

April 2025

Volume 44 Number 4

Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, GRAND MARAIS, MN



Holy Week. It's one of the most powerful weeks out of the entire year.

I get to tell the story of Holy Week every year to the Confirmation students. I watch the confusion and wonder in their faces when I remind them that Jesus gave communion to Judas, who would leave the Last Supper to betray him. I watch as their eyes get wide when I talk about the crown of thorns. I watch them cringe when I talk about the nails in Jesus' hands and feet.

During Holy Week we see the ugliness of sin, we see the pride of human hearts, and we see the humility, service, and love of Jesus. We see a God who used the cross, a tool of death and humiliation, to conquer death and the grave. We see a God who used the sinfulness of humanity to conquer sin, and to save all of us, as undeserving as we are, through grace.

Join us this Holy Week as we journey down the Jerusalem Road.

Join us on **Sunday, April 13th at 10am** as we enter the gates of Jerusalem with Jesus, waving our palm branches in celebration.

Join us **Thursday, April 17th at 7pm** as we share in the Last Supper with Jesus and his disciples, then take that same road out of Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed and arrested.

Join us on **Friday, April 18th at 7pm** as we walk the road back into Jerusalem for Jesus' trial, and follow him as he carries his own cross to that infamous hill where he was crucified.

And finally, join us on **Sunday, April 20th at 8am or 10am** as we walk that road to the empty tomb, where Jesus rose from the grave, conquering sin and death, and offering all of us grace.

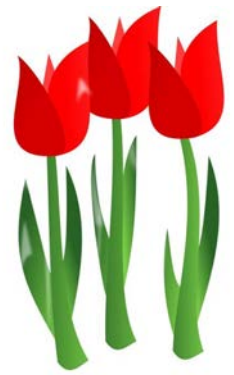
Peace in Christ.

-Pastor Calvin





**Wednesday Worship
People Celebrate with
Ethel Johnson who
turned 94 in March!**



Pastor Calvin and the Tuesday Morning Men's Coffee Group visited Gene and Barbara Erickson a day after Gene got out of a rehab facility. Gene and Barbara are moving to the Twin Cities to be closer to family and medical care. If you want to send them a card, please send it to them c/o Mullen family, 7220 Glenwood Ave., Golden Valley MN 55427. **Best wishes to the Ericksons!**



Pastor Calvin presided over the "Blessing of the Bock" for Voyageur Brewing Company. (Mike Prom in the background.)

Pastor Calvin gathering our children together "as a hen gathers her brood under her wings." (Luke 13:34) March 16, 2025

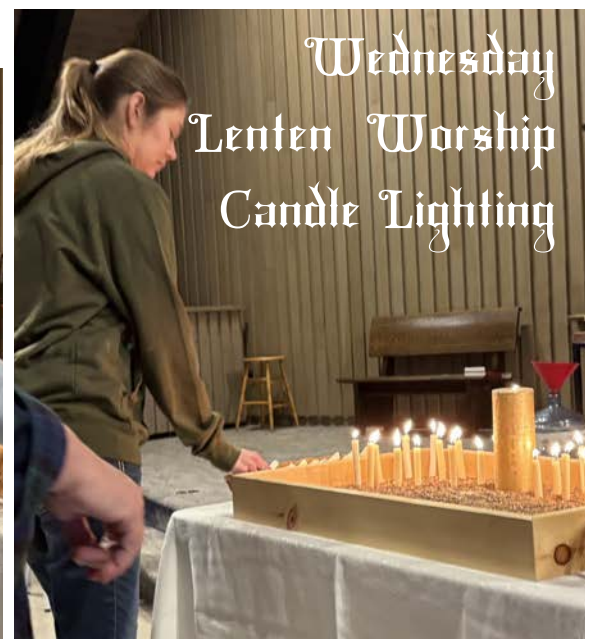


Easter

LILIES

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[www.sharingchrist.org/
forms](http://www.sharingchrist.org/forms)



Wednesday
Lenten Worship
Candle Lighting



Devotions

By Pastor Calvin Konop

Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you,

“Wait a little while, I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that.” Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs, which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer that day.

- Martin Luther, 40 Day Lent Devotional

I have that quote from Luther’s Devotional book on a post-it note on my desk, reminding me to pray. Being a pastor can be a busy gig, and it’s easy to get caught up in the daily to-do’s and to let prayer slip out of my schedule. In the same way, life in general gets busy for all of us: schedules get packed, and energy levels drain. Often prayer is put on the back burner, or not even on the stove top to begin with.

Prayer is powerful. And while some find it a daunting endeavor, prayer is simply a conversation with God. Prayer can be talking to God about your day, venting your frustrations, sharing your excitements, wondering about things you don’t understand, and (of course) asking God for things. When we pray, God listens. When we pray, God acts.

I want to encourage you, right now (yes, right now), to say a prayer. Set a timer for just 1 minute, and pray to God. Talk to God about whatever you want to talk about for that 1 minute, and then thank God for listening and say Amen.

God is with you. God is listening. God cares. God is working. **Amen.**



Ben Nikodym has Accepted His First Call!

Ben recently reached out to let us know that he has accepted his first call. He will be a full-time Deacon at St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church in Campbell Hill, Illinois. His role will

be that of a deacon but will “basically be the pastor for this church.”

It is a term call, meaning that he is only committed for one year. It is renewable, but if he wants to continue to do this long-term, the church (and synod) would eventually want Ben to go back to seminary to finish his MDiv since he only has an MA.

Ben invites us to join his ordination service on Saturday April 12 at 4:00 pm on the St. Luke’s facebook livestream: [facebook.com/stlukech/](https://www.facebook.com/stlukech/)

Ben and Julianna are currently located in St. Louis and will commute (90 miles one-way) between locations. They are able to live in the church parsonage when in Campbell Hill.

“Thank you for all of your support. I am so grateful for everyone at Bethlehem - Best, Ben”



Join us on Easter
Sunday, April 20th
for a light brunch
between services
(9-10 am)





A Word from your Pastor

For the next few months, I'll be breaking down the 4 criteria that it takes to be a Reconciling in Christ Church. What does this mean? What does this not mean? The first of the four things on the Reconciling in Christ website is a Welcome Statement.

The website says:

#1 - Clearly state a welcome to people of "all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions" or "LGBTQIA+" and name its commitment to "racial equity" or "anti-racism" in a Welcome Statement.

I've heard a couple of really great questions about the welcome statement, and I want to offer an answer to these questions.

Why do we need a welcome statement? Isn't "All Are Welcome" enough?

"All Are Welcome" is an excellent welcome statement that is encompassing for everyone. This is also a statement that every church makes across our country. But not every church is an open and affirming church. Some say, "All are welcome," but have strings attached for folks in the queer community (e.g. you must be celibate for the rest of your life, you must "convert" to being straight, etc.). As queer folks experience this in churches, they are often wary of worshiping at any church unless they are clear that LGBTQIA+ folks are welcome at that church without strings attached.

Isn't a welcome statement that specifically welcomes some going to make others feel unwelcome?

Our Welcome Statement doesn't need to *only* include the LGBTQIA+ community. The hope is that when we make a welcome statement, we can craft it in such a way that welcomes everyone *including* those who are in the queer community.

Many churches have done this around the nation, and I want to highlight our neighbor, Lutsen Lutheran's welcome statement.

Lutsen Lutheran says, "We are a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. You are invited to participate in the life of the church regardless of your sexual orientation, gender expression, political leanings, religious affiliation, immigration status, or attitude toward lutefisk."

They are intentional about welcoming everyone, regardless of our differences.

Does our welcome statement mean we have to hang a rainbow flag or banner?

No. We do not have to hang a flag or a banner.

The Welcome Statement can be on our website, on posters in our church, in our bulletin or newsletter - it can be anywhere that we want to publish it. But it does not mean that we are required to start flying a rainbow flag.

A final thought:

As we continue to discern where God is calling our church and the act of publicly welcoming all to our church, it is important for me that we keep the cross at the center. The altar and cross are at the focal point of our Sanctuary for a reason. That reason being: It's all about Jesus. Jesus' radical love for **everyone** should be the focus of what we do and say; the focus of our welcome statement that invites others to experience that love; and the focus of our worship of our Triune God.

I'm open and available for anyone that wants to talk more about this process. We will be taking our time, making space for open and honest dialogue, offering educational opportunities, and being intentional about praying throughout this process.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Calvin

**Building an
Inclusive
Church**



Youth
Ministries

blcyouth@boreal.org

NEW CYF DIRECTOR HIRED!

Welcome our new
Director of CYF Ministry,
Jessica Epple Christenson!

Jessica will be starting sometime in early May, and is relocating to Grand Marais from the Twin Cities. Jessica comes to us with years of CYF experience, and experience working for 1517 Media, formerly called Augsburg Fortress. Jessica will have an article introducing herself in a future newsletter. For now, keep Jessica and her family in your prayers as they move to Grand Marais.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

The Children, Youth, and Family Committee will be setting the dates for the 2025 Vacation Bible School and will be advertising them on the website and in our e-weekly soon. It will also be in next month's newsletter.

CONFIRMATION NEWS



Lenten Mentoring has been going well! Thank you to everyone who said "yes" to investing in the faith life of one of our middle schoolers. We've had some fun, gotten to know each other, and talked about our shared faith.

There will be **no confirmation on Wednesday, April 16th** for Holy Week.

Our regular Confirmation Ministry will start up again on Wednesday, April 23rd for our usual Wednesday night ministry (5:30 dinner, 6pm Service, 6:30-7:30 Confirmation).



FIRST COMMUNION

Several students have completed the First Communion Course and will be taking their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 17th. Please join us at 7:00 pm for this milestone. (Stripping of the Altar will end this traditional Maundy Thursday service. - Always a moving experience.)



Summer's coming! It's Time to Sign Up for Camp!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church would like to encourage youth's attendance at a Faith-based camp of choice this summer. We again are offering financial assistance on an individual basis. Last year our scholarships averaged \$250/student/camp.

There are several regional camps to consider, including several out our back door! Camp weeks fill up quickly, so families should begin checking out camp websites and register soon.

Camp Scholarship forms are available on the Youth Bulletin Board (across from the bathrooms) and on our website at: www.sharingchrist.org/forms.



Mission Of the Month

LIGHTS FOR UKRAINE



The April Mission of the Month is going international - yet has a very local connection. We will be supporting the **Ray of Life** project which supplies solar light kits to families in Ukraine who are living without electricity.

This mission was started by Dave Nonnemacher of Two Harbors, (formerly of Grand Marais). His non-profit, New Horizons Foundation, will use the funds we raise to purchase components needed for the solar kits. Volunteers will then assemble the kits and prepare them for shipping.



Assembly events have been held in North Shore locations including Beaver Bay and at Lutsen Lutheran. We are excited to have Dave come to Bethlehem on **May 20th** to lead an assembly event. The parts for each kit currently cost **\$125**. We

hope our members will respond generously. *Wouldn't it be great to give this gift to at least twenty families?*

[Pictured above: Ukrainian families receiving their "Ray of Life" kits. Pictured below: Light kits made at Lutsen Lutheran Church, "ground zero for Ray of Life project". Lutsen collected funds through one of their Mission of the Month drives and made a second batch of light kits through a partnership with a Lutheran church in Thousand Oaks, California.]

NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2025

"Living In Christ's Embrace: Echoing Shalom"

38th Annual Synod Assembly will take place on May 3 and 4, 2025 at Breezy Point Resort, Breezy Point, MN. This year's theme is taken from Isaiah 55:11-12. Pastor Calvin and two representatives will participate in this year's workshops and business meetings, including election of a new bishop. Stay tuned.

MEMBER CHALLENGE:

Join us on Tuesday evening, **May 20th**, to put together solar light kits for Ukraine. We will meet in the fellowship hall starting at **6:00 pm**. This event is open to anyone in the community who would like to help. **The quantity of kits that we will make that evening is entirely dependent on how much money we raise in April for the Mission of the Month.**

"Making these solar kits was really a blast when we did this at Lutsen Lutheran," said Denise Murray, Bethlehem's Office Manager. "I hope that you all get a chance to join the fun and support this mission."



Compostela (Way of St. James the Great) is a network of pilgrimages leading to the shrine of the Apostle James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. Legend holds that St. James' remains were carried by boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain where he was buried in the city of Santiago de Compostela. The Way of St. James became a major pilgrimage route of medieval Christianity at the beginning of the 9th century. Thousands of pilgrims from around the world still follow its many routes as a form of spiritual path or retreat for their spiritual growth.

Murray's Grand Adventure

Tom and I plan to make a Camino de Santiago pilgrimage through Portugal and Spain in May. The journey we're taking covers roughly the first half of the 185 mile walk Tom and our daughter Lauren made last spring. Instead of finishing in Santiago de Compostela, the traditional ending for pilgrims, we plan to walk as far as the historic Galician port town of Baiona.



We look forward to conversations with pilgrims from all over the world, enjoying Galician culture, eating pastries for breakfast and fish for supper, and soaking in

the rugged Atlantic coastline. We'll take it a day at a time, just putting one foot in front of the other and holding hands when the journey requires it or just for the heck of it.

Our eleven-day walk will include overnights in albergues (hostels) . . . some in cramped bunkrooms with other snoring pilgrims, but also some nights in private rooms. There will be days of relentless hills, but also days walking along beaches, down ancient Roman cobblestone paths, along urban city sidewalks, and through a succession of eucalyptus woods and vineyards. I'm looking forward to photographing and smelling flowers, seeing wildlife, and just spending time with Tom. We'll have a couple of free days at the end of our journey which we'll mostly spend back in the beautiful city of Porto where our journey began.

Thank you for the opportunity to get away on vacation.

History of the pilgrimage:

The Camino de Santiago de

Our plan is to be home in time to work on the June newsletter.

"Bon Camino" - Denise



MOZART'S REQUIEM MASS

Luther College Symphony Orchestra and Nordic Choir will be performing Mozart's Requiem Mass at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi on Sunday, April 6 at 4:00pm. Martine Redshaw is a member of this orchestra. This Mozart oratorio is a significant work that is often performed during the Lent and Easter seasons. If you will be in the Twin Cities area on this date and are interested in attending, check out the link below for tickets. <https://www.luther.edu/offices/programming/tickets/performing-arts> Scroll to the St. Andrew's option.

Hosanna! "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" -Mark 11:9



Palm Sourcing

Do you every wonder where our palms come from? Since 2015 Bethlehem has ordered Fair Trade Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday, in partnership with Lutheran World Relief. We are helping palm harvesters in Latin America, their families and communities find pathways out of poverty.

Ecologically Friendly

An effort to certify palm fronds from communities practicing sustainable forestry is currently underway. These communities have taken it upon themselves to utilize harvesting practices that minimize the impact on the natural ecosystem.

Economic Opportunities

Fair prices for quality palms encourage sustainable harvesting, meaning better income long into the future. More than a half of the farmers in Guatemala's Central Peten earn income by harvesting palm fronds and more than a quarter support themselves exclusively by collecting palm fronds. Eco-Palms are sorted and packed within the harvesting community, Extending income opportunities to even more people

Sustainable Income

Responsible palm frond gathering actually protects valuable natural forests. Eco-Palms harvesters often earn five to six times more per frond than traditional palms, and a portion of the purchase price goes directly back to the community.

Bible Quiz

As Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, crowds praised him loudly. When Pharisees told him to silence the people, what did Jesus say would shout if his followers didn't? 1



- A. Stones
- B. Palm branches
- C. Trees
- D. Hillsides

Not long before Jesus' arrest, he said: "I did not come to ____ the world, but to ____ the world." Fill in the blanks. 2



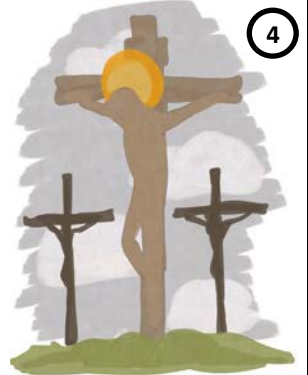
- A. judge; save
- B. hate; love
- C. condemn; teach
- D. disrupt; conform to

The night before Jesus' crucifixion, he demonstrates humble service by washing his disciples' _____. 3



- A. hands
- B. feet
- C. hair
- D. supper dishes

From the cross, Jesus prayed words from the book of Psalms. What were they? 4



- A. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- B. "I thirst!"
- C. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
- D. "It is finished!"

What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples – twice – when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding? 5



- A. "Love one another as I have loved you."
- B. "Peace be with you."
- C. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."
- D. "I am risen!"

The "Christ hymn" in Philippians 2 proclaims that after Jesus humbled himself even to the point of death, God exalted him, and that eventually all will worship him. What two body parts are named as part of that worship? 6



- A. knee; tongue
- B. hands; feet
- C. arms; lips
- D. heart; mouth

April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	2 8:00am Church in So- ciety Meeting 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Contemporary	3 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	4 Clarity Hearing Appts	5 9:00am-2:00pm Free Laundry Day at NS Laundromat 
6 8:40am Choir prac- tice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School 11:15am First Com- munion Bread Bak- ing	7 11:00am Staff meeting	8	9 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	10 8:00am Monthly Coun- cil Reports due to office 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 9:30am BLCW Circle & Bible Study	11	12 4:00 pm Ordination of Ben Nikodym facebook.com/ stlukech/ 
13 Palm Sunday 8:40am Choir prac- tice 10:00am Worship & Sunday School 11:15am Mission Endowment Meeting 	14 11:00am Staff meeting 6:30pm Executive Committee meeting	15 6:30pm Worship Planning Meeting	16 12:30pm Text Study	17 Maundy Thursday 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting 7:00pm Worship Service with First Communion 	18 Good Friday Clarity Hearing Appts 12:00pm Monthly Reports distribut- ed to Council members 7:00pm Tenebra Service 	19  Holy Saturday
20 Easter Sunday 8:00am Sunrise Service 9:00 am Easter Brunch 10:00am Traditional Easter Worship Ser- vice & Sunday School 2:00pm Care Center Worship Service 	21 Easter Monday Pastor is off 8:00am Dead- line for changes to reports 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	22 Newsletter articles due Earth Day 11:00am Staff meeting 	23 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	24 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Quilting	25 Denise is out of the office	26
27 8:40am Choir prac- tice 10:00am Contempo- rary Worship & Sunday School	28 11:00am Staff meeting 3:30pm Girl Scouts	29	30 12:30pm Text Study 5:30pm Meal 6:00pm Contemporary Worship 6:30pm Confirmation	Bible Quiz Answers: 1. A (Luke 19:40) 2. A (John 12:47 NIV) 3. B (John 13:1-17) 4. A (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 & Psalm 22:1) 5. B (John 20:19, 21) 6. A (Philippians 2:10-11)		

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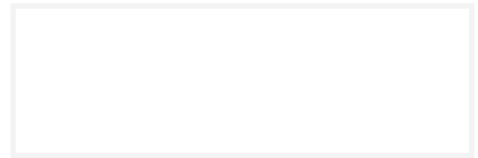
Belonging to Christ,

Sharing Christ on the

North Shore and beyond.



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America



JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK WITH US.



Join Us!

SUNDAY, APRIL 13: PALM SUNDAY

10:00 AM WORSHIP SERVICE

THURSDAY, APRIL 17: MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:00 PM WORSHIP

FRIDAY, APRIL 18: GOOD FRIDAY

7:00 PM TENEBRAE SERVICE

SUNDAY, APRIL 20: EASTER SUNDAY

8:00 AM SUNRISE SERVICE

9:00 AM EASTER BRUNCH

10:00 AM WORSHIP SERVICE