

FAITH MEMORIAL 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



Just Around the Bend

Luke 3:4-6 ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

When it comes to life, I find I am often surprised by what can be waiting just around the bend. Recently, I decided to take a hike in one of the places I have hiked several times before. However, no sooner did I come around one of the first bends in the trail, than I found myself face to face with something that strongly impacted the entire journey. Right there at the bend, its head facing toward me on the ground was a downed deer. I have to admit this sight was so unexpected that I jumped a little and an unsettled feeling immediately set in. What was it that had killed this animal? Was it still around? Might the killer or killers take an active interest in me?

What had started as a peaceful walk, in a place where before I had rarely perceived danger, suddenly took on a very different feeling. I seriously contemplated returning to the nearby trail and heading to the parking lot. Eventually, I did press on. Still, it was awhile before I no longer felt that different kind of alertness and I was able to stop clutching my hiking poles so tight.

Of course if this experience was a little unsettling, just imagine what the twists and turns of Holy Week must have been like for Jesus's disciples. As they traveled toward Jerusalem, I'd imagine some were a little nervous about the things they may have heard about certain religious leaders and what these leaders would like to do to Jesus and His followers. They knew Jesus was popular with some, but I wonder how many of his disciples expected Jesus to be greeted like royalty by so many, with palm branches and shouts of Hosanna. It was probably one of those rather unexpected high points for the disciples.

However, there were far more surprising and frightening things waiting for them just around the bend. The yearly tradition of a Passover meal and time spent together was suddenly interrupted with talk of betrayal and death. Jesus walked with the disciples to a solitary place to pray, only to have soldiers with torches come marching around the bend. Jesus, who in the past, had always somehow passed safely through the midst of those who meant to do Him harm, suddenly allowed Himself to be taken. All these twists in the road were just too much for them and so, at that time, the disciples chose to flee. Many of them hid, for fear that the killers might take an interest in them. Some ventured out to be confronted face to face with Jesus's death on the cross. Others may have experienced Jesus's death from a distance. Either way, despite Jesus's many warnings, this was one turn in the road none of them had really expected. Still, the greatest surprise was still just around the bend.

On Easter morning as the women turned the bend and saw the stone of the tomb rolled away, they really were not sure what to make of it. Frightened, sad, confused, they experienced all kinds of emotions at the strange twist in front of them. For many of Jesus's followers, it took the words of angels, the work of the Spirit, and the words of Jesus Himself to help what had happened truly sink in.

In the last place people had expected a victory, Jesus accomplished the ultimate victory on the cross. More than that, Jesus, the God and Lord of all, had now risen from the dead. Sin, death, and the devil had done their worst to throw every possible curve at Him, and Jesus had straightened them all out and come out on top. The twist, turns, and valleys — Jesus conquered them all, in order to make the path straight for His triumphant return, and open the way for us to enter into God's everlasting kingdom. Whatever twists and turns we face in this life, the day is just around the bend, when all flesh shall see once and for all the salvation of God. Part of the joy of Easter is knowing that we now share in the joy of that salvation. So whatever confronts us around the next bend, let us go forward with joy and confidence as we proclaim the one truth that is always before us, "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again, and we will see His salvation forevermore! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!" Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoech

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We received a letter from Paul Albers updating us on his vicarage year in the seminary.

Several paragraphs from that letter are inserted below.

Those who wish to read the entire letter will find copies on the table by the mailboxes at church.

"Greetings from Birmingham, Alabama!

Birmingham was one of the last places I thought I'd end up for vicarage, but in God's divine wisdom I now believe there was no better place he could have sent me. When I first received the news I was going to Alabama for my vicarage I didn't know what to think. I had never visited the state, I didn't know the first thing about the city of Vestavia Hills (a suburb of Birmingham), and I could really care less about college football (which is really a problem in Alabama). It was the only region of the United States that I had specifically said I did NOT want to go to. Needless to say, the seminary ignored that request because well, here I am and like I said I couldn't be happier!

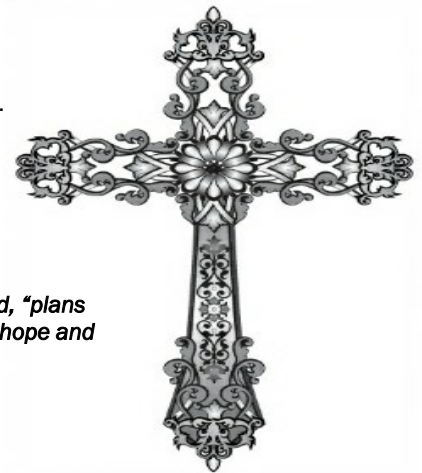
On Sundays I do two things, teach and participate in the worship service. Teaching Sunday morning means, either I teach the 7th & 8th grade confirmation class or the adult bible study in the fellowship hall. Likewise, for Sunday worship I do one of two things. Most Sundays I simply lead the divine service as the liturgist, but about once a month I preach. When that happens, that is the extent of my responsibilities for that service, which I really appreciate since it allows me to focus completely on my preaching...

In contrast to the fellowship, one of the things that I have been working on — and I pray that I will continued to improve on — is my preaching. Everyone has been very gracious and supportive and I have received nothing but positive feedback from both my supervisor and the entire congregation, but regardless, I still feel like there is a lot of room for improvement. I pray that God will help me to further develop my sermon delivery, give me a greater sense of confidence in the words that I speak and to always bring His Words into the lives of the people sitting in the pew. It would be great if this would just happen overnight, but God doesn't often work like that so I look forward to the next six months and further into the future as God makes these prayers into a reality...

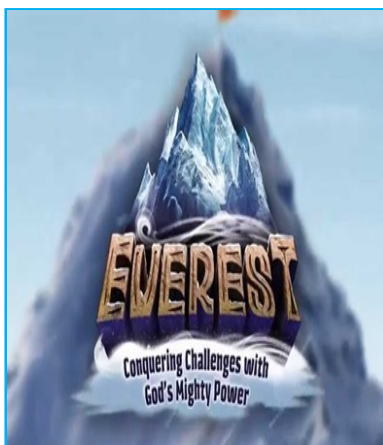
I want to say thank you to all those who have supported me these last two and a half years, in whatever way you have. The financial and prayerful support has gone a long way in making my education and training a reality. Every day it becomes more and more obvious that this is not something I can do on my own. I pray that as God has so richly and graciously blessed me that he would also bless you, protect you and guide you as you go about doing the various and unique work that God has called you to do."

Peace and God Bless

Paul Albers



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2015—SAVE THE DATE!

VBS will again be a joint effort between Faith Memorial and Immanuel Lutheran churches.

- Kick off dinner at Faith with family activities, Sunday, June 21 (Everyone is invited, even if you can't attend the daytime VBS.)
- Daytime program at Immanuel for children ages preschool-6th grade, Monday-Friday, June 22-26, 9:00am-noon.
- Pre-registration for Immanuel portion will be required, fee of \$10 includes a themed T-shirt.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Maundy Thursday, April 2

7:00pm Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 3

3:00pm Liturgy of the Cross

7:00pm Tenebrae

The Resurrection of our Lord, April 5

8:00am Holy Communion

10:45am Holy Communion

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"Easter"

A group of people hidden behind locked doors. They talk in whispers about the past week. But the conversation is fruitless and they lapse into silence. Their rabbi is dead; crucified as a common criminal by the ones who rule the country. Are they marked for death? Now there is only fear.

One woman is weeping outside a tomb. She came to anoint the body of her beloved teacher. But the stone is rolled away from the tomb's entrance and the body is missing. Where is her teacher? Now there is only sadness.

Two people walking on a road. They are conversing about the events of the past week. But the conversation is useless. They can make no sense of what happened. They had been so hopeful; so filled with confidence that their leader was the one to redeem Israel. Now there is only confusion.

One man decides to return to his job as a fisherman. Others join him, but they know nothing of the turmoil in his heart. They fish all night. The man not only catches no fish, but catches no relief from the knowledge of denying his friend. Now there is only guilt.

The rabbi, teacher, leader, friend comes with physical presence and words. "Peace be with you." "Mary." "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer?" "Feed my sheep."

And so Jesus comes to you and me. In our most fearful, sad, confusing, and guilt-ridden times, he comes to us. In word and sacrament, we receive his assurance of peace and joy, confidence and forgiveness.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

MEETINGS AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Mark Makers— will resume in April with their first meeting on Wednesday, April 8 at 6:30pm.

Women Wanting Wisdom— will resume on Wednesday, April 22 at 6:30pm in the Parlor. They will be reorganizing for the upcoming 7 months and beginning a study of 1 Timothy (covering relationships, authority, worship, God's Grace, identifying false teachers/teachings, and the love of money—hint, it's probably not a good thing...). The group welcomes everyone who would like to join in a search for wisdom. Every effort is made to end by 8:30pm.

A Children's Ministry meeting - will be held on Thursday, April 9 from 6:30-7:30pm at church. If you are interested in planning or ensuring that we have summer education opportunities like Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and "Cradle Roll", please join us or give us your opinion/support beforehand. Thank you in advance—Sherri Nord and Jackie Allwardt.

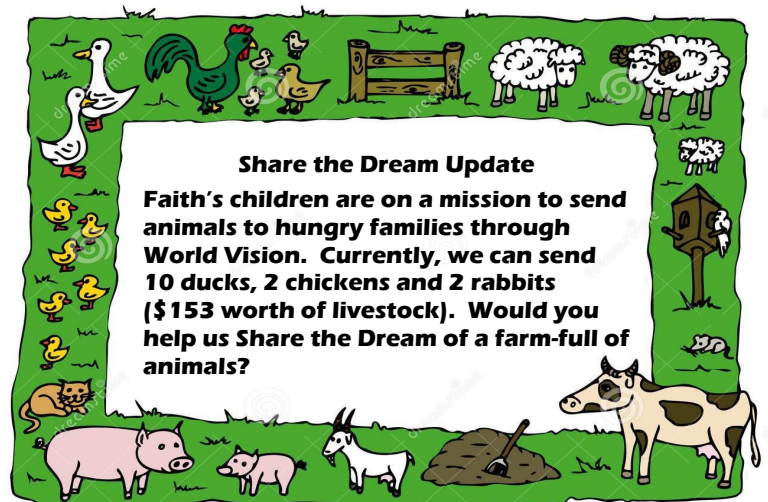
Sewing Seeds of Love— the April meetings will be held on Wednesday, April 15 and 29 at 6:30pm at church.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST ON EASTER SUNDAY AT 9:15 (BETWEEN CHURCH SERVICES).



Faith Memorial has received the following thank-you note from United Way of Porter County:

"To the Faith Memorial congregation—thank you so much for organizing and donating stuffed animals towards the Reading Buddies program! Your continued support means so much to us and your stuffed animal buddies mean so much to our elementary students!"



Share the Dream Update

Faith's children are on a mission to send animals to hungry families through World Vision. Currently, we can send 10 ducks, 2 chickens and 2 rabbits (\$153 worth of livestock). Would you help us Share the Dream of a farm-full of animals?



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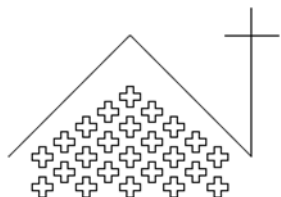
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SMILE FOR THE DAY!

A pastor parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read:

"I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses."

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note:

"I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I'll lose my job."



Lead us not into temptation."

FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Sunday of the Passion, March 29, 9:00am Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7:00pm Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 3, 3:00pm Liturgy of the Cross

Good Friday, April 3, 7:00pm Tenebrae

The Resurrection of Our Lord, 8:00 and 10:45am Holy Communion

The Second Sunday of Easter, April 12, 9:00am Morning Prayer

The Third Sunday of Easter, April 19, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 26, 9:00am Morning Prayer

The Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 3, 9:00am Holy Communion

alleluia!
Christ has Risen!