



Christ Lutheran

CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street
Valparaiso, Indiana 46385
(219) 462-6660 • clcvalpo.org



April 6, 2025

We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Sonatina

J. Haydn

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One,
you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you
and your love for the world.
We do not show others the tender compassion
you have shown to us.
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality
you grant to all people.
We oppress others,
even though you have set us free again and again.
We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.
Transform our lives
and guide us again in the way of the cross.
Amen.

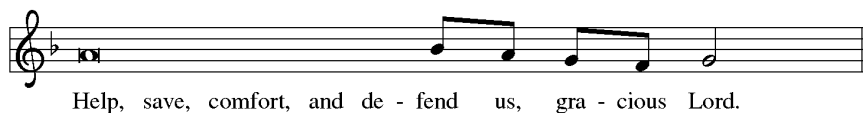
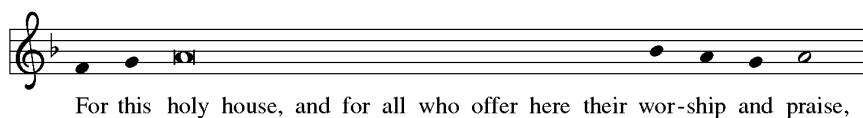
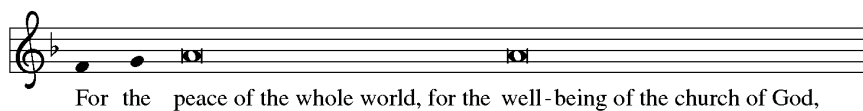
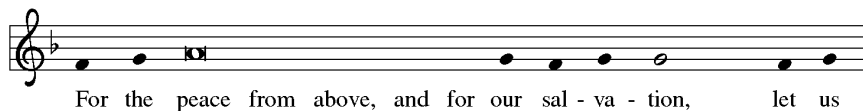
Beloved in Christ,
God's arms are always stretched open wide
to welcome the wandering ones home.
In ✠ Christ your sins are forgiven.
You have a place in God's house forever.
Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

KYRIE



PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Extravagant God,
lavishing your love
on our poverty of heart:
inspire us to give without stint,
to lose life
that we might find it again,
so the world will be filled
with the fragrance of your love;
through Jesus Christ, who offers himself for us.
Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children come forward for a time together.

READING: Isaiah 43:16-21

The prophet declares that long ago God performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage through the waters of the sea. Now, God is about to do a new thing, bringing the exiles out of Babylon and through the wilderness in a new Exodus.

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷ who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸ Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

²⁰ The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 126

The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and te people.

Refrain



Psalm Tone



When the LORD restored the for-¹ tunes of Zion,
then were we like¹ those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with¹ shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great¹ things for them."

³The LORD has done great¹ things for us,
and we are¹ glad indeed. **R**

⁴**Restore our for-¹ tunes, O LORD,**
like the watercourses¹ of the Negeb. R

⁵Those who¹ sowed with tears
will reap with¹ songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry-¹ ing the seed,**
will come again with joy, shoulder-¹ ing their sheaves. R

READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

Writing to Christians in Philippi, Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b} If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



HOLY GOSPEL: John 12:1-8

Judas willfully misinterprets as waste Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume. Jesus recognizes that her lavish gift is both an expression of love and an anticipation of his burial.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS #1004

Faith Begins By Letting Go

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what had seemed sure,
2 Faith en-dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem-'ry's roots a - live
3 Faith ma-tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en - larg - ing hearts,

tak - ing risks and press - ing on, though the way feels less se - cure:
so that hope may bear its fruit; prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive,
shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer, bind - ing up the bro - ken parts;

pil - grim - age both right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
not through mer - it we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
till we find the com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: RATISBON, J. G. Werner, *Choralbuch*, 1815

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APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Sung *O Lord, Hear My Prayer* (ELW #751)

*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call, answer me.*

*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.*

The church declares your praise, O God. Guide us in the example of Isaiah's imagination, Paul's transformed identity, and Mary's faith and devotion; that our lives, too, may be poured out in love as we trust in your promises. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The earth declares your praise, O God. Make a way for the planet's future in the sea and the wilderness, the mountains and plains, the tundra and wetlands. Repair habitats and sustainable ecosystems on, above, and beneath the ground. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

The nations declare your praise, O God. Where religious differences divide, bring together those who worship you in the name of Jesus Christ and those who call to you with different names. Guide interreligious dialogue, that faith may unite rather than divide communities. Bring reconciliation and healing in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia; give their lands, people, and churches your life and peace. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

The people declare your praise, O God. Restore those whose hope has been dampened through a health diagnosis, job or home loss, divorce, or death. Bring healing to those in need. May all who weep now sing songs of joy again. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

The gifts of the Spirit declare your praise, O God. We thank you for artists who proclaim the gospel, especially Albrecht Dürer, Matthias Grünewald, and Lucas Cranach. Inspire music, poetry, and images that proclaim the new thing you are doing. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

The communion of saints declares your praise, O God. Giving thanks for Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mikael Agricola, and all those who have died, we trust in the one who has made them his own: Christ Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call, answer me.*

*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.*

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with CoAction <https://coaction.care>.

If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).



OFFERTORY ANTHEM (8:00 am):

Calvary's Mountain

K. Lee Scott

Jesus died on Calvary's mountain, long time ago, and salvation's rolling fountain now freely flows. Once his voice in tones of pity melted in woe, and he wept o'er Judah's city long time ago. On his head the dews of midnight fell, long time ago; Now a crown of dazzling sunlight sits on his brow. Jesus dies yet lives forever, no more to die. Bleeding Jesus, blessed Savior, now reigns on high. Children, let your lights be burning in hope of heaven, waiting for the Lord's returning at dawn or ev'n. When he comes a voice from heaven shall pierce the tomb, "Come, ye blessed of my Father: Children, come home."

OFFERTORY (10:30 am):

Jesus Comes Today with Healing

Blersch

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Gracious Provider,

**you set your immense treasures among us,
opening your heart to the world.**

**As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
deepen our commitment to sharing those
treasures with others,
through our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has a double bar line after the first phrase. The second staff also has a double bar line after the first phrase. The third and fourth staves continue the melody without a bar line between them.

The pastor continues the prayer then all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,

heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the

high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is more rhythmic than the 'GREAT THANKSGIVING' section, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff ends with a double bar line. The second staff ends with a double bar line. The third and fourth staves continue the melody without a bar line between them.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER (8th Grade Confirmation version of the Lord's Prayer)

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

Our creator and protector, who is everywhere:

Your name is holy in itself and in everything.

Communities will follow your holiness, filling the world with your love.

Give us what we need today, and let us trust you will provide again tomorrow.

Help us through hard times.

Save us from evil in all forms, and harm that may come to us.

Because everything holy and good is yours, always.

Yes, yes.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All who are hungry, come!

The feast of grace is spread.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

*The assembly is seated. The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored and GRAPE JUICE is dark; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on

us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.



1 Lord, your hands have formed this world, ev - 'ry part is shaped by
 2 Yours the soil that holds the seed, you give warmth and mois - ture,
 3 Like a mat you roll out land, space to build for us and



you— wa - ter tum - bling o - ver rocks, air, and sun - light:
 too. Sprout-ing blos - soms, crops and buds, trees and plants: the
 you earth - ly homes and, bet - ter still, homes for Christ: the



each day's signs that you make all things new.
 sea - son's signs that you make all things new.
 tru - est sign that you make all things new.

Text: Ramon and Sario Oliano; para. James Minchin, b. 1942; tr. Delbert Rice

Music: GAYOM NI HIGAMI, Ikalahan (Philippines) traditional

Text © James Minchin, admin. Asian Institute for Liturgy & Music., admin. Augsburg Fortress.

ELW #522 *As We Gather at Your Table*

1 As we gath-er at your ta-ble, as we lis-ten to your word,
 2 Turn our wor-ship in-to wit-ness in the sac-ra-ment of life;
 3 Gra-cious Spir-it, help us sum-mon oth-er guests to share that feast

help us know, O God, your pres-ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 send us forth to love and serve you, bring-ing peace where there is strife.
 where tri-um-phantly Love will wel-come those who had been last and least.

Nour-ish us with sa-cred sto-ry till we claim it as our own;
 Give us, Christ, your great com-pas-sion to for-give as you for-gave;
 There no more will en-vy blind us nor will pride our peace de-stroy,

teach us through this ho-ly ban-quet how to make Love's vic-t'ry known.
 may we still be-hold your im-age in the world you died to save.
 as we join with saints and an-gels to re-peat the sound-ing joy.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous Host,
you have shared your feast with us and made us new.
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SENDING


God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS


The assembly is seated as brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

God our tender parent,
God the crucified one,
God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death he con - quered death,
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en from the dead



through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.
 Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss.
 he will free us from de - struc - tion, give to us im - mor - tal breath.
 that to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus, you are now our head,



On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,
 Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy:
 Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion that would lead us in - to sin;
 we are your own liv - ing mem - bers; where you live, there we shall be

full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding.
 all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.
 and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heav - en.
 in your pres - ence con - stant - ly, liv - ing there with you for - ev - er.

Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bid; I shall fol - low where you guide.
 Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.
 Je - sus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.
 Je - sus, let me faith - ful be; life e - ter - nal grant to me.

Text: Sigismund von Birken, 1626–1681; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, alt.
 Music: LASSET UNS MIT JESU ZIEHEN, Georg G. Boltze, 18th cent.
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

*Fugue in C Major
 (The Fanfare Fugue)*

J.S. Bach

As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.

Worship Leaders

Acolyte	<u>8:00 a.m.</u> Sam Venstrom	<u>10:30 a.m.</u> Lukas Graber
Lector	Paul Conover	Phil McGuire
Prayer Assistant	Darla Hernandez	Doug Schmidt
Communion Assistants	Scott Steinwart Gregg Copeland	Jacquie Chevalier Cindy McGuire
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Kathy Sutherland	Chuck Schaefer
Sound/Light		Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	-----	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Sanctuary Choir Melissa Summerville, cantor Jenna Abbring, saxophone	
Communion Baker	Candace Jacques	
Communion Table	Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson Barb Clements Marilyn McGawn Lori Schwartz	

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **The Balkans - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia.**

We give thanks for:

- the rich legacies that this area has long embodied
- those who kept both the people and their faith alive during years of repression
- those pursuing peace and reconciliation between the different ethnic and religious groups
- the resurgence of the ecumenical witness of churches in recent years.

We pray for:

- a continual healing of historic memories and pains that have been mutually inflicted
- those who continue to experience marginalization and injustice, especially the Roma
- religion to be a means of healing rather than of further separation and exploitation
- the nurturing and sustaining of pluralistic societies in the Balkans.

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of April 6

April 6

Albrecht Dürer, died 1528; Matthias Grünewald, died 1529; Lucas Cranach, died 1553; artists

These great artists revealed through their work the mystery of salvation and the wonder of creation. Dürer's work reflected the apocalyptic spirit of his time. Though he remained a Roman Catholic, he was sympathetic to Martin Luther's reforming work. Grünewald's paintings are known for their dramatic forms, vivid colors, and depiction of light. Cranach's work includes many fine religious examples and several portraits of Martin Luther. Cranach was also widely known for his woodcuts.

April 9

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, died 1945

Bonhoeffer was a German theologian who wrote profoundly, yet in an accessible manner. In the Second World War, he became a leader of the Confessing Church in Germany that resisted the Nazi movement. Linked to a plot to kill Hitler, he was hanged shortly before the end of the war.

April 10

Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, died 1557

Consecrated bishop of Turku, Finland, without the approval of the pope, Agricola began a reform along Lutheran lines. In only three years, he translated the New Testament and worship texts into Finnish, in the process establishing the rules of Finnish writing that are still used today.

Instead, You Could Have . . .

Not another book of the Bible talks about love the way John talks about love. Even if a person doesn't know another thing about this gospel, never went to vacation Bible school, sang a hymn, sat in a pew, or stared at a stained-glass window, chances are good they will perk up at familiar echoes of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world."

Love is leaking out of this gospel book like water from a hose with no gasket, and who knows where it all goes? "I love you, you should love me," Jesus says. And love one another too—colleagues and culprits, defamers and defenders, the near and the far, bullies, bandits, and bores. "Love." It is Jesus' nonnegotiable command. So you'd expect that the hangers-on, the stick-arounds, the learners and leaders and even the laggards-behind whose names and faces and brief bios show up in John's chapters would be specialists in the art of loving.

Some of those gospel characters were together one night in Bethany, a little village just over the hills from Jerusalem. A dinner (it was holiday time) was being hosted in the home of Jesus' friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. But the festive gathering was menaced. They were on edge in the intimacy of the room. Uneasiness stirred in the streets, rebels' causes brewed in shadows and braved daylight. Rumors and plots swirled as they do in troubled times—times that ignore commands, are deaf to pleas, and mislay impulses to love.

When love does not know what to do or how to act; when it struggles with itself and feels imperfect or too thin, unfinished and inadequate; when the campaigns and monuments and funds and meals and letters seem not enough . . . look at Mary. She leads the way by kneeling at the feet of love itself. There we find the path toward love.

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