

The light shines in the darkness... John 1:5



HARBOR BEACON

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OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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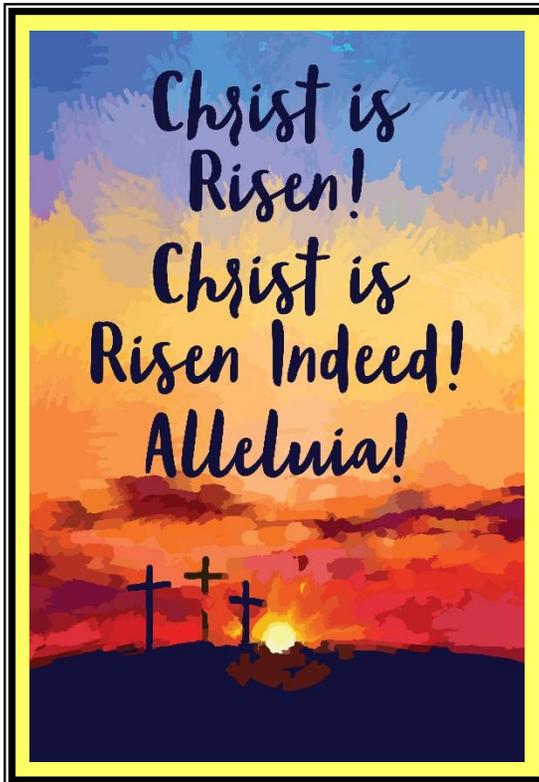
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Christ is
Risen!
Christ is
Risen Indeed!
Alleluia!

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**Click on these links
for the April newsletter inserts:**

The ELCA's monthly *Prayer Ventures*:

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>

The Northwest Washington Synod's insert, *The Spirit*:

https://faithconnector.s3.amazonaws.com/lutheransnw/files/publications/spirit/april_2020.pdf

OHLC's website:

www.oakharborlutheran.org

This issue was snail-mailed March 25, 2020

PASTOR'S PAGE: Faith in a Time of Pandemic

"Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

John 14:27

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

I have said several times over the last few days that our situation with COVID-19 is unprecedented. But that isn't true. Not at all. This pandemic and the resulting public health emergency is unprecedented in my lifetime, and probably yours too, but there are a few people in our congregation who heard stories from their parents about the deadly flu outbreak in 1918. There have been pandemics and plagues throughout history.

Once such pandemic swept into the city of Wittenberg, Germany, in 1527. Martin Luther responded by writing a pamphlet on how to face a pandemic as a Christian. His wise words are being circulated widely once again today:

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not test God."

– Martin Luther, Works v. 43, p. 132

Notice what is being said here. The Christian's first response to pandemic is prayer: "I shall ask God to mercifully protect us." I hope you are spending a lot of time in prayer these days.

Next, Luther affirms the gifts of medicine, public health measures, and even the practice of social distancing! "I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed..." We serve God and our neighbors by following public health guidelines, even when that means staying apart from one another.

Luther goes on, however, to also encourage us to pay attention to the needs of our neighbors – going to them to help whenever we can. We are doing this here at OHLC as those who are younger and less at risk from the virus are stepping up to deliver groceries and run errands for those who are at higher risk of serious complications. I'm so proud of how this has been happening in our congregation.



Finally, Luther describes a faithful Christian response to pandemic as being "neither brash nor foolhardy and does not test God." Our faith does not give us a magic prophylactic against this virus. It is entirely appropriate to use caution, common sense, and copious amounts of hand sanitizer.

Martin Luther is wise indeed, and I find his words here almost shockingly pertinent to what we are experiencing today. But as helpful and wise as Luther's counsel surely is, we need more than advice. We need a promise to hang our faith on. And for that we need to turn from Martin Luther to the Lord Jesus himself.

The most oft repeated commandment in scripture is "Do not be afraid." By itself, I'm not sure how much that is worth. You can't command away fear. But these commandments are almost always followed by promises that blunt our fears and embolden our hearts. In the quote above, Jesus tells his disciples that they will face tribulations in the world, but that they are to take heart. Notice how Jesus doesn't just leave them to "take heart" on their own. He gives them a promise to go with the command: "for I have overcome the world."

We aren't told to not be afraid because there is nothing to be afraid of. Jesus is honest with us about that – we will face tribulations, as we most certainly are right now. We don't need to be afraid, however, because Jesus has already overcome everything we're so afraid of. He has conquered sin, death, and the devil. What we see now in our world and in our lives are but the last desperate gasps of an already defeated enemy.

So live by faith, brothers and sisters! Wash your hands, serve your neighbor, and take heart. God is still in control.

Pastor Jeffrey R. Spencer

Worshipping together while remaining apart: Our plan for April

Please note that these plans assume that the CDC recommendations for social distancing will remain the same throughout the month of April. If anything should change which would allow us to gather together safely in person, we will do so. This seems unlikely at this point, but we will keep you posted.

- **Join us at the Oak Harbor Lutheran Church Facebook page at 8:00 or 10:30 AM for live streamed worship services.**
- Bulletins will be sent in the “Friday Foretaste” e-mail so you can follow along.
- Videos will be e-mailed out and available on our YouTube channel afterwards.

Those who do not use computers are being mailed paper copies of the worship bulletin and the sermon. If you have not received anything yet and would like to, please call the church office.

The same format will be followed for Maundy Thursday (April 9) and Good Friday (April 10), with both services beginning at 7:00 PM.

The following is a transcript from a video message Pastor Jeff recently posted on YouTube and Facebook. It is shared here for those who may have missed it, and especially for our members who do not use computers.

Dear Friends in Christ,

I wanted so badly to be able to come up with a way for us to be able to worship together in-person again in April – but barring some new development or more relaxed recommendations from the CDC, it doesn’t look like that is going happen.

Believe me, I came up with some bonkers ideas for some very unconventional ways to hold in-person worship services, but all of them involved a level of contact that is just not safe, especially as it seems likely that April may end up being when we bear the brunt of this virus. I was even considering drive-up or drive-through worship services, but I know what you would do. You would pick each other up. You would give each other rides. This would put people in enclosed spaces, which is not good when we’re trying to contain a virus that is particularly



dangerous for the older people who make up a large percentage of our congregation.

To our older members, I love you – and this time apart makes me realize just how much. And so while it makes me sad to delay the resumption of our in-person worship services, it would absolutely crush me if my zeal for worshipping together were to result in any of you coming down with COVID-19.

Parents, this is a time for you to step up to the promises you made when your child was baptized. The church has been trying for years to recover the idea that the home is the primary place for Christian faith formation. Martin Luther was a huge advocate for this. He wrote his Small Catechism to be used by parents in the home, not in classes at the church! Luther even said that every parent is a bishop and a pastor in their home! We will work to equip you to carry out this calling by sending out weekly e-mails with PDFs of Sunday school curriculum and other ideas and resources for how to practice and teach the faith at home.

Until something changes we will continue with online worship services, streaming live on Facebook at 8:00 & 10:30 AM. Sometimes we might lose the feed, but I’m confident we’ll get a least one good recording that we can send out later by e-mail and also post on our new YouTube channel. I’ll begin welcoming some guests to the livestream to provide music, keeping six feet apart while we sing. Services for Maundy Thursday (April 9) and Good Friday (April 10) will be streamed and then posted as well. Each of those services will begin at 7:00 PM and will be available on demand shortly thereafter.

I am especially disappointed that we will not be together in-person to celebrate Easter. But then, I also remembered recently that for Christians, every Sunday is a little Easter. Every Sunday is the day of the Lord, the day we celebrate that Jesus has risen, conquering sin and death for us.

And so whenever we are able to gather together in our sanctuary again, no matter what date the calendar says it is, we will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. When that day comes, I plan on ringing the church bells until the neighbors call the police on me.

In the meantime, though I am trying to limit my in-person contact (for your sake more than mine), I am available by phone if you need anything, even just to talk, so feel free to give me a call. I’ll be calling around to visit with you in the days ahead as well.

Stay strong in the Lord. Be both wise and full of faith. Wash your hands and remember your baptism. - Pastor Jeffrey R. Spencer

KEEPING CONNECTED

Do we have your correct e-mail address?

If you use e-mail and have not been getting e-mails from OHLC, first check your spam folder and be sure to mark us as “safe.” If there isn’t anything from us in your spam folder, then call the church office to make sure we have the correct address on file.

Do you need help with errands or picking up groceries?

If you are high-risk for complications from COVID-19, we have volunteers who are willing and able to go out so you don’t need to. Call the church office and let us know and we’ll set it up!

Check out Pastor Jeff’s new blog!

Pastor Jeff has starting writing on a new blog called *Wash Your Hands and Remember Your Baptism*. Among other things, you will find a continuation of reflections on the theme of our midweek Lenten services.

Visit the blog at:

<https://wordpress.com/home/pastorspencersblog.wordpress.com>.

Giving while not gathering

Our congregation is financed by the offering plate. Our staff salaries, utility bills, ministry supplies, mortgage payments, insurance premiums, and mission support are all paid with what comes in through the offering plate. Our offering plates currently sit in a sanctuary that will be empty for weeks. This is a cause for great concern. During this time when we are unable to have in-person worship services, we are relying on our members to make an extra effort to get those offerings to the church in ways other than through the offering plate.

We have seen a surge of giving through Tithely, our online giving platform. THANK YOU! We have also had people mail in or stop by with their offering. THANK YOU! Please continue to keep your offerings current. If you need help finding ways to get it in, please contact the church office.

Let’s help our offline friends

We have several members who are not online at all. While we are working to provide them with printed materials to maintain their spiritual life during this season of social distancing, as we have moved so much of our ministry online, they are missing out on a lot.

You can help our offline friends feel more connected by mailing cards and making phone calls. If you’re not sure who could use this kind of contact, call or e-mail Pastor Jeff or Pastor Marc.

Church landscaping update: A shout-out of gratitude!

Thank you to: Pastors Jeff Spencer and Marc Stroud, the OHLC Council, landscape designer Pamela Prior & crew, Jan Kammenga, Tom Carey, Marty & Fran Leukhardt, Leona McKee, Pat Michalski, Gaye Rodriguey, Gisela Hawley, Kerri Totten, Steve & Martha Ellis, Mary & Kelly Brock, Donna Myers, Georgette Anglum, Tim & Jessica George, Tim & Donna Aspery, Dave Carter, Luana Kim, Glenn Cornelius, Marj McNae, Adam, Candace, Max & Levi Pawlak, and any silent/unknown contributors for plant, labor and material costs, to all who were the hard working volunteers on February 29, to the lunch providers, and last, but not least, to Dave & Peg and their horses from the Fosnaugh Farm for plants and compost.



If you missed out on the opportunity to make a donation for Phase I, you are invited to offer a gift for a few more plants, labor, and materials for Phase II (refurbishing the bedding area outside the fellowship hall, including extended curbing and white rocks).

Stewardship care for the new landscape areas will be assigned to willing volunteers. Contact me if you’d like to be added to the volunteer list: tomreflexpiper@gmail.com, phone or text at: 360-675-4739.

Tom Piper

BOOKMARKS

The 2nd Wednesday Book Group

.....is on hiatus for a while. Watch for forthcoming information, and in the meantime, keep reading! (Or perhaps even try writing!)



Coupeville Book Group

The Coupeville Group will meet Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00 PM via the Zoom app. Gaye will send you an invitation. **Please let her know if you are interested in participating by sending an e-mail to gaye@tobysuds.com.**

Jan Heideger will lead the discussion on *The Lost Girls of Paris*, by Pam Jenoff. In April, each person will provide their own beverage and dessert.

From the author of the runaway bestseller *The Orphan's Tale* comes a remarkable story of friendship and courage centered around three women and a ring of female secret agents during World War II.

1946, Manhattan: One morning, while passing through Grand Central Terminal on her way to work, Grace Healey finds an abandoned suitcase tucked beneath a bench. Unable to resist her own curiosity, Grace opens the suitcase, where she discovers a dozen photographs--each of a different woman. In a moment of impulse, Grace takes the photographs and quickly leaves the station. Grace soon learns that the suitcase belonged to a woman named Eleanor Trigg, leader of a network of female secret agents who were deployed out of London during the war. Twelve of these women were sent to Occupied Europe as couriers and radio operators to aid the resistance, but they never returned home, their fates a mystery.

Vividly rendered and inspired by true events, New York Times bestselling author Pam Jenoff shines a light on the incredible heroics of the brave women of the war and weaves a mesmerizing tale of courage, sisterhood and the great strength of women to survive in the hardest of circumstances.

—359 pages

Available as an eBook and Downloadable audiobook.

BE CONSTANT IN PRAYER

Verna Morgan, coordinator of OHLC's Prayer Chain, sent the following note to our prayer chain participants on March 24:

Now more than ever may you know that your prayers are so very important. Many people depend on knowing that they are prayed for, so you are doing God's work every time you fold your hands and bow your heads. May you be blessed.

If you would like to offer prayers on behalf of others – in our church family and beyond – please consider becoming part of the OHLC prayer chain. You'll receive e-mails from Verna, containing as much (or as little) information as families and individuals have chosen to share. E-mail Verna, islandmusicworks@cablespeed.com, and she'll add your to her list of recipients. **If you have a concern and would appreciate prayers**, contact Verna, or Rekann, office@oakharborlutheran.org, or Martha, martha@oakharborlutheran.org.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, also sent an e-mail on March 24, regarding a prayer opportunity on March 25. That put it too late for newsletter readers to participate directly, but it's an encouraging reminder of the ways the Church is united in prayer. What if we prayed the Lord's Prayer at noon every Wednesday?

Dear Church,

The Evangelical Lutheran Church America, as part of the body of Christ, is united with other Christians in our communities, in our country and around the world. This unity takes many forms, including prayer.

I am writing to extend an invitation we have received from Pope Francis, through the [Lutheran World Federation](#) and the [World Council of Churches](#), to join in the Lord's Prayer tomorrow, March 25, at noon your local time. Please share this invitation through your synods, congregations, ecumenical communities and individual networks.

During the global pandemic of COVID-19, the church can and should give witness to our unity in Christ and express our deep concern for God's creation. Despite social distancing, through prayer we are able to enter together into the presence of Christ and the communion of believers. By praying the prayer that Christ taught us, we are united with followers of Jesus in every time and in every place. When the church gathers in this way, we can be assured that Christ, our eternal hope, is present in the midst of suffering.

In Christ, The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

OHLC WOMEN

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWSHIP, STUDY & SERVICE

Blanket Workshop

Social distancing prevents us from holding Blanket Workshop in April. We'll let you know when we can meet again!

Has your extra time at home turned up a stash of cotton or cotton blend fabrics that you'd forgotten you had? Why not use some of this unexpected free time to sew quilt tops or backs? (*No flannel or knits, please.*) **Quilt tops need to measure 60x80"; Backs need to measure 64x84".**

Note these guidelines from the Lutheran World Relief website:

Please do not donate items with any religious symbols, messages or your congregation's name. LWR provides quilts, blankets and kits based on need, regardless of religious creed. Religious references may be misinterpreted by the governments of the receiving countries, jeopardizing the delivery to the people who need the items most. Secular symbols such as rabbits, eggs, and poinsettias are acceptable.

Please do not donate any items decorated with a U.S. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage. Lutheran World Relief and our overseas partners have access to areas of the world others do not because we are impartial humanitarian organizations. If our intentions are misinterpreted as being politically motivated, it puts our work, our partners and the people we assist at risk.

Circles in April

Deborah Circle will meet each Thursday in April at 10 AM via the Zoom app. Gaye will send you an invitation to join the Bible study.

Please let her know if you want to participate by sending her an e-mail, gaye@tobysuds.com.

- 4/ 2: Mar. *Gather* magazine, session 3, pgs. 23-25, *Called to Serve*.
- 4/ 9: Apr. *Gather* magazine, session 4, pgs. 22-23, *Calling Networks*.
- 4/16: Apr. *Gather* magazine, session 4, pgs. 24-25, *Calling Networks*.
- 4/23: Apr. *Gather* magazine, session 4, pgs. 26-27, *Calling Networks*.
- 4/30: May *Gather* magazine, *Intergenerational Devotion*.

For Rebecca Circle information, contact Colleen Pedlar, 360-675-8967, ccpedlar@comcast.net .

For information on Lydia Circle, contact Mary Brock, 360-240-8706, mkb1998@comcast.net, or Peg Fosnaugh, 360-675-2821.

Christ in Our Home Devotions

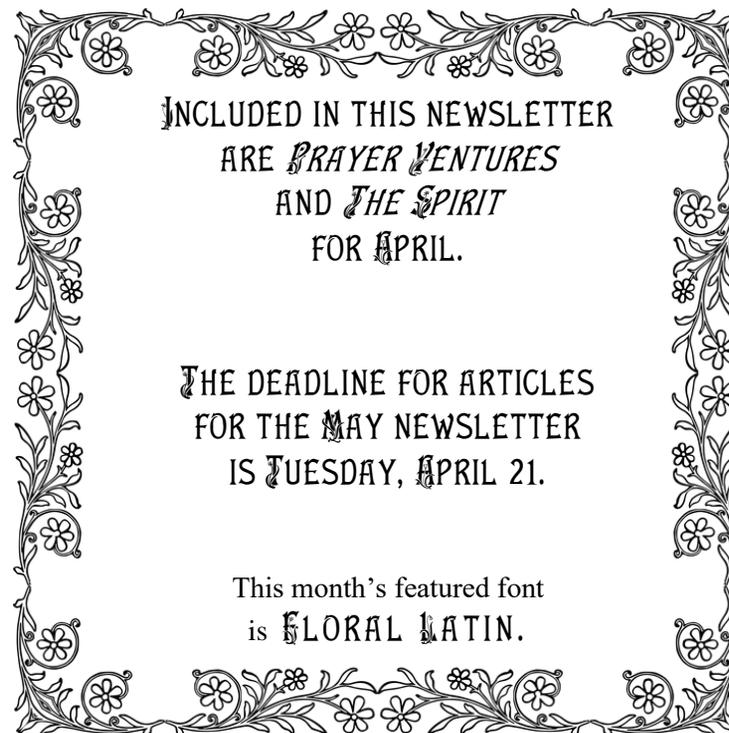
With this current health crisis, some people may be without a physical copy of *Christ in Our Home*. To assist with devotional life during this time, a limited-time complementary e-mail subscription is being offered by Augsburg Fortress. Sign up and receive the daily devotional to your e-mail for the remainder of March and April 2020.

Readers of the digital version of the *Harbor Beacon* may use this link: [Sign up here](#).

Shalom, Gaye

Take the Women's Retreat off your calendar...

Surely it comes as no surprise that the Women's Retreat scheduled for April at Quaker Cove Retreat Center near Anacortes has been cancelled. Retreat leader Gaye Rodriguey says that it will be rescheduled if possible – otherwise watch for information about the 2021 retreat! If you have questions about registration refunds or other concerns, please contact Gaye, gaye@tobysuds.com.



HIS KIDS PRESCHOOL

A MINISTRY OF OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH



We celebrated spring in the month of March! Paper lions and lambs ushered the month in, and along with that came our study of the weather. We created weather charts to keep track of what was happening outside. We also made fish-shaped paper wind socks, painted them in bright watercolors, and hung them overhead in the classroom.

During the month, we discussed different forms of transportation, so we made paper hot air balloons for air travel (see the photo above!), a submarine puppet for water, and a colorful paper train for land.

Kara Chappell of Kara Chappell Photography came to the classroom to take our class and individual photos. Smiles and combed hair were at the ready for this day for our children, and for our teachers!

We also collected items for personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to the students and families for the donations of 2 towels, 11 toothbrushes, and 33 bars of soap!

Mandated school closures as of the 17th due to the coronavirus put an abrupt end to the month's scheduled activities, so we *weren't* able to take our field trip to The Greenhouse or to have a visit by the North Whidbey Search & Rescue (with their boat) to the church parking lot. That also meant our annual Easter party was cancelled, but we did send the children home with their Easter gifts from His Kids when they took their leave from us on the 16th.

March's **Star Students** were **Lily Barajas, Adalyn Hope, Stella Harrigan, Wes Warner, Ainhara Ramirez, Julia Hendricks, Elijah Siva, Kara Pelzel, Jaden Nagal** and **Paisley Fagan**.

Here's how some of our students finished the sentence, "My favorite thing to ride is...."

AM class

Ethan: a train and a motorcycle
Levi: a cruise ship
Emily Kate: in a car
Ellie: a train and my tricycle

Lily: in a car

Liam: in a pickup truck
Owen: a bike
Eden: a scooter
Amy: a bike

PM class

Henry: my new big bike
Jaden: a bike
Hanna: roller skates
Julia: an airplane

Kara: a balance bike

Taysom: a monster truck
Elijah: a scooter
Juliet: a scooter

Families, you can keep up on the latest preschool news by visiting the church website and/or waiting for direct contact from His Kids director, Sara Harbaugh. We will let you know when we can move forward again with our normal routines and schedules.

In the meantime, happy spring to all of you! We wish you God's peace,
Ms. Elva, Ms. Michelle, Ms. Sara

His Kids Preschool

a ministry of Oak Harbor Lutheran Church since 1993

**Registration is open
for the 2020-2021 school year!**

Monthly tuition: \$165 for the 3-day classes
\$110 for the 2-day Pre-K

Readiness class

Fees due at the time of registration:

\$ 50 nonrefundable registration fee +

\$ 50 tuition fee which is applied to the final month's tuition.

\$100



Contact Martha in the church office, martha@oakharborlutheran.org, and she can answer questions and e-mail you a pdf version of the registration form. **Questions for the director?** Contact Sara Harbaugh, harbaughs-in-wa@comcast.net.

NEWS FROM THE COUPEVILLE WORSHIP GROUP
OHLC'S SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES AT ST. MARY'S, COUPEVILLE

Tuition for Theodora

What a joy it is to be able to report to you that OHLC has provided tuition for Theodora Bokun in Papua New Guinea for her senior year at Martin Luther Seminary in Lae, PNG. Thank you to all who made this possible!

Theodora is one of the first female students accepted at the seminary. Her mission in her country is vital to the growth of the ELCPNG, (Evangelical Lutheran Church – Papua New Guinea). During her third year of study, her vicar year, she served several congregations and represented women at conferences.

Please offer *Wow!* prayers of thanksgiving that we are able to support Theodora in this ministry.

Carol Reafs



Greetings, dear Partner Church congregations. And thank you for your prayers and support from afar. Your words of encouragement mean much in these odd days. God is faithful. The following piece gives little detail about our CoViD19 dealings here. Much will have changed by the time you read this. And I wish to share the impressions of the tone around here – hopeful and grateful and serious.

We celebrate each time we get a negative test result for the virus – there have been several of those in the past few days – and we are cautious about our personal protection. It is a joy to see residents beginning to feel better AND their continued healing is a clear goal.

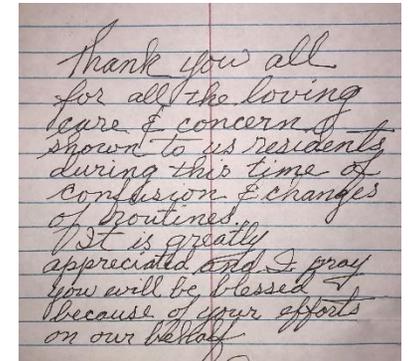
Helen

17 March 2020

I delivered Bible study sheets in The Suites last week. The halls were quiet, and folks seemed as glad to have a momentary visit as they were to have some scripture for reflection.

Posted on one resident's door was a note:

Thank you all for all the loving care & concern shown to us residents during this time of confusion & changes of routine. It is greatly appreciated and I pray that you will be blessed because of your efforts on our behalf.



A small gesture, and yet it caught me up short -- what a gift to be noticed!

It is a model we all can use just now: in the midst of the restrictions and frustrations, to see and appreciate the ways in which people are flexing and caring and responding to this odd crisis. To say “thank you.” These are challenging times and we are all in this together.

When I asked permission to share his words with you, the note's author's face contorted into a poignant smile. “These are strange times. I am grateful. People ought to know.” Such simple witness, such open kindness – a grace note amid the chaos.

Still, life continues with all the challenges and delights, all of the heartbreaks and joys, with all of the wry irony and the grace notes. Even in the midst of a pandemic, human beings are wonderfully, fearfully made AND individually, uniquely broken...

This Way of Jesus is costly, dear people. I saw it in the face of my note-writing friend, and I see it in yours. We work hard at following a gracious, shrewd, healing teacher. In the midst of all this, our faithful God calls us to see one another, to love one another, to hold one another... and so we do. Thank you.

Lenten pandemic peace to you,
Helen McPeak
Director of Spiritual Care, Josephine Caring Community
Stanwood, WA

WORDS FOR THE SEASON

April 5: Passion/Palm Sunday



We encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross.

April 9: Maundy Thursday



The *mandatum* for which this holiest of Thursdays gets its name is Jesus' commandment to "Love one another [just] as I have loved you" (John 13:34). This is both the law and the gospel of it all, the dying and the rising. It can never be done in human life apart from Christ, but still remains the mandate. Christ shows us the way through his examples of love and servanthood.

April 10 is Good Friday



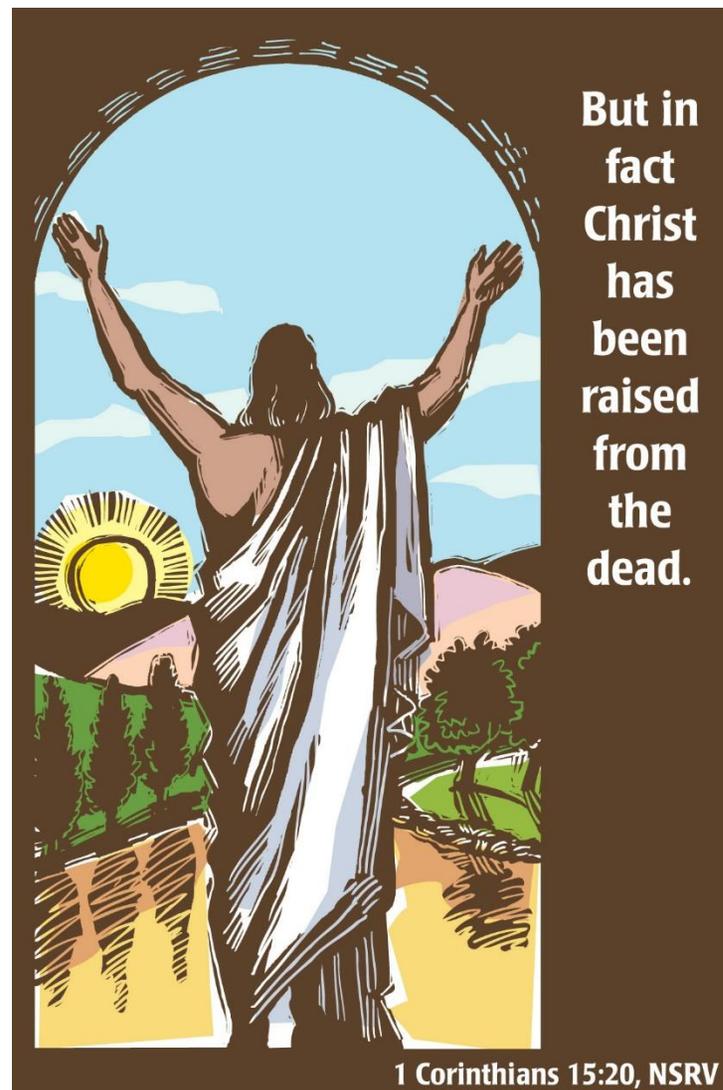
Not a funeral for Jesus, but – as the Passion from the Gospel of John points out to us – a triumph of the cross. In John's version, Jesus' own words are a two-edged, law-and-gospel sword. "It is finished" (John 19:30) is Christ's last, triumphant cry, to be sure. But echoing the completion of creation in Genesis 2:2, Christ's cry is also a birth announcement of the new creation. "It is finished," Christ proclaims, and so should we. All things are made new.

April 12 is Easter Day, the Resurrection of Our Lord



This is the day the Lord has made! Christ is risen, and through him all creation is made new! Indeed, "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34): Christ's resurrection truly brings life to everyone. With the women at the tomb, we are astonished, elated, and grateful. Filled with joy, we proclaim the good news of God's endless love.

adapted from *Sundays & Seasons* 2020 Augsburg Fortress, ©2019



But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:20, NSRV

LESSER FESTIVALS & COMMEMORATIONS: APRIL

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4 Benedict the African, confessor, 1589 | 21 Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1109 |
| 6 Albrecht Dürer, 1528,
Matthias Grünewald, 1529,
Lucas Cranach, 1553, artists | 23 Toyohiko Kagawa,
renewer of society, 1960 |
| 9 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, 1945 | 25 St. Mark, Evangelist |
| 10 Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, 1557 | 29 Catherine of Siena,
theologian, 1380 |
| 19 Olavus Petri, priest, 1552, Laurentius
Petri, Archbishop of Uppsala, 1573, renewers of the Church. | |