

Newsletter 2017



Pastoral Reflections...

“This Jesus That Shows Up”



“Where two or three are gathered in my name,
there I am in the midst of them.”
Matthew 18:20, NRSV

There was a time during my seminary journey, where I had to go through a few medical tests to handle some issues with acid reflux. This experience was at moments a little challenging, when carrying a full-time course load, working for a professor, and at a local department store, as well as managing household life as a mom with two active Littles. All of us in our seminary community understood that grad school was indeed a challenging time of life for everyone, and we were very much there to support and care for one another; but I did not expect that support to surprise me like it did in a very unique and special way.

One morning, as Larry and I walked out the door at 6:00 a.m. to head to the hospital for one of my medical tests; and I was feeling a little anxious; there sitting on the lawn was my classmate and Larry's and my good family friend named Soren, playing his guitar and singing Christian songs to encourage and uplift me. “Who would do such a thing?”, I thought to myself. First of all- to even remember that I had an appointment, when his world was already full of coursework and family life too, was impressive. Secondly, I thought, “who would get up that early to come sit on our lawn to be present in such a beautiful and extraordinary way?” Well, of course, I answered to myself, it would be someone like Soren, who so greatly loved Jesus and had so much love in his heart for others too. Yes, for sure, Jesus showed up through our very dear friend.

I can share yet another experience that is also very unique in its own remarkable way: Again, it was a time of yet another medical test. This one was to get an MRI on my injured ankle, from when I had fallen and also broken my foot. Due to scheduling issues, I had to go through this experience unaccompanied by anyone else, and so there I was, with the technicians, getting situated in the MRI machine, again, feeling anxious and

also alone, when, suddenly, in my ear I heard a very prominent, and very clear whispered voice which spoke: *"I Am Your Friend."*
Again, Jesus showed up.

In what ways have you experienced this Jesus of ours, who shows up, simply on His own or through others?

Yes, Jesus showed up as one of us, born in a manger in Bethlehem. Jesus showed up in His earthly ministry, healing, teaching, loving, and transforming others' lives from darkness to light.

Jesus showed up by going to the cross to suffer and die for our own human sin; and while on that cross, spoke those words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We didn't have to ask for that forgiveness. While we were yet still sinners, Jesus showed up in grace and love to redeem our sinful nature; not by what WE did to earn it, but by what Jesus Himself did FOR us.

Then, on Easter Day, Jesus showed up again, risen from the grave, victorious...to show US all the new life WE have been given through that cross and Easter resurrection. After that first Easter morning, Jesus then showed up among God's people in a variety of ways, making His resurrected appearance known to many. One of my favorites is Jesus' breakfast on the beach!

What do we ourselves have to say, about this Jesus of ours that shows up?
We have seen Him in our own midst through our Bethlehem family of faith.

Here are just a few examples:

+Do you remember a few years ago, in the month of June, when most people might think that the church goes to "sleep" at that time of year; that in our morning worship, we hosted a visitor from our sister church in Tanzania? On that "sleepy" June morning, we raised \$6,000.00 for two new wells in Tanzania where water was so greatly needed. As a faith family, we all stood together in our fellowship hall, with our Tanzanian friend, giving his shouts of rejoicing while we all clapped and celebrated right along with him, in praise to God. Yes, Jesus was there.

+Do you remember just a few years ago, when we celebrated 8 baptisms in one weekend? One baptism was in our Saturday night worship and again, 7 more, ages 18 months -adult, at the outdoor Sunday evening worship in the park. Yes, Jesus was there.

+And once again, do you remember, when, in our outdoor Sunday evening worship the following year, titled "All Creation Sings for Joy", we planted trees which turned out to be "Cathedral Elms", and a cardinal rested in the tree above us, singing its own song of praise? Yes, Jesus was there.

It is so easy to forget or take for granted, all the ways that Jesus shows up. On the cross, in His own suffering, Jesus went to the depths of feeling abandoned by God. But in the Easter Resurrection; Jesus shows up changed; full of renewed hope, life and joy. That Resurrected Life of Christ should change us too-and lead us to look at life, and live our life in a NEW and RENEWED WAY, responding in Christ-like hope and joy.

Yes, that's what happens when Jesus shows up. We are made new again and again.

It happens every time we hear words of welcome and forgiveness in the moments which we gather; or in the sign of the cross marked upon us in baptism, in the blessing we receive at the Lord's Holy Table, and so much more.

Jesus shows up, freely, out of grace and love. There are no requirements of having to meet any conditions, or in achieving certain attendance numbers in our worship pews, or by being perfect in any way. Where two or three are gathered, Jesus is there.

And even when we are alone and on our own, Jesus is still there, as He promised, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) Because, you see, Jesus is risen. Not even death and the grave could keep Him from showing up. Nothing will ever keep Him away.

Let's keep our eyes, ears minds and hearts open to all the ways we will know, that Yes, Jesus Shows Up. We can expect to be remarkably surprised...and yes, changed in a hope-filled way.

Also, make sure you check out the newsletter page that describes some of the Biblical accounts of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to those early disciples.

What joy, what confident hope we are given in our shared Christian faith.

Christ is Risen. Risen Indeed!

A Very Joyous Easter to you all,

Blessings and Love,
Pastor Jean, BLC

A LITTLE HEAVENLY HUMOR...

ABOUT THIS JESUS WHO SHOWS UP-

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03-21-2014

I HEARD YOU BLURTING MY NAME THERE ... ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?

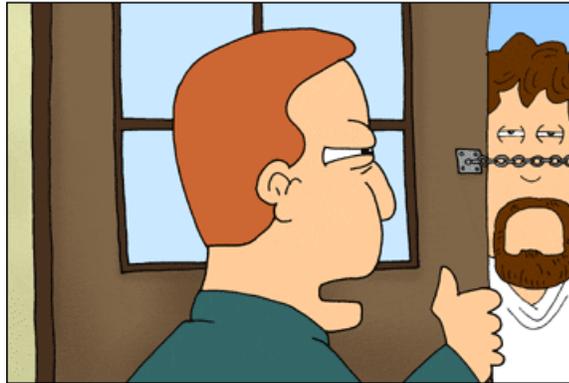
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Thanks to Richard Germain

03-14-2014

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Thanks to David A. Depew (See Luke 13:23-30)

11-22-2005

JESUS WHO?

AND SOME SPRINGTIME HUMOR...

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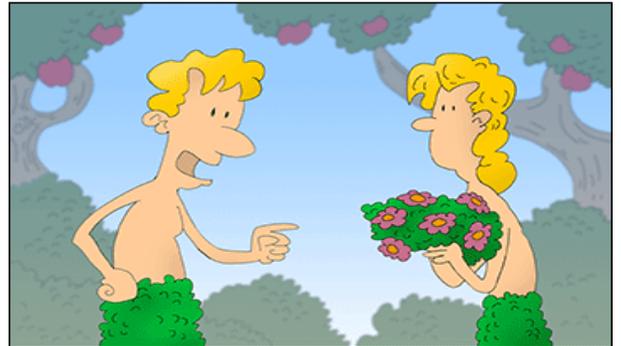


Thanks to Kerry Hodgkinson

12-06-2013

RAIN? 40 DAYS AND NIGHTS? RIGHT AFTER I FINISHED A MOST THOROUGH WAX JOB ON MY WAGON?

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01-09-2015

NEW OUTH?!



April 2021
Stewards of our natural world

“God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good.”
—Genesis 1:31

Type “glacier loss” into an internet search engine, examine photos of ice sheets today versus just a few decades ago, and you will draw the same conclusion as the world’s best scientists: We are losing ice, and fast.

But melting glaciers is just one of the many crises facing our natural world. Stressed by warming temperatures, rising sea levels, shifting weather patterns, acidifying ocean waters, and pollution of land, air and water, nature itself is under grave threat. Thousands of species of insects, plants and animals are going extinct as habitat, from coral reefs to rainforests to estuaries, is destroyed.

“Our planet is in crisis,” says campaignfornature.org. “The natural world is disappearing at an unprecedented rate.”

For God’s people, appointed as caretakers of God’s creation, this is not just troubling news but also a call to action.

This April 22, the 51st Earth Day, let’s dedicate ourselves to learning about and fighting for God’s creation. Here are some ideas:

- Learn about the growing crises and how they threaten our lives. Teach others.
- Pick one problem and make it a focus for education, awareness, and action in your family or congregation.
- Connect with nature by visiting a park or wild place near you.
- Pick up litter and trash from the street or public land.
- Learn about the plants and animals that live in your area.
- Plant flowers, herbs, vegetables, or trees.
- Advocate for public policies that will promote conservation.
- Find a special way to observe Earth Day in your family, congregation, or community.

Our natural world is under threat, but God’s people can make a difference by caring and getting busy.--*Rob Blezard*

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“THIS JESUS WHO SHOWS UP”

Here are some Biblical accounts given in scripture, of experiences where the Resurrected Jesus appeared to His disciples and followers right after the tomb was found empty, before His ascension and beyond.

- Early Sunday morning (April 9) to Mary Magdalene near the tomb at Jerusalem (Mark 16:9, John 20:11-18)
- To the women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
- To Peter (Cephas) near Jerusalem later that day (Luke 24:34, 1Corinthians 15:5)
- To two disciples going to Emmaus that day (Mark 16:12, Luke 24:13-31)
- That evening at Jerusalem to the apostles except Thomas (Mark 16:14, John 20:19-25)
- Sunday evening at Jerusalem to all the apostles especially Thomas (John 20:26-29)
- To seven disciples fishing on Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-13)
- To eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-18)

- Over 500 disciples at once --location uncertain (1Corinthians 15:6)
- To James --location uncertain (1Corinthians 15:7)
- To the apostles (and probably others) during forty days prior to his ascension (Acts 1:2-3)
- At the Mount of Olives near Bethany at his ascension (Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:6-12)
- After his ascension, to Stephen the martyr (Acts 7:55-56)
- To Saul on road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6, 1Corinthians 15:8-9)
- To John on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9-19)

CHRIST IS RISEN-RISEN INDEED!

PALM SUNDAY – CLOAKS FOR CHRIST





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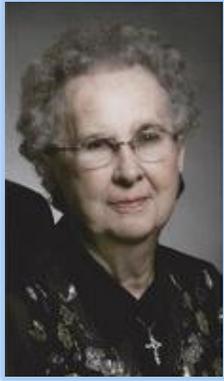
1 Harper Simonsen, 2 Joel Anderson, 2 Donna Graybill, 3 Megan Boger, 3 Hank Hayes, 3 Taelyn Reyter, 4 Wally Miller, JR.

5 Bryan Chase, 6 Deb Nelson, 9 Jordan Beck, 9 Jerri Frangenberg, 9 Bennett Schubert, 10 Dennis Allen, 10 Kara Klingborg, 10 Nate Lewis, 10 Taylor VandeLune, 11 Lexi Keleher,

11 Natalie Peterson, 12 Chris VandeLune, 15 Camille Zwiefel, 17 Jancice Lundsgaard, 17 Todd Miller, 17 Brodie Wiltman, 18 Larry Reilly, 18 Marlin Saeger, 19 Robert Ferris, 19 Gracelynn Schilmoeller, 20 Joan Anderson, 20 Nancy Enstrom, 20 Miranda Olsen, 21



4 Dave & Bev Drefke, 4 Mark & Shari Dunn, 8 Larry & Shanda Reilly, 17 Kenneth & Joan Anderson, 17 Todd & Kimberly Miller,



IN LOVING MEMORY

BERNICE ODLE, 99, of Cherokee, Iowa, passed away peacefully Saturday, March 20, 2021 at the Heartland Care Center in Marcus, Iowa.

Bernice was born on March 16, 1922 in Grand Meadow Township, Cherokee County, Iowa to Oscar & Hilma (Johanson) Lindgren. She was baptized and confirmed in the Carmel Lutheran Church in Marcus, Iowa. She grew up in the Marcus and Meriden communities and graduated from Meriden High School in 1939. She was employed at Royer's Jewelry Store and Northwestern Bell Telephone before her marriage. On May 1, 1945 she was united in marriage to Cletus Odle at the Augustana Lutheran Church in Sioux City, Iowa. They were blessed with two daughters Lynde and Susan while living in Ponca, Nebraska. The couple lived in Long Beach, California from 1948 until 1953 when they moved to Iowa where they farmed south of Cleghorn for 42 years. She and Cletus moved to Cherokee in 1996 after Cletus retired from farming. Bernice had worked as the Credit Manager for the Sears Store in Cherokee for 20 years, retiring in 1977.

She was a member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cherokee where she had been a Sunday School teacher, was on several church committees, and was on the committee to plan the present church. She and Cletus also volunteered for Meals on Wheels for several years. She enjoyed playing cards, sewing, crocheting, and spending time with her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Cletus on September 7, 2013, a daughter Susan Odle Erickson in 2019, sister Dorothy (Mike) Bush, four brothers and two sisters-in-law Paul (Marguerite) Lindgren, Holgar (Marilyn) Lindgren, Harry Lindgren, LeRoy Lindgren, two brothers-in-law and two sisters-in-law

Dado Blankenbaker, Dorinne (Bill) Schleef and Evelyn Letsche.

She is survived by one daughter: Lynde (Gary) Lundquist of

Cherokee, Iowa; five grandchildren, ten great grandchildren and one great great granddaughter: Jeff (Lisa) Lundquist of Meriden, Iowa and their children Amber and Brady; David (Grace) Lundquist of Carpentersville,

Illinois and their children Joshua and Jennifer; Cheryl (Jared) Hertzke of Round Lake Beach, Illinois and their children Shayla, Jesse, and Katelyn; Dan (Julie) Erickson of Des Moines, Iowa and their son Terry (Cathy) Erickson and their daughter Angel; Dr. Holly (Neal) Galles of Dodge Center, Minnesota and their children Mitch (fiancé Paige) and Brad; three sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law: Phyllis Lindgren of Meriden, Iowa; Marcella Blankenbaker of Tucson, Arizona; Virgie (Jim) Wolcott of Cherokee, Iowa; also many nieces and nephews.

Blessed be her memory.





March 24, 2021

Dear Bethlehem Congregation-

Good day! I hope this letter finds you well!

I know the past year has been a challenge (to say the least!), but great things are happening at Bethlehem Lutheran.

We are Christ's church together, which is one that seeks to love and care for others, and work for the common good of all. We have shared meaningful worship together, been able to receive Holy Communion, where forgiveness of sin and the gospel is proclaimed. Committees and study groups are now able to gather. Plans for more outreach ministry projects are underway. And, seeing one another in person again has been a source of great joy.

In this, as we move through this time of pandemic together, the BLC Council continues to monitor area health and safety information. We have now been able to adapt our worship settings, and as a result, the following actions have been taken:

- As we gather again in the sanctuary for worship, we also still have the opportunity for worship online.
- The ropes have been taken down in the majority of our sanctuary pews, but with the section behind the choir/piano area still displaying social distance rope markers for those who prefer a visual guideline.
- Masks are still required, in the ongoing care and safety of others.
- Communion is down in the front, with four separate stations.
- Saturday night services are being held again, but in the narthex. This will allow everyone to social distance, but still have worship.
-

There are a few things going forward that will be instituted as well:

- There will be singing in services, starting Easter Sunday. The logistics are still being worked out, but the council thinks it's time to add this back into worship services.
- There will be an Easter Sunrise Service in the parking lot at 6:45, to take advantage of the rising sun and welcoming the new day.
- Following the sunrise service, there will be an Easter breakfast at 7:30. There will be dining in the Fellowship Hall, with social distancing being observed. If there are those that do not feel safe eating with other people, curbside pickup will be available.

These are some of the changes that have been instituted, with more to come in time. The Council has been wanting to make sure we take everyone's feelings into account, and to act in the best interest of the church, while still keeping in mind the Covid pandemic, and recommendations from the state and authorities. But we are excited for the new changes and look forward to getting worship, and all church activities those where the love and joy of Christ among us is always our central focus.

Thank you for your time, and have a wonderful day!

Kyle Pingrey, Council President
Bethlehem Lutheran Church



Newsletter

April 2021

As I write this, I am reminded how different it is this year as we approach Easter. A year ago, most Easter services were cancelled, Easter was not cancelled! We see a Risen Christ in our lives everyday and see many ways to serve Him.

If we have learned anything this past year, it is the importance of personal relationships. Take the time to reach out to someone today with a phone call, card, or a visit. We need each other! I am reminded of one of Aesop's Fables that is a favorite which is the lion and the mouse and the moral of the story is that we need each other. If you are not familiar with this fable, google it, it shares a lesson we each need to remember.

Blessed to be a Blessing!

Betty

Bakeless Bake Sale

You may have received or will be receiving a letter for a bakeless bake sale, asking you to donate what you would have spent on baking ingredients, time, and purchasing products. WELCA has had no meetings or funeral lunches in a year, yet we maintain our commitments of support to various organizations. We ask all women of the church and any men who choose to support us as we move forward in these times to consider a donation. WELCA has and continues to be a vital ministry in this congregation. Please give this your prayerful consideration as you determine your donation.

Meetings

Group meetings can begin at the church and this is up to each group leader. Contact your group leader on when and if you start April meetings. Meetings at the church need to be scheduled with Brenda before the day. This is a decision that each group needs to make, as to when they feel safe meeting.

The Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board will meet on April 11 following the worship service. Please bring ideas of events that we can schedule this year and to bring in new women. We appreciate all those who have supported and worked diligently through the years on behalf of the WELCA group, but there is always room for new members to work in this ministry. All ages can learn from each other and it is in this variety of woman that we struggle, learn, and grow in our faith. Remember it is a journey not a race as we engage in God's Word.



Western Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

**News from the
Western Iowa Synod,
ELCA:**

2021 Synod Assembly

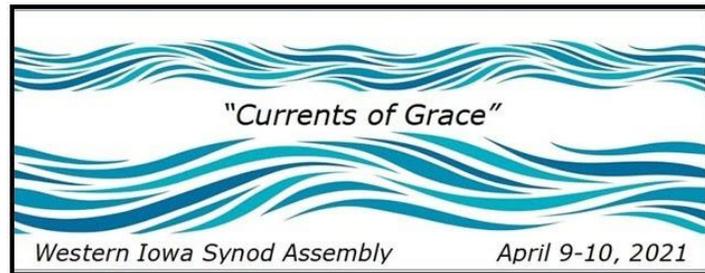
The assembly offering will be split between the Igumbilo Girl's School in Tanzania and funding the bus transportation for all Western Iowa Synod youth to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in

Minneapolis in July, 2022. Please contribute generously to these important ministries. Our challenge amount is \$20,000. Congregations are encouraged to: send their offerings to the Synod office; donate while registering; or **donate online** as soon as possible so that we can publish our progress to that goal
**THERE WILL BE AN OFFERING BASKET IN THE CHURCH NARTHEX ON
EASTER**

**WEEKEND, APRIL 3- 4TH, 2021 AND THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 10-11 FOR
THESE MINISTRIES TO ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE.
PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND PUT SYNOD ASSEMBLY ON THE MEMO LINE. THANK YOU!**

Bethlehem's Synod Assembly Voting Delegates are Pastor Jean, Dave Hickman and Brenda Manmiller. The assembly is online this year. The Bethlehem Council will also be viewing part of the assembly as Bethlehem Lutheran will be honored for our 125th Anniversary and Pastor Jean's 25th Anniversary of Ordination.

A link will also be made available for anyone in the congregation to watch the assembly online on your own computer at home, for free.



April 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

According to the most recent Iowa Department of Human Services data, 9,532 Iowa children were subject to abuse or neglect. The most common forms of abuse included denial of critical care, physical injury, exposure to illegal drugs or dangerous substance, and sexual abuse.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) helps combat child abuse through prevention, safety, and stability services, as well as mental and behavioral health care.

Through regular in-home visits to families, LSI Early Childhood Services prevent child abuse by giving parents the support, education, and resources they need to build a healthy, stable home for their children. In 2020, our Early Childhood programs

provided more than 18,000 in-home and virtual visits to families.

LSI Family Centered Services help children and families already involved in a crisis or abuse situation to become safer and more stable, and LSI's Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers serve many children and youth who have experienced trauma from past abuse or neglect.

You can make a direct impact on these children and families through your support of LSI. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and Facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Empowering Iowa Families

Gaylene was overwhelmed raising three young boys. Finances were strained and she and her partner, José, worked hard to make ends meet. Suddenly, well into her second trimester, Gaylene learned she was pregnant with her daughter, Julieanna. Left with less time to prepare her home for a fourth child, Gaylene was stressed at the thought of welcoming a little girl into a house with three energetic older brothers. And once Julieanna was born, Gaylene began experiencing postpartum depression.

Gaylene enrolled in LSI Early Childhood Services for help, and she and José began meeting with their LSI worker, Kellie. She provided the family with age-appropriate ideas and developmental activities for the kids, and served as a shoulder to lean on whenever Gaylene or José needed guidance or advice. Gaylene recently graduated from college with a degree in early childhood education, and her family is thriving. Gaylene also graduated out of LSI services last year. The family still keeps in touch with Kellie, and Gaylene says she will forever be grateful for the support she received when times were difficult.

“We got so used to Kellie coming to our home for five years, it’s going to be different. But now I know where to turn and how to help my family down the road,” Gaylene says. “I feel like Kellie and LSI actually care about people and parents.”

DUTIES April 2021

USHERS

Kevin Tapper.

Larry Morse

Rusty Rasmus

Troy Hummel

5

6

Greeters

1.

2.

COUNTERS

1.

ALTAR GUILD

1.

Banner Guild

1.

Coffee

1.

COMMUNION SCHEDULE

Maundy Thrus. Apr 1

Prepare-Duane/Lori

Assist-Jodi

Sunday Apr 4(Easter

Prepare-Jodi/Rusty

Assist-Tyler

Saturday Apr 10

Prepare-Steve

Sunday, Apr. 18

Prepare-Leah/

Assist- Vicky

Saturday Apr 24

Prepare-Vicky

LECTORS

Apr 4-

Apr-11

Apr 18-Youth

Apr 25-

ALTAR FLOWERS-\$30

Apr 4-M/M Pat Hyndman

Apr 11-M/M Jim Mohn

Apr 18-

Apr 25-Cindy
Selfridge/LaVonne Rae

BETHLEHEM ON THE AIR- \$30

Apr 4-M/M Roger Mummert

Apr 11-Cindy
Selfridge/LaVonne Rae

Apr 18- M/M Jim Mohn

Apr 25-

MISSION SUPPORT

Apr 4-M/M Lynn Friedrichsen

Apr 11-

Apr 18-Cindy
Selfridge/LaVonne Rae

Apr 25-

Acolytes

Apr 4-

Apr 11-

Apr 18-

Apr 25-