

**FIRST
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

Pastor Mark Holmes

pastor@newtonfirstlutheran.org

515-321-4882

President

Jim Lammey

JimLammey78@gmail.com

641-792-0802

Secretary

Jane Johnson

janebockwoldtjohnson@gmail.com

(641) 792-0042

Co-Treasurers

David Goos

goos2104@iowatelecom.net

641-792-8818

Corinne Coyle

corinnecoyle9@gmail.com

515-669-2983

Administrative Assistant

Nicole Vitales

office@newtonfirstlutheran.org

832-580-7451

Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours
Tuesday & Thursday
1:00—5:00 p.m.
or by appointment



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From Pastor Mark Holmes

**THE WONDER
OF THE
EMPTY TOMB**

The ancient world boasted of seven wonders: the pyramids of Egypt; the hanging gardens of Babylon; the temple of the goddess Diana at Ephesus; the lighthouse at Alexandria, Egypt; the Colossus (a huge bronze statue) in the harbor at Rhodes; the statue of the pagan god Zeus at Olympia, Greece; and the tomb of the Persian king Halicarnassus.

Of these ancient wonders, only the pyramids are still standing. All the others have crumbled, along with the ancient world powers whose accomplishments they memorialized. But another wonder from the ancient world is still very much alive today. This wonder is more

significant than all seven of these ancient landmarks put together. This is the wonder of the empty tomb of Jesus at Jerusalem.

When the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb, the forces of evil seemed to be victorious at last. But Jesus was raised on the third day. His resurrection proved that He was more powerful than sin and death and all the other negative forces that Satan uses against us.

Wonder of wonders, Jesus lives! I hope you can join us (at church!) on Easter morning to celebrate the Resurrection victory! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

While I've got your attention...

Please be aware that our in-person worship during Holy Week and Easter is a trial run. Our church council will be meeting after Easter to determine what changes or restrictions must be made for us to continue in-person worship or if we need to return to online services. We ask that you continue to wear a mask, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer, and continue to social distance. As more folks are receiving the vaccine, we are cautiously optimistic that, as long as we continue to follow these guidelines, we can move forward with worshipping in person. Thanks! Living in God's Amazing Grace!

Pastor Mark Holmes

Special dates

- Maundy Thursday,
April 1, 2021
- Good Friday,
April 2, 2021
- Easter Sunday,
April 4, 2021
- Administrative Professionals Day,
April 21, 2021

Directories

The updated 2021 church directories are available here at the church. There will be some left in the pews during Holy Week services. Please feel free to take one home with you.

Bible Quiz

We know the name of only one of the two disciples to whom the risen Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus. Who was he?



- A. John
- B. Paul of Tarsus
- C. Joseph of Arimathea
- D. Cleopas

Answer on Pg. 6

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 months of April.

**Raviolis,
Spaghetti Oh's,
(Canned) Veggie soup**
have been requested.

Please take all
donations directly to the Salvation army
Mon-Fri 8 am—4 pm

Thank you for being so generous.



Christian symbol

LILY—The lily that blooms around Easter is a symbol of Christ's resurrection because it rises from a seemingly lifeless bulb decaying in the ground. It is also used as a symbol of Christ himself. The lily, a symbol of purity, is often used to represent the Virgin Mary.

Believing in

Sometimes we get caught up in thinking we need to understand God in order to have faith. But faith is more about trust than knowledge; it's more about believing in someone than believing information. A child, for instance, doesn't have to know the precise roads to Grandma's house; he only needs to believe in his parents and their ability and desire to get him there safely. Similarly, we need not understand all the intricacies of how God works; we can take a cue from the disciples and let belief in the risen Christ transform and empower us.

In the words of Madeleine L'Engle (The Rock That Is Higher): "The disciples did not bother to try to understand the resurrection body. They doubted, and then they believed. They believed something so wonderful that it changed this broken, fragmented, beaten-down little group of men and women in a moment from depression to enthusiasm, from despair to new life, vibrant and unafraid."

Cultivating kindness

Kind hearts are the gardens.

Kind thoughts are the roots.

Kind words are the flowers.

Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
and keep out the weeds.

Fill it with sunshine,





Zinga News! Where is Dodoma?

The big news from Tanzania is the March 17 death of the country's president John Magufuli, famous for announcing, quite prematurely, that the country had conquered Covid. He did not acknowledge its presence until the death of the vice president of Tanzania's Zanzibar Island in mid-February. While rumors swirled that Magufuli himself suffered from Covid-19, the official cause of death is heart failure.

His vice president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, will serve out his 5-year term, which ends in October 2025. The 61-year-old Hassan is Africa's only current female national leader, and is affectionately known as Mama Samia. She is known as a capable leader, and hopes are high for Tanzania under her leadership. Please pray for her and for the country at this time of change.

At Zinga, they are seeing more cases of respiratory infections, for the most part mild.

Dr. Bon tells of a fifteen-year-old girl who was struggling in school because of trouble hearing. She had been to other hospitals, but no one was able to help her. At the Children's Hospital she was diagnosed with a fungal infection in her ear, which had created a huge plug near the eardrum. After ten days of ear drops and oral medication, hearing improved. Finally, her ear was irrigated and wax removed, instantly restoring her hearing. But the story doesn't end there: a few days later, the girl and her mother returned to the clinic to say thank-you.

To read more about Zinga and see a (before!) picture of the girl, go to the IHP website at www.ihptz.org and click on IHP Monthly Update.

The February Update also contains an excerpt of a letter of thanks for the bus we helped buy. Bibiana Mwaluko of St. John's University School of Nursing writes:

Thank you, thank you, thank you. The School of Nursing believes that the Students' Outreach Program will be done now without the students and lecturers stressing about how to execute the practical part of the Nursing Programs (BScN & Diploma) and the Medical Laboratory Technology Diploma Program. Bibiana

And we say: You are welcome! Glad to help!



Community Meal

THANK YOU to the people that help with our Wednesday Night Community Dinners! Wednesday Night Community Dinners are at the Methodist Church and our next meal is on the April 28th. Please come and help as many hands make for light work. Come help Jesus feed the hungry.



Chad Birkenholtz 04/08
 Connie Zimmermann 04/08
 Stan Kirchhoff 04/09
 Judith Monroe 04/09
 Lexi Frehse 04/11
 Dirk Amundsen 04/13
 Carol Ve Verka 04/16
 Emily Cantu 04/17
 Lynette Birkenholz 04/19
 Landon Karsten 04/20
 Andrew George 04/27
 Janelle Karsten 04/30
 Jennifer Sumpter 04/30

It's about us

Matuor Dot Alier is a social worker in North Dakota. A long, difficult journey — and the memory of his grandfather's words — brought him from a childhood in Africa to his life today. Alier fled with his brother and thousands of other youths when Sudanese soldiers attacked South Sudan. The children walked hundreds of miles with little food or water to a refugee camp in Ethiopia. In 2006, Alier and his brother arrived in Philadelphia, where they were sponsored and supported by a Lutheran church. Upon moving to Fargo some years later, Alier helped start a church where people who had survived war, displacement and other traumas could find healing, joy and love.

"My grandfather used to say, 'I cannot be whole unless everyone is whole,'" Alier shares. "I use this saying a lot to help me stay in a close relationship with others. It means that we need each other's support to survive and thrive. I don't want to be the only one doing well if others aren't doing well. It's not just about me — it's about us."

—adapted from Living Lutheran

IN-PERSON SERVICES

We are pleased to announce that during Holy Week, First Lutheran Church will hold in-person services. Those who would like to join us in-person are asked to please **wear a mask** and **practice social distancing**. Hand sanitizer will be provided and you are asked to use it as you enter and leave the sanctuary. Also, note that seating is restricted to certain areas. Follow the direction of the ushers if you need assistance. Please be aware that the service will be abbreviated with some elements of worship changed or left out completely. This is for the safety of everyone. Thank you for your understanding!

Service times are as follows:

Palm Sunday, March 28 at 9:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday service, April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Easter Festival Worship, April 4th at 9:30 a.m.

YOU HAVE OPTIONS! You can still worship with us from home on Facebook live or view any time after the service on Facebook and on our website.



April 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

According to the most recent Iowa Department of Human Services data, 9,532 Iowa children were subject to abuse or neglect. The most common forms of abuse included denial of critical care, physical injury, exposure to illegal drugs or dangerous substance, and sexual abuse. Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) helps combat child abuse through prevention, safety, and stability services, as well as mental and behavioral health care.

Through regular in-home visits to families, LSI Early Childhood Services prevent child abuse by giving parents the support, education, and resources they need to build a healthy, stable home for their children. In 2020, our Early Childhood programs provided more than 18,000 in-home and virtual visits to families. LSI Family Centered Services help children and families already involved in a crisis or abuse situation to become safer and more stable, and LSI's Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers serve many children and youth who have experienced trauma from past abuse or neglect.

You can make a direct impact on these children and families through your support of LSI. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Debo-rah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and Facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Empowering Iowa Families

Mike Gaylene was overwhelmed raising three young boys. Finances were strained and she and her partner, José, worked hard to make ends meet. Suddenly, well into her second trimester, Gaylene learned she was pregnant with her daughter, Julieanna. Left with less time to prepare her home for a fourth child, Gaylene was stressed at the thought of welcoming a little girl into a house with three energetic

older brothers. And once Julieanna was born, Gaylene began experiencing postpartum depression.

Gaylene enrolled in LSI Early Childhood Services for help, and she and José began meeting with their LSI worker, Kellie. She provided the family with age-appropriate ideas and developmental activities for the kids, and served as a shoulder to lean on whenever Gaylene or José needed guidance or advice. Gaylene recently graduated from college with a degree in early childhood education, and her family is thriving. Gaylene also graduated out of LSI services last year. The family still keeps in touch with Kellie, and Gaylene says she will forever be grateful for the support she received when times were difficult.

"We got so used to Kellie coming to our home for five years, it's going to be different. But now I know where to turn and how to help my family down the road," Gaylene says. "I feel like Kellie and LSI actually care about people and parents."



Church Council Meeting Review :

The council met on March 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the church narthex. Eric did devotions, the minutes were read and approved and the treasurer's report was given. Dave also shared a graph of the past ten years in the church comparing giving with spending. We appear to be doing OK, even in these strange times.

Nicole has prepared a membership directory since our previous one is pretty old and we are not ready to do a new picture one. The council likes it and is doing a cost analysis on color vs. black and white before deciding to proceed. We have been

asked to loan our parking lot, sidewalks, and folding tables for a vendor fair to raise money for 'Heart for Andres'. This is a local child who needs a heart transplant. We approved the action which will take place sometime in May. Nicole will be there that day to facilitate.

The council approved a plan to return to 'in house' services for Holy Week. These will be shortened, with COVID restrictions in place, following Synod guidelines. An email will go out to the membership announcing this, and the council will be looking and

listening for feedback to decide if we continue in this manner after Easter, or stay with remote services until safer. These services will also be live streamed for those who do not want to attend in person. Property committee reported that some painting is happening both inside and outside the church. The roof tiles have been made and will be installed in the near future as the weather warms. The corner office room has been set up as a lounge. Check it out when the church opens up again. Can be used for lots of small group purposes, or just a quiet place to enjoy our house. Service committee is doing the faith/environmental study via Zoom. Several people are enjoying that.

A fitting tribute

When Christ entered into Jerusalem, the people spread garments in the way. When he enters into our hearts, we pull off our own righteousness, and not only lay it under Christ's feet but even trample upon it ourselves.

—Augustus Toplady (1740–1778)



Next Meeting
Wednesday
April 7th

A Easter Prayer

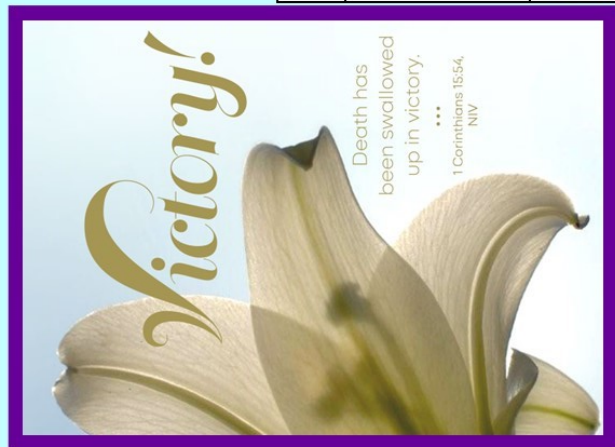
From the grave's depths, Lord Jesus Christ, you emerged, breaking the hold of sin, death and hell, that those who trust in you might share in your righteousness, life and beloved community with God the Father and all God's children. We bow in awe before your majesty, giving thanks for your grace extended so bountifully to us. By the power of your Spirit who lives within us, may we share the astonishing news of your resurrection with others, that they also may know your saving grace.

Amen.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 In person Worship Service 7:00pm 	2 In person Worship Service 7:00pm 	3
4 In person Worship Service 9:30am 	5	6	7 Property Meeting 6:30 pm	8 Happy Birthday Chad Burkenholtz & Connie Zimmermann Council Meeting 6:30 pm	9 Happy Birthday Stan Kirchhoff & Judith Mourne	10
11 Happy Birthday Lexi Frehse	12	13 Happy Birthday Dirk Amundsen	14	15 	16 Happy Birthday Carol Ve Verka	17 Happy Birthday Emily Cantu
18	19 Happy Birthday Lynette Burkenholz	20 Happy Birthday Landon Karsten	21	22	23	24
25	26 Happy Birthday Andrew George	27	28 Community Meal	29	30 Happy Birthday Janelle Karsten & Jennifer Sumpter	



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309 East Third Street North
Newton, Iowa
50208

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Office Hours

Monday—Friday
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours
by appointment



309 EAST THIRD STREET NORTH
NEWTON, IOWA
50208

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**Watch Past and Live
services !**

newtonfirstlutheran.org
&
(on Facebook at)
First Lutheran Church-
Newton

Phone: 641-792-3934

E-mail:

firstoffice@newtonfirstlutheran.org

