
Mount Cross Chronicle

April 2021



601 E. Highway 260
Payson, AZ 85541
Phone: 928-474-2552
www.mountcross.org

Sunday Worship Services

8:15 a.m.

Online Worship Service

9:30 a.m.

In-House Worship Service

Pastors

Rev. Cliff Hanus
Rev. Linda Hanus
474-2552

pastor@mountcross.org

emergency phone
928-363-1683

Music Director
Daria Mason

daria1024mason@gmail.com

Accompanist
Angeline Ng

Office Administrator
Lenore M. White

secretary@mountcross.org

Custodian
Rod Rice

Pastor's Ponderings

Sometimes, it can be challenging to get young children to understand the true meaning of Easter, the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A conversation could sound something like this:

“Mommy, will the Easter bunny bring me chocolate eggs?”

“I’m sure the Easter bunny will bring you chocolate eggs, honey. But remember, Easter isn’t about the Easter bunny; it’s about Jesus.”

“Will the Easter bunny bring me a lot of chocolate eggs, Mommy?”

“Yes. I’m sure there will be a lot. But the important thing about Easter isn’t about your Easter basket, honey. Easter is about how much Jesus loves you and me and everyone.”

“Mommy, how many chocolate eggs will the Easter bunny put in my Easter basket? Is it big enough?”

“Honey. I think you’ll get more than you can count. Your basket will be big enough. But, do you know how much Jesus loves you?”

“Mommy...”

“Yes, baby.”

“Will the Easter bunny bring me some gummy bunnies too?”

To a young child, the Easter bunny and Easter baskets are just more exciting than Jesus. (And more fun and yummy.) To some adults, it can also be challenging, when pandemics, Easter shopping, travel and family visits (or lack thereof), and Easter dinner consume our attention.

However, this Easter, Easter 2021, when we have survived one year plus living through a pandemic, we need more than chocolate eggs and gummy bunnies, jelly beans and Easter dinner. We need **hope**! We need to hear **good news**! And **The Good News** is that **Easter is the hope to which we cling and the promise of God upon which we stand**. It is the very essence of Christianity.

Easter assures us that eternal, abundant life is available to us here and now, not only in the life to come when our journey on earth has come to an end. The promises and good news of Easter 2021 are not that life will be “like it used to be” before the pandemic. **It is a promise and good news that the power of God will never abandon us**. The power that raised Jesus from the dead can raise us from loss, grief and despair- for we have experienced and suffered much loss during the past year. God is still at work, doing a new thing- in you, in me, in the church and in the world. **It is the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our risen and living Lord**.

It is much better news than Easter bunnies, chocolate eggs, jelly beans, gummy bunnies or Easter dinner.

It is the reason for our “Alleluias”!

“Alleluia!” “Christ is risen!” “Christ is risen, indeed!” “Alleluia!”

With hope and joy in God’s power and promises,
Pastor Linda Hanus

Cliff and I wish you and yours a most blessed and joyous Easter season!



Our STATEMENT . . . † ChristConnectingCommunity

Spiritual Growth Opportunities

Daily Devotions

A daily devotional time, led by Pastors Linda and Cliff Hanus, is available online via the church website on Facebook.

Online devotional held Tuesdays through Saturdays, 8:30 AM

Worship Services

Weekly online worship service available through the church website on Facebook or through Mount Cross Vimeo channel <https://vimeo.com/channels/1341353>

Sundays, 8:15 AM

Weekly in-house communion & worship service held in the sanctuary
Sundays, 9:30 AM



**Lector Schedule for April 2021
9:30 AM Sunday Service**

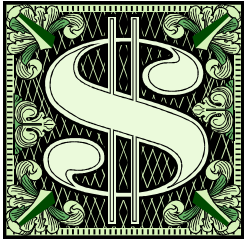
4	11	18	25
Nancy Kellett	Jean Larson	Eloise Jones	Ron Nelson

The online service lector for April is Mary Havenor.



Maundy Thursday, April 1st
Online & In-house Services
7:00 PM

Good Friday, April 2nd
Online & In-house Services
7:00 PM



Mount Cross Financial Report (January – February 2021)

2021 Approved ½ year Budget	\$152,461.50
Income	\$52,006.00 (34.0% of 2021 budget)
Expenditures	\$45,399.00 (29.7% of 2021 budget)

Total given to the Mortgage Fund during February 2021	\$4,110.00
Total paid out in 2021 for mortgage	\$5,950.00


Please note: above amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Total income received from Thrivent “Choice Dollars” in 2021	
Mount Cross	\$618.00

The Council has been in need of a Financial Secretary since the beginning of the year; the 2020 Financial Secretary, James Zorn, has stepped into the position of Council President. At the Council meeting in March, I was nominated and elected to assume this executive position. I am honored to serve the church in this manner.

I would like to point out that our expenses are less than the income for the first two months of the year. This is very encouraging! Thanks to everyone who has continued to be faithful in their giving, thus allowing Mount Cross to continue business as usual.

Yours in Christ,
Libby Winter
Financial Secretary




Vitalant
blood drive

Vitalant Blood drive will be held in the log building on Monday, April 26th, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

To make an appointment:
call 877-25-258-4825 or visit BloodHero.com
(use Sponsor Code: payson).

Much Needed Time Off!

the **Pastors** will be **Away**



Pastors Hanus will be taking a much needed vacation break between Saturday April 24th and Tuesday, May 4th. They will still pre-tape the online Sunday services for April 25th and May 2nd.

Reverend Alan Field has joyfully agreed to conduct the two in-house services for those Sundays and looks forward to enjoying some time in Payson.



Payson Community Kids Sloppy Joe supper will be served on Thursday, April 15th... if schools are in session. Please plan to arrive at 3:50 p.m. and we are done about 4:30 p.m.



Journeys with Angels

Feasting, Funny, Alleluia Angels

You are invited to join the women's Bible study as we gather in spirit on April 8 at 10:00 a.m. The complete study can be read in the "Gather" magazine or obtain a copy at the church building by the mailboxes. The mail carrier brought the April magazine on time this month.

This is the fourth and ending study of the winter Bible study about angels. Isn't it remarkable that the two greatest festivals of the church year, Christmas and Easter, are first presented to human beings as announcements by angels to shepherds and to women followers of Jesus? Feasting angels are noted in just a few Biblical passages. In Genesis 18, three angels enjoy food prepared by Abraham and Sarah. They eat an outdoor lunch just before announcing the laugh-inducing news of a child to be born to the couple in their old age. In the next chapter (Genesis 19), Lot prepares a big meal for two angelic visitors. Lot's feast in Sodom devolves into an unholy riot of intimidation, xenophobia, and the threat of sexual violence. Some in Lot's family laugh at the idea that their city would be destroyed and refuse to leave the city. Angels had to grab Lot and his family to save them.

In Judges 6, we read about funny angels in the story of Gideon who was threshing wheat in the confines of his father's wine press which was deep enough to hide Gideon and his grain from the ever-threatening Midianites. Suddenly, an angel arrives and greets Gideon as "a mighty warrior." The difference between what he was doing (a "grunt job") and the name he's given by the angel ('mighty warrior') is meant to provoke a laugh from those listening to the story. The angelic greeting presents Gideon with a first inkling of a new and bold calling. 1 Kings 19 talks about two episodes of an angel bringing food to Elijah as he was fleeing from Jezebel after winning an epic contest against a thousand priests of the false god Baal. An example of bringing a casserole to a grieving family follows the Elijah story in the study.

In all four Gospels, angels are integral to the announcement of the resurrection of the dead, this central proclamation of the Christian faith. The details vary, but all four Gospels agree: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and it was announced by angels. The author enjoys the Matthew story of the resurrection which only references one angel. "I've always loved the way this guy slides down from heaven in an earthquake and clothed with lightning, rolls back the big stone and, for good measure, sits on it! It's a gloriously powerful and funny image. We find more divine humor as the human guards are so shaken up that they, appointed to watch over a dead man's tomb, instead faint and become like dead men themselves. Furthermore, in this version of the story, the women don't hesitate to carry out their commission to go as apostles ('sent ones') to the apostles." The author further adds the information about "Holy Hilarity Sunday," patterned after an ancient understanding of the hosts of heaven laughing themselves silly over God's defeat of death and the devil at Easter. (This scribe recalls Garrison Keillor, on his Saturday night radio show in the Midwest, who would schedule many jokes for Holy Hilarity Sunday weekend.)

Alleluia Angels abound in the Old Testament, show up in even greater numbers in the New Testament and come out in full glorious force in the book of Revelation. Our communion liturgy invites us to receive a foretaste of this feast of laughter and song each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. The communion liturgy includes, "Therefore with angels, archangels and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:" at which point we join in singing "Holy, holy, holy. . ." Alleluia and Amen.

Copies of this Bible Study can be found on a clipboard near the church mailboxes.

**God's work.
Our hands.**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

During the month of March, Pastors Hanus, the Kelletts, Pennie Robinson, and the Zorns did the work of God's hands as they went through household items and cleaned the house of Jacob Waechter, who joined the Church Triumphant, thus leaving unfinished business on this earth. Libby Winter provided suggestions from a legal perspective regarding estate issues.

Each year there is a day set aside in September for us to serve others. What if we set aside one period of time each week for serving others, just like those who had taken time to care for the earthly house of Jacob Waechter?

Wouldn't the world be a better place?



Thinking of Ecclesiastics 3:1-7, There is a time for every season, and a time for every matter under heaven. With all the seasons of life, each and everything has its time and place.



Many thanks for the prayers for my daughter, Chris. It is with a grateful heart that I can report that she is doing well.

Jean Larson



April Birthdays

- 2 Terri Stevens
- 4 Sallie Loman
Scott Stein
- 6 Roger Zen
- 7 Judy Douglas
- 13 Bill Petrie
- 15 Mary Stoltze
- 17 James Zorn
- 24 Erik Knudsen
- 30 Rick Ludwig
Norma Topic

April Wedding Anniversaries

- 5 Mike Buskirk/Daria Mason
- 18 Scott/Marlu Allan Stallard
- 27 Rob/Donna Reifschneider
- 30 Clyde Longberry/Gail Bensen

April Baptisms

- 14 Linda Wiebe
- 17 Myra Herbster
- 24 Audrey Ricker

CHANGES FOR OUR MISSIONARY

Our current missionary, Pastor Kristin Engstrom, will greatly appreciate your encouragement if you can sign an Easter card for her, which can be found on the table in the entranceway of the narthex. We may send it a little later so more disciples can get this message about changes in her life.



Pastor Kristin is at a crossroads in her career. The program for Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGMs) has been discontinued for a second year due to the pandemic. As a result, Pastor Kristin's employment as the coordinator of the program in Senegal will end on March 31. Therefore, her Easter card will be sent to her home address in Minnesota.

Pastor Kristin wrote on March 15 that she now has to decide if she will take a different missionary assignment with the ELCA or be available to a call to a parish in the U.S. She appreciates our prayers as she discerns where God is leading her next. For now, please sign the card in the narthex.

**OFFICE
HOURS**

on
Wednesday, March 31st
and
Maundy Thursday
will be
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Office will be closed
on
Good Friday, April 2nd

Winter is almost over, the pollen is around us, the birds are singing to us, and finally the spread of the coronavirus is slowing down. Our God is awesome, and we are grateful for all that God has given us.

So what is next for Mount Cross? With the beam of light in the future for a return to living, what do we need to think about as a church?

The WELCA group will resume their monthly Bible meetings in May, if we do not have a new wave of COVID after the Easter holiday. Our Gather magazine study will be used along with any additional items the group may desire. I miss our discussions, as well as the time with the group. All women of the church are automatically members so once we resume, please feel free to join us. A dessert will be provided, but bring your own lunch. In the event the COVID goes crazy again, we will delay that opening meeting until June. Watch your bulletin for further information in late April. We meet the second Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

The focus for the month of April will be hanging out, or journeying with angels. So think about angels as you read this month's Gather Bible study, as well as reading the several articles concerning angels in this month's magazine.

A thought came to me about the Sabbath, how do we treat that day? Do we rest, do we visit with friends and family, do we just go about our normal business? A friend of mine is converting to Judaism from years of being a practicing Catholic. She now celebrates Shabbat starting every Friday at dusk to the end of Saturday. A day of rest as decreed by God, which our Sunday also represents, but with the pandemic it became hard to remember what day it is, and of course, at times, is it really Sunday? As we continue throughout the next month or so, let us remember that Sunday is special, a day of rest from the usual busyness, and a time to enjoy what God has given us.

Alice Natale

WELCA president

Showers of His Love

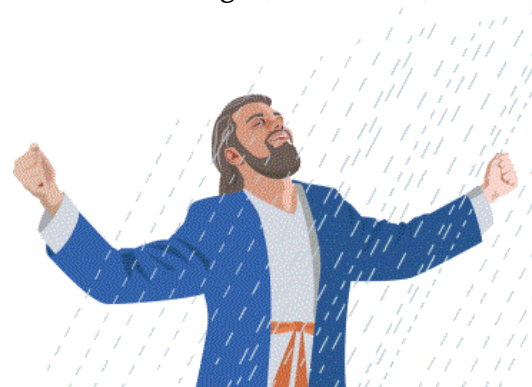
One rainy afternoon while driving along one of the main streets of town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick, the following conversation unfolded.

My daughter spoke up from her relaxed position in her seat.
"I'm thinking of something."

This announcement usually meant she had been pondering some fact for a while, and was now ready to expound all that her six-year-old mind had discovered. I was eager to hear.

"What are you thinking?" I asked.

"The rain!" she began, "It's like sin, and the windshield wipers are like God wiping our sins away."



After the chill bumps raced up my arms I was able to respond.
"That's really good, honey."

Then my curiosity broke in. How far would this little girl take this revelation? So I asked...
"Do you notice how the rain keeps on coming? What does that tell you?"

My daughter didn't hesitate one moment with her answer:
"We keep on sinning, and God just keeps on forgiving us."

I will always remember this whenever I turn my wipers on.

In order to see the rainbow, you must first endure some rain.