

[The angel] said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here." (Mark 16:6, ESV)

The Apostle Paul writes, *"Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too [will] walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:4, ESV)

Baseball season is starting soon. Spring training games are going on right now, and the regular season starts on March 28th (which happens to be Maundy Thursday this year). So the other day, I was checking out the baseball news on the ESPN website, and a headline caught my attention. It said that a former Major League Baseball player had just passed away. He was a pitcher named Jose DeLeon.

I knew the name, because he had played five of his thirteen seasons with the Chicago White Sox. He had a mediocre career, not particularly good, but not particularly bad either. But the thing that caught my eye in the headline was at the very end. It said that DeLeon had passed away "at the age of 63." That struck me because, in September of this year, I will celebrate my 63rd birthday. I feel like I still have a lot of years left in this world. But when I see my own age in the death notice of another person, it always makes me pause and think about how brief our life in this world really is.

That's why the Easter story becomes more important for me every year. I am a person who rarely reads a book a second time. Once I know how the story ends, I'm done with it. I'm ready to move on to something else. But the Easter story is one that I love to hear over and over and over again. I know the ending so well. I know that the tomb is empty. I know that Jesus is alive. But I want to hear it again. I want to hear the angel say, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here."

I love to hear that familiar story because it is just as relevant to us, in our day, as it was to those who first heard it, almost two thousand years ago. It is relevant because every one of us will someday be like Jose DeLeon. Every one of us will die in this world. And the question is, "What happens next?" The Easter story gives us the answer. Paul says, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too [will] walk in newness of life."

That is what the Easter story means for me. That is what it means for all of us. If we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we don't need to be afraid to die in this world. We can live in the promise that our time on earth is just the beginning of our story. There is so much more to come. We have a joyful eternal life waiting for us in heaven. And when we get there, we will be welcomed with open arms by Jesus, the one who made it all possible. That is a story that never gets old!

Pastor Shields

Here is a prayer that we will use on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings throughout the season of Lent:

Father in heaven, as we walk together, on the road to the cross, during the season of Lent, we pray that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts, with a desire to know Jesus, more deeply than we have ever known him before. Set our hearts on fire, so that our lives may bear witness to the world, about the love of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

2024 Wednesday Night Lenten Sermon Series**Pastor Bill Shields – First Lutheran Church, Princeton, Illinois****Pastor Matt Shields – Cana Lutheran Church, Washington, Illinois****“The Jesus I Never Knew”****Based on the Book by Philip Yancey*****March 6** “Message: A Sermon Of Offense” (Pastor Matt)**March 13** “Miracles: Snapshots Of The Supernatural” (Pastor Bill)**March 20** “Mission: A Revolution Of Grace” (Pastor Matt)

*Pastor Bill will also be using themes from this book on some of the Sundays and Holy Week services during the season of Lent.

Lenten Disciplines

Each year, during the season of Lent, I like to offer three disciplines for the congregation. Lenten disciplines have a long history in the Christian Church. They are meant to help us focus on the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, by taking on some small sacrifices in our own lives for the duration of Lent. These disciplines are entirely voluntary. They are between you and God. Here are the three challenges for 2024:

1. Try to be in worship as often as possible during Lent, on both the Wednesday nights and the Sunday mornings. And invite a family member or friend (someone who does not usually attend) to come with you at least once during the season.
2. Give up something that you enjoy during the season of Lent, as a way of remembering that Jesus gave up his life for us. Or you can turn it around and add something good to your life during Lent that you are not currently doing—something like daily prayer, daily Bible reading, or daily exercise. (Lent begins at midnight on Ash Wednesday, February 14th and ends at midnight on the Saturday before Easter, March 30th)
3. Do a random act of kindness for another person. It can be an offer to help a person with a task that needs to be done. Or it can be an anonymous act, like giving a financial gift to someone that you know who is in need.

COUNCIL Summary - February 2024:

The agenda, January minutes, Annual Meeting minutes & financial reports were approved.

Officer Election – President – Rick Cook, Vice-Pres. – Sue Scruggs, Corresponding Secretary – Lani Swinford. Kevin Martin appointed as Treasurer, Cindy Pierson appointed Financial Secretary, June Ohlson appointed Recording Secretary. Council Committee assignments: Ken Schoof – Property, Donna Monier – Service & Mission, Rick Cook – Youth, Keith Cain – Finance, Lani Swinford – Worship and Sue Scruggs – Outreach.

Correspondence – Abigail Women’s Center reported that \$826.13 was received from our Baby Bottle Collection last summer.

Pastor's Report – 4 worship services, 2 funerals (John Purvis & Eva Coates, also Linda Kloc passed away with services at a later time), 2 vacation days in January, Choir Party, Wittenberg Door, Annual Meeting. Looking ahead: Feb. Food Challenge, Ash Wed. Feb. 14, Soup & Sandwich Suppers, changing pulpits with Matt Shields, Valentine Luncheon, Mobile Food Pantry Feb. 22.

Admin. Report – Jan. Sunday attendance 83 / 63 views – Low attendance 2nd Sunday in Jan. weather related.

Property – Insurance carrier, TJ Scruggs invited to meeting to look at elevator control board, kitchen drain unclogged, recommend using drain cleaner more often, additional pews repaired, purchased new carpet for the elevator, a sensor in the burner for boiler is faulty and shutting down the boiler, roof drain on North Narthex leaked this winter due to ice-damming.

Service & Mission – \$1500 left from 2023 to be held in reserve, information shared on homeless situation this winter, discussed Another Child Foundation new program “Give Poverty The Boot”. This will be done in conjunction with VBS this summer.

Outreach & Fellowship – March 3rd Craft Party \$30 per person, Feb. Food Challenge going well.

Youth & Education – VBS will be July 14-18, theme is SCUBA from Group Publishing, Another Child Foundation will be the VBS mission.

Worship – Holden Evening Prayer liturgists scheduled, help for soup suppers complete, Easter plants will be Lilies and Tulips, activity bags cleaned & checked.

Finance – Jan. income \$19,783 down from last year, one bad weather Sunday & only 4 Sundays this year. \$25,000 transferred to Building Fund as discussed at Annual Meeting.

Endowment – Waiting on payment from Country Co. annuity, interest due on Building Fund Loan of \$586.

New officers: Don Kyle – President, Donna Monier – Secretary, Brad Kloepping – Treasurer.

New Business – Permission given to Via de Cristo to use building April 14th & 20th. New doorbells & receivers will be purchased and receivers installed in Library & Fellowship Hall so doors can remain locked for meetings & events when the office is closed.

Old Wheels – New company providing Bounce House and Train for June 15th Car Show. Council approved.

New doorbells have been installed at the North door and the Elevator door. Receivers have been placed in the Fellowship Hall and the Library. The North bell will ring “ding-dong” and the Elevator bell will play a short tune. If you are here for a meeting, (especially if no one is in the office) the doors can remain locked, while you will be able to let people in when needed.

*Special announcements for the bulletin, or the screen, need to be to the office **by Thursday morning**. Call, leave a message, email, or drop off a note. **Newsletter deadline** will be the 20th day of February.*

Office Hours: 9-12 & 1-4 Mon. – Thurs.
Website: www.flcprinceton.org
Check us on Facebook.
Phone: 1-815-875-1685
Email: office.flcprinceton@gmail.com

CIRCLE MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Rebekah 9:30am

Lydia 3:00pm

COMMITTEE NIGHT

1:30pm MON., Mar. 4 - Worship

7:00pm - TUESDAY, Mar. 5 - Committees

COUNCIL MEETING

3:30PM - TUESDAY, Mar. 12



ALTAR FLOWERS

The open dates coming up:

March 10, 17, 31.

Please call the office if you would like to schedule one of the above Sundays

ALTAR GUILD

**March – June Ohlson, Cindy Pierson,
& Laurie Anderson**

April – Marilynne Kloster, JoAnne Kloepping

May – Mary Ann Smith, Lynn Holland



March Anniversaries

TJ & Sara Scruggs 3/7

Steve & Sharon Saunders 3/22

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP

**10:00am - Tuesdays, March 12 & 26
&**

QUILTERS

1:00pm – Thursday, March 14

No Quilters - March 28

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday

7:00pm Worship & Communion

Good Friday

7:00pm Tenebrae Service

Easter

7:00 & 9:30 am Worship & Communion

8:00-9:15am Breakfast

Lenten Schedule of Soup Suppers & Worship Services

March 6, 13, 20

5:30pm - Soup Supper

6:00pm - Confirmation

6:00pm - Choir Practice

7:00pm - Worship

Sign-ups for soups & kitchen help.

Pastor's Bible Study & Confirmation

11:00am Wednesday Bible Study

6:00pm Thursday Bible Study

No Bible Study during Holy Week

March 24th – 30th

CONFIRMATION

Will meet March 13th

No class on March 20th, 27th or April 3rd

**Begin again April 10th through
the end of April.**

OWLS MAUNDY THURSDAY

WORSHIP & COMMUNION

Thursday, March 29, 2024

1:30pm

Cookie fellowship to follow.



Next Old Wheels Meeting

Saturday, April 6, 2024

8:00am

Scruggs' Pond



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF Personal Care Kits



We're spreading God's love this Lent by making Personal Care Kits for those in need in the poorest parts of the world. The first 2 weeks, Feb. 18 & 25, we collected bars of **soap and dark bath towels**. Please check the display in the back of church and pick up a shopping list. The second 2 weeks, March 3 and 10, we will collect **Nail Clippers**. The weeks of March 17 & 24, we will collect **large combs**. Any items on the shopping list can be brought anytime during Lent.

Any Questions: see Karen May

Thank you to all who donated items or purchased snacks from the Super Bowl Snack Sale. We have \$540 for Club 56. Another successful snack sale! Thanks, Dianne Van Drew

River Bend Mobile Food Pantry

On Feb. 22, we served 153 households and 398 people.

The next Mobile Food Pantry is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2024 at the B.C. Fairgrounds again. Mark your calendar.

FEBRUARY FOOD CHALLENGE

We were competing with The People Church, 1st Presbyterian & New Hope Church. Final results are not in yet, but well done First Lutheran, you were amazing!



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Melissa Cain 3/1
Kathleen Reussow 3/2
Mike Eggers 3/7
Kevin Pinter 3/7
Robert Prusator 3/9
Ty Holland 3/10
Grayson Scruggs 3/10
Alex Smith 3/13
Joanne Sheldon 3/16
Cindy Pierson 3/18
Matt Holland 3/19
Adalyn Bucshe 3/24
Jim Scruggs 3/25
Paityn Johnson 3/28
Joan Chase 3/31
David Cotter 3/31



Ladies Valentine Luncheon

21 ladies attended the luncheon plus 2 ladies from the Magi Baby Chest at St. Louis Catholic Church spoke about the work they are doing helping provide needed items for babies & toddlers to families in the community. And the food was great! Thank you Chef Corbin Hopkins!

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

If you have Thrivent Choice Dollars, you have until March 31st to direct them to your favorite charity.

Royal Family Kids Fundraiser

COMEDY NIGHT

Saturday, March 9th

Simon Conference Center

446 Elm Place, Princeton

Starring: Well Versed Comedy

Chicago's Clean Comedy Team

Doors / Dinner / Silent Auction

5:30pm

Comedy Show

6:30pm

Tickets - \$25 per person

Includes Walking Taco, Dessert,

Popcorn & Show

Royal Family Kids is a non-profit organization providing a free week long summer camp for children in Foster Care in our local area. For more information, check out website <https://www.forthethechildren.org>

First Lutheran Church - Ohio

FISH FRY

Friday, March 22nd

5-7pm

Menu: Fish, Hot Dog, Texas Toast, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, Dessert & Beverage

Adults - \$12, Children 8-12 - \$5

Children under 8 - \$2

Carry-outs available, call ahead for in town delivery or pick-up 815-376-7431

Co-sponsored by

Thrivent Action Team Project.

GRIEF SHARE

New Session

Mondays, March 11 – June 3, 2024

1:00-3:00pm

Evangelical Covenant Church

24 N. Main St.

Call 815-875-2124 for information.

EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

Flowers may be ordered through the church at **\$18.00** per plant.

There are no color choices on flowers.

_____ Single Lily _____ Tulip

My plant/s is a memorial to: _____

My plant/s is in honor of: _____

Order form & payment may be placed in the offering or turned into the office By **March 24th**. Make checks out to "First Lutheran Church".

Plants may be picked up after worship on Easter Sunday, March 31st.

Signed _____