


THE MESSENGER

Vermont Lutheran Church's Mission Statement:

Christians **A**ctively **R**eaching Out **E**xperiencing Christ and **S**preaching His Word

From the Interim Pastor's Desk . .



Pastor Rebecca will begin to briefly answer the submitted questions "Ask me anything....about the Bible!" Some of the questions may require months of newsletters articles and a 250 page essay to answer, but she will do her best to answer them in two pages or less. If you would like to discuss a question in person, please visit her at during office hours. Please remember some of the topics covered may be sensitive to some individuals and you may have a different perspective on it, but this forum is to get the Pastor's reflection on the question.

Ask the Pastor Anything

We have read so often in Scripture that God's greatest commandment is, "Love God, and love thy neighbor as yourself." Please explain those we so often encounter wearing crosses around their necks and Bibles in their hands while they go about discriminating against and thieving against their fellow human beings.

Plain and simple -- They are hypocrites. They are those who profess one thing and do another. Jesus comes down hard, and I mean hard, against hypocrites. In The Sermon on the Mount, he devotes much attention to them. He addresses himself to the religious elites who put on an outer show of righteousness but are inwardly unrighteous. He gives them a good roasting. *And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray at the street corners so that they may be seen by others... And whenever you fast, so not look dismal like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show others they're fasting.*

Inside this issue

- Pastor's Message.....1-2
- Highlights.....2-3
- News.....3-6
- Readings/Birthdays.....7
- ELCA, Living Lutheran & Synod...8-11
- Prayers, Legacy.....12

From the Interim Pastor's Desk . . (continued)

But this is nothing compared to a later discourse. Get a taste of this. *Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You make a new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves... Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside you are full of greed and self-indulgence. ...Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside you are full of the bones of the dead and all kinds of filth.* And it goes downhill from there.

In fact, Jesus lambasts hypocrites more than he does any other group. A close second is the hard of heart. So the lesson is to guard against hypocrisy in yourself and in others.

I have heard that the early Christians were persecuted because they practiced communion. Please explain.

Christianity first existed within the confines of Judaism. Judaism was deemed by Rome to be a *religio licita* -- a legitimate religion exempt from persecution and free to practice its faith. By around 90 CE, Judaism realized that it could not coexist with its Christian enclave and expelled Christianity from its ranks. Christianity was not deemed by Rome to be a *religio licita* and was subject to sporadic persecution for a century or two (when persecution became more widespread). One of the bases for Christianity's persecution was inflamed rumors about communion. Christianity was accused of cannibalism for eating the body of Christ. It was accused of incest for celebrating the "love feast." A big silver lining in all this was that persecution gave rise to the Christian Apologists, who attempted to make a systemic defense of Christianity of its persecutors. The Christian Apologists paved the way for the Church to produce systemic theologies that produced a thought system on which Western Culture was eventually based. As Tertullian famously stated, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Pastor Rebecca Clancy



HIGHLIGHTS (continued)



Quilt Blessing



Easter Service



Palm Sunday

BEE HIVE PROJECT

Thank you Sunday School and Confirmation for your glorious art work on the bee hives. Three hives are now resting on the stands waiting for their bee occupants to arrive! The delivery date is not scheduled. Once the bees are settled in the hives, additional painted boxes will be added to the hives for the bees to store honey. Watch for updates!

Debbie Krebs and Billy Stapel



NEWS (continued)

INREACH TEAM

One of the most important responsibilities of our church is to fill the needs of our members. We have a NEED! We are looking for five more people to be part of the In-reach Team to help plan ways to help our members during their greatest time of need. The goal is to answer the question “How can we help?” The team will organize visits to hospitalized, institutionalized, others desiring periodic visits in conjunction with the pastor and organize any additional needs our members may have during their time of need such as meals, transportation to appointments, etc. Please contact the church office if you would like be on the team to plan if you are just available to provide a visit, meal and/or transportation.



OUR NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE AT

vermontlutheran.org

Password: CARES

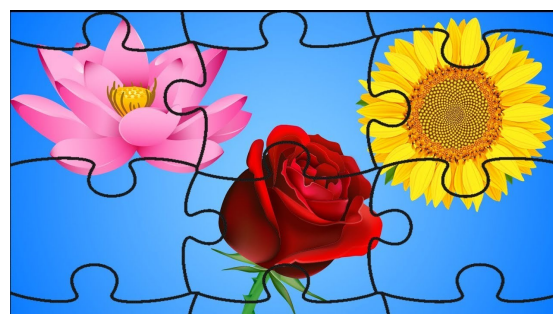
Our team is delighted to announce that our new Vermont Lutheran Church website has been launched, thanks to the amazing people and web design team behind the effort.

It looks fantastic! We now have teasers of upcoming events, news, beautiful photographs and so much more.

We'd love to hear your feedback too, so please spend some time to take a look around and share it with your friends!

The Visibility/Marketing Team

The Puzzle Library Corner April 2024 Challenge “April Puzzles bring May Flowers”



That's not how it goes. . . or is it?

Two of our avid puzzlers are taking on a 2000 piece puzzle for the month of April! The puzzle title “*Packets of Promise*” is made up of packets of flower and vegetable seeds which will come in handy when the month of May arrives. They plan to finish it during the month of April AND challenge other puzzlers to check out a puzzle from the Vermont Puzzle Library and complete it by the end of the month. It does not have to be a 2000 piece puzzle! Anyone who can show proof of completion – like a photo – to the two librarians, Klover and Adam, before the end of April will be awarded a “Packet of Promise”. So, check out the April puzzles on display and start puzzling! ENJOY!



CELEBRATE EARTH DAY—SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST

Vermont Church became a “Green Congregation” in the late 1990’s. We are stewards of God’s Creation. Worship Service at 9:30 AM focused on God’s Creation. After Worship:

- Displays in the Fellowship Hall of past, current and future stewardship initiatives
- “Green Infrastructure” development of the Prairie & Woodland
- Take a meditative hike on the Trails
- Participate in the Adopt-a-Highway pick-up along 78 and/or the cleanup of the church property



CONFIRMATION MISSION PROJECT—Heifer International

We collected \$258.97 in the month of March for a total so far of \$1,541.89. Please continue to bring your spare change to church, and throw it in the milk jar located in the Narthex. We are on our way to our new goal of \$2,000 by school year end. They will use the first \$1,000 to purchase a "Milk Menagerie". A Milk Menagerie consists of four lactating animals - a water buffalo, a heifer, and two goats -- which will be donated, along with training, to an impoverished farmer from one of the nineteen countries with which Heifer International works. A little change can make a big change.

COMMUNITY CHURCH PICNIC

SAVE THE DATE—June 15th, 2024

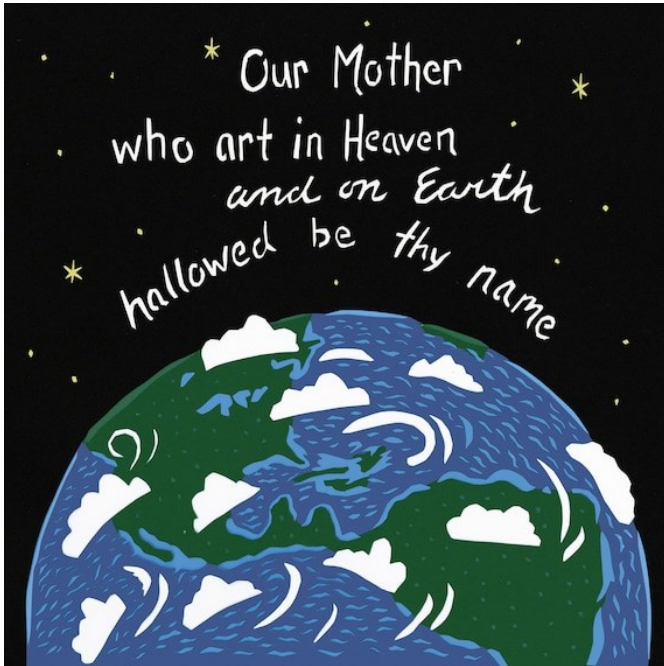


NEWS

(continued)

PARISH/FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE

We are hiring a part-time RN (preferred) or LPN licensed in Wisconsin with certification as a Faith Community Nurse (or a willingness to obtain). Minimum of one year of clinical experience. Must be compassionate and possess strong interpersonal skills. Please send questions, resume and letter of interest to: vermont_church@tds.net



EARTH DAY PRAYER

Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, Founded on the covenant of your love.

ALTAR DUTY—April

Denise Boehnen & Patty Herrling

ATTENDANCE

March 2024

3rd 64

10th 79

17th 81

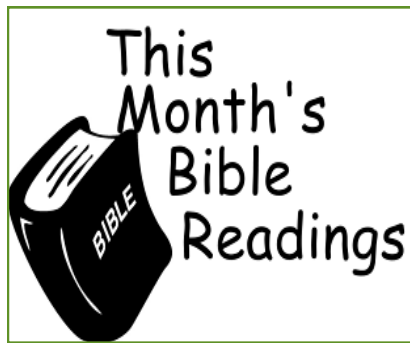
24th 71

31st 119

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

March 2024

	Actual	Budgeted	Diff.
	<u>Contributions</u>		
Monthly	\$ 15,104	\$13,047	\$ 2,057
YTD	\$ 30,762	\$40, 223	(\$9,461)
	<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Monthly	\$17,126	\$18,348	(\$1,222)
YTD	\$44,134	\$44,598	(\$463)



April 7

Eastertide

Acts 4:5-12

I John 1:1-4

John 20:19-23

April 14

Second chances

Isaiah 2:2-4

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:4-19

April 21

The Road to Emmaus

Exodus 16:13-21

Acts 9:1-6

Luke 24:13-35

April 28

Beauty

I Samuel 16:6-13

Philippians 2:1-11

John 14:25-31

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Margaret	Humphrey	April 03
Karsten	Haugen	April 05
Elliot	Lentz	April 06
Mary	Nelson	April 10
Raegan	Tigert	April 10
Janelle	Dyreson	April 12
Barb	Koch	April 12
Johanna	Friedericks	April 13
Thomas	Watkins	April 14
Brenda	Barsness	April 19
Marlene	Ludolph	April 19
Jerry	Howery	April 20
John	Syrjamaki	April 20
Noah	King	April 26
Jack	Haugen	April 28





Honeybees Provide Opportunity in Zimbabwe

Gifts of honeybees are at work in Zimbabwe, providing people with resources and training so they can follow their passions and strengthen their communities.



Enock Mavambe has always loved bees and collecting honey. But in his village of Masivamele, Zimbabwe, harvesting honey is difficult. He had to search for hives in trees and use fire to smoke out the bees, but this wasn't very effective. Sometimes he accidentally started larger fires, got stung or destroyed the entire hive. After all that, Enock usually got only a couple liters of honey.

“I never knew that my passion and hobby ... [could] be turned into a livelihood skill, a lucrative source of income in the comfort of my home.”



When Lutheran Development Services, a partner of ELCA World Hunger, established a learning center in Enock's community that taught income-generating activities such as beekeeping, Enock jumped at the opportunity.

The training showed Enock how to manage the hives properly and how to extract and process honey. “I never knew that my passion and hobby ... [could] be turned into a livelihood skill, a lucrative source of income in the comfort of my home,” says Enock.

Now a steady stream of income from selling honey, sunflowers and sorghum enables Enock to provide for his family much more efficiently, especially because his two sons can help with the beekeeping. **With his new knowledge, Enock says, he is no longer worried about his family going hungry.**



\$20

Honeybees [ELCA.org/goodgifts](https://www.elca.org/goodgifts)



GLOBAL MISSION



Right now, thanks to support from donors such as you, over 130 ELCA missionaries are at work in 41 countries. These missionaries are meeting the needs of their neighbors as pastors, teachers, health care workers, communicators and more. Most importantly, they are forming the deep relationships that connect us as a global community of faith.

The new, interactive [Global Mission Personnel directory](https://www.elca.org/assets/GM2024Directory/GM2024Directory.html) gives you the opportunity to get to know these missionaries a little better. It also allows you to see some of the ways they walk alongside our companions around the world.

<https://www.elca.org/assets/GM2024Directory/GM2024Directory.html>

SYNOD

Nature Sensory Meditation

by Deacon Judy Nolde

In creation, we can use our senses to explore the beautiful and intricate world around us and within us. Begin this meditation by sitting or standing in a space where you can be attentive to nature around you. Gather an object from nature, such as a leaf, rock or stick.

- Close your eyes and take three deep breaths. With each breath, notice the sensations in your body as you take an in-breath and an out-breath. Notice the movement of the breath through your body.
- Listen for three things you hear. Don't strain to hear, but simply notice three things you hear. Also, try not to judge the sound, but rather let the sound be as it is. Listen with ears of the heart.
- Tune into your body and notice three things you feel in your body. You might feel a warmth, tingling sensation, or a pain somewhere in your body. Spend a few moments simply being with what you feel in your body.
- Inhale deeply and notice three things you smell. Again, don't strain for any scents or judge them, but notice what comes to you.
- Pay attention to your mouth and savor three things you have tasted. You might have recently eaten or drunk something and be attentive to those tastes. If not, imagine what you would like to taste in this moment.
- Take three slow, full breaths and become aware of three things you know or intuit. Each of us has inner wisdom; what is the wisdom in you in this moment?
- Open your eyes gently and pay attention to three things you see. Spend some time gazing at three things you see, with eyes of the heart. Notice shapes, colors, symmetries.
- Touch the object you gathered close to you. Touch it slowly and mindfully noticing smooth or rough edges, holes, dents, textures, warmth.
- Lastly, listen to your body and allow one or more shapes, gestures or movements it wants to offer in response to all it has experienced in this meditation. This could be something like lifting up your arms, touching your heart, or clasping your hands in a prayer of gratitude.

Caring for the Earth as God's People

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CaringForTheEarthAsGodsPeople.pdf>



Whether on Earth Day or any other day, caring for the earth is always timely. Any time we increase our commitment to caring for the earth we show gratitude for its riches to our gracious and generous God!

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Caring for God's Creation Team
<https://scsw-elca.org/creation/>

April Reflection

by the Rev. Peter Beeson, Associate to the Bishop for Generosity

Friends,

"You are looking for Jesus... He isn't here, he's been raised from the dead." (Matthew 28:5-6)

What does resurrection look like?

This Easter we celebrate a God who died. And then rose again. Not in the way anyone would expect. His own disciples didn't recognize him. **The world changed after him.** It's worth remembering when we in the church are so quick to jump to resurrection and gloss over death. **Resurrection, redemption, changes everything.**



These early Easter readings also mark the beginning of the church of Acts, a small group of determined believers, equipped with the Holy Spirit, who set out to follow God and show Jesus' love to the world.

It begs the question, where have we seen Jesus? **Where have you witnessed the resurrected spirit of the Living God?**

As you ponder where you have encountered the risen Christ in your life, there is a children's book, titled, *Maybe God is Like That Too*. It traces the story of a young boy, living in a downtown urban area with his grandmother. As he struggles to imagine what God looks like, when he can't see God, his grandmother lists the fruit of the Spirit. **She responds that any time we witness someone practicing gentleness, kindness, patience, self-control, etc. we experience God in the world.** The rest of the story traces times during the day when the little boy notices people acting like little Christs* to one another: holding the door for someone who needs it, sharing on the playground, advocating for peace instead of war, and in the hug from his grandma. It reminds us there are many ways we can experience the ongoing redemptive work of God's Spirit.

This Easter season, may you be blessed with the courage and confidence to know God is at work in the world, calling all of us followers of Jesus to be little Christs to one another.

The Rev. Peter Beeson
Associate to the Bishop for Generosity

*Reformation 500: 50 things Luther taught that you may not know. Living Lutheran.

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2017/08/reformation-500-50-things-luther-taught-that-you-may-not-know/>

Ministry Team Updates

Church in the Wild at Bethel Horizons - May 4

Registration is now open!

The SCSW Care for Creation Team invites you to:

Church in the Wild
Saturday, May 4 from 10:00am to 1:00pm
at Bethel Horizons
(4651 Co Rd ZZ, Dodgeville, WI 53533)



Not just an outdoor church service, Church in the Wild is an invitation to **worship in the cathedral of earth and sky**. After a brief opening liturgy, we'll wander into nature individually or in small groups to see, listen, contemplate, and sense our connectedness to all living things. Then we'll regather to share how we've experienced the sacred in the creation, to "give thanks for the peace of wild things," and to join in Holy Communion with Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe. We'll conclude with fellowship at a free earth-friendly lunch prepared by Horizons Chef Cena.

Suitable for all ages and activity levels, Church in the Wild is hosted by the synod's Care for Creation team and Bethel Lutheran Church with generous financial support from the Bethel Endowment Foundation.

Click the button below to RSVP for the event - all are welcome, but we do need to know how many to expect for lunch!

RSVP for Church in the Wild

<https://scsw-elca.org/creation/>



Planet vs. Plastics

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024/>

For Earth Day 2024 on April 22nd, EARTHDAY.ORG is unwavering in our commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60% reduction in the production of ALL plastics by 2040.

Call or email

PRAYER

REQUEST to

Jane Hanson - 753-3067 - crabbyjane@hotmail.com

It is our time to build a legacy

Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund come from all walks of life and are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church, Cemetery and adjoining land. Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building, Gathering Place and 115 acres of adjacent land with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive and administer these gifts.

Our goal is to generate and maintain a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars, or more. Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve three very important purposes now and into the future:

1. Expand the cemetery and develop and maintain the adjacent land in a manner that maximizes its natural beauty and preserves its ecological importance; and,
2. Provide funds to pay property taxes on the portion of the adjacent land subject to taxes; and,
3. Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds needs of the Church.

Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who made a contribution of any amount that year.

May Newsletter
articles are due
April 25th

to Elizabeth Herrling at
vermont_church@tds.net

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Website: vermontlutheran.org

Visit Vermont's Website:

www.vermontlutheran.org

Password: CARES

Log on to see all Vermont
news and pictures!

