



The “AGAPE” #23

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, CALGARY AB

May 11, 2021

Proclaiming the love of Jesus Christ in Bridgeland

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

A BI-WEEKLY “BLOG-LIKE” NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH since 1913

Hello dear SMLC Family and friends!

Christ is risen! AND He has ascended! Alleluia!

Der Herr ist auferstanden! Und Er ist aufgefahren gen Himmel. Halleluja!

I hope you are doing fine and in good health.



As you read this (rather long) newsletter, we will remember the Ascension of our Lord (on Thursday, May 13). Our Lord lived for 40 days on this earth after his resurrection, teaching and equipping his disciples so that they would be ready to “go make disciples of all nations” and start the Church of Christ. And then he visibly ascended into heaven, in front of many eye witnesses. Now He “sits at the right hand of God the Father” and will come again on the last day. In Acts chapter 1 we read the narrative of His ascension. Let me share this text right here:

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was

taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

And when Jesus was ascending on a cloud, he promised this to his followers, including you and me: **“And behold I am with you always to the end of the ages”**. (Matth 28.20). Then, ten days later, God sent the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and the church of Christ was born on **Pentecost**. The Holy Spirit is our comforter, God’s presence in our journey through life. Never, ever, doubt that He is with you in all the ups and downs of your life.

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THE “HOME CHURCH” IN TIMES OF A LOCKDOWN

Do not get discouraged with another lockdown. I do hope you were able to watch our worship service from last Sunday online, either on YouTube or on our website. We thank God for our mothers. My beautiful mom Erika Zeuch was 61 when she died of cancer and it will be twenty years this year! She went to see Jesus right before the 9/11, so she didn’t have to watch those news! And, speaking of bad news, the pandemic has not left us yet. I hope you are getting your vaccines and we hope and pray that God will deliver us from this evil. In a joint meeting from the Parish Planning Council and the Board of Elders on last May 6th, it was decided to close our church doors for public worship once more. This decision came right after the announcement of the new health restrictions from the Alberta Government on May 4th.

It was a very hard decision to take – either to continue the in-person worship services with a restricted number of 15 people attending or to temporarily shut down again. The difference was one single vote that made us close again. With a heavy heart I expressed my opinion that we should close for the sake of protecting the whole congregation, as opposed to risking having to stop people at the church door and sending them back home on Sunday mornings. Many of our sister congregations have done the same, going back to online or recorded services, as we are doing. It is an act of love.

Since this is just a “blog-like letter” from this pastor, as opposed to an official newsletter, I remind you that this is a place where I chose to express my

feelings, impressions and opinions. I don't expect everybody to always agree with me. Our opinions are divided, polarized in many things, but hopefully not on matters of faith and doctrine.

Talking of a lockdown, even though we are meant to be together for worship and fellowship as the Body of Christ, even though we crave personal contact and interaction (most of us, at least), we need to remember the words from king Salomon in the book of Ecclesiastes 3: 1 and 5b: **"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing."**

I say it again: by taking this decision of closing our church doors for now, we are loving and protecting our neighbour (second half of the Ten Commandments, Luther's explanation of the fifth commandment). In Luke 21: 11 we read: *"There will be great earthquakes, famines and **pestilences** in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven"*. We live in a world completely stained by sin, corruption and decay, the product of a broken Creation in revolt against a loving God. God has used His prophets to proclaim alerts such as "Come inside" (Noah), "take shelter" or "let's use our houses" and "stay home" when bad things were to happen.

I'm pretty sure that Noah had his devotional times with his family inside the ark, worshipping God in those catastrophic circumstances, and trusting that God would see them through, as I am sure many of us do watch our services online with their families, worshipping God under these current circumstances and asking the Lord for deliverance of this plague. Worship at home is also keeping the first and third commandment, even if the fellowship part is missing.

There were times in the history of the Christian Church when Christians had to worship in the homes and even in the catacombs during the great persecutions in the Roman Empire. Later on, the church pews were empty again during famine, wars and plagues. But that was not the end of the Christian church. Nor will it be in our days, as we live in these unprecedented times of a long-lasting global pandemic. The church of Christ never closes...it continues in our homes for now.

Some may think that we should insist on getting together physically, after all, the grocery stores are still open and the lineups at Costco are ridiculously long. I know some of us tend to think that these restrictions are like a heavy hammer coming down especially on us Christians...that they target or "pick on churches" due to the bad example of some other churches out there who, stubbornly defy authority, after all, we should have "faith above fear". In my opinion, this is not

about living in fear, neither is it a political matter as so many would think. It is science. Putting everyone at risk because we want to show how strong our faith is, is not God-pleasing. On an online version of Forbes magazine on April 11, 2020, I bumped into this text:

“One of the Temptations of Jesus faced was to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple in order to prove that he was God’s son. Jesus refused the test because to foolishly do something is to put God to the test. We need to take care of one another, including the lost, the lonely, and the forgotten. Jeopardizing the health of others or our own health is not real faith but foolish faith.”

So, here’s my word of encouragement: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom, patience and humility as we endure all this. Don’t allow ANYTHING to take away the saving faith and your hope in Christ you have been given on your baptism. Let us not allow losing sight of Christ, who keeps us and protects us. The Lord will see us through. Keep praying and keep gathering your loved one for worship at home on Sundays until we can come together in our beautiful church again. Pray for those who are weak, who stopped worshipping God altogether and who are probably not coming back when we finally gather again in a pandemic-free world.

In **Romans 8** we read: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” (v. 35). Then, two verses later, St. Paul says: ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God’s peace (“shalom”) and love (“agape”) be with you!

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A SMALL DOSE OF GOD'S WORD FOR YOU TODAY:

JOHN 17:13-17 (From the Gospel reading for May 16 – Seventh Sunday of Easter)

Jesus prays for his church:

“But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

AUF DEUTSCH:

¹³ Nun aber komme ich zu dir und rede solches in der Welt, auf daß sie in ihnen haben meine Freude vollkommen.

¹⁴ Ich habe ihnen gegeben dein Wort, und die Welt haßte sie; denn sie sind nicht von der Welt, wie ich denn auch nicht von der Welt bin.

¹⁵ Ich bitte nicht, daß du sie von der Welt nimmst, sondern daß du sie bewahrst vor dem Übel.

¹⁶ Sie sind nicht von der Welt, gleichwie ich auch nicht von der Welt bin.

¹⁷ Heilige sie in deiner Wahrheit; dein Wort ist die Wahrheit.

NEWS FROM SMLC.

1 – ONLINE BIBLE STUDIES: We continue to offer online bible study on Zoom every Wednesday (except when there’s a fifth Wednesday), at 7 p.m.

Elizabeth Schieman is leading the study on the gospels (“Life and Times of Jesus”) every first and third Wednesday. I am leading the study “who are we, Lutherans?” every second and fourth Wednesday. Call our office or me (pastor) if you need the login info.

2 - PRAYER REQUESTS: Send us your prayer requests. We have a “prayer chain” where a group of people (the “prayer warriors”) pray for your needs.

3 – MEMORY VERSE: This week’s memory verse is **Matthew 11: 28-30** ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

4 – OFFERINGS VIA E-TRANSFERS: If you are so inclined to send your offering via e-transfer please use: smlccsecretary@shaw.ca to send your donation. E-transfers are automatically deposited into the bank account, thus no need to send a

password to the office. We appreciate your continuous support of our church. Thank you for your generosity.

5 – BAPTISM ANNIVERSARIES:

We thank God and celebrate the new birth in Christ of the following members:

May 14 – Glendon and Nicholas Haight

May 14 – Renate Schulz

May 15 – Erna Elbe

May 19 – Siobhan Smallwood

May 20 – Judy Rubleski

May 21 – John Wickner

May 23 – Assumpta Smallwood

6 – MEMBER CALLED TO GLORY: Our dear sister in Christ, **Lily Krueger** has died on Sunday, May 9th, Mothers' Day. Lily was a long-time member of our church and she was known by many of our members. I had the blessing to go see her in her home a couple of hours before she passed away, surrounded by her loving family, including Roger and Heidi Zavagnin, former members of our church. Heidi is her daughter. We were able to read scripture, pray and sing in German, and also give her the final blessing for which I am very glad. Lily spent the rest of Mothers Day with Jesus and we include her family in our prayers. Arrangements are being done by the family for a private funeral. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15.

By the way, I took this selfie below after I visited Lily at her place!



7 – SPRING CLEANING: A big Thank-you in advance to all the faithful volunteers who will be joining our outdoors spring cleaning. We now have enough people to help out. Due to Covid restrictions, we had to postpone the indoor cleaning for now.

8 – WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK AND NEXT WEEK?

May 11 (Tues): Online "church school" for kids @ 4:30 p.m.

May 11 (Tues): Online Youth Movie Time @ 7 p.m.

May 12 (Wed): Online Bible Study led by P. Zeuch @ 7 p.m.
 May 13 (Thurs – Ascension Day): Online Board of Elders Meeting 7 p.m.
 May 15 (Sat): Outdoor Spring cleaning
 May 16 (Sun): Watch our pre-recorded Worship services (YouTube or website)
 May 18 (Tues): Online “church school” for kids @ 4:30 p.m.
 May 18 (Tues): Online Youth Bible Study @ 7:30 p.m.
 May 19 (Wed): Online Bible Study led by Elizabeth @ 7 p.m.
 May 23 (Sun): Watch our pre-recorded Worship services (YouTube or website)

NAMES OF UPCOMING SUNDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS:

May 13 – The Ascension of Our Lord
 May 16: Seventh Sunday of Easter (Exaudi)
 May 23: The Day of Pentecost

9 - FEASTS, FESTIVALS and COMMEMORATIONS IN THE CHURCH YEAR:

May 11 – Cyril and Methodius, Missionaries to the Slavs.
 May 21 – Emperor Constantine, Christian Ruler and Helena, Mother of Constantine.
 May 24 - Esther

You may check out those men and women and be inspired by their example!

GEISTLICHE LIEDER AUF DEUTSCH

It is springtime! Please show this video to your German-speaking family member. This song will bring some joy in their hearts!

Es ist Frühling! Bitte zeigen Sie dieses Video Ihrem deutschsprachigen Familienmitglied. Dieses Lied wird etwas Freude in ihre Herzen bringen! Wenn Sie diesen Newsletter am Computer lesen, können Sie hier unten klicken.

WIE LIEBLICH IST DER MAIEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLjx63Ar2fk>

Genießen Sie es!



FOR CHILDREN: A SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

(in a very simple language)

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the last book about Moses. It is in the Old Testament part of the Bible.

The Book of Deuteronomy contains the instructions that Moses gave to the people, just before his death. He reminded them about the things that happened in the desert. He taught them God's law. He encouraged them to obey God. Then, God would help them; and good things would happen. But if they did not obey God, they would suffer (chapter 28).

Moses was the greatest prophet (holy man) in the Old Testament. But God did not allow Moses to lead the people into the land of Israel. Moses appointed Joshua to lead the people after Moses' death.

Adapted from <https://www.easyenglish.bible/>



And now, our “clean joke”:

WHY GOD MADE MOMS? - Answers given by 2nd grade school children

1. She's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
2. Mostly to clean the house.
3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
2. Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
3. God made my mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean.
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?

1. We're related..
2. God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's mom like me.

What kind of a little girl was your mom?

1. My mom has always been my mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

What did mom need to know about dad before she married him?

1. His last name.
2. She had to know his background. Like is he a crook? Does he get drunk on beer?
3. Does he make at least \$800 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores?

Why did your mom marry your dad?

1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mom eats a lot.
2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
3. My grandma says that mom didn't have her thinking cap on.

Who's the boss at your house?

1. Mom doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because dad's such a goof ball.
2. Mom.. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
3. I guess mom is, but only because she has a lot more to do than dad.

What's the difference between moms and dads?

1. Moms work at work and work at home and dads just go to work at work.
2. Moms know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.
3. Dads are taller and stronger, but moms have all the real power cause that's who you got to ask if you want to sleep over at your friends..
4. Moms have magic, they make you feel better without medicine.

What does your mom do in her spare time?

1. Mothers don't do spare time.
2. To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.

What would it take to make your mom perfect?

1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
2. Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.

If you could change one thing about your mom, what would it be?

1. She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
2. I'd make my mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it not me.
3. I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes on the back of her head.

(Submitted by Bettie Altenhof)

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Thank you for taking your time to read my newsletter. It was a little longer this time, my apologies. If you don't wish to receive it anymore, just let us know. See you (some of you) at church on Sundays. God's peace in the Risen Christ!

In His service,

Rev. M. Zeuch

On May 11, 2021 Anno Domini

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Visit our website: www.stmatthewlutherancalgary.com

THE STAFF OF ST. MATTHEW

Organist/Pianist: Johnson Philip

Cantor: Dana Salter

Youth Leader: Elizabeth Schieman

Secretary: Andrea Sovary (403) 266-1458

Chairman: Peter Graumann (403) 275-2166

Head Elder: vacant

Church Office hours are 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Monday-Thursday

Watch us on

