

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

229 South Broad Street
Jersey Shore, PA 17740
570-398-1676

Sunday, April 7, 2024
2nd Sunday of Easter
Holy Humor Sunday 😊

Children's Church will meet upstairs in the youth Sunday School room at end of the hallway at 9:30 a.m. Please take your child there before worship begins.

INTRODUCTON

Many American churches are resurrecting and old Easter custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity – “Holy Humor Sunday” celebrations of Jesus’ resurrection on the Sunday after Easter. For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, “bright Sunday” was observed by the faithful as “days of joy and laughter” with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced. The Easter laugh,” the early theologians called it. Jesus loves a good party!

He performed His first miracle at a wedding reception in Cana, turning water into wine. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus tells us that the overjoyed father threw a big party for his returning son. “We are going to have a feast, a celebration,” the father declared, “because this son of mine was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.” (Luke 15:23-24)



(Wal-Mart greeters are just church ushers who decided to cross over and go secular)

PRELUDE *(I can play 88 keys with just 10 fingers! What's your super power?)*

Call to Reconciliation

P: None of us likes to look foolish, but which is sillier? Chasing after the world and all its gaudy trinkets which flatter our souls, or being a 'fool for Christ', imitating him in service to others, offering ourselves in love and joy to the world? Let us admit to God the foolish choices we make each and every day, as we pray, saying,

Unison Prayer of Confession

You know better than we do, Amused God, what important people we believe we are.

Believing we have to be serious all the time, we miss out on the joy of your creation.

Choosing to feast on the pain of the world, we skip the picnic offered in paradise.

Clinging to the despair which is our best friend, we ignore Jesus who can bring us home to your heart.

Forgive us, Heart of Joy, and make us open to the startling, and upside-down, ways in which you work. Fill us with Easter's laughter; fill us with your healing joy; fill us with the love poured into us through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Assurance of Pardon

P: The Gospels tell us over and over again of the joy which comes to us through Christ. When Jesus was around, lives were changed, the sick were healed, the sorrowful began to laugh with joy. The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

Through the Holy Spirit, we are gifted with joy.

We are sent forth to bring good news to the oppressed, to bring healing to the broken, to anoint everyone with the oil of gladness.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

HYMN

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Amen" (Amen)

If you're happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, Amen)

Call to Worship

P: "Smiling is infectious. You catch it like the flu."

C: "When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling, too."

P: "I passed around the corner, and someone saw my grin."

C: "When he smiled I realized I'd passed it on to him."

P: "I thought about that smile. Then I realized its worth."

C: "a single smile just like mine could travel the whole earth."

P: "So if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected."

C: "Let's start an epidemic quick, and get the world infected!"

HYMN OF PRAISE: Take Time to Be Funny

Take time to be funny, rejoice in the Lord
Let laughter explode and have fun with God's Word
For laughter is healing, gives strength to the weak
God loves to see smiles, for they lift up the meek.

Take time to be silly, it's good for the soul
Too many are somber, grabbing control.
Let go and let God's love wash over your soul
Heavenly transcendence can be your life's goal.

Old Sarah and Abram – a child they lacked
But God's angels promised and she birthed Isaac
In Hebrew that's "laughter", go check if you want
Genesis Seven-teen is where it is found.

For humor is holy, it sanctifies life,
Replenishes hope and oft softens advice
It undercuts sorrow, deflates haughty pride
So smile and hang on, and rejoice in life's ride.

— authorship unknown. Suggested tune: "Take time to be holy"

P: Knock. Knock. **C: Who's there?**

P: Lettuce **C: Lettuce who?**

P: Lettuce pray.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Great Laughing God, we come into your presence with joy and longing to be surprised. We thank you that you have given to us the gift of laughter and delight. These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth. May we find that in giving up to laughter there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit to renew our worship and our living. Amen

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from Acts

First Reading: Acts 4:32-35

While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.

³²Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

Psalm: Psalm 133

¹How good and how pleasant it is,
when kindred live together in unity!

²**It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar of his robe.**

³It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the hills of Zion.

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life forevermore.

(Because scripture is perfect and infallible, I can deduce that God loves run-on sentences like the one in Ephesian 1. On that bases, I believe the Lord would have Mr. Jones change my 10th grade final essay to an A like I deserve before he dies.)

L: A reading from First John

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1--2:2

The opening of this letter serves as a reality check. The reality of God is light, but our confessed reality has been sin. God cleanses us from our sinful reality through Christ's death so that we live in fellowship with Christ and walk in God's light.

¹We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

****GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

(Women stand and sing “Hallelu” then sit,

Men stand and sing “Praise Ye the Lord” then sit.) Repeat twice:

(W) Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halleluiah – (M) Praise Ye the Lord

(W) Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halleluiah – (M) Praise Ye the Lord

(M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah! (M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah!

(M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah! (M) Praise ye the Lord!

P: The holy gospel according to St. John chapter 20

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this

book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

(If you chew your food, but don't swallow you will starve. The same applies to God's word. If you read it, but don't apply it, you will starve spiritually)

(I hope the pastor keeps his sermon short. When he goes more than an half hour, it's hard to wake up!)

SERMON “What are the tombs we don’t need anymore?”

The assembly will stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY Give to us Laughter (to the tune of Be Thou My Vision)

Give to us laughter, O Source of our life.
Laughter can banish so much of our strife!
Laughter and love give us wholeness and health.
Laughter and love are the coin of true wealth.

Give to us laughter as sign of deep joy;
let us in laughing find Christian employ,
joining with stars and with bright northern lights,
laughing and praising and sharing delights.

Even in sorrow and hours of grief,
laughter with tears brings us healing relief!
God, give us laughter, and God, give us peace,
joy of your promise among us increase.

(A lady is trying to find a parking space outside her grocery store on a busy evening, but cannot find a single one. She looks skyward and says, "Lord, if you grant me this space, I'll come to Church every Sunday like a good Lutheran should!" Low and behold, a space opens up right in front of her at which time, she looks skyward again and says, "Never mind, I found one.")

CREED

We believe in God, who made us in His image.

C: We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like Him.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

C: He had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

C: Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – He is our joy!

Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don’t claim the happiness that is rightfully ours as your children, when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world.

C: Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Pray is not a spare wheel that you pull out when you are in trouble. Use it as a steering wheel that keeps you on the right path throughout life!)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

Your church cries out, O God, and you listen. As you drew near to the disciples, draw near to us this day. Breathe on us your Holy Spirit, that our faith is renewed and we witness to your love. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Your creation cries out, O God, and you listen. Nurture trees, crops, wildflowers, and all growing things. Guide farmers, gardeners, arborists, and others who tend the soil and nurture plants into life. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Your world cries out, O God, and you listen. Guide police, firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders to work for the well-being of communities and the dignity of every person, that no one may need to live in fear. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Your children cry out, O God, and you listen. Hear your people crying out for justice, for an end to racism and other oppression, and for a world where all are fed and safe. We pray for all who cry out in suffering or pain (*especially*). God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Your congregations cry out, O God, and you listen. Renew pastors, deacons, musicians, and other staff, administrators, and volunteers who facilitated Holy Week and Easter worship. Open our hearts to discern where God calls each of us to serve. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

God of every land and people, less the ministry of our siblings in Christ in the Ansbach-Wurzburg Kirchenkreis in Germany. Show us how we can best support them in their work for the sake of the Gospel. Move us to reach out to them in their times of struggle and need.

God of grace,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

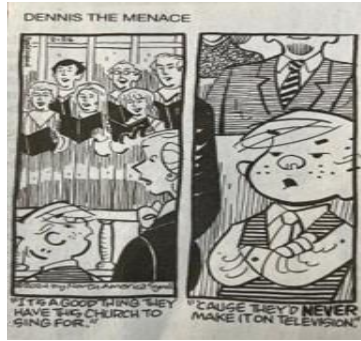
A: Accept our gratitude, O God, for the lives of those who now rest in you. Grant us your peace amid our fears. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.



*(This comic was 'found' on the desk in the choir room !)
 (Everyone in my family was always musical, even the sewing machine was a singer!)*

CHOIR ANTHEM *Hey! Hey Anybody Listening?*

The assembly stands.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit.
 May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love.
 Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING P.144 *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

Dialogue

Preface by the Pastor

Holy Holy Holy

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

Holy God, you alone are holy,
 you alone are God.

The universe declares your praise:
 beyond the stars; beneath the sea; within each cell;
 with every breath.

We praise you, O God.

Generations bless your faithfulness:
 through the water; by night and day; across the wilderness;
 out of exile; into the future.

We bless you, O God.

We give you thanks for your dear Son:
 at the heart of human life; near to those who suffer;
 beside the sinner; among the poor;
 with us now.

We thank you, O God.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
 and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
 saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup
is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table,
and to the end, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We pray for the gift of your Spirit: in our gathering;
within this meal; among your people; throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks
to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit, in your church, without end. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer p. 145

Invitation to Communion

The risen Christ is made known to us
in the breaking of the bread.
Come and eat at God's table.

The assembly is seated.

(Forgive us for our trespasses, as we forgive those who served us decafe...)

Communion

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Jesus, Name Above All Names*

(repeat twice)

*Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord,
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, living Word.*

The assembly stands.

Prayer after Communion

A: Foolish, foolish God, your belly laugh echoes through the world,
We have responded to your invitation to join in the Banquet.
Here we have eaten, we have drunk, we have tasted your goodness.
May the joy we find in this meal together lift up our hearts,
may we carry your laughter to the world around us,
may we live out that foolishness called love wherever we go. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

People: “Lord, grant me a joyful heart and a holy sense of humor. Please give me the gift of faith, to be renewed and shared with others each day. Teach me to live this moment, looking neither to the past with regret, nor to the future with apprehension. Let love be my guide, and my life a prayer.”

Pastor: “Go in laughter, go in grace. Keep the Lord in your heart and a smile on your face.”



Sending Song: *I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy TFF 257*

**I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart,
down in my heart, down in my heart.**

**I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart
down in my heart to stay!**

**I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart,
down in my heart, down in my heart.**

**I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart,
down in my heart to stay!**

**I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus down in my heart,
down in my heart, down in my heart.**

**I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus down in my heart,
down in my heart to stay!**

Dismissal

P: Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

C: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

“There will be a meeting of the Church Board immediately after the service,” announced the pastor. After the close of the service, the Church Board gathered at the back of the sanctuary for the announced meeting. But there was a stranger in their midst — a visitor who had never attended their church before.

“My friend,” said the pastor, “Didn’t you understand that this is a meeting of the Board?”

“Yes,” said the visitor, “and after today’s sermon, I suppose I’m just about as bored as anyone else who came to this meeting).”

Announcements

We welcome our visitors and ask that you sign a Visitor Attendance and Holy Communion Card that is located in the pew rack. We ask that cards be returned via the offering plate during the receiving of the offering. We practice “open Communion” here at St. John meaning that all who believe in the “real presence” of Christ are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We offer two choices for Holy Communion, wine or grape juice. Those worshipers desiring grape juice are asked at the communion rail to place their right hand over their heart after receiving “The Body of Christ.”

Remember in prayer: Rowan Aldridge, Jim Allen, Connie Barker, Danny Bennett, Maisy Boyles, Agnes Cryder, Don Delaney, Helen Delaney, Mary Ellen Dougherty, Joanne Fisher, Dawn Fryer, Margaret Gohl, Dawn Hauser, Dean Hoffman, Myrtle Long, Mick Miller, Penny Parks-Dean, Cora Pelletier, Ben Saar, Pam Shuler, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Rev. Michael Burk Presiding Bishop Pro Temp --ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany, and for peace in Ukraine and Israel.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Jeremy and Haley Naugle Sorrell, Rich Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Kevin Titus, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Special thanks to this weeks’ helpers: Lector – Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers -- Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; Head Usher –Lynette Yost; Teller–Shelby Rice; Bulletin Sponsor-- Darlene Bilby; Children's Church--Molly Hollick.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers--Bill Ely and Ken Dougherty; ; Head Usher –Lynette Yost; Teller–Shelby Rice; Bulletin Sponsor-- Darlene Bilby; Children's Church--Pam Wehler; Flowers-- .

The flowers are to the Glory of God by Betty Allen.

The Sanctuary Candle in April is to the Glory of God by Jim Ely.

Anyone interested in joining a texting prayer chain please text Christine Barner at 570-360-0178. This texting chain will send out the prayers that are received for the calling prayer chain. This chain is a one-way chain, please do not "reply" when you receive a message.

The Lutheran Church Women’s **Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597 Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852.

Thank you to all who donated, arranged, assisted and attended the Easter Egg Hunt!

Thank you to all who donated, arranged, and assisted with the Easter breakfast!

Calendar

Sunday, April 7, 2024 Holy Humor Sunday
8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's church
Roller Skating Trout Pond Park -- ALL ages!
Monday, April 8, 2024 10:00 a.m. Bible Study
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, April 11, 2024 4:00 p.m. Pack Boxes
Friday, April 12, 2024 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution
Sunday, April 14, 2024 3rd Sunday of Easter
8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's church
10:30 a.m. St John Endowment Meeting
2:00 p.m. Catechism

