



# LOGOS

The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

*"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1:5*

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May 2022

Easter Joy

St. John's held its first indoor Easter service since 2019 on Sunday, April 17, joyfully celebrating on a day filled with music, flowers, and spiritual renewal.



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Palm fronds decorate the altar on Palm Sunday, April 10.

**LOGOS**

LOGOS is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except for the July/August issue.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to [logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org](mailto:logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org).  
The deadline for the June issue is May 24.

**St. John's Vision Statement**

St. John's Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

**St. John's Mission Statement**

St. John's mission is building a strong spiritual community in Christ; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.

**St. John's Staff and Leadership**

**Staff**

Supply Plus Minister: The Rev. Dr. Laurence K. Packard  
Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson  
Organist: Judith Marcinko  
Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson  
Sexton: Julio Sorto

**Parish Leaders**

Peter Olivere, Treasurer  
John Restall, Pledge Clerk  
Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

**Vestry**

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden  
Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden  
Jeff Aitken  
Dave Dunlap

Diane Henderson  
Peter Olivere  
Lisa Pope

## Words on Hymns: Martin Luther's Revolutionary Work

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a prolific hymnodist (writer of hymns), authoring works such as *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, based on Psalm 46, and the Easter hymn *Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands*, which was inspired by a medieval Easter hymn from approximately 1100 C.E. called *Christ Is Arisen*. To the early Lutherans, Luther's hymn was new and daring.

*Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands* (*Christ lag in Todesbanden*) is Luther's reworking and expansion of the earlier *Christ Is Arisen* (*Christ ist erstanden*), which was one of his favorite hymns. *Christ lag* first appeared in the *Erfurt Enchiridion* of 1524. From there it worked its way into virtually all subsequent Lutheran hymnals. In fact, Luther's title for *Christ lag in Todesbanden* was "The Hymn of Praise 'Christ Is Arisen' Improved." The term "improved" references the tune, not the text.

The tune's arrangement is credited to Johann Walther (1496–1570). But it is possible that Luther also had a hand in its arrangement.

Walther was one of the great early influences in Lutheran church music. At first he seemed destined to be primarily a court musician. A singer in the choir of the Elector of Saxony in the Torgau court in 1521, he became the court's music director in 1525. After the court orchestra was disbanded in 1530 and reconstituted by the town, Walther became cantor at the local school in 1534 and directed the music in several churches. He served the Elector of Saxony at the Dresden court from 1548 to 1554 and then retired in Torgau.

Walther met Martin Luther in 1525 and lived with him for three weeks to help prepare Luther's German Mass. In 1524 Walther published the first edition of a collection of German hymns, *Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn*. This collection and several later hymnals compiled by Walther went through many later

editions and made a permanent impact on Lutheran hymnody.

*Christ lag in Todesbanden* points to a popular German Easter folk song from about the 12th century called a *leise*. This folk song, in turn, has its roots in the mighty sequence "Victimae paschali laudes" by Wipo of Burgundy, the Easter sequence in the Roman rite. In early usage, the choir sang the sequence in Latin and the congregation sang the folk song immediately thereafter. This became one of the most popular tunes of the Reformation.

Luther had prepared revisions of the Mass in 1523 (*Formulae Missae*) and 1526 (*Deutsche Messe*). Only a decade earlier, the entire Mass was said in Latin, including the readings from the Bible. Now the Mass was bilingual—Latin and German. Before the Reformation only the choir sang, but now the congregation was singing new hymns in the liturgy.

The arrangement by J.S. Bach (1685–1750) in *The Hymnal 1982* was not published for another 200 years. The original version had seven stanzas and appeared first in *Enchiridion* (1524). Richard Massie (1800–1887), rector of St. Bride's Church in Chester, provided an English translation of all seven German stanzas in Martin Luther's *Spiritual Songs* (1854). The shortening of the hymn to four stanzas in English took place later in the 19th century in the *Church of England Hymn Book*. Bach's *Cantata No. 4* is based on this hymn, as are other settings for organ.

Luther adapted earlier tunes and composed some original ones and also wrote new texts and adapted some old ones—a total of about 34 texts and tunes. His work was revolutionary and carried the spirit of his Reformation to the hearts, minds, and voices of the people.

Carol Dunlap

## Parish News

### Upcoming Events:

➤ St. John's Book Club will meet on **Tuesday, June 7**, at 7:30 p.m. to discuss *1776* by David McCullough. This nonfiction selection tells the story of America's birth and of those who fought on both sides of the Revolutionary War. Details about the location of the meeting will be announced closer to the date. All are welcome!

### Thank You to:

➤ Eileen Tallent and the members of the Altar Guild, who decorated the church so beautifully for Easter.

### We celebrate with all who have birthdays in May:

Patricia Bleicher, Debbie Carter, Maegan McDonald, Robert McDonald, Romana Martin, Bill Schenck, Owen Tallent, and Barbara Wien.

### We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in May:

Leslie Mead and Jeff Petrich.

