Sarah or Karen Grassi.



## FUNDS UPDATE

Building Fund = \$210.00  
Scholarship Fund = \$12,741.15  
Capital Improvement Fund = \$13,126.36  
Ukraine Fund = \$8374.70  
Bathroom = \$1272.00

