



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA

Late Easter ... early Easter?

Throughout my two decades of pastoral ministry, the question has often come to me, “Why is Easter on a different date every year? Why don’t we just keep it at the same time every year?”



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

The calculations behind the date of Easter are somewhat complicated. In the Early Christian Church (first through fourth centuries) the date followed the Old Testament Passover celebration, which was to be celebrated on the 14th of the month of Nisan. Easter followed this time of celebration, because it was on the Passover that Jesus, like the lamb in the Old Testament Passover meal, was sacrificed.

The 14th of Nisan reoccurs several other times throughout the Old Testament, but for our interest in this article, this date marked the time of Passover from which the Israelites began their exodus from Egypt into the Promised Land:

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance forever.”

— Ex. 12:14 RSV



By the third century the Church, which had become dominated by gentiles, sought to distinguish itself more intentionally from Jewish practices. It was at that time that church leaders began talking about changing the day of the Easter celebration, so that Easter would be celebrated “not with the Jews” — that is, not on the 14th of Nisan.

Looking at the verse from Exodus, one might argue that we should still be celebrating Easter on that day (as many still emphasize) or three days after. But

looking at Col. 2:16-17, we see that the Old Testament festival was ultimately a foreshadowing of what was to come and now fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

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Dual parish welcomes Pastor Clark

Rev. Thomas Clark was installed at St. John, Belford, and Immanuel, Hankinson, on March 2. Pictured at Immanuel, from left, Revs. Matthew Tooman, Immanuel, Wahpeton; Chris Brademeyer, St. John's, Oakes; Aaron Filipek, Zion, Gwinner; Arie Bertsch, district president; Lyle Kath Immanuel, Wahpeton; Clark; Adam Harvala, St. Andrew, West Fargo; Dr. Adam Filipek, Holy Cross and Immanuel, Lidgerwood; and Sean Daenzer, Peace, Barney, and Trinity, Great Bend.



EASTER

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Thus we have the freedom to celebrate Holy Week and Easter when we wish, although it is still good to remember the Old Testament foreshadowing to the New Testament fulfillment in Christ.

In the front of our hymnal (p. xxiii), *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*, we read: "Easter Day is always the Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox on March 21. This full moon may happen on any date between March 21 and April 18 inclusive. If the full moon falls on a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday following. Easter Day cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25."

Here are some interesting facts about this lunar-based formula for Easter scheduling: Easter has not fallen on the earliest of the 35 possible dates, March 22, since 1818, and will not do so again until 2285. It did, however, fall on March 23 in 2008, and will again in 2160.

Easter last fell on the latest possible date, April 25, in 1943 and will next fall on that date in 2038. However, it fell just one day before the latest possible date, on April 24, in 2011. The cycle of Easter



dates repeats exactly every 5,700,000 years, with April 19 being the most common date, happening 220,400 times, or 3.9 percent, compared to an average for all dates of 162,857 times, or 2.9 percent.

It would sure seem to make sense that we would celebrate Easter on the same day every year, but traditions are hard to break. Personally, I like it different every year because it makes it more difficult for people to plan it as only another vacation day (some would do that, maybe you?) rather than as the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

While you wait for Easter, take advantage of the Lenten Season mid-week church services and see the Lord Jesus approach Calvary's hill to suffer and die for your

sins. Lent enlivens the rest of the year as we celebrate every Sunday in the resurrection of Jesus, showing that He has conquered sin, death and the devil for you. As Paul says in Rom. 6:3-5:

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

In your Baptism, you have been connected to Christ's death and resurrection and have, with Him, conquered death. In other words, Christ has died the death that your sin deserved and you won't die a death of separation from God. Because Christ has defeated the grave and risen from the dead, so shall you. That is why we celebrate Easter — on April 21 and every Sunday! He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

Your servant in the Resurrected Christ
Jesus,
Rev. Bertsch

Celebrate with Shepherd's Hill

Preparations are underway for the BIG Anniversary celebration! Save the date — **June 29.**

This year marks several significant anniversaries at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads. The Crossroads location was opened 45 years ago and the Chapel building complex was dedicated 40 years ago. Shepherd's Hill retreats began 25 years ago. These wonderful anniversaries come together for the big celebration. Come and join us for an open house full of fun including tours,



games, campfire songs, guest speakers, historical displays and a delicious meal. This will be a fun time for everyone!

- If you know someone who would be interested in working at camp, have them contact Shepherd's Hill and we can put them on the path to a summer they won't ever forget.

- Online registration is now open! Brochures have been mailed to all congregations and past campers. If you did not

receive one and would like a copy, let us know and we will mail it to you. You can register online at shretreat.org.

- Our theme this summer is "A Cloud of Witnesses" from Heb. 12:1-2. From the testimony of Scripture and the gathering of the saints to the Lord's table, we are surrounded by a great cloud of saints.

Visit facebook.com/SHRetreat for more details. If you would like to be included in the monthly email updates, please send an email to news@shretreat.org to be added to that list.

Rev. Jon Bonine, executive director
director@shretreat.org • shretreat.org

Conference is designed for Lutheran laity

Issues, Etc., a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in St. Louis, is bringing its one and only 2019 Making the Case Conference to Concordia University Chicago. The dates are Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8.

Speakers include: Ross Douthat, columnist for the New York Times and author; LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison; Wesley Smith, author or co-author of 13 books whose blog, "Human Exceptionalism" is hosted at *National Review*; LCMS Worship Director Rev. Will Weedon; Aaron Wolf, executive editor of *Chronicles* magazine; and Rev. Hans Fiene, creator of "Lutheran Satire," and pastor of River of Life Lutheran Church, Channahon, Ill.

Registration is \$125 and includes meals Friday night and Saturday afternoon and evening. Child care is free for children ages 1-12.

For more information, visit issuesetc.org or call 618-223-8385.

LCEF offers prepaid gift cards for Gathering attendees



Lutheran Church Extension Fund is blessed to sponsor the LCMS Youth Gathering again this year, and is looking forward to seeing you at the Gathering!

Before you go, be sure to check out how LCEF can make your Youth Gathering experience much less stressful with free prepaid Visa cards, youth group StewardAccounts® and more. Check it out at lcef.org/youth-gathering.

Helpful services available

Consider the following services from members of the North Dakota District. Do you provide a service that you would like to advertise in the eNews? Contact Marie at news@nodaklcms.org today.

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- ▶ Need shirts for your youth group or special event? Coffee mugs for your church? Other special printing needs? Wholesale pricing is available for churches. Contact Alisha Schieber at facebook.com/alisha.schieber, send an email to info@thehymnustree.com or visit thehymnustree.com.



Send submissions for the district supplement to

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Please send photos in high resolution, minimum of 300 dpi.

Raising Young Leaders and the Lutheran Young Adult Corps

By Julianna Shults, DCE

Program Manager, Lutheran Young Adult Corps, LCMS Youth Ministry

When I was in sixth grade, the director of Christian Education at my church asked me to be one of several teen representatives on the Youth Board. It might sound silly to ask an 11-year-old to sit through the business agenda of monthly meetings, but I took on the responsibility with genuine passion. This one person saw me, challenged me, equipped me and ultimately moved me toward pursuing professional church work. Raising up young leaders can be a powerful thing.

In 2017, LCMS Youth Ministry did a research project on millennial retention in the LCMS. We found that congregations with a decision-making leader under 32 showed several markers of increased LCMS retention from confirmation to young adulthood. It didn't matter how many young adults were in the congregation; the impact was the same. Raising up young leaders helps children and teens stay in the church.

Rural and small-town ministries are uniquely designed to mentor new young leaders. These congregations tend to be close-knit where young people are known deeply. This can give special insight into where a young leader can best use their skills, passions and abilities and prevent ill-fitting or token leadership roles. These congregations can provide a critical safe space for young leaders to try and fail with grace.

Smaller congregations can be more open to empowering young leaders, sometimes out of necessity. When they do, leaders of all ages must work together for the sake of the Gospel. While established leaders have experience, knowledge of systems and a critical understanding of history, young leaders bring a fresh perspective and new strategies. Young leaders can learn and grow in new skills while estab-



Young Adult Corps participant Lara McCormack helps distribute food with Cecelia Andres to homeless men and women in St. Louis.

Photos © LCMS/
Erik M. Lunsford



◀ Courtney Haag and Madison Ezzell serve together at a food distribution warehouse in New Orleans.

Coretta Hedstrom ▶ teaches a Bible story to children at a daycare and preschool in Boston.



lished leaders can be re-energized and help manage change.

One example of raising up young leaders is Lutheran Young Adult Corps, which provides full-time service opportunities for LCMS young adults in urban settings. Participants grow in community and share their faith in Jesus through acts of service for 10 weeks in the summer or 10 months as a gap year.

During their service, our 18- to 26-year-old participants serve in roles such as volunteer coordinators, after school tutors, communications and administrative help.

The power of young leaders should not be underestimated. Consistently the young leaders in Lutheran Young Adult Corps prove to be self-motivated, passionate, adventurous, independent, and have a desire to grow in the areas of faith formation, service and community outreach. This is true of the young people in your congregation as well. Engaging young leaders helps ministry, keeps young people connected to the church and provides a chance for all ages to live out their vocation.

Reprinted from the March 2018 LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission newsletter.