

# Levenhagen λογοι

March 2021

## Thoughts from Aaron

*“And when they had sung a hymn...”*

“And then had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30). This is the closing sentence from the Gospel of Matthew’s account of Jesus and the disciples’ time in the Upper Room. The last thing they did before leaving for Gethsemane was to sing a hymn. The musician in me wonders what they sang...what was the melody and the words that were on Jesus’ lips as He went out to begin the ordeal of His passion? The appointed psalm for Palm Sunday this year, Psalm 118, may give us our answer. The *Hallel* consists of six Psalms (113-118) which were recited (or sung) as a unit on joyous occasions, including during the evening prayers on the first night of Passover. It’s possible (maybe probable) that Jesus and His disciples were singing the *Hallel* as they were leaving the Upper Room. And how does the *Hallel* end? Psalm 118.

As it begins, Psalm 118 seems like a typical psalm of praise: “His steadfast love endures forever” repeated antiphonally across the first several verses. But a closer look reveals a psalm with deeply messianic overtones, bearing the unmistakable imprint of the events of Holy Week throughout. The words of vv. 25-26 were on the lips of the crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. “Save us” (Hebrew: *Hosanna*), “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” Later in the week, Jesus Himself quoted verses 22-23 when He was confronting the chief priests and Pharisees with the parable of the vineyard owner: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” And now, in their last moments together, Jesus and His disciples were again singing these words. And the words take on a new poignancy. Imagine what was going through the mind of Jesus, the Lamb of God, as they sang v. 27, “Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!” All too soon, He would indeed be bound and sacrificed on the cruel altar of the cross for the sins of the world.

And yet, that wasn’t the end of the story. The hymn has a word of hope in vv. 17-18: “I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined Me severely, but He has not given Me over to death.” This one psalm takes us all the way from Palm Sunday to Good Friday through the darkness and despair to the light of Easter Sunday. And with Jesus and the disciples, we conclude the hymn:

*You are my God, and I will give thanks to You; You are my God; I will extol You.*

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!*

**“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”**

**(Psalm 118:22-23, ESV)**



*Above: Rainy day rainbow over campus, looking east from Chapel Plaza*

## Prayer Requests

- **ANSWERED PRAYER!**  
Nathan found the new job he was looking for (see p. 2)
- For our congregations, that members will be able to gradually return to worship services and that we may still find ways to minister effectively to those who are unable to return yet.
- For our Holy Week observances, that each of us may come to know the Lord more and have our faith strengthened by reflection on the Passion and Resurrection.

# Family Update

## *Jobs, Birthdays & Sermons*

Second semester is halfway done already! It's what we call "Reading Week" here at the seminary. Yes, there is reading to do and papers to write, but without classes there are a few extra moments to enjoy time with family and think back over the last few months. It's been an eventful time for everyone in the family.

Although Faith has been limited to online-only school this year, she did have the opportunity to participate in the ensemble for the middle school production of "Disney's Moana Jr." Because they aren't able to stage the show for live audiences, it was filmed to be viewed online during April. We're super excited to see the results of her hard work. She continues to enjoy the friends she's making at the seminary youth group and the chance for them all to play outdoors as the weather improves.

Nathan continues to work hard—both at school and at his job. In March, he started a new job at the Kartplex at Worldwide Technology Raceway, just across the river in Madison, IL. It allows him to earn and save some money while indulging his passion for motorsports. He also continues to participate in

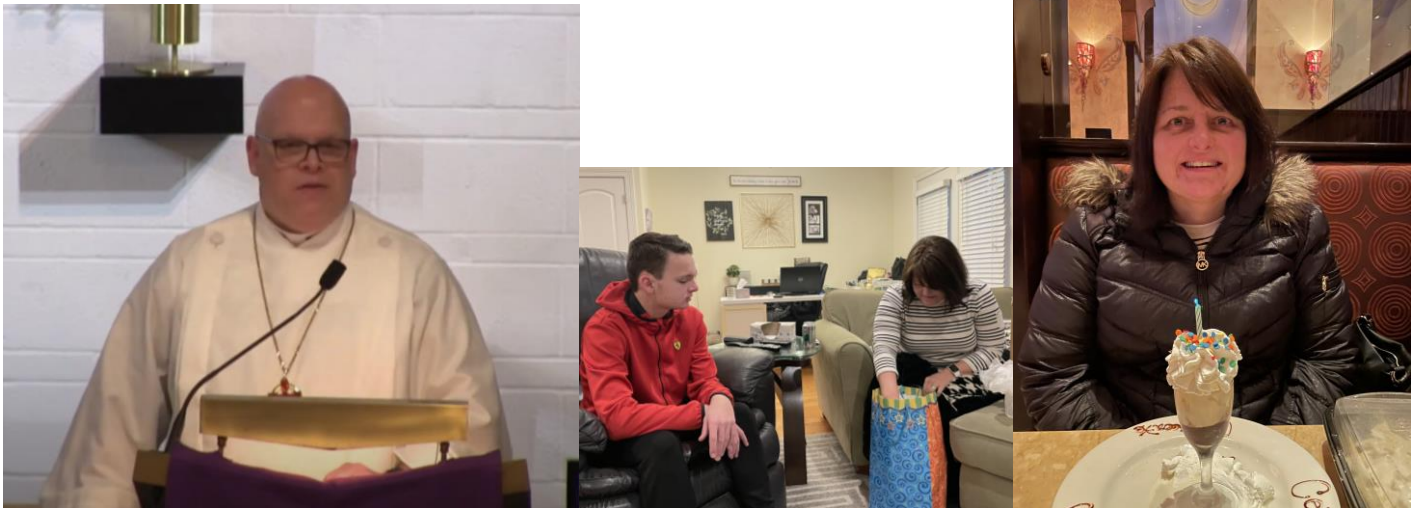
both the seminary youth group and another local youth group in western St. Louis.

Jill celebrated a BIG birthday in February. On advice of counsel, that's all I'm allowed to say. We enjoyed celebrating with her though! We followed the fire marshal's instructions and only allowed her one candle (see below). Nathan got her a 2,000-piece jigsaw puzzle as a gift, so that will keep her busy while I'm doing homework!

I (Aaron) have been as busy as ever with coursework here at the seminary. I'm learning a lot and being stretched in a lot of ways, some of them a bit uncomfortable, but necessary. During March, I had the opportunity to write and preach my first sermon. It was terrifying, but I learned so much. If you care to check it out, you can view the message here (<https://youtu.be/G4FEJ5SRhrY?t=1458>). I also had the joy of leading a worship service at a local senior center.

We thank God for the continued support of our family and friends, old and new!

*LEFT: Aaron preaching his first sermon at Timothy Lutheran Church; CENTER & RIGHT: Celebrating a BIG birthday for Jill!*



## Contact Info

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