

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 2:30 PM Closed Friday
Office Telephone: (406) 761-1543 Website: www.bethelmt.org

BETHEL NOTES

Sunday

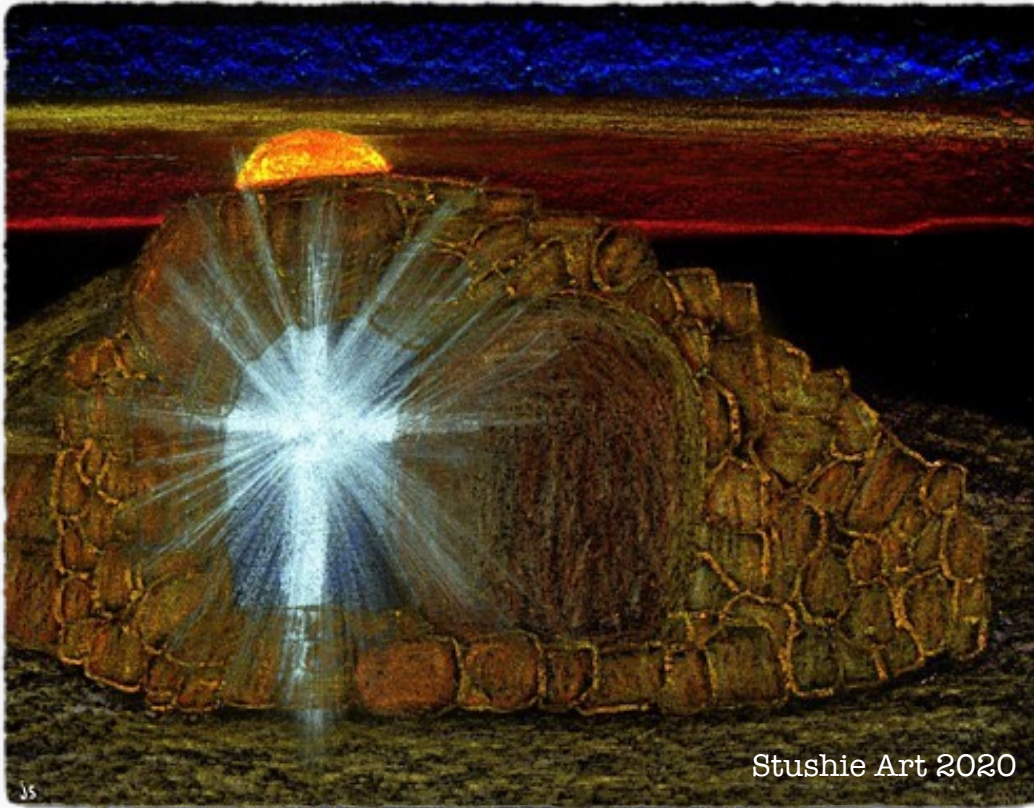
April 12

Readings Easter
Sunday

ACTS 10:34-43

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

MATTHEW 28:1-10



This Sunday we celebrate Easter Sunday.

This Sunday's Worship is a live stream from Bethel Lutheran Church 10:00 AM bethelmt.org Share this with your family and friends.

For a full **Holy Week schedule** with links, see page 6.

For worship services by the Montana Synod see their website <https://www.montanasynd.org/>

For those who do not have access to the internet, we will be sending a copy of the bulletin. Blessings and prayers to all.

Temporary change in office hours. While the students are out of school Tami Grosenick will be in the office for phone calls and emails from 8:00 am to 1:30 pm Monday through Thursday and will still be closed on Fridays.



- ✦ Prayers for **Faith Crouch** (granddaughter of Bernice Johnson) who is awaiting a double lung transplant.
- ✦ Prayers of healing **Ed Pottratz** as he continues cancer treatment.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Lee Klette**, son of Russ & Cheryl.
- ✦ Continued prayers for **Angela Mart** (daughter-in-law of Jane Mart) as she finishes treatment for breast cancer.
- ✦ Prayers for God's presence and healing for **Linda Juvik** (sister of Sandy Bechard) as she continues treatment for cancer.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Cindy Brattain** as she recovers from a medical procedure.
- ✦ Prayers for God's presence and healing touch for **John Korpela**, as he recovers after medical treatment.
- ✦ Prayers for the **Peoples of Boliva** as they transition into new leadership within the country and prayers for **Pastor Presidente German and the IELB**.
- ✦ Prayers for healing and strength for **Katie Madsen**, niece of Doug Sexe and granddaughter of Arlene Sexe as she is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Jane Mart** as she is home and continues to heal after surgery.
- ✦ Prayers of healing and support for **Jeremy Hawks** as he prepares for surgery.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Ann Tuomi** as she continues to recover from surgery.
- ✦ Prayers for safety and support for **Eric Poser**, Connie Titcomb's nephew as he is deployed overseas.
- ✦ Prayers for **Dakota Green**, great granddaughter of Bernice Johnson as she recovers from a recent surgery.
- ✦ Prayers for God's healing presence and peace for **Arlena Crandell's son, Mike**, who is undergoing medical exams.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Leonard Murphy** as he recovers at home from a recent hospitalization.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Marlys Baer** as she recovers from a recent hospitalization.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Dale Ost** as he recovers at home.
- ✦ Prayers of healing and God's presence for **Chad Erickson** as he continues medical testing.
- ✦ Prayers for God's presence, peace & strength for **Jim and Loretta Nuessle and their son** (brother, sister-in-law, and nephew of Walt Nuessle) as they face health concerns and for a safe return to their home in MN.
- ✦ Prayers for God's presence, healing & grace for **Bob Norbie** (Mary Lou) as he faces a diagnosis of bladder cancer.
- ✦ Prayers for God's healing presence and mercy for all who face the threat of the Covid-19 virus at home and abroad.
- ✦ Prayer of healing for **Allan Ost**, son of Dale and Leona.
- ✦ Prayers for healing for **Dan Jacobson**, hospitalized.
- ✦ Prayers for God's comfort and peace for **Kim Peachy and family** as they grieve the death of her father Dr. Robert Wynia.
- ✦ Prayers for God's comfort and peace for **Bob and Mary Lou Norbie, Bob's step-mother Arlie** their family and friends as they grieve the death of Bob's father.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Bob Walker**, brother of Colleen Walker-Nelson.
- ✦ Prayers of strength, support and comfort for all whom are separated from loved ones especially those in nursing homes and hospitals due to social distancing and also health care workers, first responders, and others who working the front lines to fight this pandemic.

LOOKING BEYOND THE EMPTY TOMB

Christ is Risen ! Christ is Risen Indeed ! Alleluia !

Faith, hope, and love are the God given gifts that help us to see beyond our present circumstances. We are people who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection and called to live in the sustaining power of God. Christ's resurrection enabled the disciples to dare to believe that hope was possible and that one day they would come out from behind their locked doors. It will for us as well.

In his letter to the Roman's, the apostle Paul writes, "We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand – out into the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise. We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next...Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't wait for us to get ready." Romans 5 The Message by Eugene Peterson

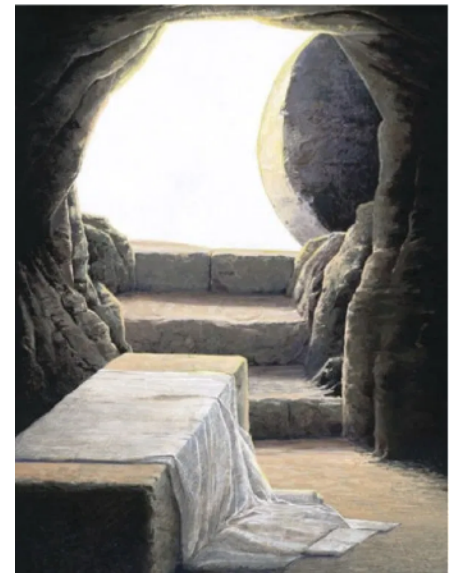
During these challenging times, I have been learning even more to depend on the grace and hope God provides in order to be able to look beyond the ways that I have always counted on to manage to go forward. To do what God calls me to do. I have never Zoomed as much as I have lately, but with the help of others I have discovered a new avenue to stay connected with others. The Men's Breakfast is still meeting but through a Zoom meeting. Still meeting, and on Zoom, is the Tuesday morning women's breakfast group. We were also able to keep the Lenten Book Bible Study going forward online. None of my pastor colleagues and I ever remembered taking a class in seminary on how to lead during a worldwide pandemic. We did agree that times of crisis call forth adaptive leadership. Creativity. Experimentation. The apostle's words ring true for me, "We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us." When God opens the door, we need to walk through it.

We are learning and will continue to learn valuable lessons from this current crisis. We are being confronted with the questions of what really matters, what is most important. Who is most important. I believe the church is and will be challenged to adapt and to embrace new ways of connecting with the world. A world that is hungry for good news, hungry for hope, grace and love. I welcome your insights...what you are learning through this time of crisis. It may be too soon for some of us to formulate what we are learning, but hopefully, new insights will come.

The resurrection of Jesus from the grave was an earth shaking and shocking event. It transformed the universe and women who were the first witnesses that first Easter day. As they moved beyond the empty tomb, with great joy mingled with fear, to share the message of the resurrection, they discovered that the Risen Christ had already thrown open his door to them. May we experience the resurrection of Christ in new and surprising ways each day. With the grace and patience God provides, to look beyond our current crisis and to see him already there waiting for us. Keeping us alert for whatever God will do next.

The Blessings of Holy Week be yours and your family's !

Pastor Steve



Words from the Bishop:

“Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee...’” (Mt 28:7)

This is a week of stories. No doubt you’ve been hearing a lot of stories recently, mostly about Covid19. No doubt some of those stories are sad or frightening. No doubt some of those stories make us want to turn off the news and watch a 1980’s sitcom.

But I’m betting that some of these stories are good news stories. Some stories are about kindness and compassion as people share with one another and care for each other. Some stories are fun and full of the delight of people trying to make the best of a tough situation. (I’m noticing a lot of online dancing!)

On the evening of April 8, our Jewish sisters and brothers begin their holy days of Passover. These siblings from the Jewish faith also are focusing on story-telling this week, speaking the goodness of God into a time of suffering. They too are struggling to find ways to come together as families and friends across the internet and over the phone so that they can eat together and tell the stories of freedom and God’s deliverance.

What are the good news stories you’re hearing around your community or phone tree? What are the good news stories that are inspiring you this week? For me, one of the good news stories comes out of Libby MT where the members of Christ Lutheran put together an Easter Parade using their vehicles and drove past the church with signs wishing

the interim pastor and the secretary a “Happy Easter.” Or the one from Powell WY where Hope Lutheran (Powell) and Trinity Lutheran (Cody) are using the local drive-in theatre for stay-in-your-car worship. (Honk your horn to share the peace! I love it!) If you have a good news story from your congregation, please share it with us. We’d love to hear it!

“Go and tell,” the angel says to the women at the tomb. “Do not be afraid. Go and tell,” Jesus says to them minutes later as they race to tell the disciples. (Mt 28:10)

This is the week we tell the core story of the Christian faith – the story of Jesus’ ride into Jerusalem and his meal with his disciples and the washing of their feet. The story of the new commandment that Jesus himself gave us: “Love one another.” The story of Jesus’ arrest with a kiss from his betrayer. The story of his so-called trial, his torture, suffering and long walk to his execution.

The story of Jesus’ death on a cross in a garbage dump called Golgotha. And yes, the story of his resurrection. On Easter Sunday, we will shout “Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!”

But this year, telling this story -- the story that someone once dubbed “The Greatest Story Ever Told” -- will be different. Many of us will be hearing this story from home, perhaps online or on the radio. Some will be reading it for ourselves from the Bible. In fact, I encourage you to read Matthew 26-28 and/or John 18-21 for the full “rest of the story.” Most of us will be staying at home to receive the story rather than “going and telling” anyone.

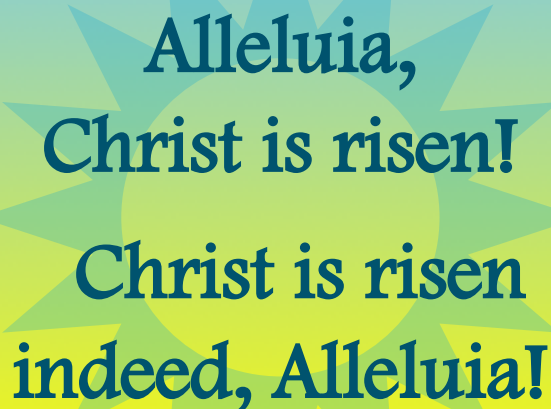


But one of the amazing things about this story is that no matter where we hear it and no matter where we tell it, the story remains our greatest good news story ever, the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this story we are reminded that Jesus went through suffering, death and resurrection to give us new life in him. We are also reminded that we too are called to take up our cross and follow him through this path of suffering, death and resurrection -- not to celebrate suffering and death but to stand up to it, face it and celebrate Christ's victory over it.

In this Holy Week story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we hear the good news that Christ's new life is our new life whether we congregate in the same physical place or not. And neither Covid19 nor the devil himself can take this new life away. We can walk through our own Holy Week journey – Christ's journey – with him, trusting with our whole selves that just as “we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Rm 6:5)

Blessed Holy Week to you all!

Bishop Laurie



**Alleluia,
Christ is risen!
Christ is risen
indeed, Alleluia!**



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday April 9th

Worship with Pastor Steve uploaded to our website bethelmt.org

bulletin available on our website.

~Good Friday

Worship service, sponsored and led by the Great Falls Ministerial Association, will be live streamed from the First Presbyterian Church in Great Falls at noon. Website: <https://youtu.be/3C25C4WB30Y>. Led by John Ritchie, Natalie

Faltin, Jeff Wakeley, Barb Gwynn and musician, Carole Hatley.

Easter Sunday April 12th 10:00 am

Live Stream from Bethel with Pastor Steve on bethelmt.org

During our Easter Sunday live stream worship with Pastor Steve, we will be offering communion. If you wish to set a table at your home to participate in communion we have provided instruction for how to set your table for communion (see page 7). A blessing will also be offered during this portion of the service for those who do not wish to take communion.

Easter Vigil - A Reflection

Over the past years, Bethel celebrated the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening. However, this year it will not be celebrated. Trying to change the format of the Holy Week services that culminate in the Easter Sunday during the current situation made it impossible to do everything we normally do. For that reason, and also because many may not know what the Easter Vigil is about, I decided to give an overview of the service.

The Easter Vigil has a very long tradition in Christian churches. Please click on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Vigil for more information.

Easter Vigil uses images like darkness and light to assist in reflecting on the Old and New Testament

readings. Bethel uses an abbreviated form. This is done because of time constraints.

The flow of the Easter Vigil service has readings that provide highlights of our religious tradition. After each reading, there is time for personal reflection. As this is not possible this year, here are some questions or comments that came to my mind when I prepared this article.

Some Old Testament readings (Source: sundaysandseasons.com):

1. **Genesis 1:1-2:4a - Creation**
Reflection: How do we live within God's Creation? Are we stewards of that Creation? Do we appreciate the wonder of life?
2. **Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18, 8:6-18, 9:8-13 - Flood**
Reflection: Destruction and death culminates with God's covenant with Noah.
3. **Genesis 22:1-18 - Testing of Abraham**
Reflection: Abraham complies with God's requests (even to the point of sacrificing Isaac, his son with his wife Sarah). Isaac lives and Abraham is blessed by God.
4. **Exodus 14:10-31, 15:20-21 - Deliverance at the Red Sea**
Reflection: God saves his people from the pursuers.
5. **Exodus 15:1b-13, 17-18 - I will sing to the Lord, who has triumphed gloriously**
Reflection: Are we thanking God?
6. **Isaiah 55:1-11 - Salvation freely offered to all**
Reflection: We receive salvation in many ways.
7. **Jonah 1:1-4:11 - The deliverance of Jonah; Deliverance belong to the Lord**
Reflection: How often do we try to run away from God? Do we get angry with God when we don't get it our way?
8. **Daniel 3:1-20 - Deliverance from the fiery furnace**
Reflection: Do we have other "Gods" that we worship? God provides salvation.

Some New Testament readings:

1. **Romans 6:3-11 - Dying and rising with Christ**
Reflection: What does it mean to "walk in newness of life?" (Verse 4)
2. **John 20:1-18 - Seeing the risen Christ**
Reflection: Where do we see the risen Christ today?

The service continues with the blessing of the Baptismal font and the sprinkling of Baptismal water on the congregation. This is done in remembrance of the early church and the Baptism and acceptance of new followers of Jesus during the early Easter Vigil services.

The service concludes with the celebration of Holy Communion.

Terree says:

I regret that we are not able to have the service this year as it has become my favorite of Holy Week. I have long believed that a real appreciation of Easter only comes by immersing myself in the events leading up to it. Maundy Thursday gets us ready for the somber Good Friday events. Without the Vigil we jump right into Easter Sunday and for me that leaves something missing. The Vigil is like having a reception after a funeral where you get together with friends and family to tell stories of the one who has died. You cry and laugh together and generally prepare for going forward without that person. That is how I imagine the disciples on the night after the crucifixion, and how I see the Old Testament passages that are a part of the Vigil. They tell stories of God's presence in the world of the Jewish community. With the Vigil I can imagine being prepared to go on without Jesus / God in my life but then imagine the joy on Sunday at learning I don't have to.

May the risen Christ be with you.

Udo and Terree Wozny



Virtual Communion Preparation Guide

In these unique days of social distancing due to the pandemic, we live and worship differently. Virtual worship has become necessary and the norm for many. Virtual Holy Communion adds an extra dimension to our virtual worship gatherings. Whether or not you participate in this portion of the worship is your responsibility and decision.

What gifts are given through Holy Communion?

- In this meal, as he has promised, the crucified and risen Christ is fully present to us in, with, and under the bread and wine, giving his true body and blood as food and drink.
- The real presence of Christ through these simple things of the earth is a divine mystery.
- Through this meal, God nourishes faith, forgives sin and offers healing, hope, new life and salvation.

Who may receive Holy Communion?

The meal is offered to all who are baptized. At the same time, Christ is the host and offers the invitation to the table. Christ's gift of love and mercy is always to be praised. The words "given and shed for you" require a simply believing heart. Please follow the practices of your home congregation regarding the age and preparation for those who receive the meal or blessing.

In preparation for the meal at home

- Please plan to receive Holy Communion within the virtual worship service either live or pre-recorded. Lutheran practice avoids the celebration of the Supper without the preceding reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and prayers.
- Before the worship begins, please set out the bread (any type you have or desire) and wine or grape juice. (gluten-free is acceptable.)
- To symbolize the unity and dignity of Holy Communion, consider setting aside a special space with a tablecloth/placemat using glassware or pottery for the cups and plate.
- Please handle the bread and wine with care and respect, out of sense of the value both for what has been set apart by the Word to bear the presence of Christ and of God's good creation.



When to commune: At the time in the worship service for Holy Communion after the introduction, familiar words of institution and the Lord's Prayer following the direction of the pastor please eat and drink with the words:

- Traditional Words: Bread -This is the body of Christ given for you. Wine/Juice - This is the blood of Christ shed for you.
- Contemporary Words: Bread – This is Jesus the Bread of Life given for you. Wine/Juice – This is Jesus the Cup of Salvation given for you.
- Blessing for those not receiving: The Lord Jesus loves you and blesses you.

You may pause for a brief moment of silent reflection or prayer after the meal until the worship service continues.


What do we do with Bread/Wine/Juice not eaten or drank?

Any food that remains may either be fully consumed by participants or returned "to the earth" - scattered on the ground for the birds and to water the plants. (Use of the trash or sink/sewer to dispose of the bread/wine/juice is not fitting or proper.)

The forgiving peace and assurance of Christ be with you!

Instruction provided by the 5 Valleys Cluster of the Montana Synod

Electric City BIBLE Study On - Line!



What a great way to connect with one another! Join the Electric City Bible Study on a Zoom conference Tuesday morning at 6:30 am. If you are interested in joining email Laurie Turner at loli51gus@icloud.com and give her an email or cell number and she will send you a link to the meeting.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Join us for fun and engaging conversation, and insightful discussion of this week's Lectionary texts as we meet through a social distancing approved Zoom video call each Tuesday morning from 7:00 – 8:00 am. Breakfast recipes and ideas will be provided. If you are interested in more information or would like to be added to the call invitation list, click on the email link below and type "breakfast" into the subject line (and then of course press send).

dscholten@dlsconsulting.net



UPCOMING EVENT

**Church Potluck
Date To Be Determined
At Bethel after Sunday Service**

Get your best church potluck recipe ready. When this social distancing storm has passed and we are once again gathering for Sunday Services we will be having a HUGE POTLUCK immediately following our service!