

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

April 2024

A message from Vicar Christy...

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.^[a] The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

As we journeyed this Lenten Season...we were Guided to the Cross through forgiveness, hope, love, peace, trust, and perseverance.

Now, during Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday, we are Guided to the Cross through humility, service, sacrifice, and new life.

We began our journey on Ash Wednesday where we were reminded that "you are dust, and to dust you shall return." As we journeyed to Palm Sunday, we see Christ entering the city of Jerusalem with shouts of "Hosanna!!" The palm branches being waved in praise and adoration.

Now, we enter Holy Week. You see Jesus betrayed and crucified. Sacrifice...Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for you and for me.

But through this journey, the one constant is that Jesus never abandons us. He is with us always, walking beside us. Jesus never abandons those he loves!!

New life...the first time Jesus raised someone from the dead was when he saw a woman crying. Jesus and his disciples had entered to a village and came upon a funeral processional. His heart broke for this woman for she was burying her only son. Jesus went over and touched the stretcher and said, "Young man, I tell you: Get up." The young man got up and spoke.

Then there was Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead 4 days before Jesus arrived. And even there were those who did not believe, Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And he did.

Jesus did not abandon that mother, that young man, or Lazarus. Jesus is deeply moved by what we all go through in our lives. He loves us so deeply that he was willing to die on a cross for us!! Jesus will stand with us, walk with us and never abandon us. He will be there to say, "do not weep...child arise...come out!" We will have new life in Christ Jesus through that glorious Easter Resurrection!!

So, as we journey on Palm Sunday, through Holy Week to that wonderful Easter morning, be guided to that cross. Be guided to Christ Jesus who died for our sins so that we may have eternal life. And shout from the mountain tops...Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!!

Yours in Christ,
Vicar Christy





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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 415 Vine Street
 Johnstown, PA 15901
 Phone: 814-536-7521
 Email: firstlutheran@wpia.net
 Fax: 814-536-0855
 WEB SITE ~www.firstlutheran.info
 Like us on Facebook

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VICAR

Christy Harford

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Kim Rauch

LEARNING MINISTRY ASSOCIATE

Barbara J. Pingatore, R.N.

OFFICE MANAGER

Jancie Stanley

CLEANER

Paul Eisenhuth

CHURCH COUNCIL

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~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

In memory of Geoff Miller gifted by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Kohler

CHURCH PRESERVATION FUND

In honor of the baptism of *Luca Robert Gamba* gifted by Caryl Swanson

Gershwin program is next noon recital

Gershwin choral works will open the Tuesday Noon Recital Series April 9. *Vox Nova, the Mt. Aloysius College* chorale, will sing such popular tunes as *Someone to Watch Over Me* and *Fascinating Rhythm*. Nancy Way is the director.



Other programs in the upcoming series are:

April 16. *Jazz musicians from four high schools* will perform together for the first time, after a rehearsal preceding the program.

Directors from Forest Hills, Greater Johnstown, Richland and Westmont Hilltop alternate as conductors of the ensemble.

April 23. *Matthew Sprinkle*, organist at Moxham Lutheran Church, will play classics and hymn improvisations. A Johnstown native, he has performed and also directed choirs across the United States. He was invited to present a choral concert at the Vatican. Sprinkle studied organ improvisation at the Juilliard School.

April 30. *Darlene Seals and Devon Haselrig* return with their popular program of gospel, patriotic, rhythm and blues, soft rock and jazz. Seals and Haselrig, who are in music ministry at several churches, have performed many times throughout the region.

In our prayers



In the life of our congregation, there are often important events which touch the lives of the First Lutheran family. We commend them to you and encourage you to share news with us.

- + Sympathy and prayers for family and friends of Robert Howsare who died February 25.
- + Sympathy and prayers for Bill and Becky Gregory and family on the death of Bill's stepfather.
- + Sympathy and prayers for Annie Hayes and family on the death of her mother.

**Income and Expense Summary
as of February 29, 2024**

	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru Feb 29, 2024	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru Feb 29, 2024	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$28,290.79	\$26,503.98	\$1,786.81
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$10.00	\$708.34	-\$698.34
TOTAL INCOME	\$28,300.79	\$27,212.32	\$1,088.47
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$35,285.26	\$28,384.82	\$6,900.44

Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness to First Lutheran Church. God bless.

Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday, April 23
Share your news with us!



Council met on March 13, 2024, to hear reports and conduct business.

As part of Vicar Harford's internship, a committee is to be formed with three members from First and three from Benscreek. The Internship Committee (or chairperson) will meet periodically with her supervisors from the Seminary and the Synod to review her progress. Those three appointed by council from First are George Fattman, Bill Grubb and Fawn Slonka.

Council recommended dividing the remaining \$1000 in benevolence funds to the following ten recipients:

- Allison N. Vaughn Memorial Fund
- Cambria City Mission
- Cambria County Humane Society
- Cambria County Library
- Johnstown Walk of Hope
- Penn State Lutheran Campus Ministry
- Salvation Army
- St Francis Sharing and Caring
- SVDP Family Kitchen
- Women's Help Center

Council is still looking for members to attend this year's Synod Assembly on Saturday June 15, at the Altoona Convention Center. Anyone interested please talk to Bill Price or Vicar Christy.

The next regular council meeting will be Wednesday, April 10 at 7:00 pm.

Thought for the month. . .

"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."

Romans 6:5

HE IS
RISEN.
HE IS
RISEN
INDEED

ALLELUIA

Easter 2024

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

There are over 775,000 words in the Bible and not one of them makes sense without these six: Jesus is risen from the dead.

There are roughly 2 billion Christians in the world and not one of them has a thing to say without these six words: Jesus is risen from the dead.

These are the words the women carried from the tomb. These are the words that have been passed from person to person and from community to community. These six words have found countless people whose lives were already dead—broken by pain and suffering, sin and darkness and given them new life.

The impact these words have had on countless lives since the first time they were spoken is immeasurable. How have these words changed your life? How have these words helped you emerge from the tomb of sin to new life?

Friends, Jesus is risen from the dead. May you live in the hope and promise of those words and experience the joy and hope of this Easter message every day of your life.

The Staff of the Office of the Bishop, Allegheny Synod
Bishop Paula, Pastor Kevin, Sue Ellen and Michelle



Jesus, thank you for Easter. Thank you for a yearly reminder of your death, burial, and resurrection. Thank you for winter and how it shows us the death necessary for Spring and new life. Lord, you know how desperately we need reminders because we often get fixated on temporary circumstances. We allow things that don't go as planned to zap our joy and belief and cause us to despair. But that's not what you want for us! You are the God of hope. Lord, forgive us when we forget and unbelief takes over. Or when we make having hope insignificant. Jesus, renew us with your hope. Fill us with your joy and peace. Lord, this Easter, may the significance of the gospel become the best news to us again in a fresh way. May we never grow weary of hearing and sharing what you did for us! Lord, may we abound in real hope despite all circumstances. Teach us to be okay, even when it looks like things are not okay. In Jesus' name, amen.



Bread of Life WOV Setting

The Easter Season with its renewing spirit and vitality will be reflected in our liturgical setting – “Bread of Life” in With One Voice. The “Bread of Life” music is bright and optimistic. The melodies and rhythms are energetic, and many congregations use this setting year-round.

The spirit of With One Voice can be summed up in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

It is the voice of the Church that is heard in singing together.

It is not you that sings, it is the Church that is singing, and you, as members of the church, may share in its song.

I invite you to welcome this new liturgy into our service as we celebrate the Bread of Life in the risen Christ.

Kim Rauch



Praise God
from whom all
blessings
flow.

Music Sunday

We celebrate and honor all our musicians on April 28, Music Sunday.

Once known as “Cantate,” the fourth Sunday after Easter is the appropriate day to celebrate music in the church. We are grateful for all who sing, play an instrument, participate in Hand Bell Choir and the Adult Choir, play the tower bells, provide music for Saturday worship, offer outreach via the Tuesday Noon Recitals, and those who are involved in planning music in worship. First Lutheran truly has a talented and working force who contribute talents and gifts of music. We are richer for their generosity.

TO ALL OUR MUSICIANS – THANK YOU!

**SOME
THING
NEW**

New Bulletin Covers!

Our traditional bulletin artwork has become limited in the size that we use. Therefore, at the end of April, our bulletins will take on a new look! We have found a graphic design series that ties directly with the lectionary and scriptures for each Sunday. We will be able to choose from multiple options weekly. Questions? Concerns? Please speak to Vicki Price or a staff member.

◀ Lenten Outreach – West End Food Pantry, other pictures page 6.



The generosity of First Lutherans reaches beyond our church walls, into the community, the church at large and globally. We receive notes of thanks and acknowledgements for many of the gifts given. Acknowledgements received are noted each month in the VSJ and posted on a bulletin board located in the Lounge.

THANK YOU to the many who have made Holy Week, the Three Days and this Easter morning meaningful with music, special music, preparing the altar, decorating, office work, cleaning, and extra service as ushers, greeters, communions assistants, musicians, acolytes, lectors and readers. "Liturgy" means the work of the people, and it is good work we do together in the name of our risen Lord!



THANK YOU to everyone who supported our many Lenten outreach ministries. Our partners at the West End Food Pantry, ELCA World Hunger-Buck-a-Chick, YWCA Stork's Nest, and tissue collection for the residents of Heritage Ridge Senior Living center. Collections will come to a conclusion Sunday, April 7 with the exception of the tissue donation that will continue through the month of April.

Vine Street Journal Deadline

Every Journal has a deadline for submission of information to be included in the next edition of our newsletter. The routine deadline is the third Tuesday of the month at noon. This deadline is noted on each VSJ calendar and an email is sent to those who routinely provide information. Anyone can submit material relating to our church ministries or events.

Information submitted after the deadline may not be included in the journal for that month. Please submit information via email to bjpingaol.com. It may also be submitted verbally if necessary.

In order to have the Journal mailed in a timely fashion it is important that the deadline is adhered to. Your support of this will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

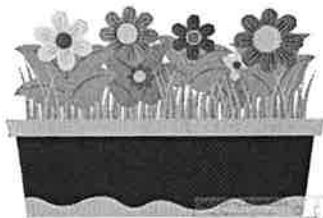


First Lutheran Walkers
Basket Raffle



As part of the Walkers pledge to more fully support the Johnstown Walk of Hope, we are

placing several baskets in the Social Hall and Lounge for a basket raffle. All monies will go to the Johnstown Walk of Hope during their June 1 Walk. Tickets will be available Saturday and Sunday after services from April 6th through May 5th and during the April noon recital lunches. Winners will be drawn May 5th and notified May 6th. Please consider supporting this effort. All money received by Johnstown Walk of Hope goes to local cancer patients. The First Lutheran Walkers thank you for supporting our efforts to help this great locally run charity.



STUVER'S NURSERY COUPONS

Spring has arrived and so have the flower coupons for Stuver's Nursery. Coupons will be available for purchase following church Saturday and Sunday. You may also contact Donna Kovalchek or Cindy Fabo. The price for a hanging basket coupon is \$18.00. The flat (consisting of 8 market packs of annual flowers is \$14.00. These make wonderful gifts for flower lovers.



Game Day Returns

First Lutheran Church has not had a Game Day since the world shut down in March of 2020. In fact that day on March 15, 2020 was the last time we were together for a long period.

It is time we get together to just have fun. So join in the fun at noon on Sunday, April 14. A light lunch of sandwich, chips, veggie tray and dessert will be followed by game time.

Bring a favorite game of your own, or play one provided but just come to play and enjoy.



TEA PLEASE. On May 5th 2024 a Ladies Tea Party will be held in the social hall @12:30pm. All ladies from the church are invited and are welcome to bring guest.

Please RSVP by April 25th. A sign-up sheet will be available in the lounge or you may call the church. Any questions should be directed to Cindy Fabo or Fawn Slonka.

HEALING
SERVICE



Good Shepherd Sunday

Prayers for Healing
Saturday April 20th
Sunday April 21st

Including prayers for healing on Good Shepherd Sunday is a perfect opportunity to be reminded that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and joined to the risen life of Christ, the lives of the baptized are shaped by generosity and sacrifice. Giving one's life, resources, gifts, or whatever one holds most dear for the sake of another is both a witness to the love we have first been shown and an act of faith. Hearing Jesus' words in this Easter season reminds us that laying down one's life is not an act to be feared; rather, it is an act that defies death, as we trust that, washed in the waters of baptism, we already live in the resurrected life of Christ.

Join others in prayer for healing for yourself and others in need.

LBW 360 *O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come*

1 O Christ, the healer, we have come
to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored
when reached by love that never ends?

2 From ev'ry ailment flesh endures
our bodies clamor to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess
that wholeness is our deepest need.

3 In conflicts that destroy our health
we recognize the world's disease;
our common life declares our ills.
Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

4 Grant that we all, made one in faith,
in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us,
shall reach the whole of humankind.

April Readings and Psalm

April 7 – Second Sunday of Easter

- Acts 4:32-35
The believers' common life
- Psalm 133
How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity.
- 1 John 1:1--2:2
Walking in the light
- John 20:19-31
Beholding the wounds of the risen Christ

April 14 – Third Sunday of Easter

- Acts 3:12-19
Health and forgiveness through the risen Jesus
- Psalm 4
The LORD does wonders for the faithful.
- 1 John 3:1-7
The revealing of the children of God
- Luke 24:36b-48
Eating with the risen Christ

April 21 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

- Acts 4:5-12
Salvation in the name of Jesus
- Psalm 23
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
- 1 John 3:16-24
Love in truth and action
- John 10:11-18
Christ the shepherd

April 28 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

- Acts 8:26-40
Philip teaches and baptizes an Ethiopian
- Psalm 22:25-31
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD.
- 1 John 4:7-21
God's love perfected in love for one another
- John 15:1-8
Christ the vine





ALTAR/ORGAN FLOWERS

Here is a listing of flowers available. Please sign up on the boards in the lounge.

Altar dates available:

April 28, May 19
June 23, July 14, 28

Organ dates available:

April 21, May 5, 19, 26
June 9, 16, July 21

Sign-up boards are available for reserving your flower requests. The charts are located on the wall in the Lounge area. One board is for Altar Flowers - \$40. (If there are 2 listings on the same day, the flowers are only \$20.) the other is for Organ Flowers - \$30. As noted, more than one listing can be requested and the cost will be shared. Payment will be due on or before the date you have chosen. Thank you

**Spring Benefit Dinner
Camp Sequanota
May 3, 2024**

Suggested donation of \$60 per person

4:45 PM Tours of camp

5:30 PM Appetizers and Trivia Time

6:00 PM Dinner



Join us for an evening of fellowship to support camp and raise funds to help kids attend summer camp. Sing some camp songs and see the impact that Sequanota is having on campers, guests, and volunteers with the presentation of the Annual Report.

The Jesus Prayer



The early monastics known as the "Desert Fathers and Mothers" wrote a simple scriptural prayer called the Jesus Prayer, which they taught pilgrims to pray 3,000 times a day.

The prayer is simply: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." For centuries, believers have used it as a mantra to call upon the powerful name of Jesus and beg him to anoint them with kindness.

An easy way to begin is to sit comfortably and set a timer for somewhere between five and 20 minutes. Close your eyes and say the Jesus Prayer silently, connecting it with your breath. Continue to breathe the prayer in and out until the timer rings. As other thoughts surface, release them gently and return to the prayer.

Another way to pray it is with a walking meditation. Say the prayers as you walk slowly, connecting the rhythm of your steps with your breath and the mantra. The more you use the Jesus Prayer, the more it prays itself within you.



It's a HOMECOMING!

Family, Friends, Former Members!
Invite them NOW so they can
PLAN AHEAD!
MARK your calendars NOW!

When is everyone coming home???
Saturday, August 3

Where is the Homecoming???
RIGHT HERE at First Lutheran!
Start talking about it NOW! Watch for more details in the months ahead!



Happy Easter, dear church.

“So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.” That’s where the Gospel of Mark originally ended. And it just seems so odd to me. It’s so abrupt. I mean, the women had seen the angel. He’d announced that Jesus was raised from the dead, and then he tells them all this good news and wants them to go on their way. And they just are not going to say a single word.

There are three words in that passage that really stand out for me, especially in the Greek. One is fear — phobos. We get phobia from that. The other one is amazement — ekstasis. We get ecstasy from that. And the other one has to do with being seized. It actually means “being possessed.” So we take a look at these women, and they’ve had this miraculous appearance by an angel. They’ve heard the good news that Jesus has raised from the dead, and they’re too afraid to do anything about it, and they just are going to be silent. It seems that nothing changed. They came to take care of Jesus’ dead body because on the Sabbath they could not work. But on the first day of the week, they were there. They have this announcement, and then it’s all the same.

Sometimes I think we feel like nothing’s changed. Sometimes I think that the events in our country, in our church, around the world are just so terrifying and so overwhelming that it seems like the resurrection really didn’t make a difference. But these three words really say something about the women, and I think about us and, most especially, about Easter. When they said that they were filled with amazement — this is this ecstasy, ekstasis — they were really standing. It means literally standing in a different place. So though they were still in the tomb and they hadn’t reacted yet, nevertheless, everything had changed. And because of the resurrection, we, all of us, are standing in a different place. The whole of creation is standing in a different place. And the word for fear, phobos, phobia we get from that. But it’s really a sense of trembling in the presence of God, of awe that they were actually filled with awe — not paralyzed by fear but filled with awe. And I hope this Eastertide and all year round, we have a sense of the presence of God that fills us with awe. And it also says that they were seized with fear. Well, the word means “possessed.” And yes, we believe that in baptism because of the resurrection, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and we now are all Spirit-possessed.

When things seem to be staying the same, when things seem to be happening and coming at us so quickly, I think it’s very important to take time to be a little amazed, to be standing in a different place, to have a sense of this awe and trembling before the Lord, and to allow ourselves to be possessed by the Spirit, who will give us power and courage in these times.

My favorite hymn is “Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song.” It’s ELW 808. And the last verse goes like this: “I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey; but courage will come with the sound of his steps by my side. And with all of the family Jesus saved by his love, we’ll sing to his dawn at the end of our journey.”

Be well, dear church. Happy Easter.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Volunteer Page - Month of April

ALTAR GUILD

Fawn Slonka and Donna Kovalchek – *Saturday*,
April 6 and 20

Annie Hayes and Carol Massingill – *Saturday*,
April 13 and 27

Vicki Price, Carol Allison - *Sunday*

COUNCIL GREETERS – Jim Hargreaves and
Karen Hargreaves

FLOWER DELIVERY – Jim Hargreaves

ACOLYTES

7 Council
14 James Hill
21 Council
28 Josie Hill

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

7 Tom Roberts
14 Barry Critchfield
21 Rick Hite
28 Bill Grubb

SATURDAY PIANISTS

6 George Fattman
13 Joel Hoshaw
20 Harriett Miller
27 Jeanne Burr

TOWER BELLS

1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Anne Fattman
2, 9, 16, 23, 30	George Fattman
3, 10, 17, 24	Vicki Price
4, 11, 18, 25	Harriett Miller
5, 12, 19, 26	Kim Rauch
7, 14, 21, 28	Heidi Staib

VIDEO

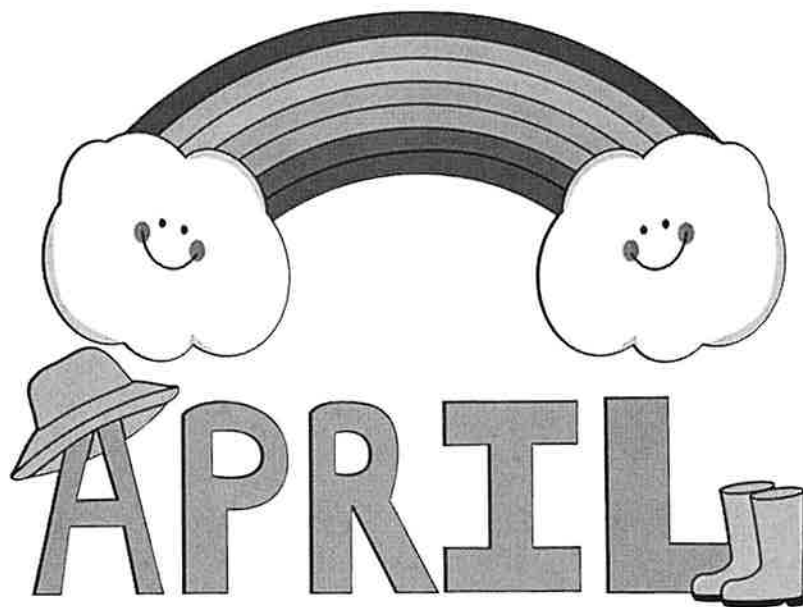
7 Bill Price
14 Rob Abele
21 Bill Grubb
28 Bill Hargreaves

LECTORS

6* George Fattman
7 Tom Roberts
13* Joel Hoshaw
14 Ann Furlong
20* Harriett Miller
21 Rick Hite
27* Jeanne Burr
28 Rick Blackford
*Saturday Lectors


SOUND

7 Rick Blackford
14 Calvin Anderson
21 Bill Grubb
28 Chuck Staib



April 2024

First Evangelical Lutheran Church – Johnstown, Pennsylvania
 814-536-7521 email: firstlutheran@upia.net
 Office Hours: Mon. thru Fri. 9 am - 2 pm

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
 7 Second Sunday of Easter 11:00-Word & Sacrament Vicar Harford Noon-Hospitality Basket Raffle Tickets Available	8 11:00-Staff Meeting 11:45-Communion 12-Prayer Meeting. 8-Channel 9 Broadcast OFFICE CLOSED 8-Channel 9 Broadcast	2 11:00-Staff Meeting 6:30-Bellechoir	3 9-Conference Pastors: Text Study	4	5	6 Eve of Second Sunday of Easter 5:00-Word & Sacrament Vicar Harford Basket Raffle Tickets Available
14 Third Sunday of Easter 11:00-Word & Sacrament Vicar Harford Noon-Hospitality Noon-Game Day	15 11:00-Staff Meeting 11:45-Communion 12-Prayer Meeting. 8-Channel 9 Broadcast	16 Noon Recital High School Jazz Musicians 6:30-Bellechoir	17 9-Conference Pastors: Text Study	18	19	20 Eve of Fourth Sunday of Easter 5:00-Word & Sacrament with Prayers for Healing Vicar Harford
21 Fourth Sunday of Easter Good Shepherd Sunday 11:00-Word & Sacrament with Prayers for Healing Vicar Harford Noon-Hospitality	22 11:00-Staff Meeting 11:45-Communion 12-Prayer Meeting. 8-Channel 9 Broadcast	23 Noon Recital Matthew Sprinkle 12-VSJ Deadline 6:30-Bellechoir 6:30-Bible Study	24 9-Conference Pastors: Text Study	25 RSVP's due for the May 5 th Tea Party	26	27 Eve of Fifth Sunday of Easter 5:00-Word & Sacrament Vicar Harford
28 Fifth Sunday of Easter Church Music Sunday 9:30-Bellechoir 11:00-Word & Sacrament Vicar Harford Noon-Hospitality	29 11:00-Staff Meeting 11:45-Communion 12-Prayer Meeting. 8-Channel 9 Broadcast	30 Noon Recitals Seals & Haselrig 6:30-Bellechoir	