



ALL SAINTS

LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

April 2026

HOLY WEEK AND BEYOND

WORDS ABOUT HOLY WEEK

The cross of the Christ marks, in a decisive and irrevocable way, the unconditional participation of God in the life of the world, the concretization of God's love for the world, the commitment of God to the fulfillment of creation's promise. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."

– Douglas John Hall, *The Cross in Our Context*

Holy Week lands in the first week of April this year. Most people know Palm Sunday and Easter. Many miss the story and experiences found in between, which we remember with a degree of drama on Maundy Thursday with the stripping of the altar, symbolic of the humiliation of Jesus at his arrest. Then on Friday, we recall his death on the cross, marked through liturgy, music and the extinguishing of candles. Palm Sunday and Easter both represent moments of celebration. These days in between are a trek through vulnerable and painful moments. Holy Week contains the entirety of our own human experience, through the best and the worst. And so, when we don't give the stories in between their due, we miss the depth of meaning and hope that eventually comes out of them.

Theologian Douglas John Hall reminds us that the child we welcome in Bethlehem, who entered into our world to be present with us,

fully shares in our humanity even going into death itself. There is no place where God doesn't go with us!

With that assurance and hope, Hall says our life in faith now is "nothing more nor less than being sent with increasing insistence 'into all the world'—or in other words, embracing our freedom to manifest something like a new nonchalance about self and a new attention to the other." With Jesus, we are called to that same unconditional participation in the life of the world for the sake of our neighbors, including places of both pain and celebration. In a world which too often avoids the uncomfortable and painful spaces that we and our neighbors occupy, this mission is an ongoing gift of grace! Holy Week will always be a reminder of that.

WORDS ABOUT THE VOTE TO CALL AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR

As you have probably heard and read previously by now, the church council has called a special congregational meeting on the Sunday after Easter (April 12 following worship) for the sole purpose of voting on calling an associate pastor. This is a half-time position. Some of you will recall that this has been a goal and priority for an extended time now.

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HOLY WEEK AND BEYOND

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The council has repeatedly reaffirmed this as a priority over time and the call committee has been meeting as candidates have come to us. The process had been on pause off and on based on the availability of candidates. It's worth knowing that there is an overall shortage of clergy in the ELCA, and there are a limited number of pastors seeking part-time positions. The call committee and council are grateful to have found who we believe is a great person and fit for this role.

As you have probably experienced, All Saints has been growing and engaging new people. Calling this additional pastor represents an investment in continuing to reach and engage our community and those in our congregation. Priorities for this role (Pastor of Engagement) include fostering engagement with new and existing participants at All Saints and in the community, sharing overall pastoral leadership including in worship and preaching, and work with spiritual formation and our wellness process.

In the week prior to the special meeting, there will be some more details about our candidate. We invite you to come and get to know her at an open-house style Meet and Greet event on Wednesday, April 8 from 6:30-7:30pm. We'll have some dessert available! This is for all ages. Please take the time to stop by! All active members are then invited to the special congregational meeting on April 12, where members of the call committee will make a presentation prior to the vote. Please note that our regular annual meeting is scheduled for May 3. Please feel free to reach out to Council President Amy Stratton or me if you have any questions.

*Be well,
Pastor Jon*

APRIL EVENTS

- 2nd Maundy Thursday Service, 7pm
- 3rd Good Friday Service, 7pm
- 4th Easter Eggstravaganza, 10am-12pm
- 5th Easter Sunday Service, 10am
- 8th Meet & Greet with Associate Pastor Candidate, 6:30-7:30pm
- 12th Special Congregational Meeting, 11am
- 19th Retirement Celebration for Chris Heiberg, 11am

For up to date info, visit AllSaintsMtka.org/events.

CHRIS HEIBERG IS RETIRING

"After nearly 24 years in the church office at All Saints, I will retire in April. It will feel strange not coming into the building several days a week after all this time, and it's hard to believe how much has changed during those years. What hasn't changed is that All Saints' staff and congregation are a wonderful, caring community, and I will miss being a part of that. Thank you, friends!" — Chris Heiberg

We will recognize Chris for her years of service at All Saints with a special gathering after the service on Sunday, April 19.



EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Bring your family to a morning filled with free Easter Activities this Saturday, April 4, from 10am-12pm. Enjoy an egg hunt, crafts, bingo with prizes, a photo booth, an Easter I Spy, and meet birds from the Raptor Center! To ensure that everyone has a fun and safe egg hunt experience, there are two egg hunts: one at 10:30am and another at 11:30am. All are welcome to join us at this free community event, so invite your family, friends, and neighbors!

Reserve your tickets for the egg hunts today at AllSaintsMtka.org/eggstravaganza



INVITATION FROM CARING FOR CREATION

All Saints Lutheran Church is in the 9 Mile Creek Watershed District. They have arranged an event to clean up Valley Park in Hopkins on May 2 from 1-3pm. Please join us. Meet at the Playground to borrow equipment and sign waivers. Water and snacks will be provided. Contact Eileen Anderson or the church office if you have questions.

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Calling an Associate Pastor

Sunday, April 12

All Saints' Church Council has scheduled a special congregational meeting for the sole purpose of voting to call an associate pastor. This will take place following worship on April 12 and is open to all active members.

This is a half-time role focused on helping to foster engagement in our surrounding community, with those new to All Saints, and with our whole congregation. This pastor will work alongside Pastor Jon to provide overall congregational leadership and ministry, and contribute to worship leadership and preaching. This new pastor will also work with Pastor Jon, staff and members to help lead our spiritual formation wellness process.

The call committee, which was appointed by the church council, received a new slate of names from the Minneapolis Area Synod in late 2025 and has been conducting interviews over the first couple of months of 2026. At the council's March 16 meeting, the call committee presented its final candidate, and the council has unanimously accepted and recommended calling this candidate.

The candidate's name will be shared in the few days prior to the time of the special congregational meeting. An open-house style **Meet and Greet** has been scheduled for members to come and get acquainted on **Wednesday, April 8 from 6:30-7:30pm**. This is for all ages with dessert provided. We hope that you will come and share a warm greeting prior to the April 12 meeting!

This special congregational meeting will be separate from our regular annual meeting scheduled for Sunday, May 3. Feel free to speak with Council President Amy Stratton or Pastor Jon if you have questions.

DAY CAMP

A MINISTRY OF GLLM

DAY CAMP REGISTRATION

There is still time to register for Day Camp, happening June 15-18 from 9am-2pm. Day camp takes the fun, games, lessons and excitement of overnight camp and compacts it for younger kids and brings it to All Saints. Staff from Water's Edge Ministries make sure the kids that come to day camp have a memorable week filled with songs, Bible stories, games, crafts and memories. Day camp is open to any kids who are age 3 and potty trained through 5th grade.

At Day Camp this summer, kids will learn how our story and God's story are one in the same. Every splash, song, act of service or kind word are all moments that we become part of a great story-one of faith, hope, belonging and love. Journey with us as we step into the stories at the Water's Edge at Day Camp this summer. There is room for everyone, so invite your friends!

Register at AllSaintsMtka.org/daycamp

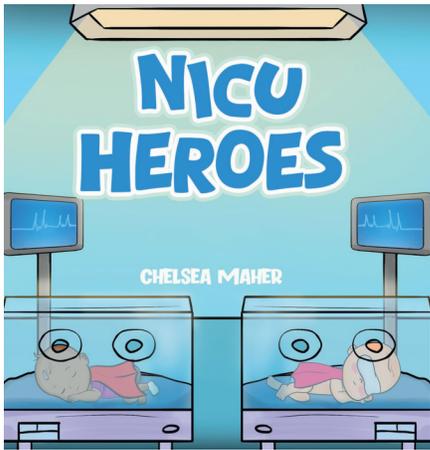


KIDS CONNECTION: BLOCK PARTY

Celebrate Jesus and Joy That Never Ends

During Easter, we are reminded that a time that once was dark and sad was filled with joy again because Jesus rose from the dead. We celebrate and shout Halleluiah because of the amazing thing that happened on that Sunday morning. All month long at Kids Connection, we will be looking at the aftermath of when Jesus rose from the grave until he finally ascended to Heaven. We will see the disciples try to cope with the fact that Jesus won't always be with them and learn how to find their purpose and joy beyond being friends with Jesus. Though Jesus is no longer here on Earth with us, we too can find our joy and purpose just like the disciples.





NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK

Family Ministry is more than just Sunday morning Kids Connection or Wednesday night Confirmation. Sometimes, it involves walking alongside families through each phase of life: the good and the bad. As many of you know our Family Ministry Coordinator, Chelsea, spent a long time in the NICU with her daughter Lyla. That time inspired her to write and publish a children's book called NICU Heroes with the ambition that it would bring hope and healing to anyone going through a similar experience. Whether you have been through a similar experience, another kind of hardship, or are in a season of celebration, we are here to walk with you.



Thank you! You brought in over 600 pounds of food and household goods for our partner, ICA.



UPDATED CREDENZA

As part of the ongoing upkeep of our building and furniture, staff and volunteers renewed the serving credenza in Fellowship Hall. As a well-designed piece, it provided an opportunity for a greener alternative than replacement. The old stain was stripped off and it was re-stained to match the updated flooring. A new, modern top and door hardware were then installed. Thank you to Greg Jackson, Doug Larson, and Dale Lighter for their planning and work. Check it out the next time you're in the building!



ALL SAINTS

Preschool and Child Care

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION NOW OPEN JOIN THE FUN THIS FALL!

All Saints Preschool is excited to announce that registration is open for our Fall 2026 half-day programs! For 60 years, we have offered a high-quality, flexible learning environment designed to meet the unique needs of every family and child.

We currently have openings for: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 days a week. At All Saints Preschool, we pride ourselves on our exceptional teacher-to-student ratios of 1:5. These small group sizes allow our educators to provide the personalized attention, nurturing care, and intentional instruction your child deserves during these critical formative years.

Spaces fill up quickly! To learn more about our curriculum, tour our classrooms, or begin the enrollment process, please reach out to Director Katie Avenson via our website or call 952-934-3552.

OPEN CHILD CARE POSITIONS

Do you want to help kids learn and grow? There are two open positions in the Full Day Child Care program: Cook and Float Teacher. Both are full-time positions (35+ hours) with benefits. Reach out to the Child Care Director Heather Lane or the church office for more information.



INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS APRIL WELLNESS FOCUS

It's April and our wellness focus for the month is Intellectual Wellness. It's a good time to ponder how we approach learning new things, improving a skill, or being aware of our sources of information. Our social media posts and Intellectual Wellness page have more information about taking stock of our intellectual wellness and making some changes this month.

NATURE AS THERAPY

There is a growing body of research on how nature plays an important role in human health and well-being, including reducing symptoms of mental and physical health problems.

Become familiar with some of the science behind how spending time in nature can help treat both the psychological and physical ailments of the human condition by reestablishing a connection with the natural world. Recognize the impact of modern environmental noise and diminished natural soundscapes on stress, attention, and nervous system regulation. Differentiate between being in nature and being with nature, and identify why intentional, relational engagement is essential to effective eco-healing.

The meeting is Tuesday, April 14, 2026 from 7-8:30pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church or on Zoom. The presenter is Tara Burns, MA, LPCC, Therapist with Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minnesota, Saint Paul office.



2026 STORIES OF HOPE BREAKFAST

Get ready to feel inspired together! Mental Health Connect's 2026 Stories of Hope Breakfast is Thursday, May 7 from 8-9am at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church. This year we lift up the collective practice of hope and the ways we build resilience in community. Enjoy delightful music, savor a delicious breakfast, and mingle with fellow community members. Doors open at 7am for coffee and conversation.

All Saints has a table reserved for 8. Reach out to the church office if you are interested in attending. Let's come together to hold hope and support one other!

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY

The Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, May 3rd after the service. Confirmation Sunday is May 17th. Stay up to date on everything happening with the weekly E-News.

PEACE MOMENT

"Earth rejoices our words, breathing and peaceful steps. Let every breath, every word and every step make the mother earth proud of us."

— Amit Ray, Author

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All Saints Lutheran Church
15915 Excelsior Boulevard
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Contact the church office at aslc@allsaintsmtka.org or 952.934.3550