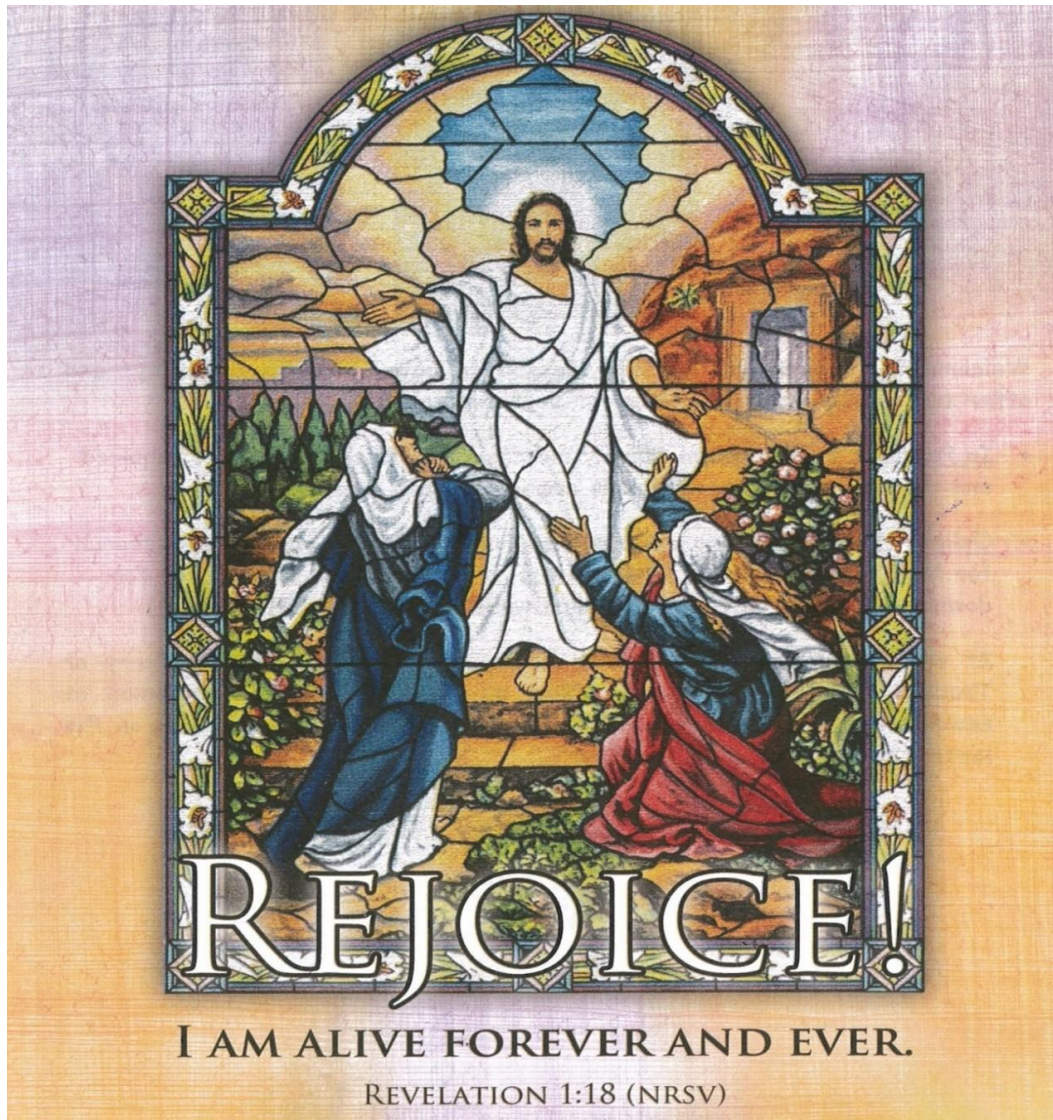


Worship Guide for April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday



Welcome and Announcements

Let us prepare our hearts for worship.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Brief silence for reflection.

Gracious God, *have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. *Amen.*

Gathering Hymn

Jesus Christ is Risen Today



1 Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3 But the pains which he en - dured, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4 Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - le - lu - ia!



our tri - um - phant ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!
 un - to Christ, our heav'n - ly king, Al - le - lu - ia!
 our sal - va - tion have pro - cured; Al - le - lu - ia!
 praise e - ter - nal as his love; Al - le - lu - ia!



who did once up - on the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!
 who en - dured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!
 now a - bove the sky he's king, Al - le - lu - ia!
 praise him, all you heav'n - ly host, Al - le - lu - ia!



suf - fer to re - deem our loss. Al - le - lu - ia!
 sin - ners to re - deem and save. Al - le - lu - ia!
 where the an - gels ev - er sing. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia!

Prayer of the Day

Together we pray: O God, *you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Reading of the Word**First Reading Acts 10:34-43**

³⁴ Peter began to speak to [the people]: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,
³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.
³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Word of God, Word of Life. ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God’s mercy endures forever.

² **Let Israel now declare, “God’s mercy endures forever.”**

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.

¹⁵ **Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!**

¹⁶ The right hand of the LORD is exalted! The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!”

¹⁷ **I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.**

¹⁸ The LORD indeed punished me sorely, but did not hand me over to death.

¹⁹ **Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.**

²⁰ “This is the gate of the LORD; here the righteous may enter.”

²¹ **I give thanks to you, for you have answered me and you have become my salvation.**

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ **By the LORD has this been done; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

²⁴ This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

¹ If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Word of God, Word of Life. ***Thanks be to God.***

Children's Message**Gospel Acclamation****Halle, Halle, Hallelujah (sing 3X)**

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

Gospel Matthew 28:1-10

¹ After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon



**Thank you to the following families and individuals for sharing their Easter Lilies and Geraniums with us today.
To the Glory of the Risen Lord!**

Jennifer and David Aakre

**A Seeker in Celebration of
The New Salem Community**

Tom Berdahl in Memory of Fritz Nipp

**Cheryl & Brad Buck in Memory of
Gerald & Ellen Benson**

Barb & Gary Comfort

**Megan & Jane Comfort in Memory of
Bryant Comfort**

**Marge and Gary Danielson in Memory of
Our Parents**

**Jennie Eastman in Honor of
Joan Lueth**

**Carol, Graig, Gabe & Apollo Gilbertson
In Honor of Anna and in Memory of
Colleen, Bob & Dean**

**Pastor Terry Hagensen & Kevin Estenson
in Memory of Oli & Dorothy Estenson
and Roy & Melda Hagensen**



**Linda Hendrikson in Honor of
My Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren**

**Ardis Hofstad in Memory of Rene Hofstad,
Everett Sondreal, Shirley Cyr
and Doris & Ed LaJambe**

**Lisa & Benji Hofstad Family in Memory of
Rene Hofstad, Jeremy Hofstad, Grandpa Paul,
Randy, Debbie & Selma Larson,
Grandpa Ed & Grandma Doris
Joan in Honor of Sue & Mark**

Sonya & Paul Kraft

**Dar and Mike Moen in Honor of
Hailey, Meara, Aaron and Drew and
in Memory of Our Parents
Carroll & Pat and Lena & Stan**



**B & Roger Olson
To God Be the Glory!**

**Alicia and Patrick Peterson in Honor of
Our Parents and in Memory of
Bob, Laurie & Vicky**

**Shelley & Bob Quinlan in Memory of
Our Parents, Brothers & Sisters**

**Traci & James Schanke in Memory of
Wes, Dolores & Sally Djonne,
Mary & Rolf Schanke,
Della & Alf Djonne, Opal & Stan Guest,
Brenda Bahr, Nancy Djonne, Brian Guest**

Mert & Howie Schultz

**Lynn Strandt in Honor of Tom & James
Joy Wilander in Honor of Marie Paulson,
Chet & Susan Wilander, and Life!
In Memory of Gus & Martha Wilander,
My Siblings and their Spouses**

**Linda & Dale Wolden in Memory of
Bruce Wolden**



Hymn of the Day

Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia (continues next page)



M - fu - ra - hi - ni, ha - le - lu - ya,
 1 Christ has a - ris - en, al - le - lu - ia.
 2 For three long days the grave did its worst
 3 The an - gel said to them, "Do not fear.



m - ko - mbo - zi a - me - fu - fu - ka.
 Re - jice and praise him, al - le - lu - ia.
 un - til its strength by God was dis - persed.
 You look for Je - sus who is not here.



A - me - fu - fu - ka, ha - le - lu - ya,
 For our re - deem - er burst from the tomb,
 He who gives life did death un - der - go,
 See for your - selves the tomb is all bare.



m - si - fu - ni sa - sa yu ha - i.
 e - ven from death, dis - pel - ling its gloom.
 and in its con - quest his might did show.
 On - ly the grave - clothes are ly - ing there."

Refrain

Tu - mwi - mbi - e so - te kwa fu - ra - ha.
 Let us sing praise to him with end - less joy.



Ye - su a - me - to - ka ka - bu - ri - ni.
 Death's fear - ful sting he has come to de - stroy.



Ka - shi - nda ki - fo, ha - le - lu - ya;
 Our sin for - giv - ing, al - le - lu - ia!



ha - le - lu - ya, Ye - su yu ha - i.
 Je - sus is liv - ing, al - le - lu - ia!

4 "Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.
 He has arisen this world to save.
 Jesus' redeeming labors are done.
 Even the battle with sin is won."

Refrain

5 Christ has arisen to set us free.
 Alleluia, to him praises be.
 Jesus is living! Let us all sing;
 he reigns triumphant, heavenly king.

Refrain



Welcome to New Salem - We are blessed to have you worship with us today!



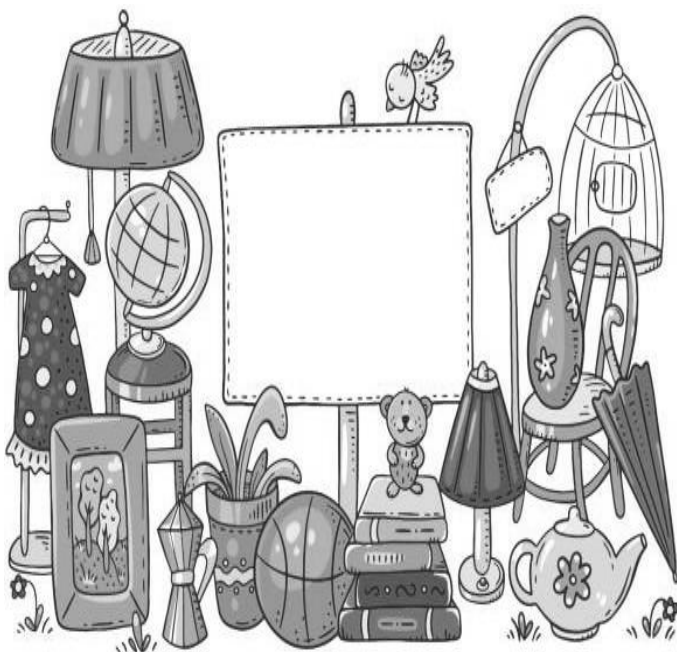
If you are looking for a church home, please contact Traci Schanke in the church office at 218-586-2262 or via email at newsalem@paulbunyan.net. If you are a visitor, please sign our guest book outside the church office.

Website: newsalemlutheran.org

YouTube Channel: New Salem Lutheran Church, Turtle River, MN

Worship Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to assist with various Sunday ministries here at New Salem! Ushers, readers/Communion assistants, helpers to set up Communion before the worship service and tidy up afterward, offering counters (we will train you!), and hosts for our coffee fellowship after worship. Sign up as a family or team up with a friend or two! **Signup sheets are available on the back table in the Fellowship Hall. Remember: If no one signs up to host coffee fellowship, there is NO coffee fellowship.**



Rummage and Bake Sale April 18

It's time to start assembling your rummage items - Saturday, April 18, is the date for the 2026 Spring Rummage and Bake Sale! Items for the sale can be brought to the church during office hours (noon-5, Monday-Friday; please call to make sure we haven't stepped out for a few minutes). See the activity table in the fellowship hall for a signup page for sale prep/working at the sale and foam trays/plastic bags for baked goods. All are welcome to assist with this event!

Prayers of the People

Hear us, O God. *Your mercy is great.*

Sharing the Peace

Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Hymn

Come to the Table



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

Offering Prayer

Together we pray: *Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Together we pray: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.*

Sharing Christ's MealCommunion Hymn #1

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re - sounds
 2 E - ter - nal is the gift he brings,
 3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with daunt - less love;
 4 A - dor - ing prais - es now we bring



in praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has
 there - fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has
 set heart and will on things a - bove that we
 and with the heav'n-ly bless - ed sing: "Christ has



tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Sing, choirs of
 tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Now still he
 con - quer through your tri - umph; grant grace suf -
 tri - umphed! Al - le - lu - ia!" Be to the



an - gels, loud and clear! Re - peat their song of glo - ry
 comes to give us life and by his pres - ence stills all
 fi - cient for life's day that by our lives we tru - ly
 Fa - ther, and our Lord, to Spir - it blest, most ho - ly



here: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"
 strife. "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"
 say: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"
 God, all the glo - ry, nev - er end - ing!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Communion Hymn #2

Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Alleluia



1 Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day; Al - le - lu - ia!
 2 For the sheep the Lamb has bled, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3 Christ, the vic - tim un - de - filed, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4 Chris-tians, on this ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!



Chris-tians, has - ten on your way; Al - le - lu - ia!
 sin - less in the sin - ner's stead. Al - le - lu - ia!
 God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled, Al - le - lu - ia!
 all your grate - ful hom - age pay; Al - le - lu - ia!



of - fer praise with love re - plete, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!
 when con - tend - ing death and life, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!



at the pas - chal vic - tim's feet. Al - le - lu - ia!
 now he lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!
 met in strange and awe - some strife. Al - le - lu - ia!
 now he lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!



Communion Hymn #3**The Day of Resurrection**

1 The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad,
 2 Let hearts be purged of e - vil that we may see a - right
 3 Now let the heav'ns be joy - ful, let earth its song be - gin,
 4 All praise to God the Fa - ther, all praise to Christ the Son,



the pass - o - ver of glad - ness, the pass - o - ver of God.
 the Lord in rays e - ter - nal of res - ur - rec - tion light,
 the round world keep high tri - umph and all that is there - in.
 all praise to God the Spir - it, e - ter - nal Three in One!



From death to life e - ter - nal, from sin's do - min - ion free,
 and lis - t'ning to his ac - cents, may hear, so calm and plain,
 Let all things, seen and un - seen, their notes of glad - ness blend;
 Let all the ran - somed num - ber fall down be - fore the throne,



our Christ has brought us o - ver with hymns of vic - to - ry.
 his own "All hail!" and hear - ing, may raise the glad re - frain.
 for Christ the Lord has ris - en, our joy that has no end!
 and hon - or, pow'r, and glo - ry as - cribe to God a - lone!

Communion Blessing**Post Communion Prayer**

Together we pray: Life-giving God, *in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people.*

Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

Benediction

Sending Hymn

Thine is the Glory



1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring Son; end - less is the
 2 Lo, Je - sus meets thee, ris - en from the tomb! Lov - ing - ly he
 3 No more we doubt thee, glo - rious Prince of life; life is naught with-



vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won! An - gels in bright rai - ment
 greets thee, scat - ters fear and gloom; let his church with glad - ness
 out thee; aid us in our strife; make us more than con-qu'rors,



rolled the stone a - way, kept the fold - ed grave-clothes
 hymns of tri - umph sing, for the Lord now liv - eth;
 through thy death - less love; bring us safe through Jor - dan

Refrain

where thy bod - y lay.
 death hath lost its sting! Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring
 to thy home a - bove.



Son; end - less is the vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won!

Today's Worship Leaders/Assistants**Presiding Clergy: Pastor Terry R. Hagensen****Ushers: The Hofstad Family****Reader: Sonya Kraft****Communion Assistants: Sonya Kraft,****Shelley Quinlan****Social Media Coordinator: Nora Illies****Setting the Lord's Table: Sonya & Paul Kraft****Pianist: Cheryl Durant****Cantor/Choir Director: Annalise Aakhus****Trombonist: Hannah Herrig****AV Services: Traci Schanke****New Salem Lutheran Church - Terry R. Hagensen, Pastor****7491 Island View Drive NE, Turtle River, MN 56601****Office Tel: 218-586-2262/Office Email (Traci Schanke): newsalem@paulbunyan.net****Website: newsalemlutheran.org/****YouTube Channel: New Salem Lutheran Church, Turtle River, MN****March Income vs Expenses (PRELIMINARY)****Total General Fund Income: \$18,430****Total Expenses: \$23,630****DEFICIT for March (-\$5,200)****3.29 General Fund Offering: \$1,490****Attendance/Social Media Engagement (as of 4.3.26)****Sunday, Mar 29 (in person/online): 92/49****Thursday, April 2 (in person/online): 24/26****YouTube Views: 720****YouTube Subscribers: 142****Facebook reach: 33,185****Announcements for the Week of April 6, 2026**

Birthday Bag Assembly/Rummage Sale Setup on Sunday, April 12! It's time again to put together birthday bags for the Food Shelf. We are in need of cake mixes, frostings (full size please) and birthday napkins – these items can be brought to the church before April 12. Our goal is to assemble 150 bags!

Along with assembling birthday bags, we will also start setting up for the April 18 Rummage and Bake Sale. Please stay and help with these projects if you are able – many hands make light work!!!

Offering Reminder: Please remember to indicate on your check/offering envelope how you wish your gift to be credited. Unmarked offerings/those marked "general" go toward New Salem's annual operating expenses; gifts marked for other entities are credited as such in your giving record and sent to those organizations. Thank you for supporting the missions and good works of New Salem!

Upcoming @ New Salem

Wed, April 8	Choir Practice	5 p.m.
Thurs, 4/9	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Fri, 4/10	New Salem Volunteers @ the Food Shelf	9 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Sun, 4/12	Birthday Bag Assembly/Rummage Sale Set Up (after church)	
Mon, 4/13	New Salem Volunteers @ the Food Shelf	9a.m. – 12:15p.m. and 12 noon – 3:15p.m.
Tues, 4/14-Mon 4/20	Pastor Terry on Vacation	

Music Rights/Permissions for April 5

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Halle, Halle, Hallelujah – Music: Caribbean traditional; arr. Mark Sedio (b. 1954)
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Music: Tanzanian traditional/Text © 1968 Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania; admin. Augsburg Fortress/Tr. © 1977 Howard S. Olson, Admin. Augsburg Fortress

Come to the Table – Text: Claire Clonigen (b. 1942)/Music: Martin Nystrom (b. 1956)
Text/music © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music; Juniper Landing Music, admin. Word Music

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds – Text: Paul C. Strodach (1876-1947), alt.
Music: Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Köln 1623
Text © 1958 Service Book and Hymnal, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Christ the Lord is Risen Today; Alleluia! – Text: attr. Wipo of Burgundy, d.c. 1050; tr. Jane E. Leeson (1807-1882), alt./Music: Robert Williams (1781-1821)

The Day of Resurrection – Text: John of Damascus (696-754); tr. J. M. Neale (1818-1866) alt.
Music: German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X.L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangebuche*, 1833

Thine is the Glory – Text: Edmond Budry (1854-1932); tr. R. Birch Hoyle (1875-1939)
Music: George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Make a Joyful Noise - Join the Choir!

If you like to sing, join the New Salem Choir.

We are a fun, friendly, supportive group, and the ability to read music is not necessary! The choir sings for worship on the first and third Sundays of each month, as well as presenting special music at Christmas/Easter and participating in the summer Bemidji Area Church Musicians recital.



Rehearsals are at 5 p.m. on Wednesdays - join us!

April Mission Partner: Lutheran Campus Ministry



*New Salem's
Highlighted Mission Partner
April 2026
Lutheran Campus Ministry
Bemidji*



Mission: Lutheran Campus Ministry of Bemidji is a welcoming grace-filled campus community where everyone is invited to explore faith, deepen relationships and serve our neighbors.

Vision: Lutheran Campus Ministry of Bemidji is a centering place for students to connect with God and each other. Rooted in God's infinite grace, we invite opportunities to be curious about faith, engage in service and grow deeper in relationships. We are committed to welcoming everyone while integrating faith and life to belong and feel both safe and

CORE VALUES

Acceptance
Belonging
Relationship
Connection
Contribution
Faith

Lutheran Campus Ministry is connected to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)! We're a part of one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States. The ELCA is a church that has a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Grace is the hope, forgiveness, joy and new life that is always, always available to us in God. We believe one of the ways grace announces itself in our lives is through faith. For us, faith comes through hearing the good news of God in Jesus:

- **We are loved unconditionally by the Holy One who created us!**
- **God has promised to meet us and be with us in hard times as well as good ones!**
- **We get to see, feel, hear and know God in stories of scripture, in our faith communities and relationships with people around us!**
- **In baptism our liberation & salvation are assured so we have been set free to love and serve our neighbors!**

Your support makes a big difference. Visit us at
1221 Birchmont Dr. NE
on the BSU Campus

God's Work, Our Treasure—APRIL 2026

This month New Salem is lifting up the work of a mission partner, **Lutheran Campus Ministry Bemidji**, and urges you to consider the various ways you might support this valuable ministry.

You can send your check to New Salem and indicate it is for **LCM-Bemidji**

The Readings on This Day - Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day

By the second century, Christians had shaped Passover into an annual celebration of Christ's resurrection, having agreed to keep this Christianized Pascha on the Sunday following the Jewish festival. By medieval times, the full Easter Vigil had been relegated to monasteries and convents, and so the Sunday morning celebration of Easter assumed priority in most churches. Since to be Christian is to believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, observing Easter became the primary mark of a practicing Christian. The term "Easter duty" arose from the regulation that to be considered Christian, a person was required to make penance and then to attend eucharist at least once a year, at Easter. Since even now many Christians attend worship only on Easter, the challenge is to tell the whole story of salvation although focusing on only three readings.

Matthew 28:1-10: In Year A, most of the gospel readings come from Matthew, and that pattern suggests that John's Easter gospel be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil and Matthew's on Easter morning. Jesus appears, not only to the women leaving the tomb, but also to us, who worship him now this Sunday and hold onto his body in the bread of the eucharist.

Acts 10:34-43: Throughout the eight Sundays of the fifty days of Easter from Easter Day to Pentecost, the three-year lectionary appoints first readings from Acts. The idea is that the Spirit extended the power of the resurrection from the empty tomb to the whole Christian church, spreading throughout the Greco-Roman world. Thus we can think of each Sunday's reading from Acts as another telling of the resurrection. In the sermon credited to Peter in Acts 10, Luke referred to the witnesses of the resurrection who "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." We believers see ourselves as among these witnesses.

Colossians 3:1-4: It is appropriate that, centuries after the life of Jesus, we hear from the letter to the Colossians on Easter Day: we ought not, its author argues, think that seeing angels is necessary for us to have faith in Christ's resurrection. Rather, baptism has brought us all into the benefits of Easter.

Images in the Readings

Matthew's accounts of the crucifixion (27:51) and the resurrection (28:2) include earthquakes. The eastern Mediterranean area is prone to earthquakes. Although we explain earthquakes in geological terms, often at theophanies or in apocalyptic material in the Hebrew Scriptures earthquakes are interpreted as manifestations of the power of God. Matthew means to say that the entire world was shaken by the actions of God at the tomb.

In biblical symbolism, angels are messengers of God, extensions of the power of God. The description of angels attending God suggest that heaven resembles an ancient royal court, in which the monarch has servants who carry out the sovereign's will. Like the Elohist source of the Old Testament, Matthew has people seeing an angel, rather than seeing the being of God. Luther's morning and evening prayers ask for God's presence in the form of "your holy angel."

The language of being raised from death relies on the commonplace human idea, evident in speech and story, that up is good and down is bad. The ancient three-tier universe placed divine powers on the top level, humans in the middle—between life and death—and the dead below the earth. In today's readings, God raised Jesus (Acts), we go up to Zion (Jeremiah), Christ is above at the right hand of God (Colossians), and the angel descends like lightning. Current scientific understandings of the universe teach us that there is no "up." Thus this language must function for us symbolically: up is life, down is death.

Gail Ramshaw, sundaysandseasons.com

