

# The *First* Word

Volume 27, Issue 5

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

April 2026

Seek **FIRST** His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

## Special April Dates

FLS Easter Break.....	March 30-April 6
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 1
<b>Maunder Thursday.....</b>	<b>April 2</b>
<b>Good Friday.....</b>	<b>April 3</b>
Easter Egg Hunt.....	April 4
<b>Resurrection of Our Lord.....</b>	<b>April 5</b>
Youth Easter Breakfast	
FLS Classes Resume.....	April 7
OWLS.....	April 9
First Edition Book Club.....	April 11
Joyce Nachtsheim (Touchmark)	
Second Sunday of Easter.....	April 12
WOW! Bible Study.....	April 14
Lifelight: <i>John</i> , Part 2	
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 15
Third Sunday of Easter.....	April 19
LWML MT District Convention.....	April 24-26
In Lewistown	
Fourth Sunday of Easter.....	April 26
WOW! Bible Study.....	April 28
Lifelight: <i>John</i> , Part 2	
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 29

He Is  
**RISEN**  
**INDEED!**



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## The Romans sent a message; God sent one, too



The rulers of the Roman Empire wanted everyone under their power to understand clearly that it would be very costly to try to overthrow their government. They conceived the idea of crucifixion as a way of sending an unforgettable message to all people under their control. Death on a cross would be a slow, excruciatingly painful death. The cross would be put in a very public place so as many as possible would get the message: Don't even think of defying Roman rule!

That is why Christ was crucified on Golgotha hill close to a busy road where no passerby could miss the shocking scene. Christ was guilty of nothing. Yet His enemies hated Him so much that they told Pilate, Rome's representative in Jerusalem, that Jesus was a danger to Roman rule. Christ's enemies said to Pilate, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (John 19:12). Pilate caved in to the clamor of the crowd and allowed Jesus to be crucified.

But those who saw to it that Jesus suffered death on the cross did not know that God had a message to send as well. God victoriously raised Christ from the

dead! God touched the precious body of His Son and infused it with life, glorious, dynamic life, life in all of its fullness.

God turned the cross, the executioner's tool of death, into a dramatic symbol of victory. The empty cross and the empty tomb, along with the resurrected body of Christ, reveal God's victory over the worst deed humans might do — the assassination of Jesus, the Savior.

That is why we put crosses everywhere: boldly, proudly, joyously, triumphantly. It is why we glory in the cross always. It stands eternally "towering o'er the wrecks of time" (John Bowring).

After the Resurrection, Jesus' friend, Peter, explained God's message to all of Christ's enemies with these bold and certain words: "*This Jesus, you crucified and killed ... But God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it ... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses ... Therefore know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified*" (Acts 2:23-24; 32, 36). That is what Easter is all about. All praise to the living Lord!

— The Newsletter Newsletter

## From Ashes to Alleluias

*You are dust, and to dust you shall return* (Genesis 3:19).

The pastor marks a cross on our foreheads and says, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." We are reminded that from dust we were formed and to dust we will return. Doesn't sound very encouraging, does it?

But look what happens in between! In spite of our falling from God in the Garden of Eden, our ashes turn to alleluias because of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection! We begin our Lenten journey

fully aware of our sin-filled condition, but also aware that those ashes on our foreheads are in the form of a cross to shout out to the world that the alleluia is coming soon!

That "Ring around the Rosie" refrain we sang as children was right on target: "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down." But we are assured that whenever we do fall down, the Lord will pick us up! Now that's a reason for some alleluias!

Dr. Rich Bimler, "From Death to Life,"  
*Devotions For Our Journey From Cross To Empty Tomb*,  
published by Creative Communications for the Parish.

# Women of the Word

The W.O.W. (Women of the Word) Bible study group is continuing our study of Lighthouse: *John*, Part 1. We begin Lighthouse: *John*, Part 2 on Tuesday, March 24. We meet **every second and fourth Tuesday** at 9:30 a.m. at the church and we'd love to have you join us!

Following are the dates for spring. Please flag your calendar:

**April 14 and 28**  
**May 12 and 26**

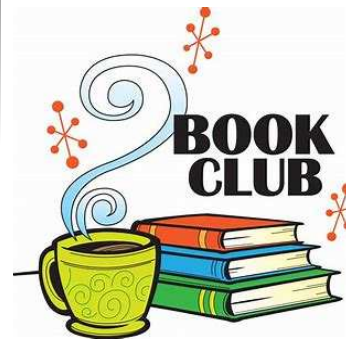


**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**

We are currently in the process of growing our Lutherans For Life Chapter 318. The Helena area Life chapter has been in existence since October 21, 2003. Member churches are First Lutheran in Helena, Faith Lutheran in Boulder, and Holy Trinity in Belgrade.

Our church is currently seeking a secretary, treasurer, committee chairman, and members. Interested parties can pick up the membership brochure on the display table in the Fellowship Hall or on the shelf outside the school office.

Please prayerfully consider becoming a Gospel-motivated voice for life by joining LFL. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Sue Taylor in the First Lutheran School office, or on her personal cell phone: (406) 461-0272.



First Edition Book Club members will meet at **12 noon** on Saturday, April 11, (one week later than usual) at Touchmark, Joyce Nachtsheim's new home, for lunch and a stimulating discussion of *Pioneer Doctor: The Story of a Woman's Work* by Mari Grana.

**Please RSVP to Joyce by Saturday, April 4, by calling or texting (406) 459-9002.**

The May luncheon and discussion will be held at **12 noon\*** on Saturday, May 2, at the home of Lori Northrup. For the May meeting, members will read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot.

**Please RSVP to Lori by Wednesday, April 29, by calling or texting (406) 461-5378**

Ladies generally carpool to Lori's house, and should watch for more information to come from Linda Fromm regarding the time and place to meet for that carpool.

*\*Time for the MAY meeting may be subject to change, depending on what is decided at the April meeting.*

## And the winner is ... cherry!

The Trustees would like to thank the congregational members for their participation in the selection of — and the donations toward the cost of — the fencing around the pit area in the parking lot.

Congregational members donated \$1,810 toward the cost of the fence, and the color of choice was cherry, which should go well with the trim on the church.

We expect to install the new fencing the end of May and the beginning of June.

Thank you, again, for your participation!

Larry Laposky  
Chairman

## All ladies invited!

The LWML Montana District Convention is set for April 24-26, 2026, at the Yogo Inn and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lewistown, Montana.

Please see the current *Montana Missive* for registration forms and additional information about the convention activities. A list of restaurants and hotels in Lewistown is located near the *Missives* and also posted on the white board in Ziegler Hall.

Ladies who register by Wednesday, April 1, will save \$15 off the normal registration fee!



### The First Word

Published monthly by:

First Lutheran Church  
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Helena, MT 59601  
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Rev. Larry A. Miller.....Pastor  
Linda Fromm.....Editor  
Shari Miller.....Calendar/Servant Schedule  
Volunteer Staff.....Printing/Collation

**Deadline for the May First Word is Wednesday, April 22. Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email them to: [lindafromm@mac.com](mailto:lindafromm@mac.com)**

## “He is not here, for He is risen, as He said!” Alleluia!

(Matthew 28)



Aside from Jesus' cry "It is finished!" there exist no words quite equal to these: "He is risen!" From death, from hell, from the tomb, indeed, to life and it everlasting. "Alleluia!"

Think of it. **Since His ministry began, Jesus knew that Calvary awaited Him.** Calvary was why He had come to Bethlehem's manger in the first place. Calvary was the goal of His earthly journey. Calvary's cross was preordained. So He "set His face toward Jerusalem." There, He knew, the greatest miscarriage of justice in human history would take place. There, He knew, the only Perfect Man ever born to woman would be sacrificed. There, He knew God would die! His presence in Jerusalem would lead to the Cross on the Day of Preparation, just before that most solemn and celebrated of Jewish feasts: the Passover.



Three times on that journey to the cross, Jesus had told Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the other disciples that this would happen: He would be slain. Yet, they were completely unprepared for the reality, for the horror, for the awful bloodthirsty and bloody truth of it all.



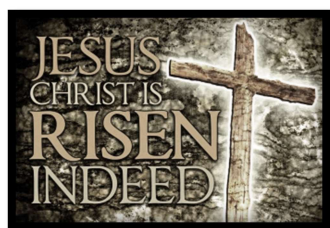
Yes, and three times **He also told them that the ultimate, unbelievable, rectifying Resurrection would follow.** But they failed to understand what He was talking about: that He would rise again!

Peter finally got it at Pentecost. In his sermons following that auspicious event and recorded in chapters 2,3,4, and 5 of Acts, the Spirit-transformed fisherman, the Christian church's first evangelist, boldly attests to the "foolishness" of the resurrected Christ.

Paul, the missionary without equal, wrote to the church at Corinth that these are of "**first importance**": Jesus died for our sins; He was raised; and, He appeared to others (1 Corinthians 15). To emphasize the reality of Jesus' rising and subsequent appearances, Paul lists the witnesses: first Peter, then the twelve, then more than five hundred at one time, James who was Jesus' earthly half-brother and the first bishop of Jerusalem; all the apostles at once, and, lastly, Paul himself.

Why are these post-Easter appearances of "first importance?" Well, Paul tells us in the last verses of Romans, chapter 4. Here he writes of "... Jesus, our Lord. Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our **justification.**" There it is: **our justification!**

The Lutheran Study Bible states that Justification is the "... dominant theological truth in Paul's letters and the Scriptures" (p.1903). It means that the believer (the "justified" person) raised up with Christ in baptism, is declared righteous! That, dear friends, is the verdict, the final legal act completed by God for us in Christ's Resurrection! Not only are your sins and mine paid for by Jesus' death, we are declared righteous by His Resurrection. **Justified: "just as if we never sinned."** "**Right before God!**" "**Righteous!**" **Alleluia!**



**Happy Resurrection Day ... now ... every day!**  
**Happy Easter! God bless you ... you righteous one!**

*Pastor Miller*

## Holy Week



## Worship Services

During Holy Week, we will observe Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter! The services of Holy Week recall the events of the week that led up to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This week is considered the chief time in the life of the church! Join us for our worship during Holy Week and Easter, as we contemplate the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ ... For Us!

**Palm Sunday** marks the beginning of Holy Week. During our Divine Worship Services, with the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we rejoice with the crowds, singing Psalms, waving palms, and shouting

"Hosanna!"—"Lord, Save us!" as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

**March 29 ~ 8:15 & 11 am**

**Maundy (Holy) Thursday** takes its name from the Latin word ("mandatum") for "commandment" as we remember when Jesus encouraged His disciples, "*A new commandment I give to you: Love one another.*" In this Divine service, we remember the institution of the Lord's Supper and participate in the the Sacrament, receiving forgiveness, life, and salvation.

**April 2 ~ 12:10 & 7 pm**

**Good Friday** commemorates the day when our Lord gave his life to save us from our sins. In these somber Tenebrae services, we contemplate the cost that Jesus paid for our redemption. The

Tenebrae (which means "progressive darkness") service includes the gradual removal and extinguishing of candles with the reading of the Passion, as well as the *strepitus* (the loud sound symbolizing the closing of the tomb), and our leaving in silence, contemplating the love of Jesus that moved Him to die for us.

**April 3 ~ 12:10 & 7 pm**

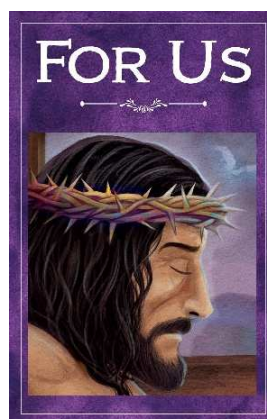
**Easter Sunday** is the day of the resurrection – a joyous celebration of our Lord's victory over sin, death, and the devil. This festival is the high-point of the Christian year and a source of peace, joy, and hope!

Come out in the darkness, welcome the happy morn of the Resurrection, and rejoice in the Light of Christ, your risen and living Lord, in our **SonRise Celebration** of Scripture and Song!

**April 5 ~ 6:30 am**

**Our Resurrection Festival Divine Services** will include special music by our Chancel Choir and others, an Easter Message Especially for Children, the Sacrament of Holy Communion Feast of Victory for Our Lord, the return of Alleluias, and great reason for Easter and Forever Joy in Jesus, our risen and ever-living, ever-loving Savior!

**April 5 ~ 8:15 & 11 am**



**Give your family and friends a special Easter Gift** by inviting them to join us for each and all of these services! What blessings God has in store in His Word and Sacrament ... **For Us!**

# Where, oh where, are those eggs?

First’s annual Easter Egg Hunt is set for Saturday morning, April 4. The church doors will open at 9:30 a.m., we’ll have an Easter devotion at 10 a.m., and the hunt will begin shortly thereafter. (We are asking members to contribute individually-wrapped small candies and toys to fill the eggs. Please bring donations to the church by Palm Sunday, March 29.)

Pack up your kids, your friends’ kids, and the neighborhood kids for an exciting morning of crafts, cookie decorating, storytelling, and snacks!



A delicious Easter breakfast will be served by First Lutheran’s youth group on Easter morning, Sunday, April 5, immediately following the SonRise worship service (about 7:15 a.m.).

The youth are asking for donations of baked goods from the congregation, and if you would like to do so, please sign up on the list in the Fellowship Hall.

Plan now to join your brothers and sisters in Christ to enjoy scrumptious food and fellowship, and support the youth group in its various activities.

A free-will offering will be taken.



## Congregational President Mercer issues second call for nominations for open positions on First’s Mission & Ministry Council



In preparation for the annual Voters’ Assembly meeting, generally held in late May or early June, MMC President Jason Mercer has issued a second call for nominations for officers and MMC at-large members to be elected at that meeting. The list of

nominees will be closed at the time the meeting date and time, agenda, and slate of candidates is published prior to the meeting.

Basic duties of the Vice President include: presiding at all meetings of the MMC and/or the congregation when the President is absent, or when requested by the President to do so; initiating counsel with the President should a violation of policy occur; and leading the nominating committee for the election of officers and members of the MMC. *The Vice President does not automatically move into the office of President after finishing the 2-year term as Vice President.*

Members of the MMC may not serve on other boards or committees of the church.

The MMC generally meets one evening each month, for approximately two hours.

If you are interested in sharing your God-given time and skills in one of these positions, please contact MMC President Jason Mercer. He may be reached by phone at (406) 438-1182, or by email to: [jmercer@m-m.net](mailto:jmercer@m-m.net).

*Note: You do not need to have another member of the congregation nominate you; simply ask Jason to add your name to the list of nominees for the position in which you are willing to serve.*

Nominations are now open for the office of President (2-year term); Vice President (2-year term); and three MMC at-large members (each for 2-year terms). All terms will begin on July 1, 2026, and end on June 30, 2028.

Basic duties of the President include: presiding at all meeting of the Voters’ Assembly and the Mission & Ministry Council; enforcing the Constitution and Bylaws; and performing the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Voters’ Assembly from time to time.

## The Book Fair is coming!

First Lutheran School will be sponsoring a Book Fair on Friday, May 29, and Saturday, May 30, in conjunction with its “Dino”-Mite Readers read-a-thon.

We would love to see our members and their families at the Book Fair, which will be held in the Fellowship Hall at the church.

If you would like to order books ahead of time and have them delivered directly to your home, you can still support the book Fair by ordering them at our website: [paperpie.com/brandpartner/G3743/event/4082795](http://paperpie.com/brandpartner/G3743/event/4082795).

Thank you for supporting our school’s fundraising efforts and finding yourself, your children, and grandchildren some good books to enjoy.



## Without a clue

C. Gray Norsworthy, a pastor in Atlanta, once shared a story about the woman who prepared his worship bulletin.

She was faithful in her work but didn’t have much background in church hymns.

One week, Pastor Norsworthy handed her a draft of the service and hoped she could decipher his handwriting.

When he reviewed the finished bulletin, he noticed the final hymn was titled “Just As I Am, Without a Clue.”

Whether it’s “without a clue” or “without a plea,” the truth remains the same: we all come to Jesus just as we are — and we all need Him.

— *The Newsletter Newsletter*



***“I want to die with the heart of a child beating in my old chest and, God willing, I want to be remembered as a tiny seed that has been planted in the dark, that has roots in eternity and has died singing of the Resurrection.”*** — Sr. Paulette Anne Ducharme

— *from Holy Humor: Inspirational Wit and Cartoons*  
By Cal and Rose Samra

## April Birthdays!

### April 1

Kristin Basinger  
Arlena Deppmeier  
Sonja Elvbakken

### April 2

Richard Ellwein

### April 3

Darlene Staffelt

### April 4

Quinn Hanson  
Ryan Rose

### April 5

Jacob Balcerzak  
Elijah Walker

### April 6

Ian McGrane

### April 7

Walter Wareham

### April 8

Kim Ballard  
Lillian Buhr  
Jonathan Maxwell

### April 9

Joseph Ellwein  
Heather Johnson

### April 10

Tierney Beatty  
Zachary Everson  
Cheyenne Frank  
Crystal Gozelanski

Larry Shields

### April 11

Chuck Ballard

### April 13

Jean Hanson

### April 14

Liz Belcourt  
Rena Belcourt  
Henry Schmeltzer  
Amber Smith

### April 15

Zachary Antonick  
Kristina Johnson

### April 16

Betty Burton

### April 18

Pippa Davis  
Remi Carlson Shields

### April 19

Joe Jorgensen

### April 20

Dale Young

### April 21

Meagan Kraft  
Rob Lebahn  
Gibson McIntosh  
Nathan Mohs

### April 22

Dallas Anderson  
Briana Brott

Chris Brott

Carla Smith

### April 24

Jana Nygaard

### April 25

Emilie Glenn  
Julianne Hill  
Sid Lebahn  
Daniel O’Malley  
Nicolaus Peterson

### April 27

Mariah Mercer

### April 28

Ruth Alling

Jerry Smith

### April 29

Sharyn Gunderson





# Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director  
Sue Taylor

Get Set Teacher  
Shannon Champagne

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher  
Lori Radtke

After Care Provider  
Emily DuPre

Lunch Assistant  
Jeannie Hubbard

Pastor  
Larry A. Miller

## What is Easter?

What do you think of when you think about Easter?  
Eggs? A giant bunny? Candy?

We often find ourselves focusing on the “fun” in holidays, especially with our littles.

**But Easter is SO MUCH MORE!**

We celebrate Easter because an **AMAZING** thing happened many, many years ago!  
JESUS was crucified, died, was buried, and then ...

**HE rose again!** What? Really? YES!  
HE did this for US, so that our sins may forever be forgiven!  
Thank you, JESUS, for saving us!

We asked our littles, “What would you say to Jesus if you saw Him after He rose again?”

### Get Set

### Pre-K



**Beau**  
Wow! You’re back!  
**Charli**  
Hi, Jesus!  
**Eli** Thank you for saving us!  
**Havyn:** I be good.  
**Jane:** Do you want a kitty?  
Because He might love kitties.  
**Lola:** I love you!

**Clyde**  
I would find Easter eggs for Him.  
**Colter:**  
I would give Jesus a big hug and say,  
“I love You, Jesus!”  
**Dean:**  
Thank You that You are the King!  
**Ember:**  
I praise You! You are the best King in the  
whole wide world.  
**Kasen:**  
Thank You for dying on the cross.  
**Lily:**  
I love You! Thank You for dying for our sins.  
**Olivia:**  
I love You, God! I love You lots, and I will clean  
up my room!

**Happy Easter**  
from the students and staff at First Lutheran School!

First Lutheran Church & School  
 2231 Broadway  
 Helena, MT 59601

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 School Phone: (406) 442-6913  
 Website: [www.firstlutheranhelena.org](http://www.firstlutheranhelena.org)  
 Email: [churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org)

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of  
 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

**THE MISSION of First Lutheran Church is  
 "Sharing God's Word with Everyone, Everywhere!"**

Tune in to **"The Lutheran Hour"**— Sundays at 8 a.m. on the Christian Satellite Network 91.1-FM  
 or listen on **"Family Talk"** on Sirius XM 131  
**"Woman to Woman"**— Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on KMTX 105.3-FM

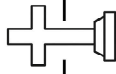
**Just for KIDS!**

**PUZZLE**

**FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS**

Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection  
 helps us live with gratitude every day.

Use the picture and number code to fill in the blanks for Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV







- 1. Jesus
- 2. weary
- 3. endured
- 4. opposition
- 5. cross
- 6. endured
- 7. scorned
- 8. shame











- 1. Jesus
- 2. lose
- 3. pioneer
- 4. sinners
- 5. perfecter
- 6. him
- 7. faith
- 8. hand










- 1. eyes
- 2. us
- 3. joy
- 4. heart
- 5. right
- 6. grow
- 7. God
- 8. throne



"... fixing our  on  the  and 





 of . For the  set before 

he  the ,  its 

, and sat down at the  

of the  of . Consider  who 

such  from ,

so that you will not   and  .

Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV

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 Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV