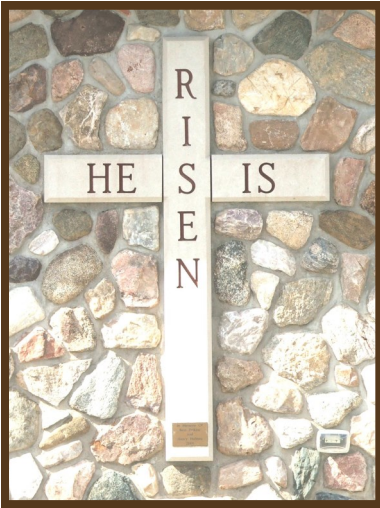


April 2021



The Bethany Messenger

The newsletter of Bethany Lutheran Church

130 O'Dill Drive, Norway, Michigan 49870 906-563-8472

Rev. Dave Johnson, Pastor

www.norwaybethany.org office e-mail: bethanyoffice@norwaymi.com

Bethany is best known as the village outside of Jerusalem where Lazarus, Mary and Martha lived. The word "Bethany" is from the Hebrew for "place of welcome." Our mission statement reflects the good news of our message to all: "Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love. Here and now God dwells in all our lives, bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all."

*Sovereign God,
you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood
of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who
with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

MAUNDY THURSDAY: live and online: 5:00 p.m. at Bethany & 6:30 Calvary

GOOD FRIDAY: live and online: 1:00 p.m. at Bethany & 6:30 Calvary

EASTER SUNDAY

live and online: 9:00 a.m. at Bethany
and 10:30 a.m. Calvary



PASTOR'S PROFOUND PONDERINGS

Matthew 28:1-6 – Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were shaken and became like dead men because they were so afraid of him. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying.

Can you believe that it has been a year already? Can you believe that at this same time just a year ago shut-down orders were in place and “Stay Home, Stay Safe,” became the new mantra? We were shut in and on lockdown for months. Some had the company of our families, but others were staying safe and staying home alone. It felt like we were closed-in doing the best we could to avoid having this new viral threat infect others. I am sure if anyone asked you where you have been the past year, you may be tempted to reply, “living under a rock.” Last Easter was no different. It was not quite the same as the Easters that came before it and even this Easter is still going to be different than it has in the past. Yet, there is hope. He is risen!

For those of you who have felt alone, distant, and discouraged, you really are not alone. If you felt like you have been stuck under a rock this past year, there are others who share your sentiment. For those of you who are longing for hope, it is here. And I am not simply talking about the vaccines that are now available and getting distributed, I am talking about the hope that comes from the words, “He is risen!”

Christ’s resurrection is the most important aspect of the Holy Week experience because it is in the resurrection itself that we see Love win. Up to this point Love is arrested, Love willingly gives Himself up for you and for me, Love is sacrificed, and on Good Friday, Love dies. The end; all hope is lost. This experience is like having the world that you knew change in an instant forever. All hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the disciples and the women that followed Jesus died when He (Love) died. For all they knew, Love lost, and Death won. How could things ever be the same again?

Haven’t you wondered that during this pandemic, “how could things ever be the same again”? Or maybe, “I want to get back to some semblance of normalcy!” In an instant the world that we knew was changed forever; yet there is hope. You see, the story does not end at the tomb, in fact the story does not end at all! Love wins! The fact that Jesus rose from the tomb means that death has been beaten and the Love that God has for the world is the final victor. He is risen! The world may have been changed at the death of Jesus (Love) at the cross, but it was changed for the better because on that day, Love wins!

As we start to emerge from the rocks we have been living under for the past year (safely) our world is not going to go back to the way it used to be, but at the same time we can work to make it better. Jesus, out of Love for you, carried the worst so that you can freely live into the person that God created you to be. In all this time, through your faith, you have never been alone because Love wins and will continue to do so. May we all cling to that truth in such a way that through the way we “Love Out Loud” we can show this new world that “Love wins”!

In Peace,



Pastor Dave Johnson

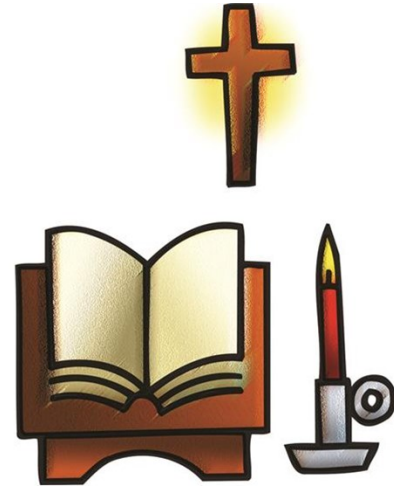
Thank you for serving as a lector!

Bill Borga

Maundy Thursday, April 1

Andrea Anderson

Easter Sunday, April 4



Looking for Lectors

Volunteers to read the lessons at worship at Bethany are needed for April, May, and beyond. Call or e-mail the church office to take part in this weekly ministry, indicating Sundays when you will be not be attending worship at Bethany: **906-563-8472 or bethanyoffice@norwaymi.com**

Bethany Lutheran Church Council 2021

Ray Anderson, President

Dave VanHolla, Vice President

Lisa Anderson, Secretary

Mike Randall, Treasurer

Sally Borga - Lori Dzik - Diane Gendron

Blessed communion kits and bulletins

are available to pickup every Saturday afternoon from 1:00 – 2:00 and Sunday morning from 8:00 – 8:30 in the Bethany parking lot. Bulletins may also be downloaded from the Bethany web site.

Please call Pastor Dave if you want to talk about home communion or the delivery of a communion kit to your door. Call or text him at 651-769-3365 or e-mail ftp565@yahoo.com.



Fortune Lake Bible Camp is open for registration

The camp, in fact, has just added some newly-funded programs. See www.fortunelake.org for complete information. As capacity for some programs is limited, some of the offerings are filling fast. Scholarships are available from Bethany. **Talk to Pastor Dave** if your family is interested in a camp experience.



Turning to God, our Strength and our Redeemer, we pray for the family of Marvin Wrege, Jim Trudeau, Tim, Barbara, and Ava Johnson Mitchell; For those who are having difficulties with being shut in for months because of COVID -19; for those who received prayer shawls and are in need of comfort; and for those who requested special prayers through our website.

If you have an update to our prayer list, please contact the church office.

These weekly events provide opportunities for fellowship, learning, and growing in Faith through Bethany Lutheran Church:

- Community Coffee, every Tuesday at 9 a.m. at Bethany;
- Women's Online Bible Study at 10 a.m. every Wednesday
- Men's Breakfast and Bible Study at 7 a.m. every Thursday at Bethany;
- Women's Bible Study at 10 a.m. every Thursday at Bethany

Happy Birthday

Grant Moll	04/04/98
Neil Borga	04/09/91
Katie Borga	04/11/86
Jeff Moll	04/12/61
Ervin Sparapani	04/12/44
Wendy Mattia	04/15/68
Darren Schiltz	04/16/76
Megan Lynch	04/17/89
Peter Kivisaari	04/18/46
Kimberly Mollick	04/18/82
Bruce Hawkinson	04/19/47
James West	04/22/96
Cheryl Kivisaari	04/28/47



Happy Anniversary

Ray and Andrea Anderson

Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly Online May 10-15, 2021.

Visitors are welcome at all of the 2021 Synod Assembly events, including online workshops. You do not need to register in advance to visit. Links to participate in the workshops and observe the business meeting will be available on the synod website.



Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod

Reverend Katherine Finegan
Bishop, Northern Great Lakes Synod

My father was a historian. Often at the dinner table, he would alert us to some historical milestone of the day. He would announce with enthusiasm, "Five hundred years ago today..." such and such happened. Or "It's been exactly ten years and four days since..." Sometimes we would have to guess what obscure anniversary was being named, which was always impossible, unless it was our birthday.

So, prepare yourself as now I am going to inflict the same reverie on you. It has been a year, one whole year, since the pandemic became real to our corner of the world. On March 15, 2020, Pastor Jim Duehring was at St. Paul's in Ironwood celebrating the installation of their new pastor, the Rev. Doug Norquist. And on that same day, practically that same hour, I was at Salem and Zion, Ironwood, celebrating the installation of their new pastor, the Rev. Nicole Hanson-Lynn. After that Sunday, practically overnight, pastors were transformed into video producers, we learned about FM transmitters, Zoom, making masks, and the status quo became anything but quo.

In this past year, what have we learned? What have we lost? What have we gained? God has been at work in this pandemic. I think of the scripture readings that have to do with pruning, with being refined like silver, with being molded like clay in the hands of the potter. I think of God's promise for new life, for renewal, to be active in us as the Spirit pushes and pulls us as the body of Christ, the Church, into a God-pleasing shape.

No doubt, we have felt the points of pressure, even pain. We can look back over this past year, which has felt much longer than 12 months, and compare then to now. We can look back and take note that this will be our second pandemic Easter, that we will still observe safety protocols and be silent of trumpets. That we still have a way to go before we can declare the pandemic is over. But at this one year mark, we can look back and see what we have gained.

We have learned how to be more connected in new ways. Our Lifelong Faith Formation classes connected participants and teachers from the Copper Country to the Soo, from Ironwood to Menominee. The current Racial Equity Challenge is doing the same thing. Pastors and leaders slogged through decision fatigue to creatively meet the new challenges. Congregation Councils did the hard work of figuring out safety protocols and what metrics to apply to future decisions of in person worship. I saw congregations equipping parents to teach the faith with take home packets and at home worship. I saw online meetings, zoom coffee hour, email devotions, and hard copy sermons sent through the mail.

You all have been and continue to be AMAZING!!! What a year! What a difficult, trying, tiring, creative, faith deepening, discipleship challenging, grief provoking year of loss and gain. I know I am not the only one who has felt weary, impatient, and sad. But neither am I the only one who has found new appreciation for what makes us Church, the power of community, and how Christ becomes more palpable when we are together.

Looking at both the positives and negatives of this pandemic allows us to look forward with better questions about what our next steps will be. There is newness emerging and a hunger to dive deeply into the things we took for granted before. As we gather for worship again, as we reapply ourselves to ministries that have been neglected, as we are newly aware of what matters to us about the community of faith, I urge that we continue in prayerful discernment about future directions. I do not believe it is wise to rush back to fill every corner with the way we did things "before."

I hope, in this year of HOPE, that the same care and consideration that we invested in designing safety protocols will be applied as we consider what to carry forward and what to leave behind, and what to begin from scratch. I know that God is creating something new, and we are only just beginning to perceive it.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan



Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
130 O'Dill Drive
Norway, MI 49870

Return Service Requested

LET US PRAY. The ELCA Prayer Ventures for April 2021 include these suggestions and many more:

He is risen! Praise God! Give thanks that through Jesus' resurrection we are no longer constrained by sin and death but can celebrate salvation, new life and God's wonderful grace, which reclaims and changes us.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Look around and give thanks for the people, community, world, wonders of creation and signs of God's presence and work that surround you

Pray for the humility to acknowledge and respect God's infinite power, presence and grace for the sake of all people.

Jesus is with us in times of fear and uncertainty, just as he was with his troubled disciples after the resurrection. Pray for the Spirit to encourage our faith, ground us in the good news of Christ and grant us peace, reassurance, hope and direction throughout our baptismal journey.

Give thanks for signs of spring! Some places still have snow on the ground, yet others show signs of nature blossoming and new life emerging. Give thanks for the good, life-giving work of our Creator, who urges patience and stirs new life and hope in every season.

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!" Pray that God will help us better understand what living together in unity requires of us as siblings in Christ and as world citizens striving for peace, justice, reconciliation and mutual care.



For the full monthly Prayer Ventures throughout the year, visit

<https://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>.