

SERVING THE LORD IN

K-TOWN, GERMANY

NEWS FROM THE JENSEN FAMILY



April 2022

Landstuhl, Germany

April 27, 2022

Dear friends,

The end of February was spent mostly relaxing and getting used to the new addition to our family, our little Agatha. Emma stayed at home as much as possible recuperating. I moved my desk upstairs to our bedroom to spend more time with the girls. I will never forget our cozy arrangements!

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, several members gathered at a member's home for a bonfire to make ashes for our Ash Wednesday Divine Service on March 2. Holy Week services were canceled last year due to Coronavirus, so there were no palm branches to burn for the ashes. We used wine corks instead! And now we have palm branches in storage for next year. Our Lenten emphasis was the seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143), which teach us how to confess our sins and receive absolution. We held a compline service every Wednesday, either at church or at members' homes. Our midweek services included a light supper and choir rehearsal, preparing to sing the *Victimae Paschali* and "Christ is Arisen" (LSB 459/460) on Easter Sunday. We also had members over one Sunday after church to listen to, reflect on, and discuss J. S. Bach's *St. John Passion*.

The week before Holy Week we decided to clear our minds by taking a mini vacation to Paris, where we met up with our friends, the Ottens. Luke, Ehryn, and baby Wilhelm are part of the exchange program this year at our sister seminary in Oberursel, Germany. You might remember that Wilhelm was my first baptism last December. Ehryn and Emma both speak French, which made the trip much easier. A highlight in Paris was the Basilica of St. Denis, where nearly all the French monarchs are buried. I was really looking forward to seeing the grave of Louis IX (St. Louis!). I searched the crypt twice, only to find out from a guide that St. Louis's grave was desecrated, and his bones scattered during the French Revolution! One thing we did not consider much before our trip was how difficult it would be to push a stroller around Paris, especially in the metro. Elevators were often elusive, so we developed various systems of lugging a stroller and baby up flights of stairs and escalators. Now we know better for next time!

Holy Week began with our Palm Sunday procession and reading of the St. Matthew Passion during the Divine Service. We offered vespers services at church on Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, not expecting much of a turnout. To our surprise we had around 12 people each night! We divided Luther's *A Meditation on Christ's Passion* into three parts for our nightly devotion and sang any Lenten hymns we were not able to get to during the rest of the season. From Maundy Thursday on we had a number of visitors. The Ottens and three German students from Oberursel stayed with us, as well as the Swenson family from Wiesbaden. All of our babies were celebrating their first Easter!

Our Maundy Thursday service included the usual "stripping of the altar." On Good Friday we observed Tre Ore, a three-hour service from noon until 3 p.m., meditating by way of readings and hymns on our Lord's suffering and death, and observing the "Chief Service" with Holy Communion. Our Tenebrae service (service of darkness) was later that evening and one of our chaplains, Rev. Ray Ayers, assisted with the readings. At 8:24 p.m. (sundown) on Holy Saturday we began our Easter Vigil service. What a joyful

transition to Easter! Towards the end of the service, everything stripped from the altar on Maundy Thursday is returned to its place as the bells peal and the congregation sings This Is the Feast! The service ended around 10 p.m., and then Emma served an “Easter Feast” for our guests. We ate our ham and cheesy potato casserole around midnight! And then it was right back to church on Easter Sunday for 8:30 a.m. Divine Service. What a joy to see so many visitors! The service was followed by a potluck Easter breakfast.

Another highlight since last writing was re-instituting our regular Winkel (that’s what it’s called when Missouri Synod pastors come together for a meeting). At the end of March, Pastor Schuschke from Trinity Frankfurt joined me and Chaplain Ayers in Kaiserslautern for a day of study and mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. Just yesterday we drove up to Frankfurt for our April Winkel. As is often the usual way at Winkels, we study a portion of the Lutheran Confessions (currently the Smalcald Articles) and discuss an upcoming text we will preach on.

I am sure you have been following the news about the war in Ukraine, and perhaps you have heard about all the women and children seeking refuge in other European countries. Towards the end of March, I was contacted by a friend of a Ukrainian woman who is married to a Wisconsin Synod pastor. The pastor met his wife while teaching at a Lutheran seminary in Ukraine. This pastor’s wife flew to Poland to pick up her elderly mother at the Ukrainian border. The mother is 83 years old and in a wheelchair. Her caretakers abandoned her, so the daughter came to rescue her mother. They were looking for housing in the Frankfurt area as they try to navigate the visa process for the mother to move permanently to the United States. We lined up a room for them at the seminary in Oberursel. Please join us in praying for this pastor’s wife and her mother, particularly that the visa application process will go quickly!

Please continue praying for our family and our congregation as well. Pray especially for all those affected by the situation in Ukraine. We appreciate everything you do for us and our work among U.S. military personnel and others in Germany.

Jesus be with you,

Rev. Nathaniel Jensen

The Jensen Family



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To support the LCMS through the work of Rev. Nathaniel and Emma Jensen, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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