

In Touch

in Easter time 2021

Newsletter of All Lutheran Church of Brussels
Series 14 — Number 4 — www.alcb.be



ALL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BRUSSELS



EDITORIAL

Dear Members and Friends of our All Lutheran Church of Brussels,

The Lord is risen! – Intensive weeks lay behind us, full of hope and trepidation. On one hand, winter ended and spring started, increasing temperatures, blossoming flowers, bushes, and trees bring back life– the best symbol of the message of Easter. On the other hand, the peace with Covid was apparently too treacherous. Liberalisations of the confinement had to be taken back or postponed. We could not celebrate Easter freely the way we had hoped a few weeks ago, though we celebrated Holy Communion again after several months. Even though the hospitals and intensive care units are full again and this time with more young people, we see the start of a positive development. More and more people are vaccinated and with higher temperatures and drier weather chances are good to overcome the pandemic in the next few months. – Recently, the new regulations by the government came out, a real road map out of the confinement which gives hope. Maybe we could meet again for a “summer picnic” before the summer holidays. It would be so important for our community which has changed so much, as you can read in this edition. We have seen the last two Sundays what a cup of coffee together can do. What this means for our congregation and which plans we have for the future is also topic of this newsletter. The good thing is: after Easter came also Pentecost. God is with us in His Holy Spirit, enlightening and embalzing us with faith, hope, and good ideas to maintain His Church in a beneficial way. Let us do this together with a joyful heart. The Lord is risen indeed!

Yours Pastor Johannes





Life is stronger!

The last weeks lend themselves to be a picture for the message of Lent. We were on the way with our Lord Jesus Christ – could there be better company? But on the other side, the end of the story was inescapable. As the Cross waited for Jesus in Jerusalem, so waits death for us. This is the unadorned truth. There is no vaccination against biological death. The Biblical passages of Lent reminded us of our fragility and dependence on a redeemer, especially the passages of Job (9, 19-27) and Hebrews (11-12, 3) and of the basics which can carry us through all times, even through death, into life. But there was Easter after Good Friday! The message of Easter, that life is stronger than death, that we belong to the side of life, shall strengthen us to go into the next weeks of uncertainty.

The services of the Easter time want to help us to see the positive effects of our faith in the risen Lord. We believe that we are bound to Jesus Christ through our Holy Baptism as the Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3-5, and as we have already heard in the Easter service as a reminder: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by

baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Holy Baptism is a kind of vaccination of life for us. It contains the “antibodies” of death, created by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ – suffered and tested, for us. The eternal death cannot harm us anymore even if we must die the biological death. Nevertheless, we can still be infected by the virus of sin and evil. This must no longer be a death sentence after the vaccination of Holy Baptism. But we must still treat this disease. We must keep the sin in check. The side-effects of being healthy are content, peace, inner freedom, open eyes, and strength to serve my neighbour and the world to be a better place. Therefore, we come regularly together in the healing and sanctifying presence of God in the services, and we receive Holy Communion. The ancient Church Father Ignatius († ca. 107-110) called Holy Communion a “medicine of immortality”. He says it enriches us with immortality the more and more we receive it. Worship services, singing, praying, listening to God’s word, and receiving Holy Communion – this is the best medicine for real life. Come, and let yourself also be filled with this beneficial medicine.

Yours Pastor Johannes

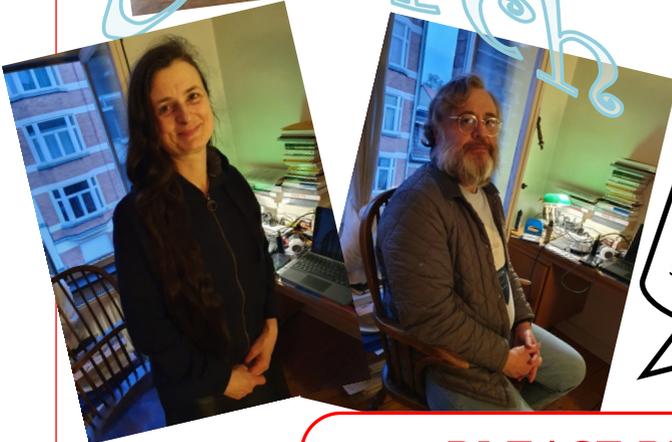


Our next services (tbc!) - HC = with Holy Communion

Date	Sunday (Day) Service	Topic
02.5.	Cantate	15:00 Divine Service (HC) Sing to God and each other!
09.5.	Rogate	15:00 Divine Service Pray and stay in contact with God!
13.5.	Ascension	no service The circle is complete: Jesus reigns in heaven.
16.5.	Exaudi	15:00 Divine Service Lord, hear us and don't forget us!
23.5.	Pentecost	15:00 Divine Service (HC) The Holy Spirit / the Church
30.5.	Trinity	15:00 Divine Service (HC) One God in three persons



Church Life



Anne & Renaud
(see Members' Page of last edition)

PLEASE PRAY...

...that the vaccinations will work well and that we may overcome the pandemic soon.

...for all infected, nurses, doctors, scientists, and all who work hard to conquer Covid19.

...for our congregation and church that we grow in spirit and in truth, but also in numbers and in community and that we soon can meet all together without confinement.

...that the Gospel of life and resurrection will spread over all the earth to give hope and future to all mankind.



EASTER

The feast of Easter is the highest feast of Christianity. We celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the victory of life over death. The Easter time is therefore a joyful time with a lot of singing and joyful hymns which sing over this victory. The Sundays after Easter consider the new life of the redeemed followers of Christ (Sunday Quasimodo Geniti = “like the newborn”) and their life after Easter and before their biological death which has lost its terror (Sunday Misericordias Domini = “Have mercy on me, Lord!”, Sunday of the Good Shepherd). For “Easter people” death is nothing

more than the door to life. Easter and the new creation of life are reason to rejoice (Sunday Jubilate = “shout for joy!”) and to sing (Sunday Cantate = “sing!”) and to live in close relationship with the Father in heaven (Sunday Rogate = “pray!”). Nevertheless, we know about our limitations in life and in faith. We know that death threatens us, that life conditions are often everything else than free, peaceful, and sunshiny. Therefore, also these aspects appear in the readings of these Sundays: learning to integrate the Easter Gospel in my usual life which is often so far from Easter morning. The Easter time in narrower sense is completed by the Ascension of the Lord in May. As Lent was 40 days before Easter, the Easter time till Ascension Day also lasts 40 days. Afterwards 10 “strange” days with the Sunday “Exaudi” (“Hear me, Lord!”) follow when Jesus has left his people, but the Holy Spirit is not yet poured out and the Church not yet established. Therefore, Sunday Exaudi is sometimes called “Orphan Sunday”, Jesus has left us as orphans before the Holy Spirit comes to comfort us and to stay with us until the Lord comes again at the end of all times. →

Pentecost (“50 days” after Easter) with the commemoration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church is the end of the Easter time in a broader sense.



Spring Picnic? - Spring Picnic!

From 8 May on restaurants and cafés can open their terraces and open-air spaces and already since 26 April people in Belgium can meet with 10 people outdoors. This means that it is likely possible to meet for our traditional Spring Picnic soon. Please save the “traditional” date, the Saturday before Day of Saint John the Baptist and midsummer: **19 June! We will keep you updated.**

Church Board Report



FROM THE CHURCH BOARD

Get engagement started! – financial update

After having celebrated Holy Communion on Easter, the Church Board decided to celebrate **Holy Communion** under the current measures for the time being every other week, alternating with “services of the Word”, when sermon and prayer stand in the centre. We hope that this decision finds your agreement. Moreover, we “re-started” **church coffee** after the service outside the church and plan to have it again when the weather complies. Come and make use of it to meet your church family!

Additionally, we would like to strengthen the involvement of the whole church family in the services by sharing the **Sunday tasks** (reading, praying, preparing coffee, set up technics, clear up after the service). This is of course no obligation! But if you would like to get more engaged in church, speak to the Pastor! And the Church Board could also envision deepening our **community** by having a **social activity** from time to time. Do you already have any idea, and would you like to start a (one-time) activity? That would be great, just contact the Pastor or the Elders Mark and Erland!

Financially, we must state that we still raise less money than we spend each month. We can only survive with the help of extra donations which reach us from time to time. But these donations are no regular, fix basis for our church work. As long as we have no official recognition and financial substitution by the Belgian state, we need more offerings and donations in the medium-term, otherwise we will be bankrupt by the end of this year (status now). **Please consider how you could support our congregation regularly according to your income! (Bank account on the last page.)**

Members' Page



The Herfindahl family moved to Brussels in January 2020 from Springfield Virginia, USA because of Erland's job. All the Herfindahls enjoy being outdoors, traveling, and playing games as a family. Erland works as Senior Trade Representative in the U.S. Mission to the EU and enjoys biking and hiking. Esther is nurse by training and enjoys cooking, gardening, and participating in women's groups at our church in Springfield. Nils is in grade 12 at the International School of Brussels (ISB). He is will be attending university in the U.S. starting in August, where he will be on the dive team. Ove is in grad 9 at ISB and enjoys baseball and languages. Erland, Nils, and Ove were all confirmed in the Lutheran faith at Our Redeemers Lutheran Church in Benson, Minnesota, USA. Esther grew up attending the New East African Church in Mitaboni, Kenya.

Divine Service

by Elder Mark and Pastor Johannes



What is the “worship service”? Martin Luther said that *“it is nothing else than God speaks to us and we answer Him in prayer and praise (hymns).”* This sounds very simple, and it is. Because we cannot provide something for it by ourselves. We just come to God – God serves us first in the service. God serves us with His Word and Sacrament which bears faith in us by the Holy Spirit. We receive forgiveness of our sins and can find hope, strength, support, advice, and direction to live our lives. In the service we receive part of the one, all-availing service of Jesus Christ at the Cross. – Changed in our existence by this to a new, redeemed creature and made capable of believing, we can answer God and thank Him and praise Him for His mercy and blessing. That is then – as a second, subordinated service – our worship service.

In all liturgy, in all ages, God remains the Gracious Giver while we always remain the recipients. God is always the eternal ‘initiator’. We receive the gifts He chooses to bestow and then we respond in ways which He has taught us. This does not change. *Always we use His words; words He has given us to speak. Always His Sacraments surround and envelop us.* And in this it always remains evident that we are Christians; we are Lutherans. Therefore, the church and our hymnals use the proper name “Divine Service”.

“Especially intense gets this in the liturgy of Holy Communion when we in an extraordinary way take part in the great, heavenly worship services, as it is especially taught by the letter to the Hebrews. The Proper Preface for Holy Communion concludes by placing these words in the mouth of the officiant: “Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name . . .” “Therefore with angels and archangels!”



This statement is both glorious and utterly incredible. With these words we are transported. Suddenly time and space fall away; they recede into insignificance and we are united with heavenly choirs. In the Holy Communion we are joined to an ongoing feast in the presence of God. This is the feast which will never end. This is worship. This is the worship of saints. And here you have your place, a place reserved for you from the foundation of the world. At the Holy Communion heaven overlaps earth and the words of Hebrews 12 become present reality: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect." In the liturgy of the church this eternal worship of God enters time - our time. This is the "real" time - time which finds its beginning in God; time which is never diminished. Thus the title of this essay." (by using words of The Rev. Dean M. Bell)

HOLY COMMUNION

As Lutherans we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is really present (not just symbolically) **with His body and blood "in and under" the elements of bread and wine** (so teaches it for example Martin Luther in his Large Catechism, Part V - The Sacrament of the Altar) **by celebrating Holy Communion.** Therefore, we worship the special and unique presence of our Lord in the elements of bread and wine during the liturgy of Holy Communion and bow down or kneel in front of the elements for example. But the Lutheran Church has never decided what happens to the left elements and Christ's presence after the service. To avoid any difficult and unsettling thoughts, we try not to have any. Therefore, the Pastor just consecrates as much as necessary and eats and drinks all the leftovers. With our current Covid19 measures we have now the problem that we only use these tiny "individual cups" in which always several drops of wine remain. To avoid any hard feelings and to express our faith in the Lord's presence, we have started to clean the cups with a sip of water. After the Communion, everyone receives a bit of water into the cup and is asked to drink this water with the last drops of wine. This takes a little bit longer but for a good reason and we hope for your understanding to take our confession seriously.



Services

Usually each Sunday at 15:00
in the German Protestant
„Emmaus-Church“,
Avenue Salomé 7
in 1150 Woluwe-Saint-Pierre

Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België – All Lutheran Church of Brussels

Reverend Johannes Reitze-Landau

+32 (0)470 10 38 26 | pastor@alcb.be | www.alcb.be

IBAN: BE71 9530 6054 7769 | BIC: CTBK BEBX

Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk. Address: Tabakvest 59, 2000 Antwerp

The Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België and as part of it the ALCB is a registered, legal church body in Belgium and part of the „Belgian Council of Churches to the State of Belgium.“

