



St. Luke Lutheran Church

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Editor: Jo Klein

# St. Luke Lutheran Church

*Open doors, open hearts, open minds.*

## Parish Times April 2018

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it...the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised.... Matthew 28:1-2, 5

Jesus is risen! As one person put it, "None of the Gospels really end the story of Jesus. The whole point is that the story of Jesus continues – and that its significance continues." Just as the tomb could not contain Jesus, neither can any of the Gospel stories. Jesus lives. Jesus has burst the bonds of hell, busting the barred doors wide open, bringing new life, hope and great joy to people trapped in fear and death. Think of the women who first visited Jesus' tomb. What were they expecting to find? What a silly question. They were expecting what had always been fact. They were expecting to find a cold, dead body. No hope, just the finality of death. But Jesus burst through those bonds of death to surprise them with joy. They couldn't believe it. Who can blame them? He sent them running, the Bible says, filled with fear – who would ever expect to find a dead man alive – that would fill anyone with fear. But the Bible says they were also filled with joy - again – who would expect to find a dead man alive! WOW! Unbelievable, yet true. Jesus is alive, giving life and joy to people.

Can God really do that? You bet God can! I like what Meister Eckhart says about expectations of what God can do. He said, "God is greater than God." Huh? "God is greater than God." What he means is, as we open ourselves to God, our sense of God will grow as expansive as our God is. Each tiny conception gets obliterated as we discover more and more the God who is always greater than we can imagine.

How great is your God? God is much greater than you can imagine.... imagine that! You can't contain Jesus. He is on this side of the stone now!



See you in worship!

Pr. Dave


**Joint Worship with St. Mark at St. Luke** *Joint Worship*

On Sunday, April 29 the people of St. Mark will join us for worship here at St. Luke. Come, join your voices with our brothers and sisters from St. Mark, enjoy the combined choirs and prepare for some delicious fellowship.



**April Acolytes**  
 1, 9:30am: Alek Landenberger  
 15: Ava Herrmann

Heartfelt thanks to our April **Bun Run** volunteers:  
 Julie Ellingson, Mike Hegdahl, Dave and Sandy Grzywinski, Ken McGrew.

**Usher Notes**  
 Many thanks to our ushers for April:  
 Alek Landenberger, Volker Landenberger, Ben Pilgrim, Doug Klein, Joan Wilson, Bruce Magnuson, Ava Herrmann, Rob Herrmann.



**Ladies Night Out** in April will take place on Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at Bennett's Chop and Railhouse, 1305 W. Seventh St. at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in carpooling, please meet at church at 5:00 p.m. Please notify Joyce Bluel (651-690-4614) by Sunday, April 8th if you are planning on attending so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.

## April WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

### Readers:

- 1 (9:30) Dee Plagens
- 8 Dick Plagens
- 15 Jeff Kingsley
- 22 Laurie Herrmann
- 29 Kay Reich

### Communion:

- 1 (9:30) Jen Fredrickson
- 15 Jeff Kingsley



### April Birthdays

- 1 Joan Holtz
- 2 Beth Peterson
- 3 Barb Jensen
- 5 David Elliott
- 6 Tom Gaarder
- 7 Michael Arndt
- 11 Samuel Elliott
- 14 Larry Vigdal
- 21 Tracy Arndt
- 22 Vivien Cendra
- 24 John Fabie
- 26 Gladys Byrnes  
Jen Fredrickson  
Abby Klein
- 30 Eddie McGrew



On February 26th at St. Matthew's Catholic Church 90 very hungry men, women and children enjoyed a delicious meal at Loaves and Fishes. Workers from St. Luke were Verdel Humburg, David Tews, Larry Litzkow, Joyce Bluel, Pastor Dave Person, and Roger and Dianne Diestler.

### congregational meeting



**Mark the Date: Sunday, May 6th** is our Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting following worship. We need and value your input...please plan on participating.



### April Anniversaries

- 5 Volker & Jodi Landenberger: '03
- 8 David & Nahoko Person: '78
- 11 David Elliott & Susan Lorenz: '90
- 25 Bob & Pam Ballis: '92

**SAVE THE DATE** for Pr. Dave's retirement party which will be Sunday, June 10th right after our service. More details to follow. Come one, come all!



### Please join us for Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday Worship, March 29, 7PM  
Good Friday Worship, March 30, 7PM  
Easter Sunday Worship, April 1, 7AM & 9:30 AM

Also on Easter:

~Fundraiser Breakfast at 8AM, sponsored by Thrivent, which provided a \$250.00 grant. All proceeds will go to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

~Egg Hunt at 9AM...bring the kids!

### New Member Sunday

April 22 is new member Sunday. If you would like to join St. Luke, please talk with Pastor Dave. And current members, please come on April 22 and welcome our new members!



### Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Come at 10:00 on Wednesday mornings as we study the Bible and how it enriches our everyday lives. Come study, share, and enjoy a treat and a cup of coffee while we dive deeper into Scripture and faith.



**Spring is right around the corner...finally! Time to make plans to beautify your yard. St. Luke Church will be selling bedding plants and flowers after worship on April 8, April 15 and April 22. The plants/flowers will be available for pick up on Friday, May 18, 5pm to 7pm, and Sunday, May 20, after worship. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



### *Musings from the Music Director*

Now that Lent has wrapped up and we move into Easter, I have to admit I move on reluctantly. Lent and Holy Week have some of my all-time favorite hymns. In most cases, I dislike having to choose a favorite anything, but I've always found the music at Lent special - "Abide With Me" and "Go To Dark Gethsemene" being the top two. I have a new hymn in my canon of favorites now: "Lord of All Hopefulness" written by the author who also wrote the "Mrs. Miniver" character. Each verse is like a small prayer, one for waking up, noon, coming home and bedtime. It is plaintive, assuring and thoughtful, an invitation to keep that Lenten idea of reflection throughout the day. What about you - what are your favorite hymns? During the months of April and May, vote for your favorite hymns. This summer we'll count down the top 15. Look for the wooden box with the music note on the front, on the Welcome Table in the Social Hall.

Last but not least, a big thank you to everyone who has participated and shared their music: special music during service, participating in the choirs or joining in our first Hymn Sing! If you would like to share whatever musical talent you have, let me know before or after service, or email me: [bunkamade@gmail.com](mailto:bunkamade@gmail.com). If you don't know what to play, I can help you out with ideas too.

-Becca Ruiz

## **Study Notes for the Sundays in April**

Below are some notes for your study and meditation on the Sunday gospel texts in April. Please take time to read the gospel and the notes. Try reading them on Monday and think and pray about them through the week, going back to them day by day until Sunday worship. Let God's Word be your companion throughout the week.

### **April 1: Easter Day, Mark 16:1-8**

"When is an ending not the end? When a dead man rises from the tomb—and when a gospel ends in the middle of a sentence" – Williamson

Dr. Donald Juel writes, "There is no stone at the mouth of the tomb. Jesus is out, on the loose, on the same side of the door as the women and the readers....God is no longer safely behind the curtain."

Three women, Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:3), Mary the mother of James (Mark 15:40-41), and Salome brought spices to anoint Jesus' body when the Sabbath was over. Remember, this refers to the Jewish Sabbath, which traditionally begins a few minutes before sunset on Friday evening and goes until late Saturday night. Because of the Sabbath they could not anoint Jesus' body on Friday evening soon after his death (But had his body already been anointed? Read Mark 14:3-8). So they watched where Jesus' body was laid and waited until the Sabbath was over (Mark 15:47). They waited until Sunday morning, the first day of the week. When the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. Tombs of that time were often just a hole cut out of a hill, with a rock rolled against the opening. A friend who visited the Holy Land said he was surprised to find that they aren't like a big cave, as is often depicted. One has to bend down to look inside a tomb. Still, the rock sealing the tomb was heavy and the women wondered how they would be able to move it so they could anoint Jesus' body. They were shocked, to say the least, when they found the rock rolled away. They looked inside and were alarmed to see a man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side. Can you imagine watching your loved one laid in a grave, then coming back to not only see the body gone, but some guy in white sitting in the tomb telling you not to be alarmed?! Who wouldn't be alarmed!? The man in white tells them that Jesus has been raised and is gone. Then he said, "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you (Check out Mark 14:28). Why didn't he group Peter in with the other disciples (go tell his disciples and Peter). Was it because Peter betrayed Jesus and was no longer considered a disciple? Or was Peter mentioned by name to emphasize that Peter too was to be included, a sign of Jesus' forgiveness and deep grace? What do you think? After hearing this, the women fled in terror (who can blame them!) and amazement. And they said nothing to anyone because they were afraid. Do you know the command Jesus used the most with his disciples? "Do not be afraid." What might have happened if the women were not afraid? How do you react when you are afraid? How can Jesus speak to that fear? How can the resurrection speak to those fears?

### **April 8: John 20:19-31**

John begins by setting the scene: It was the evening on that day, the first day of the week. This is the day of the resurrection. Jesus had been raised from the dead and appeared to a number of people. The disciples gathered that evening in a house, with doors locked for fear of the Jews. They were afraid they would be killed next. They were afraid. Then Jesus came and gave them the typical Jewish greeting of peace. He showed the disciples the scars on his hands and side, and once again greeted them with peace. All is complete. All is well (one of the meanings of peace). Then Jesus told them that he had been sent by the Father (something Jesus says 41 times in the Gospel of John!), and in the same way he sends them (and us). In effect, he commissions them to service in the name of God. Jesus breathed on them. This word "breath" can be translated in the Greek as "wind, breath, or spirit." By breathing on them, Jesus bestowed the Holy Spirit on his disciples (something that happens in a different form at Pentecost, fifty days later). Finally, Jesus bestows on them the authority to forgive and retain sins (just as he does to us). We switch now to the second scene involving Thomas who did not witness any of this, nor did he believe his fellow disciples about the risen Lord. One week later, the Lord appears once again. Notice this time the doors aren't locked, just shut (26). Since meeting the risen Lord, fear has lost its grip on the disciples. Once again Jesus announces peace. All is complete. All is well. Jesus turns to Thomas and invites him to touch his wounds and so believe. Thomas answers with a confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas and the other disciples were blessed with faith by coming face to face with the risen Jesus (Like Thomas, none of the other disciples believed until they met Jesus face to face – only Thomas gets the bum rap and moniker, "Doubting Thomas"). Jesus then says, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Some take this as a gentle slap, but others see this as Jesus placing later believers on the same plane as the original disciples. Indeed all people, whether then or now are blessed through their belief in Jesus. Fun fact: the writer of the Gospel of John NEVER uses the noun "faith," only the verb, "to believe." You will never find the word "faith" in John. John believed that believing is not like a noun, that is, static, unmoving; believing is like a verb, active, alive, moving, dynamic.

### **April 15: Luke 24:36b-48**

This appearance of Jesus took place on Sunday, the day Jesus was resurrected. That day began when the women found the tomb empty (Luke 24:1-12), then Jesus appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and finally Jesus appeared to the disciples in today's gospel reading. It seems that Jesus appeared quite suddenly in the midst of them (like last week's gospel) and said, "Peace be with you." It was a beautiful greeting, but it scared the daylights out of the disciples. It says they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost! To help the disciples understand that he wasn't a ghost, and was in fact Jesus in the flesh, Jesus first showed them the scars on his hands and feet. At that time, many people believed the Greek notion that the soul was immortal, indestructible and disembodied. They believed it came to the body at birth and returned to God at death. If this were so, there would be no nail marks. Christians confess that the body is resurrected (think of the Nicene Creed). Along these lines, someone once said that the only man-made object in heaven are the scars on Jesus' hands, feet, and side. Touching Jesus would also demonstrate that he was of flesh and blood, a human being, not a ghost. Yet even after touching him the disciples, "while still in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering." To answer this disbelief, Jesus asked them for something to eat, and he ate some fish. Ghosts don't eat... Jesus helped the disciples to believe. Although they all deserted him at the crucifixion, Jesus still loved them and helped them to believe. Sometimes we may need to pray, "Lord I believe. Help my unbelief!" After this Jesus reminds them of what he had previously told them, that all of Scripture pointed to him and must be fulfilled. Then it says he "opened their minds to understand the scriptures." This, and what I wrote above about Jesus helping the disciples to see and believe, remind me of what Luther wrote concerning the third article of the Apostles Creed. Luther wrote, "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts and sanctified and kept me in true faith." Each one of us needs our Lord to keep us in the true faith. For this, we need our Lord as well as each other, for our Lord also speaks through each one of us. Jesus then tells the disciples that they are to be bearers of this good news, to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20). The disciples, all of us, are included in God's salvific plan involving the Scripture, Jesus, and sharing that saving word, powered by the Holy Spirit.

### **April 22: John 10:11-18**

Our gospel reading begins with Jesus saying, "I am the good shepherd." This is one of the seven "I am" sayings found in the Gospel of John. These are only found in John, not Matthew, Mark or Luke. The seven are: 1. Bread, 2. Light, 3. the Gate, 4. the Good Shepherd, 5. the Resurrection and the Life, 6. the Way, Truth, and Light, and 7. the True Vine. These "I am" sayings are a direct echo back to Exodus 3:14

where Moses is standing before the burning bush and asks God his name. The Lord replies saying, "I am who I am." When Jesus says, "I am" he is referring to himself as God. He did this one other time in John, when he said in John 8:58, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." This made some Jewish leaders so mad they tried to stone him! Jesus says he is the good shepherd...not just any old shepherd, but the good shepherd, the one who lays down his life for the sheep. He is the shepherd who cares so much for the sheep that he is willing to die for them. Jesus is then compared with the hired hand, who is only in it for the money. He says, "I just work here..." As soon as danger (like a wolf) approaches, or there is misfortune, the hired hand runs, leaving the sheep in danger, because he does not care what happens to them. But Jesus, the good shepherd, cares enough to offer his life. I wonder, what in our present life is like the hired hand, who would abandon us at the slightest whiff of danger or misfortune...and where do you see Jesus, willing to give his very life for you? In verse 14 we see Jesus repeat once again that he is the good shepherd. He means it! Jesus says that he knows his own and his own know him. Jesus knows his own...I think of Matthew 7:21-23 in which people say to Jesus, we cast out demons and prophesied in your name and Jesus saying, "I never knew you." What does it mean to be known by Jesus? I Corinthians 8:1b-3 says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him." Jesus talks about the sheep who will listen to his voice. In Romans 10:17 Paul writes, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." Mary was one who listened to Jesus. When Mary found the tomb of Jesus empty, thinking someone had stolen his body, she was weeping. It is then that Jesus approached her and said her name, "Mary." It was at that moment she recognized him (John 20:16). How often do we take the time to quiet ourselves to listen to Jesus by reading the Scripture and praying? How often in this noisy world do we take time to just listen? In verse 16 Jesus said, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice." Who is Jesus talking about? We are not sure. Who is a follower? Who is included in this fold? It is best for us not to judge and leave that up to our good shepherd.

#### **April 29: John 15:1-8**

Like our gospel reading last week (John 10:11-18), this week Jesus begins with an "I am" saying, which are unique to the Gospel of John. Remember, there are seven "I am" sayings in the Gospel of John. They are: I AM the bread of life, 6:35; I AM the light of the world, 8:12; I AM the door (gate) of the sheep, 10:7; I AM the good shepherd, 10:11; I AM the resurrection and the life, 11:25; I AM the way, and the truth, and the life, 14:6; I AM the true vine, 15:1. As I mentioned last week, these are an echo of Exodus 3:14 in which the Lord tells Moses his name saying, "I AM WHO I AM." When Jesus says, "I am..." there are divine reverberations involved as we are reminded of the name of the Lord! Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:1; 4:24-25). Today Jesus says, "I am the true vine and my Father is the vinegrower." For people of that time, this brought to mind many passages in the Bible in which a vineyard is used as an illustration of their relationship with God. Take out your Bible and read through them so you have a richer vision of what Jesus is saying. Examples are: Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:1-7, 27:2-6; Ezekiel 15:1-6. Back to John, did you notice how many times the word "abide" shows up here? John uses this word often. In fact in the Gospel of John and the letter of I John, the word is used 64 times! John uses it to talk about a living, active relationship with the Lord. In fact, it can often mean "believe." Do you remember the April 12 commentary on John in which I wrote that John only uses the verb "to believe" and never the noun "faith?" He does this because for John believing is not static, like a noun, rather it is active, alive, moving and dynamic, like a verb. With this in mind, John uses many verbs to describe a believing relationship. "Abide" is one of those verbs, a very important one. It describes life IN CHRIST (when you read Paul's Letter to the Romans, note how many times Paul writes "in Christ". You will also see Paul's use of "in Christ" in the Ephesians quote found in the May 17, 2015, John 17:6-19 commentary. He is describing the same kind of relationship). This is an intimate relationship leading to an abundant life right here and now in our present day. Jesus calls on us to abide in him just as he abides in us (verse 4). In John 14 Jesus says that in his Father's house there are many dwelling places. This word is "mone" in Greek. The word "abide" is "meno" in Greek. They come from the same root. They are related. In John 14:23 Jesus says, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home (mone) with them." Jesus is talking about the intimate relationship of God abiding, making his home in and with us. In Revelation 21:3 we see something very similar where it says, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them." In chapter 15, John emphasizes this living relationship with our Lord Jesus, a relationship giving life and producing fruit (bearing fruit is mentioned 6 times here). Our true strength and life, a life of meaning, hope, and fruit, is found in relationship with Jesus.

*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. ~Numbers 6:24*