



# ALMA LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

May 2019

## Symbols of the resurrection: The true story of the Easter egg

An egg doesn't seem like much. Small enough to sit snugly in your palm in a plain white or brown shell, available to buy in any grocery store, convenience store and even some gas stations, an egg is one of the most unassuming, common foods we know. But at Easter time, eggs of all sizes and colors appear everywhere. They are made, hidden, gathered and loved by Christians and non-Christians alike to celebrate the holiday.

How did this happen? Eggs are part of the springtime holiday in many religions: An egg is placed on the Jewish Seder plate for Passover, and decorated eggs are shared during the Persian New Year. The connection is natural: As there are more and more hours of daylight in the spring, poultry lay more eggs. Also in springtime, when the food stores of the previous harvest are depleted after a long winter, the return of a steady supply of eggs is a welcome source of nourishment before gardens or fields are producing much or animals are big and fat enough for butchering.

Eggs are also a miraculous incarnation of new life: A seemingly inanimate object, resembling a stone or sealed tomb, cracks open to reveal a living, breathing creature. Even an egg cooked for your plate is beautiful: a pure white and gold "chapel," as poet Anne Sexton once wrote about her breakfast. An eggshell is an irresistible canvas for decoration, whether dunked in cups of dye on your kitchen counter; traced with pencils, crayon, beeswax or markers in simple or intricate patterns (think of Ukrainian Easter eggs); or covered with paper shapes, glitter and even gold leaf. (In 1290, King Edward I of England had 450 eggs gilded to be given as gifts.)

It was during the Victorian era, when childhood and family life began to be especially cherished, that dying and hiding eggs became an Easter activity for children. The first chocolate Easter eggs appeared in this era, too. Today, however, Easter eggs most often are either chocolate or plastic eggs, not dyed chicken eggs. Plastic eggs (which can be filled with candy, money or tiny toys) and chocolate eggs are more common these days because they are simpler to prepare, shelf-stable, and more exciting to eat or crack open for most kids than a hardboiled egg. With our busy lives and schedules, who's to argue with making Easter easier for families and congregations? On the other hand, plastic eggs create more landfill waste if they are not reused each year, and a plastic egg doesn't have the same, physical connection to new life that a real egg has.

Still, many families and churches who use plastic eggs for their Easter egg hunts have told me they also dye hardboiled eggs, both because they see it as part of tradition and because it's fun. I don't have children of my own, but I haven't let that stop me from decorating Easter eggs for my own home. I've colored cups of vinegar with the classic PAAS tablets (which, it amazed me to learn, have been on the market since 1880, when a Newark pharmacist began selling them from his shop), and I have tried simple, natural dyes, using pantry items like purple cabbage, herbal tea bags, beets and turmeric.

When I learned about the old Orthodox tradition of dyeing eggs red using yellow onion skins, I couldn't quite believe it would work, so I had to try it. To my astonishment (see the recipe that follows), onion skins turned white eggs a dark, mottled shade of red, impossible to describe. Meanwhile, in my research about red eggs, I also learned about the legend of Mary Magdalene and her red egg, well-known in the Orthodox Church and the story most often told to explain the tradition for dyeing red eggs at Easter.

In this legend, Mary Magdalene decided to seek an audience before the Roman Emperor, Tiberius Caesar. Anyone who appeared before Caesar was expected to bring a gift, so Mary Magdalene brought a plain, ordinary egg. She came before the imperial throne holding out the egg in her hand and greeting Tiberias, declaring: "Christ is Risen!" She told him about her teacher and savior, Jesus, and the unfair treatment and death penalty he'd received from Caesar's own governor, Pontius Pilate. She also told him how Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared, alive, to her and all his disciples.

Caesar responded with bored disbelief: "How can anyone rise from the dead? That's as impossible as that egg in your hand turning red." And, miraculously, the egg in her hand turned from white to a deep red. In Orthodox iconography, Mary Magdalene is often pictured holding up this red egg in her hand, sometimes with the words, "Christ is Risen," spelled out on it in tiny letters.

Heidi Haverkamp is an Episcopal priest and author of *Advent in Narnia* and *Holy Solitude*, both published by Westminster John Knox Press. She lives in DeKalb, Illinois, with her husband, two cats and a beagle.

This article is excerpted from the April 2019 issue of *Gather* magazine. To read more like it, [subscribe to Gather](#).

## ACTIVITIES

### Children's Sunday School -

9:30am every Sunday except the 1st Sunday of the month. Ages 3 years old through 8th grade. Meets in the basement of the church. Contact Moriah Nygren for more information.

**Adult Sunday School** - Meets at 9:30am every Sunday except the first Sunday of the month. Meets in the room behind the altar. Contact Doug Gustafson for more information.

**Youth Group** - For 7th grade through 12th grade. Contact Megan and Weston Engel for more information.

**Hope Circle** - Meets the fourth Tuesday mornings of the month at 9:30am. Location varies. Contact Janice Gustafson for more information.

**Faith Circle (MGM)** - Meets the third Thursday at 1:30pm @ Bethlehem in Wahoo. Contact Angie Johnson for more information.

**Chat & Sew** - Meets the 1st Tuesday at 8:30am. Contact Sharon Hollst or Lana Krumpus for more information.

**Book Club** - Location and date varies. Contact Viki Miller for more information.

### Choral and Bell Choirs -

Practices are held on Wednesday evenings. Contact Angie Johnson to join.

### 150th Anniversary committee

Next year is the 15-th anniversary of Alma. If you would like to be part of the committee that will decide how we celebrate, please contact Jess Miller.

### Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to and supported the youth by coming to the Easter breakfast!

### Vision for Mission transition

The name of the ELCA Vision for Mission program is changing. As we near the end of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we have an opportunity to invite even more ELCA members to support ministries of the church through undesignated giving opportunities. Going forward, you can support the church in the same way you did through the ELCA Vision for Mission program by giving to the ELCA "where needed most" at [elca.org/give](http://elca.org/give), or by making checks payable to "ELCA" and including "where needed most" on the memo line.

### Follow us on social media

Do you follow the ELCA on social media? Keep informed with church news, event notices, pictures and video across many platforms. Look for us at [Facebook.com/Lutherans](https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans); [@ELCA on Twitter](https://twitter.com/ELCA); [@ELCA on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ELCA) and [YouTube.com/ELCA](https://www.youtube.com/ELCA). Join this online community of Lutherans!.

### 40 Days of Giving – thank you!

Thank you for participating in ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving! We invite you to gather your congregation's gifts and mail them to: ELCA, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Please make checks payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and write "40 Days of Giving" on the check's memo line. Give online at [ELCA.org/40Days](http://ELCA.org/40Days). As we continue to celebrate the Easter season, we invite you to keep in touch with ELCA World Hunger on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAWorldHunger). Thank you, again, for your contribution toward a just world where all are fed.

### "Three Sides" podcast: Little steps, big faith

Can the science behind children's brain development inform faith formation? Author Dawn Rundman discusses this on "Three Sides" podcast. Dr. Rundman provides daily practices for parents and ideas on how congregations can create inviting spaces for children to experience God. Find this episode and others at [LivingLutheran.org/podcast](http://LivingLutheran.org/podcast).

### Central Europe Teaching Program

Do you know someone who might be interested in teaching in Central Europe? ELCA Global Mission volunteer teachers serve in partnership with companion churches in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. Learn more and apply at <http://bit.ly/ELCACentralEuropeTeach>.



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## BUDGET

### As of 2/27/19

Income: \$8733.00  
Expenses: \$6438.59  
Balance: \$2294.41  
World Hunger YTD: \$87.57

## INFORMATION

### Council Chair Contact

Tyler Munter  
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### Secretary's Email

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Website - [almalutheran.com](http://almalutheran.com)

Facebook - Search for "Alma Lutheran Church" and "Alma Lutheran Educational Ministries"

## MISSION STATEMENT

Disciples by grace, Growing in faith, Living our hope, Sharing God's love.