



Cross Currents Newsletter April 2025

A Word or Two... by Pastor Mark

If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. (I Corinthians 15:14-19)

Those powerful words from St. Paul to the Christians in Corinth proclaim a bedrock of the Christian faith in an age that worships measurable truth. Today people tend to bolster arguments by endlessly referring to "studies" or "science." And of course that has its place, although science constantly evolves and many, many times finds its results to be in error, needing an update. But children know that the world is full of mysteries unending, and they are willing to embrace that fact. That explains why they have no problem believing that God is all around them, loves them and died as Christ for them, before their minds get complicated with "Yes, buts."

Still, Paul boldly admits that if the resurrection never happened, the whole Christian project is in vain. I suppose you could say that if it were proven Jesus didn't rise from the dead you could still have a pretty good religion made from His sayings, but then it would just be another philosophy. Indeed, a lot of folks who fancy themselves "Christian" think just that. In Revelation, Jesus says that He would just as soon spit that kind of lukewarm stuff out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16).

So, how do we hold on to that great message in a world that would deny or ignore it? First of all, it might be helpful to remember that this age of skepticism is not unique. People back in Paul's day were not stupid – they were uninformed about a lot, but many of them also thought the resurrection was a lot of hooley. That's why Paul wrote what he did.

Second, there are good arguments on a practical level for the resurrected Christ. For example, if the body had been stolen, as was rumored, how would that have benefitted His followers? To think they could find satisfaction in knowing Jesus' body was in an unmarked grave and they were propagating a lie the rest of their lives, suffering and dying horrible deaths for that lie, is absurd. Not to mention that getting past the guards would have been impossible, and a lie like that would have bubbled to the surface at some point, especially for the reward it would mean for someone who could lead the authorities to the grave.

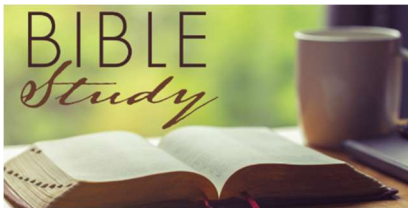
But what seals the deal is the miracle of faith itself. I've often mentioned that both my brothers were scientists, one a physicist/chemist, the other a geologist. Both also serious Christians. Why? Because as scientists they knew that just beyond all measurable truth lies a universe of complete mystery. It breaks through to us from time to time, as in the case of the wonderful message of the gospel. That is why another scientist, Pascal way back in the 1600s, could declare that "the heart has reasons that reason cannot know." Faith

puts us in touch with that if our hearts are open. Faith is always a miracle that can come only from God Himself.

So, Paul goes on to write after the passage above:

"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

That is what, to our joy, we believe and will celebrate this April 20th.



Faith & Life Bible Study

The written Bible is precious and will never be superseded. But it is brought to life in wonderful ways

through modern media. A good example of this is the series *The Chosen*. It is a portrayal of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This isn't your basic 1950s pious rendering of the subject. Instead, it is an up-to-date and deeply inspiring series of episodes that will leave you uplifted. If you go to <https://www.thechosen.tv/en-us> you can watch any of the episodes free. Eventually the series will have seven seasons of eight episodes each.

Faith and Life, our weekly Bible study for adults, is currently going through the series. On one week we watch the next episode, and in the following week we talk about it, using the Bible study guide that comes with the series. But just because we've started, it doesn't mean that you can't join in. You will find that we are easy, relaxed, fun, and have a wide range of familiarity with scripture. And there are coffee and treats every week.

Faith and Life Bible study meets in the fellowship hall every Monday night 6:30-8:00, and Wednesday mornings 9:30-11:00. Check it out – it may become habit-forming!

Prayers

*Praise and thanksgiving for all that Christ has done for us, for His resurrection and promise of new life, forever.

*For peace in Europe and the Middle East, because with God all things are possible.



Holy Week at Bethlehem

- Sunday, April 13, 9:30 AM Palm Sunday worship: procession with palms marking Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Baptism of Knox Roghair.
- Thursday, April 17, 6:30 PM Maundy Thursday service: Lord's Supper Table, First Communion for Ali Kruse.
- Friday, April 18, 6:30 PM Good Friday service: Procession of the cross, meditation on the crucifixion.
- Sunday, April 20, 9:30 AM Easter Festival Worship. Breakfast beforehand (8:15-9:15) by the Young Adults.

Upcoming Scripture Reader Chairpersons

April – Lisa Shiley

May – Vicki Witte

June – Michelle Essing



Easter Lily Orders

The Altar Guild will order lilies and have them delivered to the church for the Easter Morning Service. Cost is \$20.00. Simply complete an order form and designate whom it is in honor or memory of. Payment can be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Altar Guide and given to an Altar Guild Member or dropped off at the church office. Order forms are available on the table beneath the mailboxes in the entryway. Deadline to order is April 13th.



Giving Minute

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ ties in with the new life we witness at springtime. The cold storms of life are inevitable, but, as scripture says, joy comes in the morning. Nature seems to die, but then it brings forth the life that was there all along.

Our desire to be giving people can get beaten down by the stresses and challenges of life. Ironically, those same burdens can be a source of giving if we look at it in the right way. Giving to others lifts us out of despondency. It helps us feel that it's not all about us individually. When we part with our resources of money, time, and possessions to help others know the love of God, we triumph over those things that drag us down. Victoriously with Christ, we declare that no issue in life, even death itself, is greater than the power of the grace of God.

April Mission of the Month-

Upper Des Moines Opportunity needs: canned proteins, boxed meals, canned soups, cereal canned fruits, toilet paper, soaps, feminine product, adult incontinence garments.

King's Kamp Spring Musical Sunday Practices

There will be practice for the musical, beginning at 8:30 a.m. on the following dates:

April 6th and 13th

The musical will be held on Sunday, April 27th at 9:30 a.m.

Solos will begin at 9:00 a.m.



King's Kamp Needs Your Help!

*King's Kamp is in need of about 40 treats every week.

To be allergy friendly: no nuts please!

*King's Kamp would also love more helpers! We are in need of teachers, substitutes and volunteers. King's Kamp runs from 3:30-5:00 on Wednesdays. **If you are interested, please text Julie at 712.363.1170 or Betsy at 712.363.4635.**

He answered, 'Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your strength and with all your mind';
and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Luke 10:27



Volunteers Needed for April

If you (or you & a friend) would like to share rolls, cookies, bars, or other goodies during Sunday fellowship, please sign up on the calendar on the bulletin board outside pastor's office. Plan to bring enough to serve 75 people.

April 6 - Volunteer Needed

April 13 – Volunteer Needed

April 20 – Volunteer Needed

April 27 – Stricker/Noll



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Meeting

The Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m.

on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 with devotions led by Pastor Mark Wilms. Members present were Alecia Tolzin, Dayton Brugman, Michelle Essing, and Brandon Swanson (by zoom: Jade Woodall, Ryan Phillips, and Mark Joenks)

Secretary's Report: The February report was reviewed. A motion was made by Brandon to approve the report as written. The motion was seconded by Michelle and carried by the council.

Treasure Report/Finance Report: Insurance premium and deductible are going up. Will follow up with Church Mutual next week for a quote to possibly try to lower the premium. The special funds church directory and praise team fund fixed. The insurance certification was signed. The motion to approve was made by Michelle Essing and seconded by Brandon Swanson.

Youth/Education Report: King's Kamp is going well with the enjoyment of music, stories, and snacks. Youth group is going well and the youth are concentrating more on study time and sermon time. The fellowship following is great as well. Youth group will be helping with the Lenten meal on April 19th. Will be having a phone



call with Praying Pelicans next Wednesday so look for more information to be coming soon in regard to the mission trip this summer. We currently had two youth drop out of the mission trip. 3,500 is the goal tentatively set for money to raise to cover mission trip expenses.

Pastor's Report: We continue with the series for the Lenten season. March 30th we will celebrate Baby Boom 2.0. with taking an updated picture. We will also have a baptism that same day for Charolette Bobzien (daughter of Austin and Chelsea). April is upon us and that brings Palm Sunday on the 13th, Council mtg 16th, and Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and then Easter Sunday.

Tech Report: No updates

Outreach Report: Lenten meals are in full swing and are going well. All Wednesdays are covered and thank you to those who signed up and are providing the suppers. Holding off on ordering and making a decision on church directory copies due to Baby Boom 2.0. updated picture to include in our updated directory.

Property Report: Northwest Glass will come look at the door on the south side, until then we will use a chain and a lock to secure. The doors for the entrance to the sanctuary are being ordered. Spring cleanup is upon us and we will be setting a date and looking for volunteers to help with yard cleanup for parsonage and church.

New Business/Old Business: New business was combined with old business. Centennial church service planned for 9:30 at the park in the shelter house on July 20th. Saturday noon meal possibly have youth group help with that.

Talking points:

The council meeting was closed with The Lord's Prayer at 7:47 P. M. The next council meeting will be held Wednesday, April 16th at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Essing, Secretary

OUR VALUES STATEMENT

We are a discipleship driven ministry, inviting all people to become disciples for Jesus Christ, nurtured by scripture and prayer. We are a community of caring and forgiving people who create a nurturing and Christian environment here everyone feels welcomed. Working cooperatively, we serve as a leader in partnering with families, businesses and other churches to maximize the outreach services available to the Christian community. We strive to serve as a cornerstone of the community.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is committed to making disciples for Jesus Christ through our thoughts, words and deed.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Mark Wilms
- **Church Office:** 712-933-2229
- **Pastor's E-mail:** pmamlw@royaltelco.net
- **Pastor's Cell Phone:** 507-251-8993
- **Pastor's Home Phone:** 712-933-5545
- **Lynn Wilms Cell Phone:** 507-251-9242
- **Secretary's E-mail:** blc@royaltelco.net
- **Secretary's Office Hours:** Thurs. afternoon/Sat. am
- **Website:** www.royalbethlehemplutheran.com
- **Kitchen and Hallway Phone:** 712-933-2244
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MILESTONES

BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES:

Kay Schmidt, Alice Roghair, Kent Means, Donald Nelson, Isabel Woodall, Nicholas Toft, Nate Kruse, Henleigh Stephens, Kathy Hegwer, Lauryn Fletcher, Rell Peterson, Kimberly Spengler, Stephanie Hoermann, Alexander Spengler, Nash Roghair

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

Casey & Alecia Tolzin, 8 years, Mike & Jodi Wimmer, 30 years

April

Acolytes

- 6. Bodie Essing
- 13. Hallie Fletcher
- 17. Kate Holtz (Maundy Thursday)
- 18. Neva Pullen (Good Friday)
- 20. Zander Burks (Easter)
- 27. Khloe Combes

Altar Guild

Sherry Toft
Julie Christensen

Liturgical Colors

April 6 -- Purple
April 13, 17 -- Red
April 18 no color (altar stripped)
April 20 -- Gold
April 27 -- White

Ushers

Ben Essing Blake Essing

Scripture Reader Chair

Lisa Shiley

April

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 9:30 Bible Study 3:30 King's Kamp 5:15 Lenten Meal 6:30 Lenten Service	3 1:00p Altar Guild	4	5
6 8:30 King's Kamp Musical Practice 9:30 Worship w/Communion 10:30 Fellowship 10:50 Adult Choir Practice	7 6:30 pm Bible Study	8	9 9:30 Bible Study 3:30 King's Kamp 5:15 Lenten Meal 6:30 Lenten Service	10	11	12
13 Palm Sunday 8:30 King's Kamp Musical Practice 9:30 Worship-Knox Roghair Baptism 10:30 Fellowship 10:50 Adult Choir Practice	14 6:30 pm Bible Study	15	16 9:30 Bible Study 3:30 King's Kamp 7:00 Council Meeting	17 6:30 Maundy Thursday Worship w/ Lord's Supper Table	18 6:30 Good Friday Worship	19
20 8:15-9:15 Easter Breakfast 9:30 Worship	21 6:30 pm Bible Study	22	23 9:30 Bible Study 3:30 King's Kamp	24	25	26
27 9:00 Pre-Service Music 9:30 Spring Musical 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Confirmation Class	28 6:30 pm Bible Study	29	30 9:30 Bible Study			