



Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

April 2026 Newsletter

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." [Saint John 10:27]

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **John 10:27-28**

Dear Sheep of the Divine Shepherd:

A Musician of the Reformation



Among the many figures who helped shape the Lutheran Reformation, Johann Walter holds a unique place, whom the Church recognizes on April 21st. While theologians such as Martin Luther articulated the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, Walter helped ensure that these truths were sung by the people of God. Through his work as a composer, editor, and church musician, Walter became one of the primary architects of early Lutheran church music and played a decisive role in developing the Lutheran chorale tradition.

Walter is often considered the first Lutheran Kantor, a title that reflects both his musical leadership and his theological commitment to the Gospel proclaimed in song.

Early Life and Education

Johann Walter was born in 1496 in Kahla, in present-day Thuringia, Germany. Little is known about his early childhood, but he received a strong musical education and eventually became associated with the electoral court of Saxony. Walter served as a singer and musician in the court chapel of Frederick III the Wise, the prince who famously protected Luther during the early years of the Reformation. This connection brought Walter into the circle of reformers in Wittenberg, where the theological and liturgical reforms of the church were unfolding.

It was there that Walter developed a close relationship with Martin Luther, a partnership that would shape the future of Lutheran church music.

Collaboration with Martin Luther

Luther firmly believed that music was a gift of God and a powerful vehicle for the proclamation of the Gospel. He famously wrote that next to theology, music deserves the highest praise. Walter became Luther's most important musical collaborator in turning that conviction into reality.

Together they worked to place biblical and doctrinal truth into congregational song.

In 1524, Walter published the *Geystliche Gesangk Buchleyn (Spiritual Songbook)*, the first Lutheran choral hymnbook. This collection included:

- Early Lutheran hymns written by Luther and others
- Polyphonic choral settings (Many Voices) for trained singers
- Musical arrangements designed to support congregational participation

The book provided structured musical settings for the emerging Lutheran liturgy and became a foundational text for Lutheran worship.

Theological Significance of Johann Walter's Work

Walter's contribution was not merely musical; it was deeply theological.

1. Music as Proclamation of the Word

In Lutheran theology, the Word of God is central, and music serves that Word. Walter composed and arranged music so that the text remained clear and intelligible. The music existed to carry the Gospel, not overshadow it.

This reflected Luther's conviction that hymnody should teach and confess the faith. Lutheran hymns therefore became sung theology.

2. The Birth of the Lutheran Chorale Tradition

Walter helped establish what became the hallmark of Lutheran worship: the chorale.

Characteristics included:

- Strong connection to Scriptural texts
- Clear melodic lines suitable for congregational singing
- Harmonizations that could be sung by choirs

These chorales later inspired composers such as:

- Johann Sebastian Bach
- Michael Praetorius
- Heinrich Schütz

Through Walter's work, Lutheran congregations did not simply hear the faith preached—they confessed it together in song.

3. Choir and Congregation Together Walter's settings often used choir and congregation together.

Rather than reserving sacred music only for professional choirs—as had often been the case in medieval worship—Walter’s music helped foster a liturgical culture where the entire congregation participated.

Later Life and Service as Kantor

After his work in Wittenberg, Walter served in various musical posts. Most notably he became Kantor in Torgau, a city closely associated with the Lutheran Reformation and the dedication of the first newly built Lutheran church.

There he oversaw church music, trained singers, and continued composing. His work helped solidify the musical foundations of the Lutheran liturgy for generations.

Walter died in 1570, leaving behind a legacy that shaped Lutheran and Protestant worship across Europe.

Lasting Legacy in Lutheran Worship

Johann Walter’s influence continues wherever the Lutheran church sings.

His contributions helped establish several enduring principles of Lutheran worship:

- The Word of God at the center of music
- Congregational participation in hymn singing
- Music as proclamation and confession of faith
- Integration of theology and liturgy

These principles remain visible today in Lutheran hymnals, including the rich chorale tradition preserved in worship.

As Luther himself once said of Walter:

“He is the one who has set my hymns to music.”

Through Johann Walter’s faithful service, the Reformation did not merely reform doctrine and preaching—it reformed the song of the church.

Johann Walter helped ensure that the truths rediscovered in the Reformation were not only taught from the pulpit, but also sung by the faithful. In Lutheran theology, this is no small thing. For when the church sings the Word of Christ, the Gospel is not only heard—it is confessed together by the whole people of God.

Listen to Jesus,
Pastor Zimmer

Christian Stewardship

A Better Way



The most common question about stewardship is not whether a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, “How much should I give?” But this question really means, “Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?”

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn’t necessary because it isn’t expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no “Thus saith the Lord,” or “should” concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn’t tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won’t be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians should tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn’t specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one’s income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here’s another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we’re not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let’s answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I’m glad you’re still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God’s promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I’d really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we’re ecstatic that you’re giving, and that you’re giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.

APRIL

Week of April 1-4

Wed, April 1 6:30 pm Choir Practice
Thu, April 2, 6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Service
Fri, April 3, 6:30 pm. Good Friday Service
Sat, April 4, 6:30 pm. Holy Saturday Service

Week of April 5-11

Sun, April 5, 8:00 am Easter Breakfast
Sun, April 5, 9:30 am Festive Easter Service

Week of April 12-18

Sun, April 12, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, April 12, 9:40 am Fellowship
Sun, April 12, 10:00 am Bible Study

Week of April 19-25

Sun, April 19, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, April 19, 9:40 am Fellowship
Sun, April 19, 10:00 am Bible Study

Week of April 26-30

Sun, April 26, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, April 26, 9:40 am Fellowship
Sun, April 26, 10:00 am Bible Study

April Birthdays

02 Christine Stocker
03 Caitlin Collins
08 Clarisse Rose
10 Laverne Stephens
13 Nathan Geschke
17 Tom Staffeldt
25 Jesse Pape

April Baptismal Anniversaries

01 Julie Zimmer
01 Diane Weaver
02 Dawn Rouser
15 David Zimmer
30 Lisa Cruz

April Wedding Anniversaries

04 James & Laurie Bingenheimer
28 Michael & Jolene Delaney

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday | March 29
Divine Service 8:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday | April 2
Triduum Service 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday | April 3
Tenebrae Service 6:30 p.m.

Holy Saturday | April 4
Candlelight Easter Vigil 6:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday | April 5
Festive Divine Service 9:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday marks the beginning of the Triduum—the three days that lead us from the upper room to the empty tomb. This solemn Divine Service begins with corporate confession and absolution, includes Holy Scripture readings and a sermon on God's new covenant, focuses on the Holy Supper our Lord Jesus gives His people, and concludes with **Psalm 22** and the stripping of the altar in preparation for Good Friday.

Good Friday

On Good Friday we ponder anew God's great love for us in Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This Tenebrae Service (service of darkness) features Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's sacrifice and a choral version of the Passion according to Saint John. It concludes in almost total darkness as we ponder the wages of our sin and what it cost Christ to redeem us.

Easter Vigil

On Holy Saturday, we celebrate our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. This candlelight service begins in almost total darkness with the lighting of the paschal candle, features Old Testament readings that foreshadow and explain our baptismal life in Christ, and ends with the first proclamation of Easter. Come and join in one of the church year's most beautiful services.

Easter Breakfast

The Elders are hosting an Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 5 at 8:00 am. Please sign up on the sheet in Luther Hall if you are attending and can bring a dish to share (optional).

See Dan Rossof with any questions or if you can help to set up/cleanup. Thanks.

Easter Sunday

Easter is our annual celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. A festive Divine Service focuses on Saint Luke's account of the resurrection and includes the Supper of our Lord's resurrected body and blood. This service also features special choral and instrumental music. Come and celebrate our Lord's resurrection with your brothers and sisters in Christ!

New Address

Rose Clark
2361 White Berch Lane # 205
Joliet, IL 60435-5514

Altar Flowers

Thank you to everyone who purchased Easter flowers to decorate the sanctuary.



The 2026 flower charts are posted. This is a wonderful way to help beautify God's house, celebrate a birthday or anniversary, or remember a departed loved one. If you would like to contribute flowers to help beautify the sanctuary on a Lord's Day, please add your name to any open Sunday on the flower charts. Ruth Ogden will do two altar bouquets for \$30. If you sign up, **Karen** will contact you to get your flower request, and a brief note to place in the worship bulletin. When the worship service is over, you are welcome to take your bouquets home.

Sunday Treats

Do you enjoy treats and fellowship after Sunday services? If so, please consider signing up on any given Sunday(s). Why not sign up with a friend? *Empty slots mean no treats.* To enable our diabetic members to enjoy these treats, please consider supplementing some of the "sugary goodies" with crackers and cheese and/or fruit.

Follow Us on Social Media

Follow us on social media to keep up to date with church happenings and events, find a variety of new and old congregational photos, and read inspirational posts and quotes from Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and various Christians throughout the centuries.

Facebook: fb.me/DSLCLCbolingbrook

Twitter: [@dslc60440](https://twitter.com/dslc60440)

Shop with RaiseRight are available throughout the year for everyday expenses and gifts for any special occasion. Next order date is **April 12**. Pre-purchased cards are available after Sunday services and forms are on the bookcase in Luther Hall. These cards make many of the Ladies Aid projects possible, and best of all they do not cost members anything beyond the face-value amount. We get paid to use their service. What is more, many of these cards can be reloaded so you do not have to continually buy new cards.

Your Organization:

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church – Manna

Your Coordinator: **Lisa Cruz** 630-636-6359

• dslcmanna@yahoo.com shopwithscrip.com

Your Enrollment Code: 2BLD2C7AA55973

Prayer Chain

Several members are part of a church prayer chain. If you (men or women) would like to join them in praying for our congregation's special needs, please contact Julie Zimmer at 712-584-5301.



Important Phone Numbers

Church office: 630-759-5300
Pastor Zimmer: 563-880-9532
Deacon: 708-253-3506 (Mark Drevlow)
Prayer Chain: 712-584-5301 (Julie Zimmer)
Head Elder: 630-360-5573 (Scott Collins)
Newsletter info: 630-759-3188 (Karen Moritz)
(due April 24)

Thrivent Dollars

Directing Thrivent Choice Dollars is a great way for eligible Thrivent members to show support for what matters most to them. Thank you to everyone who donated their 2025 choice dollars.