



Holden Evening Prayer

Every Thursday in Lent at 6:30pm

This prayer service includes communion and is designed to center our



Holy Week & Easter

March 24 - Palm Sunday at 8:30am and 11:00am

March 28 - Maundy Thursday at 6:30pm

March 29 - Good Friday at Noon and 6:30pm

OUR REDEEMER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH THE VOICE

March 2024



The History of Dramatic Retellings in Church: What Is Our Tradition?

For much of recorded history only a very small percentage of people could read or write. Scholars call this an "oral culture" because knowledge was passed down through the generations by storytelling, rather than through writing. According to David Rhoads, a New Testament professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, biblical stories were often acted out and even improvised to make more sense to the audience. "[Dramatic] performances were an integral and formative part of the oral cultures of early Christianity," and the most common way people received biblical stories (taken from his 2005 essay on the topic*). This is known as *performance criticism*.

These performances served a number of purposes and, in my view, continue to serve us well as Christians. They allow us to contextualize far-removed stories and times into our own lives and culture. They urge us to see old stories in new ways and consider new aspects or details of the events. They bring our faith to life.

It is no accident that David Rhodes, one of the leading scholars in performance criticism, is Lutheran. We Lutherans are constantly thinking about how we bring our faith into modern culture. It is of little importance to us that every detail is represented precisely as it happened, and more important that the story brings our faith to life. After all, it would be impossible for every detail of every biblical story to be completely historically accurate, as much of the Bible was written down generations after the events occurred. And this can bolster our faith because it means these are not dead stories of a by-gone era. They are living, breathing big-picture events that have parallels to our own lives, regardless of the minutia.

According to New Testament scholar Bart Ehrmann, some modern Christians' obsession with absolute historical accuracy of the Bible was not shared by Christians for most of history. To people of antiquity, accurate names, locations, and dates were of little consequence; the moral of the story and the quality of the characters were what mattered. This lends further license to dramatic performance as biblical storytelling. If the goal of biblical storytelling is to convey large ideas, then there are many ways that can be done. I am grateful to be part of a Christian tradition that fosters and supports these efforts. We explore these stories in dramatic ways because we explore our faith and how it interacts with our daily lives.

I love the season of Lent, the journey toward the cross, a time to reflect upon my own failures, my own mortality, and God's love for me. The gritty reality of the passion stories can be brought to life by dramatic retellings in worship. This year, holy week will feature dramas exploring Judas' internal dialogue after leaving the last supper, Pontius Pilate and his wife anguishing over the fate of Jesus, and more. We can be assured that, even though these stories do not appear in the Bible directly, we Christians have a rich history of exploring such themes through dramatic performance.

Please join us this holy week as we journey toward the cross. Palm Sunday is March 24 at 8:30am & 11:00am, Maundy Thursday worship is March 28 at 6:30pm, Good Friday worship is the following day at Noon and 6:30pm, and our Easter Sunday celebration is March 31 at 8:30am and 11:00am and will feature a brass quintet!

-Jason Callon
Director of Worship and Music

* which can be found here: https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/rhoads_performance.pdf



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OUR REDEEMER'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
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EMBRACED BY GOD'S LOVE WE REACH OUT TO SERVE BECAUSE OUR REDEEMER LIVES

Stewardship Article: Not Your Parents' Offering Plate

First. Thank you for your faithful financial support of Our Redeemer's and your prayers for the continuing work of the Stewardship Committee.

The committee spent a great deal of time discussing what "stewardship" means, what it doesn't mean, how it has changed and continues to change, and how we must adapt and respond in order to support the mission, work, staff, and ministries of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church.

While many resources, articles, and books were reviewed and discussed, two stand out. The first, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, by Henri Nouwen, was the basis for the *Fed by Ravens* stewardship workshops presented as an adult education series in January 2023. The second, *Not Your Parents' Offering Plate*, by J. Clif Christopher, contains important information about the committee's work on behalf of the congregation.

Philanthropy, the financial contributions to promote the welfare of persons and communities, is at the highest level in our nation's history. In 2013, \$335 billion was donated to religious and nonprofit organizations. Churches and religious organizations were the number one category and accounted for 31 percent of all charitable giving. Education was next at 16 percent. While this seems like good news, it is tempered by the reality that in 1980, churches received 60 percent of all charitable giving and have been in steady decline for the past 25 years. The question is, Why?

While the answer may include factors that are too complicated and numerous for this article - and may not be completely understood even by the experts, they essentially fall into three categories: competition, culture, and the church.

1. Competition. In 1995, there were 500,000 nonprofits and 370,000 churches. Today, there are 1.1 million nonprofits and 370,000 churches. The competition for charitable dollars from nonprofits has doubled.
2. Culture. Giving patterns have changed, especially among the younger generations, who do not tend to donate in the same ways or for the same reasons as previous generations. Giving is affected by technology (digital and social media) and the desire for contributions to have an observable and tangible impact.
3. Church. The reality is that the church does a pretty miserable job of engaging with anything related to finances. The message that "You should give" is no longer adequate. Tithing is a nonstarter. And pledge drives are obsolete.

So, what IS the answer?

Well, the short answer is, "We don't know. But we have some ideas we'd like to try."

The reality is that no one has the answer, not just at Our Redeemer's but...well, anywhere. We don't know what the new stewardship program should be, which is both terrifying and exhilarating. Change has come upon us, and we must adapt. Step out in faith. How great is that?

But it's not like we don't know anything. We know the three most important reasons people give to churches and nonprofits are mission, staff and integrity.

1. Mission. People want to make the world a better place to live. People want to believe that they can make a difference. People want to change lives. And the church does this through Jesus. We know that we do this. We need to do a better job of sharing all the many ways we do this.
2. Staff. People give because of people – particularly because of all the leaders of an organization. Church buildings or church programs don't change people's lives. People change lives.
3. Integrity. What we mean by integrity is that people do not give to maintain the status quo or to "make the budget." People expect their investment to accomplish something bigger than filling a gap in the balance sheet. They expect great things to be done. They expect life and growth and love. People understand risk and imperfection but also recognize that being faithful means not being fearful.

So, in the days and weeks and months ahead, you will hear things, and see things, and be invited to things by the Stewardship Committee as we wrestle to find what works for this community of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. Amid the challenges, change and chaos that fills our world, we remain expectant and encouraged by the fact that so much is being done already to fulfill our mission and to change people's lives. We will do even more, with your help.

The Voice is published monthly as an update on the ministry and mission of

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

3580 N Benton Ave
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406.442.7842

www.ourredeemerlives.org

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Ministers: **All the People of God**

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Trina@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Lori Walter, Administrative Assistant

LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.Org

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Sarah@OurRedeemerLives.Org

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Jason@OurRedeemerLives.Org

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Steph@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Liz Swenson, Director of Children and Family Ministry

Liz@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Linda Keim, Organist

David McHaley, Custodian

Carol Will, Deacon

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Lay Pastoral Associate

Jan Martin, Lay Pastoral Associate

Jeff Martin, Lay Pastoral Associate

Kevin Mathews, Lay Pastoral Associate

Lisa Williams-Mathews, Lay Pastoral Associate

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Alenna@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Marie Grissom, Preschool Teacher

Marie@OurRedeemerLives.Org

A congregation of the
Montana Synod of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America

Our Redeemer's Church Council

If you have questions or concerns and would like to visit with a council member, please feel free to contact any of us at the following email or phone:

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208-604-3198

Voice articles due on the 15th of each month

Friday, March 15 at 5:00pm

LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Long Term Prayer Concerns

Help us update our Long Term Prayer Concerns list by calling the church office, 406-442-7842.

Our Members

Phyllis Bauer	Jim Haubein	Dale Mickus	Julie Mehl	Vicki Poore
Richard Carey	Carol Kimble	Nikki MacMillan	Ron Paulson	Laurie Simms
Roberta Carey	Mark Langdorf	Lorna Meyer	Jim Poore	Ruth Straley

A new year means updating our prayer list. Please reach out to Lori Walter with prayer requests. LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.org or 406-442-7842

Our Family and Friends

Luke Brown (brother of Charlie Brown)
Brandon Erickson (nephew of Janet & Glenn Erickson)
Sawyer Ewan (cousin of Mary & Mark Robertson)
Danny McCaughan (nephew of Lori & Dave Swenson)

Our Family and Friends Serving in the Military

Brandon Bach	Adam Guay	Cody Johnson	Chris Oelkers
Kyle Begger	Ryan Girard	Colton Johnson	Scott Pocha
Erin DenHerder	Austin Grieve	Chance McDowell	Tanner Reddig
Kellan Elder	Travis Gronley	Kent McGowan	Cody Stipcich
Travis Elder	Charlie Heidbreder	Dean McLain	Darrell Stipcich
Micah Emmons	Roger Henschel	Sawyer Linke	Victoria Stipcich
Jessilyn Emmons	Paul Horst	Erin Mills	Tait Strom
Joe Fischer	Anela Hemry	Brian Neal	Andrew Zimmer
Grant Gagnon	Wade Hemry	Keith Nordquist	

Our Seminarians

Shawn, Sara, Addie & Kaden Juers



On **Saturday, March 23**, Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church is scheduled to volunteer on Habitat for Humanity's current build site in Highland Meadows Subdivision in East Helena. This is from 9:00am-4:00pm on Saturday. This is a time for the congregation to come together to physically help build a home for a family in need alongside of them. You must be 18 years or older to volunteer on the construction site. All youth 16 -17 years of age, must provide a waiver (printed and signed by a parent/guardian) and be accompanied by an adult for the duration of their volunteer experience. This event is not for those under the age of 16.

Sign Up to Help:

1. Create a profile at helenahabitat.volunteerhub.com.
2. Once you have created an account, go to the calendar date of March 23 and click the link labeled "Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church." It will open some details and directions to the build site.
3. You will need to click the sign-up button and it will ask to agree to our standard volunteer waiver that is required before volunteers come out to the build site.
4. Remember your username and password as you will have to scan a QR code once you arrive to start tracking the volunteer time.

Directions to the Site: There is a map in Volunteer Hub, but just in case...

Heading east on Canyon Ferry Rd., you will come to Valley Dr., Turn right on Valley Dr.

Heading down Valley Dr., you will pass East Helena High School and come to Meadow View Loop on your right. Make a right and go all the way towards the back, you will come upon Glenfinnan Court. That is the cul-de-sac we are building in. Feel free to park anywhere in the cul-de-sac.

Young Adult Fellowship

Young adults (ages 21-35) are welcome to join together at the Lewis & Clark Brewing Co. (1535 Dodge Ave) at 6:30pm, to explore such questions as: What makes Lutheranism unique in the landscape of Christianity? What are the guiding lights for Lutheran worship, sacraments, and social ethics? Why *do* we stand up and sit down all the time in worship? If any of these questions sound familiar, join the Young Adult Group on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6:30pm for education, conversation, and fellowship!

Contact Baird Linke (bairdlinke16@gmail.com or 406-465-9532) for information.



March BIRTHDAYS

(Remember our friends in Christ with a Birthday prayer!)

Communion Instruction

Classes will be held for children in **2nd** thru **4th** grade and **any** other families interested in learning more about Holy Communion.

Please save these dates:

- ⇒ **March 17 @ 1:00pm - Fed and Forgiven:** An instructional time for both communicant and parents about Holy Communion.
- ⇒ **Palm Sunday, March 24 @ 11:00am -** We invite the children and their families to attend to celebrate their deepened understanding of communion and for those who are not yet communing, to receive their First Communion.

An invitation was sent to all second, third and fourth grade children and their families. If you have any questions, or didn't receive a formal invitation please contact Liz at liz@ourredeemerlives.org or Pastor Trina at trina@ourredeemerlives.org.



Vacation Bible School 2024

Theme: *SCUBA: Diving into friendship with God!* Kids will take a deep, undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God.



Dates: June 10th-14th, 2024

Hours: 9:00am—Noon, Monday thru Friday

Age: PK-5th Grade (4yo by Sept. 2024)

Price: Only \$10! (The church helps to cover the remainder of our expenses.)

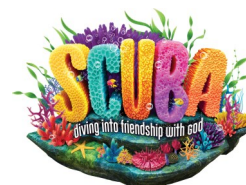
REGISTER TODAY: Follow the link below or use the QR code to register your child for our upcoming VBS. We can't wait to see you there!

<https://forms.gle/ZsVRarmiZqAeZKEZ6>



Also...we need **YOUR HELP!** We are in need of **VOLUNTEERS** to make VBS possible. Please contact Liz or [register below](#) if you are interested in volunteering your gifts for an undersea adventure this June!

<https://forms.gle/qJVQy7GYz2aaJVSy6>



Contact Liz for more information,
liz@ourredeemerlives.org.

- 3/1 Emma Hoover
- 3/2 Ivy Brott
Mike Caplis
Richard Carey
Elaine Heen
Brekken Murray
Clint Ohman
Kathy Olson
- 3/3 Kash Helfert
- 3/4 Joan Anderson
Jason Cummings
Mariah Swenson
- 3/5 Sawyer Linke
Lorna Meyer
David Swenson
- 3/6 Isaac Callon
Brad Johnson
- 3/7 Shawn Moore
Kacey Salo
Drew Sielbach

- 3/9 Scott Brown
Pat Lumma
Annette Sharkey
- 3/10 Lowell Anderson
Thomas Guariglia
Millie Johnson
Brianna Plant
Audrey Willard
- 3/11 Victor DeTienne
Brinley Mingay
Christy Weikart
- 3/12 Allison Aschim
Trish Harrington
- 3/13 Sawyer Holm
Andi Michason
Jessica Willcut
- 3/14 Herbert Kulow
Isabelle Mavis
- 3/15 McKenna Emerson
- 3/17 Dillon Harris

- Tracey Tintinger
- 3/18 Dave Carlson
- 3/19 Loren Davis
Tami Ellis
Larry Hanson
Kendall Smith
- 3/21 Linda Young
- 3/22 Travis Elder
Duncan Ellis
Laura Gorman
Levi Rispens
Dylan Willcut
- 3/23 Donna Greenwood
Pr. Trina Johnsten
Marian Paulson
Julie Penner
- 3/24 Rylee Solan
Marge Kasper
- 3/25 Craig Martin
- 3/26 Bennett Hanson

- Sean Maharg
Ed Peachey
Vicki Poore
Lane Salsbery
- 3/27 Katy Callon
Lyanne DenHerder
Morgan McDaid
Matthew Vukonich
Ava Watne
- 3/28 Mark Lauf
Jim Penner
Ryan Quinn
Vadine Rispens
Pat Sampson
- 3/29 Sully Lynn
Sarah Magee
- 3/31 Ken Richmond

March Anniversaries
Celebrate with those married 40 years or more this month!

3/19/1983	Carl & Denise Richards	41 years
3/18/1967	Bonner & Karen Armstrong	57 years
3/25/1961	Dale & Judy Mickus	63 years

Come to The Water
Baptism Class at Our Redeemer's

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!

Interested in baptism? Please let Pastor Trina know! We offer a one-hour session during which we discuss what Lutherans believe about baptism and go through what happens in the baptismal rite. These sessions are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. Pastor Trina can be reached at trina@ourredeemerlives.org or 406-442-7842.

90+ years old

Let's celebrate our friends who have turned 90 years or older this month by sending them a birthday card.

Loren Davis (age 90) 3980 McHugh Ln Helena, MT 59602	Elaine Heen (age 92) 915 Saddle Dr. Apt. 213 Helena, MT 59601
Mike Caplis (age 92) 1101 Saddle Dr. Helena, MT 59601	Isabelle Mavis (age 92) 915 Saddle Dr. Apt. 203 Helena, MT 59601

Baptisms

2/17/2024	Elias Martin Knutson
2/18/2024	Lachlan Ben Hanson
2/18/2024	Everly Anne Hanson
2/25/2024	Sadie Maye Connerton
2/25/2024	Levi Richard DeLaHunt

Did You Know?

Every Wednesday at 9:00am at Our Redeemer's there is a coffee group. The coffee hour has been going on for many years, at coffee shops around town, Touchmark Retirement Community, and recently ORLC. It's a time for fellowship and discussion and provides a meaningful time for people to gather and enjoy each other's company. The group is mainly attended by men but everyone is invited and welcome.

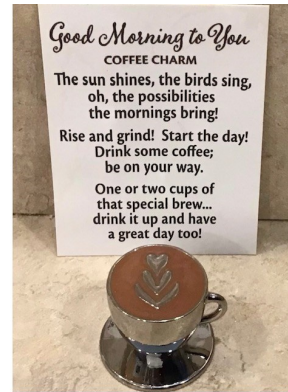
The participants discuss whatever is on each other's mind, relate experiences and greatly benefit from each others perspective and expertise. Sometimes it's what's in the road sand/salt that's used on the roads during winter. Other times it's train operation and train track maintenance. Whatever an individual brings to the table is discussed. Sometimes more than once because we forget a lot!

But, did you know, these same men and others take on projects in the church to insure all missions are accomplished. There is the arranging of chairs in the sanctuary, Community Room, and other locations prior to an event or meeting. Tables are decorated, moved from one location to another, and back. The choir loft is arranged for singing, bell ringing and other musical presentations. Christmas lights are strung inside the building and outside. Then the lights are removed after the season.

In addition there is church maintenance as scheduled or accomplished as necessary. The fire alarms and sprinkler system are tested and drained as scheduled. The floors in the sanctuary are stripped of wax and re-waxed. The outside of the church is restained. Other areas of the church are painted or renewed. The windows are checked to make sure they're closed in the winter. The walks are shoveled, lawn mowed, and watered with the sprinkler system which needs to be adjusted, charged with water and blown out in the fall. Problems are noted and sometimes professionals are called and hired.

Did you know the acoustical tiles in the Community Room of the church were installed by members of the church and this group. Additionally, the acoustical tiles recently installed in the back of the sanctuary were also installed by these members. Basically anything requiring help to accomplish is taken on.

We all appreciate what this group and other members do. The coffee hour is just the beginning. Anyone wanting to participate is welcome. Just come!



New Member Orientation

If you are interested in formalizing your relationship with this congregation, a very general introduction to Our Redeemer's will be offered twice:

Sunday, April 7 at 12:15pm

-OR-

Sunday, April 21 at 12:15pm

Please let our office administrator, Lori Walter, know if you'll be attending either of these so we can be ready to welcome you. She can be reached at LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.Org or 406-442-7842.

middle school.

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church



Save the Date

Confirmation Sunday is May 5 at the 11:00am service with a brunch to follow in the Community Room. A letter with more detail will be going out soon to those families.



Register now for FLATHEAD LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMP

You can register for camp on their website at flbc.net.

You select your week at camp and pay a deposit of \$100 to reserve your spot. Then tell Steph or Liz that you did so, and then the church will help you pay the rest. In addition, if your child needs a ride to camp, please let Steph know. She is working on getting transportation to and from camp. ORLC will be going two different weeks for on-site camp.

June 23 - 28, 2024

&

July 28 - Aug 2, 2024

OPEN BOWLING EVENT

This event is for youth of all ages. Join us at Sleeping Giant Lanes on Sunday, March 10 starting at noon.



high school.

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church



Save the Date

High School Senior Graduation service is on May 19 at the 11:00am service with a brunch to follow in the Community Room. A letter with more detail will be going out soon to those families.

SUMMER RAFTING TRIP

with Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

July 21-26

\$100 deposit to secure your spot. FLBC is holding 10 spots for our group. Talk to Steph if you are interested and she will get you the registration link.



HUNGER TEAM NEWS

HELP US IN OUR GARDEN

In order to continue our vital ministry of supplying fresh fruits and vegetables to Helena Food Share, we need a garden volunteer coordinator who can begin to work with volunteers in the late spring. If you love to dig in the dirt and don't mind managing a group of eager volunteers (Carroll College students, Hunger Team members, Boy Scouts, VBS students, other gardeners, etc.), you might be just the person for the job. There are people on this team with lots of garden expertise. We just need someone to coordinate all our fantastic volunteers. If you wish more information, contact Vicki Downhour (406-465-2197).

GARDEN PLOTS AVAILABLE FOR 2024

The ORLC Community Garden is blessed with brilliant sun, rich soil, a well for water, and chicken-aided pest control! For only \$25 ANYONE (you? your neighbor? a friend?) can rent a space of any size in which to garden! It's a great spot for Hubbard squash, pumpkins, potatoes - you know - all the plants that take up a lot of space! Please spread the word! You may contact Vicki Downhour (406-465-2197) if you have questions, or contact Lori Walter (406-442-7842) to reserve a plot.

SEED DONATIONS

We shall soon be accepting seed donations to provide produce for Helena Food Share in our community garden. We'll be accepting seed donations for root vegetables (carrots, onions, beets, NOT potatoes), and smaller winter squash (buttercup, acorn, Kabocha, spaghetti). Although it seems early to consider, we know some of you are ordering seeds - you know who you are!

GOD'S LOVE

The God's Love shelter desperately needs cleaning supplies. The shelter was overrun in February with snow and mud, as well as many souls going in and out. Bleach, Pine-Sol, spray cans of Lysol, Soft Scrub, Comet, and other similar cleaning products are most useful. Also, over-the-counter cold and flu medications are requested.

Thank you for your continual support in helping ease the burden of those experiencing the ravages of homelessness.

KENDRA WILDE HUNGER ENDOWMENT FUND

The last quarter of 2023 yielded \$294.80 from this endowment fund. The Hunger Team allocated these funds to God's Love, to assist with special needs during the winter months. You may continue to donate to this fund by writing "Wilde Endowment Fund" on the memo line of your check.

FAMILY PROMISE

Thank you to everyone who provided meals, set up rooms, or spent the night with our Family Promise guests in February. Although we hosted only one family, we also provided meals for others who were in the process of transitioning out of the program.

In 2022, Family Promise served 91 families with a total of 204 children. In 2023, Family Promise served 205 families with 502 children were served. As the program has grown, so have the needs for shelter and day services. Family Promise is in the process of acquiring the building presently owned by First Christian Church. The congregation will still worship there, but the day services of Family Promise will soon move in there. The present Day Center, located on Cooke, will eventually be used for overnight housing. So fantastic things are happening. Stay tuned for more details soon.

SPECIAL KID PACKS REQUEST: PLEASE NOTE

Helena Food Share has sent out a special request for **individual pudding cups** for the month of March. Your Food Share bookmark listed granola bars for this month. But Food Share recently purchased a large quantity of Kind Bars at a greatly reduced rate, eliminating the need for additional granola bars at this time of the year. Kids always love the pudding cups. Remember: when you find your favorite flavor, you will also be adding some extra calcium to the kid packs this month.

And **THANK YOU** for all the popcorn last month. You are such a generous group of people.

Lutheran Bible Camp 2024



"FLBC is a place to be in nature, in God's backyard. You can find yourself so easily." -Laila

"FLBC is a great place where you can truly be yourself." – Brisies



"Camp helped me grow religiously, mentally, and socially. Camp is a place where the judgement disappears." – Tess



"Church is a safe place for all who come... Forgive like Him, love like Him, treat others like He would. Love like Him no matter who it is!" – Hailie

Youth Retreat to Flathead February



"Its family, friends, great food, fun, worship, and nature in the best possible combination." -Eleanor

"FLBC is one of my favorite places on earth. There are so many emotions that you feel at this place. You grow more connected to God and feel like you are floating on a cloud full of emotions. I wish I could visit here every day, but since I am not able to, I look forward to coming here whenever I can. I LOVE FLBC!!!!!!!" -Morgan

"I really love FLBC... It helps me feel safe." -Alayna



"Camp is awesome...Camp will always have a special place in my heart." -Nate

"Camp is the place I feel closest to God. It's my Holy ground, and being able to have fun there makes it that much more special... I feel most at peace there." – Katrina

Call Committee

Patience is a virtue - or at least that is what we keep hearing. It can also be very frustrating. Part of the procedure in a pastoral call is to wait for the Synod to submit a name to us for our review and investigation. This Call Committee has decided to try a bit more pro-active approach and has been in contact with many members of clergy, both past and

present, that we individually are aware of - to solicit their aid. We want them to help us explore options and alternatives for filling this Associate Pastor position as well as try to discern any leads they might have. These activities were occurring during the month of February. We hope to have fruitful discussions within the committee in March that may take us closer to a resolution. Rest assured we continue to work on this and are thankful for your continued support and prayers.

Abby McLane (chair), Kristi Antosh, Lori Chase, Dee Dee Fischer, Shauna Helfert, Dwight Hiesterman, Craig Linke



CAREGIVER'S SUPPORT GROUP

A small group of individuals who provide support for loved ones meets monthly at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in the Conference Room. We will meet on Sunday, March 24 at 12:10pm, after the second worship service. As Easter is on the last Sunday of the month. we will meet a week early.



We gather for an hour to share stories, challenges, and successes.

If you wish to speak to one of the leaders during the week or have any questions, please contact us at the following numbers:

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina 406-672-2470 OR Jane Peachey 234-567-1461

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP



The grief group will meet on March 10 between services. Don't forget to Spring forward. All who have suffered loss are invited. We share, we lift up, we cry and laugh as we honor each person's walk through grief. For more information feel free to call Jane Peachey 234-567-1461 or Lori Bigwood-Pecarina 406-672-2470.

Touchmark Worship Services

Our Redeemer's Church members provide a worship and communion service monthly at Touchmark Retirement Community. We will meet Tuesday, March 19 at 10:00am in the forum. Lori Bigwood-Pecarina and Sharlene Kolb will provide leadership. If you would like to worship with them and our member residents at Touchmark, you are welcome to attend. Touchmark is located at 915 Saddle Drive.

Property Development Update-Jerry Hoover

Jerry Hoover made a presentation, updating the Council about the work with our partners and the progress of the buy/sell agreement. Last year the city of Helena set aside \$1,580,000 of ARPA funding for the purchase of 11 acres from Our Redeemer's to provide affordable housing for the community. The present appraisal of those 11 acres is \$1,450,000. The buy/sell agreement with Rocky Mountain Development Council is now in draft form. The Council has been asked to review this document, as well as the Restrictive Covenants so that the measure can come to the entire congregation in the near future. RMDC will select an engineering firm for further development of the property, a process that is expected to take 27 weeks. In addition to paying off the mortgage for the Our Redeemer's property, the church will also face some extra expenses, such as Horseshoe Bend Road easement, closing costs, open space/park development, landscaping, etc. The estimated cost for these additional issues is \$200,000-\$250,000. Other representatives from the Property Development Committee will be invited to the March meeting to answer questions from the Council.

Audit Review-Mike Burke

Mike Burke summarized the findings of the audit review for the year 2022. There were no major issues in this review. However, it is recommended that an external audit take place in 2024, to be certain the church is in compliance with the IRS.

Financial Review and Action-Tracey Tintinger

Receipts for the month of January totaled \$60,084. The Council approved a payment of \$13,239 to the Building Fund, a payment of \$8486.08 to the Dedicated Account, as well as \$2403.35 to the Synod (4% of the January giving), and our annual gift of \$500 to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously to our mission during the month of January.

Ministry Team, Committee and Task Force Reports

All staff members reported an increase in attendance, as well as registration for upcoming events. A new phone system will be installed in the next few weeks that routes calls to staff cell phones. Staff members will have cell phones. However, one landline will remain in use for safety reasons and for the use of the fax machine. Stewardship Committee reports that they have received \$4600 for camp scholarships, in addition to the original donation of \$7000 when they launched this campaign. The Long-Range Planning Committee has begun its research and assessment process. Ingrid Childress presented a brief summary of the giving of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, reminding the Council of the generous benevolence donations of the women of our church. The Green Team reports that they will make several presentations on caring for the earth during the month of April.

Unfinished Business

An ad hoc committee will be formed later this spring to address issues regarding our building use policy. The Council has been working on an organizational plan to improve communication between the Council and the many existing ministries in our church. Council members have selected the areas they would like to represent. More details about this plan will be forthcoming in the next month. The group categories include the following: Outreach, Faith Formation, Worship, Congregational Care and Fellowship, Finance, and Facilities and Administration.

New Business

Council members will be installed at the end of both worship services on Sunday, March 10.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Nelson, Secretary

Greetings From Preschool!

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year is OPEN!

Since 1999 we have offered classes for three and four-year-olds and prekindergarten. Our programs are structured to allow children to experience the joy of learning through both play-based and instructional methods. Our ultimate goal is to prepare them for continued success in their education, and in their lives. **Classes are filling up fast!** Pick up a brochure in our church, visit our preschool web page at <https://www.ourredeemerlives.org/preschool/> or call Kris Thatcher at 406-442-7842, ext. 20.

A Huge Thank You to all that participated in our Panda Express fundraiser. We received a whopping \$1,166.46!! This is awesome and such a tremendous help to our program! Our heartfelt thanks for your continued, amazing support!

Preschool Basket Silent Auction Our silent auction featuring a variety of themed baskets begins on Sunday, March 24, and runs through Sunday, April 7. If you are interested in donating a completed themed basket or an item for the auction, please contact Kris Thatcher at 406-442-7842, ext. 20, stop by the preschool office, or email us at preschool@ourredeemerlives.org.

Each year preschool families, church and community members, and local businesses provide items to create amazing, themed baskets. These baskets will be on display in the Great Room for viewing and bidding opportunities. There is always a great variety; something for everyone!

The funds raised from this event will enable us to purchase items for our preschool and provide enrichment opportunities for our students. These proceeds are also utilized to supplement our Tuition Assistance Fund. Additionally, we donate a portion of the money raised to the Angel Fund of Helena, a 501C3 corporation that helps area children with basic scholastic needs.

As always, we are extremely grateful for your ongoing support and thank you for all the contributions you have made and continue to make to our preschool. We could not do it without you.

Kris & Staff



Reflections on Good Friday

In one of Paul's letters to the young Galatian church, he identifies his preaching core as "Christ crucified," which he describes as "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the gentiles." (1 Cor 1:23) A marketing expert (or any reasonable person) might advise a better way to win converts. But Paul goes on to explain his choice: the message of Christ crucified is "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

We Christians love the triumph of Easter and the tender vulnerability of Christmas. But we tend to be more ambivalent about Good Friday. Good Friday requires us to confront the painful mystery of the Cross. Was that really necessary? If so, why? The Cross seems much more a symbol of earthly, oppressive power than of Godly power. Even though it is the central icon of our faith, the Cross has always been, and remains, a foolish stumbling block to our moral sensibilities, to our reason, and to our pride.

Theologians have constructed several theories to answer the question: "Why the Cross?" Each theory has substantial following, though there is a broad spectrum of longevity and popular acceptance. As I consider Good Friday this year, here are some answers I find personally helpful. They're based on traditional Lutheran and, more generally, protestant understanding, but filtered through my own experience and reasoning.

To begin, it's important to understand that *Jesus was not a victim*, as we tend to want to portray him. A victim is powerless against his or her oppressor. Jesus was not powerless. Quite the opposite. Jesus had all the power of the universe at his command. That is why his sacrifice was so powerful. If he were a mere victim, his crucifixion would have been just one more tragedy in a history of countless tragedies. His suffering may have been especially tragic due to his innocence. But innocent people have suffered throughout human history and will continue to suffer. His suffering would also have been particularly pitiful and pathetic since it could have been avoided. Jesus went out of his way to provoke the rulers of his society, knowing full well what the result would be.

The crucifixion was not merely a sad, unjust ending to a good man's life. Nor was it an act of martyrdom meant to shame and guilt us into obedience. It wasn't a display of weakness and defeat. Rather, it was a demonstration of ultimate power. It was the reason God exchanged His deity for weak human flesh. It wasn't unjust. It was the culmination of justice. It was God's way of simultaneously realizing perfect justice and perfect mercy. Justice requires that the sins of humankind receive the prescribed penalty of death. God's perfection demands it; God's mercy accepted the penalty on our behalf.

That is why Jesus suffered even more than we can imagine and why he was so completely alone at the end. All his earthly life he experienced and modeled an obedience and connection to God the Father that even the most saintly of us can only aspire to. But as he bore the sins of the world, he paid the ultimate penalty of absolute death: complete separation from God, the source of life. For perfection, by definition, cannot mingle with imperfection, and God's essence is holy perfection.

I would argue that Good Friday is the holiest day of the church calendar, as it commemorates God's willful act of sacrificial redemption. Christmas set the plan in motion. Good Friday is its culmination. As John's gospel reports, Jesus' last words on the Cross were, "It is finished." While Easter is our greatest and best reason for celebration, it is still the consequence of Good Friday's action. Good Friday demands a response beyond a superficial sadness and vague guilt provoked by a good and innocent man dying a tortuous death. Rather, an appreciation of its full meaning produces profound awe that God would go to such lengths to connect with us, supreme gratitude and humility, and a "Godly sorrow [that] brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret." (2 Corinthians 7:10)

Good Friday completes Jesus' Maundy Thursday mandate at John 13:34. There Jesus tells his disciples, including us, not just to love one another, but to love one another as he loves us. Then he submits to the Cross to show us how vast that love is. He certainly doesn't make it easy on us. In fact, it would be impossible to fulfill the mandate apart from him. But because of Good Friday and the resulting Easter resurrection, we receive faith, freedom, and power to love God with all our hearts and to love one another—and ourselves—as children of God, each created in the image of, and beloved by, God.

Ultimately, we will never completely understand the mechanism that links our eternal salvation to the Cross of Christ. God is infinitely beyond human understanding. What is of ultimate importance is to know that all of us are—and each of us is—saved *from* death and *for* loving obedience by faith in the power and promise of God through the grace-filled gift of a crucified Christ.

Kevin Mathews



"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." Gen. 1:31

We are all so blessed to live in this wonderful world God has made, and we'd like to commend all your efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle and any other ways you are helping our creation. Please continue!

But, do you feel overwhelmed when you think about how to better take care of creation? Many of us do and it is easy to throw our hands in the air and just go on with our lives. There are many things, small and large, that we can do (or continue to do) as a community and as individuals.

This Creation Care Corner, as part of ORLC's Creation Care Team's effort, will appear monthly in the newsletter to offer suggestions, and resources for our caring journey.

We often think, "What difference can one person make?" Well, all small acts added together make a big difference. We can:

1. Get informed through podcasts, books, magazines (eg. GREEN AMERICAN magazine is a very informative and practical guide)
2. Do our part at home, work, school and church to improve our care of creation.
3. Find ways to advocate for best use and care of our environment.
4. Get involved with the Creation Care Team as we discern and evolve our role at ORLC and in the world.

Stay tuned... April is Creation Care month at Our Redeemer's with a special worship service and creation focused adult forums...more later!!!

Creation Care Team contacts:

Nelson Bock at Nbock6552@gmail.com

Elaine Ulgenes at Elaineulge@yahoo.com

CRAFTING NIGHT

- Do you enjoy crafting but can't seem to find the time or space? Join us for a fun evening of crafting and fellowship in the Community Room. Bring your project and work away. We will be meeting on March 1 from 6:30pm until about 10:00pm. If you have questions, call Lori at 406-431-5906.



Taking Care of Your Neighbor

This month we received a \$2,000 grant from Northwestern Energy to be deposited to the Our Redeemer's Emergency Fund. The Emergency Fund is available to community folks with essential needs like lodging, food, clothes, transportation, and other immediate care. Pastor Trina is the contact for distributions from the Emergency Fund.

Thank you Northwestern Energy for your generosity and partnership in caring for our neighbors.

March 2024

AD = Administrative Wing
CR = Classrooms
PS = Preschool

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
3 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3 - 5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:15am - Training for Lenten book leaders	4 10:00am - Staff Meeting 5:30pm - Stewardship Committee	5 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 6:30pm - Young Adult Group
10 Daylight Savings Time 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Grief Support Group - Conference Rm 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3 - 5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:00pm - Open bowling for youth at Sleeping Giant Lanes	11 10:00am - Staff Meeting 6:00pm - Preschool Board Meeting - Conference Room	12 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 6:30pm - Executive Committee meeting - Conference Rm
17 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3 - 5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 1:00pm - Fed & Forgiven (First Communion Prep class)	18 10:00am - Staff Meeting 7:00pm - Bell Choir - Sanctuary	19 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 10:00am - Touchmark Worship and Communion 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 5:30pm - Council Meeting - Community Room 6:30pm - Young Adult Group
24 Palm Sunday 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Confirmation Class 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:10pm - Caregiver's Support Group - Conference Room	25 10:00am - Staff Meeting 7:00pm - Bell Choir - Sanctuary	26 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 6:30pm - Hunger Team - Conference Room
31 8:30am - Easter Worship 11:00am - Easter Worship	April 1 Easter Monday - Office closed	

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2
6 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class 6:30pm - Youth Group	7 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 6:30pm - Holden Evening Prayer	8	9
13 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class 6:30pm - Youth Group	14 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 6:30pm - Holden Evening Prayer	15 Voice Articles Due	16
20 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 1:00pm - WELCA Bible Study 6:30pm - Confirmation Class 6:30pm - Youth Group	21 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 6:30pm - Holden Evening Prayer	22	23 9:00am - 4:00pm - East Helena - Habitat for Humanity Site Build
27 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm.	28 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 6:30pm - Maundy Thursday Worship	29 12:00pm - Good Friday Worship 6:30pm - Good Friday Worship	30