

THE JOY OF OUR SALVATION

“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.” – Psalm 51:12

As we enter the holy season of Lent, I believe it would be spiritually beneficial to meditate on one of the seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). For the month of March, we will examine Psalm 51.

In Divine Service, Setting Three, after the preaching of the sermon, the congregation stands and sings the Offertory. But how many Christians know that these well-known words come from one of the most beloved penitential psalms?

We have sung these familiar words so often there is a danger that our singing will become too mechanical and we are remembering the words just by rote. There is a concern that we will lose what God wishes to confer on us. Let us take a look at some of these words of the Offertory found in Psalm 51.

King David, the writer of this psalm, found the joy of salvation only when he was ready to say with understanding these five words: “I’m sorry; I have sinned.” For a long time David tried to hide his sin and excuse his guilt. He had committed adultery with the wife of another man. In an attempt to hide his sin, he had ordered that Uriah be put in the front line of the army, where he was quickly killed. Then he married Bathsheba and deceived himself into thinking that would take care of his problem. But David would not bring himself to say those five important words. Instead, he tried five other words: “Nobody will be the wiser.” But it did not work. He could not find any spiritual peace. He lost the joy of his salvation. Listen to David as he tells of his deeply troubled conscience in Psalm 32: “When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all the day long. For day and night my hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.” Only when David confessed his sin to God and said “I’m sorry; I have sinned” did he find what he was praying for.

The reason we do not always have the joy of salvation that God wants us to have is that we are not ready to say those five little words. It is easier for us to say “Of course, I’m not perfect”. With these five little words we try to deny our guilt. “It was all his/her fault.” With these five words we attempt to push the blame onto someone or something else. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. We blame someone who has tempted us or the circumstances or our background or some peculiar flaw in our personality. But as long as we try to excuse ourselves or to blame others, we will never find the joy of salvation. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:8-9: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Again, in Proverbs 28:13 “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

A man and his wife became very unhappy with one another in their marriage. Relations between them became so strained that they refused to speak with each other. They gave one another the “silent treatment” for several weeks. Even their children could feel the tension and the unhappiness. Finally the husband went to his wife, took her hand, and said “I’m sorry; I was wrong”. She did not sarcastically respond “Well, it’s about time you admitted it.” Quietly and sincerely, she said “I’m sorry; I was wrong”. Then and there peace and joy was restored to that household. If we want to recapture and keep the joy of our salvation that God desires us to have, then here are five words that we must speak to Him with understanding and sincerity: “I’m sorry; I was wrong”.

Earnestly King David prayed “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.” God sent the prophet Nathan to David when David was trying to hide his guilt. Nathan told him a touching story about a rich man who had many sheep and cattle, but still insisted on taking away from a poor man the only lamb he had. At first David did not understand the point. Instead he flew into a rage and said “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die!” “You are the man” Nathan calmly replied. After reminding David how the Lord had blessed him so abundantly, Nathan asked the searching question, “Why have you despised the Word of the Lord, to do what is evil in His sight?” The stony heart was broken. David said to Nathan “I have sinned against the Lord.” Then the broken heart was healed. Nathan assured him “The Lord has put away your sin. You will not die.” With this assurance of God’s forgiveness the joy of salvation was restored to David.

You, too, can experience again the joy of your salvation. Whenever you receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, silently pray “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation “ and you will find this joy again.

2020 MID-WEEK LENTEN SERIES



“Three Little Words”

In the Gospel accounts of Jesus' passion, there are several striking three-word phrases, such as "Love one another," "Watch and pray," and "It is finished." This Lenten season, Pastor Riley will help you gain a greater understanding of powerful words like these under the theme “Three Little Words”. It is his prayer that as we “unpack” these phrases, you will discover the rich meaning and purpose of God's inspired Word, even in the smallest pieces of dialogue. The morning mid-week service begins at 11:00 a.m. with a light lunch following. The evening mid-week service begins at 6:00 p.m..

Imposition of Ashes
& Holy Communion
February 26th :

“Is It I?”

Matthew 26:20-25

March 4: “**Love One Another**”

John 13:31-35

March 11: “**Watch and Pray**”

Matthew 26:35-41

March 18: “**I Am He**”

John 18:3-9

March 25: “**What Is Truth?**”

John 18:33-40

April 1: “**Take Him Away!**”

John 19:14-18

HOLY WEEK:

Palm Sunday, April 5:

“**Save Us Now!**” *Matthew 21:1-11*

Holy Thursday, April 9:

“**Take and Eat; Take and Drink**”

Matthew 26:26-28

(Individual Confession and Absolution with Holy Communion, Stripping of the Altar)

Good Friday, April 10:

“**It Is Finished!**” *John 19:28-30*

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 11

Easter Sunday, April 12:

“**He Has Risen!**” *2 Timothy 2:8*

**SAVE THE
DATE:
ORGANIST
DR. BALINT
KAROSI OF
NEW YORK
CITY
CONCERT**



*Presented By
The 'Soli Deo
Gloria' Concert Series At St.
John's*

Saturday: April 25, 2020- 3:00PM

Bálint Karosi, composer and organist has won first prizes at the J. S. Bach Competition in Leipzig, the Dublin and Miami International Organ Competitions, the Improvisation Competition of the University of Michigan and the recipient of the 2014 Charles Ives Scholarship for composition by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has performed at Saint Sulpice in Paris, the Saint Thomas Church and Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Matthias Church and National Concert Hall in Budapest, the St Petri Dom in Bremer Dom and has been the featured organist for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation at the Cathedral of the Saint John the Divine in New York City. He has recorded five CDs, including two critically acclaimed albums; *Clavier-übung III* by J. S. Bach, featuring the period vocal ensemble Canto Armonico in 2014 and *die Kunst der Fuge* on organ, harpsichord and clavichord.

In 2015 Bálint was appointed as Cantor at Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in downtown Manhattan, where he oversees an ambitious classical music program. Prior to this appointment, he served as Minister of Music at First Lutheran Church of Boston for eight years, where he founded and directed the acclaimed “Boston Bach Birthday,” a daylong celebration of the composer's birthday.

Bálint has completed his doctoral studies in composition at Yale University. He holds a

Master's degree and an Artist Diploma from the Oberlin Conservatory, two Master's degrees from the Liszt Academy in Budapest (in clarinet and organ performance), and two Prix de Virtuosités from the Conservatoire Supérieur de Genève in Switzerland.

He has taught music theory at Yale University, organ and improvisation at Boston University, the University of Massachusetts Boston and Oberlin Conservatory. He regularly gives concerts in the United States and in Europe, masterclasses on improvisation and hymn playing.

Thrivent Notes:

The Thrivent Choice Dollars for 2019 *must be allocated by March 31, 2020 or be forfeited.*



St. John's would like to ask you to allocate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to St. John's Lutheran Church. Last year these donations helped with improvements to the church, provide meals for the Westfield Soup Kitchen, Church float, Westfield Gardens Christmas Tree, donations to Forum House, coffee hour supplies, Stockings and Christmas Cards for Soldiers, Wreaths Across America, sponsor two children in Gbarnga for schooling, etc. Please log-on to www.Thrivent.com to allocate these funds or call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836, or call Louise at Jim Shuttleworth's office at 413-525-9165, or see Jane McClure for assistance.

Reminder, for the Action Team program, benefit members are eligible for two Action Team submissions/awards (\$250 each); associate members are eligible for one Action Team submission/award for \$250. Please try to be as detailed and specific as possible when submitting a request. This will help to get your application approved quickly. See Jane McClure if you need any ideas about projects to be funded.



**BACH
BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION
MARCH 21ST, 2020
First Lutheran Church of
Boston**

The music of Johann Sebastian Bach is unquestionably the high water mark of the Lutheran musical tradition. Every year on the Saturday closest to Bach's birthday, First Lutheran Church of Boston celebrates this musical giant and his myriad contributions to music and to the faith with the Boston Bach Birthday. Begun in 2009, this exciting event consists of a day-long celebration of Bach and his music, both sacred and secular.

While the day's programs center around the outstanding Richards, Fowkes & Co. organ that graces First Lutheran's nave, the Boston Bach Birthday additionally features talented instrumentalists and vocalists from the Boston area in solo, chamber, and ensemble performances. Naturally, the majority of music performed is predominantly Bach's own, though music by Bach's contemporaries and music that reflects his influence finds a welcome place.

An event geared towards children and their families always takes place in the morning, such as an organ performance of Peter and the Wolf or Casey at the Bat, or the accompaniment of a silent film. Afterwards, children are invited to visit the organ console and to play a few notes themselves. The day frequently includes an address given by a prominent Bach scholar, and past years have featured such luminary figures as Christoph Wolff or Robin Leaver. The day comes to a close with a Lutheran Vespers service modeled after those services Bach himself led at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig in the 1730s and 1740s, featuring one of Bach's cantatas accompanied by a

period orchestra.

An authentic German lunch (\$15) is served in the church undercroft for patrons who wish to take part. The menu varies slightly every year, but typical fare includes sauerbraten, roast pork, sausages, sauerkraut, salad, and giant pretzels. No events are cross-scheduled with the lunch, so nobody has to miss out on any music.

Admission is free to the entire day (though donations are gratefully accepted), and patrons are welcome to come and go as they please. Some patrons stay for the whole day, and invariably come away musically satisfied.

If you are interested in attending, please speak with the director of music, Jeff Windoloski, who will be attending and has seats in his car for anyone who would like to join him. (JEFFREY.WINDOLOSKI@gmail.com)

Bells? Birds? ...In The Choir Loft?

You may occasionally hear a strange twinkling or chirping sound coming from the organ. Don't worry, nothing is broken! The sounds you are hearing are two so called "toy stops:" a Cimbelstern and a Vogelgesang. Both of these "toy stops" were mainly found on organs in Germany during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Cimbelstern ("cymbal star") is a wind-driven wheel of high-pitched bells. When it spins, the bells ring continually, adding a climatic sparkle to the music. In the Lutheran liturgical tradition, the Cimbelstern is used at the end of a piece such as the prelude or postlude, or on a verse about the Trinity. A Vogelgesang ("bird song") is simply a pipe that is partially submerged in water. When the pipe is activated, wind bubbles through the water and creates a sound very similar to that of a bird chirping. Indeed, today organists continue to use these stops to enrich the congregations worship and praise of the one true God!

COFFEE HOURS

Volunteers are needed to help host coffee hours on Sundays following the worship service. The coffee, juice and half & half are provided. All the host needs to do is provide baked goods or snacks, serve after the worship service, and clean up. This time after church allows for wonderful fellowship among our members. There is a sign up sheet located at the coffee hour tables. For questions, please see Linda Slozak.



EASTER FLOWERS:

Order NOW

This year we are offering:

Lilies: Single - \$8.00

Double - \$14.00

Triple - \$20.00

Tulips: 6 inch pot - \$7.00

Daffodils: 6 inch - \$7.00

Hyacinth: 6 inch pot - \$7.00

8"Hydrangea - \$20.00 in blue, pink or white

If you would like to order flowers that will adorn the altar on Easter, in honor or in loving memory of a loved one, please fill out a flower form located on the round table in the church foyer or call Jane McClure (562-0492) to order or for any questions.



The following have signed up for flowers for the months of March and April:

March 1 - open

March 8 - Caba

March 15 - Sienkiewicz

March 22- Sienkiewicz

March 29 - Ferst Fund

April 5 - Caba

April 12 - Riley

April 19 - Sienkiewicz

April 26 - open

If you would like to sign up in the 2020 FLOWER BOOK located on the round table in the church. We can do up to three bouquets per Sunday. The cost per bouquet is \$21.00.



EASTER VIGIL SATURDAY APRIL 11 6:00 p.m.

This year, for the second time, we will celebrate the Easter Vigil at St. Johns. What is an Easter Vigil? If you're wondering the answer to that question, keep reading. This is for you.

The Easter Vigil is an evening service celebrated on Holy Saturday, the night before Easter. This year, we will hold our vigil on April 11th at 4:00 p.m. The beginning of the service is unlike anything else we do at St. John's. We will begin gathered around a single flame. Surrounded by darkness, this light symbolizes the light of Christ which breaks the darkness of sin and unbelief. From that light, we'll light the paschal candle. That's the big tall white candle that normally rests on its stand by the lectern, which represents the presence of Christ with His people. Once the candle is lit, we will proceed into the church in darkness. As the pillar of fire led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the paschal candle leads us in to the church.

Once this is completed, we will light individual candles from the paschal candle. At the Good Friday Tenebrae service, the sanctuary gradually was darkened to signify the darkness of sin and the solemnity of the crucifixion of the Light of the world. The Easter Vigil acts correspondingly. We begin where we left off on Good Friday, in darkness, but more light is gradually introduced into the sanctuary as we begin the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and his victory over sin and death. It will also be the first look at the sanctuary that is decorated for Easter. We come into darkness, but as the lights are lit, we get our first glimpse of the glory of Jesus' victory over the grave.

Next, there will be a series of

readings. However, expect longer portions of Scripture than we typically hear on a Sunday. The Old Testament Israelites celebrated Passover to remember how God delivered them from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, even many generations after the Exodus. But, it was more than just cognitive reflection. By reenacting the Passover meal, they weren't just recalling something that God did a long time ago, they were remembering and reenacting *their story, the story of God's salvation* that he had called them into. Similarly, at the Easter Vigil we read of some of the key events in the history of God's people as *our story, the story of salvation and deliverance from sin in Jesus that He has called us into*.

After the readings, we will have a time of remembrance of our baptism. We were brought into the people of God, out of darkness and into light, by our baptism. In baptism we were buried and raised with Jesus to new life. The Easter Vigil is a wonderful time to reflect on our baptism, which made us a part of God's own people. Then, we will have a time of responsive prayer. Following this the altar will be dressed into its Easter paraments and the lights to the sanctuary are returned and the organ renders music of trumpet celebration heralding the resurrection of Jesus. We will remember that "Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7), as we celebrate the victory of his death and resurrection!



shutterstock.com • 616103417

INTERESTED IN SINGING WITH THE CHOIR FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER?:



Starting on Wednesday, March 3, St. John's Choir will begin to rehearse music for Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. No music reading ability required to join ... we are always looking for new singers! If you are interested, speak with Jeff Windoloski following the service or join us this coming Thursday at 7:00 p.m. for our next rehearsal.

CHOIR & CHIMERS: Reminder on March 3, rehearsals will resume at their normal times starting Chime Choir at 6:30 p.m. in the music room and Adult Choir at 7:00 p.m. in the lounge.

WinGS: Women in God's Service



The next WinGS meeting will be March 14th at noon with a luncheon being served in Room 8. At the meeting, discussions will take place for Easter cleaning preparations, Tag Sale ideas, German Supper plans and voting on which mission to support for the upcoming months.

Mark Your Calendar for the showing of *The Passion* at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 4.

First Lutheran Church in Holyoke Ladies' Guild has invited the WinGS group to see "The Broadway Question" (the school musical from last May) on Saturday, March 14th. Popcorn and drinks will be served. First Lutheran Ladies Guild have also invited school families who were unable to attend last year or who are new to the school this year.

This year's musical, "Rolling Thunder," will be on May 15th at 7:00 p.m. It's another original. It takes place in a nursing home with lots of different characters. On March 14th, a synopsis will be shared. The premise is very funny.



TRAINING

Sponsored by (ACS)

The American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma

March 28th or May 2nd

At 10:00 a.m.

1 HOUR CLASS

Advance Sign-up Required

SIGN UP SHEET IN NARTHEX

The top cause of preventable death in mass casualty incidents is bleeding, and approximately 20% of people who have died from traumatic injuries could have survived if someone near had been able to provide quick bleeding control. In an effort to help prepare St. John's parishioners to help someone who has been injured, we will be offering a Stop The Bleed class free of charge to congregants. Jeff Windoloski will train members on what to do in a trauma situation, how to properly apply tourniquets, and how to use the supplies you have at hand to potentially save a life. "In trauma situations, the only thing worse than a death is a death that could have been prevented," said Tomas Jacome, MD. We want to equip our community with the knowledge and supplies to save lives if they are in a position to before paramedics arrive on the scene of a trauma or mass casualty incident.

Volunteers are needed to care for the altar during the upcoming months in



2020. This past year, we were short of help. Please consider offering your time to help our church with this activity. If you cannot do a full month, two weeks will be fine. This activity doesn't take a lot of time and is very easy to do. Men, women, and teens are welcome. Training will be provided for those who are interested. For questions, contact Jane (562-0492).

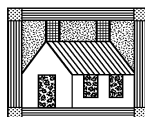


Did you know that each Sunday morning before our Worship service, there are about 1,000 people who listen on the radio to our service from the prior week? When we sit in the pews we can look around and see maybe 40 or 50 folks on a good Sunday. What we don't see is the people who "hear the Word" via radio or the internet. So, the next time you're attending Worship look around and imagine all the people we reach who might not be sitting in our sanctuary.

Each Sunday afternoon parts of that morning's Worship service are shared with a local radio station and uploaded to our website. If you missed church due to illness or another commitment you can still enjoy the service. Just log onto <http://stjohnswestfield.org>; links to the broadcasts and the weekly bulletins are on the main page.

Broadcasts can be heard each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on WHYN (560 AM). The cost for the program is now \$125 per week. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast (or a part of a broadcast) in memory of or in honor of anyone please call the church or sign up on the sheet outside the office door. Donations of any amount are welcome. Additionally, we have posted previous weeks' broadcasts on our website along with the associated bulletin. If anyone would like a CD copy of any radio broadcast, please contact Bill Schneeloch 860-604-5264 or e-mail at radio@stjohnswestfield.org with any questions.

Thanks to all who support this ministry !



As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. -Joshua 24:15



New England Branch

We have a shipment to Kyrgyzstan on February 27. Typically, the time between Christmas and Easter, Orphan Grain Train doesn't do many shipments. However, we still meet every Monday to do packing and sorting. If you're interested, please contact Bill Schneeloch. Usual time is from about 9:00 a.m. to noon. This is at our warehouse at 33 South Main Street in Terryville, CT.

Your financial support is always needed and appreciated. Checks should be made payable to: Orphan Grain Train, New England Branch. And can be mailed to OGT-NE c/o LCMS-NED, 400 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109

Please keep OGT in your prayers.

LWML MITES

Any loose change, dollars, or even checks are accepted in our MITE JAR located at the round table in the foyer each Sunday.

There are also MITE boxes for home use in the church office. The list of MITE Projects is posted on the WINGS bulletin board in the foyer. Great and mighty things are being done with our change. Remember that the change goes to the New England District as well as International projects chosen by the LWML to support.



If you know anyone who would love to have a prayer shawl to wrap themselves in God's love as they battle health issues, please speak to Pastor or Doris Love. Also we have yarn available to make prayer shawls, as well as, premature baby hats and blankets to be delivered to BayState NICU.



Jesus Is Most Important

In his book, *The Best Is Yet to Come*, John Kieschnick tells the story of Bob Buford. He writes, "Bob Buford owned a cable television company, and God richly blessed his business. Wealth and power, however, didn't fill the hole in Bob's life. He had a nagging sense of emptiness, so he went to a psychiatrist. Bob shared his dilemma, and the psychiatrist told him, 'Bob, I want you to go home and take out a piece of paper and a pen. Draw a box, and in that box write the words that describe the most important thing in your life.'

What do you suppose Bob wrote in His box? What would you write in your box? What is your highest priority in life?

Before we put our answers in the box, let's reflect on our thoughts in relation to Bob's

emptiness. As Christians, we understand that wealth and power do not fill our emptiness nor give us the security and happiness that Bob was seeking. As our faith grows, we learn that true riches have nothing to do with money. We can have very little money and be very rich or be very wealthy and be impoverished. True riches have to do with a right relationship with Jesus Who, through His death and resurrection, brings us happiness, contentment, joy, love, peace, and life everlasting. Material possessions do not constitute real riches.

Material things are transitory. What we possess materially is subject to loss in a variety of ways. Our wealth can be lost in the stock market or through rust, obsolescence, and thievery. No matter how much money we may have, we have no way of

guaranteeing that it can be kept safe and secure. Money can be lost, stolen, or its purchasing power lost through inflation. Investments can decline in value and businesses can fail. Our property can be burned or robbed. All material things can be gone quickly. Even if our material things stay with us, we will eventually leave them, because, at the end, we can take nothing with us.

God had blessed Bob materially, but he was still feeling empty with no purpose. Through faith, we understand that what we need most is a relationship with Jesus Who is the only Person Whose love and forgiveness can give us all that we need. So, in response to the psychiatrist's question as to what is the most important thing in our life, our answer in the box is "Jesus!"