

## From Ashes to Glory

By Pastor Justin Vetrano

Over the past several weeks, as we have witnessed changing weather patterns, I have also witnessed a deep confusion in nature. Just outside my office door several perennials have tried to peek their colorful buds up out of the dirt, only to be met a few days later with frigid temperatures, snow, and ice. What a confusing time and quite the battle for our colorful friends. You can almost hear them asking, "Is the winter ever going to end?"

Their struggle is so LENTEN! Lent seems so long, so dark, and so cold. It began Ash Wednesday, when we faced the cold and stark realities of life, with the reminder that it is "from dust that we have come and to dust we shall return." We acknowledged that the world can be cold

and daunting. The power of darkness seems to overwhelm our longing to live in the light. The colorful nature of glory, with which God has blessed us, drives us to peek the heads of our souls out of that dust, with hope, at times to be sent scurrying for cover from the stark reality of brokenness, with cold winds confusing us, and causing us to wonder, "Is the winter ever going to end?"

I am not a meteorologist, but it's fair to assume that the weather will change. And it's a safe assumption to plan and prepare for warmer temperatures and that flowers will bloom. No matter how harsh the Long Island winter, the flowers bloom, and the leaves return to the trees.

I am always amazed how on the first few warm days each year, people emerge from their homes, open their windows, grab rakes, and begin cleaning up with a renewed vigor as they bask in the warmth of the sunlight and enjoy the outdoors. The warm fresh air in our homes and in our lungs empowers us to spring clean that which has become covered in dust.

So it is with our lives of faith. Lent is long and cold; Holy Week gets darker and more intolerable. Jesus is laid in the cold tomb, and His followers retreat into the ashes of death. And then, God breaks through with glorious hope on Easter morning, empowering us to brush off the dust and shine in the light of God's glory.

As Christians, we have recognized the reality of our own mortality with dust and repentance, and know the hope of God in the resurrection celebration of Easter. We brush off the dust of death with the sure hope of everlasting life with God.

And we will literally brush off the dust as the church community gathers for Pastor's Annual Spring cleanup of the church as we prepare the church for Easter.

Join us on Saturday, April 8, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. to dust, clean, organize and set up the church to welcome hundreds of people for the observance of Christ's passion and the celebration of the Resurrection. (There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex, the entrance hall to the church.)

The long winter is coming to a close; the glory of spring is just around the corner. It's time for us to brush off the dust and welcome the light of Easter to reflect from our glorified lives, made possible in Jesus Christ who promises us ABUNDANT LIFE!

See you around Church,  
Pastor Vetrano 

### Join us for your time of *THE LIFE!*

- Sundays**    **Worship with Communion, 10am**  
                  **Children's Sunday School, 9:45am**  
                  **Bible Study, 11:30am**
- Thursdays** **Worship with Communion, 7pm**
- thru Apr 8**   **Compline Night Prayer, 7pm (exc. Sun & Thu)**
- thru Apr 19** **Lenten Bible Study, Su 12:45pm, W 7:45pm**
- Apr 9**        **Palm Sunday Worship, 10am;**  
                  **Breakfast, 11:15am**
- Holy Week**   **See insert**
- Apr 24**      **Blood Drive, 3:15-9:15pm**

# Getting to Know...Heather and Tim Noonan

By Joni Mazer

**I**t's always a blessing for me to interview fellow members of *THE LIFE* and hear their stories. Everyone has a story, and there is no exception with The Noonans. Heather and Tim were married on April 30, 2016, at *THE LIFE*, officiated by none other than our very own Pastor Vetrano! The couple honeymooned in Antigua in July 2016. That is where the gorgeous picture of them was taken.

**J:** How long have you been worshipping at *THE LIFE* and what brought you here?

**T:** I've been worshipping at *THE LIFE* since 2012. I met Pastor Vetrano at the Carle Place Fire Department, where I am a volunteer firefighter and he serves as Chaplain. He invited me to church, and I started attending on Thursday evenings. After that, there was no turning back!

**H:** I began attending church with Tim in 2014 when we started dating. I grew up Lutheran and attended St. John's Lutheran Church in Lindenhurst, where I ran the senior choir and sang solos.

**J:** What do you like most about *THE LIFE*?



Tim and Heather enjoy a beautiful honeymoon in Antigua.

**T:** We like the very friendly, family atmosphere. There's a nice sense of community and something for everyone.

**J:** Are you involved in any activities and/or ministries at *THE LIFE*?

**H:** I sing in the Choir, substitute for Lisa playing the keyboard with the Worship Band, volunteer with VBS, teach ESL and participate in Women's Ministry.

**T:** I am active in Men's Ministry, and we both enjoy attending the numerous activities available. I plan on getting even more involved.

**J:** What do you do outside of church?

**T:** Heather and I like to walk, run and go to the gym together. We also enjoy going out to dinner, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

**H:** I am a music teacher in the Island Trees School District, working with primary and middle school students. Tim is a phlebotomist with Long Island Blood Services.

**J:** Do you have a favorite Bible verse?

**H:** Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. This is a favorite passage of ours. Tim's sister read it at our wedding. Everyone says it's perfect for us. We make a great team and work well together.

**J:** How has God worked in your life?

**T:** In December 1997, I was hit by a car and was in a coma for six weeks. I had to relearn how to do almost everything. Before the accident, little things would bother me, but now I don't sweat the small stuff. A life-changing experience like that helps you put things in perspective—not that I would recommend it. **L**

the **LIFE**

LUTHERAN CHURCH  
& DAY SCHOOL

## **THE LIFELine**

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"Love Thy Neighbor"  
**BLOOD DRIVE**  
**APRIL, 24 3:15 - 9:15PM**

**CONTACT:** 516-333-3355 THELIFENY.ORG  
**LOCATION:** THE LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH



# Is It I?

By Deacon Paulina J-Mesloh

The Living da Vinci is a dramatic reenactment of the Last Supper that depicts the moment after Jesus speaks to the apostles of His betrayal. As the apostles react to this revelation, they relate their inner thoughts in monologues that end with the question, “Is it I?” Around the table the men freeze their poses to reflect da Vinci’s painting, as soft light shines on the live picture they have created. It is breathtaking every time!

However, this program is so

much more than just the picture at the end. Most important, it is about the final three



(from left) Anthony Giordano, Jason Gudzik, Simeon Raddatz and John Bruno as Judas, Peter, John and Jesus, respectively, at dress rehearsal practice their poses for the reveal.

days of Holy Week. The Maundy Thursday liturgy and the Living da Vinci are merged to provide a complete and memorable service.

The question, “Is it I?” for those who work behind the scenes, has a different connotation, and it is actually answered: “It is all of us.” As Holy Week nears, a crew of many devoted people makes sure that everything is ready for the dress rehearsal. While the actors’ beards grow, costumes, wigs, stage, props, and lights are carefully selected and prepared to become part of the painting.

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## Love Thy Neighbor: Give the Gift of Life

By Roxanne Oelrich

One of God’s great commandments is “Love Thy Neighbor.” What better way than giving the gift of life to a “neighbor” who needs blood. It is estimated that one in three people will need blood sometime during their lives. Just think of a family member, friend, neighbor, a newborn baby or even yourself who may have received blood or a blood product for surgery, transplant, cancer, or trauma. There is no substitute for human blood. One pint of blood can be divided and can save three lives!

Some of you are generous blood donors and give every 56 days or when called by the blood center, especially if you have a rare blood type. Many however are hesitant to give blood, but once informed perhaps you will reconsider.

Blood donors must be between 17 (16

with written parent consent) and 75 years young and weigh over 110 pounds. The reason for this is that the usual donation is one pint which is approximately one-tenth of your total blood volume. There are some medical conditions which can prevent you from donating; these are listed in blood services brochures. In addition, if you traveled to areas where incidence of malaria is high you may be deferred.

On the day you are donating, make sure you have eaten regularly and drink plenty of fluids. Bring photo ID or your blood bank ID card when you arrive to donate. You will be asked to fill out basic info, including SS number and then complete a medical history. Your temperature, pulse and blood pressure will be measured. A finger stick will be taken to determine your hemoglobin. You will be

escorted to a cot where a trained technician will thoroughly cleanse an area on your arm and place a sterile needle into a vein. It usually takes 10 to 15 minutes for the pint to be drawn. After the donation, rest on the cot awhile, and then enjoy some complimentary snacks and fluids.

Most people feel fine after donating if they have eaten and hydrated before donating. Your body replaces the blood volume in 24 hours and red blood cells within 4-8 weeks, so it is important to drink extra fluids for the first day after donating.

THE LIFE is hosting a Blood Drive, Monday, April 24, 3:15 to 9:15 p.m. Please donate blood; you will truly be loving your neighbor! Any questions, please contact Roxanne Oelrich or the NY Blood Center at 800-688-0990. 

## Is It I?

Continued from page 3

The growth of the Men's Ministry, in the last few years, has allowed for each apostle's part to be divided between two men: actors (in costumes) and monologue readers. This creates refreshing dynamics that add texture to the characters. Judas' monologue is read by Deacon Oellrich, whose deep voice and inflections convey a feeling of arrogance that contrasts the burdened and anguished demeanor of Anthony Giordano's portrayal of Judas. This tension adds an interesting poignancy to this character.

Jesus has been portrayed by John Bruno since the inception seven years ago, and has brought a sense of serenity and sensitivity to his depiction. There is no monologue for Jesus, so John projects the part fully through his body language and facial expressions, and he does it flawlessly. John says, "First and foremost it is an honor and a blessing to portray Jesus. I always have this feeling that I'm not worthy and lightning will strike me down, but after six years playing the part that has not happened!"

On April 13, the canvas will be ready in the sanctuary; the soft light will add a candlelight hue to the long table, set with bread and grape juice. The worship service will begin as Jesus and the apostles make their slow entrance into the canvas to complete this living da Vinci picture. The music will then swell, the apostles will freeze their poses and the picture will come alive. As the gospel is read we will find ourselves gazing into the Upper Room.

The magic of this blending of acting, voices, set, and liturgy, results in an unforgettable experience for the congregation. They will be transported through the apostles' thoughts and actions, to their own personal reflections on the question, "Is it I?" as the altar is stripped to mark the beginning of Jesus journey to Calvary. **L**

## A Day at The Zoo

By Lisa Dennelly, Day School Director

**I**s it Spring yet? The calendar says yes, the weather says ... maybe.

The Day School definitely has Spring in the air. It's obvious when you walk into any classroom and see a collection of water bottles, tissue boxes and anything unusual in large quantities. It's ART Show time!

The classes are in the middle of creating animals. Not just any animals, zoo animals. This year's theme is "A Day at the Zoo." THE LIFE Lutheran Day School's annual Art Show will be on May 10. The children and teachers are working very hard on creations that will eventually turn the Fellowship Hall into a



The children love doing art!

zoo. Don't be surprised if you see a few lions and tigers and bears, Oh my!

Please join us on Wednesday, May 10 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. for an evening at the zoo. **L**

## On Playing Judas

By Anthony Giordano

**T**his year will mark the fourth time I've played Judas in the "Living da Vinci." I really need to speak with my agent about being typecast.

What has amazed me so much is that each time, God teaches me something new. Two years ago, a woman came up to me after the Holy Thursday service and said, "What was it like to play Judas?" The answer came out of my mouth before I even thought about it: "I've been playing Judas my whole life."

My own view of Judas is that Jesus did not meet his expectations. He was looking for the savior who was going to free Israel from her oppressors, the Romans. Instead, Jesus came as the suffering servant and preached love and forgiveness. In my own life, Jesus has not met my expectations. Just as Jesus turned the universe upside down with the Gospel, He has also turned my life upside down. When I thought I had Him figured

out, He surprised me again and again. When I felt anger, He softened my heart. When I felt loss, He comforted me and sometimes even brought joy. When I thought I was alone, He revealed Himself to be next to me the whole time.

I am at the halfway point of my life. It took half my life to figure out how much I don't know about God. It also took half my life to figure out that it's all about love. God is love. And I have a lot more in common with Judas than I ever thought. I don't have to put on the costume. I merely need to look in the mirror to understand how wrong I have been, how forgiven I am and that Jesus has transformed my life. It is quite the irony that I now embrace Judas each year during this performance. I am moved in new ways every time.

I look forward to what God has for me this year. **L**



# HOLY WEEK AT the LIFE

## **Maundy Thursday, April 13**

6 pm International Agape Supper  
(\$10 Suggested Donation)

7 pm Worship Service &  
“Living DaVinci” (Last Supper Dramatic Presentation)

## **Good Friday, April 14**

12 pm Stations of the Cross  
7 pm Tenebrae Service (Liturgy of Shadows)

## **Saturday, April 15**

12pm Service of First Communion  
7 pm Easter Vigil Service with Holy Communion

## **Easter Sunday, April 16**

9 am Easter Egg Hunt & Refreshments  
10 am Easter Worship with Holy Communion

### **THURSDAYS at THE LIFE**

Worship & Holy Communion, **7 pm**

### **SUNDAYS at THE LIFE**

Worship & Holy Communion, **10 am**

Children’s Sunday School, **9:45 am**

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