

# Easter Changes Everything



## April 2026

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One spring morning, a little boy stood beside his grandfather at the cemetery as they placed flowers on a grave. The boy looked at the rows upon rows of stones and asked quietly, “Grandpa, is this where grandma will stay forever?” The grandfather paused, a tear glimmering in his eye, and smiled gently. “No,” he said, “for those who believe in Jesus, this is only where their bodies rest for a little while.”

That simple truth rests entirely on what happened on the first Easter morning. When the women came to Jesus’ tomb, they expected to find death. Instead they found an angel with a message that has echoed through the centuries: **“He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”** (Matthew 28:6) *Jesus’ resurrection was not just a miracle—it was the confirmation that his work of salvation was complete. On Good Friday he paid for the sins of the world. On Easter morning God the Father declared that the payment was accepted. Because Christ lives, sin is forgiven, death is defeated, the grave is temporary, and the future is secure because eternal life is certain for all who believe in him.*

That means that Easter changes everything. That means Easter changes the way we live every day. When guilt troubles our conscience (and it should, for we daily sin much), we remember that the risen Savior has already paid for our sins (Easter proves it!). When fear creeps into our hearts (and there is much to be afraid of), we remember that our living Lord rules all things for the good of his church (Easter proves it!). When we face illness, grief, and uncertainty (and we most certainly will in this broken, sin-filled life) we remember that the God-Man who conquered death promises to work all things for our eternal good (Easter proves it!).

And when we stand at the grave of someone we love, we remember that the tomb is not the end of the story. Because Jesus rose, those who belong to him will rise too. This is not where they will stay forever. “For those who believe in Jesus, this is only where their bodies rest for a little while.” (Easter proves it!)

So this Easter, rejoice in the victory that Christ has won for you; a victory that changes everything! The stone has been rolled away! Death has been conquered! Your Savior lives! Your sin is gone! He works all things for your good! Your loved ones who died in the Lord live! And one day soon we will join them to live with Jesus forever! (Easter proves it!)

Rejoice, dear saints! For Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! May the joy and peace of the risen Lord fill your hearts and your homes this Easter season and always!

In Christ,  
Pastor Guenther



## March Sermon Texts

April 5	Jonah 2:2-9	The Sign of Jonah
April 12	John 20:19-31	Peace Be With You
April 19	1 Peter 1:17-21	Paid in Full
April 26	John 10:1-10	Come, little Lambs, and Follow Jesus

**Bible Class meets in the Church Basement**  
**The class can also be found online at [bit.ly/SJBibleClass](http://bit.ly/SJBibleClass)**

Sundays at 9:30am		
Thursdays at 10am	A Simple Way to Pray	Pastor Jeff Bovee
Thursdays at 7pm	The Life of David	Pastor Rob Guenther

## Council Digest

The Church Council met on March 17, 2026. A summary of reports and actions from the meetings not reported elsewhere in the *Fortress* follows:

### Membership Changes

#### A. Transfers In

Ben and Anna Schaefer, Ruth, Dorothea, Vivian, Alice, and Louisa from Mt.

Calvary

Lutheran, Redding, CA

(Note: We received their letter of transfer, welcomed them on July 21, 2025, and added

them to our online directory; however, we failed to include this in the reports for

the minutes, which has now been corrected.)

#### B. Transfers Out

None

### Pastoral Acts

#### C. Adult Confirmation and Profession of Faith

Riley Melby

Lottie Ludewig

### Council Reports

The March council meeting included several important financial, ministry, and operational updates. Financial Secretary J. Ladner and Bookkeeper Mike Thom presented reports showing stable member giving, even as the monthly subsidy to St. Paul's Lutheran School has decreased by approximately \$7,000. Both reports were approved. The council also discussed conducting a financial review of the previous year to ensure accountability, with Sarah Dolan identified as a potential reviewer. In addition, the council approved increasing the mileage reimbursement rate to \$0.70 to align with WELS recommendations.

Planning is underway for the April Voters' Meeting, with key topics including teacher distribution among congregations and call-related membership flexibility. The council is also considering reducing regular voters' meetings to twice per year, while continuing to allow special meetings as needed.

Ministry highlights from the boards reflected ongoing care and engagement across the congregation.

- The Elders reported continued work in member care, including outreach to inactive members and preparation for April confirmation. The Church 360 app is now live and will support attendance tracking and shepherding efforts, with careful communication to ensure it is used for encouragement rather than monitoring. Additional efforts include improving database accuracy, reviewing security measures, and addressing staffing needs.

- The Board of Evangelism highlighted recent outreach efforts, including an Easter canvass and continued emphasis on Friendship Evangelism, with plans to expand communication strategies and develop video content to better engage members and the community.
- The Board of Properties reported ongoing maintenance work, including repairs at the rental property and preparation for a church cleanup day on April 17.

The meeting concluded with reminders of upcoming dates, including the April council and voters' meetings.

Future meetings:

- Next regular council meeting - April 14 @ 7 PM
- Next regular voters' meeting - April 21 @ 7 PM
- Next joint council meeting - May 19, 2026

Respectfully,

pp J. Berg, Congregational Chairman  
J. Schaefer, Congregational Secretary

## Library News

Welcome to Spring ! Easter is near !

So our first book is a good one to read.

He Chose the Nails by Max Lucado studies what Jesus did on the cross for us. God long ago planned to solve our problem of sinfulness by sending His Son. Jesus became one of us to be our dark side. Jesus forgave us, spoke our language, let us choose, and did not abandon us. He gave us His robe, endured pain, and redeemed us for now and forever turning our tragedy into triumph and won the victory on the cross.

The second book is actually Book One of the Mark of the Lion Trilogy, titled A Voice in the Wind by Francine Rivers. We already have book 3 in our library. This Book One takes us to the year 70 A. D. , to Rome and Ephesus. The main character is Hadassah, a Jewish slave who is quietly a Christian also. There is also a Roman family of father, mother, son, and daughter. Also a German gladiator who is the best in the arena and is then the main character in Book Three. I have read them all several times seeing the years after Jesus' Resurrection in every day lives, and how a simple slave can make such a big difference in the the lives of others. Now all we need is Book 2 to finish Hadassah's story.

Our third book is another "Love Finds You" book, this time in Victory Heights, Washington , by Tricia Goyer and Ocienna Fleiss. The heroes are the women who are making airplanes in Washington State during World War II. The main heroine is named Rosalie and is dubbed "Rosie the Riveter" and then becomes famous, thanks to a handsome reporter . Can she help recruit more women to work for the war effort? And find love in the mix?

I pray that you all have a blessed Easter as we review the last days of Jesus as the Son of Man, and then the Son of God.

LeiLani Rahn

## LWMS MN Valley Circuit Spring Rally

When: Saturday, April 11, 2026

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Coffee & Registration

9:00 AM - 12:15 PM Program

12:15 PM Lunch

Where: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 750 Jeffrey Street, Owatonna, MN

Theme: The Way, The Truth And The Life

Guest Speaker: Pastor John Holtz, Native Christians Counselor in East Fork, AZ

The table in the new narthex has flyers with these details as well as a sign up sheet for those who would like to carpool. No RSVP is required to attend the rally.

### **63rd Annual LWMS International Convention**

When: June 25-28, 2026

Where: Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison, WI

Theme: Cast Out Your Nets

Registration: Opens March 1 online (along with hotel booking)

Closes June 1 (pending capacity)

Additional details are available on the table in the new narthex.

We hope to see you there!

## **Women of St. John's**

Just a few friendly reminders:

- Women of St. John's will not have a meeting in April.
- If you still have a book from our Blind Date with a Book exchange in February, please be sure to return it to the owner (identified inside the cover) when you are finished reading it.
- Our May meeting will be an indoor picnic. Watch the bulletin for more details in the coming weeks.

# St. Paul's School

## Encouragement for Worship

With Holy Week in the first week of April, we are drawn again to the heart of our faith. We walk with Jesus from the upper room to the cross, from the cross to the tomb, and from the empty tomb to the sure hope of eternal life. These are not just historical events—they are the very foundation of our faith and life with God.

What better time to reflect on why regular Sunday worship matters? In Word and Sacrament, our Savior meets us with forgiveness, strengthens our faith, and reminds us of his victory over sin and death. Holy Week makes this beautifully clear: we need what Christ freely offers to us, again and again.

As we look ahead to the summer months, routines often shift. Travel, activities, and busy schedules can easily take priority. Yet the blessings of worship are not seasonal. The same Savior who gave his life for us invites us continually to “taste and see that the Lord is good” and to receive his gifts. Staying connected to worship during the summer keeps us grounded in Christ, even when life feels scattered.

Consider making worship a steady part of your summer plans. Whether at home or away, seek out opportunities to gather around God's Word and to participate in Holy Communion. In doing so, we remain rooted in the grace first proclaimed so powerfully during Holy Week.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! And because he lives, we gather, we receive, and we rejoice—week after week, season after season.

**ST. JOHN'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**NEW ULM, MN 56073**

**APRIL 2026**  
**354-6744**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b><u>T.V. Service:</u></b>  <b>Mondays: 6 pm</b>  <b>Tuesdays: 1 pm</b>  <b>Thursdays: 10 am</b>  <b>on</b>  <b>Comcast Channel 14</b>  <b>Nuvera Channel 3</b></p>			1	2	3	4
<p>5 <b>Easter</b>  <b>WORSHIP</b>  <b>7 &amp; 9:30 AM</b>  <b>W/ COMMUNION</b>    8:15 am <b>Easter</b>  <b>Breakfast</b></p>	<p>6    <b>Easter Monday</b>    <b>Office Closed</b></p>	<p>7    6:30 pm <b>Elders'</b>  <b>Meeting</b></p>	<p>8    6 pm <b>Examination</b>  <b>Practice</b></p>	<p>9    10 am <b>Bible Class</b>    5:30 pm <b>Board of</b>  <b>Child Discipleship</b>    7 pm <b>Bible Class</b></p>	10	<p>11        <b>WORSHIP 6:30 PM</b></p>
<p>12 <b>Easter 2</b>  <b>WORSHIP</b>  <b>8, 9:30 &amp; 11 AM</b>  9:30 am <b>Bible Class</b>  and <b>Sunday School</b></p>	<p>13    6 pm <b>Evangelism</b></p>	<p>14    4 pm <b>Oak Hills</b></p>	<p>15    10 am <b>Catechism</b>    6 pm <b>Handbells</b>  7 pm <b>Choir</b></p>	16	17	<p>18    9 am <b>Church</b>  <b>Cleaning</b>      <b>WORSHIP 6:30 PM</b>  <b>W/ COMMUNION</b></p>
<p>19 <b>Easter 3</b>  <b>WORSHIP</b>  <b>8, 9:30 &amp; 11 AM</b>  <b>W/ COMMUNION</b>  9:30 am <b>Bible Class</b>  and <b>Sunday School</b></p>	<p>20    6:30 pm <b>Worship</b>  <b>Meeting</b></p>	<p>21    7 pm <b>Council</b></p>	<p>22    7 pm <b>Examination</b></p>	<p>23    10 am <b>Bible Class</b>    7 pm <b>Bible Class</b></p>	24	<p>25        <b>WORSHIP 6:30 PM</b></p>
<p>26 <b>Easter 4</b>  <b>WORSHIP</b>  <b>8, 9:30 &amp; 11 AM</b>  11am <b>Confirmation</b></p>	<p>27    1 pm <b>Stewardship</b></p>	<p>28    4 pm <b>Oak Hills</b>    7 pm <b>Voters'</b></p>	29	<p>30    10 am <b>Bible Class</b>    7 pm <b>Bible Class</b></p>		

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ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL  
**DIG IN  
GALA**



 Vintage Car Show • Doors Open at 6:00 PM

**Friday, May 8, 2026**  
**Turner Hall • New Ulm**

Join us for a groovy evening of fellowship, fun,  
and fundraising as we continue supporting St. Paul's  
Lutheran School.



**FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026**  
**AT TURNER HALL • NEW ULM**

**St. Paul's Lutheran School**



# Central Africa Medical Mission

Happy March! Wherever you are reading this newsletter from, I hope you are enjoying a change in the seasons. Here in Minnesota, we are finally experiencing some relief from the winter weather. The temperature is warming, the grass is slowly beginning to green back up, and I can imagine the perennial plants beginning to prepare to pop out of the ground and reach once again for the sun. Spring is a good time for us to be reminded to always be reaching for the one and only son, Jesus. With each new day we should be spending time with Jesus, in prayer and giving thanks for all that we have. Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day. 1 Kings 8:61

Our newsletter this month is written by Jackson Kalekwa, the Clinical Officer in Charge at the Mwembezhi Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre. He writes about the blessings of the laboratory technologies that are helping people identify the reasons behind their symptoms and allowing them to get the treatment they need. Many of these machines were funded, in part, by generous donations from CAMM supporters. What a blessing it is to hear exactly how these tools are being used to heal and help the people of Africa.

Thank you for your continued prayers on behalf of CAMM.

God's Blessing, Stephanie Otto

As one of the two laboratories in our district, we are blessed to serve at Mwembezhi Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre, where our team is driven by compassion and excellence. We see every laboratory test as an opportunity to touch lives, reflecting the love of Christ in our work.

From diagnosing different illnesses, we are not just testing samples, we are offering hope. Our laboratory monitors treatment, progress, empowers patients and gives staff the swift answers they need to heal patients. "For I was sick and you took care of me," Matthew 25:36 reminds us of our calling.

I recall two patients, one had tuberculosis and one has diabetes. The journey of the two patients turned around. Thanks to our timely diagnosis and care of the tuberculosis patient, the patient was cured in six months. The patient with diabetes was first taken to herbalists (traditional medicine). When the condition became very bad, one teacher who is diabetic visited the family and gave a health education talk on how he started and is now on treatment. He encouraged the family to bring the patient to our laboratory for testing. The patient was brought to clinic in very bad condition. Her glucose was 34.3mmol/L (617.4g/dl). The clinician discussed referring her to a hospital, but the family said they had no money. The patient was admitted at our clinic and put on insulin treatment.

She was able to walk within one week, despite muscle atrophy. She is now doing fine and on treatment. In our laboratory, every test tells a story of struggle, perseverance or victory. Last year, we processed thousands of tests, a small part of God's bigger plan to bring health and wholeness to our community. From outbreak tracking to community screening, we seek to serve with kindness

and accuracy. Our Lutheran laboratory is more than a facility, it's a ministry of precision, love and service. As we work, we trust in the Healer's hand guiding every step.

#### THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE IN THE LABORATORY IN 2025

1. We test for malaria: Any patient found positive with malaria is treated and a follow-up test is done to all neighbors and family members close to the patient. Patients found positive with malaria were 30 out of 739 tested.

2. Urinalysis and stool testing: Patients found with urinary tract infection were 255 and for stool sampling we found 73 cases of intestinal worms.

3. Blood test for syphilis, viral load, CD4 count, Full Blood Count (FBC), sickle cell anemia and iron deficiency anemia. 41 patients tested positive for syphilis. 835 total patients were found with anemia. Blood was drawn for viral load from 940 HIV clients. Out of this number, 24 were found with high viral load. Counseling on adherence was done. Clients who adhered were switched to the second line of treatment. The non-adhering clients were continued with the same antiretroviral drugs.

4. Sputum testing for pulmonary tuberculosis is done at the clinic. When a patient is found positive, she/he is put on treatment and contact tracing is done to all who came in contact with a tuberculosis positive patient. Positive tuberculosis patients should have their sputum tested at regular intervals, to monitor the effectiveness of treatment. Testing typically takes place at the end of the initial intensive phase (2 months), in the middle of the continuation phase (5 months) and at the end of treatment (6 months).

**LOOKING FORWARD** Despite success in all that we do in the laboratory, challenges remain.

When patients are sent to the laboratory, they go and sit together with TB patients. This is not good as TB is highly contagious. In the lab, we also have sputum specimens, some of which are positive.

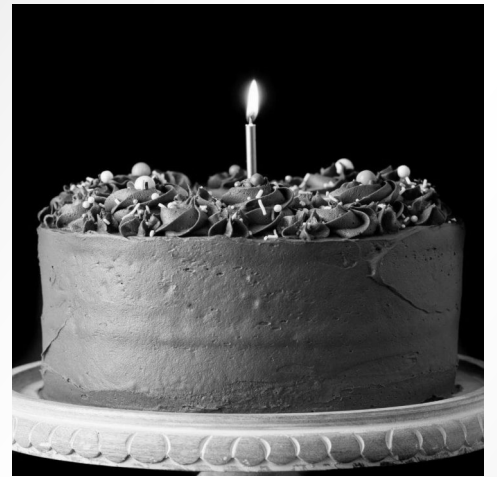
In the short term, we are looking for ways to separate TB patients from the general population.

Long term we may need to consider finding a separate TB testing area.

Jackson Kalekwa Clinical Officer In Charge



# Happy Birthday!



- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | Melissa Gieseke<br>Emily Rich                                   | 17 | Madeline Martin<br>Timothy Meinert   |
| 2  | Michael Bovee<br>Del Ulrich<br>Martha Weber<br>Elizabeth Wessel |    | James Schaefer<br>Miriam Schaefer  |
| 3  | Judith Lemke<br>Sandra Reinke                                   | 18 | Ella Hunter<br>Jeff Kiecker<br>Maverick Kiecker<br>Kristy Wiechmann                        |
| 4  | Jennifer Johnson  | 19 | William Behnken<br>Danielle Ecker<br>Stephanie Kempenich<br>Rebecca Kuck<br>Tatum Toltzman |
| 5  | Paul Evers<br>David Gosdeck                                     | 20 | Anne Flatau<br>Matthew Kiecker   |
| 6  | Daniel Fenske<br>Cheyenne Murdock                               | 21 | Waylen Thompson  |
| 7  | Estrella Strackbein   | 22 | Thomas Wels  |
| 8  | Lee Fischer<br>Logan Fischer<br>Denise Karstens                 | 23 | Connie Micheel   |
| 9  | Brandon Hanevik<br>Charlie Iverson                              | 24 | Lisa Fenske<br>Cindy Wellner   |
| 10 | Roger Hull  | 25 | Linnea Gunderson<br>Carol Meinzer<br>Dominick Olson<br>Erin Paulson                        |
| 11 | DeWayne Blaalid   | 28 | Emmalyn Price  |
| 12 | William Dinse<br>Earl Heidtke                                   | 29 | Paul Willems   |
| 13 | Brian Dose<br>Greg Miller                                       | 30 | Emmitt Hunter<br>Glenn Minkel<br>Renee Schmit<br>Randy Shoen                               |
| 14 | Judith Zahn   |    |  |
| 16 | Dylan Hanevik<br>Hailey Miller<br>Nathanael Smith               |    |  |

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church  
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New Ulm MN 56073

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April 2026

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church • New Ulm, Minnesota

*Welcome to St. John's!*

627 S. Washington St.

507-354-6744

[www.stjohnsnewulm.com](http://www.stjohnsnewulm.com)

*Worship Times*

Saturdays: 6:30 pm

Sundays: 8, 9:30 & 11 am

and online at:

[YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Search: Saint John's New Ulm

*Adult Bible Class*

(In person and online at: [bit.ly/SJBibleClass](http://bit.ly/SJBibleClass))

Sundays: 9:30 am

Thursdays: 10 am & 7 pm

*Sunday School*

Sundays: 9:30 am

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