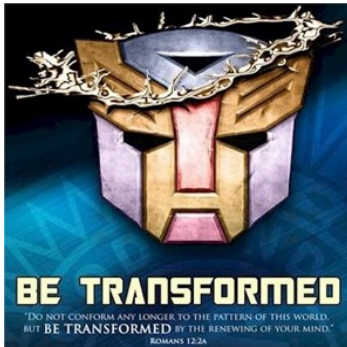


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community



Transformed by the Risen Lord

Romans 12:1-5 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

“Transformers: more than meet the eye.” Long before the modern movies, this was the tag line of one of my favorite cartoon and toys growing up. These robot characters known as transformers could change into all kinds of things and back: cars, trucks, even dinosaurs, to name a few. The transformers used their different forms both to blend in with the world around them, and as a part of an epic battle between good and evil.

In recent months, one of our church’s small groups, of which I am a part, has been watching and discussing *The Truth Project*. The theme of this series is from Romans 12:2. “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*” The goal of this series is to help Christians not to blend into the world, but to stand out by being transformed. Part of this transformation process takes place when one dives into the Truth of scripture and through prayer, testing, and discernment applies this truth to every aspect of their life and how they view the world.

It can feel a lot easier to try and blend into the views of the world. Blending in can also feel safer. It can be easy to think more highly of ourselves than we should and to want to do things our own way, whether it is by blending or trying to stand out. However, scripture calls us to “*present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship,*” seeking to “*discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*” This of course, is easier said than done. Which bring us back to the very important events and particularly the very important person we celebrate at Easter.

If you want to witness the epic battle of good and evil taking place, you need only watch Jesus. After His baptism, His battle with Satan’s temptations, His casting out of demons, and especially His words and actions from the cross, the battle lines and the ultimate victor are clear. Satan flees, those who were once demon -possessed become different persons than they once were, and the power of sin and death are brought firmly to an end. Not hard to discern the battle lines between good and evil there.

What we may often miss is the transformation in Jesus’s own disciples. From the moment they meet Jesus, the transformation in them seems up and down and gradual. True, God works some miraculous things through them, even before His death and resurrection. However, for every powerful work or statement of faith, the disciples still have plenty of missteps. More often than not, they seem more focused on power or their limitations in the world, than what Jesus is truly teaching and showing them. When things start to go wrong, especially at the trial and crucifixion, the disciples like Peter chose to blend into the background. Even after they found out Jesus had risen, we still see the disciples often remaining behind locked doors, where it was safe.

However, that is not to say a transformation was not taking place. Christ and His Spirit were at work in them. Running from the tomb to tell the others Jesus had risen. Standing before the crowds to proclaim Jesus at Pentecost. Gathering together throughout the book of Acts to study and even debate what God was calling them to do. Each serving in the different capacities necessary to care for one another and carry out the work of the gospel. Some were faster and some were slower to grow in their understanding. Some were bolder and some served in more quiet ways. Yet in this way, God faithfully transformed His church and His people.

God’s transforming work continues to be more than meets the eye, as He continues to transform His church and people, even now. Each time we hear and study God’s word, the Spirit is working His transforming power on our hearts. Each time we seek to discern the direction our Lord is calling, and use the gifts He has given us, God is shaping. Each time we stand up and stand out in our culture, by presenting and conforming ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice and living out the gospel, the Lord’s transforming power is at work.

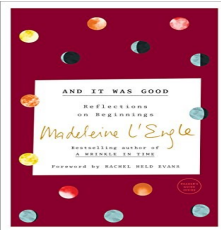
As a part of this transforming process, I invite all of you to bring a friend and join us for the remainder of our *Thursday Prayer and Praise* meal and worship times, from now till the end of May. The remainder of our study during this time will look at how the message of Easter and seeking to discerning the will of God, truly impacts our lives and our view of the world around us.

In Christ, *Pastor Eric Schoeck*

WOMEN WANTING WISDOM

WWW Will start up again on May 15 at 6:30 at Faith. We will start our new book And It Was Good, by Madeleine L'Engle. This book is a reflection on Genesis and new beginnings. It is available as an e-book (Kindle or Nook) or paperback. The paperback is \$10.20. If you would like to order a copy please speak with Deb Porter.

At our May 15 meeting we will do an overview and make sure everyone has a book. Fellowship is from 6:30-7:00, with study and prayer from 7-8:00. Anyone is welcome to join this small group!



If you have questions or would like to order the book please see Deb Porter or call her at (219) 309-8794.

LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry

Launched in August 2008, the Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry is a national human-care ministry embracing the unique, calming nature and skills of purebred Golden Retrievers. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are a bridge for compassionate ministry, opening doors for conversation about faith and creating opportunities to share the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

On Mothers Day, Sunday, May 12, Immanuel Lutheran's new Comfort Dog *Caleb* and his handler will attend our service and visit during "What's Happening". Mark your calendars and plan to attend to learn more about this Lutheran Church Charities ministry!



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"This week's sermon is about how we all need to simplify our lives. Unfortunately, I lost the whole thing when my computer crashed."

PLEASE JOIN US FOR FOOD & FUN!

WHEN: SUNDAY, May 5

5:00-9:00

WHERE: HERE AT CHURCH!

Bring your favorite card, board or collectible games. Bring your friends!

Some snacks and beverages will be provided. Additional food welcome, but not required. Call for more info: (219) 242-9139



May Birthdays

Micah Nord	May 2
Connie Pilz	May 3
Donna Cawby	May 4
Jon Stingely	May 6
Marc Nicholson	May 8
Sherri Nord	May 8
Marilyn Lindner	May 11
Jon Beagley	May 12
Tom Nimtz	May 15
Cora Bernard	May 23
Don Ballard	May 24
August Nord	May 24
David Allwardt	May 29



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

*The Lord Is My Shepherd, I Shall Not Want
Psalm 23:1*

What is it about the imagery of shepherds and sheep? Unless we grew up with sheep, or a relative or friend had sheep, we know little about them. We live in a technological society and shepherds and sheep are not part of our usual vocabulary. Next to the Lord's Prayer, the 23rd psalm is the most well-known portion of scripture. Interestingly, the Gospel of John devotes an entire chapter to Jesus and his words about being the Good Shepherd. The other Gospels only make cursory references to Jesus as shepherd, and we as sheep. Of the many names and titles that are given to Jesus in scripture, the church chose Good Shepherd as a name for one Sunday out of the Church Year. It is always the Fourth Sunday of Easter (May 12th this year) when we focus on Jesus as our shepherd.

So, what is it about shepherds and sheep that fill us with such comfort and peace? Why in times of great trial or illness or death do we hunger for the words, "I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear my voice and I know them." Why when dementia takes away memory can people still recite Psalm 23? For me, the Good Shepherd recalls a life-sized statue that stood in the narthex of the church in which I grew up. The statue was Jesus as the shepherd, with a lamb in his arms. Is that what we hunger for from the Good Shepherd? Are there times when we long to be that lamb? Do we long to be held and carried, to know that someone else is watching out for the wolf and the lion, to not be an adult, but to be a child again?

Easter brings with it many glorious images, ideas, stories, miracles, and appearances about the risen Lord. St. John even says that if all of them were written down, the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. But amid all of that, I still have a bias toward that image of Jesus as my Good Shepherd.

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
He will gather the lambs in his arms,
He will carry them in his bosom,
And gently lead those that are with young. Is. 40:11*

P.S. On Monday, April 22, Jim Gammon, Valparaiso Christian Academy Administrator, shared a portion of an email with me. The mother of two girls in the daycare wrote, "The other day we were at a restaurant and one of the girls "reminded" us that we had not said our prayers. Priceless." For those of you who haven't been in the building during weekdays, the children in the VCA always say a meal prayer before their snacks and lunch. Not only did the girl remind her parents to thank God for the food, imagine the witness that was given to other diners as the family bowed their heads in prayer. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

PRAYER AND PRAISE

**Thursday evening Prayer and Praise
will resume on April 25 at 6:15pm.
A light supper will be offered at 5:30.**

Please plan to join us!



Faith Lutheran Church

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WHAT'S HAPPENING!!

"What's Happening" will be held on Sunday, May 12 between church service and Education Hour. Mark your calendars and join us to learn everything new that is happening around Faith Lutheran!



FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, April 25, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

The Second Sunday of Easter, April 28, 9:00am Morning Prayer

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, May 2, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

The Third Sunday of Easter, May 5, 9:00am Holy Communion

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, May 9, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

The Fourth Sunday of Easter, May 12, 9:00am Morning Prayer

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, May 16, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

The Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 19, 9:00am Holy Communion

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, May 23, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

The Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 26, 9:00am Morning Prayer

Prayer & Praise, Thursday, May 30, 6:15pm Contemporary Worship

