

Holy Humor Sunday
Sunday, April 7, 2024: 8:30 am & 11:00 am
Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND
Pastors John Streccius and Beth Walch



About Holy Humor Sunday....

Holy Humor Sunday is a tradition that goes way back. The early Greek Christians started this Easter custom as a way of celebrating Christ's resurrection. The Bible tells us "for every-thing there is a season... a time to weep and a time to laugh." (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4) Easter is a time of joy when we can even laugh in the face of death, because of Jesus's victory over death.

History tells us that churches in 15th century Bavaria celebrated the Sunday after Easter as Risus Paschalis ("God's Joke" or "the Easter Laugh"). Priests would tell jokes and funny stories to highlight the joy of the resurrection. Following worship churchgoers and priests would play practical jokes on each other, drench each other with water, tell more jokes, sing and dance. The celebration of Risus Paschalis was officially outlawed by Pope Clement X (also known as Pope Party-pooper) in the 17th century. There wasn't a theological problem with the tradition, it seems that revilers were just having a little too much fun. We hope today's worship is a fun and reverent celebration of Easter. God raised Jesus from the dead, this is a cause to celebrate and laugh.

The Gathering of God's People

Welcome/Announcements/Jokes

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen indeed.

Let us rejoice! Let us celebrate with holy humor.

Let us laugh, let us dance,

Let us sing praises of joy!

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Gathering Song: ELW #619, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives!"

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



**Our Purpose Statement: "Love All, Serve All,
Welcome All as Christ."**

None of us likes to look foolish, but which is sillier? Chasing after the world and all its gaudy trinkets which flatter our souls, or being a 'fool for Christ', imitating him in service to others, offering ourselves in love and joy to the world? Let us confess to God the foolish choices we make each and every day.

You know better than we do, Amused God, what important people we believe we are. Believing we have to be serious all the time, we miss out on the joy of your creation. Choosing to feast on the pain of the world, we skip the picnic offered in paradise. Clinging to the despair which is our best friend, we ignore Jesus..

The Gospels tell us over and over again of the joy which comes to us through Christ. Through Jesus lives are changed, sins are forgiven, the sick are healed, the sorrowful begin to laugh with joy. The dead are raised to life. The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

Ha, ha, ha! We are loved by God! We are forgiven by God! Death will not have the last laugh with us! Amen!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the communion
of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you!

(11:00) **Sacrament of Holy Baptism**

Kaia Faye Lammers, daughter of Ethan and Amy Lammers. Baptismal sponsors are Taylor Heinzen and Joseph Klein.

At the conclusion of the baptism, the pastor and congregation will say:

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Holy God, **as you have taken what we call an absurdity and turned it into possibility.....as you have coaxed us to sing springtime alleluias where once there was a gray dawn, as you have called us out of the tombs we inhabit into an undreamed of tomorrow, we praise you for this day! Come, Risen Christ, in newness and hope on this Eastertide day. Amen.**

Sharing of Jokes

First Reading: Jonah 1:1-17

¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, ²‘Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.’ ³But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. ⁴But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶The captain came and said to him, ‘What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.’ ⁷The sailors said to one another, ‘Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.’ So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, ‘Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?’ ⁹‘I am a Hebrew,’ he replied. ‘I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.’ ¹⁰Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, ‘What is this that you have done!’ For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them so. ¹¹Then they said to him, ‘What shall we do to you, that the sea may quieten down for us?’ For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, ‘Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quieten down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.’ ¹³Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. ¹⁴Then they cried out to the LORD, ‘Please, O LORD, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done

as it pleased you.’¹⁵ So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging.¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.¹⁷ But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials,⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 20th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it

in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’²⁸ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’²⁹ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Message

Sermon: Pastor John Streccius

Hymn of the Day: ELW #721, “Goodness Is Stronger than Evil”

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God,
who made us in God’s image.
We live, we love, we laugh,
because we are God’s beloved children.

We believe in Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.
He had the last laugh death
when He rose from the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
coequal and coeternal with the Creator and the Son.
Our counselor, our guide, our motivator –
our joy!

Prayers of Intercession

At the conclusion of each petition, the pastor and the congregation will say:
*“Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**”*

Sharing of Jokes

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Let us pray,

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Words of Institution (*Matthew 26:26-28*)

Lord's Prayer

Communion

ELW #365, "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"

ELW #376, "Thine Is the Glory"

Post-Communion Blessing

Blessing of Home Communion Kits

Post-Communion Prayer

Blessing

Benediction

May the God of surprises bring smiles and joys to the everyday and ordinary. May the God of love be seen in all we do and say. Go forth rejoicing, for the good work has just begun! **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (*Easter Version*)

Dismissal

Go with joy. Share the Good News!

Thanks be to God!

Worship Participants: Pastors: John Streccius & Beth Walch; **Assisting:** (8:30) Kyla Aull (11:00) Bruce Boe; **Communion Assistants:** (8:30) Beverly Berry & Judy Kudrna (11:00) HELP NEEDED; **Ushers/Greeters:** (8:30) LeAna Hug (11:00) Dwite & Kathy Gorder; **Acolyte:** (8:30) HELP NEEDED(11:00) HELP NEEDED; **Song Leader:** Jim Quarnstrom; **Pianist:** Marilyn Kesterke; **April Altar Guild:** Diane Chepulic, Alice Westby, Arlyce Malarkey.

Prayers at Lord of Life: Shirley O'Brien, Coralyn Hoovestol, Kelli Mahlum, Grant Geffre, Ruth Ann Rexine, Sharon Fisher, Edna Mae Erickson, Mary York, Ellen Bartz, Pat Hellman, Susan Francis, Mavis Jundt, Betty Dendinger, Todd Asendorf, Karen Stacevich, Kyla Anderson, Matt Olson, Joyce Koch, Jerry McLachlan, Scott Berry, Nathan Berndt, Aldeen Klain, Emmett Pratt, Rose Horner, Emma Seibel, Marlene Muse, Jack Lostlen.

Flowers are given today by: Nora Morast in loving memory of George Pederson, Melvin Morast and Norman Kruckenberg.

Stewardship Info: Attendance—Sun. (3-31): 355 **Wed.** (4-3): 38

Offering: General Plate Offering: \$8,323.00 General Online Giving: \$2,998.91

February expenses: \$54,971.84

February income: \$61,858.39

Annual expenses through February: \$141,740.35

Annual income through February: \$106,963.75

April Service Group Leaders: Franky and Ward Enger (934-3122)

Volunteers: Members with last names starting with "Alb" through "Bin"

Worship Helps: Large print bulletins, a wheelchair and a walker, and personal **p.a. devices** are available from the ushers'. **Activity bags and bulletins** for children are available in the narthex.

Ushers/Greeters and Communion Assistants are always needed. Please check the sign up sheets for openings at the Information Desk.

Today we will serve Holy Communion in worship. Those who come to receive the gifts of Christ's body and blood for the strengthening of their faith and the forgiveness of their sins are welcome to eat and drink. Children are welcome to receive Holy Communion at any age. Please have them extend their hand to receive the elements, if not we will offer a blessing. Taste and see that the Lord is good!

For Communion: Grape juice is always available. Simply select the light colored liquid. Gluten free communion wafers are available, indicate gluten free to the server when you come to the communion station.



Altar Bouquet Donations: Thank you for your donations to date, the next available Sundays are April 7, May 12, May 19 and May 26. Cost is \$25.00/bouquet. The sign-up sheet can be located at the Information Desk. **Please note Altar Flowers on check memo line.

Ken Snyder's 90th Birthday Celebration! Come join us for an open house today, Sunday, April 7 from 2:00 pm– 4:00 pm in the fellowship hall to celebrate Ken turning 90! Everyone welcome.

Adult Forum: Today, April 7 at 9:45am join Ann Crews Melton, Executive Director of the Consensus Council, she will be speaking on the Restorative Justice program offered since 2021. The Restorative Justice team aims to provide a respectful, compassionate and healing response to crime and conflict by seeking to restore to the extent possible those harmed by an offense. **On April 14, join Deacon Beth Anderson in learning more about ministries of accompaniment between services.** Life is a journey and we're not intended to go it alone. The ministries of coaching and spiritual direction can support you in growing deeper in your relationship with God, bring greater intentionality to your life, leadership, relationships or career, accompany you in making change, or help you navigate times of transition due to life stages, grief, or new opportunities. Beth offers these services through Centered Growth Coaching and Spiritual Direction here in Bismarck and supports other faith-based coaches across the Western North Dakota Synod and ELCA.

The Banquet: Lord of Life will be serving at The Banquet on Saturday, April 13. We are looking for 2 volunteers from 9:00am—11:00am and 8 volunteers from 11:30am –1:30 pm. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex.

Young at Hearts: On April 8th, we invited Dan Cashman to speak on gardening as our thoughts turn to spring planting. We will meet at 2:30 for coffee and dessert.

Join our Confirmation 9th Grade Students on Wednesday, April 24th at 7 pm. On this evening, they will present the service projects they did this year and how it has impacted their faith. This is a great way to honor our baptismal promises as a congregation and support the kids in our faith community.

Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits: During the month of April, we will be collecting items for personal care kits! Items needed are bath towels (dark light weight towels preferred, these may also be gently used), bar soap (4oz), heavy duty combs, and nail clippers with file. Please bring your items by May 1st and place them in the display area that will be set up in the narthex. Thank you!

Lord of Life is scheduled to help Heaven's Helpers Soup Café on April 22. Shifts are two hours in length from 8 AM through 5:30 PM. Just log in to <https://www.soupcafe.org/volunteer/> or, if you need assistance signing up, please contact Shirley Klein at Shirley.klein7166@gmail.com or call her at 701-391-7166. Please remember to wear closed toe shoes and a Lord of Life shirt if you have one.

The planning group is in need of clean plastic bags with no tears. Those from Menards, Target and grocery stores are preferred as those from Walmart and dollar stores tear too easily. They can be left in the quilting room.

Donations Needed: My name is Caroline Gill and I am a freshman at Legacy High School. For my confirmation project this year, I decided to build and install a Little Free Pantry at the Soup Cafe. I am hoping that we can provide grab-and-go food items for the people who live near or visit the soup cafe and may need something when the soup cafe is closed or if they need something extra to eat. I have a box in the narthex for non-perishable food donations as well as winter hats and gloves!

Lord of Life Book Club: Wednesday, May 1st at 4:45 pm: "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. This book is a collection of interrelated stories providing detailed accounts of the struggles faced by American soldiers on the ground during the Vietnam War. Tim's narrative tells the stories of his many comrades during the war.

SAVE THE DATE! May 30 will be our Lord of Life outing with the Larks baseball team. Look for more information and sign up in May. The Larks will be playing at 6:30 pm against the Duluth Huskies. A Larks hat, food for the first three innings and a game are all included. Join the fun!

Volunteer Recognition will be held on Sunday, April 28, we will recognize all volunteers at Lord of Life, without you the church could never be what it is today!

United Way Shelter: Lord of Life will be serving supper at the United Way Shelter on Saturday, May 4. We need servers, a sign up sheet will be at the Information Desk. Serving begins between 6:00 pm and 6:30 pm.

The Senior Class of 2024 will be recognized during worship on Sunday, May 19 at 8:30 am. Congratulations to Kirna Anderson, Avery Brousseau, Kendra Dockter, Taylor Gabbert, Kaylee Johnson, James Melberg, Cade Pittenger, Maren Swenson, Jenica Twete, and Ava Vetter. Best wishes to all!

Happening this week at Lord of Life
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am-3:00 pm
Church Office: 701-223-2986
www.lordoflifebismarck.org

Sun., April 7

Holy Humor Sunday

8:30 am: Worship

9:45 am: Church School

9:45 am: Adult Forum

11:00 am: Worship & Baptism

2:00 pm: Ken Snyder's 90th Birthday Celebration

Mon., April 8

2:30 pm: YAH's

Tues., April 9

9:30 am: Women's Bible Study

10:00 am: Staff Meeting

3:30 pm: Executive Team Meeting

5:00 pm: Worship Team Meeting

7:00 pm: Boy Scouts

Wed., April 10

3:30 pm: Planning

6:15 pm: Worship

7:00 pm: Church School & Confirmation

Thurs., April 11

Bulletin Deadline @ 12:00 pm

8:30 am: Centering Prayer in the Sanctuary

9:30 am: Brunch with Beth

Fri., April 12

10:00 am: Coffee with Caregivers

Sat., April 13

LOL at the Banquet

11:00 am: Baby Shower in F.H.

Sun., April 14

8:30 am: Worship

9:45 am: Church School

9:45 am: Adult Forum

11:00 am: Worship

Thank you for your financial offerings to the ministry of Lord of Life Lutheran Church. If you would like to give now using your smartphone, just take a picture of the QR code and you will be taken to the secure church website for giving.



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