



# *Holy Cross Lutheran Church*

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*Making peace by the blood of his cross — Colossians 1:15-20*

Grace, peace, and mercy to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

You may know the name George R.R. Martin as the writer of the fantasy book series *Game of Thrones*, which then became a hit TV series for HBO. These stories are filled with R-rated themes and images, which many people of faith have found distasteful. If you experienced Martin's worldview as alien and inhospitable, the feeling is mutual. Martin has described himself as fascinated by religion but unable to rationalize any kind of belief.

Indeed, Martin has been critical not just of resurrection as a historical fact but how modern writers use resurrections in their stories. On that latter point, we may truly find room for agreement. Perhaps you, also, have grown frustrated with superhero stories in which a hero makes a dramatic sacrifice only to have the end of the movie bring him or her back. Or if the character manages to make it to the end of the movie still "mostly dead," there's nothing to stop the studio from rebooting the franchise the following summer with a new actor and art direction. The old saying about superhero stories said, "No one stays dead except Bucky, Jason Todd, and Uncle Ben." In today's comics world, even those three exceptions have resurrected in at least one timeline. (Don't worry, we won't get started on diverging timelines.)

Twentieth-century German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer once diagnosed his culture with "cheap grace," a reliance on forgiveness without agreement that what was forgiven was really a problem. Today's stories can rightly be diagnosed with "cheap resurrection," a tendency to dial dramatic events up to 11 without ever damaging long-term franchise prospects. Who wants to buy a lunchbox with dead Superman on the front?

Yes, George Martin, we agree that Wonder Man should have stayed dead. But recently Martin went from Wonder Man to Christian fantasy, criticizing J.R.R. Tolkien for resurrecting the character Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*. We stop short there and do not promise to go all the way with Martin into that Mordor. Tolkien's fiction intended to give images of his faith, not allegory in which any one character matches exactly with a Bible character. Instead, Tolkien divided the burden of carrying images of the Christ among several of his characters. Frodo imaged the sin-bearer. Aragorn imaged the king who once was hidden from the people but now returns victorious. Gandalf was wisdom incarnate, and, yes, resurrected from his fall into darkness.

Sacrifices mean something because of the cost. When Gandalf puts himself between the Balrog and the fellowship, we immediately sense the cost. He does not fear giving his life even before such a terrifying presence. When Gandalf's last words re-emphasize to the company that they need to take his sacrifice and flee, the cost weighs heavy on our hearts.

Similarly, in our Holy Week hymns, we ponder the cost to Jesus on the cross:

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, Was all for sinners' gain;  
Mine, mine was the transgression, But Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favor, And grant to me Thy grace.  
(LSB 449 O Sacred Head Now Wounded, v. 2)

Then, three days after Good Friday, we sing, “Jesus Christ is ris’n today... Our triumphant holy day!” (LSB 457). Does this three-day shift from sorrow to triumph cheapen the sacrifice?

I’ll answer this question from two perspectives. First, what Jesus suffered—not just on the cross, but from the time of His arrest until His expiration—was excruciating considered in human terms. Crucifixion was designed to maximize pain and shame. On top of the physical pain, Jesus was betrayed, rejected, slandered, and mocked. He took all the pain.

Then we also have to consider the spiritual agony of His alienation from the Father. God is Love. From eternity to eternity, the Father, Son, and Spirit have shared that love. On the cross, paying our spiritual debt, Jesus felt forsaken. I do not think we fully grasp how much this cost.

On the other hand, and I think this is where Martin stumbles, the cost was temporary. Martin seems to be reading it like someone buying an expensive dress but not cutting the tag off and three days later returning the dress and getting their money back. Where was the cost if Gandalf is raised up better than before his fall with the Balrog? I get where that idea comes from, but I don’t think the analogy finally fits. You can have both real cost and real reward.

In that context, I want to put before you a word from our Lord. Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life” (Luke 18:29-30). No one will doubt that the interruptions in relationships have real, hard costs. I think that hints at what Jesus was cost in His sacrifice on the cross. At the same time, it is absolutely a promise of God that our sacrifices are received by God and repaid.

We believe He is both a God of justice and a God of mercy. He inspires us to make sacrifices, but, even as we make them, to expect, to hope, to believe that they are not lonely sacrifices. God takes up those sacrifices as investments, covering the cost and insuring dividends. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

For an author who decries resurrection motifs, Martin’s books resurrect a fair number of characters. However, when his characters come back, we see the price etched into them, sometimes both physically and in the heart. A character who once acted with dignity comes back consumed by revenge. I don’t note this as a criticism of Martin. I think he writes how the world feels when faith is absent. Without faith, sacrifice can embitter. On the other hand, belief helps cover the cost of sacrifice. Vital belief does enable Christians to be more generous. This is what Jesus teaches.

This not just what Jesus teaches; this is what Jesus did. He believed He could offer His suffering and death. He did offer it, not bitterly but joyfully (Hebrews 12:2). The Father did receive that gift and revive Jesus to live forever and never suffer again. May celebrating that story this month enliven our hearts and inspire us to follow where our Captain leads. For, Jesus concluded, “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:25-26). Amen.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Daniel Guagenti



April 6 Maundy Thursday 7 PM  
April 7 Informal Children's Good Friday 3 PM  
April 7 Good Friday Tenebrae Vespers 7 PM  
April 8 Easter Egg Hunt 1 PM  
April 9 Easter Breakfast 9:30 AM  
April 9 The Resurrection of Our Lord 11 AM

#### **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

The night Jesus was betrayed, He washed His disciples' feet and instituted the Lord's Supper. In response to His command to love as He loved, we confess our lack of love and hear His forgiveness. We will have an opportunity to post written sins on the cross. No one will ever read those postings. Pastor privately and prayerfully destroys those posts just as Jesus blotted out our sins. After posting those sins, we will hear individually that our sins are forgiven. We meditate on the readings about the Lord's Supper and then celebrate that meal together. Finally, the altar is stripped and we leave the church in silence.

#### **CHILDREN'S GOOD FRIDAY**

We gather informally at the hour Jesus died to introduce children to our Holy Week customs. Here is the kids' chance to ask as many questions as they want, learning about the grace of Jesus from the cross.

#### **GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE VESPERS**

The service of increasing darkness focuses on Jesus' seven last words from the cross. We enter and exit silently carrying ourselves with somber consideration of all Jesus gave for us. We extinguish candles gradually singing hymns, hearing the Word, and praying. The service concludes with the Strepitous, the loud slamming shut of a book. This is one of those traditions that is old enough that it has been explained in more than one way, on one sure what the original meaning was. It could be the closing of the Book of the Law, fulfilled by Christ. It could represent the tomb slammed shut. It could mark Jesus' death. It could have more than one meaning.

#### **EASTER EGG HUNT: APRIL 8**

There will be an Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, April 8. We will be stuffing the eggs with candy on Saturday, April 1 at 10 am. Volunteers are also needed to hide eggs and help during and after the hunt. Donations of individually wrapped candies are also needed. **We do not need donations of plastic eggs.** For more information please see Jason VanEvera.



#### **EASTER BREAKFAST: APRIL 9**

Next Sunday is our second annual Easter Breakfast. We will start at 9:30 and start cleaning up shortly after 10:30. We will have a wonderful variety of breakfast casseroles, homemade baked goods and fresh fruit salad. Help will be needed to break down and clean up so that pathways and visible areas are clear and ready for our divine Easter service. A sign up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board. All are welcome; signing up is greatly appreciated. Any questions, ask Corrie or Jason.



## *Celebrations in April*

### *Birthdays*

- 2- Bill Adams
- 4- Karen Hite
- 7- Christopher Anderson
- 9- Monica Yaroma
- 10- Abby Gehrman
- 10- Brady Gehrman
- 10- Caitlin Gehrman
- 11- Kelsey Shreve Carton
- 12- Allen Whitehouse
- 12- Donna Saltzman
- 18- Charlie Adams
- 18- Emily Crawhorn
- 21- Bill Heeg
- 24- Joshua Lancaster
- 24- Jonathon Lancaster
- 25- Adam Runner
- 25- Alex Shreve

### *Anniversaries*

- 19- Mark & Marilyn Murray (1985)
- 20- Steve and Lorie Rusch (2002)

### **LUTHERANISM 101**

Lutheranism 101 covers the basics of how to read the Bible, church history, and what makes Lutherans special. If you want to know more about your faith or are interested in learning about Lutherans, this is the class for you. Our new round of Lutheranism 101 will begin not too long after Easter. Contact pastor if you want in as our timing is flexible.

### **TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY**

This Tuesday Hybrid Zoom-In-Person Bible Study will be reading and studying Paul's epistle to the Romans in our hybrid Zoom/In-Person Bible class. We'll meet at church and have Zoom access as well. Join us either in person or through the zoom link at 7pm. The Guagenti's address is 207 Old Spring Drive, Shelbyville.

To Join the Zoom Meeting

:<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89139535214?pwd=d3pSUXM5eWhMSWc3Y01FR3VLNnVnQT09>

Meeting ID:89139535214 Passcode: holycross

### **EASTER LILIES**

Orders are now being taken for lilies to decorate our church for the Easter Service. To place your order, please fill out this order form. There are extra forms in the magazine rack at the back of the church.



Flowers may be ordered in memory of someone or in honor of someone. **The last day to order is April 2.** Please turn in the order form with your money to the church office. Make checks payable to Holy Cross Lutheran Church. The price is \$10 each.

### **DAY-TIMERS: APRIL 4**

Day-timers will meet on Tuesday, April 4 at 10am. For more information please see Charlie Moody.

### **DAY-TIMERS COMMUNITY PROJECT**

Holy Cross Day-timers participate in a community project the 3rd Monday of each month. We prepare a meal for the women who reside at Awake Ministries in Shelbyville. The food does not have to be homemade. We provide a main dish, salad, dessert, bread, and drinks. The women are always so appreciative! If anyone would like to help, please speak with Brenda Moody.

### **CRAFT NIGHT: MAY 18**

Starting the 3rd Thursday in May we will begin a monthly craft night from 6 to 8pm. All are welcome as well all crafts. Bring what you would like to work on and enjoy the fellowship.



## HOLY CROSS FOOD BOX

The food box in our driveway is the result of an idea from the Day-Timers group. This is an outreach to the community that all the members of Holy Cross can share and participate in.

Several have been very generous in stocking the box but we continue to need help. There is a list of items on the kitchen door that are suggestions for donations. However, the food box is getting low. Money donations, or if those of you who have the Thrivent card would like to share, that too would be appreciated. Thanks to all who are helping and we look forward to future donations. Day-Timers Group

## PRAYER REQUESTS

We are looking for quarterly updates for prayer requests. We want to know when prayers are answered, when prayers need a new direction, and even when things are just going on as before. To keep any name that is on the prayer request list on for April, please send in a prayer request or update.



You can email our church secretary Merrie at [secretary@holycrosslutheran-ky.org](mailto:secretary@holycrosslutheran-ky.org) or Alena running the prayer chain at [prayers@holycrosslutheran-ky.org](mailto:prayers@holycrosslutheran-ky.org) or pastor for any private prayer requests. There are also prayer request cards on the credenza that can be returned in the basket in the secretary's office.

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## YOU MIGHT BE A LUTHERAN IF...

- You think anyone who says "casserole" instead of "hotdish" is trying to be uppity.
- You freeze the leftover coffee from fellowship hour for next week.

## LOUISVILLE BATS

Fellowship is considering a baseball game one Sunday afternoon in June. The schedule will be posted soon. I will purchase the block of tickets in advance but this will need to be done a minimum of 4-6 weeks in advance. Ticket prices are running around \$25-30 each. I will check to see if I can get a lower price for groups. Is this something the congregation would be interested in doing? More information will be forthcoming.



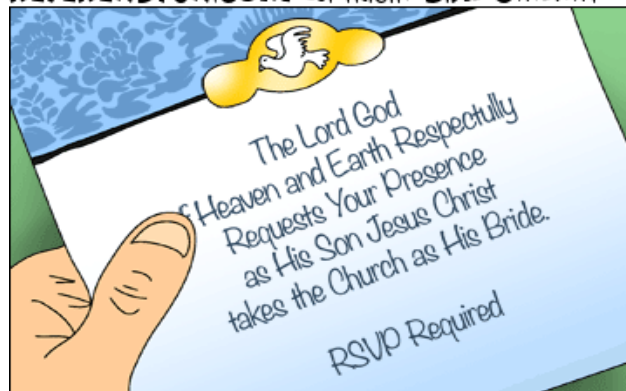
## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Teachers are needed for the lower grade classes. You would be teaching only 3-5 times between January and May. All materials will be provided for you. If you would like to volunteer please see Marilyn Murray. Volunteers to clean the church are also needed. You would be cleaning approximately every 4-5 weeks. For more information see Jennifer Harrod.

## LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

Lutheran Hour Ministries is a Christian outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide in its mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nation—and the Nations to Church*. Lutheran Hour Ministries produces Christian radio and TV programming for broadcast, as well as Internet and print communications, dramas, music, and outreach materials, to reach the unchurched in more than 30 countries. LHM's flagship program **The Lutheran Hour**, is the world's longest-running Christian outreach radio program. It airs Sundays at 9am on 102.7FM. For information, visit [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org) (<http://www.lhm.org>)

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Thanks to Stephen Illich

04-05-2013

### LIFE QUOTES

"Our true identity turns us back toward our Creator, the one who not only made us but also defines us in His Word. So, permit me to remind you of that truth once more: You are a created child of God. You are handmade by Him, loved by Him, redeemed by Him, and sustained by Him. The gifts you possess are gifts He's given you; all that is good comes from Him. Your identity and your value are, always were, and always will be, found in Him."

*Michelle Bauman, Y4Life –*

*A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*



### KNOW YOUR BIBLE



#### Fiery Foxes

What judge of the Old Testament used foxes to set the crops of the Philistines on fire?

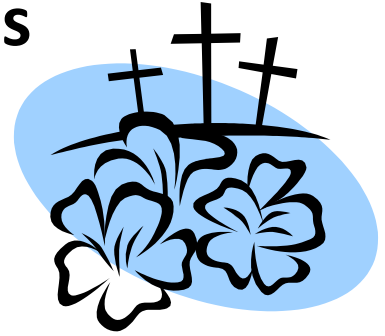
Look for the answer in the May Newsletter  
March's Answer: Joshua (see Joshua 12)

### VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	ACOLYTE	READER	USHERS	CLEAN	NURSERY	ALTAR GUILD	MOWING
April 2	Gabriel Guagenti	Nancy Kovach	Charlie Moody Rita Whitehouse	Sandy Runner	Merrie Feole	Brenda Moody Cindy Alvano	John Feole Anthony Ewers Apr 5-8
April 9	Zachery Semeniuk	Charlie Moody	Alex VanPelt Charlie Adams	Theresa Tippet Jennifer Harrod	Suzanne Rutledge	Jennifer Harrod	Pastor Alex VanPelt Apr 12-15
April 16	Nathaniel Guagenti	Nancy Kovach	Corrie Brian Zoe Shreve	Roxana Pontius Guagenti Family	Merrie Feole	Rita Whitehouse	Dave Franke Max Themer Apr 19-22
April 23	Masyn Botkins	Dave Themer	Cindy Alvano John Feole	Don Saltzman	Anita Themer	No Communion	M. Semeniuk Max Semeniuk Apr 26-29
April 30	Nathaniel Semeniuk	Dave Franke	Don Saltzman Greg Rutledge	Charlie Adams	Suzanne Rutledge	Brenda Moody Cindy Alvano	Dave Themer B. Gehrman May 3-6
May 7	Eden Guagenti	Charlie Moody	Charlie Moody Rita Whitehouse	Franke family	Merrie Feole	Rita Whitehouse	G. Rutledge R. Chesher May 10-13
May 14	Brenyn Botkins	Dave Themer	Alex VanPelt Charlie Adams	Sandy Runner	Anita Themer	No Communion	John Feole Anthony Ewers May 17-20

**If you cannot serve on the appointed day, please call someone to serve in your place.**

# RESURRECTION COOKIES



To be made the evening before Easter.

You need: 1c. whole pecans, 1 tsp. vinegar, 3 egg whites, pinch salt, 1c. sugar, zipper baggie, wooden spoon, tape, Bible.

**Preheat oven to 300 BEFORE BEGINNING.**

Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces.

*Explain that after Jesus was arrested He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.*

Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl.

*Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross he was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30.*

Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life.

*Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.*

Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl.

*Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. Read Luke 23:27.*

So far the ingredients are not very appetizing.

Add 1 c. sugar.

*Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know this and how to belong to Him. Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16.*

Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed.

*Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.*

Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet.

*Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matt. 27:57-60.*

Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF.

Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door.

*Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. Read Matt. 27:65-66.*

**GO TO BED!**

*Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20 and 22.*

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie.

Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty! Read Matt. 28:1-9

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**  
**LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)**  
**Newsletter Article – April 2023**

### **A Better Way**

The most common question about stewardship is not whether a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, “How much should I give?” But this question really means, “Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?”

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn’t necessary because it isn’t expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no “Thus saith the Lord,” or “should” concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn’t tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won’t be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians should tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn’t specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one’s income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here’s another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we’re not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let’s answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I’m glad you’re still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God’s promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I’d really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we’re ecstatic that you’re giving, and that you’re giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.

**– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)**

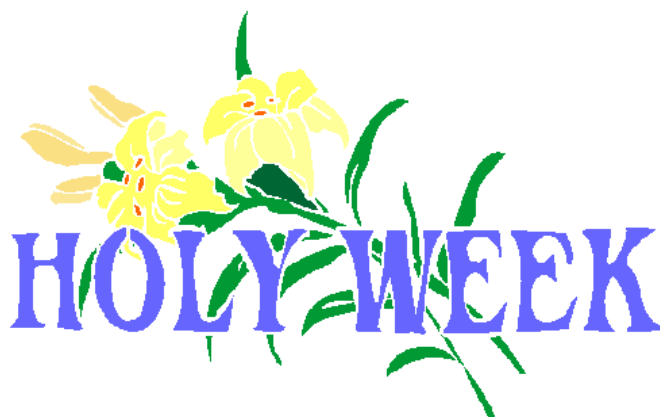


## SHARING THE POWERFUL GOSPEL!

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EVERY SUNDAY  
BIBLE STUDY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL-9:45AM  
DIVINE SERVICE-11:00AM

APRIL NEWSLETTER 2023



PALM SUNDAY SERVICE - APRIL 2, 11AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE - APRIL 6, 7PM

INFORMAL CHILDREN'S GOOD FRIDAY- APRIL 7, 3PM

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE - APRIL 7, 7PM

EASTER BREAKFAST APRIL 9, 9:30AM

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD - APRIL 9, 11AM