

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH - APRIL 2019

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*The [angels] said to [the women], "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Luke 24:5b-6a, ESV)*

I read a story recently about a US Marine private from Houston, Texas, named Ronald Ridgeway. On February 25, 1968, Ridgeway and his platoon of 45 men were caught in a vicious firefight in Vietnam. Men were dying all around him. Ridgeway himself was shot twice, once in the shoulder and once in the leg. He passed out.

Meanwhile, the platoon survivors were ordered to pull back. Because of the intense fire, they could not bring out the bodies of their fallen comrades. They left 26 men behind, all presumed dead. It would take six weeks for US troops to move back into the area. They recovered the bodies that had been left behind, but they were only able to positively identify 17 of them (this was in the days before DNA identification). The remains of the other 9 were buried together in a national cemetery in St. Louis. Their names, including that of Ronald Ridgeway, were all carved onto a single tombstone.

But Ronald Ridgeway was not in that grave. On the morning after the firefight, Ridgeway was awakened by a North Vietnamese soldier, who was trying to pull his watch off his wrist. The soldier was startled to find that he was still alive. Ridgeway thought that the soldier was going to shoot him. But instead, the man helped him up and dressed his wounds and took him as a prisoner.

For the next five years, Ridgeway lived in a series of North Vietnamese prison camps. He experienced horrible conditions, which he described in the article. But then, suddenly, in January of 1973, a guard came into his cell and told him that he was going to be released. The US and North Vietnam had just signed an agreement for the withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam. Part of the agreement was that all prisoners of war were to be released.

When the North Vietnamese released the list of the prisoners that they were holding, Ridgeway's name was on it. His mother got a phone call from a Marine official, telling her that her son was alive and that he was coming home. When she hung up the phone, she ran out of the house and went banging on the doors of her neighbors shouting, "Ronnie's alive! Ronnie's alive!" He returned home on March 16, 1973. It was a very special and a very joyful homecoming. Ridgeway's mother was quoted as saying, "It wasn't like he was just coming home from the war. It was like he was coming back from the dead!"

The feeling that Ronald Ridgeway's mother felt on that day is what Easter Sunday is all about. When Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, the disciples and all of the other followers of Jesus were devastated. Their spirits were crushed, because they thought that the whole Jesus movement was over. They were confused, because they had thought that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and so his death made no sense to them. They were afraid, because they knew that the same people who had arrested and crucified Jesus might also be looking for his friends.

But then the women at the tomb on Easter Sunday morning heard that amazing message of the angels: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." They ran and told the disciples. Peter and John went to the tomb to investigate. It was empty, just as the women had said. They were perplexed, but they were also hopeful. And then Jesus himself appeared. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene outside the tomb. Then he appeared to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus. And then he appeared that evening to the disciples, who were hiding in a house in Jerusalem.

When they saw Jesus alive, at first they were afraid. But then they were filled with joy. He was really alive! And unlike Ronald Ridgeway, Jesus had *really* been dead. This was not *like* a resurrection. This really *was* a resurrection. And they knew that if Jesus had the power to rise from the dead, then everything that he said about himself was true. And they knew that if they gave their lives to him, then he would also raise them from the dead one day, and they would live forever with him in Heaven.

That is the message of Easter! Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, as a sacrifice for our sins. And then he rose again on Easter Sunday, proving that he truly was the Son of God and that his death truly did pay the penalty for all of our sins. And now, all we have to do is believe in him and we are saved. We have the promise of the resurrection for ourselves and for our loved ones. And we know that, one day, we will see Jesus face to face in heaven!

But I imagine that when we do see Jesus, we will be overcome with gratitude. We will immediately bow down before him and worship him. We will give thanks for the gift of eternal life, given to us by the one who rose from the dead on that first Easter Sunday. What a great day that will be. And what a great day it is, every year, when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Pastor Shields

Council Summary:

Council met Tuesday, March 12. February minutes and Financial reports were reviewed & approved.

**Pastor** – In addition to his regular schedule, he served 2 funerals, 3 baptisms, attended LCMC Pastor's Theological Conference in Minnesota and welcomed 19 new members on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. Council approved Pastor's vacation plans for April 30-May 7 with Pastor Norm to fill in.

**Administrator** – Average Feb. attendance 110, Sunday School 40, Ash Wed. attendance 82.

**Property** – Work done on Kewanee boiler, a radiator was found to be cracked & shut off, another is leaking & shut off; kitchen project is complete; ladies restroom upstairs painted; & a new furnace installed in the parsonage.

**Service & Mission** – Our Table on May 20 full meal; Mobile Food Pantry Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at the fairgrounds; Lenten Denial envelopes available going to Buddy Bags, Food Pantry & Another Child; this month's benevolence \$3000 to be paid to LCMC.

**Outreach & Fellowship** – Planning an event for Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> hors d'oeuvres & desserts in place of Progressive Dinner.

**Youth & Education** – 7 youths & 4 adults attended LCMC Youth Retreat on March 1-3; Kid's Club working on a mission project during Lent for kids at Freedom House; first communion instruction was March 17; kids will sing Palm Sunday & last day of Sunday School is May 12.

**Worship** – no meeting

**Finance** - \$34,232 income - \$33,774 expense = +\$468 minus \$3000 benevolence = -\$2532.

**Endowment** – council approved 2 payments: \$100 for a Via de Cristo weekend and \$1098.40 for the remainder of the LCMC Youth weekend.

**New Business** – discussion of hosting an LCMC workshop here with Mark VanDerTuig possibly the first weekend of November. Other LCMC congregations would be invited.

The LCMC Annual Gathering is scheduled for Sept. 29-Oct. 3 in Omaha, Nebraska.

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Our Kid's Club children are going to be singing for all of us on Palm Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. Come & hear their angelic voices praising Jesus! Kids, please be at church by 9:20 that morning.



## OWLS Maundy Thursday

Dessert Fellowship  
1:30 pm April 18th  
Worship & Communion @ 1:30 &  
Dessert Fellowship to follow.



## "A Night to Remember"

### Special Needs Prom

Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>  
Red Carpet Event @ 5:30  
Bureau Co. Metro Center  
837 Park Ave. West – Princeton  
Come out and cheer them on the Red Carpet!



## River Bend Mobile Food Pantry

Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> – 10:00am  
B.C. Fairgrounds – Allen Building  
Please help unload & distribute the food.



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## EASTER BREAKFAST MENU

Scrambled eggs	Sausage
Breakfast pizza	Bacon
Waffles	Ham
Pancakes	French Toast

All donations will go to the Old Wheels committee to benefit the mobile food pantry. Come, eat and fellowship as we celebrate our Risen Lord!



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9:30am – Sunday, April 14 – Palm Sunday – Parade of Palms & Kids singing  
1:30pm – Thursday, April 18 – OWLS Worship & Dessert Fellowship  
7:00pm – Thursday, April 18 – Maundy Thursday Worship & Communion  
7:00pm – Friday, April 19 – Good Friday Tennebrae Service  
7:00am – Sunday, April 21 – EASTER Sunrise & Communion  
8:00am – 9:00am – Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall  
9:30am – Sunday, April 21 – EASTER Worship & Communion



## BASKET OF PROMISE

The First Lutheran Church donations to Lutheran World Relief for school kits, personal care kits, baby care kits, and quilts for the past 3 years has helped adults and children living in poverty in countries of Rwanda, Serbia, Peru, Ukraine, and Guatemala.

We are asking you again for donations to 'Basket of Promise' during Lent. We need **dark towels, nail clippers, bars of soap, toothbrushes, and wide tooth combs.** Thank you for caring.

LCW committee

### Outreach & Fellowship

Is planning an event to replace the Progressive Dinner.

The date is Sunday evening, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Watch for more details after the April committee meetings.



## LCW NEWS

Hope everyone is beginning to enjoy the warmer weather we've been having. Time to get our gardens in shape.

At this writing, 23 ladies have signed up to attend the Ladies' Luncheon at Niel & Shorty's for Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and many ladies are not circle members. All are welcome! June Ohlson will be sharing about the mission of the Princeton Ministerial Association.

Also at this writing, 95 guests will be attending the April 6<sup>th</sup> Special Needs Prom at the Metro Center. The proceeds from the Super Bowl Snack Sale helped to fund this event.

We are still collecting items for the "Basket of Promise" during Lent. We are looking for the following items: April 3 & 7 – Tooth brushes (in original wrapper), April 10 & 14 Comb (large tooth) and Holy Week April 14 – 21 dark bath towels, bar soap, nail clippers, tooth brushes & large tooth combs. Deposit them in the basket in the back of the sanctuary.

1:30pm Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> is the Maundy Thursday OWLS Worship & Fellowship event.

Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> we provide 12 dozen cookies for CWU Blood Mobile. Look for that sign-up sheet for cookies. Bring and leave here in the kitchen before that date or take directly to the Methodist Church that day.

9:00am Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> is the CWU "May Friendship Day" program at New Hope Church. Gay Kyle is our representative and all women are welcome to attend.

Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> is our Memorial Book Dedication during Worship. Books are purchased and donated to our Library in memory of our ladies who have passed away since last Mother's Day.

As always, the Prayer Shawl ministry meets Tuesdays, April 9 & 23 at 10am in the Library and the Quilters meet Thursdays, April 11 & 25 at 1pm in the Fellowship Hall. Previous experience is not necessary, they will be happy to teach you what to do.

Don't forget, Naomi Circle meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 1:30pm, Rebekah meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 9am and Lydia the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7pm.

April Birthdays: Linda Bacon, Jo Kloster, Karen May, Emalie Ohlson, Lisa Widmark, Sue Eggers and Judy Mugerdichian.

**Happy Easter!**

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## EASTER LILY OR MUM ORDER FORM

Easter Lilies or mums may be ordered through the church at \$15.00 per plant.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lily

\_\_\_\_\_ Mum (no color choice)

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 **April 14<sup>th</sup>**.  
Make checks out to "First Lutheran Church". Plants may be picked up after worship on  
Easter Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Any plants left will be delivered to shut-ins.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_