



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA

Happy Easter

(no April Fools!)

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! And this is no April Fools' joke!

I am sure that many in this post-Christian era see it as appropriate that Easter was celebrated this year on April Fools' Day because for many, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection are only something for fools to believe. This should not surprise us; for as the psalmist writes:

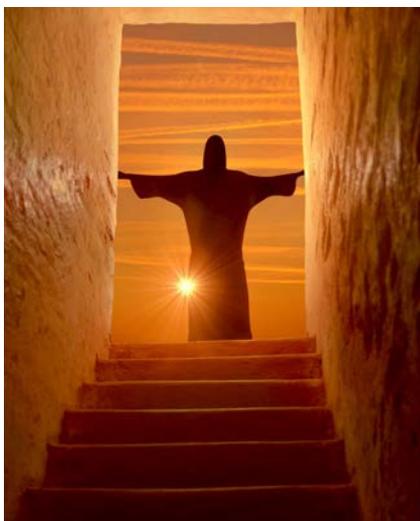
"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" **Ps. 53:1**

Also, St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 1:20-27:

"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President



to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."

I pray that all of you have had the joy of hearing and celebrating that Easter joy of the Resurrection once again, even on April Fools' Day; that you heard of death's defeat by Christ and you have been connected to that victory through the waters of Holy Baptism so that you do not die, but have life and salvation for eternity.

Along with that sweet message and our joy, the question arises: "Why don't we set the time of Easter so that it doesn't fall on April Fools' Day?"

The calculations for the date of Easter are somewhat complicated. In the early Christian Church (first through fourth centuries), the date followed the Old Testament Passover celebration, which was to be celebrated on the 14th of the month of Nisan. Easter followed this time of celebration because it was on the Passover that Jesus was sacrificed, as was the lamb in the Old Testament Passover meal.

Other events in regard to God's people happened on the 14th of Nisan several other times throughout the Old Testament; as did, centuries later, the time of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God." But for our interest, it marked the time of Passover, from which the Israelites began their exodus from Egypt into the Promised Land:

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance forever." **Ex. 12:14**

By the third century, the Church, which had become Gentile-dominated, wanted to distinguish itself from Jewish practices. The tradition that Easter was to be celebrated "not with the Jews" meant that Easter was not to be celebrated on the 14th of Nisan. It was at that time that talk began about changing the day of the Easter celebration.

Looking at the verse above, one might argue that we should still celebrate

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After basement is damaged by melted snow, church rebuilds from ground up

Bethlehem Lutheran Church has shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people of the Upham, Newburg, Deering and Towner communities for 116 years. Organized in 1902, it became a two-point parish with St. John in 1907. In 1999, Bethlehem/St. John became one congregation with the Rev. Daryl Rothchild serving as pastor, and he still serves today. The present edifice was built in 1950.

This north-central area of the state had record snowfall in winter 2017. When it melted, Bethlehem's basement was covered with a foot of water. At the July 2017 voter's meeting, it was decided to abandon the basement and build a 2,700-square foot addition to the west of the present structure, including a parish hall, kitchen, office and storage room.

The front entrance would also be extended, allowing ground-level access and a lift installed for handicap accessibility. Work began immediately, with members

using their talents, skills and resources. Working together was a time of fellowship and growth among members. The sanctuary was also painted and new carpet was installed, giving the entire building a unified appearance and facelift.

The record snowfall also became a blessing to this farming community. With very limited rainfall in the spring and summer of 2017, the sub-soil moisture sustained the crops and resulted in a good harvest. Members were able to make generous contributions to this project, and all the bills have been paid.

The first service was held on Dec. 17, five months after starting this project. The parish hall has excellent facilities for Bible class, with a pull-down screen and surround sound. It is great for large gatherings. The kitchen cabinets were cleaned, sanitized and placed in the new kitchen, where they are being used once again. For the congregation, it is a joy to worship and work together with fellow saints in these pleasant surroundings.

There are plans this summer to remodel the present washrooms, making them handicap accessible as well.

All glory be to God!

HURRY

Sign up for **Higher Things** retreat



There still is time to sign up for the Higher Things retreat, to be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hankinson, from 6 p.m. on Friday, April 20, to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 21. **Please RSVP by April 13.**

The cost is \$50 per person, which covers all expenses for the retreat including all classes, food, activities and lodging at the church. Boys and girls will be housed separately throughout the church. There are no shower facilities; bathrooms are located throughout the church. Attendees should bring sleeping bags and pillows.

The conference topic is the conscience ... what is it and how does the devil work in our conscience? And how does the Holy Spirit work to train and comfort the conscience? The biblical teaching of the conscience will be explored, what affects it, what hurts it and how the Lord Jesus intends to give us a clean, clear, good and joyful conscience through the Gospel.

The Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller will be the presenter. He is pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Aurora, Colo. He is also the co-host of "Table Talk Radio," host of the video Bible study series "Grappling with the Text," and the author of "Has American Christianity Failed?" (CPH, 2016).

Register online at higherthings.org/retreats or download a registration form.

Groups may pay securely online or bring your registration payments to Immanuel Lutheran Church. Or just bring everything with you when you arrive for the retreat.

For more information, contact Tana McKenna at zionwinner@gmail.com or 701-308-0411.

MAIN STREET LIVING NORTH



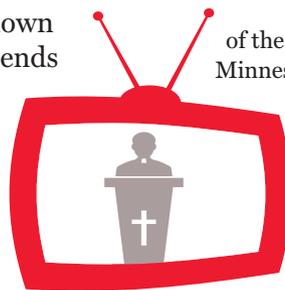
We have TV outreach ... help spread the word!

Please continue to help make known to your extended family and friends about our television ministry.

In addition to viewing the television program at each Sunday, please let them know that they can watch all of the archived programs at any time online at mainstreetlivingnorth.com.

To give much-needed financial support, checks may be sent to "Main Street Living North," 821 5th Ave. S., Fargo, ND 58103, or donate by credit card or PayPal at mainstreetlivingnorth.com.

Thank you and God's blessings in Christ! Main Street Living North is a locally produced TV program that includes a 30-minute worship service led by participating pastors



of the North Dakota and Minnesota North districts, along with a 30-minute children's program called "Kid's Crossing." **It is broadcast each Sunday at 9 a.m.** on KVRN Fargo-Moorhead Channel 15.1, KBRR Thief River Falls-Grand Forks Channel 10.1, KJRR Jamestown Channel 7.1, KNRR Pembina Channel 12.1, and cable and satellite systems carrying these stations.

April program schedule

April 1: Rev. Dave Suelzle, Grace, Fargo, presents "Death Swallowed Up ... Forever?" based on Is. 25:7-8. Hymns are "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" and "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing."

April 8: Rev. Blake Rickbeil, St. Paul's, Bertha, Minn., presents "Peace Be With You," based on John 20:19-31. Hymns are "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" and "Jesus Christ is Risen Today."

April 15: Rev. Dan Suelzle, Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel, Grand Forks, presents "Children of God," based on 1 John 3:1-7. Hymns are "The Day of Resurrection," "Children of the Heavenly Father" and "Go My Children with My Blessing."

April 22: Rev. Jeff Ross, St. Paul, Garfield, Minn., presents "Real Security," based on John 10:11-18 and Psalm 23. Hymns are "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want," "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" and "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us."

April 29: Rev. Adam Harvala, St. Andrew, West Fargo, presents "Fruit From Gnarled and Tangled Vines," based on John 15:1-8. Hymns are "The Day of Resurrection," "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness" and "On What Has Now Been Sown."

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Easter on that day (as many do try to emphasize) or three days after. But looking at Col. 2:16-17, we see that it was a foreshadowing of what was to come and now fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

"Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."

Thus we have the freedom to celebrate it when we wish, although it would be a good tie to the Old Testament foreshadowing the New Testament fulfillment in Christ.

In the front of our *Lutheran Service Book* hymnal, (p. xxiii), it says: "Easter Day is always the Sunday after the full moon

that occurs on or after the spring equinox on March 21. This full moon may happen on any date between March 21 and April 18. If the full moon falls on a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday following. Easter Day cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25."

Here are some interesting facts about this Easter scheduling following the moon: Easter has not fallen on the earliest of the 35 possible dates, March 22, since 1818, and will not do so again until 2285. It did, however, fall on March 23 in 2008, but will not do so again until 2160.

Easter last fell on the latest possible date, April 25, in 1943 and will next fall on that date in 2038. However, it did fall on April 24, just one day before this latest possible date, in 2011. The cycle of Easter dates repeats after exactly 5.7 million years.

It would sure seem to make sense that

we would celebrate Easter on the same day every year, but traditions are hard to break. Personally, I like it on different days every year because it makes it more difficult for people to plan it as only another vacation day, rather than the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I pray that you have taken advantage of the Lenten season with mid-week church services and saw the Lord Jesus approach Calvary's hill to suffer and die for your sins. Actually, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus every Sunday, knowing that He has conquered sin, death and the devil.

Therefore, if we celebrate Easter every Sunday, it doesn't really matter which day we actually set as Easter. So, Happy Easter!

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Even on April Fools' Day!

Men gather for circuit elders retreat

The third annual Circuit Elders Retreat was held Feb. 3 at the charming Coteau des Praires Lodge in Havana. The Revs. Adam Moline, Sean Daenzer and Aaron Hambleton offered thought-provoking plenary presentations while breakout sessions allowed about 30 elders and six pastors from different congregations to interact and reflect on goals, content and challenges related to catechesis. The Rev. Arie Bertsch, North Dakota District president, joined as a participant and offered opening devotions. The day concluded with fellowship and a chance for casual conversation.



Lots of opportunities at camp

Work for RV space

Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads is excited to offer a new program and opportunity for volunteers! Have you wanted to help at Shepherd's Hill, or wanted a way to give something other than dollars? Do you want a great place to stay, with golf courses, fishing and recreation opportunities around every corner?

Shepherd's Hill is offering a limited number of free RV hookups in exchange for assistance at camp — 15 to 20 hours per week of help in an area of your choosing and expertise. The free RV hookup is normally \$180 per week. Spots are limited, so please contact the camp at 701-244-5225 or director@shretreat.org.

Safety seminar

Does the news make you wonder and worry about the safety of your congregation and the members? Shepherd's Hill will host a special Congregational Safety Seminar at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 14. Please bring your pastor and others in your congregation for an opportunity to study God's Word, and consider your neighbor and their safety in the setting of your church. Please contact the Rev. Jon Bonine, camp executive director,

at director@shretreat.org or 701-389-9033 to reserve your place or for more information.

Summer is coming!

Before we know it, summer will be here, along with all the activities. For summer camp registration, check with your congregation for a brochure or look online. You can register online and make your payments through PayPal. Check out the registration page for more information.

Shepherd's Hill can now receive payments through PayPal! You can set the amount and how often you want to help with making camp a great place to be! Don't forget about your opportunities to give through AmazonSmile and your Thrivent Choice dollars as well.

The spring calendar is filling up with retreats and events. Check shretreat.org for the latest details, or watch for the latest brochure. If you want your own copy, send a message and you will be included on the mailing list. In April, the camp is offering a 50-percent discount for all clergy reservations to give pastors a time of recouping after Lent and Easter. And don't forget the possibilities of confir-

mation retreats as your celebration of confirmation draws closer!

Are you still looking for a place for your summer family reunion? Weekends are available ... call to schedule your time of fun at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads!

Get your scholarship application in

The deadline for applications for a scholarship from the North Dakota District for the 2018-19 school year is June 1. The scholarship is for students enrolled in an LCMS college/university or seminary preparing for full-time church work. For an application, please contact your financial aid office.

Send submissions for the district supplement to:

Marie Johnson
news@nodaklcms.org