

# FAITH NEWSLETTER

April / May 2012

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Dear Friends in Christ,

As you read this newsletter, Lent will be drawing to a close and Easter will be beginning.

Recently, I've been thinking a lot about how we celebrate Lent and Easter. It seems like Lent is a bigger deal than Easter. We have special services during Lent. We do extra devotions during Lent. Some people give things up or change their lifestyle during Lent.

This is odd, because Lent is just a time to get ready for Easter. Lent is not an end in itself, but preparation for something bigger and better. Lent is only 40 days long, while Easter is 50 days. During Lent we set aside our Alleluias and the Hymn of Praise, but they come back in their fullness at Eastertime. Lent is about Jesus' suffering and death, but Easter is about His resurrection and life. Lent should not be the big deal. Easter should be the big deal.

Sometimes I've wondered if we shouldn't change things around. Why don't we have special devotions during the Easter season, focusing on the Resurrection and New Life we have in Jesus Christ? Why don't we have special midweek services during the Easter season to praise our Risen Lord and Savior? Instead of spending so much time on sin and suffering, shouldn't we focus more on joy and new life?

Lent and Easter obviously go together. We don't have one without the other. But sometimes I think we spend so much spiritual energy on Lent and Holy Week that we're exhausted by the time Easter finally arrives.

This year, don't let your spiritual life drop off during Easter. As spring time brings all sorts of activities and busyness, don't forget about rejoicing in the good news of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

One thing that will be new during Easter this year is that I will be taking some time off to complete my studies from April 16-May 20. The Rev. Dan Gensch will be your pastor for these few weeks. Be sure to read further in the newsletter and ask questions if you have any concerns.

Although you'll be seeing less of me in the next few weeks, stay faithful in your worship, your service, your giving, and I'll be back with you soon.

God's Blessings,

**Pastor Birkholz**



*Alleluia! He is Risen Indeed!*

## **Frequently Asked Questions on Pastor's Sabbatical:**

*At the Voters' Meeting on March 18, the congregation approved a Sabbatical for Pastor Birkholz. Hopefully this will address any questions you might have. If not, please contact Pastor or an elder.*

### **What's a Sabbatical?**

A Sabbatical is a scheduled time off, often used to work on special projects.

### **What will Pastor be doing?**

Pastor began working on a PhD degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in August, 2005. Although he has completed most of the requirements for the degree, he still needs to finish writing his dissertation. Most of his time will be spent in local libraries doing research and writing this paper. For more about the topic Pastor is studying, please come to Bible Class on Sunday, April 15.

### **How long will the Sabbatical last?**

The Sabbatical will last a total of three months, taken in three one month segments.

### **When will the first segment be?**

The first segment will be from April 16 – May 20. The dates for the second and third segments have yet to be determined.

### **Who will fill in during this time?**

Pastor Dan Gensch, recently retired from St. Paul, Oak Lawn, has graciously agreed to serve while Pastor Birkholz is on Sabbatical. You will have an opportunity to meet Pastor Gensch on Sunday, April 15.

### **What will Pastor Gensch be responsible for?**

Pastor Gensch will handle all the day-to-day responsibilities of the pastor. He will preach and preside at services on Sundays. He will teach all the classes and visit the sick and shut-ins. He is an experienced pastor and will be able to take care of any pastoral needs you may have.

### **What if there's an emergency?**

If there is a true emergency (a matter of life or death), please don't hesitate to call Pastor Birkholz, if you would like him to visit.

### **What happens when Pastor Birkholz finishes his degree?**

Pastor has no plans to leave Faith. He is not and will not be seeking any other position. This Sabbatical will simply allow him to complete his degree and be able to focus more on congregational ministry, caring for his family, and other scholarly projects he may wish to undertake.

# In and Around Faith Church

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## Ladies Aid

Faith ladies work hard to help provide for special interests of our church. They spread good will while spreading God's word. Here is a sampling of the many things the Ladies have provided.

We yearly sponsor a Seminarian, donated to each special project, bought new carpeting for the church and parsonage, bought fans for the parsonage, helped pay for the modernizing of the parsonage kitchen and parish hall bathrooms, and have purchased new robes for our Pastor to wear during our special services. We also paid for the blinds in the parish hall and parsonage. These are only a few of the wonderful things our ladies have done.

With the help of the Ladies Aid our church budget has been able to concentrate on church matters and keep us afloat. As you know our money comes from our fund-raisers during the year. This year the Rummage sale will be held Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM.

Of course we are urging you to donate used items anytime after April 8<sup>th</sup>. We are also seeking your help on Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM to 11 AM and Friday April 27<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM to 11 AM and 6 PM to 8 PM. for setting up of rummage items. On the day of the sale Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM **we will need many helpers to box unsold items** for pickup by a vendor.

***Remember: For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10***

Our April meeting has been changed to April 12<sup>th</sup>. We will meet May 5<sup>th</sup> for our Ice Cream Social. We meet at 6:30 PM in the Parish Hall. All Ladies are invited.

May the Love of our Risen Savior be with you.

Kathleen Nowak

## VBS

Come one, Come All!

June 11<sup>th</sup> - June 15<sup>th</sup> 9:30 AM - 12:00 AM.

We will embark on an Amazing Desert Journey with Jesus. We will learn about God's plan to rescue us from sin and death through His Son, Jesus, who even now is preparing a heavenly home for us and all who believe. We will hear accounts of God's forgiveness, mercy, and salvation from Scripture, and we will begin to relate these Bible truths to our own life of faith now and for eternity.

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## Easter Eggstravaganza

Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

Please invite all the young people you know, ages 12 and under, to join us in celebrating the joy of Jesus' resurrection and the new life we have through Him. Our program includes crafts, games, snacks, an Easter egg hunt, and of course the message of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

If you are available to help with this event, please sign up in the church narthex.

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## Evening with Jesus

Thursday April 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

Our Easter celebration continues as we discover what Jesus' resurrection means for us.

May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. (Please Note Date)

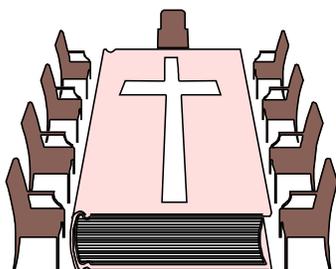
We'll wrap up the year by talking about heaven and Jesus' return on the Last Day. Our closing program will be at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. All members of Faith are invited to come for the closing program.

# Schedule of April 2012 / May 2012 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>April Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
5	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>	
	7:00 PM	Worship / Communion
6	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>	
	3:00 PM	Worship
	7:00 PM	Worship
7	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
8	<b>EASTER SUNDAY</b>	
	7:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	8:15 AM	Easter breakfast
	9:00 AM	Easter breakfast
	10:00 AM	Worship / Communion
15	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
21	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
22	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
29	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## Weekly Meetings

Bible Study	Fri. - 11:00 AM
Confirmation Class	Thurs. - 3:30 PM
Evening w/Jesus	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs. - 6:00 PM
Family Night	1 <sup>st</sup> Fri. - 6:00 PM
AA Groups	Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM
	Sat. - 8:00 AM
Adventure	1 <sup>st</sup> Sun. - 7:00 PM
ALANON	Tue. - 7:30 PM
Barnabas Christian Assembly	Sun. - 12:00 PM
	Wed. - 6:30 PM



<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>May Event</u>
5	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
6	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
13	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
19	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
20	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
27	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## New Members:

Mrs. Cheri Hendler has joined our congregation by transfer from Hope Lutheran Church in Park Forest, Illinois. Cheri is a Senior Addictions Counselor at the South Suburban Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse in Hazel Crest. She became a Christian and was baptized when she was in college through the work of Campus Crusade for Christ. After moving to Chicago to study at Moody Bible Institute, she later joined the Salvation Army, until eventually joining the Lutheran Church with her husband, Jim. Jim received pastoral care from Pastor Birkholz until his death in June, 2010. Cheri lives in Park Forest and has three adult children. Her son Dan lives in the Northern Suburbs, and often joins her for worship at Faith.

## The Christian Funeral: Proclaiming Jesus' Resurrection

*Saturday, June 2, 10:00 AM.*

This special seminar will explore the rites used when a faithful Christian dies, from the wake and prayer service at the funeral home, to the funeral at the church, and the committal service at the cemetery. This is an opportunity both to learn why we do things the way we do, and also to make plans for your funeral, or the funeral of a loved one, if you wish.

# April / May Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

## April Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

**April 1** Ed Neaves  
Bob Green  
Mary Slepski  
Howard Johnson

**April 8** **7:00 AM**  
Richard Clark  
Bill Weems  
Alden Ketchum  
Ray Bennett

**10:00 AM**  
Frank Oslakovic  
Gene Osmanski  
Glen Werth  
Howard Johnson

**April 15** Ed Neaves  
Bob Green  
Nick Trojanowski  
Mark Trojanowski

**April 22** Bill Weems  
Richard Clark  
A.J. Bray  
Ray Bennett

**April 29** Glen Werth  
Frank Oslakovic  
Richard Clark  
Howard Johnson

## Lenten Worship

**April 5** **7:00 PM**  
Bill Weems  
Glen Werth  
Ed Neaves  
Mary Slepski

**April 6** **3:00 PM**  
Alden Ketchum  
Howard Johnson  
Bob Green  
Richard Clark

**7:00 PM**  
Frank Oslakovic  
Gene Osmanski  
Ed Neaves  
Ray Bennett

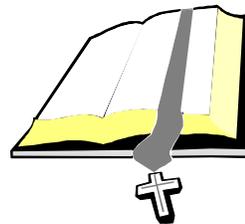
## May Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

**May 6** Gene Osmanski  
Ed Neaves  
Mary Slepski  
A.J. Bray

**May 13** Bob Green  
Bill Weems  
Mark Trojanowski  
Nick Trojanowski

**May 20** Alden Ketchum  
Bill Weems  
Frank Oslakovic  
Howard Johnson

**May 27** Gene Osmanski  
Richard Clark  
Howard Johnson  
Ray Bennett



## Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

**April 1** Ed Neaves

**April 8** Bill Weems 7:00 AM  
Gene Osmanski 10:00 AM

**April 15** Mark Trojanowski

**April 22** Ray Bennett

**April 29** Debbie Hockgesang

**May 6** Ed Neaves

**May 13** Nick Trojanowski

**May 20** Ray Bennett

**May 27** Gene Osmanski

# Holy Week Services

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## Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday: Responsive Prayer at 12:00p

These brief prayer services include a reading from the Passion of Our Lord, and time to pray and meditate on God's Word. In contrast to the services later in the week, these are much simpler and more reflective.

## Maundy Thursday Divine Service at 7:00p

We begin with corporate confession and forgiveness, with the opportunity to receive individual absolution at the altar. The service continues with the service of the Word and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It concludes with the stripping of the altar as Psalm 22 is sung.

## Good Friday Chief Service at 3:00p

Held at the hour of Jesus' death, this service uses St. John's passion account and the hymn "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" to focus our thoughts on Jesus' suffering and death. This service also includes the procession of the cross with the reproaches, as well as the bidding prayer.

## Tenebrae Vespers at 7:00p

A service of shadows and darkness, this service includes the singing of several psalms as the candles on the altar are gradually extinguished and the sanctuary lights are lowered. This is a more solemn service as we reflect on the death of our Lord.

## Easter Sunday Sunrise Service at 7:00a

This service begins in silence and darkness, but quickly moves to the bright joy of Jesus' Resurrection.

Celebration Service at 10:00a  
Join us as we rejoice in the new life and hope we have in Jesus' victory over death and the grave.

## Private Confession and Forgiveness

The best way to prepare to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection is through private confession and forgiveness. Here you have the opportunity to confess any sins that have been troubling you, and hear God's Words of forgiveness spoken to you. All confessions remain strictly confidential. There is no need for an appointment, just come to the church during one of the time slots indicated below:

**Tuesday, April 3, 7:00p - 8:00p**  
**Wednesday, April 4, 12:30p - 1:30p**

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## Picnic

Please join us for our annual picnic on Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM.

We will have our regular worship service at church at 9:00 AM. There will be a modified service at the picnic. Please bring a dish for the common table and a \$5 wrapped gift if you wish to play bingo. Hot dogs and soda are provided.

*Note:* Our venue this year is the covered pavilion on the North side of 103<sup>rd</sup> St. approximately 2 blocks West of Central Ave. The change was required due to ongoing renovation of the pavilion at our usual site.