

May 2025

BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew



CLOTHED IN CHRIST

BRINGING COMFORT BY WHAT WE WEAR EACH DAY



Matthew F. Leighty
Matthew F. Leighty
Executive Director

Embracing Easter Virtues All Year Long

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

For many years, during the early Easter sunrise service, while my kids were young and my wife sang in the church choir, I was responsible for waking up our four children — our son and three young daughters — and getting them ready for church by myself.

I often fretted about getting the girls dressed in their beautiful Easter dresses and preparing them for the service. The house would have a frenzy of activity as I worked to make sure everyone was ready. My daughters would don their lovely dresses, and we would rush out the door.

Upon arriving at church, my wife, Kelli, would scoop them up into the restroom to fix their hair and work her magic with the finishing touches. I fondly remember gazing down the church

pew after hearing from adoring church members and marveling to myself at how we managed to dress them in their Easter best.

Despite what Andy Williams may sing about Christmas, Easter is “the Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” Easter is filled with anticipation and joy as we gather to celebrate our Savior’s resurrection. One of my favorite moments of the Easter morning service is when we sing the hymn “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds” (Lutheran Service Book 465). The triumphant melody and brass band fill the sanctuary, echoing the joy and victory of Christ’s resurrection. The hymn’s tune, known as “Lasst uns erfreuen,” is familiar to many, as it is also used for “All Creatures of Our God and King” and “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones.” The latter can be found in the Lutheran Service Book (670), making it a cherished tune.

Cover Photo Provided by Cheryl Lockhart

Job Comfort Dog, Memphis, Tenn., is one of the many golden retrievers in service for the Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dog program.



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Worship Anew
 5 Martin Luther Drive
 Fort Wayne, IN 46825
 (888) 286-8002

EDITORIAL STAFF

MATTHEW LEIGHTY
 Executive Director

ASHLEY WIEHE
 Director of Communications

THOMAS MOLL
 Director of Content & Innovation

SHEILA BANKS
 Communications Specialist

ELIZABETH PULS
 Copy Editor

PEYTON SWEET
 Content Specialist

Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.



“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Colossians 3:12-13 ESV

The opening words of the hymn ring out into the air, a reminder of the hope and new life we have in Christ. *“Now all the vault of heaven resounds In praise of love that still abounds, ‘Christ hath triumphed! He is living!’ Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear! Repeat their song of glory here: ‘Christ hath triumphed, Christ hath triumphed!’ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”*

As we continue our Easter celebration, let us remember that we are called to wear our Easter best all year long.

Colossians 3:12 reminds us to “put on” compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. These virtues are the true garments of a life transformed by Christ’s resurrection.

Verse three of “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds” asks the Lord to help us live out these virtues: *“O fill us, Lord, with dauntless love; Set heart and will on things above.”* This plea aligns with Colossians 3:12 as we seek to embody the love and grace of Christ in our daily lives.

With joy and exaltation, we sing praises to our God, just as the hymn beautifully captures the triumph and glory of this Easter season. Let us carry the virtues that God gives us to embody in our daily lives. As the final verse concludes: *“Adoring praises now we bring And with the*

heavenly blessed sing: ‘Christ hath triumphed! Alleluia!’ Be to the Father and our Lord, to Spirit blest, most holy God, All the glory, never ending! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!”

During this season, we ask you to join us in our **“50 Days of Blessings”** initiative. This meaningful period, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, offers a chance to reflect on how you might be blessed through the vital mission of Worship Anew. It also features a unique gift match opportunity that will enhance your generosity and, in turn, bless this ministry. Watch your mail for a special **“50 Days”** calendar.

As we celebrate Easter, let us remember that Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection three days later is not simply a moment in history; it is the most transformative event of all time that impacts our lives today and into eternity. **Christ is risen!**

Clothed in the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, we are called to reflect the love and grace of our risen Savior in everything we do.

May the joy of Easter fill our hearts and guide our lives as we continue to sing praises and live out the message of Christ’s victory over death and the cross each and every day. **Yes, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

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**JOIN WORSHIP ANEW IN THIS
IMPORTANT DISCUSSION.**

Pastor Zeckzer brings blessings to Worship Anew

Blessed are those who have not seen but believe.” The Rev. Scott Zeckzer brings a message of hope as the newest pastor on Worship Anew’s weekly broadcast program. Pastor Zeckzer joined the ministry for his first program on April 27 with his message, “I Believe ...”

“We confess in the Apostle’s Creed that Jesus, on the third day, rose again from the dead, and we believe in the resurrection of the body. Why is it important we believe in the resurrection? Hear why the resurrection of Jesus changes everything for you,” Pastor Zeckzer said about the April 27 program.

Pastor Zeckzer, senior pastor at Emanuel Lutheran Church in New Haven, Ind., joins the program as the Rev. Thomas Eggold steps away after seven years of service to Worship Anew. Pastor Eggold provided his final program, “Christ is Risen,” on Easter Day, April 20.

Pastor Zeckzer brings more than 25 years of ministry experience to the role, including working alongside fellow Worship Anew pastor, the Rev. Paul Shoemaker, at Emanuel for many years. He even shared that his approach to the ministry is much like that of Pastor Shoemaker’s.

“Pastor Shoemaker and I have often talked about this — that our preaching style is a lot alike,” he said. “But it just comes down to making sure that the people can understand the gospel and the Good News of God’s salvation — that Jesus came and He brings us forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation, and that’s the core message that Jesus wants us to share with people.”

He conveyed his admiration for the work that Pastor Shoemaker and all of the pastors on Worship Anew have been able to do to share the gospel over so many years — from Pastor Shoemaker’s singing to Pastor Thomas Ahlersmeyer’s props for his lessons.

“All of them have their own unique way, and how they do that is how the Holy Spirit works,” Pastor Zeckzer said.



“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26 ESV

And while Pastor Zeckzer didn't know it at the time, the Holy Spirit was working in him from his college days when he studied broadcasting before entering the Seminary to ultimately become a pastor — a skill he is thankful for, given his new role on Worship Anew.

“(When I was doing broadcasting), I would sit behind a microphone in an empty room. I would go, ‘Who am I talking to?’ so I would always picture in my mind someone,” he said, explaining that he applies the same skills when he is filming Worship Anew. “I’m thinking, you know, I might be speaking to my mom because she watches it every week up in the Detroit area.”

He shared how she always watches Worship Anew for

any family members who might be on the program, like a nephew or daughter-in-law who recorded with a choir.

“She’d say, ‘You know, I haven’t seen you in a while, Scott.’ Well, Guess what, mom? I’ve got a surprise coming,” he said with a grin.

For all, Pastor Zeckzer’s appearance on Worship Anew is a welcomed blessing.

“I’m looking forward to sharing with the audience the Good News of God’s salvation found in Christ Jesus,” Pastor Zeckzer said. “And, also, just being a part of the great history and tradition with Worship Anew.”



For Pastor Bill Mueller, leading a church is like being its “chief shepherd.” He leads the congregation in their spiritual growth, but he also gets to watch as the other members of his church lead the flock.

“I love it when staff members and various ministries of the congregation shine, and we see the gifts of God displayed through them,” he said. “I love it when we have teachers occasionally do a children’s message in a worship service. I just love to see the joy on the kids’ faces as they interact with the teacher. Or when we have a seminary student leading a Bible study and watching the people of the congregation sitting there at the table taking in everything that he’s sharing. It’s just a great joy to see God’s people at work like that.”

Pastor Mueller has served as the senior pastor at Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., for more than 16 years, and he has served as a

regular pastor on Worship Anew since 2016.

Pastor Mueller comes from a long line of pastors in his family, following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, uncles, and two brothers.

Most would think that he was born ready to be a pastor, but his calling actually took more of a winding road.

While in high school, an assignment made him think hard about what he wanted to do with his life. He had to choose a person to shadow. Yes, maybe a pastor, but he was around pastors all of his life, so he knew what they did. Maybe a teacher? Well, he was in high school so he “knew” what teachers did (at least at the time that’s what he believed). Third option? A meteorologist.

“I said to Mrs. Crownover, wow, okay, how about a meteorologist,” he recounted in a conversation with his



Use your camera app to scan the QR Code to watch a video about Pastor Mueller and his Call to be a Pastor. Or, watch the video on our YouTube Channel at [YouTube.com/@WorshipAnewOnline](https://www.youtube.com/@WorshipAnewOnline)

‘CHIEF SHEPHERD’

Pastor Bill Mueller leads his church with ‘great joy’

guidance counselor. “A real National Weather Service meteorologist.”

It happened at the time that the National Weather Service was located in Fort Wayne, his hometown, and his guidance counselor made the connection for him to shadow someone for the day. However, within 10 minutes of arriving, he knew that was not the job for him.

“I remember walking back to my car, thanking God in a prayer,” he said after a bad shadowing experience.

Soon after that, he found his calling to be a pastor.

“My parents had always said, ‘You know, you can do anything you want to do. Just do it with all your heart,’” Pastor Mueller said. “And I really kind of realized there’s one thing that fits that description for me, and that’s to become a pastor.”

After high school, he enrolled at Concordia University-Ann Arbor (Michigan) in their pre-seminary program and then continued his studies by receiving a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Today, he continues his work as the “chief shepherd” at Suburban Bethlehem. He loves how every day is different — how no two weeks are alike, not even two Sundays are alike.

“I love the vast variety of what a pastor does,” he said. “It’s a great joy because you get to share Jesus.”

Watch Pastor Bill Mueller this month on May 25 as he leads the Worship Anew program with his sermon titled, “Here She Comes.” Visit worshipanew.org/where-to-watch to see all the ways to watch Worship Anew in your area.



What are the stoles that pastors wear?

By Thomas Moll

Director of Content & Innovation

Pastors in the LCMS (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) church wear different pieces — and colors — throughout the year as a representation of the church. One of the items you'll see pastors on our Worship Anew program wear is a stole.

A stole is worn over the alb like a scarf draped around the neck and down the front of the alb. A stole can be simple or ornate. Often, a pastor will tuck the stole underneath the cincture (which looks like a rope belt around the alb).

The history of exactly how the stole came to be is unclear. Some will point to what Jewish priests wore. Others have made the connection to what Jesus used to dry off his disciples' feet after washing them. It could be as simple as a formal scarf that pastors wore to go with their vestments.

Despite not knowing their exact origin, stoles today typically reflect the current season of the church year and often match other seasonal decorations for the church, such as the cloth hangings used for altars, pulpits, lecturns, and banners.

At Worship Anew, you'll see our pastors wearing a variety of different stoles to match the season of the church year. Many stoles have symbols that are specific to that church season. For Pentecost, a stole may have a flame and a dove to represent the Holy Spirit.

Many pastors will receive a stole as a gift on their ordination day, and these carry special significance to each pastor. Some pastors will bring back stoles from special places they've visited for vacations or mission work. You will see different styles of stoles from our pastors on Worship Anew as they bring their own stoles that they have gathered over the years.

The next time you see your pastor wearing a stole, ask them about the significance of the stole to them personally and to the church season. Likewise, feel free to reach out to us at editor@worshipanew.org or (888) 286-8002 about any of the decorations you see on Worship Anew as we recognize the changing seasons of the church year.



Worship Anew in May

Year 2025 | Series C



The Conversion of Paul

May 4, 2025 – Third Sunday of Easter ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

Paul was a fierce enemy of Christianity, so his conversion to faith in Jesus was an amazing event. This was totally unexpected. But God can do anything because of His almighty power and because of His awesome grace, mercy, and love.

Sermon Text: Acts 9:1-9, 17-20

Readings: Psalm 30:1-5; Acts 9:1-9, 17-20; John 21:1-14

Featured Choir: St. John Adult Choir, Indianapolis, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Savior of All Lutheran Church, Cartersville, Ga.



Compassionate Pursuit

May 11, 2025 – Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday) ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

The Bible identifies Jesus Christ as both “The Lamb” and “The Good Shepherd.” Jesus Christ, The Lamb, has endured every pain inflicted by a sin-broken world. Jesus Christ, The Good Shepherd, pursues us with goodness and mercy “all the days of my life” (Psalm 23:6 ESV).

Sermon Text: Psalm 23:6

Readings: Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

Featured Choirs: St. Paul Singing Saints, St. Paul Lutheran High School, Concordia, Mo.; Holy Cross Angelis Choir, Holy Cross Lutheran School, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Junior Choir, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: LCMS-U at Ball State University, Muncie, Ind.



Hearts Will Rejoice!

May 18, 2025 – Fifth Sunday of Easter ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

“You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy” (John 16:20 ESV). You will have sorrow because this is a fallen world. But your sorrow will turn into joy because Jesus has taken your sorrow upon Himself on the cross and to the grave. He is risen, victorious over sin, and yes, even your sorrow.

Sermon Text: John 16:20

Readings: Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-7; John 16:12-22

Featured Choirs: Adult Choir, St. John Lutheran Church, Sherwood, Ohio; LWML Indiana District Choir; Jubilate, St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.;

Featured Art and Architecture: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, Ind.



Here She Comes!

May 25, 2025 – Sixth Sunday of Easter ~ Rev. William Mueller

Toward the end of the great revelation, the Lord Jesus gave His Apostle John a glimpse of the church (the totality of all who have believed in Jesus) after the return of Christ. What a glorious picture it is — a picture that gives hope and comfort to worn and worried Christians ... like you and me!

Sermon Text: Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27

Readings: Psalm 67; Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27; John 16:23-33

Featured Choirs: Adult Choir, St. Paul (Preble) Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.; Junior Choir, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. John Lutheran Church, Seward, Neb.



Mobility devices promote independence

By Christian Puls OTR/L

As we age, it is common for our ability to walk or move safely to decline for a variety of reasons. This could be related to pre-existing conditions, acute illnesses or injuries, or general functional decline.

As such, doctors or other medical professionals may recommend a variety of devices to promote increased safety and independence with walking or functional mobility. Below is a summary of common devices, as well as their purpose to promote safety. They are listed in order from lowest support to greatest support.

SINGLE POINT CANE

Single point canes are primarily used for minor corrections of balance or stability. The cane is typically held in the hand opposite of the impacted limb. For instance, if you are using a cane after a right ankle injury, the cane should be held in the left hand. In addition, the cane should be held at your side and not in front of you. If you feel you still remain unsteady with the single point cane, you should not use two canes at once as this forces your balance to be distributed between two separate points. Instead, you may need to consider moving to one of the following devices.



QUAD CANE/WIDE BASED QUAD CANE

Quad canes are utilized in the same way as single point canes; however, due to the multiple points of contact on the surface, it tends to offer increased stability. To utilize a quad cane correctly however, all four points should be on the ground at the same time, and you should not rock from the back two to the front two as you move as this negates the purpose of having the increased surface area.



FOUR-WHEELED WALKER/ROLLATOR

Four-wheeled walkers offer increased support during mobility while also having the strength of high maneuverability through the four separate wheels with the front two being castor wheels. Another benefit of a four-wheeled walker is that many are equipped with a seat. This seat can be handy for the transport of items such as clothing or a snack. This seat also can be useful by allowing the user to take seated rest breaks as necessary. When sitting on the four-wheeled walker DO NOT sit and move the walker or have somebody else move you as this presents risks for tipping the walker and slipping off. Many four-wheeled walkers are also equipped with brakes, and although they hold, because the walkers are not heavy they still may shift easily. Whenever sitting on the walker you should always lock your brakes first prior to turning and sitting on the walker. For increased stability during sit to stand and stand to sit transfers, park the walker against a wall or stable surface.



TWO-WHEELED WALKER

The two-wheeled walker offers the highest level of stability with walking as there are four points of contact during mobility while still having wheels to promote smooth mobility. When walking with this walker, you should be walking inside of the walker itself and not behind it to have appropriate arm support to reduce pressure and fatigue on the legs.







Photos Provided by Lutheran Church Charities

In 2020, multiple Comfort Dogs were deployed to Milwaukee, Wis., after a shooting. Multiple dogs and handlers provided comfort and the proclamation of Jesus Christ during their time there.

'BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING'

A simple vest helps Comfort Dogs share the proclamation of Jesus Christ

*By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Communications*

It's time to get dressed for work — one leg at a time, one, two, three, and then four. Their vests read, "Please Pet Me," and they know exactly what to do when they put it on.

These are the dogs of the Comfort Dog program through Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) that deploy throughout the United States.

love her back," said Nancy Pruim, a handler for Moriah Comfort Dog out of Oviedo, Fla. "She also seems to understand that she has a specific purpose when she is vested. She has been able to identify people in need of extra attention that we as handlers may not have yet identified."

The Comfort Dog ministry currently has more than 130 K-9s serving in more than 27 states. They respond during

"Moriah is always ready to love on people and have them

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

natural disasters, school shootings, fires, hurricanes, and every day visits with schools, care facilities, hospitals, churches, businesses, and with veterans through Honor Flights and individual visits. They go where they are needed.

“Job Comfort Dog is our bridge between him and the people we minister to as we share the mercy, compassion, peace, and proclamation of Jesus Christ to others,” said Cheryl Lockhart, a handler for Job out of Memphis, Tenn.

Teams are invited to respond to situations through their relationship with the LCMS (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) church districts and individual churches, schools, care facilities, or organizations. Last year alone, they made more than 19,000 visits nationwide.

The program began after an “eye-opening” experience with Hurricane Katrina. FEMA did not have the capabilities to help the pets of the homeowners, and it was then that they saw the extreme importance of that bond that people can have with their pets.

The program grew from there when LCC began borrowing dogs to use at disaster scenes to comfort victims. After responding to a mass shooting at Northern Illinois University in 2008, their then-president Tim Hetzner realized, “don’t wait for disasters. Place dogs in churches.” In 2009, the program expanded their visits to nursing homes, hospitals, and community events and made the dogs a regular part of northern Illinois-area congregations.

“We know that from science that when you begin to pet the dog, one of the chemicals that gets released in the body is one that is very similar when you’re experiencing trust,” said Chris Singer, current LCC president. “That really has a tendency to bring down anxiety and give opportunities for folks to open up and share.”

This team of Comfort Dogs are golden retrievers with 2,000 hours worth of training where they learn to relieve anxiety, reduce stress, and most importantly, provide an opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ with others.

“For our team, we all agree that we have been blessed to be a blessing to others,” said Sandy Shavlik, a handler for Jared Comfort Dog out of Fort Wayne, Ind. “Jared opens the door for us to meet, talk, comfort, pray, and show kindness. People open up to Jared, and we have



Photos Provided

(Top) Jared Comfort Dog makes regular visits to care facilities in the Fort Wayne, Ind., area. (Below) Zechariah Comfort Dog, out of Las Vegas, Nev., opens the door for his handlers to spread the gospel.





heard many, many stories of loneliness, sadness, grief, illness, uncertainty, and fear, and we are blessed to come up beside them and offer them the love that Jesus wants us to give.”

The dogs are, on average, making about five visits each week.

In care facilities, they are visiting those who are lonely or those who are missing their own pets. Many are facing the end of their lives, and the dogs provide comfort in what many see as a desolate time.

“Seth has an amazing rapport with older adults, especially the frailer ones. He can develop a gentle concerned look when making eye contact with them that they perceive,” said Bob Massa, a handler for Seth Comfort Dog out of Seneca, S.C. “For a moment as we visit, their loneliness leaves. While they pet Seth, the ministry partner converses with them and sometimes, but not always, they share a concern or desire. This usually presents an opportunity to ask if we can pray with them and hopefully leave them knowing God loves and cares about them.”

On occasion, teams of the dogs are deployed to respond to disasters. The earliest deployment was



Photos Provided

(Left) Jared Comfort Dog, out of Fort Wayne, Ind., has a military vest that he wears when he is working with veterans. (Top) Multiple Comfort Dog teams responded in April 2024 to Charlotte, N.C. after multiple police officers were killed.

to the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting in 2012. Most recently, they responded to the fires in Los Angeles.

“Often, the dogs, by their presence, encourage people to share with us what they might be going through. This usually happens on a crisis deployment, a hospital visit, and at the rehabilitation or assisted living or memory care facilities,” said Diana Bartholomew, a handler for Lois and Zechariah Comfort Dogs out of Las Vegas, Nev. “Many times, God opens the door for us to pray with families. This is always an honor and a blessing for me to do with people. Sometimes, we all are in tears by the end of the visit, but we also are sharing a connection that was brought about by the dog’s presence.”

The program also has a special connection to veterans. With a special camouflage military vest, the dogs are making visits in a way that veterans are needing. There are 64 “Kare 9” Military Ministry dogs in service in 23 states.

“The ‘military vest’ adds a bit of respect and honor for the vets we visit,” Massa said about Seth’s visits. “It tells them we respect, recognize, and appreciate the sacrifice they made for our country.”

The program is ever-expanding as the need grows across the United States. As more are in need of a listening ear — and maybe one to scratch — the dogs will be there to bring comfort and the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

“The Comfort Dog program brings both joy and comfort to children, adults, the lonely, the sick, and the grieving,” said Dianna Garner, a handler for Job Comfort Dog out of Memphis, Tenn. “Seeing the loving, sweet face of a golden retriever just makes everything better.”



50 Days of Blessings

*By Jon Dize, CFRE
Director of Development & Strategic Initiatives*

*“And God is able to make all
grace abound to you, so that
having all sufficiency in all
things at all times, you may
abound in every good work.”*

2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV

Through our ministry, we daily hear blessings from aging adults. They share how the pastor’s message has been impactful for them that day. They let us know how a Hope-Full Living devotion really spoke to them this morning. They tell us how a care package brought them comfort on their darkest day. These blessings reflect the incredible hope that this time of Easter brings.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a powerful testament to the triumph of love and life over death and despair. This season is a time for reflection, renewal, and sharing the abundant blessings we have received.

In the spirit of Easter, we invite you to join us in a new initiative we are calling the “50 Days of Blessings.” This period, spanning from Easter Sunday (April 20) to Pentecost (June 8), is a time for us to reflect on the abundant blessings that our viewers, readers, and friends receive from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of Worship Anew.

As we embark on this journey of “50 Days of Blessings,” we encourage you to reflect on the blessings in your own life and consider how you can share those blessings with others over these 50 days.

Watch your mail for a calendar of blessings to follow along with us during this initiative. We invite you to place the calendar on your refrigerator, on your nightstand, or wherever you can pray for those receiving the blessings of our ministry over the next 50 days. If you did not receive a calendar or would like an additional one, please contact us at (888) 286-8002 or info@worshipanew.org.

**What is the significance of God changing peoples' names in the Bible, such as changing Abram's name to Abraham?**

Names are important. In Genesis 11, we see what happens when people want to make a name for themselves with the Tower of Babel. Short story, it doesn't work.

With Abraham, he begins with the name Abram, which means "exalted father." In Genesis 12, God promises Abraham, then Abram, that he will make of him a great nation, will bless him, make his name great, and finally, that he will be a blessing.

Throughout Abraham's life he shows his trust in God; although, he also falters and tries to take his destiny into his own hands. Throughout Abraham's story, God is faithful to His Word and acts with His timing. When Abraham (still Abram) and Sarah (still Sarai) are past the point of child-bearing years, God makes a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17, changing his name from Abram to Abraham, which means "father of nations."

When God gives a name, He points to what He is doing in the lives of His people. We fail in our faithfulness to who we are as God's children, yet our God remains faithful to His promises to us, His dear children.

What is Good Shepherd Sunday?

Good Shepherd Sunday is, traditionally, the fourth Sunday of Easter. In John 10:1-18, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. This is what we celebrate on Good Shepherd Sunday. We have a God who loves us, sacrifices for us, and protects us from the dangers that would harm us as His sheep. Learn more about Good Shepherd Sunday in our Bible Study from the Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer on pages 20-21.

What church body is your ministry affiliated with?

All of our pastors are LCMS trained (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod), and we are a Registered Service Organization of the LCMS church. Though independent, we do agree to ensure that our content is in harmony with the doctrine and practice of the LCMS.

We strive to walk alongside churches in your area — not to be a replacement for them. If you are looking for a church in your area, please contact us at (888) 286-8002 or info@worshipanew.org.

You can learn more about what we believe by visiting our website at worshipanew.org/about/what-we-believe.

As you read each blessing, we ask you to consider making a special donation over and above your usual support for Worship Anew to help us continue this important work of the gospel. Your additional gift will enable us to continue to share the healing power of the Holy Spirit to seniors who need it most, spreading the message of hope and renewal that Easter embodies.

Every donation, no matter the size, will make a significant impact and help us bring the light of Christ's love to those in need. Because of faithful supporters like you, your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000 over these 50 days.

Whether it's through a financial donation, volunteering your time, or praying for our ministry, your support is invaluable.

Thank you for your continued generosity and support. During this Easter season, we invite you to join us in making these 50 days truly transformative for our community.

May you and your loved ones experience the joy and blessings of Easter these next 50 days and beyond.

Learn more at
WorshipAnew.org/50Blessings

A note from the Editor ...

In our letters to the editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about scripture, aging well, and our ministry. Please send your questions to editor@worshipanew.org. Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can. Thank you and enjoy!



Photo by Ashley Wiehe

Bev, a resident at Lutheran Life Villages in Fort Wayne, Ind., gets her nails done at a special pampering session on a Thursday afternoon.

The importance of self-care for your mental health

*By Sheila Banks
Communication Specialist*

Self-care or self-indulgence? Is there any relevance to the self-care trend?

At Lutheran Life Villages (LLV) in Fort Wayne, Ind., Thursdays are “spa” days. In the morning, residents have opportunity to get their hair done. And in the afternoon, it’s time for manicures.

In the environment at this care facility, it’s more than hair and nails. While the women gathered in the room, some were chatty, sharing their stories, and others were quick-witted and entertaining. Yet, another resident appeared to sit quietly, contentedly smiling, and taking it all in.



For the residents at LLV, they call spa days a “blessing.”

According to the Kentucky Counseling Center, “Embracing self-care isn’t vanity. It’s about finding balance between how you look and how you feel inside. Taking time to pamper yourself, whether through a facial, a new haircut, or simply prioritizing relaxation, boosts self-esteem and reduces stress.”

In “Caring for Your Mental Health,” the National Institute of Mental Health defines self-care as “taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. This can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy.”

Healthline’s definition is similar, but goes on to say, “This includes physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual wellness. It’s not necessarily about changing yourself but rather about creating routines that feel meaningful and nourishing.”

In essence, self-care is a way to manage our overall health — physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual — in meaningful and nourishing ways.

The benefits can include healthy stress management, lowered risk of illness, increase in energy, and improved self-esteem.

Senior Services of America shares that while there are many benefits of self-care activities for seniors, three of the most notable benefits are improved mental and physical health, increased independence and satisfaction, and enhanced social connections.

Healthline simplifies the areas of self-care as follows:

- ▶ Care for your body: Creating routine for diet, exercise, and sleep.
- ▶ Care for your inner self: Thoughts, emotions, and feelings.
- ▶ Care for your community: Nurturing friendships, family, and those around you.

Self-care is not one size fits all but varies from person to person. Just as unique as our personalities, strengths, abilities, and limitations, so will our approach be to self-care.

“Just about anything that fills your tank and is a healthy habit can be self-care,” shares Senior Services of America.

IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

- ▶ Get enough sleep
- ▶ Eat a well-balanced diet
- ▶ Take a walk
- ▶ Go outside and enjoy nature
- ▶ Plant a garden
- ▶ Write your thoughts or feelings in a journal
- ▶ Read or listen to an audio book
- ▶ Learn a new skill
- ▶ Engage in a favorite hobby
- ▶ Play a game
- ▶ Call a loved one
- ▶ Schedule dinner or coffee with a friend or family member
- ▶ Write a letter
- ▶ Attend church — get connected!
- ▶ Volunteer

These are just a few suggestions for caring for your overall health. Consider what activities and connections bring you joy as you navigate what self-care looks like for you.





THE GOOD SHEPHERD

By Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

My early years of Lutheran parochial education instilled in me a love for the music and words of Christian hymns. I memorized one of my favorite hymns in kindergarten:

*I am Jesus' little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my needs and
well provides me,
Loves me ev'ry day the same,
Even calls me by my name.*

"I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (Hymn 740, stanza 1) from the Lutheran Service Book (LSB)

This paraphrase of Psalm 23 is cherished by many Christians and is often sung in worship on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, affectionately known as "Good Shepherd Sunday."

The Scripture readings for this Sunday — part of a three-year historic pattern of Bible readings and special observances that are followed

by the preachers and musicians of Worship Anew — always include Psalm 23 and a portion of John 10. Here we celebrate our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ's shepherd-like, daily care for every need of our lives.

*Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my strength and stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.*

"I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (stanza 2)

A day awaits me when I will enter the sanctuary of my congregation for the final time. Hymns, glorious hymns, will be sung. Words of eternal life will be spoken. Strong witness and glory will be given to the Good Shepherd who gave His life for me and now reigns eternally. The pastor will lead my family and Christian brothers and sisters in one final prayer:

*Lord God, our shepherd, You gather
the lambs of Your flock
into the arms of Your mercy and
bring them home.
Comfort us with the certain hope of
the resurrection to everlasting life
and a joyful reunion with those we
love who have died in the faith;
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our
Lord, who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever. Amen.*

"Funeral Service, Concluding Collect" from LSB (page 281)

And then, as the casket containing my earthly remains departs the sanctuary, the congregation will sing with joy and thanksgiving and hope:

*Who so happy as I am,
Even now the Shepherd's lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By His angel host attended,
He shall fold me to His breast,
There within His arms to rest.*

"I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (stanza 3)



Reflection Questions:

What special memories do you have of Psalm 23 and its paraphrase hymn, “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb?”

What about “Good Shepherd Sunday” speaks to the challenges you face today?

Why do you suppose the Bible refers to Jesus Christ as both the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God? (Hint: Read John 10:14-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; and Revelation 7:9-17)

What difference will it make today as you live with the knowledge that Jesus Christ is your Good Shepherd?

Prayer:

My dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, please sustain and guide my life and the life of those for whom I care with the gentleness and, when needed, firmness of a Good Shepherd. Grant me faith to follow You, wisdom to discern Your voice amidst the clamor of earthly enticements, and the trust that nothing and no one can snatch me from Your hand. I ask this in Your name, Good Shepherd, even as You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This month’s study text:

The Lord Is My Shepherd ***A Psalm of David.***

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name’s sake.*

*4 Even though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

*5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.*

Psalm 23 (ESV)



FUN THIS MEMORIAL DAY

*By Elizabeth Puls
Copy Editor*

Memorial Day is celebrated this year on Monday, May 26. Here are some fun facts that you may not know about this important holiday in American history:

Original name: Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day.

Its Beginnings: Waterloo, New York was named the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966. However, many towns claim to be the birthplace, especially in the South. Memorial Day became an official federal holiday in 1968, with the passing of the Uniform Monday Holiday Act by Congress in June 1968, which went into effect in 1971.

Civil War origins: The custom of decorating graves with flowers and flags began during the Civil War.

National Moment of Remembrance: President Bill Clinton signed the National Moment of Remembrance Act in 2000, which asks Americans to observe a moment of remembrance at 3 PM local time on Memorial Day.

Poppies: People wear poppies on Memorial Day in honor of fallen soldiers. This tradition comes from the poem “In Flanders Fields” by Lieutenant John McCrae.

Fun Activities for the Day

Place flowers on the grave of a fallen soldier: Make a trip to a local veteran’s cemetery and place flowers on the grave of a fallen soldier. The red poppy is the flower worn as a sign of remembrance.

Attend a local parade: Many towns across the United States honor fallen soldiers with a Memorial Day parade. Bring your children or grandchildren and talk about the sacrifices made for the freedoms enjoyed.

Assemble care packages for soldiers: Gather your family together to assemble hygiene products, snacks, comfort items, outdoor gear, and entertainment items. Check with military organizations regarding specific items that are needed and those that are not allowed.

Plan a neighborhood barbecue or block party: This is a great way to meet the neighbors, celebrate the unofficial start to summer, and give thanks for the service men and women who have died while serving their country. Download your favorite patriotic music to play throughout the afternoon.

Watch a patriotic movie: Round out the evening by watching a patriotic movie that celebrates the sacrifices of these brave men and women.



WORD SEARCH



Find and cross out all the listed words. The words may go horizontally, vertically, diagonally, not backwards, and may intersect. All letters are used.

ASSUME	ISLAND
BALLOON	LORGNETTE
BANANA	MAESTRO
BROAD	MAIL
BURRO	MIRROR
CALF	MULTIPLICATION
CAREER	NEIGHBORHOOD
CRANE	NEPHEW
CROWD	NIGHT
DANCE	NOISE
DINNER	OFFER
DIVER	OIL
DRAMA	ORCHESTRA
DRIVE	RECORD
ELBOW	SEAWEED
EPIGRAPH	SHARP
FRIEND	SILENT
GOLF	STORE
GRAIN	TRIVIA
HYENA	WHEAT
INCA	WIDTH
INCH	ZINC
INSERT	

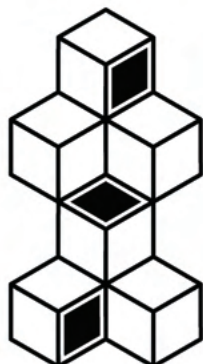
B	A	L	L	O	O	N	D	A	N	C	E
Z	D	C	R	O	W	D	O	I	L	A	P
M	I	R	R	O	R	H	S	I	V	R	I
U	N	N	B	O	D	G	E	H	S	E	G
L	N	L	C	F	B	R	N	A	A	E	R
T	E	E	L	F	R	A	A	E	T	R	A
I	R	A	L	E	O	I	S	M	T	N	P
P	C	O	N	R	A	N	E	S	A	T	H
L	G	A	R	I	D	M	E	N	U	T	E
I	R	U	V	N	T	R	A	P	D	M	S
C	B	I	A	H	O	B	I	I	H	A	E
A	R	L	G	T	Y	I	W	V	L	E	A
T	S	I	S	I	L	E	N	T	E	S	W
I	N	S	E	R	T	I	N	C	A	T	E
O	R	C	H	E	S	T	R	A	H	R	E
N	E	I	G	H	B	O	R	H	O	O	D



VISUAL PUZZLE



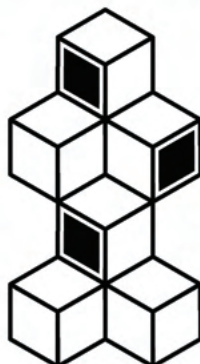
Spot the two identical graphic elements (rotation allowed).



1



2



3



4



5



6

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Happy Mother's Day

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my
mother's womb. I praise you, for I
am fearfully and wonderfully
made. Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

Psalm 139:13-14 (ESV)

You are a blessing!
WorshipAnew.org/50blessings