

When you hear the word "fellowship," what's the first thing that comes to mind? Coffee and doughnuts in between Divine Service and Bible Study? Sharing a meal with fellow believers? The "fellowship hall" where so many church activities take place? "The Fellowship of the Ring?" The fellowship of believers? Church fellowship? In our own circles, there is confusion over the term "fellowship" because of at least two, if not three, distinct ways the word is used. On the one hand, there is fellowship in the spiritual or religious sense (the fellowship or union between Christ and believers). This sense of the term "fellowship" is closely related to another sense: the unity between churches and the members of those churches (church fellowship). On the other hand, the term "fellowship" also denotes any aspect of communal life, including coffee hour or a lunch out. This sense of the term "fellowship" can also be appropriate so long as the other aspects of the term are not forgotten or confused.

The English word "fellowship" can be traced back to the 1200s and

originally meant "companionship." Shortly thereafter it was used to describe a "body of companions" and in the following century a "spirit of

## Christian Buzzwords: "Fellowship"

By Pastor Jensen



comradeship, friendliness." So you can see clearly how any kind of comradeship or friendship, including drinking a coffee or sharing a meal with others, can be described as "fellowship." In Middle English, the term "fellowship" also became a euphemism for sexual intercourse ("carnal fellowship"). From this use, you can see the correlation between the terms "fellowship" and "union" (i.e. the sexual union).

In translations of the Bible into English, the word "fellowship" became a technical term to translate the Greek word "koinonia," which has the sense of sharing things in common. In Acts 2:42, for example, the early believers

"continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (KJV). In 1 Corinthians 1:9, "fellowship" is used for the community of Jesus Christ: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (see also Philippians 1:5). Later in 1

Corinthians, in 10:20, Paul warns against a similar fellowship, not with Christ, but with demons: "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they

sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." There are similar exhortations in 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 3:9; 5:11).

In 1 John 1:3 we see the clearest connection between fellowship or communion with Jesus Christ and fellowship or communion with one another: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." John is seeking true unity or communion in the congregation by way of true unity or communion with the Father and with our LORD Jesus

Christ. The unity we have with God leads to unity with other believers. Fellowship with God is the basis of our fellowship in the church. United with Jesus Christ, we give Him our sins. In turn, He gives us His righteousness in a blessed exchange. In the fellowship of the Christian congregation, then, we share our burdens and our struggles with one another as well as the forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ.

Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the Sacrament of the Altar, also called the Holy *Communion*. Communing on our Lord's very body and blood, we become united with Him more intimately than we could ever imagine; and not only with the Lord, but with all who likewise participate in that same union. We truly become one body: the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is how St. Paul puts it in his first letter to the Corinthians:

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we

being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (10:16-17). This also explains why our church is so adamant on the practice of "closed communion." Fellowship can only be expressed where fellowship truly exists.

In John Russell Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1848), fellowship in the sense of "church fellowship" is described quite negatively: "to hold communion with; to unite with in doctrine and discipline. This barbarism now appears with disgusting frequency in the reports of ecclesiastical

conventions, and in the religious newspapers generally." As churches began having official dialogues, a term was needed to describe that point at which adequate agreement in doctrine and practice had been reached. When could members of churches share things in common, most especially the altar and pulpit? When could preachers be exchanged and the Lord's Supper received together (in common)? "Church fellowship" came to describe the official position churches take towards one another.

Church fellowship really only became a big issue in the last few centuries because of increased mobility. Before, church membership was often territorial.

The religion of the ruler would be the religion of his people. The

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord"

—1 Corinthians 1:9



United States became a melting pot not only for cultures but for religion as well. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, Baptist, Pentecostal and other particular churches would be found in one geographical area. And further theological divisions would lead to further breakdowns within each camp, leading to multiple Lutheran denominations, for example. This was also the case in Europe. With such open theological division in a limited geographical area, along with the increased movement of people, official resolutions about church fellowship became necessary so

believers would know where they belong.

Today, church bodies like the Missouri Synod declare altar and pulpit fellowship with other church bodies around the world, confessing that we share the same doctrine and practice. For example, at last summer's convention, the Missouri Synod declared fellowship to exist with five more churches (in Ukraine, Uganda, Sri Lanka, South Sudan/Sudan, and Finland). We now recognize that we can share pulpits and altars with these churches. At the same convention, the Missouri Synod declared itself to no longer have fellowship with the Japan Lutheran Church after that

church body began ordaining women into the Office of the Ministry.

For those in an international context, our church body's official fellowship agreements with other church bodies can hit closer to home than for those in the United States. Every week we experience the joys and challenges of church fellowship as we interact with members of partner churches from all over the world. Last Sunday, for example, we had visitors from partner churches in Germany, South Africa, and Brazil. Our fellowship in the Holy Spirit with God the Father and our Lord Jesus brings us together into a shared confession of our most holy faith, and a common sharing in the gifts God gives to us, most especially in the Lord's Supper. This church fellowship is then reflected in our fellowship with each other as the Body of Christ throughout the week, at coffee hour, shared meals, and sharing our burdens and joys with one another everyday.

A Letter from the Mission Field

## Pastor Christian Tiews

"And when they bring you before the...authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Lk 12:11-12). I recently accompanied one of our Iranian parishioners to his asylum interview before the German authorities. His goal was to convince the official that his Christian faith is authentic. In the previous weeks, "Ali" and I had reviewed the key points of



Christianity. He was well prepared, although quite nervous. We met in the waiting room (see picture). I asked him to read Psalm 91 in Farsi. Then we prayed. Next, his attorney arrived. We were soon called up by an official, accompanied by an interpreter. We all filed into the hearing room. The walls were bare except for a calendar. Sitting in a blue rolling office chair across from two large computer screens, the official went

through a long list of questions. During the interview, Ali declared that he had been baptized several years ago, attends church every week, and is very active in the congregation. He also explained that he regularly invites Iranian friends to church. After over two hours of questioning, it



was getting stuffy. The official opened the window. The joyful sounds of children playing soccer broke the heavy atmosphere in the room. Then the official asked the decisive question: "If for some reason you were deported to Iran, how would you live out your Christian faith?" Gathering his thoughts, Ali replied in a firm voice: "Jesus Christ and the Christian faith have become part of my identity. I am compelled to share Him with others, even though that could lead to my execution. But I have to do it. I cannot deny Him." In that hearing room the New Testament came alive, as the Holy Spirit supplied a young Christian with courage, teaching him what he ought to say.



# Elder's Corner

## Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

We find ourselves deep into this Lenten season. A time of humble reflection on our sinfulness, and our dire need for a Savior. We look ahead to what Christ accomplished for us in his obedient death on the cross that Good Friday, and his glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday.

But why?

We may ask, am I worthy of Christ's redeeming work? As confessional Lutherans, we can say with scriptural confidence that in and of ourselves we are most assuredly unworthy of our Lord's gracious gifts and mercies. Paul tells us so in Romans; "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and again in verse 7:18 "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh."

Looking within ourselves, we will not find the source of our inherent value. Likewise, we cannot look to our fellow earthbound sojourners for a reliable sense of our worth either. Everyone around us is just as sinful and flawed as we are.

So then, where are we to turn our focus to gain a proper understanding of our value and a true sense of worth? The answer is both simple and yet, infinitely profound... our heavenly Father.

In the creation narrative we are told explicitly and specifically *that* God created us, *how* he created us and *for what purpose* he created us.

In the opening chapters of Genesis, we learn God formed Adam from the earth, breathed life into him, and created Eve from his side. "Male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27) With the attention a fine craftsman gives to his work, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." ( Psalm 139:14) "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus

to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

These are not random acts performed by a detached, uninvolved entity. We further read that Adam and Eve were created in His likeness, given attributes that are reflective of his nature. Attributes such as intelligence, a sense of morality, and the capacity to be in relationship

with others, most importantly with our heavenly Father himself. All mankind are descendants through Adam and Eve, and those same attributes have been passed down to us.

He thoughtfully created us with work to do, to tend the creation he placed us in, to obey and worship him, and to show his merciful love to others. From Micah 6:8, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God". Through all these things we reflect His glory to the world around us and we give him the thanks and praise he deserves.

When we pause to reflect on how truly significant all these points are, we can begin to get a glimpse of why we are so valuable to God. So treasured in fact, that He saw fit to devise and execute a plan for our eternal salvation. A plan that came to full fruition in the humiliation, suffering, death and resurrection of His dear sinless son, Jesus Christ.

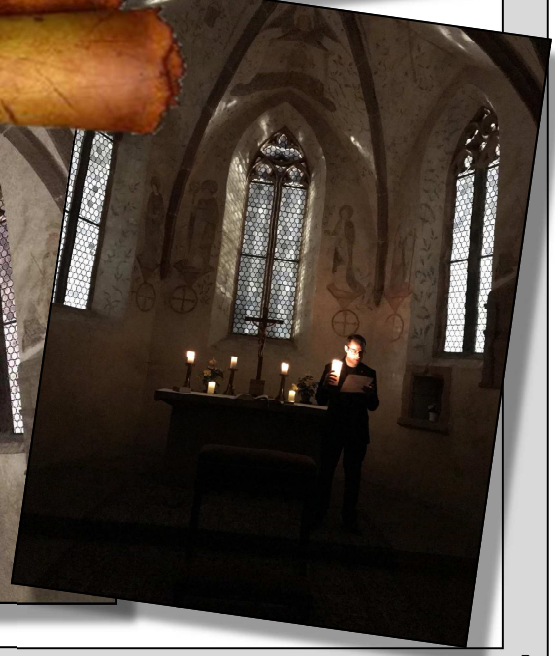
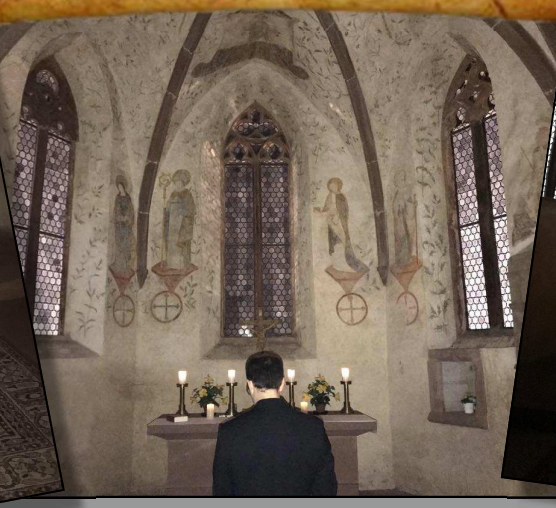
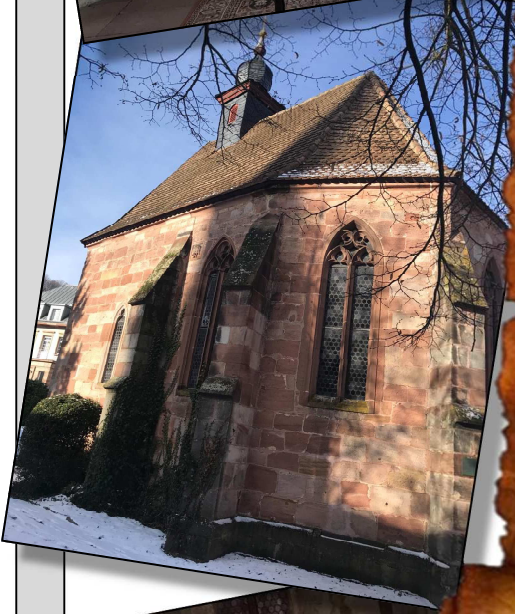
Our Father, created us in love, designed us to do good works in love, which in turn reflects that love back to him. Our true value and worth, lie firmly in Him. Our source and our destination. "You are precious in my eyes." (Isaiah 43:4)

—Elder Stephen Guzik





**Ember Friday  
Vespers**  
At The  
**Alte Kapelle**  
Landstuhl, Germany



# Special Services

At St. Michael's

## Palm Sunday

Divine Service, Mar. 24th @ 8:30 AM

## Holy Week Vespers

Mon. Mar. 25th

Tues. Mar. 26th

& Wed. Mar. 27th

@ 7:00 PM

## Maundy Thursday

Divine Service, Mar. 28th @ 7:00 PM

## Good Friday Tre Ore

Fri. Mar. 29th @ 9:00 AM—12:00 PM

## Good Friday Tenebrae

Fri. Mar. 29th @ 7:00 PM

## Easter Vigil

Sat. Mar. 30th @ 6:58 PM

## The Resurrection of Our Lord

Sun. Mar. 31st @ 8:00 AM

## Easter Brunch

Sun. Mar. 31st @ 10:00 AM

## Sunday Mornings

At Kirche Mittendrïn

## Fellowship Time

9:30-10:15 AM

## Sun. School & Bible Study

10:15-11:15 AM

## Sunday Catechesis

St. Michael's Basement 11:30 -12:30

# March

# Birthdays



1st Cedric Kumar

14th Markus Busenius

15th Jonathan Ponziano



Thank you to all who came out and helped with the Mexican Fiesta Potluck dinner on February 23rd for the Ukrainian refugees in Kaiserslautern.



Please join us again at the end of March. Date and Signup Genius coming soon.

## LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

Kaiserslautern  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church (KELC)

For news, worship sign-ups  
and fellowship events.



On Thursday nights at  
St. Michael's



Please join us in praying for the important work of the Kaiserslautern Military Resiliency Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

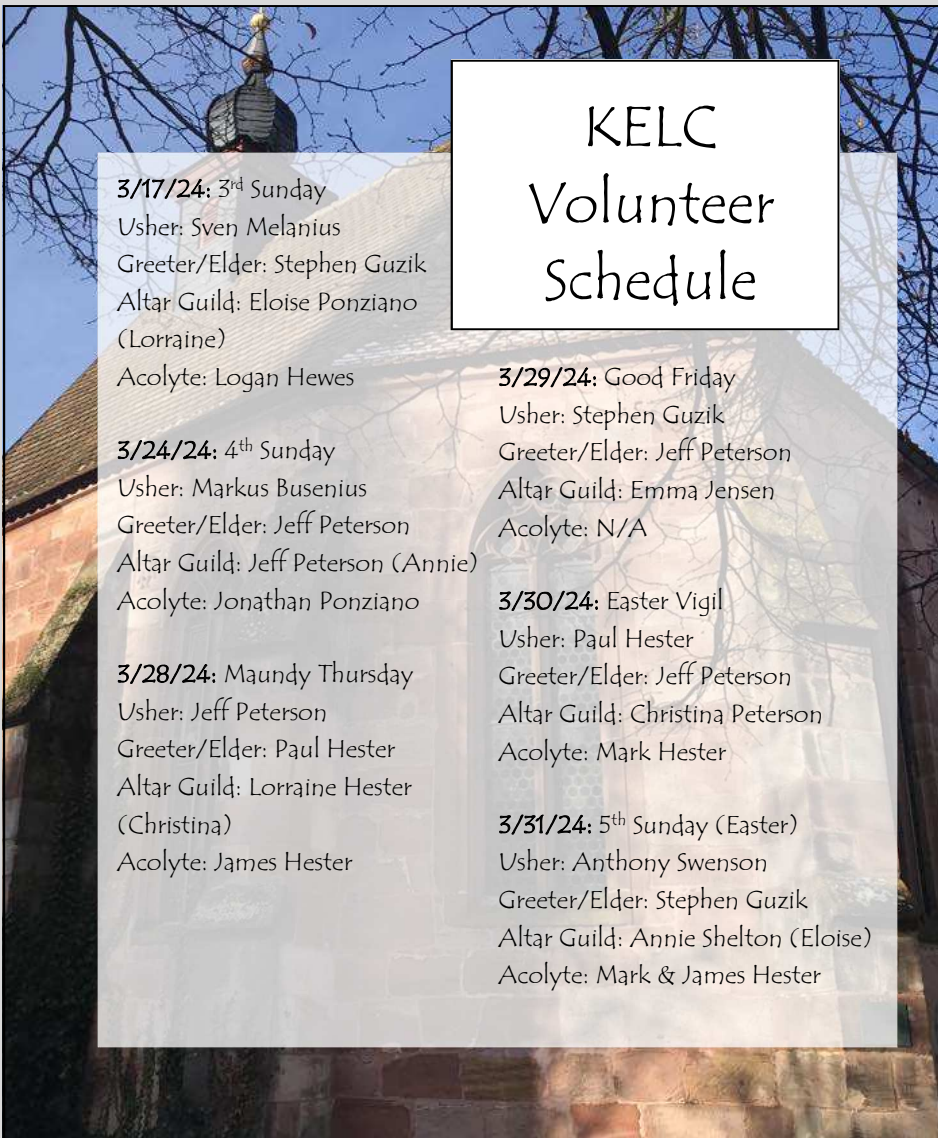


## KELC Men's Group

Meeting monthly  
At 7:00 PM  
on Tuesday Evenings as  
announced.


At The Green Dragon  
in Nanzdietschweiler

The Guzik's House  
Hauptstrasse 68  
66909 Nanzdietschweiler



## KELC Volunteer Schedule

<p><b>3/17/24:</b> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Usher: Sven Melanius Greeter/Elder: Stephen Guzik Altar Guild: Eloise Ponziano (Lorraine) Acolyte: Logan Hewes</p> <p><b>3/24/24:</b> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Usher: Markus Busenius Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson Altar Guild: Jeff Peterson (Annie) Acolyte: Jonathan Ponziano</p> <p><b>3/28/24:</b> Maundy Thursday Usher: Jeff Peterson Greeter/Elder: Paul Hester Altar Guild: Lorraine Hester (Christina) Acolyte: James Hester</p>	<p><b>3/29/24:</b> Good Friday Usher: Stephen Guzik Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson Altar Guild: Emma Jensen Acolyte: N/A</p> <p><b>3/30/24:</b> Easter Vigil Usher: Paul Hester Greeter/Elder: Jeff Peterson Altar Guild: Christina Peterson Acolyte: Mark Hester</p> <p><b>3/31/24:</b> 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday (Easter) Usher: Anthony Swenson Greeter/Elder: Stephen Guzik Altar Guild: Annie Shelton (Eloise) Acolyte: Mark &amp; James Hester</p>
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## Women's Bible Study

A hymn study...

### "Oh Morning Star"

Monday Evenings,  
To Be Announced

**At 6:30 PM**

**Emma's House  
Danzigerstrasse 7  
66849 Landstuhl**