



Congregational Communication
March 27, 2024
Rev. Joel Petruschke

Our Mission: We respond to Christ's love by feeding those who hunger in body, mind, and spirit.

Thursday, March 28

6:30pm – Agape Meal

Friday, March 29

7:00pm – Good Friday Service (@ Our Saviour Lutheran Church)

Saturday, March 30

7:00pm – Easter Vigil (@Good Shepherd Lutheran Church)

Sunday, March 31 – Easter Sunday

9:30am – Sunday School

11:00am – Worship Service (Hybrid)

Pastor's Perch

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are now in the most holy time of the Church Year, that which is called Holy Week. It is the week in which we observe our Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection. In fact, the Triduum (Latin for "three days"), which comprises Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday is the central focus of Holy Week.

Holy Week began, of course, on this past Sunday with Palm Sunday. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, which is how the Old Testament prophesied the coming Messianic King (see Zechariah 9:9). Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and takes his place in the parade of lambs. The lambs were used for the Passover Meal. Each family would have their own lamb to celebrate Passover. Jesus, however, is the Lamb of God, who is sacrificed for the sin of all people.

Next, we find Jesus with his disciples preparing for the Passover Meal on Maundy Thursday. It is during that meal that something amazing happens. Jesus takes bread and says, "This is my body." And Jesus takes wine and says, "This is my blood." The Passover Meal becomes our Holy Communion Meal. And through this meal, Jesus establishes a new covenant with all people.

The Last Supper is significant because it is tied to Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Holy Communion is therefore tied to Jesus' suffering and death. What Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, forgiving us our sin, is accomplished through the celebration of Holy Communion. This is Christ's body broken for each of us. This is Christ's blood pour out for each of us. This food empowers us so that we are forgiven and so that we have new life.

The next day, we find ourselves at the cross of Jesus Christ on Good Friday. And imagine if we will the whole universe slowing down, everything stopping in the universe to focus on this event. Imagine all the lights dimming in the universe, and a single spotlight in the universe shining on the cross. That is how central the cross is. In short, the cross is the very power of God. It is the love of God for the redemption of humanity and all Creation. Nothing, NOTHING so captures the sheer wonder of God as does the cross of Jesus Christ. To understand the mind of God, one has to turn to the cross. And yet it is paradox—God's power is hidden in suffering.

And then we wait. Holy Saturday always feels a bit strange, like we are all in some sort of weird holding pattern until we arrive on Easter Sunday. But then comes that glorious Day of Resurrection. And we rejoice that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. The tomb is empty, Death has been defeated, and we sing our Alleluia's. Praise be to God. Praise be to God. Praise be to God.

In Christ, Pastor Joel Petruschke

Youth Corner

Nawakwa Work Day Sign Ups! As our April service activity, we will be going down to **Camp Nawakwa** to help get the camp ready for the summer camping season. Lunch will be provided by the camp. Something can be found for all ages and abilities to help with! If you have your own work gloves, feel free to bring them along. Remember to bring any body supports or braces you may want for comfort. Watch the weather and dress in layers, so you can take them off as you warm up! We will meet at **Nawakwa**, in the **parking lot**, at **9AM**, and enter together as a group, once everyone has arrived. All are welcome to participate! **April 27, 9am - 5pm**. Register at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XFKY7FD>

We are accepting donations of small, mixed Legos for our upcoming Lessons and Legos community program! The New Kingstown community has asked St Stephen, specifically, to develop some after school programming for the local kids. In response to this, our first program will be the monthly, Lessons and Legos program, where kiddos will listen to a brief story and then build a Lego creation around the theme of that story to be displayed for that month, inside the church. To begin the program though, we will need to fill the three tubs on the stage in the Fellowship Hall with Legos. We will take care of the sanitation, just dump your Legos in the tubs! Contact Mrs. B with questions.

Nawakwa/Kirchenwald Summer Camp registrations are out and can be found in the pocket under the **Communication Board** in the **Fellowship Hall**. Scholarships available. Contact the church office with scholarship questions.

Attention Families! St Stephen Church, New Kingstown, will be holding their Fuse Meetings on the 3rd Sunday of each month, at 1PM. A lunch meal is always served. Bring a side dish to share! This meeting is for kids of any age, 0-18, and the adult spiritual influencers in their life, in whatever form that is (parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends, older siblings, extended family, etc.). You don't need to attend St Stephen Church to attend Fuse! Anyone is welcome! We will have a meal, do some activities and learn a lesson. So come Fuse with us!

Senior High Summer Camp Week is in the works for 2024! Camp is for kiddos just graduating this year, to those going into 9th grade for the 24/25 school year. This year's theme will be "God's Jobs". We will be exploring different careers of the Bible and how God can use all, even the most unlikely of jobs, to accomplish his work. We'll also be setting out for some hands-on experience of some modern-day versions of some of those jobs, learning new skills, and of course fitting in some time for friends and fun! Start marking your calendars now! Camp runs June 9-14. Cost -\$150 for the week. Scholarships will be available.

Women's Retreat Update – This year's retreat is still scheduled for April 23 -25 at Camp Eber. Unfortunately, due to her husband's health concerns, Terri can no longer lead the retreat. Please contact Lynne Immell (717-462-8625 or limmell@gmail.com) if you would like to take the reins! Absent a leader, we will be forced to cancel the weekend gathering until 2025.

Sunday worship begins at 11:00am. This is hybrid worship, meaning that we worship both in person and online at the same time. If you worship online, please introduce yourself to others online and greet other folks that you aren't familiar with. We also invite those worshipping online to provide their own elements of bread and wine/grape juice in order to participate in communion.

Accessing worship online - You can attend online worship by clicking this link -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/410597064?pwd=b3lEa2hnbmtxU2kvYVhxUGN6ZWdoUT09>

You can also call 1-929-205-6099. Once connected, just enter the Meeting ID - 410 597 064 and the password – 779080. You can also find the direct link for this on our church webpage – www.ststephenlc.org. Scroll halfway down to the link that says, "Join us online." Click the link and you'll be connected to the Zoom session.

Worship Assistants

Date	Usher Greeter	Cantor	Lector	Assisting Minister	Altar Guild	AV Support	Counters
3/31/24	Larry Bouchat	Lynne Immell	Carol Clelland	Jadam Smith	Maxine/Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Cheryl Neidig Roger Immell
4/7/24		Jadam Smith	Jadam Smith	Lynne Immell	Maxine/Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Cheryl Neidig Lela Ewell
4/14/24		Lynne Immell	Roger Immell	Jadam Smith	Sue Rodgers	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Roger Immell Sue Rodgers
4/21/24		Jadam Smith	Carol Clelland	Lynne Immell	Maxine/Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Lela Ewell Cheryl Neidig

Prayer Requests

Date	Name	Connection	Request
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Chronic or Long-Term Requests

1/17/24	Tom Burson		Please pray for Tom and Kathy Burson. Tom is at Country Meadows Center continuing to recover.
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Temporary Requests

3/25/24	Jodi Ellis	Cheryl Neidig's sister	Recovering from brain surgery
3/25/24	Kristy Evans	Ginny Monko's granddaughter	Recovering from surgery