



PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH

44 CHAPEL ROAD – KENMORE, NY 14217

(716) 875-5485

*A Congregation in Mission, Community and Service*

# *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

**APRIL 2017**

PASTOR: Rev. Ben Eder

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 AM

EDITOR: Mary Werth

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY: 9:30 AM

ASSOC. EDITOR: Marilyn Schneck

WORSHIP: 10:00 AM





The month of April is upon us, and Easter is nearly here: soon we will be celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead!

However, before the joy of Resurrection Sunday comes the events of our Lord's Passion, especially his betrayal on Maundy Thursday and crucifixion and death on Good Friday.

Speaking purely from an emotional point of view, those are not “feel good” moments: it is not a pleasant thing to view the suffering and death of someone we love, especially our Savior.

Perhaps then I can understand why far fewer parishioners attend Lenten services, and even skip the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday observances: after all, blood & gore and death is pretty depressing!

This reminds me of those who refuse to visit a friend in the hospital because sickness and death bother them; these visits aren't about “you,” but about the person who needs your visit.

Even more, how can we appreciate the joy of Christ's resurrection when we gloss over his suffering and death for our sins?

Jesus, being the Son of God, didn't have to come to earth to die; but he did so that we would not have to die an eternal death.

Furthermore, when Jesus lived among us, he not only took on our human nature but also experienced the full range of what it means to be human: he grew and developed, was hungry, thirsty, slept, and cried.

Jesus also underwent the final stage of the human experience, which is death itself. As the Scriptures make clear, being our Savior it was necessary for Jesus to die as our substitute on the cross for our sins.

As Jesus walked the steps to Calvary and the cross, he knew a tomb awaited him; but he also knew it would not hold him. On the third day, Jesus would rise again from the dead in triumph over death itself!

When you and I face our final hour, we too can be sure that Jesus has already gone ahead of us and is waiting to receive us into his heavenly kingdom. He who has gone before us will be with us on our final journey.

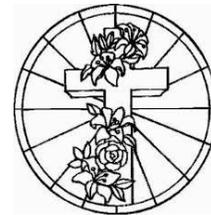
+ Pastor Ben Eder



# SUNDAY SERVER SCHEDULE

## APRIL 2017

DATE →	April 2	April 9	April 16	April 23	April 30
READER	Wes Wiers	Sue Holway	Tyrone Bryant	Gary Smith	Dooley O'Rourke
USHERS	Eric Fellner and Gary Smith	Tegwanda Alford and Tyrone Bryant	Peggy Clark and George Alessi	Mike and Diane Wuerch	Naomi George and Harvey Caldow
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Jim O'Brien	Frank Alessi	Gary Smith	Jack Hambridge	Eric Fellner
NURSERY	Ruth and Gabby O'Brien	Carol Obot	Carolyn Alessi	Peggy Clark	Linda Eder



### **When we can't find Easter**

Easter is the most joyous Christian holy day ... except when it's not. What do we do when our mood isn't what we think it "should" be? The kids are sugared up, we're juggling family gatherings (and conflicts), everyday challenges remain, and festive hymns — however rousing — fail to lift our spirits. We wonder, "What's wrong with me, that I can't seem to find Easter?"

Been there, done that. And it's okay. You're okay.

Jesus' resurrection doesn't scoop us out of our troubles, but the death-defying Christ walks through them beside us, on our own Emmaus road (Luke 24). We aren't alone. When we can't find Easter, Easter somehow finds us — if not on this designated Sunday, perhaps two days from now, or next week or mid-May. Watch for it; keep your heart open. Christ is risen indeed — and you shall be too.

—Heidi Mann



## ESTHER CIRCLE

Thanks go to Carol Obot and all the others who helped with the “Rosa Young” event. It was not only informative but we also got to meet and share fellowship time with our neighboring Lutheran Churches.

Our fundraiser, just in time for Mother’s Day, Journey of Faith Heritage Candles, is in full swing. We hope you will consider placing an order. The candles come in 8 different scents to tantalize your senses and are made right here in the USA. All of the information is in your mail boxes. Orders and money need to be in by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your support.

There are two surveys being put in the church boxes. One of the surveys is for all the ladies young and old. We would like to find out your thoughts and ideas on how to better serve the women of Pilgrim and the community. The second survey is for everyone!

We would like to host a Paint Nite, either here or in another location, depending on how many would be interested. There is a ticket cost of \$45 with \$15 of it being donated to charity of choice.

Please keep sending in Dash’s tapes, canceled stamps, and pennies. They really do make a difference.

Ruth O’Brien is hosting the April Esther Circle fellowship hour.

***There will be NO meeting in April. Have a blessed Easter.***



## COMMUNITY DINNER

The next Community Dinner will be on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 pm. Our menu is “open faced” sloppy joes, homemade macaroni and cheese, baked beans with bacon, served with applesauce, assorted desserts and beverages. (This monthly dinner is sponsored in part by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.) Come and join us for great food and fellowship!



# BLESSINGS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

Eric Alessi	Apr. 15
Melody Keef	Apr. 20
Jeanette Donnelly	Apr. 21
Adam Keef	Apr. 22
Kevin Rodgers	Apr. 25





The first Voters' Meeting of 2017 was held on March 19<sup>th</sup> after the service. Several items were discussed.

We are looking to update various things at the church, including a new outdoor sign (standard) and a new sound system. Our current projector is old and cannot handle the updated software out there so a getting new one is definitely on the "to-do" list. Thanks to Mike Weurch for researching a new copier/printer, which was purchased by Pilgrim this month. Pastor Ben says it works like a dream. (He also said that using the old copier would make anyone want to take a shower afterward!)

Our website need revamping as well. Does anyone know of a "webmaster" who can handle this?

Our Community Dinners continue to be the centerpiece of our outreach to the community. It continues to be blessed by God under the leadership of Wes Wiers, Gary Smith and those who staff the dinner in various roles.

If anyone is interested in being a reader, usher, communion assistant or nursery attendant, please contact Mike Weurch and he will add you into the scheduling process.

Our Youth Group has not taken off as we had hoped. What is needed is someone who is blessed with the "heart" and desire to rise to this opportunity. Some ideas mentioned were reviving Game Night, a Movie Night, or some kind of outing/activity outside of the church building. If you have any ideas as to what we can do to reach out to those in the community, please contact Pastor Ben or Jim O'Brien.

The Community Picnic is planned for Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. More information will be forthcoming as the date approaches.

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.

## **The Best Medicine**

Although the Bible never refers to Jesus laughing, he clearly had a sense of humor — and needed one to deal with his critics and even his disciples. James Martin, S.J., author of *Between Heaven and Mirth* (HarperOne), writes, "If we accept the idea of [Jesus] as a human being, we must accept all human attributes for him — laughing as well as suffering."

The ancient church marked the Sunday after Easter with humor and laughter to celebrate Jesus' triumph over death. Today some congregations designate their post-Easter worship as Hilarity Sunday or Bright Sunday. Faith is serious business, but that doesn't mean Christians must always be serious!



Good morning! I am happy I am here to praise the Lord with you today and tell you about myself.

I was born in South Sudan to a loving Christian Mommy and Daddy. I was close to my Daddy who died when I was 6 years old. I had no formal schooling in the Sudan. We went to church when I was younger, then things changed, a lot of fighting, many people were hurt and died. I was hurt at age 10. My family left my village and went to the city. After some years, I married.

My husband and I fled to Egypt. While there, I heard that my Mommy was sick. She died in the Sudan. After one year in Egypt, we came to the U.S. to Buffalo, New York with the help of Journey's End in November, 2001.

I knew no English when I came. I lived on the Westside, worked with Habitat for Humanity and I now work with Jericho Road. I began to look for a house. I was close to buying a house in Riverside, but it never happened. I prayed for a house. One day I was driving down Westgate Road in Kenmore and saw a sign in front of a nice house. I wrote the telephone # down. It was God's will and now I live in Kenmore!

I went to several Catholic Churches. I went to St. Paul's near my house for one year. Only one person spoke to me. I did not feel the fellowship there. When I went to the library, I saw Pilgrim's church sign and people out front. I came to the church. The people were friendly. They talked to me and invited me to Bible study. Pastor Ben welcomed me. The smaller church is good with me. I feel the Lord's presence at Pilgrim.

I thank you for all of your love and support. I am glad to be here.  
God Bless You All!

Testimony by Akuor Amanka on Sunday, March 12, 2017

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## **Forsaken For Us**

Church reformer Martin Luther considered Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46) as "the greatest words in all of Scripture," writes Timothy Keller. In *Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering* (Penguin Books), Keller notes, "Luther knew personally about what he called *Anfechtungen*, a word that means the 'assaults' that the world, the flesh and the devil make on human beings through the evils and suffering of life."

Jesus suffered *Anfechtungen* "in infinite degrees, beyond anything any other human being will ever experience," Keller writes. And he did it all for us. As Luther said, "In Christ, the God-forsaken sinner has a Savior who has taken on himself the full depths of human estrangement from God — and overcome it."

Dear Friends in Christ,

On this blessed Easter, I'd like to share one of my mom's poems on Christ's resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:4 says, "And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

***Christ is Risen! Praise the Lord!!***

In Jesus' Love,

Marilyn Schneck



**HE WALKED AWAY**

The stone was rolled away

And angels came to say –

“He walked on through the door

To show the world there's more.”

Can we begin to feel

That life can be so real?

Oh, can we comprehend

The promise of a Friend?

3/26/07 - Doris V. Neumann



**Easter's Dawn**

On the third day, the friends of Christ coming at daybreak ... found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways, they realized the new wonder; but even they hardly realized that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in a semblance of the gardener, God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but of the dawn.

—G.K. Chesterton



## **Radio Broadcast Offers Hope to Young Venezuelan Mother**

**Maria was struggling with depression when she heard a radio message produced by LHM—Venezuela that had a tremendous impact on her life.**

**Mar. 2, 2017** — Maria was born in the city of Barinas, Venezuela, and was raised in a poor family where her parents had no way of giving her a good education. When she was 16 years old, she met an older man who was serving in the military. She was immediately attracted to his good looks and his kindness towards her. Despite their difference in age, they got married a few months later and Maria was excited to finally put poverty behind her.

Two months after her marriage, Maria became pregnant and she was thrilled to be starting a family. However, to her surprise, the news about becoming a father did not please her husband. He began going out more often and drinking alcohol to excess. Each time he came home it would lead to arguments and verbal abuse directed towards Maria.

Months went by until the day of giving birth to their child arrived, and Maria found herself at home alone that day. Her neighbors drove her to the hospital where she gave birth to a baby boy. When she called her husband to tell him about their son's birth, he refused to come to the hospital to visit them. This was the final straw in their relationship; Maria decided to leave her husband and ask for a divorce.

This decision did not improve Maria's life. She became afraid of falling in love with another man (or potentially getting married again) and tried to find comfort with many different men who just made her feel lonely and empty inside. In addition, she felt like a failure as a mother and fell into a deep depression.

Maria was starting to believe that life was not worth living when one day she heard an encouraging message over the local radio station that said, "Dear God. You who are our Father, help me with this deep loneliness that I have." This message had a tremendous impact on her and she immediately called the phone number that was given at the end of the program. She got in contact with staff from **Lutheran Hour Ministries—Venezuela** and they listened to her discuss her problems and offered encouragement through their prayers and biblical teachings that greatly nourished Maria's spiritual life.

Today, Maria has an optimistic outlook on her life. "Thanks to hearing about the Good News from my brothers and sisters of Lutheran Hour Ministries, my son is blessed to now have a mother who is completely happy and devoted to God."

It has been said that more than 90% of the world's population has access to radio—and radio can cross borders and reach into the homes, workplaces, and cars of people almost anywhere in the world. This is one of the main reasons why radio continues to be an important strategy for LHM to be able to connect with the unreached in more than 50 nations around the world.

In addition to broadcasting short radio messages, **LHM—Venezuela's** evangelistic activities address everyday problems through outreach such as Christian literature, film showing and lectures, youth resources, and a Bible course aimed at connecting individuals with congregations.

# JESUS IS RISEN!

When Jesus' disciples saw that the stone was rolled away from his tomb, they knew he had risen. Make a moveable tomb to celebrate Easter.

## What you need:

- 4 pieces of paper (brown, blue, black, yellow)
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Glue stick
- Brad fastener
- Marker



## What you do:

1. Fold the brown paper in half, short side to short side. Cut along the fold. On one half, draw and cut out a large half-circle (the tomb). On the other, draw and cut out a palm-sized circle (the stone).
2. Glue the brown tomb onto the blue paper.
3. Cut a black circle (the inside of the tomb) the same size as the brown stone and glue it onto the brown tomb.
4. Place the brown stone over the black half-circle; this is the entrance. Push the brad through one edge so the stone can move from side to side.
5. Cut out a cross from the yellow paper and glue it by the tomb.
6. Write "Jesus is risen!" atop the blue paper.

**PUZZLE**

## > NEW LIFE <

How did God work through Jesus to give us new life at Easter?

*Directions: Use the puzzle pieces from the box to complete 1 Peter 1:3, NIV.*

dead	hope	resurrection	given	of	
birth	living	Christ	mercy	great	Jesus

In his [ ] [ ] he has  
[ ] us new [ ] into a  
[ ] [ ] through the  
[ ] [ ] [ ]  
[ ] from the [ ].

**1 P E T E R 1 : 3 , N I V**

Answer: In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3, NIV

**THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER IS APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>.**