**Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church LC-MS**

Monthly Newsletter --- April 2022

699 Stambaugh Avenue, Sharon, PA 16146

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“THE ROCK and THE SWORD”

“Built upon the Rock of Christ and wielding the

Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.”

**From the Pastor:**

 **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”**

I don’t believe it is a far stretch to say that a great number of Christians find *Romans 8:31-39* to be one of the most comforting passages in Scripture. It is often used by pastors in times of spiritual distress, sickness, and even before death. This passage recognizes the sin-sick world we are living in and also grants us a great deal of hope in overcoming this world. For half of the month of April, we are in the penitential season of Lent; and, for the other half, we are in the joyous season of Easter. This is much like the life of the Christian which often seems split down the middle between sorrow over sin and joy in forgiveness. But what wins out at the end of the day? Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation conquer in the fight. The Christian, whose faith and hope is in Christ, stands on the side that wins, dominates, and crushes all life’s sorrows and pain. *Romans 8* is the summary of the conflict between sin and Christ, the devil and Christ, the world and Christ, and mankind and Christ. Life and

death contended, but the victory remained

with life.

*31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?*

Do you see? This is our Easter joy! Nothing that is written here would have any certainty unless Christ had risen from the dead. Thanks be to God that Jesus has risen from the dead for by His sacrifice we prisoners have been set free, and by His resurrection we stand assured of our salvation. Saint Paul goes on citing *Psalm 44:22*, for, though it may seem that while you suffer God does not care for you, this could not be farther from the truth.

*36 As it is written,*

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;*

*we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Saint Paul says we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. And this is confirmed again for us through the Apostle John who writes, *1 John 5:4-5*, *“For everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that has conquered the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that conquers the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Although April might be split in half between Lent and Easter, all things are leading us to confess the death and resurrection of Christ, for by the work of Jesus we are more than conquerors in this life. Jesus rises above all our problems, our sins, our world governments, and over all creation in order that nothing is able to separate us from Him. Our lives may seem to be divided by sorrows and joys but, in the end, the joy of Christ in the resurrection will conquer all this life’s sorrows and pains. As you enter into Holy Week and partake of Jesus’ last will and testament in His body and blood and as you meditate upon the cruel sufferings of Christ on account of your sins, do not become swallowed up by your own grief. Rather, turn to Christ and confess your sins. Do not harden your hearts to the Holy Spirit who will renew your faith again, that you may always believe that you are more than conquerors through Him who loved you.

In Christ,

Pastor Deal

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**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE**

Blue: Pledged as of 03.20.2022 $169,320 (84.66%)

Orange: Remaining

$30,680(15.34%)

**Total Contributions**

**as of 03.20.2022: $107,173.00**

**(53.59%)**

**Previous: $104,178.00 (52.09%)**

**New\*: $2,995.00(1.50%)**

**Remaining: $92,827.00 (46.41%)**

**It’s not too late to submit a Capital Campaign pledge card!** Pledge cards are available on the table outside Pastor’s office.

 If circumstances have changed and you need to update your pledge card, please see Nancy Robertson! Updated pledges help our Trustees plan more effectively and efficiently.

**IMPORTANT CHANGES!**

**The next Church Council meeting will be held**

**Tuesday, April 26th**

**beginning at 6 pm.**

**Our Easter Sunday Divine Service, April 17th**

**will begin at 10:30 am.**

**There will be *no* Bible Study**

**that morning.**

**Church offices will be closed Monday, April 18th.**

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**CELEBRATING IN APRIL!**

**Birthdays**

Dillon Hamilton 4-2

Patricia Parker 4-3

Bill Nelson 4-7

Kim Revale 4-13

Henrietta Holcroft 4-24

\*If birthdays or anniversaries have been omitted, please let the church office know. Thank You!

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**Pastor Deal** continues to serve as **Vacancy Pastor for All Saints Lutheran Church** in Slippery Rock, PA until further notice. As he must leave shortly following our worship service in order to travel safely to Slippery Rock, Pastor is generally available one hour prior to the 9 am Bible Study class for those wishing to speak with him.

New **ACTIVE MEMBER DIRECTORIES** are now available! Pick up yours in the narthex! They are labeled by household.

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**We were chosen!** By directing designated Choice Dollars through Thrivent Choice, eligible Thrivent members choose where Thrivent Financial for Lutherans distributes some of its charitable outreach grant dollars among thousands of participating Lutheran nonprofit organizations and congregations.

 **Many thanks** to Thrivent Financial member **Marie Flaugher, Mike Flaugher, and Betty Wolf** who recently directed Choice dollars to our church!

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Submissions for the May issue of **“The Rock and the Sword”** newsletter are due to the secretary’s office Tuesday, April 19th at noon. This includes meeting dates and times for the church calendar.

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**SCRIP Program:**

The next date for **SCRIP orders and payments** is Sunday, April 3rd. Checks should be made out to Sts. Peter & Paul’s and are to be given to Matt Berent or placed in the offering plate. You should receive your gift cards the following week.

 Participation in the SCRIP program is a wonderful way to help out our church. Participants receive the full value of gift cards purchased with the church receiving a percentage of the amount spent from the gift card providers. The amount varies based upon the gift card purchased.

Forms for ordering gift cards are available in both the narthex and on the parking lot entrance sign-in table.

**TRUSTEES’ UPDATE**

 **By Mike Flaugher, Chairman**

The Trustees did not hold a meeting in March, but work has continued on several projects. The Trustees are still working towards the removal of the dishwasher in the kitchen and continue investigating water pressure issues throughout the building. A plumbing service, which does pressure testing, will be scheduled in to assess the issue. Bids are currently being solicited for the repointing of the exterior masonry which is our next major project.

 The Trustees plan to redo the floors in the Fellowship Hall this month.

 There will be a meeting for all Trustees Tuesday, April 5th at 6 pm in the library. Please let Mike Flaugher know in advance if you are unable to attend.

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**LIKE & FOLLOW our Church’s Facebook page (Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church)!**

Remember to like, comment, and share to help us reach as many people as possible.

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**Thank You for Serving in April:**

**Head Elder:** Jonathan Baisch

**Assisting Elder:** Barry Nelson

**Altarware:** (Before service) Marie Flaugher (04.24), Diane Riefstahl; (After service) Elizabeth Haenftling and Joani Rice

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**Word of Hope: 1-888-217-8679**

The only 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL Hotline that is distinctly Lutheran, bringing healing found in Christ, to those whose hearts have been broken by abortion.

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**EASTER FLOWERING PLANTS**

**Cottage Garden Designs** has stepped up to provide churches spring flowering plants this season! Funds which have been donated will be used to purchase plants which will later be planted into our church gardens.

 The only slight hiccup in this plan is that our order needs to be placed with them Friday, April 1st which is two days earlier than the original due date for donations. If you had planned to donate Sunday, April 3rd, please go ahead and do so *but* let Diane know by April 1st how much you will be donating. This will allow us to have a more accurate idea of what we have to spend.

Envelopes for your donations may be found on the tables in the narthex and by Pastor Deal’s office. In the event of more money collected than spent, any remaining money will be put towards the purchase of summer flowers for the church gardens.

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**STS. PETER & PAUL’S**

**FOOD PANTRY UPDATE**

At this time, our Food Pantry is not in need of additional donations. Please consider re-directing money which you might typically give to other funds in our church which have need.

 *We are in need, however, of manpower.* If able and available to assist us packing/distributing goods Thursday mornings, please contact Barry Nelson at 724-866-7417.

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There will be a meeting following worship **Sunday, April 3rd**, for all members of the **Financial Committee**. Please let Matt Berent know if you are unable to attend.

**BIBLE MEMORY VERSES FROM MARCH**

**For Adults**

**March 6:** *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.* 1 Peter 4:8

**March 13:** *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* Philippians 4:8

**March 20:** *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

**March 27:** *My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.* Proverbs 6:20; 23:22

**For Children**

**March 6:** *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.* 1 John 3:8

**March 13:** *The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward.* Isaiah 50:4-5

**March 20:** *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Matthew 20:28

**March 27:** *Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* John 12:24

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**To listen to Pastor Deal’s sermons, phone 724-347-3620 and press Opt. 6.**

**TUTORS NEEDED!**

**Career Link** (217 W. State St., Sharon, PA) is looking for volunteers to tutor adults in math, reading, English, and history. Classes meet Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays from 10 am – 12:30 pm and Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 - 3:30 pm. Classes consist of a maximum of 5-6 students who are studying for their GED exams. No teaching experience is necessary.

 If interested or you would like further information, please phone Michelle Jordan at 724-458-7270.

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**Mission Outreach Project…**

**International Christian Literature Distributors, Inc.** focuses on getting the Bible and study materials to learn the Bible into the hands of Christian leaders in the least-fortunate places of the world. They supply churches and schools of Bible learning throughout the English-speaking world. Copies of old Portals of Prayer are greatly appreciated (Please note that weekly service bulletins and Advent / Lenten devotions are not accepted). For more information about ICLD, check out their website: [www.icld.org](http://www.icld.org/). **Please recycle items by dropping them in the basket in the hallway by the offices. Thank you!**

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**Homebound Members & Friends**

***Please keep the following in your prayers:***

Betty Ann Wolf

7777 Arthur St., SC

Masury, OH 44438

330-448-1080

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Ed & Millie Zachar

1320 Old Forge Rd.

Niles, OH 44446

330-652-9316

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**MEN’S RETREAT 2022**

**JOIN US FOR COFFEE FELLOWSHIP**

**FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

**APRIL 10TH**

This month’s sponsors will be

**Mike & Marie Flaugher**!

All of the remaining months of 2022 are available for sponsorship.

To sponsor, bring 2-3 dozen donuts/muffins (or other treats!) and 1 qt. juice on the day you are scheduled and place them in the Fellowship Hall prior to the worship service. Set up and clean-up will be done for you. Freewill donations will help cover the cost of coffee, tea, and other supplies.

Rev. Arthur Baisch has been selected as the featured speaker at the 2022 Men’s Retreat in cooperation with the Eastern District Lutheran Hour Ministries. This retreat is scheduled for June 3,4, & 5 and will be held at the Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in Bemis Point, NY.

 The 2022 retreat theme will be “Render to Caesar: The Christian / Child of God in Relation to God and Government”.

 Participants can select from three different retreat packages. The full retreat package, which includes 2 nights lodging, 6 meals & snacks, and speaker’s honorarium costs $159-$164; half retreat packages (1 night lodging, 4 meals, snacks, and speaker’s honorarium) range from $99-$104, and the Saturday-only package (lunch, dinner, snacks, and speaker’s honorarium) costs only $48.

 Registration forms and further information are posted on the bulletin boards in the main hallway and narthex. Feel free to speak with Rev. Baisch if you have any questions.

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Church Council President Jonathan Baisch is looking for volunteers to serve on a **committee to review our Church Constitution and Bylaws** for possible revisions.

It is hoped that the committee will have its work completed by the 3rd Quarter and be ready to present its suggested revisions to the Voters’ Assembly for consideration.

If interested in serving on this committee, please speak with Jonathan.

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ALTAR GUILD NEWS

Our Altar Guild seamstresses, Judith Furey and Marie Flaugher, have been busy! A new, unadorned black veil was introduced during the March Ash Wednesday service and a new, embroidered, purple veil and burse have adorned our altar during Lent. We give thanks to God for the talents these women use to His glory.

 Members of the Altar Guild polishing committee are reminded that we will meet at 1 pm Wednesday, April 6th to polish items in preparation for Easter.

 Our next Altar Guild meeting will take place Saturday, April 9th with Bible Study beginning at 11 am and a business meeting to follow. All are welcome to join us! If interested in bringing a “treat” to share, please let Diane know.

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**REMINDER:** Please let the church office know of any changes to your address, phone, cell phone or your e-mail address!

**ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM (ADF)**

For the last year, Sts. Peter & Paul’s has been part of the Alliance Defending Freedom Church Alliance (ADF). As part of this alliance, we have access to their lawyers in matters of religious liberty, procedures, and guidelines. We have had them review our current church constitution and bylaws and have sought their guidance in the matter of integrating the Food Pantry account with our general checking account.

The following case is one in which the ADF has been involved. It is cited simply as an educational tool and to let you know the type of work the ADF does.

**HORIZON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

Horizon Christian Fellowship, Swansea Abundant Life Assembly of God, House of Destiny Ministries (also known as Iglesia Casa de Destino), and Faith Christian Fellowship of Haverhill are four diverse Massachusetts churches that want to impact their communities with the love and grace of Jesus Christ. But the Commonwealth of Massachusetts threatened these churches with fines and imprisonment simply for operating consistently with their faith.

In July 2016, the Massachusetts legislature passed a law adding gender identity to the state’s public accommodations law. Although the public accommodations statute does not expressly cover churches, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”) issued a guidance document stating that when churches host events that MCAD views as “secular” — like spaghetti suppers — churches are public accommodations and must comply with the gender identity law. The state’s highest law enforcement officer, the attorney general, also declared on her website that houses of worship are public accommodations. Violations of the law are punished with civil penalties and jail time.

The practical effect of this law was to force churches to open their sensitive areas — like changing rooms and restrooms — to members of the opposite biological sex. This requirement conflicts with the religious beliefs of these churches regarding God's design for human sexuality.

Alliance Defending Freedom represented Horizon Christian Fellowship, Swansea Abundant Life Church, House of Destiny Ministries, Faith Christian Fellowship of Haverhill, and their pastors, in a pre-enforcement lawsuit to protect the churches' and their pastors’ freedom to operate their houses of worship consistent with their faith.

Thankfully, commonwealth officials voluntarily reversed course and admitted that the First Amendment protects a church’s freedom to operate consistently with its faith even when engaged in community outreach activities. On December 12, 2016, the four Massachusetts churches and their pastors voluntarily dismissed their lawsuit.

Commonwealth officials revised their official Gender Identity Guidance and website language, which now protects the freedom of churches to express views consistent with their faith and operate their facilities in a manner that doesn’t violate their core religious beliefs.

Article Source: <https://adflegal.org/case/horizon-christian-fellowship-v-williamson>

Remember the

following in Prayer…

**~The Hurting and Healing:** *Kristine Altenor, Joseph Altenor, Ellen BaronCA, Lois BortnerCA, Richard Brandes, John Burdette, Kathleen Coughenour, Kim, Susan Davies, Sophia Dean, Tim Dudash, Dolores Fee, Joseph Fleet, Eddy Furey, Neil & Melissa Huston, Barbara Kreske, Michelle KellyCA, Donna Kennedy, Gerald Krivosh, Jess Lavoie, Paul Lucas****CA****, Sandy Marshall, Ernie Meszaros, David Nelson, Juanita Rentschler, Richard ReuningCA, Viola Sakony, Marty Scott, Fred Tonty, and Angela WeserCA.*

**~The Homebound:**  *Betty Wolf and Ed & Millie Zachar.*

**~Serving in the Military:**  *Curtis Sinewe and Joshua Solyan.*

**~Community & World Needs:**  *Those suffering from or affected by the coronavirus; those suffering from loss and dislocation because weather disasters; those suffering from addiction and their families; Local, State, and National Government Leaders; safety for all Police Officers, Firefighters, & First Responders; the unemployed; our Second Quarter Local Mission: Support of a Concordia, Fort Wayne seminarian.*

*\*CA represents cancer.*

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**REMINDER:** If you would like someone’s name to be added to or deleted from our prayer list, please put a written note in the secretary’s mail slot by the office door.

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If you do not have an email account or do not receive emails from the church but wish to be notified of significant information concerning your fellow church members (such as births or deaths), please put a note in the Secretary’s mail slot asking to receive a phone call. Every attempt will be made to phone you within 24 hours of an email being sent out.

**Sunday Morning Bible Study**

The Sunday morning Bible Study class is studying the book of *Revelation*. *Revelation* is often considered to be one of the most challenging books of The Bible to understand and is often misinterpreted. Many find its contents to be frightening, but the Christian should find them otherwise.

The Apostle John was commanded by Jesus to write to the seven churches (cities) of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each of these cities had fallen from the Word of God to varying degrees. *Revelation* serves as a call to repentance and faith. John’s message to these churches is a message for *all* churches. Christ died for *all* people; He wishes *all* to be saved. For the repentant sinner, *Revelation* offers hope and comfort. Its prophecy is one of salvation.

Our first few weeks of this Bible Study have been spent examining each of the seven churches to whom John writes (*Revelation 1-3*). Here he points out what each church is doing right (if anything) and its short-comings. Each is promised salvation if repentant; damnation, if not.

Following this close look at the seven churches addressed by John, our discussions have turned inward. What are the things we (Sts. Peter & Paul’s) are doing well? How could we improve? What are we failing to do? How can we change this?

Please consider joining this weekly study of *Revelation* and find the comforting message and promise it holds for the repentant sinner.

**ATTENTION AUDITORS!** The **April monthly audit of deposits and 2nd quarter audit** will take place following worship, Sunday, April 24th in the library. If unable to attend, please phone Bev Chlpka at 724-962-4806.

**SCHEDULE OF HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

**Maundy Thursday Divine Service**

Thursday, April 14, 2022

at 7 pm

**Tre Ore**

**Matins~Divine Service~Vespers**

Friday, April 15, 2022

from noon – 3 pm

**Stations of the Cross Service**

Friday, April 15, 2022

at 7 pm

**Easter Vigil Divine Service**

Saturday, April 16, 2022

at 7 pm

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**Stations of the Cross**

At our 7 pm Good Friday service April 15th, we will be commemorating Christ’s passion while observing the fourteen stations of the cross.

 Each station relates, through prayer, meditation, or a Biblical passage, Christ’s walk to Calvary and is accompanied by a related picture.

 Three of the stations are not mentioned in the Gospels, but have traditionally always been included. These are noted below with an (\*).

 The fourteen stations of the cross are as follows:

* Jesus is condemned to death
* Jesus takes up His cross
* Jesus falls
* Jesus meets His mother
* Simon of Cyrene carries the cross
* A woman shows mercy to Jesus\*
* Jesus falls a second time\*
* Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
* Jesus falls a third time\*
* Jesus is stripped of His garments
* Jesus is nailed to the cross
* Jesus dies on the cross
* Jesus is taken down from the cross
* Jesus is laid in the tomb

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**Tre Ore (Three Hours)**

The **Tre Ore** or Three Hour Good Friday service will be held from noon to 3 pm April 15th.

 This solemn service denotes the three agonizing hours during which Christ hanged on the cross. Also celebrated by some other Christian sects (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist), our Tre Ore service is broken into three parts: Matins, Divine Service, and Vespers.

 There will be a brief break between each part of the service.

 Those who attend this service are asked to observe its solemnity and refrain from extraneous conversation while in the sanctuary.

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At the December 5, 2021 Voters’ Assembly, members selected the support of a Concordia, Fort Wayne seminarian as our 2022 Second Quarter Local Mission.

**Our Second Quarter Local Mission is Support of a Concordia,**

**Fort Wayne Seminarian**

 Monies which are collected during this time will be sent to a randomly-assigned seminarian. These monies may be used in any way needed (books, tuition, living expenses, etc.). It is hoped that this gift will bring some joy and relief into the life of one dedicated to the study of His word in preparation for the ministry.

 Donations may be placed in a pew envelope and put in the offering plate. Please be certain to specify 2nd Quarter Local Mission and note your name and envelope number.

 Thank you for helping to brighten the day of a servant of God!

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**Concordia Seminary ~ St. Louis**

**Concert Series**

# ****“Awake, My Heart, with Gladness”****A Service of Sacred Music for the Season of Easter

#### Live-streamed via cls.edu/live

#### 4 p.m. EST Sunday, April 24

#### Featuring *Laudamus*, the St. Louis Lutheran Chorale, the Concordia Seminary String Ensemble and the Clarion Bass



**April 10th is Palm Sunday!**

Be part of our processional as we enter the front doors of our church raising our voices to the Lord while singing “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”. The worship service will begin in the hallway by the steps to the Clover St. entrance, weather permitting.

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**Church Council members** are reminded to email copies of their reports for the April 26th council meeting to the secretary by noon, Monday, April 25th so that packets for the meeting can be prepared.

 Please also note that our meeting will begin at 6 pm Tuesday evening.

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Easter Reminds Us to Thank God for Our Many Blessings

For Pastor Deal, who faithfully preaches the Word of God and administers the Sacraments…

For Catherine Carr, Chris Nelson, and the members of our choir, who joyfully share their musical talents with us…

For our Elders, who prayerfully

watch over the spiritual welfare of our church family…

For our elected officers and boards, who guard the general welfare of our church…

For our church workers, who help with the day-to-day operations of this church…

And for you,

member of our church family,

for whom the greatest sacrifice of all was made.

