



**2024 Event Schedule**

VOL LXIII  
February 1, 2024

<b>Sat., Feb. 10 1 pm</b>	<b>Laskiainen Luncheon and a walk</b>	<b>Gethsemane Lutheran Church</b>
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On Saturday, February 10, as you see above, we will celebrate the Finnish festival, Laskiainen. This year we will meet at 1 pm to share the usual fare of Pea soup and side dishes, to be followed by a walk by anyone who would like to join in. There are several celebrations around the country that have more elaborate gatherings, partly due to their climate. In Palo, Minnesota, 40 miles north of Duluth, they will meet at the Loon Lake Community Center for a Kropsu breakfast, which features Finnish Baked Pancakes, topped with Lingonberries and powdered sugar. Some people prefer to top them with sautéed cinnamon apples, or with other fruits and berries or with sausages and maple syrup. This is a batter that is poured into a very hot pan and baked; (that is what makes the sides crisp).

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 C (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 T sugar
- 1/2 t salt
- 2 C whole milk
- 1 C all-purpose flour

Toppings as desired: lingonberries, sausage, strawberries, other fruit, etc.

Powdered sugar, optional

Instructions:

1. Place a heavy 9 X 13 inch pan in oven and turn oven to 400 degrees. The pan needs to get very hot.
2. Add the stick of butter to the pan and let it melt in the oven.
3. While the butter is melting, break eggs into a bowl and add sugar and salt; whisk until blended.
4. Add milk alternately with the flour and stir.
5. Using heavy oven mitts, remove pan from oven and carefully pour melted butter into the flour mixture and stir, then pour the mixed batter into the hot pan and return pan to oven.
6. Bake for about 40 minutes or until the pancake puffs up and is nicely browned.
7. To serve, cut pancake into squares or just scoop up. Top with your favorite toppings and serve immediately.

Many thanks to <https://theculinarycellar.com> >Kropsu! You might enjoy reading the comments that follow from Finns and descendants of Finns following the recipe; they suggest many variations and memories of when they first had the pancakes, some in Sweden or in the part of Finland that follows Swedish traditions as well. One comment by the person who offered the recipe on how to handle leftovers amused me as she said she had never had any leftovers and could not help with that!

In Palo on February 3d, following the breakfast, they have artisans and demonstrators in the Laskiainen tradition, a Laskiainen shoppe, a bakery of Finnish breads, a museum and the "Old Co-op Theatre." This is followed in the evening by Moijakka (Finnish stew), and by basketball games by young people, by "Old Timers," and by the Laskiainen Lakers' Game, and sliding for 2 days: no saucers or sleds with runners allowed. They offer sleigh rides, carriage rides and dog sled rides. Wow! We may Need to make a trip there next year! This is too good to miss!

Laskiainen is the Finnish Mardi Gras, usually 7 weeks before Easter. Traditionally, everyone took part in sledge riding, and people used to believe that the further they went, the better the crops would be in the next year. The same applied to eating heavy foods like pea soup, and buns filled with whipped cream, jam or almond paste (laskiaipulla).

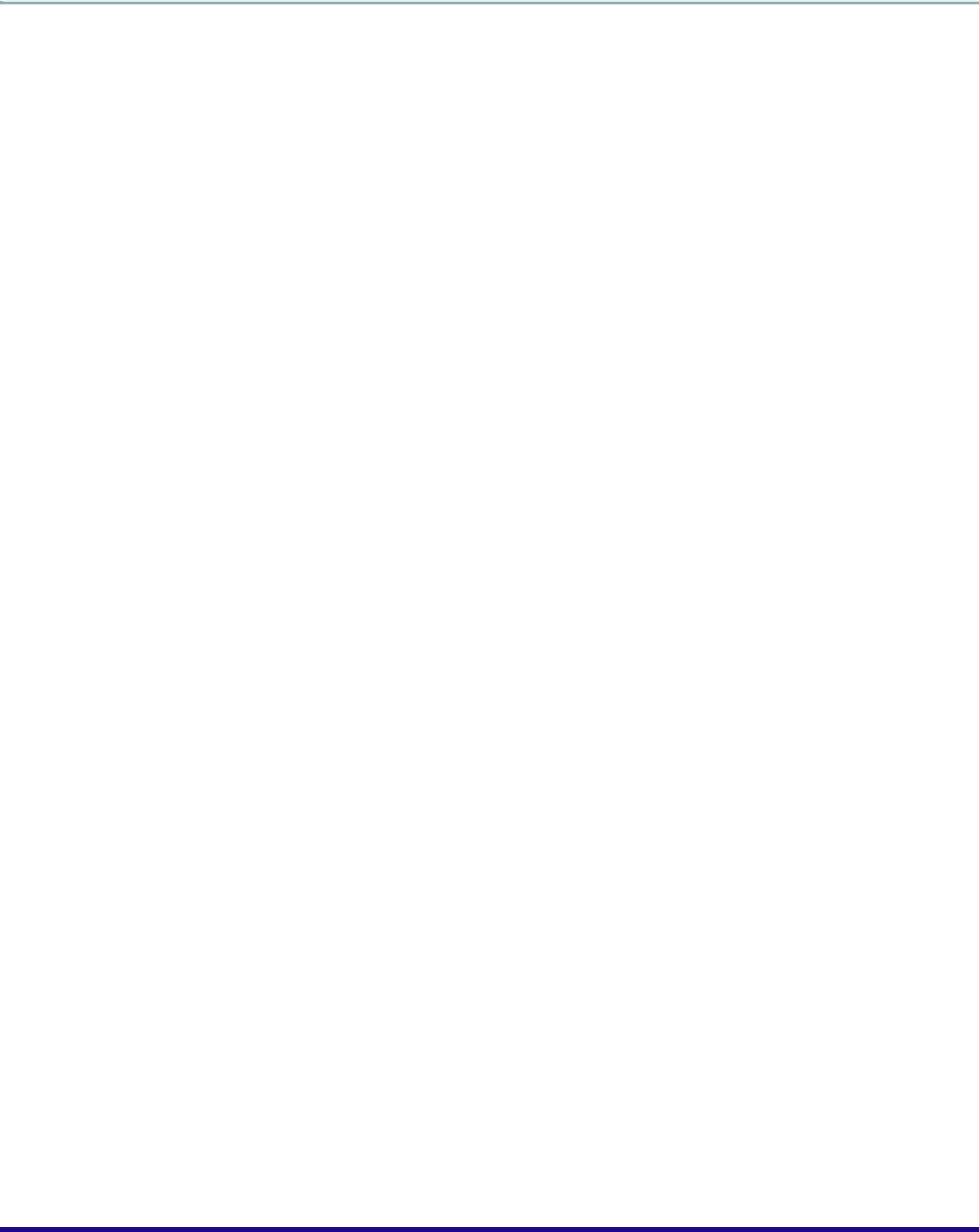
One tradition goes back to Pagan days when people believed that witches also could help ensure a good crop. Close to Easter, children in disguise as witches or wizards appear on the streets. On Palm Sunday, they ring doorbells looking for small treats in exchange for a spell bringing good health. This reminds me a bit of our Halloween. The treats are usually a coin, sweet or Easter egg. On Easter, a traditional meal includes lamb and Mammi, a Finnish rye pudding. The author notes that it is particularly good with cream and sugar! This information may be found at <https://www.visitfinland.com> which has an article called Traditional Finnish Celebrations and Parties.

News from the Helsinki Times, on January 30, includes a comprehensive Finnish study that finds that monitoring the mother's heart rate reduces the risk of brain damage to newborn babies. This is a change from merely monitoring the external fetal heart rate. Apparently to monitor both improves the ability to recognize fetal distress due to oxygen deprivation and to take remedial steps.

Another study revealed that sleep medications given to the elderly often lack sufficient information on how to take them. These are regarded as high risk medications. While 98% most say how much to take, only 83% say when to take them, and 57% fail to mention the duration of treatment. Only 5% say when to discontinue them, and only 3% give the warnings of side effects. Good to know!

Euronews.travel tells us that we should head north in the winter: we are missing northern lights, ice caves and saunas. Apparently this is a good year to see the Aurora Borealis, which tends to peak on an 11 year cycle. You can choose among Alaska, Canada or Scandinavia. Fairbanks has an ice carving festival from 2/17 to 3/31. 100 km. north of there at Chena Hot Springs Resort you will find an ice museum, dog sledding and snowmobiling, with a geothermally heated outdoor pool to warm up afterwards, and maybe see the northern lights. In Iceland, you do not need to drive far from the city to see them either! In Finland, along with the sights and cafes, Loyhly Sauna offers a chance for you to dive into the icy waters of the Baltic Sea before warming up! Any takers? See you on the 10<sup>th</sup>!





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