

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



HARBOR BEACON

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OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

A friendly, Christ-centered congregation with a place for you!

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

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OHLC Staff

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Newsletter Editor: Martha Ellis
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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*
for April:

<https://dq5pwpq1q8ru0.cloudfront.net/2024/03/20/01/15/39/dc4aa124-ea91-45d8-bde2-2ad26a4f78b5/APRIL%20Spirit%202024.pdf>

OHLC's website:
www.oakharborlutheran.org

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PASTOR'S PAGE: Counting our Blessings at OHLC

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the people! Psalm 105:1

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

One of my least favorite annual responsibilities as a pastor is completing our Annual Congregational Report to the churchwide organization. This report is roughly the congregational equivalent of doing your taxes. The forms include lots of boxes which need to be filled in with numbers: membership numbers, attendance numbers, financial numbers. I understand why it is important. I don't begrudge those who need that information. I always take it seriously and get it in on time. I just don't like numbers. I think words are much more interesting, which is probably why I'm a preacher and not an accountant. I don't like counting, and this report demands a lot of it.

However, this year as I was grumpily counting, one number jumped out and made me smile. The number was 24. That's how many new members we received at Oak Harbor Lutheran Church in the past calendar year, either by baptism, transfer, or affirmation of faith. Not only that, but this was 12 more members than we lost to transfers, removal, or death. Yes, Oak Harbor Lutheran Church grew in membership in 2023! Suddenly numbers didn't seem so bad! Suddenly they were fun! Like most Christian congregations, our membership numbers have at best plateaued in recent years. Like most Christian congregations, some years we have seen a dip in numbers. But not this past year. This past year we grew in membership. And while our worship attendance numbers are still not quite back to pre-pandemic levels, those numbers were up too.

I may not be a full convert to the joys of counting, but this was a reminder of the importance of a certain kind of counting, the counting of one's blessings. And there are more blessings to count at OHLC! This

past Lent we had 60 people order a copy of Luther's *Large Catechism* for our Lenten book study, most of whom showed up consistently for the class. This is the largest adult ed class I've ever had the pleasure of teaching. Here is another number to celebrate: 97. That's how many new chairs a few of our members hauled back to OHLC from the Burlington Costco. These chairs were eventually matched by 12 new round tables. This was made possible by a large number of dollars generously given to OHLC as a memorial gift. (We'll keep that number in our financial report.) This new furniture significantly brightened up our fellowship hall. The chairs have been especially appreciated. One of our members described their comfortable contours as "like receiving a hug from God." That's an actual quote!



A word of caution is warranted here, I think. God's favor towards us cannot ultimately be counted by earthly blessings. As people of the cross, we know that God is not "more" with us when things are going well. God's greatest blessings, the blessings of faith, hope, and love, are not tied to our circumstances, which inevitably change. Moreover, while the weather has been good at OHLC recently, the overall climate for churches still poses significant challenges which we should not deny or ignore.

That said, it is always appropriate to give thanks. It is always appropriate to be grateful for the good things we have seen God doing. It is always good to count our blessings. "O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the people!" writes the psalmist. "If there is anything worthy of praise," St. Paul encourages us, "think on these things."

There are 24 new people calling Oak Harbor Lutheran Church their spiritual home, which is 12 more than the previous year. I praise God for each one of them, and for each one of you. I guess counting isn't so bad after all.

Pastor Jeffrey R. Spencer

GROWING & LEARNING

New Adult Bible study series announced

Adult Bible study will go on hiatus for a few weeks due to Easter and Pastor's Jeff's post-Easter vacation time. It will resume on April 21 with classes being held on Sunday morning in the library from 9:15 to 10:15. We will not be having a Wednesday night class this spring. Our spring study will be on First Corinthians and will utilize some themes outlined by The Bible Project.



For in the one spirit we were all baptized into one body.

1 Corinthians 12:13

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Seeing Every Part of Life Through the Gospel

April 21: Community (*1 Cor. 1-4*)

April 28: Sex (*1 Cor. 5-7*)

May 5: Food (*1 Cor. 8-10*)

May 12: Mother's Day Tea – NO CLASS

May 19: Worship (*1 Cor. 11-14*)

May 26: Death (*1 Cor. 15*)

Confirmation class meets April 21

Confirmation class will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on Sunday, April 21. At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend with their student. Mark your calendars and be sure and complete sessions 9-10 in your workbooks before we gather.

New Member class set for April 28

An orientation class for new members will be held on Sunday, April 28 at Noon. Lunch will be provided. RSVP via the Connection Card or by e-mailing Pastor Spencer at pastor@oakharborlutheran.org.

Pastor Spencer on vacation April 12-16

Pastor Spencer will be on vacation and out of town April 12-16. He and Amy will be attending Family Weekend at Texas A&M University. Pastor Laurie Johnson will be preaching and presiding at our worship services on Sunday, April 14. If you have an emergency requiring pastoral care during this time, please call the church office to be referred to an on-call pastor.

OHLC NEWS

Sunday, April 7:

Memorial brunch for Karola Cornelius

You are invited to join us for a special brunch following the 10:30 service (about 11:45 AM) in memory and in celebration of Karola Cornelius. We will have a mic set up in the fellowship hall to give people an opportunity to share a few words about her and to give thanks for her life. Pastor Spencer will share some scripture and lead us in prayer. A private committal service will take place later that day.



Born and raised in Illinois, Karola graduated from Southern Illinois University. She moved to Los Angeles and began what became a 38-year career with the US Treasury Dept. Throughout her life she enjoyed drawing, painting, ceramics and working with stained glass. She was a runner and avid hiker, and loved her horses, her dog, cockatoo, cats, goats, chickens and geese. With Glenn, her spouse of 31 years, she moved to Oak Harbor at the end of 2011 and joined OHLC in 2013.

Glenn extends his thanks to the congregation for the prayers and support, especially during the last few weeks of Karola's life. They both very much appreciated both Pastor Spencer and Tom Piper who made multiple visits and brought communion.

Peg checks in



Peg Fosnaugh sends her thanks for the congregation's continuing loving support as she undergoes chemo. Special thanks to those who are keeping their eyes on things around the church, freeing Dave from his various building and grounds tasks and 8:00 AM service usher duties as he now shepherds Peg through the maze of treatments and doctors' appointments. They're wearing masks and keeping their distance due to Peg's compromised immune system, but they appreciate the prayers on their behalf as well as all the cards, notes, and other expressions of love and concern.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

- WITH BETH STEPHENS

Come along on the adventure!

QUEST CLUB is open to youth of all skill levels, age 12 and up. Join the Dead Sea Squirrels adventuring party in a TTRPG game based on Dungeons & Dragons 5E as they travel through the lands and time of the Bible on a quest to track down the missing Magi and discover more about a mysterious prophecy. For more info, contact Beth Stephens, bethasteph@gmail.com.

NEW PLAYERS: Sign-up ahead is preferred for character creation, but not required.

GROWNUPS! Are you interested in seeing what Quest Club is all about?

Contact Beth Stephens to sign up for an introductory tabletop roleplay adventure: *Terror of the Tarasque* (inspired by the legend of St. Martha) to experience the fun yourself on April 20 (time TBA). You may also sign up via the Connection Card in your Sunday bulletin!



Youth & Family Night news:

Due to Spring Break, we won't gather for Youth & Family Night in April. **Mark your calendar and plan to join us for Youth & Family Night on Sunday, May 5**, for *Christ in the Clouds*, 6:00-7:30 PM. We'll have an early celebration of the Ascension of our Lord, with kite-making and a fun-themed snack.

We have scholarships available!!


Oak Harbor Lutheran Church's Theresa Ferguson Memorial Scholarship offers **\$1,000-per-year renewable scholarships for any type of post-secondary education.**


The **deadline for applications** for the 2024-25 school year is **Wednesday, May 1**. Application forms are available in the church office, or contact Roshel Donwen, 360-929-0136, roshel@3sistersbeef.com.



Church Family news: *Reasons for Rejoicing!*

Please keep our congregation's children in your prayers, especially...

 **Soraya Wiley**, who celebrated her First Communion on Palm Sunday, March 24. Her parents are Jim & Shannon Wiley.

 **Brynlee Ann Donwen**, baptized on Easter Sunday; March 31. Her parents are Nicholas & Roshel (Muzzall) Donwen.



Pastor Jeff & Soraya

A word about Faith & Family Day with the Seattle Mariners

The Mariners have moved their "Faith & Family Day" to June 15, much earlier in the summer than it has been in recent years. This is also the date of graduation at Oak Harbor High School. As a result, we will not be organizing an OHLC trip this year. While we are taking a break from this outing this summer, we hope to do it again sometime – ideally with a more conveniently scheduled "Faith & Family Day."

This is still a great event, however, and so we wanted you to know about it. Perhaps some of our members and their families will be available and choose to go on their own



Included in this newsletter are *Prayer Ventures* & *The Spirit* for April.

The deadline for articles for the May newsletter is Friday, April 19.

Bloodworks Northwest will use the fellowship hall on Thursdays & Fridays, April 11&12 and 18&19, 10 AM to 4 PM. Equipment remains in place Thursday nights. Blood donations are by appointment only, <https://donate.bloodworksnw.org/>.

The One Thing Book Group meets Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 PM in the home of Gail Dobbyn, 754 NW 1st Ave, Oak Harbor. The book for discussion is *The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers*, by Maxwell King.

The Brotherhood of St. Bernard, OHLC's men's group, meets for lunch & Bible study in the fellowship hall at noon on Tuesdays, Apr. 9&23.

HIS KIDS PRESCHOOL

A MINISTRY OF OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

March was a full month for students, families, and the His Kids Preschool! Students learned about different methods of transportation: land, air, and water! They also explored different types of weather, even making their own weather trackers, and water-color painted giant fish kites for the classroom. Focus letters were L, W, K, and E.

We had wonderful community visitors from North Whidbey Search & Rescue, who brought along their own essential method of water transportation. The students were able to tour a SAFE boat in the parking lot, and learned about life jackets, boat safety, and water safety!

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

Elizabeth: on an airplane

Celia: on an airplane

Jomari: in Mommy's car

Abby: on water skis

Hannah: on a ferry boat

Theo: on an airplane

Liam: in a car

Brayden: on an airplane

Reid: on a ferry boat

Harper: on a train

Jacob: on an airplane

Karter: on a helicopter

Wren: in a car

Maren: on a ferry boat

Everett: on an airplane

Our field trip took us to The Green House Florist & Nursery, where lessons on plants and flowers kicked off our almost (even if it still feels cold) springtime in the Pacific Northwest! We look forward to more plants, animals, and sunshine to see through the classroom windows. For St. Patrick's Day the room was filled with green, and many students hoped they might be able to catch a leprechaun!

March's Star Students were **Celia, Brayden, Harper, and Abby**. Class portraits were taken at the end of the month, and we're eagerly looking forward to seeing all their smiling faces and personalities!

On the 27th we had our Easter Celebration, celebrating the story of Jesus' resurrection and the new life and excitement this time of year brings! We'll be excited to see our students again after their Spring Break, welcoming them back on April 9!

Registration is underway for His Kids Preschool for 2024-2025! We are looking forward to a new year, with new class options. Please continue to spread the word if you know any families with littles; a full classroom again would be such a joy for our teachers.

Happy Spring, and warmest wishes!
Ms. Jasmine, Ms. Elva, Ms. Michelle

OHLC WOMEN

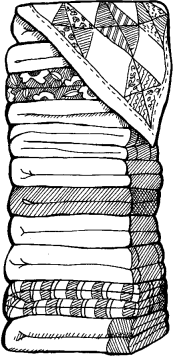
OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWSHIP, STUDY & SERVICE

Blanket Workshop

Blanket Workshop meets Tuesday & Wednesday, April 2&3, beginning at 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall to work on tied quilts for Lutheran World Relief. New-comers are always welcome!

Are you interested in assembling (uncomplicated) quilt tops at home? Materials are provided.

Feel free to stop by and see what we're up to, or contact Leona McKee for more information, 360-675-5712, bcmac68@comcast.net.



From the LWR website: Lutheran World Relief distributed its first quilts in 1945 to families in war-torn Europe following the Second World War. Within a decade, the ministry was reaching around the globe to villages far removed from the world's attention. Today, an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year. LWR Mission Quilts are highly regarded because of their quality and consistency. Whether used as warm bedding, simple tents or floor coverings, each quilt reflects God's loving presence in a world rife with suffering.

Circle meetings in April

Lydia Circle meets at 5:30 PM in the prayer room on **Tuesdays, April 2 & 16**, to continue study in the *Friendship* book. Newcomers are always welcome, and you can join the group at any time! For more information, contact Mary Brock,

mkb1998@comcast.net, or Peg Fosnaugh, 360-929-1653.



Deborah Circle meets every **Thursday**, 1:00-3:00 PM in the library. For our first 3 weeks, we're continuing the Bible study *Scripture and nature: Teachers of faith*, in *Gather* magazine, a publication of the Women of the ELCA. Loaner copies are available if you don't have a current subscription. Questions? Contact Gaye Rodriguey, gaye@tobysuds.com, or talk to Martha Ellis in the church office.

4/ 4 Mar./Apr. 2024 *Gather*, Session 3, *Rivers*, pgs. 17-19

4/11 Mar./Apr. 2024 *Gather*, Session 4, *Food*, pgs. 32-34

4/18 Mar./Apr. 2024 *Gather*, Session 4, *Food*, pgs. 35-37

4/25 *Foundations of Grateful Living: Grateful Gathering*, Session 1

COMPASSION MINISTRY

A personal message about Stephen Ministry

April's focus is Stephen Ministry. We're honored to have the perspectives of someone who's been 'on both sides' of this caring ministry.

The relationship between a Stephen Minister and Care Receiver is confidential. I am stepping out of that confidentiality to encourage folks to take advantage of the blessing of Stephen Ministry. Twice in my life, when I was walking in my own "wilderness" of grief, pain, and anxiety, a caring woman has walked beside me for as long as I had need of her support, her encouragement and, most importantly, her compassionate listening.

You may recognize my identity by the details I am sharing in this note, and I would welcome conversation about my story. Fourteen years ago, as I completed treatment for breast cancer, my husband died while in hospice care. A female Stephen Minister reached out to me, listened and comforted me, and over the course of several months helped me back to finding purpose and joy in my life. I became a Stephen Minister myself and have been able to share my gifts and training with two other women.

In 2023, I had a very difficult year. I had three surgeries and my daughter-in-law died after a long battle with cervical cancer. I was deeply depressed, anxious and in pain from the latest surgery. Once again, at my request, I was placed with a Stephen Minister. She listened to my fears and anxieties. She met me in that wilderness and walked beside me. Yes, we prayed together. Yes, we wept together, and came to laugh together as well.

I am sharing these experiences with you all to encourage and invite you to take advantage of this ministry. Certainly your own "wilderness" is different. Have no fear about acknowledging your need for help and support. Please talk to Pastor Jeff or Stephen Leaders Gaye Rodrigue and Gail Dobbyn, or to me. God bless you!

With my love, Carol Reafs

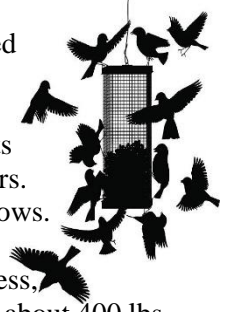
Adult forum, Sunday, April 7, focuses on Hospice Care

OHLC's Stephen Ministry will sponsor an adult forum at 9:15 AM in the library. Presenter will be Pastor Laurie Johnson, our visitation pastor, who also serves our local WhidbeyHealth as Bereavement & Volunteer Coordinator.



Help support Josephine with these springtime opportunities!

Following a successful and greatly-appreciated birdseed drive in 2023, Josephine Caring Community in Stanwood is again asking for our help. As noted in a newsletter article last summer, many Josephine residents were avid gardeners and love nature and the great outdoors. Quite a few residents have birdfeeders outside their windows. Studies show that birdwatching is helpful for those who are homebound, sharpening concentration, decreasing stress, and improving long-term health. Josephine goes through about 400 lbs. of birdseed each year, and the Activity Dept. does its best to stretch their budget to purchase seed for those who cannot afford it.



There will be a birdfeeder (you'll recognize it from last year's drive!) on a stand in the narthex donation center and we welcome your **monetary contributions** towards their birdseed fund. (*No actual birdseed, please!*) Checks may be written to OHLC, with *Josephine/Birdseed* on the memo line.

Josephine is also gathering **reading glasses** (2.5 mag or greater) and **washable wool yarn** for projects (used and remnant balls are also welcomed).

Josephine is reaching out to many area shelters by assembling personal care kits. We at OHLC wish to help by collecting **new hand towels** and **new, travel-sized toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste, body wash, lip balm and toothbrushes**. These items may be placed in the marked collection bin in the narthex during April & May.

Do you enjoy sewing? Please talk to Rita Carter, who has a template for sewing personal care kit containers from hand towels. The work can be done independently, and only simple, machine-stitching in a straight line is required.

**Thank you so much in advance
for supporting Josephine Caring Community
and its outreach projects!**



Many blessings!
Rita Carter & Kathy Holroyd
Josephine Congregational Reps.

Flowers for worship services are presented to the glory of God

Thank you to all who sign up to sponsor flowers for our worship services! The chart is posted in the hallway beside Pastor Spencer's office door, and there are still a few spaces available for 2024. If you have a particular Sunday in mind and a name is already written in for chancel flowers, please let me know. There are always other options available, and we'll make room.

Peg Fosnaugh, 360-929-1653

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

April 7		
8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Tom Carey Acolyte: Anna Richards Healing Prayer: F Leukhardt, M. Stroud	Computer: Lucas Stone Organ/Piano: V. Morgan
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Moira Bartrand Communion Asst: Kim Healing Prayer: L. Improta, T. Piper	Computer: A. Spencer Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
April 14		
8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Tom Piper Acolyte: Matthew Richards	Computer: Donna Aspery Organ/Piano: Jan Ernst
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Jan Heideger Communion Asst: Louis Bartrand	Computer: Bruce Holroyd Organ/Piano: Jan Ernst
April 21		
8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Jeff Margraf Acolyte: Elizabeth Richards	Computer: Lisa Margraf Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Carol Fitzgerald Communion Asst: Rita Carter	Computer: Kale Totten Organ/Piano: Verna Morgan
April 28		
8:00 AM	Assisting Minister: Sheila Ryan Acolyte: Abby Gray	Computer: Maddox Ackerman Organ/Piano: Sue Stroud
10:30 AM	Assisting Minister: Bobbi Miller Communion Asst: Kerri Totten	Computer: John Totten Organ/Piano: Sue Stroud



FINANCIAL REPORT

FEBRUARY

	February	Year to date
Income	\$ 39,213	\$ 75,408
Outgo	<u>34,241</u>	<u>79,420</u>
	\$ <u>4,972</u>	\$ <u>(4,012)</u>

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

MARCH

Date	8:00 AM	10:30 AM
March 3	50	96
March 10	42	107
March 17	41	89
March 24	54	99
Avg. Att.	47	98

Easter Sunday, March 31, will be included in next month's statistics.

Average Sunday attendance: 145

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 | |

Little Lutheran bags in April – Marge & Kim

This month's decorative font is FLORAL LATIN

APRIL



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 7:30-12:30 Cultural Homestay Int'l/ed wing 7:00 North Whidbey NA	2 7:30-12:30 CHI/ed wing 9:30 Blanket Workshop 5:30 Lydia Circle	3 7:30-12:30 CHI/ed wing 9:30 Blanket Workshop 11:30 OHLC Staff 4:00 Chancel Choir 4:30 set up for 6:00 CHI, send-off/fellowshp hall	4 1:00 Deborah Circle 6:30 <i>She Sharps</i> 7:00 NA	5	6
7 Worship 8:00 Adult Forum: Hospice 9:15 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 Memorial brunch for Karola C. 11:45 CA 7:30	8 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 6:30 WICAREs 7:00 North Whidbey NA 7:30 WIYS, sanctuary	9 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 5:30 Al Anon	10 11:30 OHLC Staff 4:00 Chancel Choir	11 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Bloodworks Northwest, 10 AM – 4 PM fellowship hall - donations by appointment only</div> 1:00 Deborah Circle 4:00 Stephen Ministry 6:30 Council 6:30 <i>She Sharps</i> 7:00 NA, ed wing	12	13
14 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 QUEST CLUB 4:00 CA 7:30	15 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 7:00 North Whidbey NA 7:30 WIYS, sanctuary	16 5:30 Lydia Circle 5:30 Al Anon 6:30 One Thing Book Group	17 11:30 OHLC Staff 4:00 Chancel Choir	18 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Bloodworks Northwest, 10 AM – 4 PM fellowship hall - donations by appointment only</div> 1:00 Deborah Circle 6:30 <i>She Sharps</i> 7:00 NA	19	20 Time TBA Intro to Quest Club for interested adults: <i>Terror of the Tarasque</i>
21 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed 9:15 Worship 10:30 Confirmation 6:00 CA 7:30	22 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i> 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 6:30 WICAREs 7:00 North Whidbey NA 7:30 WIYS, sanctuary	23 10:00 Church Mice Stampers 12:00 Brotherhood of St. Bernard 5:30 Al Anon	24 11:30 OHLC Staff 4:00 Chancel Choir	25 1:00 Deborah Circle 6:30 <i>She Sharps</i> 7:00 NA	26	27
28 Worship 8:00 Sunday School 9:15 Adult Ed 9:15 Worship 10:30 New member class 12:00 QUEST CLUB 4:00 CA 7:30	29 12:30 M.M. set-up 1:30 Munchy Monday 6:00 North Whidbey NA/fellowship hall 7:30 WIYS, sanctuary	30 5:30 Al Anon	<h2 style="color: blue;">Christ Is Risen!</h2> <p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED</p> <h1 style="color: blue; font-family: cursive;">Alleluia</h1>		<p>HIS KIDS PRESCHOOL M,T,W 9:00/9:15 AM – 12:15 PM</p> <p>Registration is underway for 2024-2025!</p> <p><i>Spring Break: April 1-5</i></p>	