

FRIENDS IN CHRIST NEWS

Friends in Christ Lutheran Church – 1338 Clay Street – Morris, IL 60450 www.ficl.org Office: (M-F) 10:00 am-1:00 pm (815/941-1255)

Christ is risen indeed!

ONE TRUTH: One - Very - Stubborn - Truth

Something is happening:

A lot about Christianity is being challenged and called into question. Part of that is deserved. We admit, we are Christians who do not live up to the call and teachings we say are from Jesus. There are times we are unloving, unforgiving, unhumble, and very full of ourselves. Looking at us, it would make sense if Christianity was a failing religion.

But something is happening. Around the world there are millions turning to Jesus. So much that Christianity has become disliked by every movement, political philosophy and religion that wants to become more powerful. We hear about people turning to Jesus in China, North Korea, Iran and so many other places. One of the untold secrets of our time, almost never in any news sources is the continuing spread of Christianity. It takes a bit of deep searching to find this out, but it is happening. How is this possible?

How is it happening?

Here in the West, we say it's clearly not us. In fact, we are distressed by people turning away. How could it be us who are driving the expanse of the Christian faith? Maybe ... probably it's the new churches, the new believers in other parts of the world. But ...

Years ago, I sat down with some in South Africa and Botswana. I listened. I was surprised. They were lamenting the same thing: Our faith is not courageous like our grandparents. Some have turned away. Christianity among us is "an inch deep and five miles wide."

How, then, is Christianity growing? They were saying the same thing – It's clearly not us! And yet it *is* happening. How, then, is this happening?

Christianity has been persecuted from ancient Rome, under every Communist regime; suppressed under Islam, Japanese and Chinese emperors; mocked in universities by scholars and academics; ridiculed and panned on the news and in more movies than you could count. It has become popular to scorn and ridicule every

(continued on pg.2)

WORSHIP TIMES:

Saturday Evenings	...	5:30 p.m.
Sunday Mornings	...	9:30 a.m.
Maundy Thursday (<i>April 1st</i>)	...	7:00 p.m.
Good Friday (<i>April 2nd</i>)	...	7:00 p.m.
Easter Sunday (<i>April 4th</i>)	...	6:30 a.m.
	...	9:30 a.m.

(Sunday morning, Lent & Easter services are live-streamed at www.facebook.com/ficl)

(Tuesday Bible Study	...	9:00 a.m.)
		<i>(Online via ZOOM)</i>

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SAVE THE DATE:

APR 6:	Elder's Meeting	7:00 p.m.
APR 11:	Stewardship Board Meeting	10 30 a.m.
APR 18:	Shrine of the Passion	1 00 p.m.
APR 22:	Church Council	7 00 p.m.

Looking Ahead...

May 2 nd	Voter's Assembly	10:40 a.m.
May 9 th	Mother's Day	-
May 13 th	Ascension Day	-

part of what we believe. And yet, multitudes turn to Jesus.

I listened to a friend from overseas tell how he had recently been to a Zulu concert singing the great hymns of the Christian faith; and how he sat there remembering the story of his great-grandfather. That man was a missionary who had very little “success” and at the end of his life, dying from cancer, he was mocked. Those in the village where he lived gathered outside his house to sing out (call and response style) mocking his God and his faith as a complete failure. But only a few generations later my friend sat in the concert listening as the choir sang out loudly and boldly, in that same language, the story of salvation in Jesus Christ. How does this happen?

One Truth:

There is a very stubborn truth. It is the One Truth – the one that everything else that lasts is being built around. It is the truth that we speak to each other on Easter. Three simple words: Christ is risen.

By which I do not mean simply that Jesus was made alive in the grave and appeared to His disciples. There is so much more than that. And I do not mean that Jesus, rising from the dead, ascended and went back to heaven. That is not what we are talking about. If He had gone and left the disciples in charge Christianity would have long since disappeared.

No, Christ is risen, and this is the only thing that explains what has happened ever since. It's not us; and it's not my friends in Africa, or in any other part of the world. We are not that good. But we have a friend who is. We could say, “Jesus is on the move,” and He has been all along. He is gathering people into His kingdom to know Him; to call them His friends and share eternity with them.

A young man feels a tug, a pull toward something more and travels through a number of countries until he meets one who tells him about Jesus. Refugees in Europe seek out a pastor to ask why they are having dreams of Jesus. Another hates the name of Jesus, but then reads the Gospels to find out who this Jesus is. (These are stories I know about personally and have talked with some of those involved.)

Jesus is building His kingdom and His family. As He has always done, He is doing it one at a time. He is calling one soul at a time into His kingdom and into eternal life. He arranges events. He chooses specific verses and words from God that will call that one soul. He sends His Holy Spirit to work through Christians in ways we are not even aware of, to bring those words from God; and to bring home the hearing of the message, planting the seed of salvation. There is an amazing individual, personal part to every story of coming to faith; and the stories are as varied and as the people are different.

The one very stubborn truth:

This is the truth that will be there long after everything else in the world is gone. It cannot be stopped, or changed, or held back. It will keep on being the one truth until everything else is either built upon it or gives way to it. Christ is risen! This is the eternal truth, that gives eternity to all who believe and have it in their souls. Now that is remarkable! It is the only truth that can change who you are and will one day change what you are.

So, this Easter season when you hear the greeting: “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” remember, we are not just talking about something in the past. We say, “is.” Jesus **is** risen. He **is** among us when we gather. He **is** in our lives, and that is day after day. And He **is** calling and gathering an amazing number of millions from every part of the human race, to live forever with Him.

This is sweet! Nothing in any part of life can take that away (*Romans 8:31-39*). The journey with Jesus is the sweetest of all, to walk with Jesus in life forever! Honestly, the rest is just scenery, but it also will be amazing.

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen!

Rev Mark Willing



LWML CONVENTION 2021

Bonnie Nelson has been selected to be this year's delegate for NID – Zone 7 and has accepted the invitation to attend the LWML Convention this summer. Please pray for safe travels as she meets/worships/learns alongside hundreds of other LWML women from across the U.S. all while growing closer to our Lord.

Date:

June 24–27, 2021

Location:

Lexington, Kentucky

Theme:

Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus
Bonnie Nelson has been selected to be this year's delegate for the NID District

Scripture Verse:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (*Hebrews 12:1-2*).

President:

Debbie Larson

Goal Statement:

Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord.

Objectives:

Convention attendees will:

- Focus on Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament.
- Joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer.
- Serve our neighbors through witness and mission.

LWML

We will **not be meeting in April . . .**

(but we are hoping to meet soon, perhaps in May?)

Please watch the Sunday bulletin's insert for updates!

2019-2021 Mission Grant 21

LCMS Deaconess Ministry

LCMS Office of International Mission

\$39,523

LCMS Deaconesses are women who are full time professional church workers, trained to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a ministry of works of mercy, spiritual care, and teaching the Christian faith. The LCMS Deaconess Ministry program will provide LCMS students the opportunity to become a church professional, learning and training to understand the diaconal leadership, the work of deaconesses as applied to body and soul ministry. This grant will provide educational and financial support to our partner churches who introduced deaconess training programs within their church bodies like the Philippines, Latvia, Liberia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India.

BELOW: *Deaconess students in South Africa*



April
BIRTHDAYS

- 2nd Gary Gillette
- 4th Kris Farber
- 5th Ashley Van Heiden
- 6th Harold Carlson
Shaye Carter
- 7th Harry Benner
Scott Heren
- 17th Adolph Wendling
Brenda Collins
- 21st Michael Kahn
- 23rd Deidre Carlson
Judie Thompson
Alexa Thorson
- 26th Jacob Van Heiden
- 30th Nova Miller

*The LORD is my strength and power;
He has become my salvation.
This is my God, whom I will praise,
the God of my ancestors,
whom I will acclaim.*

- Exodus 15:2

April
ANNIVERSARIES

- 7th Don & Judy Johnson 59 years
- 9th Richard & Earlene Enervold 60 years
Duane & Mary Heren 66 years
- 23rd Michael & Laurie Applebee 33 years
- 24th Harold & Norma Carlson 56 years

Financial Report Friends in Christ Lutheran Church 2021



THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH DURING CORONAVIRUS

General Fund	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	YTD Actual	BUDGETED
Income	\$ 9,719.67	\$ 12,137.83				\$ 21,857.50	\$ 23,392.00
Expenses	\$ 9,409.76	\$ 9,308.01				\$ 18,717.77	\$ 23,382.00
Net Income (Loss)	\$ 309.91	\$ 2,829.82	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,139.73	

Prayer Calendar

APRIL 2021



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<p>1 Father, may we walk spiritually with Jesus on His pilgrimage to the cross, living every day in it's shadow. Luke 9:23</p>	<p>2 On this special day of Good Friday, I pray to the Lord, May His Blessings shine upon You and May He always keep you in His Loving care.</p>	<p>3 God, create in us a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within us. Psalm 51:10</p>
<p>4 Almighty and everlasting God, through the glorious resurrection of Your Son Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened to us the gate of eternal life. Jesus has risen! He has risen indeed! Alleluia!</p>	<p>5 Please pray daily for Pastor Willig, Deb Carter, Kim Farber and their families. Pray for Missionaries, Deaf Ministry, Doctors, Nurses and anyone working in the medical field, Police, Fire and EMT's. Those working everywhere.</p>	<p>6 Lord be with our Governor and Mayor and help them make good decisions for the state and city.</p>	<p>7 God teach us to rejoice in our sufferings because suffering produces perseverance, character and hope. Romans 5:1-11</p>	<p>8 Be with those working on the Corona Virus vaccine.</p>	<p>9 By Your bruised body, precious blood, and bitter agony, have mercy on me a sinner. I praise You, bless You and adore You because by Your death and resurrection You redeemed the world.</p>	<p>10 God, we pray that everyone who attended Easter service would be inspired to seek You first.</p>
<p>11 God, Thank You for loving the world so much that You gave your one and only Son so that we will have eternal life. John 3:16</p>	<p>12 Thank You Lord for watching over our congregation. Thank You for different ways we are worshipping. We ask you to bless our congregation as we worship You.</p>	<p>13 Lord bless those who are joining us in church and on line to worship You. Open their hearts so they may come to know You.</p>	<p>14 God, as we seek to follow Christ's example, please bless us with humble, servant's hearts. John 13:1-17</p>	<p>15 Lord, forgive us when we complain and test Your patience. Teach us to count our blessings, one by one. Ex. 17:1-7</p>	<p>16 Lord, be with our President and Vice President. Help them to make decisions that are good for all in the USA.</p>	<p>17 Lord, remind us that through every change You will remain faithful and steadfast. Hebrews 6:17</p>
<p>18 Pray for those who have just heard the message of God's love through Jesus that it would work faith in their hearts and move them to share the love of Jesus with others.</p>	<p>19 God, equip us with willing hearts, eager mouths, and able bodies to get the Word out to those whose who need to hear about You.</p>	<p>20 Lord, be present in the lives and work of military chaplains. We ask for your blessing on their ministry. Be with the soldiers and their families. Romans 8: 38-39 Genesis 31: 49</p>	<p>21 Lord, forgive us when we become spiritually blind. Help us to have courageous and selfless sight. John 9:1-41</p>	<p>22 Lord, when I struggle to make decisions and the path isn't clear, lead me in the way I should go. Psalm 32:8</p>	<p>23 Lord, etch onto our hearts that all things are possible for those who believe. Ezek. 37:1-14</p>	<p>24 Lord be with the people we know that need You in their lives. Open their hearts, minds, bodies and souls to hear Your Word and come to faith in You. Thank You Lord.</p>
<p>25 Be with those fighting the Corona Virus. Help them to get well Lord.</p>	<p>26 Lord, teach us to worship You in spirit and in truth. John 4:24</p>	<p>27 Lord during our more challenging times on this earth please bring us to trust You more deeply.</p>	<p>28 Father, I pray for forgiveness for my sins and for the ability to accept Your forgiveness. Matthew 6:12</p>	<p>29 Eternal Lord, allow me to live each day in the peace that comes through the good news of being forgiven, so that I in turn may be forgiven.</p>	<p>30 We pray for our family members that need You in their lives. Bring them to get to know You or bring them back to You. Open their hearts, minds, and souls to hear Your word and come to faith in You O Lord.</p>	

April, 2021 – Friends in Christ Lutheran Church, Morris, Illinois

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Important Notes: <u>Easter Sunday Schedule Update:</u> Sunrise Service remains at 6:30 AM Morning Worship will be at 9:10 AM				1 COMMUNION Maundy Thursday Worship 7:00 PM	2 Good Friday Tennebrae Service 7:00 PM	3
4 → Easter Sunday ← COMMUNION 6:30 AM – Sunrise Service 9:30 AM – Morning Service Live Streamed	5	6	7	8	9	10 5:30 PM –Worship
11 2nd Sunday of Easter 9:30 AM – Worship & Live Streamed 10:45 AM – Posted On-Line	12	13 9:00 AM – Bible Study 7:00 Elders	14	15	16	17 COMMUNION 5:30 PM –Worship
18 COMMUNION 2nd Sunday of Easter 9:30 AM – Worship & Live Streamed 10:45 AM – Posted On-Line	19	20 9:00 AM – Bible Study	21	22 7:00 Church Council	23	24 5:30 PM –Worship
25 2nd Sunday of Easter 9:30 AM – Worship & Live Streamed 10:45 AM – Posted On-Line	26	27 9:00 AM – Bible Study	28	29	30	May Dates: 5/2 Voters' Assembly 5/9 Mother's Day 5/13 Ascension Day