

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. - 1 Corinthians 15:17

Dear friends of Cross Roads UMC,

As we prepare for the three days that climax in the Resurrection of our Lord, I think often about how different that first Easter morning was, when there were no hallelujahs, no trumpets, no jubilation. There were only women, how many depends on which gospel version you read, who had come to anoint Jesus' body, because it had not been done before his burial.

Suddenly, they are treated to a great earthquake as an angel of the Lord came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance like lightening and his clothing white as snow. The guards froze in their tracks. But the angel told the women, *“Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. But he is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come see the place where he lay.”*

The angel then encourages the women to go and tell Jesus' disciples that Jesus has gone to Galilee and will meet them there.

But note that even had the story ended there, the fact was proclaimed that Jesus had been raised. The tomb was empty. In spite of the women's awe, death did not have the last word, which explains why others added on to the story.

Good stories, whether we read them in the Bible or hear them told by others, have the power to change lives and change history. We all have stories to tell. As Christians, we have stories about how God changes us, uses us, and blesses us when we worship, obey, and love God. When we tell our stories, we must acknowledge that God is not a character in our story but rather that we are a beloved character in God's story. God asks us to tell God's story and gives us rich material from the Bible, history, and personal experience to help us do so.

This is not the end; it is only the beginning. Go and tell the good news that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Peace,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Holy Week and Easter will be here before you know, so mark your calendars for the following worship services:

-Palm Sunday, worship at 9:30 am

-Maundy Thursday, worship service at 6:30 pm
(Maundy Thursday service will include a foot washing, a sampling meal of items which would be found in a traditional Passover meal, followed by the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup. We will end the service in the "garden" with a reading from Scripture about the night of Jesus' arrest.)

-Good Friday, worship service at 6:30 pm
(We will be remembering Good Friday with a reading of the last seven words of Jesus.)

-Easter Sunday, worship service at **9:00 am**
(Easter Sunday will include Holy Communion.)
(Please note the time change on Easter Sunday. Also, there will not be a Sunrise Service this year on Easter.)

Mission & Outreach

The Missions and Outreach programs have been very busy already this year!

In January, we held Tuesday's Table, where we served 46 guests, had 12 volunteers and gave away 44 additional "to go" meals. Our mission focus for January was to assist Family Promise with securing the lease for a larger facility. We were able to donate \$323 to them.

In February, our Lenten project, 40 Items for 40 Days was launched. Many bags were taken, so I think we can say this was a success! Our mission focus for February was to assist the NLS with their lunch program debt. No child will be turned away, but they don't always have the funds. We were able to help by donating \$500 to that program.

In March, we participated in the MN Food Share. All donations will be given to The Link who in turn, can receive grant monies and purchase TEN TIMES the amount. No final report yet.

We also held a Blood Drive on March 10th and successfully donated 34 pints of blood! Lots of lives saved!

For April we will focus our Mission giving towards the Willmar YMCA. The funds collected help seniors gain strength through exercise programs and allows kids to participate in water and activities and swim lessons. Please give generously!

Admin Team Notes

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL!

The old trope is that "spring has sprung." Well, I think spring is broken! As I write this in March, there is still snow blanketing the landscape with no patches of green anywhere. Snow is piled high along roads and on edges of parking lots. Our fatigue over the long and snowy winter is the first thing we talk about with our friends and family or even the strangers we meet. But no matter how much we despair about winter, we do know that eventually spring will come. Snow will melt. Tulips and crocuses will peak through the snow. Grass will green up. Daylight hours will continue to expand. Fields will be planted. Hope springs eternal, so they say!

This is surely how the early followers of Christ felt. Their despair and grief over the death of Jesus at the hands of Pontius Pilate was palpable. But after the horrific death, their hearts were gladdened with the resurrection of Christ and the promise of salvation. Christ's resurrection provides a bright future for those who Believe (with a capital "B").

For the Easter season that is upon us, there are services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Join together in celebrating the Good News!

Behind the scenes, the Administrative Team is chugging along managing and monitoring the church's "business" end of things. In March, we approved the church's Facility Use Policy. At our next meeting on April 12, we will start reviewing the Finance Policy, and we will also be looking very closely at our financial status. As you've heard by now, our giving is not keeping up with our budget and expenses, a trend that is not sustainable in the long term. There are only three ways to manage a deficit budget. One, we increase "revenue" (giving). Two, we decrease spending and expenses. Three, we do both. PLEASE complete and return the pledge card that was given out during worship and also emailed out this week by Pastor Leslie. This will help the Admin Team manage the church's finances and resources by understanding the dynamics of our congregation's giving. Thanks to those who have already completed and returned their pledge forms.

Spring is the season of hope. Easter is the Christian season of hope. As it says in Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

God's blessings to all,

Pat Solheid, Admin Team Chair

Admin Team Meeting Notice:

The next Admin Team meeting will be Wednesday, April 12 at 6:30.

5th Sunday Gathering!

On Sunday, April 30, as has become our tradition since last fall, we will be having a 5th Sunday Potluck at Cross Roads. Following worship, we will have lunch, followed by a "Town Hall" meeting led by members of our Admin Board and our Ministry Team Leaders.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a dish of food (enough for your family and 1-2 extras) and come join us for some great fellowship and conversation about happenings in our congregation. During this time together, there will be a brief update regarding some of the issues presently facing our denomination. We hope to see you all there!



April Birthdays

Howard Carlsen 9th
Nick Zachariason 9th
Andrew Ryks 13th
Harlan Halbersma 16th
Amy Pahl 18th
Ken Flowe 26th
Bryan Maurice 26th
Anna Duke 28th
Jeff Duke 30th

April Anniversaries

Daryl & Bonnie Hoogeveen 9th
Terry & Michelle Albers 11th
Kevin & Leann Navratil 16th



If we have missed your special day, please let the office know.

The Link Updates

SAVE THE DATE!!!! RibFest 2023 planning is officially underway! It is scheduled for **June 10, 2023** from 1pm-4pm in the large city parking lot behind The Link! If you are interested in having a Rib team, please contact Ashley at 320-354-5465! We also have sponsorship opportunities available for businesses and individuals. If you would like to help financially with RibFest this year, please contact us at 320-354-5465 and we will send you the sponsorship information. There are many different opportunities available! There will also be volunteer opportunities for the day of RibFest! Please stay tuned for more information.



Volunteer Opportunities: If you or someone you know would like to be a part of The Link's mission and volunteer at the **Community Revival Boutique and Thrift**, we are looking for extra help on-call and on a consistent basis (mostly Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays). Our store hours are 10-3 Wednesday-Friday and 10-2 Saturdays. Our current volunteers are amazing and have a great time together building friendships. If you'd like to join the fun, call Shawna at 320-347-1047 or Ashley at 320-354-5465.

In February, The Link was able to serve 12 families with common household needs with our **Household Exchange Program**. The Household Exchange program takes in donations such as smaller furniture, bedding, towels, kitchen utensils, pots and pans etc. to provide families when they are getting back on their feet.

The Food Pantry served 65 households in February (including: 107 adults, 52 children and 22 seniors) and distributed a total of 3115 pounds of food. The need of food has increased significantly the past couple months, requiring The Link to increase their food budget to meet the needs of the people served.

The Wildcat Backpack Program is currently serving 88 children. Each week, students from the NL-S High School pack bags including: 2 juices, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 snacks, 1 fruit and 1 treat, and deliver them to each school to ensure our students nutritional needs are met on the weekends when they are not in school. If you know a family that could benefit from this program, please have them call Ashley at 320-354-5555 or Vicki Mickelson at NLS schools at 320-354-2252 ext. 2607.

The Link's **Client Outreach** program served 10 families in February by helping with transportation, medical bills, utility bills and rental payments. This program also provided advocacy for 12 families, in-depth budgeting support for 8 families, networking for 7 families and provided 19 families with referrals for additional assistance to meet basic needs.

Tuesday's Table's schedule is as follows: 1st Tuesday of the month: Our Lady of the Lakes (Spicer), 2nd Tuesday: Evangelical Covenant (New London), 3rd Tuesday: Faith Lutheran (Spicer), 4th Tuesday: Peace Lutheran (New London), 5th Tuesday: Rotating (call 320-354-5555 for more information).

As always, a HUGE THANK YOU to those who have donated food and/or monetarily and to those who have prayed for and with us here at The Link! With the increased need for food and in client outreach, we are asking for your continued support- financially and prayerfully.

Monthly Giving Opportunities: The Link makes monthly giving a convenient option for our donors. You can set up online giving through The Link's website at www.youarethelink.org or directly through your bank. If you would like to make a one time donation, you can send a check to P.O. Box 823, New London, MN 56273 or via Venmo @The-Link-1. Please contact Ashley at 320-354-5555 or email her at ashley@youarethelink.org for more information.



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April 2023

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

The Cross Roads Mission

To help everyone find joy in their journey by:

Inviting everyone to walk with Jesus,

Growing together as His disciples,

Serving others we meet along the way

And Joyfully Celebrating the Journey