

April

**First Lutheran Church,
Newton IA**

2015 First Epistle

From the Pastor... **Does questioning or doubting mean I am lacking in faith?**

This is an important question in our lives as followers of Christ. We've just celebrated one of the most amazing and unbelievable stories of the world—Jesus, who was dead, was raised to new life! If I have questions or doubts or uncertainties on this or other aspects of Christian faith, am I somehow lacking? Let me tell a story:

Jesus had twelve men who made up his inner circle. They listened to Jesus, learned from him, and tried to emulate him in their lives. After Jesus died, the masses that had followed Jesus dispersed and the inner circle of disciples (and others) sat in locked rooms fearful for their very lives. Their leader, their teacher, their Lord had been executed and they were lost.

One day, ten of the disciples were huddling in the locked room, Judas (who betrayed Jesus) had killed himself, and the twelfth—Thomas—was not around; we don't know why. And amazingly, Jesus appeared to the ten. He showed them his hands, his feet, his side, he ate food with them and gave them peace. It was an absolutely amazing event! Jesus, their leader and Lord, the one who had died, was alive and speaking with them! All of sudden, new hope infused the disciples. All was not lost.

After Jesus left them, Thomas finally came back. The other ten began speaking over each other trying to tell Thomas of the amazing thing that had just happened. But dampening their spirits, Thomas announced that he would not believe that Jesus was alive again until he saw for himself. He would have to put his hands into Jesus' side and palms before he'd believe.

Think about this for a moment. Thomas and the other ten disciples had radically different beliefs. Thomas actively questioned their assertions about Jesus. And yet, despite the differences, despite the questions and uncertainties Thomas had, he stayed with the community. He stayed with the other disciples challenging them on their beliefs while also listening to what they had to say.

A week later, Jesus again came to visit the disciples in their locked room. Thomas was with them. Jesus approached Thomas and told him to put his fingers into Jesus' palms and to put his hand into Jesus' side. At that point, his eyes open with amazement, Thomas shouted out, "My Lord and my God!" And Jesus did not chastise Thomas. He did not rebuke him or think less of him for having doubts and questions. Instead, Jesus came to the one with questions and provided answers.

Throughout history we have labeled this disciple "Doubting Thomas" and we have spoken his name with a little bit of derision—this is the one who wouldn't believe. But is that what we should get from this story? Is that the lesson to be learned? I don't think so.

Questions and uncertainty is part of being human. I think that the lesson to be learned from this story is that we, like Thomas, ought to voice our questions, our concerns, our uncertainties. If something doesn't make sense and just doesn't seem to fit into our experiences (for instance, dead people don't generally become alive despite what others may say) then we, like Thomas, need to voice those concerns. Only by voicing them, only by bringing them out into the open can they be addressed in any meaningful way.

The other lesson we should take from this story deals with the other ten disciples' response to Thomas. When he questioned and doubted their experience and the truth they knew, they did not

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Sunday Worship
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Fellowship & Education
10:30 a.m.

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Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday
9:00-Noon
or by appointment

Happy Birthday



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|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| 4/3 | Brayden Geilenfeldt | 4/14 | Laker Kubik |
| 4/4 | Pam Hamilton | 4/16 | Carter Smith |
| 4/7 | Nathan Odland | 4/17 | Emily Cantu |
| 4/8 | Olivia Johnson | 4/19 | Lynette Birkenholtz |
| | Connie Zimmermann | 4/20 | Landen Karsten |
| 4/9 | Nick Cummins | 4/23 | Gregory Forsyth |
| | Stan Kirchhoff | | Marilyn Main |
| | Judith Monroe | 4/27 | Andrew George |
| 4/11 | Charles Allen | 4/28 | Nathan Lampe |
| | Lexi Frehse | 4/30 | Janelle Karsten |
| 4/12 | Christina Thompson | | Jennifer Sumpter |
| 4/13 | Dirk Amundsen | | |



Food Pantry Donations Needed

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month. Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month. **For the month of April, laundry detergent and dish soap ; have been requested.** There is a basket in the narthex for all food pantry items.

Thank you for being so generous.

Chancel Flowers

- April 5— Easter Lilies
April 12— Easter Lilies
April 19—
April 26—

Fellowship

- April 5— Easter breakfast
April 12—Cammie, Ing, Gloria
April 19—Dottie, Carolyn, Pat
April 26—

Please sign up to provide flowers and fellowship.

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kick him out. They did not call into question his faith. Rather they remained in community with him. They still lived with him. They still worked with him. They still loved him. They gave him the space and time to wrestle with these questions and, finally, come to an answer on his own, with the help of Jesus.

So, to answer the question posed: Questioning—dare I say, doubting—is part of the Christian experience. Rather than being something to try and squash, it is something to be embraced. After all, the first step in gaining understanding is to admit that I do not know. Let us embrace our questions. Let us use our questions to help us grow into new life as the children of God that we are.

Peace,
Pastor Zach

Penny Challenge Jars Results

Men	Women
-17,186	-15,382

**Pastor gets a pie...in the face!
At the Congregation Meeting,
May 17th, come watch the fun!**



Wednesday Night Community Dinners:

THANK YOU to the people that helped with our March Wednesday Night Community Dinner! Our next dinner is scheduled on April 22nd and will be held at First Lutheran. Then we will help with the April 29th dinner. Please watch for the sign up sheets in the narthex and join us to continue this very important community service.

Will You Help Usher at Church?

Ushers help the church service run smoothly and on time, so having a full staff of ushers on a regular basis is a quietly important aspect of our service. Would you be able to help one Sunday a month? Please contact the office. If you can help occasionally, please talk with one of the ushers when you come in to church to offer your assistance.

Or Run the Slideshow?

If you would like to help run the slideshows for announcements and service by advancing the screens in time with the service, please contact the church office.

April Choices in Mission

The Jasper County O.P.E.N. board has spent over 20 years providing international programming for the greater Jasper County area. Many of our families have been touched hosting visitors as well as attending programs provided by our group.

The Ukrainian people are suffering at this time. We have been in contact with our sister city, Smila, and learned of their serious needs. The hospital has shortages that leave all patients at risk. Additionally, many young men are returning with injuries and the medical center is unprepared. Specifically, they need wound supplies, wheel chair pads, mattresses, and basic medical supplies. Not only do they not have the funds to purchase these, but the supplies are not available. Choices in Mission has selected this as our April project. All donations to First Lutheran will be matched up to \$5000. Money will be raised all spring, supplies purchased and shipped in May or June. We thank you for your support!

WELCA (Women of the ELCA) Cluster 2 Spring Gathering, Saturday, April 11, 2015

WELCA's Spring Gathering will be held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 3001 S. 6th Street in Marshalltown and is open to all women of the ELCA and is totally handicap accessible.

Pastor Michael Herschberger will give the Bible study over Matthew 6:12, "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors".

The Program Speaker is David Hicks of Youth and Shelter Services of Marshalltown. Southeastern Iowa Women's board Representative, Sandy Chandonia will give a report. Offerings from units will go half to Southeastern Iowa Women's Organization and half to Youth and Shelter Services of Marshalltown.

A business meeting will follow with the election and installation of Coordinator and Recorder/Secretary positions.

Love-In-Kind-Gifts will be given to the House of Compassion of Marshalltown (homeless shelter in Marshalltown). They need paper products, dish & laundry detergent, diapers (larger than newborn), feminine hygiene products, body wash, shampoo, aspirin/Tylenol, cold medicine, etc. No food items please.

Meals on Wheels in May

First Lutheran will again be delivering meals on weekends in May. It is very rewarding as the people are so thankful for what you do. We pick up the meals from Skiff at 11:00 a.m. It takes about 1-1/2 hours on Saturday and Sunday. If you could commit to only one day that would be fine. We would be happy to pair mentors with folks who have not done this before, so come try something new, no experience is necessary.

Please contact Sarah Sandquist at (792-7702) if you have questions or could help out.

THANKS to all those who gave Easter Lilies:

Dirk & Marlys Amundsen in memory of our parents.

Steve & Ing Benskin in memory of Ed & Hedy Klavins, Betty & Wendell Benskin & family.

Cantu family in honor of the Glory of God.

Choir members in honor of our choir director, Jayne Goos, for all her work and dedication.

Steven & Pam Comer in memory of Pam's father.

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Corinne & Bruce Coyle in memory of Corinne's mother, Mildred Stover and Bruce's father, Robert Coyle.

Nick, Kristi, Colin and Allyson Cummins in honor of our family, both on earth and in heaven.

Matt & Dianne Egenes and family in memory of Paul & Lois Egenes.

Charles & Elaine Elliott in celebration of Christ's victory over death and thankfulness that he did this for us.

Bob & Judy Floss in honor of our parents.

Pat Foote in memory of Richard Foote.

Greg & Chris Forsyth in memory of our grandparents, LaVerne & Arthur Neilsen, Tom Wenger, and Bob Macon.

Andy & Evelyn George in honor of Orville & Alma Roth.

Andy & Evelyn George in memory of Don & IvaLou George.

Jayne & David Goos in honor of our parents and children.

Gloria & Jim Grant in memory of our daughter Darla Swalwell.

Tom & Terri Hayden in honor of Tom's father.

Tom & Terri Hayden in honor of Terri's father.

Hal Herbold in memory of parents Howard & Alice Herbold.

Hal Herbold in memory of uncle and aunt Glenn & Tudy Herbold.

Jane & Gary Johnson in memory of Paul & Lois— 1st Easter without them!

Stan & Carolyn Kirchoff in honor of our risen Lord!

Fred Matthias in honor of Dot Logan.

Dotty Mittelstadt in memory of Robert Mittelstadt.

Ken, Jane, Nathan, Kendra and Michael Odland in memory of Irvin Odland.

Ken, Jane, Nathan, Kendra and Michael Odland in memory of Robert, David and Philip Biederman.

Jan Olson in honor of Jesus Christ—He is risen!

Al & Barb Orsund in memory of our parents.

Jodi Morgan-Peters & Kip Peters in memory of Steve Morgan and our grandparents.

Craig & Betty Peterson in memory of Harold & Marion Peterson and Dillon & Dorothy Finney.

Dennis & Vicki Porter in memory of Edward & Velma Pederson.

Dennis & Vicki Porter in memory of George & Janet Porter.

Duane & Marie Quanbeck in honor of our medical missionaries Paula & Dennis Lofstrom.

Tom & Ruth Sharp in memory of our parents.

Tom & Ruth Sharp in memory of Paul & Lois Egenes.

Ron, Sara, and Andy Shockey in memory of B.F., Betty and Karen Carlson and Harriet Shockey.

Colleen Spain & family in memory of Bob Spain.

Candy Thompson in memory of Margaret, Paul and Debra Thompson.

Laird & Julie Trusler in memory of our parents.

Connie & Marv Zimmermann in honor of our children.

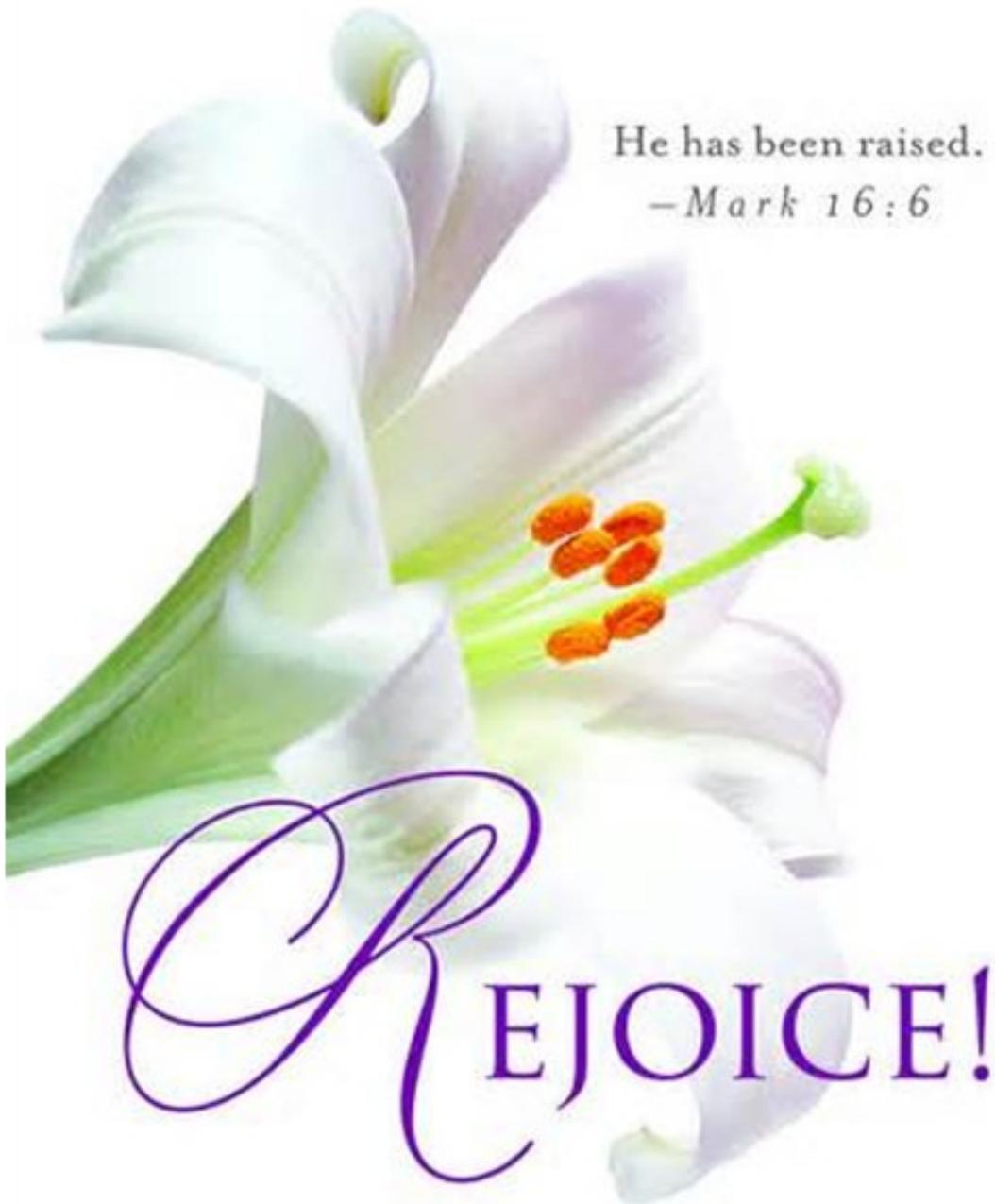
Connie & Marv Zimmermann in honor of our grandchildren.

Prayer Corner

Please pray for all of our families, friends and church family. Pray for the love and joy in our hearts, that we experience in our risen savior Jesus Christ, to shine out to our families and friends. Pray for a loving greeting to our reemerging earth and neighbors. Please continue to pray for our congregation, our leaders, our community and our world.

2014 Giving Statements

Your 2014 Giving Statements are available for pick up in the narthex. Please take them home for your tax records.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.