

ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH "OASIS OF JOY" USA
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LATE LENT ... EARLY EASTER
2011

DEAR FRIENDS ...

I LOVE LENT!@!! ... and the anticipation of EASTER!!

Maybe it's those little bulbs peeking out next to the driveway. Seeing kids play ball in the park ---- wearing 3 sweatshirts, with baseball hats on. The memories of Grandma in her babushka and 3-pocketed apron ... waiting for the lamb to be done just right ... in the oven.

No one liked lamb (except me!!) ... but somehow ... it smelled like "love."

Opening day ... spring break ... the prom ... a youth retreat in the woods ... getting grandpa out of his nursing home room, a blanket over his lap, and whisking him and his wheelchair out the door.

Fresh air ... new life ... tulips on the altar ... my mom forcing me out of bed for the sunrise service.

I haven't even mentioned God yet ... or Jesus ... or the cross.

But then I remember ----- God is in every moment. He's on little league fields, in nursing homes, in your kitchen ... IN YOUR LIFE!@!! ... wherever life takes us.

The cross reminds us how REAL God is. In our lives ... in life and death ... a humble carpenter son ----- who "walks the walk" with us.

Were you here at the 11:00 service this past Sunday????

TALK ABOUT AN "EXPLOSION OF THE SPIRIT"!! Was it the music of Gerry Dignan? ... the sound of the choir? ... Mike's spirited music? ... the 40 red shirts sharing the Lord's Supper after their return from the youth retreat?

Did Don put something in the coffee???

Maybe all of that and more. Our humanity ... our longing for peace and goodness ... the willingness to laugh at ourselves and cry for those hurting. This "human casserole" we call a church ... the body of Christ.

It all comes together as Lent moves into Holy Week ... culminating in Jesus' amazing RESURRECTION.

"For everything there is a season ... " ----- now: all the "seasons" come together.

Our victories ... our shortcomings ... the struggles and the "alleluia" moments ... new life ... getting older ... missing those we love ... happy family gatherings ... lonely moments, when we wish our family was doing better ...

It's you and me ... just as we are ... no games or phoniness ... just the reality of this journey we share.

This is your church. The door is open ... the coffee pot perks ... the "banquet table" is set. Please, come in.

Maybe for just a silent moment ... at the altar ... wondering, dreaming, praying ...

It's all about love ... and a bit of joy ...

"rev"

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS THIS SUNDAY ... for kids 3rd grade and older ... who are not yet receiving the Lord's Supper. We gather in the sanctuary about 12:15. You will receive your first Communion the following Sunday, April 17 (Palm Sunday) ... at a special service, 2:00. Please invite your family and friends ... and folks in the congregation ----- we'd enjoy having you here, too.

LADIES NIGHT OUT ... Friday, April 15, 6:00-9:00.

Good food ... vendors ... fashion show ... "container gardening" demo ----- what a night!! Last call for tickets this Sunday ... or ... stop by the church.

HOLY WEEK AT ALL SAINTS

****PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 17 ... REGULAR SCHEDULE.** *The youth group has an Easter Egg hunt for the Sunday School kids. Distribution of PALMS.*

****THE BIBLE STUDY** on "Holy Week Wednesday" will focus on the Easter story.

****HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 21 ... 7:30**

A service of Holy Communion ---- remembering the "last supper" Jesus had with his disciples, the night before he died. This year ... the "first communion" of our young people will NOT be a part of this service. So, it will be more of a meditative service ... capturing the spirit and solemnity of holy week.

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 22

This is definitely the quietest and most solemn service of the year ----- as we remember the "7 last words" of Jesus on the cross. We worship at noon and 7:30.

A nursery for kids will be available on Thursday evening and for both services on Friday.

****speaking of that ... you know I love kids ... I love the energy and "unpredictable spirit" of the kids' time in church. But we also need worship to be respectful and dignified. This is why we have a nursery ... it's why we pay our staff well to care for your kids. Worship is one of the few times during the week ... where folks can quietly reflect ... and maybe renew their spirits.**

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 24 (no Sunday School)

We have an "almost sunrise" service at 7:00 ----- with Holy Communion.

Our regular services at 8:30 and 11:00 ----- with Easter breakfast from 7:30 – 10:30 ... it's awesome.

Sponsored by our festive youth group.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE EASTER FLOWERS FOR OUR CELEBRATION ... PLEASE SIGN-UP SUNDAY.

Lilies, Hyacinth, and Tulips are your options ---- beautiful plants ... \$17.

MAY IS GONG TO BE A HOOOT AROUND HERE LOTS OF GOOD THINGS!!

***LADIES LUNCH ... for all ladies, and friends, and daughters, and nieces, and cuzzins ... served in style by the MEN'S CLUB ----- Sunday, May 1, 1:00 ... tickets available starting Sunday.**

***KIDS ART SHOW ... featuring art from kids age 13 and under. SUNDAYS, MAY 1 & 8. You will be selling your art ... it doesn't have to be framed ... and it's good to keep the price low ---- until you become famous!@!!**

Please bring your art one week ahead of time ... Jude will help you price it, if you need assistance.

(Stay tuned for Jude's next art class ----- beginning Thursdays, June 23.)

***PLANT SALE ... on Mother's Day, May 8 ... sponsored by Every Bloomin' Thing.**

***KITCHEN SHOWER, Sunday, May 15. We are putting together a list of things our kitchen needs ... it will be available in a couple weeks ... and then you can bring your donations on the 15th.**

***NEXT WINE TASTING PARTY IS FRIDAY, MAY 13.**

ONE OF THE BENCHMARKS OF OUR CHURCH ... IS OPENNESS.

We do have some "groups" catering to specific folks ----- like the "senior young at hearts" and "Men's Club" ... Some have asked if we have ever had events for "singles." If this is a need ... and if some folks want to help get something started ... we can. I do hope all of you know ----- everything we do is open to everyone. This is a good place to develop new friendships and new relationships ... and if there is ever a way we can do this better ... let's talk about it.

THE SPIRIT IS SO GOOD AND POSITIVE AROUND HERE ... we are lucky and blessed in many ways.

LOVE AND JOY TO ALL.

May your Holy Week and Easter be blessed with God's incredible spirit!!

