



April 14, 2022

# Staying in Touch Happy Easter!

## Bone Collectors

Of the 2,646 soldiers “unaccounted for” at the end of the Vietnam War (Spring 1973), only 1,040 have been identified or repatriated. That leaves over 1,600 still missing. Every year there are 20-40 remains found and returned to the U.S. From a scientific point of view, it is a sophisticated archaeological dig and has cost American taxpayers millions of dollars. The United States remains determined to discover the fate of every single serviceman still missing.

On Easter morning, the original bone collectors were busy. The religious leaders were worried that the disciples would sneak in and steal the bones of Jesus, so they posted soldiers to make the tomb secure. On the first day of the week, the women went to see the tomb. No one had any earthly reason to suspect that the corpse would not stay put. After all, death is death. Once in the grave, bones don't tend to move.

The search for the bones of Jesus is an exercise in futility. "He is not here," says the angel of the Lord. "He has been raised" (Matthew 28:6). Jesus left no bones, and no body. This is good news for believers, but bad news for bone collectors.

But why is there still a shadow of doubt? For many, the resurrection story itself remains a bone of contention. In a culture that wants rock-hard facts, even Christians get pulled into this debate trying to “prove” the resurrection. That's why doubters have got a few bones to pick with the story of the empty tomb.

*“...we need to pull out the tools of faith to experience the risen Christ in our lives.”*

First, there's the bone of perception. None of us was present to feel the Easter earthquake or hear the angel, so some wonder whether the story could be true. But the resurrection is a faith event. Purely logical arguments will carry little weight for those who refuse to believe. The resurrection cannot be perceived by our five senses, but that does not make it any less true.

Second is the bone of pluralism. "How can God have been revealed in one man, Jesus? There are so many religions, and spiritual paths -- how can we claim Christ to be the only true way of life?" Regardless of how God is encountered in the other religions of the world, we are people who have discovered that God has come to us in

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## A Big Thank You!

### To all our Spring Cleaners!

Thank you to Marty & Roberta Thorpe, Tom Berry, Jenny Beede, Dave Blackledge, Lilly Rogers, Lee Meier, Craig Wilkening, Carey Wilkening, Terry Stutesman, Dianne Williams, Jay, Ali and his niece, Tim Stanford, Laura & Steve Jones, Rosemary & Bruce Stover, Darcy Wendland, and we hope we didn't miss anybody! Thank you for all your time and work to clean our attic, our church yards, and our community garden. Our garden now has a new patio to sit and enjoy the garden. (Beautifying with flower pots, etc, to come.) Thank you also to Kathy Robertson who has been coming into the office to clean out and archive files.

All of this is a ‘fresh breath of spring air!’ to St. John's and each of you are so very appreciated!! (see photos below and on page 3.



Tom & Marty



## Our 2022 Church Council

From left to right: Brook Stoddard, President; Larry Gray, Treasurer/Comptroller; Ashley Ross-Velasquez, Secretary; Marty Thorpe, Vice President; Jenny Beede.

### 2022 Church Council Retreat Report

Church Council held a retreat on March 5 under the Vision “Connecting with God, each other and community; Our Ministry Now and in the Future.” How do we reimagine our life together?

- **Outreach:** Be Intentional in our outreach to visitors; we could have a “welcome buddy” for new members; use “Ice Breakers” to get conversations going (even in worship)
- **Worship:**
  - Lectionary – Add introductory line to the reading to give it context. Add testimonies/storytelling of God in our lives to the worship service. Godspotting.
  - Hybrid – Moving forward always have services on-line and in the building. We need to increase our “platforms” on social media.
  - Covid – The numbers are low right now so start sharing the peace again.
- **Fellowship Opportunities:**
  - Dinner and a Movie – We could host a spaghetti dinner. Let’s add a movie and dinner on a regular basis. Make sure to include ELC families.
  - Date night – Provide sitters for parents who would like to use this service. Who would babysit?
  - Small Groups – Women’s book study is beginning after Easter.
  - After worship – Need a sign-up sheet for folks participating.
- **Education:**
  - Adult – Continue with success of Bible study.
  - Children/Youth – We struggle with staffing a traditional Sunday school and have so few numbers. Brook volunteered to chaperone the Confirmations class to Rainbow Bow Trail for their Confirmation Camp.

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- **Stewardship**
  - VANCO “Gift Plus” link needs to be made more prominent on the website.
  - Stewardship for All Seasons 2<sup>nd</sup> Year (May 21<sup>st</sup>) – Pastor will contact previous members of SAS Team to see who is interested in doing this ministry.
  - Cell Tower proceeds – Unanimous agreement that we should refocus our efforts to hire a staff person part-time to enhance our social media platforms.
- **Property**
  - Parking Lot – Need to redo parking lot. This big project may take a while to raise funds. Get bids.
  - A/V booth – Contact a cabinet maker and get bids for building a booth for all the A/V equipment.
  - Drop down ladder for attic access – Get bids on building a drop-down ladder for the north hallway by the ELC director’s office.

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Jesus Christ. Our challenge is to conform our lives to what God has done in Jesus Christ, not to argue with the world religions.

We have been made God’s children in our Baptism. That event gives our lives meaning. Our lives have meaning because Jesus lived, died and rose. Our life of discipleship makes our life interesting.

The final bone we often pick is the bone of passion. We have to confess that we rarely experience the “fear and joy” the women at the tomb felt. Consider what the angel says to the women at the tomb: Jesus “is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him”. Jesus is “going ahead” of us, always ahead of us. If we do not follow him with some enthusiasm, then we will never discover where he is leading us.

Maybe it’s time to stop collecting bones of contention. Looking for the risen Christ with the wrong tools will not transform our lives. Instead we need to pull out the tools of faith to experience the risen Christ in our lives. Make no bones about it: Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Happy Easter, Pastor Wes

## Spring Clean-up 2022!



### A Letter from Our Neighbors

In Islam, God said in the Quran 49:13 "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you."

The Quran states that God created all people from Adam and Eve and made them into different cultures, races, and backgrounds to work together for mankind's prosperity, peace, and human dignity, not dislike, racism, or human bigotry.

Ramadan is this month. **It is a time for spiritual discipline, an opportunity for self-contemplation of one's relationship with God, extra prayer, increased charity and generosity, and more opportunities to spread goodness and love in society starting with our own self, our families, friends, and strangers.**

It's like the Muslim version of Christmas, or Passover, in the sense that it's a religious holiday where everyone comes together for big meals with family and friends, exchanges presents, and has a good time.

Let us celebrate this next Ramadan and other faith traditions together as one **"mankind"** so we **"may know one another"** to spread love, understanding, and build bridges that connect our rich society of different **"nations and tribes"** so we can indeed be **"the most righteous" "in the sight of God."**

Ihsan Riahi, Outreach Director, Metropolitan Denver North Islamic Center



*Happy Birthday to these St. John's Family Members!*

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Christina Helgeson | 9 Brook Stoddard    |
| 2 Jennifer Kayl      | 12 Barb Pech        |
| 3 Ron Engele         | 13 Brandon Stoddard |
| 3 Yvonne Gruenberger | 17 Katie Flanagan   |
| 4 Tina Abeyta        | 18 Fran Jarrett     |
| 4 Joni Columbia      | 18 Jacob Padilla    |
| 7 Phyllis Brandt     | 20 Kathy Berry      |
| 9 Emmitt Goad        | 22 Jacob Larson     |

### April Anniversaries



- |                            |
|----------------------------|
| 16 Rod & Kristi Kindschuh  |
| 21 Rosemary & Bruce Stover |



### Top 10 Signs You're At a Bad Baptismal Service

10. The coast Guard is involved.
9. The service is held at Splash Mountain Water Parks.
8. The pastor wears scuba gear.
7. Two words: Alka Seltzer.
6. "Billy the Bass" singing "Take Me to the River" instead of choir singing "Shall We Gather at the River?"
5. The pastor keeps repeating "Oops! Honestly, sister; I didn't know about that drop-off!"
4. Unable to lift the rather large person being baptized up out of the water, the Pastor yells for help.
3. The church board shows up with fishing gear.
2. As the choir begins to sing, that Crocodile Hunter guy jumps out of the water and wrestles the preacher into submission.

### AND THE NO. 1 SIGN YOU'RE AT A BAD BAPTISM:

The organist plays the theme from "Jaws".

## Again Asking and Finding Steadfast Love in the Gloom of War

March 2, 2022

By the Rev. Amy E. Reumann,  
ELCA Senior Director for Witness in Society

“Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” (Joel 2:17)

The prophet Joel doesn’t hold back when sounding the alarm about the coming Day of the Lord in today’s Ash Wednesday reading. It will be “a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.” Joel goes on to remind the faithful that despite the terror they see, God’s true nature is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.” He calls on the priests to assemble the people, to repent, and to testify to all who may ask, “Where is their God?” that God is still with them.

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### BIBLICAL CRY IN PRESENT CRISIS

This year Joel’s alert sounds above the horror of the Putin regime’s invasion of Ukraine, a great and powerful army conducting an unprovoked attack against a neighboring state. The valiant resistance of Ukrainian leaders, the courage of civilians fighting back and resilience of so many inhabitants are inspiring. But they do not ease my deep dismay as Russian air strikes and ground fighting continue, and civilian casualties mount. Over



Ukrainian refugees

three quarters of a million people (as of this writing), primarily women and children, have streamed across borders seeking safety. Many, many more are still to come in a growing humanitarian crisis.

Just like the grinding conflict and famine in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia or endless suffering in Syria and Yemen, the invasion of Ukraine and first days of war there can lead us to question: “Where is our God?” I ask it again when I hear about the plight of the Roma, a marginalized and undocumented people in Europe, facing bigotry as they try to flee. I ask again when reports of discrimination against non-Europeans trying to reach safety surface. I ask it again as I see Russian citizens bravely protesting the actions of their government for which they may expect harsh punishments. I ask it again as the questions about the potential for use of nuclear weapons in this war takes me back to childhood Cold War fears of annihilation.

### WHERE HELPERS ARE

Fred Rogers, host of the long-running show “Mister

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March 31, 2022 Budget Information		March, 2022 Account Balances	
YTD Income	\$101,996	Checking	\$6,634****
YTD Expenses	\$99,749	Savings	\$2019
Thrivent Mortgage Principal Owed	\$120,633	Scrip Checking	\$437
**includes cell tower sale ***used to cover two operating accts while moving to new bank. To be repaid semi-annually per Council. ****includes monies to repay Bldg Fund		Scrip Savings	\$315
		Building Fund	\$81,475**
		Note: to be repaid to Bldg Fund***	\$37,256***
<b>Bingo News!</b> As of March, bingo proceeds brought in \$12,000 to the mission and ministry of St. John’s. This figure is <u>in addition</u> to the income above.			

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Rogers' Neighborhood," told the famous story of how his mother told him that in a tragedy he should "look for the helpers" to keep despair at bay. Today, the solidarity of so many around the world with Ukraine who step up to help reflects a glimmer of God's steadfast love even in the gloom of war.

In our Lutheran family, I can glimpse God's action and can testify that in the gloom and horror of war, God is here.

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- ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has [called the church to prayer](#) and communicated our concern to [Lutheran churches in Ukraine and in Russia](#).
- ELCA staff have long and strong relationships with European partners preparing to receive people fleeing Ukraine. These relationships will guide our accompanying

actions and support these churches as they address the trauma that comes with violence, dislocation and family separation.

- Lutheran Disaster Response has created an [Eastern Europe Crisis Response](#) for donations to support the long-term response. The ELCA is working through the Lutheran World Federation and the Action by Churches Together Alliance to bring humanitarian aid to Ukraine and at the borders.
- [At the United Nations](#), ELCA staff are monitoring Security Council deliberation and the global humanitarian response.
- Through ELCA advocacy we are urging the Biden Administration to offer deportation relief to Ukrainians in the U.S. through a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation or a Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) order.

We don't know when this military action will end. Much misery lies ahead and it may be unbearable. In addition to actions we take now as advocates and in relief work,

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Lutherans are called to confess the ways we have fallen short in our responsibility for peace, and dedicate ourselves anew to be students of peace and act for God's shalom in our world. The ELCA social statement [For Peace in God's World](#) teaches that peace is deeply rooted in God's identity, that God suffers with and for our world of violence and the church is called to be a faithful presence, testifying to the God of peace in specific ways, as:

- a disturbing presence that denounces warful actions and advocates publicly and boldly for peace;
- a reconciling presence that creates bonds between people, imagines solutions to conflict and counters hate speech, especially among Christians;
- a serving presence that stands with the poor and vulnerable and compassionately meets human needs and stands for human rights; and,
- a deliberating presence where we discuss and debate responses to human evil.

### **GUIDANCE OF GOD OF PEACE**

As the war in Ukraine continues, the God of peace is here and calls us to maintain compassion and concern for all human suffering that results from conflict and war. The God of peace calls us to be active peacemakers who disturb, reconcile, serve and deliberate. The God of peace also calls us to hope, even when hope is shrouded by the pall of war, and to "give God no rest" until that day when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4).

**Can YOU help with summer yard work?**

**Contact Lee  
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