



The

Sanctuary

You are God's Temple

...God's Spirit Lives in You. 1 Cor. 3:15

BLESSED SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH + 1205 NORTH LINCOLN AVE. + O'FALLON, IL 62269 + 618=632-0126 + WWW.MYBSLC.ORG

Upcoming Events

MAY 2024

Mon. Apr 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Support Group 7 pm

Tues Apr 2

Quilting 930

Tues. Apr 2, 9, 16, 23 30

Jr Confirmation 4 pm

Tue. Apr 2

Youth Board 6 pm

Elders Mtg 7 pm

Wed. Apr 3, 10, 17, 24

Ladies Bible Study 10 am

Sun. Apr. 7, 14, 21, 28

Worship 930

Sun. School Adult Bible

Study 1045

Tues. Apr. 9

Church Council 7 pm

Sat. Apr. 13

Basket Guild

Tues. Apr. 16

Christian Ed 7 pm

Thurs. Apr. 18

Fellowship

Committee 4 pm

Ladies Night

Bunco—6 pm

Sun. Apr. 21

Special Voters Meeting

Call at Pastor 1230 pm

Tues. Apr 23

Stewardship Mtg 6 pm

Sun. Apr. 28

Semi annual Voters

Meeting 830 am.



Sunday, April 21, 2024

12:30 p.m.

This is a special meeting to call a new pastor to our congregation

**Semi Annual
Voter's Meeting
Sunday, April 28**

8:30 a.m.

Election of new officers and committee chairpersons



Vacation

Bible

School 2024

June 3 - June 7

Volunteers are needed

Save the dates!





Family of God, Blessed Savior Lutheran, For many years I joined Trinity Lutheran, Centralia in observing an Easter Vigil Service. I was always the pastor who led that service and gave the message. Now, for those of you who are not familiar with that term, "vigil," let me explain the term. It is described in Webster's Dictionary this way: "A watch kept, or the period of this watch; the eve of a festival...or services held on such an eve." In Centralia

their Easter Vigil was always on Saturday night, when they held weekly services. On Holy Week or Holy Saturday the church watches for the resurrection of Jesus as we contemplate Jesus' suffering and dying.

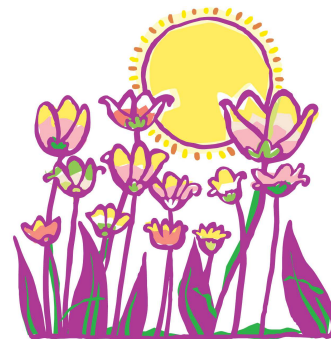
We could say that Holy Week is a time of waiting! Spring offers us an excellent illustration. It's my favorite time of the year. (No, it's not because my birthday is in May.) The cold, dark, dreary days of winter are behind. We observe the budding and blossoming of trees, bushes, and flowers. We have examples on our church grounds as we come into our Blessed Savior Church building. We anticipate more evidence of new life in nature as the weather warms up. How encouraging are the signs of spring!

And, how encouraging are the signs of Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday! Why? Because we know the rest of the story. Families who have gone through the grief of "winter's" cold, dark, dreary days know the comfort, peace and hope of those words of the Psalmist, "...**but joy comes in the morning**" (Psalm 30:5). So, even though Easter may not have arrived yet when you read this, you can know the rest of the story. It's not merely wishful thinking. It's an established fact!

The announcement of the angel at the tomb reassures us as well as the women at the tomb: "...**You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; His is not here. See the place where they laid Him.**" Christ is alive! Death has been conquered!

Easter makes our hearts beat faster. It represents hope for us: not only as we deal with death but also as we deal with life. One of my favorite Easter Hymns expresses it well: "Because He lives I can face tomorrow." Life is not always blooms and blossoms, sunshine and warmth. There are thorns and thunder in our lives. The Risen Savior is God's promise to us that neither life nor death can conquer us. Easter is hope! Easter is the certainty of God's goodness, living in our hearts and lives. "...**thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Perry Schefelker, Member and Vacancy Pastor



Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalm 30:5, NRSV



Hello Blessed Savior,

It's that time of the year again ... butter braid time! Everyone has their favorite flavors so please feel free to order from the table in the back of the church or from one of our youth. And if butter braids aren't your thing then there is also cookie dough and pizzas available. The proceeds of these things go towards helping the kids attend the National Youth Gathering 2025. We will be selling till 4/14/24. Items will be delivered to the church on Tuesday, 4/23/24. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. My email is tcmichael19@gmail.com.

Our Interim Pastor



Dear Brothers and Sisters of Blessed Savior

Praise we Him, whose love divine gives his sacred blood for wine, gives His body for the feast –Christ the victim, Christ the priest. Alleluia! “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing,” LSB #633, verse 2

As we celebrate the season of Easter, my mind is filled with hymns. Easter hymns mostly, but also one communion hymn. The hymn printed above, “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing.” The whole hymn is uplifting, but verse 2 always stands out in the mind. During Easter, we remember that Christ was the victim on Good Friday. But he wasn’t the victim in the modern sense of the word. Today we are very attuned to people being victims. A vulnerable person is taken advantage of by a con artist who receives money from the victim by claiming to be a grandson in need of fast cash. The vulnerable person is a victim. Or a child is bullied by an older child who is much bigger than the child. The child is a victim. But Jesus isn’t that kind of victim. He’s the victim of sacrifice. He’s the one who was sacrificed for the sins of the world. He gave himself –made himself vulnerable, if you will—to fully atone for your sins. He removed all your sins by being the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

But Jesus is so much more than the victim. He’s also the priest. In the Old Testament, the priests were the ones who offered the sacrifices. They performed the sacrifices by placing the lamb on the altar and killing it. They shed the blood of the victim/lamb to indicate the sinner’s need for cleansing and God’s gift of forgiveness. In a similar way, Jesus gave himself as the sacrifice for your sin. No one forced him. No one coerced him. He offered himself and performed the sacrifice because he’s in charge. He was carrying out the plan that he and the Father, along with the Holy Spirit, had decided on before the foundation of the world. Jesus is the victim and the priest. The fulfiller and the creator of God’s plan of salvation. He is man and God.

So, in the words of verse 8 of “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing,” we declare, “Father, who the crown shall give, Savior, by whose death we live, Spirit, guide through all our days: Three in One, Your name we praise. Alleluia!” Have a blessed Easter season!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Tony

Words don’t seem to be enough to express our gratitude from checking on me during the ordeal in Mexico to getting back to the States.



Thank you to Pastor Vern and Pastor Perry for your visits at the hospital to being with us when we had to remove life support.

A huge thank you from our family to all those who expressed their condolences, provided meals, hugs and many prayers during this difficult time. We are honored that you thought of us and appreciate your support.

Another huge thank you for providing a wonderful luncheon after the Service on Saturday.

What a joy to have a fabulous Church Family!
Love, The Morton Family



CARE PACKAGES

Sunday School is getting ready for our annual Care Package event. Treats and useful items will be collected, handmade cards with heartfelt notes created and finally, boxes will be eagerly filled with all the goodies! Military members stationed far from home and our college students getting ready for final exams will receive these care packages. It is a fun reminder that they are cared for and loved by Blessed Savior! Assembly will take place on Sunday, April 21 during Sunday School hour, but we are collecting items now!

Please drop CARE PACKAGE items off in Narthex on Sunday, April 7 & April 14

Items Needed:

- Rice Krispy Treats
- Small Bags of Crackers or Chips
- Fruit Snacks
- Tic Tacs
- Hot Cocoa Packets
- Microwave Popcorn
- Post-It Notes
- Gum
- Tea Bags (individually wrapped)
- Highlighter Markers
- Granola Bars



If there are any questions and/or if you know someone who would enjoy receiving a care package, please contact Ryan Moureau or Loriann Reynolds. Your help is greatly appreciated!!!

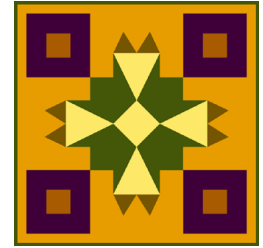
VBS HELPERS NEEDED

Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School at Blessed Savior on the evenings of June 3 – June 7. Our theme this year is SCUBA, diving into friendship with God! We are in the planning stages and we need the congregation's help. We are looking for volunteers for the following positions.

- Co-Director
- Emcee for Opening and Closing
- Kid Vid Leader
- Imagination Station Leaders
- Games Leader
- Crew Leaders
- Photographers
- Set Designers
- Decorating Helpers
- Kitchen Helpers



If you are able and willing to volunteer please contact Ryan Moureau or Loriann Reynolds. YOUR help will make it a success!!!



Join the Lutheran World Relief QUILTERS on from Apr. 2, May 7, & Jun. 11 from 9:30– 12:00 p.m. to tie quilts. (We don't actually quilt by hand. Instead we secure the layers by hand tying them.) Come and join us for a time of good ole fellowship. Hope to see you there! Mark your calendar for the 1st Tuesday of each month. If you have any fabric pieces, thin blankets, curtains, drapes, sheets, etc. you no longer need, the quilters would love to recycle them into quilts.





Fellowship Committee

In conjunction with the Elders, the Fellowship committee will be serving Easter breakfast at 7:30 AM on Easter Sunday, All are welcome to attend. We will be having Ham, and pancakes as well as various egg casseroles, etc. Sign up sheet is in the Narthex- there is still time to sign up!



Bunco will be held on 18 April at 6:00 pm. Come join us for some fun. You do not have to know how to play we will teach you, Its a great way to have fellowship with each other.

Thank you for supporting the donut fund1. Without your help, we might not be able to do this. If you would like to donate there is a basket in the Fellowship hall for donations. Thank you

Thank you everyone for supporting us. We could not do it without you Blessings,
Ginger Kieffer and Gwen Borsch



Blessed Are You

The Beatitudes receive little attention, lamented novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "But, often with tears in their eyes, [Christians] demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And, of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard [anyone] demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere."

Jesus' Beatitudes have much to teach about selflessness, mourning, peacemaking and more. Jim Berger, author of *Being Sermon on the Mount Christians*, explains that those teachings were once "viewed as a mandate for the faithful." Post-Reformation, they became less law-like and more of a "liberating directive." Berger writes, "For Jesus, being and doing are inseparable. The Sermon is at once theory and praxis. It is not enough to read it or hear it. Jesus intends it to be how we live."



- 7- Samantha Poteet O'Daniel
- 8 - Kevin Schmidt
- 9 - Jordan Colvin
- 11-Ann Lundebly, Savannah Boggs
- 13- Brianna Berens, Leah Geis,
- 14 Callie Gorney
- 15-Maddie Moureau
- 16 - Matthew Vohlken
- 17 - Pat Dalton
- 21 - Ashley Vosholler
- 23 - Kristen Lintvedt
- 25-Zachary Kinsella, Harlan Feary
- 26 - Diana Brandmeyer



- 2- Dale & Carol Schutte
- 2- William & Ellen Boswell
- 7 - Ralph & Karen Olson
- 17-Emily & Gogo Sanchez
- 21- Emily & Luis Garcia
- 27-Dennis & Donna Brockmeyer

We are sorry if your birthday or anniversary has been overlooked. Please call the church office, 632-0126 or email Nancy at nancy@myslbc.org so we may add your name to our list. Thanks for your help.

Cultivating Kindness



Kind hearts are the gardens.
Kind thoughts are the roots.
Kind words are the flowers.
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
and keep out the weeds.
Fill it with sunshine,
kind words and kind deeds.



Church Council

Council Report for 12 March 24

Pastor Tony Troup opened with a short devotional revisiting the Beatitudes (Mathew 5 VS:3-5) that give us life lessons. Confirmation class continues and one student will be confirmed on 19 May. The lady's bible study group on Wednesday mornings are just starting a study on Prayer.

Pastor Perry gave the following Report as Visitation Pastor. Wayne Kemp is back at Keystone. Cornie Paulsen has moved to St. Paul's Sr. Living Community Nursing Home, Belleville. The following members received private communion at their locations: Wayne Kemp, Cornie Paulsen, Georgia Trefftz, Laurie Tatge, Cheryl and Dean Krantz, and Jean Miller. A Vacancy Preaching list which covers through 28 April was distributed. Jeff Trefftz is pursuing membership at Blessed Savior; his mom is a member here. Pastor will meet with him. Bob Strohm is waiting another month to possibly have a cast put on. Bob Morton, after suffering a stroke, will have his life support terminated tomorrow, 13 March. Pastor Perry will be there. Keep the Morton family in your prayers.

Our Treasurer reported the church is doing well with a positive income of over \$1,000 in February. Our Sunday School is donating to Pastor Daniel who is leaving us soon.

An Easter Egg Hunt and puppet show will be 30 March. Place candy donations in the box in the Narthex. Egg stuffing is Thursday 28 March. Box assembly begins on 21 April for the annual college and military care packages. A box in the Narthex for donations will be out on 7 April. Our Vacation Bible School (VBS) taking place 3-7 June. Help by answering "yes" when asked to help or volunteer and 2) sign up your kids, grandkids, and your kids' friends to come to VBS in June!

We may be including a Children's Message in some Sunday services. Ed Brandmeyer is up for reelection for the Board of Elders at our annual Voter's Meeting on 21 April. R.J. Kinsella reported the call committee had one Zoom call interview in February and another scheduled for 14 March.

The board of Evangelism will have John Lundeby as chairman due to Pastor Perry being one of our vacancy pastors.

There are two more Lenten Wednesday Dinners on 13 March and 20 March. Our annual Easter Breakfast will be served at 7:30 Easter morning. There is a signup list in the Narthex for food to donate and ways to help.

Paint for the fellowship hall and flooring for the women's bathroom have been purchased. The flooring will be replaced after Easter because of major sub floor repair needed. After gutter replacement and painting is completed, we can apply for the depreciation portion of our insurance claim. False fire alarms have gone off numerous times causing Ed Brandmeyer to make multiple unnecessary visits to church at all hours. We now have new wiring in the upstairs Fellowship Hall for T.V. livestreaming.

All fundraisers must be approved by the Stewardship Committee. A motion was made, seconded, and passed for a Youth Group Butter Braids and Pizza fundraiser for the spring to be held 24 March to 14 April 2024. Stewardship will host Lenten dinner on 13 March.

A new livestream system for Facebook, postings on our website, and video wiring for Fellowship Hall has been set up. We can go back to using the pulpit and lectern now with the new video streaming system. A list will be put together of previous people who volunteered for readings. Pastor Daniel will be leaving in May as he has been elected to lead the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ghana.

Youth Board is planning for the National Youth Gathering 2025. The Trivia Night and Auction is 16 March with 11 tables reserved. Winter Jam Concert, 23 March, will be advertised on social media. Five kids are in the youth group.

In old business we will not participate in District Nights in O'Fallon this summer because it is for the local merchants. However, the Chamber of Commerce has invited us to participate in the city-wide picnic on the 23-24 August by providing a much-needed water and changing table station for families.

Discussion about the Media Contract will continue at the April meeting to be completed and sent out by May 2024. Council members can contact Hannah Husemann to put things on social media about one month before events. Putting ads on social media will have variable costs but will give more visibility to the events. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to spend \$34 to run Easter weekend events. We will continue discussion for Education Scholarships for Lutheran elementary students in the April meeting.

Time and Talent Surveys as well as phone calls will be used to contact potential board or committee members. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to form a nominating committee to include Gus Williams, Pastor Perry Schefelker and Dale Schutte. Contact Pastor Perry Schefelker if interested in helping.

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer and a prayer for the Morton family.

Stewardship CORNER



LCMS Stewardship Article

Whose Is It Anyway?

If you have every bought or sold a house, you are acquainted with the concept of a “title search.” Before you can sell your house, and before anyone else will feel comfortable putting down the money to buy it, you have to prove

that you really own it. So a title company looks through the public records to ensure that you bought it from the person who really owned it, who bought it from the person who really owned it before that, all the way back to the earliest records of your state, including when your state was only a territory or colony of England.

Peak into a preschool classroom during playtime and you’ll see a simplified version of this. A child starts playing with a ball, but another child says, “That’s mine: I had it first.”

You can’t understand the Seventh Commandment without understanding this concept of ownership or title. As the Small Catechism puts it:

You shall not steal. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor’s money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

Your neighbor’s possessions are *his*: you don’t have a right to take them. And likewise, your possessions are yours. Ownership and property rights are foundational to any functioning society.

But there is something deeper to know about ownership, and that is the question of who has the title and ownership *to you*? Paul says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

If you yourself are owned by God, then of course everything that you own, you really only possess by God’s leave: all of it, at bottom, belongs to Him since *you* belong to Him. For you were bought with the blood of Christ.

This notion is the foundation of all Christian stewardship. It all belongs to God. It should all be used for things that bring honor to His name, blessings to our neighbors and the extension of His kingdom.



When it Rains

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower’s intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: “Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring.” The rains will come. Whether you’re experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to his work in that area.—Janna Firestone

Trustworthy Stewards

After making people in his own image, God entrusted them with the rest of his creation. He wants us to manage well our bodies, our minds and our earthly home. Consider these stewardship quotes from Christian thinkers:

“We ourselves are not masters of our own ability and knowledge. They, like our talents and health, are a loan presented for our use. We must live as people who know that such temporary possessions are not true belongings and that we must give account for our management of them.”—Albert Schweitzer

“Our God is not a God who discards what he has made, who is defeated by sin and evil. Our God is a redeeming God, a God who is determined to reclaim his fallen world, setting it free from its enslavement to corruption and bringing it to a final state of glory.”—Douglas J. Moo, *Creation Car*

SOMETHING OLD, Something New

Use scrap paper to fuel new growth and make a gift that keeps on giving.

What you need:

- Scrap paper
- Water
- Herb or flower seeds
- Blender
- Strainer
- Cookie sheet
- Towel
- Adult help



What you do:

1. Tear the scrap paper into strips and place in a bowl. Cover the paper with water and let it soak overnight.
2. Pour the mixture into a blender and blend about 10 seconds.
3. Strain and squeeze the paper pulp to remove excess water. Place in a bowl.
4. Sprinkle seeds over the pulp and mix to incorporate them into the pulp.
5. Shape the pulp into a flat layer on the cookie sheet. Use a towel to soak up excess water. Allow the paper to dry completely.
6. Tear paper into shapes or fold into a card. You can plant the paper directly into soil. Water it and then watch your plants grow!




SUNRISE SURPRISE

The hidden surprise in these sweet rolls hints at the reason behind Easter's joy.

What you need:

- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 10 uncooked frozen rolls, thawed
- 10 large marshmallows
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup melted butter
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Grease a round baking dish. Sprinkle pecans on the bottom.
2. Flatten each roll. Place a marshmallow in the center, wrap dough around it and pinch edges together.
3. Combine sugar and cinnamon. Dip each roll into melted butter and coat with cinnamon-sugar. Place in pan, seam side down.
4. Sprinkle brown sugar and remaining butter over rolls. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise 30 minutes.
5. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Cool in pan.
6. As you bite into a roll, you'll see the marshmallow has melted, leaving an empty center — just like Jesus' empty tomb!

Good news flags

Use batik, a unique fabric-dyeing method, to create flags celebrating the good news of Christ's resurrection.



What you need:

- Colored chalk
- White linen fabric
- Washable gel glue
- Acrylic craft paint
- Textile medium
- Paintbrushes

What you do:

1. Cut fabric to the desired size and shape. Set it on a flat, protected surface. With chalk, lightly sketch an Easter design or message.
2. Completely cover the chalk lines with gel glue. Let dry.
3. Mix equal parts paint and textile medium. Paint the flag with that mixture, which makes paint permanent. Let dry.
4. Soak the dried fabric in warm water a few minutes. Then gently peel away the glue to reveal the unpainted areas. Lay flat to dry.
5. Hang the flags and celebrate!

Superimposed Love

Maybe you've heard how salvation is like a total solar eclipse: God doesn't see our sins because Jesus' holiness covers them completely. Or maybe you've heard how trials can cause an "eclipse of faith."

At WorldChallenge.org, Pastor Gary Wilkerson explains that in Greek, *eclipse* means "I am absent" or "I cease to exist," because people once thought the gods temporarily extinguished the sun. "For Christians, a 'spiritual eclipse' is a dark hour when God seems to be absent from our lives," Wilkerson writes.

Wilkerson points to Peter being sifted like wheat, Elijah and Jeremiah facing extreme discouragement, and David collapsing morally. Amid Satan's attacks, "God seems completely absent," writes the pastor. "In that dark moment of eclipse, the devil has created such chaos we can't possibly see a way out." During times of testing, Christians must cry out to God and trust his faithfulness.

Completing the eclipse analogy, Wilkerson shares Titus 3:4, the "love of God our Savior appeared" (NIV). The Greek meaning of *appeared* here is *superimposed*, he writes. God looks on our fraught-filled times of eclipse and "superimposes his divine love over us."

Following the 'Perfect Fool'

Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the "foolishness of God" (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, "The life you save may be your own."

"That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell," wrote Buechner. "What God says, on the other hand, is 'The life you save is the life you lose.' In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love's sake is a life worth living."

Buechner continued, "To bring his point home, God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of [human] wisdom, he was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion."

Keep on Shining

Charles W. Naylor (1874-1950) was a traveling evangelist until misfortune struck. First a tentpole fell on him as he prepared for a meeting. A year later, a bus accident left him partially paralyzed.

Despite experiencing chronic pain, Naylor became a prolific author and hymnist, dictating almost 150 songs. He often wrote about God's loving care amid adversity. One of his hymns begins:

When the winds of persecution blow,
When the streams of hatred tow'rd you flow,
When your foes in number seem to grow,
Just keep on shining.

"God's comfort in our times of sorrow is not an imaginary thing," Naylor wrote. "It can be so real that it is a balm for our wounded spirits. Having passed through the experience more than once, [I know] how real and vital and sustaining the comfort of God can be."

Sharing the Load

In 1969 the Hollies released "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." Do you know the story behind that song title?

Fifty years earlier in Omaha, Nebraska, a boy with polio was abandoned at Father Flanagan's Home for Boys, predecessor to the Boys Town organization. Soon several older residents started carrying young Howard — with his heavy leg braces — especially up stairs. Father Flanagan once saw an older boy, Reuben, doing this and asked if it was hard work. Reuben replied, "He ain't heavy, Father. He's my brother." Years later, these words and the image of one person carrying another became the Boys Town brand.

All of us have been "carried" at some point, and we've likely "carried" someone else. The Hollies' song declares: "His welfare is my concern." Jesus said it this way: "Love your neighbor as yourself." The load isn't too heavy to bear because Jesus himself is always carrying us.

Faith is The Key

In April of 1521, a monk named Martin Luther was put on trial by the Roman Catholic Church. He had been severely critical of the pope, questioning the validity of some of the sacraments and denouncing church corruption. ...

At this trial, Luther was convicted of heresy. Anyone caught following him was to be condemned. But Luther and his followers were not crushed — they went on to lead the Protestant Reformation, the movement we commemorate today. We can be grateful that Luther took a stand for what he believed in and worked tirelessly to bring the word of God to common people, so that they could develop deeper faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith was the key to Luther. In his own study and translation of the Bible, he discovered that faith is essential to an everlasting relationship with God. "We are saved by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ," he proclaimed. Faith is the attitude that enables us to hang on to Christ, according to Luther; it is the way we gain access to the saving grace of God. Faith is best defined as "trust," he said; it is a willingness to rely on Jesus through all the challenges of life. —Homiletics

Holy Hilarity!

More churches lately have been resurrecting (pardon the pun!) the early-church tradition of celebrating the second Sunday of Easter as Holy Humor Sunday, affirming the season's joy. Need some jokes for April 7? Try these:

Easter is the only time when it's perfectly safe to put all your eggs in one basket.

Knock knock. *Who's there?* Hatch. *Hatch who?* God bless you!

What should you do after eating so many Easter treats? *Eggs-ercise!*

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke? *It might crack up!*

An irate subscriber called the newspaper, demanding to know where her Sunday edition was. "Ma'am," said the employee, "today is Saturday.

The Sunday paper isn't delivered until Sunday." After a brief pause, the caller spoke with a ray of recognition: "So *that's* why no one was in church today."

Mirth upon the earth

On April 1, you may well have a joke or two played on you. If so, enjoy the moment. Laugh, even if the joke is on you.

Christians have great cause for laughter on a daily basis. We can laugh because we know that no matter how much tragedy we see or may suffer personally, we have the assurance that God can turn it all around and bring great good out of evil.

The proof of that, for Christians, is Jesus' resurrection. —Charles Ferrell

Be an April Fool

English essayist and poet Charles Lamb (1775-1834) once joked, "Here cometh April again, and as far as I can see the world hath more fools than ever."

April Fools' Day is best known as a day for practical jokes, but it can be used in more beneficial ways. It can be a day of faith and fun - a day to thank God for the joyous times of life, for the days of laughter, for funny stories, for the antics of children and for other things that bring smiles to our faces.

There is opportunity for laughter every day. Laugh! Laugh heartily and often. You will find healing in mirth and levity. And remember, "He who sits in the heavens laughs ..." (Psalms 2:4, NRSV).

Fools for Christ

April Fools' Day isn't a religious holiday, though it may date to Pope Gregory XIII and his new calendar. In 1582, he shifted New Year's Day from April to January, and people who didn't believe the change were called April fools.

April Fools' Day may also be connected to the lightheartedness that comes with warmer weather, as well as to medieval Christian festivals that involved pranks, disguises and a temporarily inverted social order.

Yet, in Scripture, such reversal characterizes the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, St. Paul writes that the gospel seems foolish to people who don't know Christ, that God uses the "foolishness of our proclamation" to offer salvation to all and that God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Jesus "foolishly" inverted the social order, saying the last will be first and the first, last.

So if on April 1 — and every day — we live as "fools for Christ," we're precisely what he calls us to be!



TRUST IN THE LORD.

PROVERBS 3:5

