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Rev. Joseph and Deac. Dr. Jennie Asher

## DID YOU KNOW?

- German children used to wait for the Easter Fox or Stork to bring them their treats. Today, the job has been taken over by the Easter Bunny.
- Some cities hold Easter bonfires. Traditionally, the bonfire symbolized the ushering out of the cold and darkness with the resurrection of Christ.
- On Easter weekend, an enriched sweet bread is served for breakfast. This is often in the shape of a bunny, rooster or other animal.
- It is estimated that 3.5% of the German population attends church regularly.



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## It Feels Like Home

The sun is finally shining in southwestern Germany. As I sip my morning coffee, a group of young people walk down the street singing the most beautiful, solemn hymns. They are setting the tone for “Karfreitag” (“Mourning” or Good Friday), a national holiday in Germany. Today there will be no shopping, dancing or party events. Today is a day of fasting where, in German tradition, only fish should be eaten.

Yesterday was “Gründonnerstag” (“green” or, more traditionally, “crying” Thursday). Some people eat just green foods on this day. On Sunday, many will go to church (some for the first time this year) and, of course, the Easter Bunny will bring eggs. Homes are decorated with “Osterbaum” (Easter trees) made from pussy willow branches. Families will gather for an Easter feast.

While the German culture’s primary focus is on the secular traditions and few will take time to reflect on our Lord’s death and resurrection, at Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC), the focus will be on Christ. For our members, so very far away from home, walking through the doors of KELC brings them back to the familiar.

Our Holy Week and Easter celebrations bring the traditions with which the adults grew up. From children processsing with palms on Palm Sunday, to a Tenebrae service with candles extinguished and the “strepitus” (loud sound) representing the sealing of Jesus’ tomb, to the joyous Easter “Alleluias” and children singing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” members are reminded a bit of home. In these traditions, they feel connected to the loved ones who are so far away. But most importantly, they are reminded of Christ’s victory over sin, death, and the devil – a victory which will bring them to their eternal home in heaven.

We wish you a most joyous celebration of our Lord’s resurrection. May the peace and joy found in His victory remain in your heart and lead you to share His love with others.



*The children process with palms on Palm Sunday.*

**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

- Our application process for gate access to the local U.S. Air Force bases.
- Our son, John, who was in a serious car accident. We thank God that he only had minor injuries, but pray for peace as he feels guilt over his passenger still in ICU.
- The new class that Joe is starting at the Sembach prison on "Parables."
- Sufficient financial support for us to stay in Germany.

**GIVE THANKS FOR:**

- Safe travel while in the U.S.
- Renewed gate access to the local U.S. Army bases.
- For all the new friends we made as we stayed with and fellowshiped with them during our U.S. travels.

**PRAISE GOD FOR:**

- The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us



# Home Service in Numbers

**1260** people heard about our work

Presentations given in **8** states

**5**

**1/2**

weeks in the U.S.

**4613** miles traveled in the U.S.

**0** inches of snowfall while traveling

**27**

presentations given

**27** inches of snow falling in places we visited the week after we left

*We thank you for your prayers and financial support. It is an encouragement to us as we serve the Lord in this place. We still need nearly \$150,000 in pledges to stay and serve here in Kaiserslautern, Germany. If you haven't yet made a gift, please consider an Easter blessing. If 250 people gave \$50 per month, we could stay and continue to serve military families living abroad. God bless you!*

*Joe and Jennie Asher*



*There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](http://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."*

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