

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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*Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community*



## “Are We There Yet?” Acts and the Power of Easter

**Acts 1:1-8** *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” <sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

“Are we there yet?” We have probably all heard or said it a time or two. Waiting for the end of a long car ride. Looking ahead to that next big moment. Wanting to move beyond an apparent lull to that next mark of success. It can be very easy to get focused on a particular destination in the future or certain stops along the way.

Not long after Easter, we see the disciples struggling with this very thing. Much like asking, “are we there yet,” they ask Jesus, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Their eyes were on the future and whether it was finally here. However, Jesus tells them that while the exact time of the day they are looking for is not theirs to know until it arrives, God has prepared something important for them to do and be a part of right here and now.

Easter has had a powerful effect on our future and our eternal destiny and this is something to remember and celebrate. However, it also had an immediate effect on the disciples and their community, as well as our own. The book of Acts is a powerful reminder of Easter’s immediate and continuing impact: Eyes being opened to the resurrected Christ, the receiving of the Holy Spirit, the reshaping of lives, the forming of new spiritual communities, and a direct impact on the world. All these things are the result of Easter, and God’s ongoing work among his children. The mission Jesus began, and which we hear described in the book of Luke and the rest of the Bible prior to Easter, Jesus continues after Easter, in the Book of Acts and throughout history to the present day. There will be highs and lows and slower points in the action, but there is no break in the mission, the story, or God’s work in us.

It can be far too easy to end up celebrating Easter as if it is an event that only impacts our distant future. Hopefully, we all look forward to the day when God’s kingdom will come in all its fullness and no doubt wonder when it is going to come. However, when our Easter day celebration is over for this year what’s next? Do we just start planning for the next holiday? Are we to just go about our lives like business as usual as if no event has taken place that impacts our present? Do we just sit and wait for God’s kingdom and the resurrection? Jesus gives a clear answer. Ours is not to know the dates and seasons of His particular plans (I’m not sure how constructive we would be with such knowledge anyway), “***But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***”

Whatever the times and seasons we are in, we have a mission and a precious gift to help us grow and carry it out. Easter’s impact is now. Easter’s power is already at work right now. God’s kingdom is already impacting our present reality. Christ presenting himself alive after his suffering, and his message about the kingdom, has very real ramifications.

Following Easter this year we will be studying the book of Acts in one of our Sunday Bible Studies. (Look for more detail later in this newsletter.) I hope many of you will join us as we look at how these ramifications play out in the Book of Acts and for us as well, as we witness to Christ in the world today.

In Christ,

*Pastor Eric Schoech*

Pastor Eric Schoech

## WHAT'S HAPPENING??!!

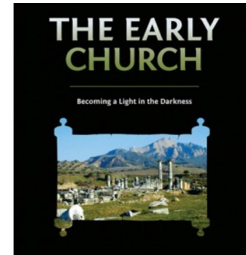
Be sure and join us right after services on Sunday, April 22 for a very special What's Happening!! (It's a surprise..... And you don't want to miss this one!)



## BIBLE CLASS INFORMATION

Please join us on Sunday mornings at 10:30am.

***The Early Church*** (based on the book of Acts), will be taught by Pastor Schoech, beginning the second Sunday in April.



***Spiritual Disciplines***, taught by Mark Price will continue through Pentecost.



We will have two Holy Communion services on Easter Sunday, April 1, at 8:00 and 10:45am.

Between services we will enjoy a time of fellowship at our Easter breakfast downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

After breakfast and before the second service, the Sunday School children will enjoy an Easter Egg Hunt.

Please join us and bring your families and friends.

## NEEDED..... FREE ROCKS!!

The Mark Makers group needs rocks that are a bit smaller than a basketball and larger to about 18" across. We will write Bible verses on them and place them along the Meditation Trail. Please leave them near the ***"Thanks for the Rocks"*** marker on the ground near the air conditioners located at the north corner of the church near the parking lot. If you know a farmer who has a pile of rocks from clearing his fields please let us know. Thanks for your help!



WOMEN WANTING WISDOM—WILL BEGIN MEETING AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, AT CHURCH. THE GROUP WILL BE STUDYING A BOOK ON CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY. FELLOWSHIP STARTS AT 6:30PM, BIBLE STUDY AT 7:00PM ENDING BY 8:30. ALL FAITH LADIES AND THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES ARE WELCOME! IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE SEE DEB PORTER.

**Christian  
Hospitality**



## THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

*"Roll Away the Stone"*

Easter of 1976 is one that I haven't forgotten. During Holy Week at a church in Dallas, Texas, a member of the congregation committed suicide. As often happens, there was no warning. No one knew, including his wife and children, of the intense pain that led to this tragedy. No one knew of the stone in this man's life that seemingly could not be rolled away.

For the funeral, Pastor Meyer chose as his sermon text the Easter story from the Gospel of Mark. Of the four Gospels, Mark's is the only one that has the women questioning about the stone in front of Jesus' tomb. "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" To their amazement, the stone has been moved, the tomb is wide open to the morning sun, and an angel greets them with news of resurrection.

In the funeral sermon, Pastor talked about the stones and tombs that are in our own lives. The stones are made of pain and guilt and sin. They trap us inside our own tombs. We can be so burdened by the hidden secrets in our lives that we may have no hope our tomb will ever be open to the morning sun. Such a stone had trapped that husband and father. He could see no way out of his tomb except through death.

But the story in the Gospel doesn't end with women worried about the stone. They arrive at the tomb to find it open, empty of Jesus' body, and filled with the glory of an angel. "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here." This Son of God and son of man has power over death. He has the power to forgive and bring everlasting life to a man who couldn't move the stone in his life. This Jesus has the power to move the stones from our own tombs. He has the power to bring the glorious light of God's love and forgiveness and healing into our lives.

However, the story doesn't stop with the news of the resurrection. The women and the disciples share the news among themselves and with others. The stones had been removed from their tombs, and it was news that couldn't be hidden. And so it is for us. With Easter, the stones have been and can be removed from our tombs, and from the tombs of others. We, too, hear the angel, "He has risen; he is not here. But go, tell . . ."



Carol Ballard	April 2
Anne Lyons	April 13
Evan Snowdin	April 14
Matthew Dunlap	April 16
Roxanne Gottleber	April 19
Jane Szoke	April 22
Sean Allwardt	April 27
Heather Brant	April 28
Ray Kickbush	April 29
Dean Gengnagel	April 29



### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Day of Pentecost is Sunday, May 20. After services and Bible Study/Sunday School we will continue our tradition of a Pentecost Pot Luck downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.



### FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS TO HILLTOP

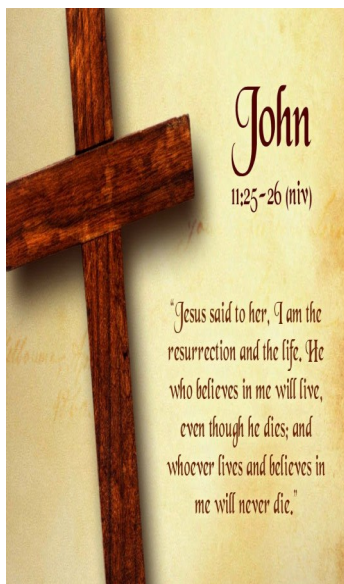
Hilltop Neighborhood Food Pantry had a significant flood in February and lost all the baby food, all the diapers and half of the other food items stored there. Our Care Committee will be collecting food for Hilltop during the next few weeks. Hilltop serves over 600 Valparaiso residents each month. Donations are badly needed right now, please give if you are able. Cash donations are always welcome as well. Questions? Please see Nancy Kickbush.



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**FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

The Resurrection of Our Lord, Sunday, April 1, 8:00 & 10:45am, Holy Communion  
Prayer and Praise Service, April 5, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship  
The Second Sunday of Easter, April 8, 9:00am Morning Prayer  
Prayer and Praise Service, April 12, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship  
The Third Sunday of Easter, April 15, 9:00am Holy Communion  
Prayer and Praise Service, April 19, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship  
The Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 22, 9:00am Morning Prayer  
Prayer and Praise Service, April 26, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship  
The Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 29, 9:00am Holy Communion

