


THE PULSE BEAT



Volume 49, Number 4

April 2024

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

The month of April takes us fully into the resurrection season, on the church year calendar. And (hopefully) reminds us that Spring is now with us!

I think it's a great thing that the Easter season gets 7 Sundays in the life of the church. Starting off with some of the resurrection appearances of Jesus, who is now, not only the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, but because of his "obedience unto death," he is now the exalted & risen Lord, Son of God and Savior of the world!

The "Resurrection," that is, when God raised Jesus from the dead, early on the first Easter Sunday morning, Jesus did not just get up on his own, after somehow groggily waking up after his ordeal of being crucified. No, Jesus had died! He was "deader than a doornail." Even though the nails, in the end, could not hold him!

Jesus was dead, and God decided to wake him up, & give him new life! And that means a completely new kind of life, where he can never die again!

In the narrative resurrection stories, we read, that Jesus can be seen for who he was --- the known rabbi/master from Galilee, who walked & talked, ate with & slept next to his disciple companions for 3 years. The marks of the nails made Jesus recognizable to his disciple followers.

St. Paul, who met Jesus on the Damascus road, some 3 years, after the resurrection, preaches that Jesus is the "firstfruits," of an entirely new resurrection life for all who believe. Jesus is the first. And if there are first fruits, there must be 2nd and 3rd fruits, & more fruits. Which is good news for all the rest of us Jesus followers!

Even way back in the days of seminary, my mind resonated with people like Wolfhart Pannenberg, rather than Bultmann, Marxsen or Kittel, who, in effect, denied there was a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Instead, Pannenberg writes: "*There is no justification for affirming Jesus' resurrection as an event that really happened, if it is not to be affirmed as a historical event as such.*"

And he adds: "*The situation demands that within the circle of the first community one had a reliable testimony for the fact that the grave (of Jesus) had been found empty.*"

Let me throw into the mix, a statement of my favorite theologian, still with us and more recent even than Pannenberg, perhaps the best reasoning around the resurrection from Walter Brueggemann who writes in a very straightforward sentence: "*The resurrection cannot be explained on the basis of the previously existing reality.*" BOOM! This is where the doors get blown off their hinges!

God is creating new futures for people, and you can't get any newer than the awe and amazement at the resurrection of Jesus! Nothing before this tremendous happening, can explain it, or justify it! Brueggemann says we can only "affirm and celebrate Jesus' resurrection, as the new action of God!"

So, may Easter blessings be yours as you move through the month of April!

And let me share one thing more: As my time at St. John is winding down towards retirement, our council has asked that I plan some Sundays that celebrate our ministry together over these last 15 years with special emphasis. So I am working on these three themes:

- 1) On April 28, our theme emphasis will be – "Sustaining Faith through changing times."
- 2) Then, next on May 19th, our theme is – "What God's Holy Spirit has accomplished through us." And
- 3) Our June 23 theme is, "Who we were, and who we are becoming."

The details are yet to be worked out! And there will be a concluding worship service, and perhaps a catered lunch or potluck on my last Sunday of June 30th. God has done much good work through the people of St. John church, the "Body of Christ in this place! We shall celebrate it!

Easter and April blessings! Peace! *Pastor Jim*

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Easter! Even though Easter Sunday has passed, being early this year on March 31, the season of Easter extends all through April and into May. The season of Easter is actually 50 days long, spanning the time from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. The word “Pentecost” comes from the Greek word “pentekoste,” which means fiftieth.

I found it very interesting while doing some research for this report that in the early church, Lent was a season when persons who wished to become Christians were learning how to live the way of Jesus and preparing for baptism on Easter Sunday. The original purpose of the Easter season was to continue the formation of new Christians in the faith. Today, this extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what we mean when we say, “Christ is Risen” and that we, as the church, are the body of the Risen Lord.

So how do we keep Easter alive and keep celebrating it during these 50 days of the Easter season? The season of Easter is actually the second longest liturgical season of the year, making it appropriate to pray and reflect on what this means and what it looks like for every Christian today. In 1986, Pope St. John Paul II said, “We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song.” I love that quote! The author of the website I found it at stated that, “in this context, it is clear that Easter is not just a season, it is a way of life.” Think on that one!

One thing to keep in mind – at the moment of Jesus’ resurrection, His focus, and ours, turned to the future. Through His death on the cross, we have been granted a second chance. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Easter heralds in the beginning of spring – our season of new life and new beginnings. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead wasn’t just a singular event to be recalled on one single day. Like the earth, which wakes from its long winter sleep throughout the Easter season, we should work to call upon the Holy Spirit to strengthen our Christian resolve and mission.

Our altar will serve as a reminder to us that we are celebrating the Easter season. The white vestments of Easter will be visible until Pentecost, and our Easter cross will stand tall as well. The lilies that will be displayed will further help us remember to celebrate the new life that we will welcome during the Easter season and as spring arrives.

However we choose to celebrate Easter this year, the key idea is to recognize that it is a celebration that is not meant to be confined to Easter day or Sunday service or confirmation class or Sunday school. This celebration is one that should give us new hope and make us a people that proclaims the love and life that is celebrated throughout this Easter season.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3

Hugs and prayers to you all and a Blessed Easter Season!

Sandy

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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Vice President – Dennis Jaeger

Secretary – Judy McMullin

Treasurer – Peter Viesselmann

Church Council:

Dennis Jaeger – Worship

Sue Dowe – Education/ Youth

OPEN – Stewardship

Robin Fatla - Outreach

Roger Wendorf - Finance

Joe Porth – Property & Grounds

Mary Ellen Levra - Public Relations

Jane Turowski - Financial Secretary

Organist

St. John Choir Director

Glory Rings Director

Flutist

OPEN

Sharlene Sandquist

Dale Allen

Sandy Allen

Newsletter staff:

Robin Fatla & Sheila Kapke

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GENERAL INTEREST NEWS

We keep in our prayers: Paul Barnes (Jim & Carole Litvinoff's nephew), Anna Bullio (great-granddaughter of Florence Van Cleave), Cathy Collins (Florence Van Cleave's daughter), Amanda Combs (friend of Laura Christenson), Nan Donner (friend of Diane & Roger Wendorf), Henry Frier (Marian Witte's son-in-law), Pat & Sandy Granrath, Merry Lou Green, Chris Heggenbarth (Robert & Borgne McClelland daughter-in-law), Cheryl Isotalo (Robin Fatla's cousin), Bill Leedy (friend of Robin Fatla), Joanne Levenick, Rosemary Litvinoff (Jim's mother), Scott Maronde (nephew of Gary & Sue Haas), Ken Matthews (Kayla Matthews' father-in-law), Chuck & Cary Mueller (friends of Glenn Sievers), Alice Murphy (family of MerryLou Green), Duane O'Reilly (Debbi O'Reilly-Christensen's brother), Sugeily Pineiro-Garcia, Karen Rautenberg (Sue Dowe's mother), Tom Rogahn, Kathy (sister of Jackie Rogahn), Renee Schauer, Harvey Salger, Wendy Tomter, Wendy Werner (Sandy Allen's sister-in-law), Kathy Willie (friend of Roger & Diane Wendorf) **Military personnel:** Kyle Christenson **"Home away from home" members:** Jeanine Burhop (sister of the late Marilyn Speranza) – Lasata; Tim McClosky – at home with sister Merry Lou Green





Bible study: Monday, April 8, 1:00 PM

QUILTING DATES:

**Monday
April 8 & 22
9:00 - noon**

YOUTH/ EDUCATION NEWS

Sunday School classes will continue again in the fall. A registration will be sent to eligible youth over the summer. Please consider joining us in the fall!

Confirmation classes continue in April at Trinity and will follow this schedule:

April 3 - If there is only one God, why are there so many different religions?

April 10 - Visit to the Jewish Discovery Center or speakers from other religions

April 17 - Why do Christians believe that Christianity is the best religion?

April 24 - Why are there so many Christian churches?

5:15 - 5:45 Dinner

5:45 Highs and Lows

6:00 - 7:15 Class

SAVE THE DATES

Our week for VBS will be **July 22-26**.

We will share the theme and registration soon. In the meantime, mark your calendar.

VBS is for children Preschool/3k-5th grade. Middle and high school youth are welcome as helpers.

Please reach out to Sue Dowe with questions (sadowe1966@gmail.com).

OUTREACH TEAM



Be a piece of the peace puzzle.

April 11th is World Animal Day.

During the month we will be collecting items needed at the Ozaukee County Humane Society in Saukville.

Please watch for the list by email or in Sunday bulletins.



Earth Day - April 22



As we approach Pastor Jim's retirement this summer, we will welcome his thoughts on his 15+ years at St. John.

On Sunday, April 28th, he will share his "Ministry Celebration" titled "Sustaining Faith Through Changing Times"

FROM OUR TREASURER

Giving To St John Lutheran Church Using Qualified Charitable Distributions

Do you have a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA)?

Are you age 70-1/2 or older?

If you answered “yes” to both of these questions, then the IRS and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue give you the opportunity to transfer gifts of almost any amount to the charity of your choice (such as St John Lutheran Church) tax-free each year using what is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (withdrawal) or “QCD”.

Normally, withdrawals from a traditional IRA are taxed in the year that you receive them. When you make a QCD withdrawal from your traditional IRA, the funds that are given to the charity are not taxed to you. An important point to note is that the funds must be made payable directly to the charity – not to you.

Another benefit is that if you are age 73 or older and are subject to Required Minimum Distributions, the QCD also qualifies for satisfying the RMD requirement.

Does the idea of a QCD sound like something that you would like to do as an easy way to support St John? Then here are the steps you can take to get started:

- ◆ Contact your financial advisor or tax preparer and ask them to help you set up a QCD, and verify that a QCD will work for your particular situation.
- ◆ Decide on the amount of the gift you would like to make.
- ◆ Verify if your IRA provider will allow you to make QCDs in any amount, and allow for withdrawals with frequencies of monthly, quarterly, or annually.
- ◆ Be sure to specify that the QCD be made payable directly to St John Lutheran Church.
- ◆ Be sure that your IRA provider includes your name on the payment stub so that when it arrives at St John you are given credit on your giving statement.

When you prepare your tax return at the end of the year, be sure to remember that you had a QCD so that you can record it properly and exclude it from your taxable income.

Thank you for your support of St John Lutheran Church!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Noon - Pastor's Lunch	4	5 Pastor's day off	6
7 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 11:00 am - choir rehearsal	8 9:00 am - Quilting 1:00 pm - Women's Bible Study Robin off this week	9 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	10 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	11	12 Pastor's day off	13
14 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 11:00 am - choir rehearsal	15	16	17 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	18	19 Pastor's day off	20
21 9:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 11:00 am - choir rehearsal 11:00 am - Church Council	22 9:00 am - Quilting Earth Day	23 10:00 am - Bible study at Village Pointe Commons	24 Noon - Pastor's Lunch 5:15 pm - Confirmation class at Trinity	25	26 Pastor's day off	27
28 9:30 am - Holy Communion - Pastor Jim's "Ministry Celebration" 10:30 am - Fellowship hour 11:00 am - choir rehearsal	29	30				



- 4/1 Nerissa Heusdens
- 4/4 Peter Briehl
- 4/7 Wendy Tomter
- 4/12 Kassidy Fatla
- 4/15 Jeanne Immekus
- 4/19 Owen DeFendi
- 4/23 Laura Christenson
- 4/25 Sue Haas
- 4/28 Jane Turowski
- 4/28 James Kapke
- 4/28 Dennis Heusdens
- 4/30 Lucas Fatla
- 4/30 Robin Fatla



- 4/27/2013 Matt & Anette DeFendi
- 4/30/2011 Adam & Heather Feidler

Please notify Church Office if we have missed someone. Thank you!



Not just yet...

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister:

- April 7 - Dennis Jaeger
- 14 - Bob Butt
- 21 - Robin Fatla
- 28 - Gary Haas

Lector:

- April 7 - Judy McMullin
- 14 - Florence Van Cleave
- 21 - Sandy Allen
- 28 - Bob Butt

Usher:

- April 7 - Bob Eichmann
- 14 - Roger Wendorf
- 21 - Joe Porth
- 28 - Sue Dowe

Altar bouquets:

- April 7 - Marian Witte
- 14 - Robin Fatla
- 21 - Jean Verber/ **OPEN**
- 28 - Dale & Sandy Allen/ Robin Fatla

Fellowship hour hosts:

- April 7 - **OPEN**
- 14 - **OPEN**
- 21 - Evie Tetzlaff & Marion Meyer
- 28 - Robin & Lucas Fatla

Counting Team:

- April 7 - Dennis Jaeger Team
- 14 - Jim Litvinoff Team
- 21 - Peter Viesselmann
- 28 - Borgne McClelland Team

STEWARDSHIP CORNER**STEWARDS OF CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY**

congregation an assembly of persons brought together for common religious worship; an organization formed for the purpose of providing for worship of God, for religious education, and for other church activities.

community - a social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists
www.dictionary.com

GOD GIVES US FAITH COMMUNITIES

At the beginning of creation, God decided earth was not a place for Adam to be alone (Genesis 2:18). God created Eve, and the very first faith community was born! Throughout the Bible, we find many examples of the faithful coming together, pooling their resources, sharing their talents, and doing God's work together. In Exodus we read how God, through Moses, commanded the Israelites to make offerings to God.

"Everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the Lord"(35:21) Moses reminded the Israelites that God also blessed them with many skills, so "...every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work...are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded"(36:1).

Likewise, the letters of the New Testament overflow with stories of the early Christian communities. The apostle Paul gives thanks for the generous givers in the Macedonian churches saying, *"In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people."* (2Corinthians 8:2-4)

Not only did they give generously, they gave enthusiastically and view their giving and service as a privilege in spite of their own trials and challenges!

Paul reminds us that willingly and sacrificially giving of ourselves, whether it be through money, time, talents, possessions, treasure, or other resources, is our way of thanking God for the many blessings we enjoy. See 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, 11-13.

THE ST. JOHN FAITH COMMUNITY

Just like the Israelites and the early Christians, individuals at St. John join together in community to carry out God's mission in the world. We look out to see how God is calling us to love our neighbor with all that God has entrusted to our care. We are a church that believes Jesus is God's "Yes" to us. Our lives can be a "Yes" to others. Stewardship of our congregational community is one way that we can be that "Yes" to others.

When asked: "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus responds, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbors as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39).

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Stewardship is the way we use all of our resources - time, talents, possessions and money - to love God and our neighbor. Stewardship transforms God's commandment to "love our neighbors as ourselves" from a religious expression into a way of life.

What are some of the ways we see stewardship in action at St. John?

- + Many faithful givers at St. John have contributed money in 2023 to feed the hungry, house the homeless, comfort individuals in need, and share the Good News of God's grace through Jesus Christ with people of all ages. Your financial contributions make a difference. **Thank you!**
- + Many of our households have committed to financially support God's ministries at St. John in 2023. Your generous contributions will help continue and expand ministries sustain homeless families transitioning to permanent (Family Promise) housing and continue to support meaningful worship services. **Thank you!**
- + Every week, St. John volunteers drive those no longer driving to worship (a program we hope to expand), serve on boards and committees that coordinate ministries at St. John; and share their lives in many other types of service. Each of you makes a big difference in the lives of those you serve. **Thank you!**

Ask:

- + How might St. John use all the resources God has entrusted to us to live out God's mission through this congregation?
- + Where is God calling you to share your time servicing neighbors through this faith community?
- + How is God moving your heart to increase your financial support for the ministries at St. John?

PRAY:

Abundant God, we thank you for your goodness to us and for all the blessings of life. We praise you for your immeasurable love in redeeming us through Jesus Christ, our means of grace. Raise our awareness of your generosity so that with thankful hearts we give ourselves to serve you and our neighbors through the congregational community at St. John. Amen.

Sharlene Sandquist, St. John Stewardship

(Portions of this article were taken from the ELCA publication, Stewards of God's Love: A year-round guide to stewardship in your congregation.)

April 2024 Pulse Beat



1193 Lakefield Road
Grafton, WI 53024

"In God's Word, Serving You and the World"

Worship Schedule

- Sunday Morning - 9:30 a.m.
- Education hour - 11:00 a.m.

IT IS OUR MISSION as people called by God into the Congregation of St. John Lutheran Church to:

- Proclaim the Gospel in worship and daily life.
- Study and teach God's Word.
- Fellowship among people of this congregation.
- Serve people in our surrounding community.

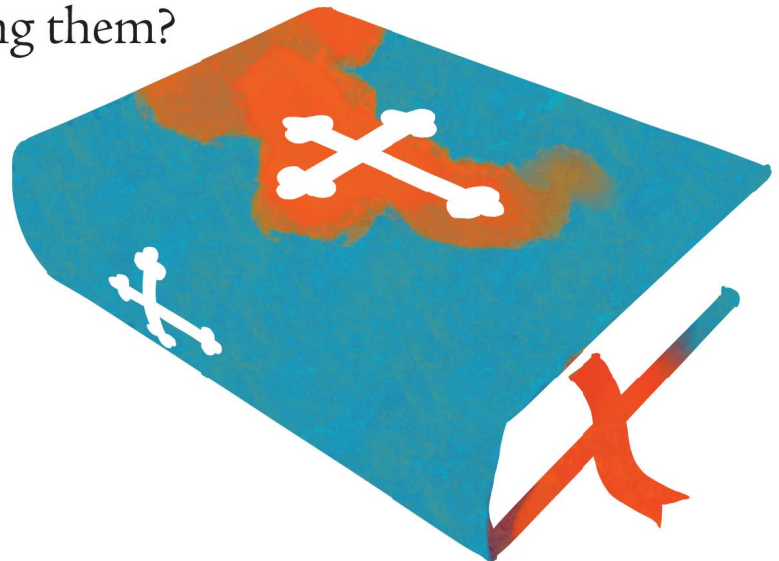
This is the **MISSION** and **MINISTRY** that we accept as fellow Christians at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lakefield.

"Faithfully Serving Christ Since 1866"

Bible Quiz

A few Bible books have only one chapter. Which of the following is not among them?

- A. Obadiah
- B. Philemon
- C. 1 John
- D. 2 John
- E. 3 John
- F. Jude



Answer: C