

# FAITH NEWSLETTER

April 2014 / May 2014

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Dear Friends,

When some people hear the word “Stewardship”, they want to run away screaming. Most folks recognize “Stewardship” as church-speak for “Give us money.” As soon as you start talking about money, people turn you off and stop listening. I’ve talked to many people over the years who have left churches because they got the impression that the church only wanted their money.

Here’s the problem. There are two typical approaches to talking about stewardship:

On the one hand, there’s the guilt trip. The pastor talks about everything that God has given to you, and then tells you that now it’s time for you to give something to God. He might say things like, “God gave you everything that you have. Jesus gave His life on the cross for you. What are you willing to give to God?” This is a problem because it makes it seem like God’s gifts are conditional, that you are obligated to repay Him. We know that God gives us His gifts freely with no strings attached. He doesn’t expect anything in return.

On the other hand, there are wild promises. These are the classics employed by the late night televangelists. “Are you sick? Do you have financial problems? Are you depressed? All you have to do is send me money and all your problems will be fixed. God will bless you beyond your wildest dreams, if you just contribute to my ministry.” This is a problem, too. It doesn’t work this way. There’s no guaranteed way to get a blessing from God. You can’t slip God a twenty and hope for a blessing. There are generous people who suffer and stingy people who don’t. There’s no connection between giving and material benefits.

So what’s the answer? How do we talk about Stewardship in a way that uses neither guilt nor wild promises? We can’t just ignore the issue. Jesus has lots to say about how to properly use our money and possessions.

Our Synod has recognized that we need to develop more gospel-centered resources for individuals and congregations to use in the area of Stewardship. I’ve been asked to help with this process and to serve as a representative of our district to a national conference in St. Louis at the end of May.

Here’s where you come in. I’ve been asked to help test some new materials on Stewardship, and I need you to be my “guinea pigs.” On April 6 and 13 during the Bible Study hour (10:15-11:15a) we’ll be trying out some of these new materials and I will need your feedback. Are they easy enough to understand, or should they be more challenging? Do they apply to you and your situation in life, or do you have a hard time relating to them? What sort of information is left out and should be added?

This is your opportunity to help shape the way that we talk about Stewardship in a way that is faithful to our Lord’s Word and helpful for the way that you think and act. Please plan to be a part of this special conversation on April 6 and 13.

Thanks in advance,

Pastor Birkholz

# In and Around Faith Church

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## Holy Week Services

### **Palm Sunday – April 13, 9:00 AM**

Holy Week begins with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with joy and celebration. The shouts of "Hosanna" quickly turn to "Crucify" as we hand Jesus over to be executed. Palm Sunday follows this journey with a procession to begin the service, as well as a responsive reading of St. Matthew's Passion.

### **Maundy Thursday – April 17, 7:00 PM**

Our service begins with reconciliation, as the Lord forgives our sins and we forgive one another, using the rite of corporate confession and forgiveness. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper, the amazing gift given to us by Jesus on the night when He was betrayed. The service concludes with the stripping of the altar as Psalm 22 is sung.

### **Good Friday: Chief Service –**

**April 18, 3:00 PM**

In this service we hear John's account of Jesus' suffering a death, interspersed with verses of "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded". We also watch the procession of the cross as we sing, "Lamb of God, Pure and Holy".

### **Good Friday: Tenebrae Vespers –**

**April 18, 7:00 PM**

This is the service of shadows and darkness. The lights are dimmed and candles are extinguished as we remember the darkness of Jesus' death.

### **Easter Vigil – April 19, 7:00 PM**

Our celebration of our Lord's Resurrection begins on Saturday evening with a new fire and the lighting of the new Paschal Candle. We process with candles into the church to hear once more the great stories of the Old Testament. The sanctuary is lit as we hear the good news of the resurrection and we conclude with our Lord's body and blood.

### **Easter Sunday – April 20, 9:00 AM**

We continue our celebration on Sunday with a festival divine service, where our joy overflows in songs and hymns of praise and we join in the feast of victory at the Lord's Table.

## Confession and Forgiveness

We prepare for our celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection by examining ourselves and looking to the Lord for forgiveness. Private confession and absolution will be available on Tuesday, April 15th from 1:30-3:00 PM or on Wednesday, April 16th from 7:30-9:00 PM, or by appointment.

## Easter Breakfast

Our Easter Breakfast will be at 8:00 AM again this year, on Sunday, April 20. There is no cost for the breakfast, but a freewill offering will be received. There are also plans to have Faith's renowned "Amen Singers" entertain our guests. We will be looking for donations of food items for the breakfast, so watch for a sign-up sheet in the coming weeks. Easter bread will also be available for purchase.

## Easter Eggstravaganza

Our Children's Easter event continues to draw families from the neighborhood to celebrate our Lord's Death and Resurrection. The Eggstravaganza is held on Saturday, April 19 at 2:00 PM. We'll need help setting up, working with the children, and then cleaning up afterwards. Please consider inviting any young people you know to come to Faith for this event. There is no charge to participate.

## Ladies Aid

Our next meeting will be April 3rd at 6:30 PM. We will be making final arrangements for the Rummage Sale and will also play bingo after the meeting. We will have an ice cream social at the May 1st meeting. Please join us.

Our annual Rummage / Bake Sale is Sat. April 12th, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. We are in need of helpers for setting up tables Sun. the 6th after Bible class, Thurs. the 10th at 9 -11 AM, Fri. the 11th at 9-11 AM and 6-7 PM and of course Sat. during and after the sale for clean-up. Please consider helping in whatever capacity you can. Everyone is welcome. Thank you in advance.

# Schedule of April / May 2014 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>April Event</u>
2	7:00 PM	Lenten Worship
5	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
6	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
9	7:00 PM	Lenten Worship
13	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
17	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday Worship / Communion
18	3:00 PM	Good Friday Worship
	7:00 PM	Good Friday Worship
19	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
19	7:00 PM	Easter Vigil Worship / Communion
20	9:00 AM	Easter Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
27	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## Weekly Meetings

Sunday School	First Sunday – 10:15 AM
Bible Study	Fri. - 11:00 AM
Confirmation Class	Thurs. - 3:30 PM
Evening w/Jesus	3rd Thurs. - 6:00 PM
AA Groups	Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM
	Sat. - 8:00 AM
Alanon	Tue. - 7:30 PM

## Hymn of the Month

### He's Risen, He's Risen (# 480)

C.F.W. Walther was the first president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He was also a pastor serving four congregations, a seminary president, and chief editor of both a newsletter and a theological journal. He wrote several very important books and worked hard to build connections with other Lutherans here in America and overseas. Somehow he also found time to write a few hymns, and this is one of them. "He's Risen, He's Risen" captures the joy and triumph of Jesus and His people over sin death and Satan. It calls us to join in singing praise to our God for His glorious victory, which is ours in Jesus Christ.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>May Event</u>
3	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
4	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
11	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Congregation Meeting
17	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
18	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
25	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## Vacation Bible School

This year's VBS will be June 16-20 from 9:30AM-noon. Our theme is "River of Life." We'll hear about how God used water to bring life to His people in the Scriptures, and continues to bless us through our baptism of water and the Spirit. All offerings will go for the work of Lutheran Heritage Foundation to provide Spanish language Bibles and Small Catechisms to children in Latin America.

Here's how you can help:

1. Pray for the students and the volunteers, that together we experience the love of Jesus at work.
2. Start thinking about young people you can invite to VBS. If there's anyone you would like to add to the contact list, please submit their information to the church office.
3. We'll need plenty of volunteers. If you've got the time, we'll find something you can do. Opportunities include helping with registration, serving refreshments, making crafts, playing games, and teaching the Bible stories.
4. We'll also be looking for donations of refreshments and items for our craft projects. Watch for more information in the weeks to come.

We're also planning to set up for VBS on Sunday, June 15th. We will also have a time set aside on that day for an Open House, if parents want to bring their kids for registration and to meet their teachers. For more information, please contact Amberleigh Birkholz, (708) 857-7256.

# April / May Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

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## April Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

- Apr. 6** Alden Ketchum  
Ed Neaves  
Ray Bennett  
Howard Johnson
- Apr. 13** Frank Oslakovic  
Richard Clark  
Katie Kampenga  
Mike Kampenga
- Apr. 20** Gene Osmanski  
Bob Green  
Richard Clark  
Howard Johnson
- Apr. 27** Alden Ketchum  
Ed Neaves  
Nick Trojanowski  
Mark Trojanowski

## Lenten Worship 7:00 PM

- Apr. 2** Frank Oslakovic  
Ed Neaves
- Apr. 9** Alden Ketchum  
Bob Green
- Apr. 17** Gene Osmanski  
Richard Clark  
Howard Johnson  
Ed Neaves
- Apr. 18** **Good Friday 3:00 P.M.**  
Alden Ketchum  
Bob Green  
**Good Friday 7:00 P.M.**  
Frank Oslakovic  
Richard Clark
- Apr. 19** **Easter Vigil 7:00 P.M.**  
Ed Neaves  
Gene Osmanski  
Richard Clark  
Howard Johnson

## May Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

- May 4** Frank Oslakovic  
Richard Clark  
Ray Bennett  
Mary Slepki
- May 11** Gene Osmanski  
Bob Green  
Nick Trojanowski  
Mark Trojanowski
- May 18** Ed Neaves  
Alden Ketchum  
Mike Kampenga  
Katie Kampenga
- May 25** Richard Clark  
Gene Osmanski  
Howard Johnson  
Ray Bennett

## Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

- Apr. 6** Ray Bennett
- Apr. 13** Katie Kampenga
- Apr. 20** Mark Trojanowski
- Apr. 27** Ed Neaves
- May 4** Debbie Hochgesang
- May 11** Gene Osmanski
- May 18** Nick Trojanowski
- May 25** Mike Kampenga

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## Volunteer Opportunity

Are you looking to do some good? Mt. Greenwood Lutheran Church is partnering with Blue Cap Services in Blue Island to work with developmentally disabled adults. They have started meet on Tuesday evenings at Mt. Greenwood Lutheran to help bring the Gospel to these special people. If you're interested in helping out, chat with Howard Johnson, or contact Pastor Vician at (773) 445-6080.

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# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Our anniversary celebration is only a year away. On April 12, 1940 our congregation was officially established. Thankfully April 12 falls on a Sunday in 2015, so that will be the date for our main celebration. We will also have many other special events leading up to next April. We're going to need everyone to pitch in to make this a special year.

## **Here's what we need:**

**Photos and other mementoes** from your time at Faith. Just bring them to the church office. We'll make copies and return your originals.

**Stories and Memories** of your time at Faith. They can be from fifty years ago or five years ago. It doesn't make a difference. Think of special people or events that you particularly remember. You can write them out or talk to Pastor or Donna and we'll help.

**Names and contact information** of former members or friends of the congregation who might be interested in joining in our celebrations or adding their memories.

**Time to serve on our Anniversary Committee.** We'll start meeting after Easter and we're looking for people who like to plan celebrations, and can help us involve as many congregational members as possible. If that sounds like you, contact Pastor or Ed Neaves for more information.

**Thanks be to God for His many blessing to us through this congregation for nearly 75 years!**

