



St. Paul News

The Newsletter of
St. Paul Lutheran Church
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APRIL

2024

An Easter Journey Worth Taking

My final year of seminary, I took myself on quite the journey. A journey, not of time, but an Easter journey. I made absolutely sure that I attended all of the holy week services. It proved to be quite an exhausting week, but spiritually filling.

The journey really began with attending the Maundy Thursday services at my field work church, Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Charles, Missouri. It was the first time I had ever experienced the stripping of the altar. In this case, I actually was taking part in the service. My task was to lead in the liturgy, including reading Psalm 22 while altar was stripped.

It was a sobering experience, to be reading "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" and the rest of the Psalm while here these parts of the altar area stripped away. Then to turn around and see everything gone, was haunting. It was however a powerful image. I don't know what it is like for a congregation member, but it is a striking reminder of Christ being stripped of his glory for me.

The following day, I attended Good Friday services at a church on the other side of the river, into Illinois. The pastor gave such a great sermon, his final words still stick to my mind. "Jesus says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And the Father does. Amen."

I remember sitting there waiting for more, but those words were everything. The sermon itself was pretty hard law, it was difficult not to see the ugly image of my sinful nature inside that mirror. But the Father forgives me! He forgives me! He does this on account of his son.

Saturday night, I attended worship at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Missouri. It was the first time I had ever attended an Easter Vigil. From the burning of the palm branches in the parking lot, to the candle light processional into the darkened sanctuary, to the growing light of the Easter joy in the midst of the stories of God's deliverance in the Old Testament. The service was beautiful.

Later that night, at 11:30am to be exact, I attended a Midnight Pascha service at a Greek Orthodox church in Des Peres. This was an almost 3-hour service. The service alternated between Greek and English. Admittedly, this was pretty long, even for me. However, the service was still deeply poetic. The incense, plus the ringing of the bells every time they sang Paschal troparion. "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling death, and to those in the tombs, granting life!"

With what little energy I had left, I still made it to an Easter sunrise service, and sat in on a great Bible study on 1 Corinthians 15 lead by Dr. Joel Biermann. This was followed by lots and lots of sleeping.

I tell this story as encouragement to you. We are venturing closer and closer to Holy Week and Easter. I strongly encourage you to come along for all of the journey. Notices the different movements and changes within the weekend services. What does this tell you about your God, how does it enrich your faith.

Be in church on the Sunday of rejoicing, March 10th. Hear of God's rest in the Feeding of the 5,000. Attend Passion Sunday on March 17th, watch as the crosses are veiled, ponder the unknown love of our God. Join in on the Palm Sunday procession on March 24th. Ponder the institution of the Lord's Supper, see the altar stripped on March 28th. Here of your Lord's extravagant love as it is recorded the Gospel of John, as the church turns to black on March 29th.

Witness the church slow brighten to an Easter joy on March 30th at the Easter Vigil. Let the alleluias ring out in exultation and jubilation on Easter Sunday, March 31st. If you are so bold as to attend both the 6:30 and 9:00am service, the sermons will be different, but each service will have their own character.

Partake in this journey and I pray that the Holy Spirit would fill you with forgiveness, mercy, joy, and love. I look forward to seeing you as we journey through this season.

In his Holy Service,
Pastor Neil Wehmas

CHURCH NEWS

VOTERS' MEETING will be on Sunday, April 14 at 10:30AM – items on the Agenda will be Election of Church Council Board members, and review and discussion of the recent surveys regarding a change to our evening Worship Service, with potential action on discussion.

FAITH SHARING FOR 8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION STUDENTS will be on Wednesday, April 24 at 6:00PM

SENIOR RECOGNITION will be Sunday, May 5 during the Worship Service with reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

COMMUNITY BASKET NEEDS FOR APRIL- Breakfast items: pancake mix, syrup, cereal, cereal bars, peanut butter, jelly, etc.., place your donation in the shopping cart in the Narthex. *All items are appreciated as well, as they can always use donations.* The Community Basket is open on Thursdays (except 3rd Thursday), from 2:30-5:30PM. **The mobile food pantry will be on April 18 from 4:30-5:30PM, at the Shed, 14 N. Grove in Kiron.**



COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP Coffee & Fellowship on Sunday mornings at 10:15AM is in the Fellowship Hall. Come and join us! If you would like to help or provide, please let Deb Clausen or Kathy Edsen know.

The High School Youth will provide & serve on the 1st Sunday's of the month and the Junior High Youth will provide & serve on the 3rd Sunday of the month.



WEDNESDAY EARLY MORNING BIBLE CLASS meets at 7:00AM at Jimmy's

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS meets from 9:30-10:30AM in the Conference Room in the lower level.

THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY: MORE THAN BREAD BIBLE STUDY AT SUBWAY will meet at 6:00PM

SUNDAY MORNING HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH in the youth room from 10:15-11:15AM

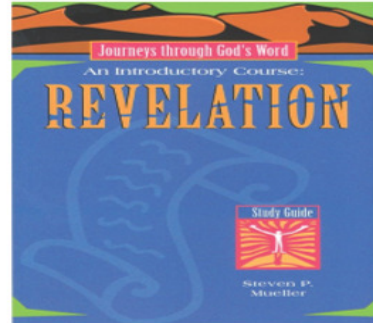
SUNDAY MORNING ADULT BIBLE CLASS join us in the Fellowship Hall 10:30-11:15AM



Bible Studies w/Pastor Neil



Wednesday's @9:30am

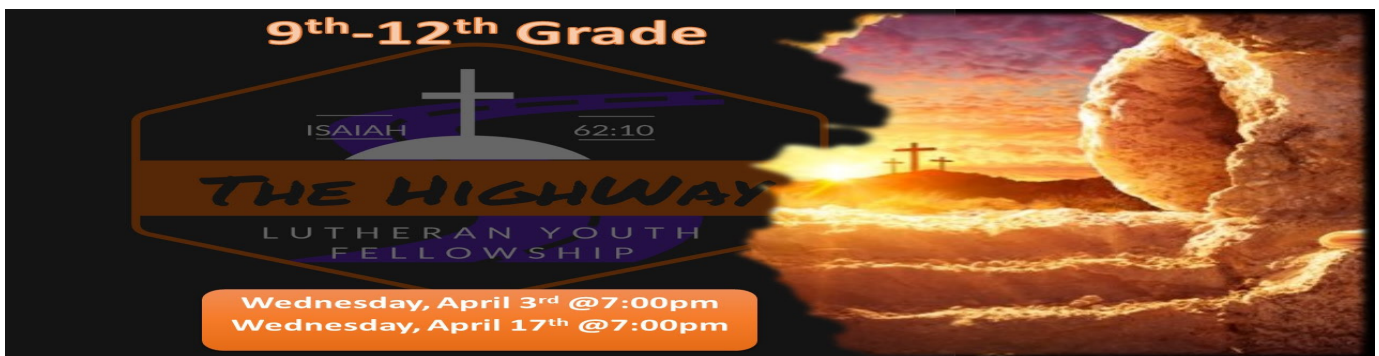


Sunday's @10:30am

WATCH FOR DETAILS COMING FOR MOVIE NIGHT TO RETURN MAY 1ST !!



Lutheran Youth Fellowship April 2024



MIGHTY FORTRESS SKATE NIGHT at the Skate Palace Sunday, April 7 from 4:30-6:30PM. Free event for area Lutherans, 6th -12th graders and their friends. and Drop Zone in Sioux City for grades 6th -8th on Saturday, March 23, watch for more details

FAMILY BOWLING NIGHT AT IDA BOWL on Friday, April 12 from 6:00-8:00PM. OPEN TO ALL AGES AND IT'S A FREE EVENT. Come and watch too is always fun!

FAITH SHARING FOR 8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION is Wednesday, April 24 at 6:00PM.

SENIOR RECOGNITION will be on Sunday, May 5 during the Sunday morning worship service and a reception to following the fellowship hall.

Youth E-Blasts

Follow and pay attention to the Youth E-blasts that are sent out throughout the week in order to keep up-to-date of High School and Middle School youth happenings/activities.

LWML LADIES BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL

RUTH (2) will meet on April 4 at Zimmy’s at noon and meet at the church for Bible Study at 1:00PM.. Ellen will be BSL. We had 12 present for our March meeting.

LOIS (3) will meet on April 4 in the Conference Room at 1:30PM. Nancy will be BSL and Linda will be hostess. We had 9 present for our March meeting.

EUNICE (10) will meet on April 4 at the Willowdale Assisted Living, Battle Creek at 2:30PM. Karen will be hostess and Karen will be BSL. We had 6 members present for our March meeting

JOHANNA(12) will meet on April 4 at 7:00PM, in the fellowship hall. Cecile will be BSL and hostess. We had 6 present for our March meeting.

LWML SPRING RALLY is Saturday, April 20 9:00AM (rolls and coffee) at St. Paul Hanover (south east of Ricketts) Speaker: Pastor Tim Frank, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs

LADIES SALAD LUNCHEON on Wednesday, May 5 at 5:00PM in the fellowship hall. Nancy Schoen will tell us about her adventure of helping with VBS in Alaska last year. Watch for more details to come. Open to the public and bring your friends!

LWML MITEBOX CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2024

At the November 2023 meeting of the LWML Executive Board a decision was made about how the LWML Mite box contributions for 2024 would be distributed.

The Executive Board decided to designate the funds from each quarter would go to the National LWML Mission projects and local mission projects in our community. The distribution of each quarter's funds will be one-fourth to the National LWML Missions and three-fourths of each quarter's contributions would go to local missions.

For 2024 the local mission distribution will be as follows:

- 1st Quarter will be supporting the Ida Grove Ambulance
- 2nd Quarter will be supporting the Community Basket
- 3rd Quarter will be supporting the Ida Grove Fire Department
- 4th Quarter will be supporting the Ida Grove Orphan Grain Train

Your coins will make a difference on the national level as well as in Ida Grove in 2024! Please drop your coins in the large Mite Box located in the Narthex whenever you visit our church!



Blessed are you

The Beatitudes receive little attention, lamented novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "But, often with tears in their eyes, [Christians] demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And, of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard [anyone] demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere." Jesus' Beatitudes have much to teach about selflessness, mourning, peacemaking and more. Jim Berger, author of *Being Sermon on the Mount Christians*, explains that those teachings were once "viewed as a mandate for the faithful." Post-Reformation, they became less law-like and more of a "liberating directive." Berger writes, "For Jesus, being and doing are inseparable. The Sermon is at once theory and praxis. It is not enough to read it or hear it. Jesus intends it to be how we live."



The joy of Jesus



The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*



When it rains

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower's intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: "Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring." The rains will come. Whether you're experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to his work in that area.

