

PASTOR'S PAGE

The Resurrection Fills the Void

Astronomers have found a massive void in the universe. Huge. Bigger than the mind can comprehend. About as hard to grasp as the massive void discovered on that 1st Easter Sunday morning long ago. This hole is gigantic, nearly a billion light-years across. Inside it there are no planets, no stars, no galaxies, no gases. It's just a huge cold spot. A whole lotta nothing.

It can stretch and even boggle your mind to think of the incredible distances between stars in the sky. You might be aware that a light-year is a unit of distance — it's the distance that light can travel in one year. One light-year equals about six trillion miles. Quite a distance. A massive void. No planets, no stars, no galaxies, no gases. Absolutely nothing.

An empty place. An empty space. The empty tomb. That the tomb is empty, void, is a massive, world-changing reality. This is the reality we celebrate every Easter Sunday. Mary Magdalene and two other women encountered a massive void when they showed up at the empty tomb, one that was as mind-boggling as anything at the edge of the universe. It was early when they arrived, and after meeting a young man and hearing about the resurrection “they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (Mark 16:8).

Can you imagine how empty Mary is feeling at this point? She has already suffered the crucifixion of her friend and teacher Jesus, and she's mourning his death deeply. Now she goes to his tomb to finish what she could not on Friday, and what does she find? Nothing. A huge cold spot. She didn't know that *you've got to pass through some empty tombs on the way to resurrection life.*

We know what this feels like, don't we? Each of us, at some time in life, comes face to face with a massive void, a big empty place. It happens ...

- when you give your heart to someone who doesn't accept the gift
- when you learn a sport, practice hard and still don't make the team
- when you study and pursue a profession, only to find you hate your work
- when you create something beautiful, and discover that no one's interested
- when you try to resist a temptation, but then give in to it again and again
- when you jump to a new job, then lose it in a downsizing
- when you put money into a home, only to see your equity disappear
- when you retire from a long career, and wake up with nothing to do
- when you lose a spouse to cancer, and find yourself all alone in the world.

These are huge cold spots are massive voids.

Too often we try to pretend that there are no massive voids in our lives, no empty places. Sociologist Jean Twenge observes that young adults in particular have been told things such as “believe in yourself and you can do anything” — which is not very good advice. The truth is, bad things can happen to good people, and not every goal in life is realistic. You may believe that you're going to earn a graduate degree and get a great job, along with a perfect family in a beautifully decorated home, but life doesn't always give you what you want. Twenge thinks that overblown expectations are largely to blame for the recent rise in anxiety and depression in young adults. She says, “It's depressing to realize that your unrealistic dreams are never going to come true.”

We're all going to face some empty places in life, and we need to take them seriously. You cannot expect to step into a dream job right out of college. Most of us are going to endure a lot of heartbreak before we find a partner for life. Loss and rejection are a part of just about every life story you can imagine. *You've got to pass through some empty tombs on the way to resurrection life.*

Mary and her companions make this journey as they flee from the tomb. They do not fall into the trap of thinking that if they believe in themselves, they can do anything. Instead, they feel a blast of alarm, terror, amazement, and fear — and it is precisely these emotions that set them up for the surprising reality of the resurrection. They quickly discover that Easter is not about them — instead, *it's about God. In particular, it's about God filling the empty places in our lives with new and unexpected life.*

Through the resurrection, God fills the empty places in our lives. He does it for the first followers of Jesus, for the apostles, for Paul, for the early Christian of Church ... and for us.

That space ... is not nearly ... as cavernous ... as a heart ... without God.

About 350 years ago, Blaise Pascal, mathematician, philosopher, and physicist, observed that the human heart is like an "infinite abyss." He discovered that we human beings try in vain to fill our hearts with everything around us — education, jobs, homes, money, friends, family. But none of these earthly things can help, "since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God himself." Despite his brilliance and his contributions to mathematics, Pascal realized that life apart from God is empty. He found refuge in the resurrected Christ and Him alone. The empty tomb filled his massive cold void of his heart.

If you are feeling a massive void in your life, the very same will be true for you. Your emptiness will not be eliminated by a new career, a new spouse, a new house, a new car, a better salary. Instead, the hole in your life can be filled only by believing in the resurrection and following Jesus into the future. The good news of Easter is that Christ is risen! He has been raised from the dead. He fills all massive voids. He warms the cold spot of our hearts. He is with you wherever you go! His resurrection fills the void in each of us. We have a purpose this side of the grave and promise on the other side!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Steele

MAY BIRTHDAYS

5-01: Annalise Hasler
5-03: Steen Willadsen
5-04: Gary Bartz
5-05: Dan Fibiger
5-06: Austin Fibiger
5-07: Julie Regutis
5-11: Shirley Mueller
Grace Matte



5-14 Marilyn Buell
5-17: Ray Ottman
Betsy Metscher
5-19: Jeremy Paltzer
5-20: Lexie Matte
5-22: Joshua Yang
5-26: Kristine Faucher
5-30: Ezekiel Johnson

MAY ANNIVERSARIES



5-01: Bill & Julie Regutis
Rev. Robert & Julie Steele
5-11: Joe & Lori Wychesit
5-26: Patrick & Rachel Johnson
5-31: Bob & Karen Wuerzberger

If we missed a member's birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office and let us know.

SUMMER SERVICE TIME AND CALENDAR REMINDERS

The service time for summer will remain on Sundays at 10:00am. There will be no Thursday or Saturday services. The last day of Sunday school will be May 22, the last day of Sunday Adult Bible Study will be May 29, and the last day of Thursday Adult Bible Study will be June 2.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was so joyful seeing the children of Bethany participating in the Palm Sunday service making a processional to begin the service, then singing and playing chimes to remember the journey Jesus made into Jerusalem.



After the service we had a voter's meeting to discuss the streaming and Wi-Fi upgrade which passed unanimously. We pray that the upgrades will help with outreach efforts for new members as well as improve the quality of the service for members who are unable to be with us in the church on Sundays. Thanks to everyone who attended, and to Lisa Willadsen for taking notes!

After the service we celebrated Bethany's 113-year birthday with some cake. Thanks to Gina, Dori, Grace and Luke for helping serve the cake.

We are still looking to add another Elder. Please consider this if you have Eldered in the past and reach out to Andy Fibiger to volunteer as an Elder.

God Bless and to God be the Glory!

Todd Matte - Council President



MAY/JUNE CHARITY OF THE MONTH – Vernacular Video Mission International (VVMi)

"Whether hiking hours into mountain ranges or going by boat to small islands, the Gospel is being shared in remote areas of the Philippines through video and Scriptures and hundreds of people are responding and being disciplined in places where the Lord has never before been praised." We can help by giving of our gifts to the May and June Mission of the Month. Our donations will be used to help purchase Bibles which have been translated and are printed in vernacular (heart) languages. Christian videos which have been dubbed into "heart" languages are also used to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please be generous as you share in this important project.



LWML 2021 - 2023 MISSION GRANTS

Lutheran Women Missionary League has established 28 different Mission Grants to receive help through LWML Mite Collections. Some have already been paid in full, some partial and some waiting for help from mite collections. Our mites collected during May will provide funds for Healthcare and Medical supplies for students at Mwadui Lutheran school and the community in Tanzania. Mites will also help single at-risk Moms choose life at Redeeming Life Maternity Home in Chicago. Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries has been successful in

the Florida area and had the opportunity to expand in the Chicago area. Bethany's Mite Box will be set out in the back of church on **Sunday, May 15**. Please help support these two mission grants and once these are paid in full the other grants will benefit from our mites. Bethany's LWML is a Supporting Society. We don't meet as a group anymore but are dedicated to help collect mites for all the grants. You don't have to belong to LWML to help collect mites. Any Bethany member, children included, can bring their "coins" and place them in the box. Thank you for your support!

BLESSINGS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT LOVE INC

With another session of NEW WAY Classes beginning, there are some items that we could use if you are able to donate. These items are used as Weekly Blessings for our attendees to earn for faithfully attending class.

There is a display in the lower narthex explaining the classes starting and what the program is about. Please take a minute to review. If you can help with any items, it is greatly appreciated. Thanks, and of course I am always available to answer any questions you might have.

Sue Prange - Church Coordinator for Love INC



Ministry teams seeking volunteers:

- Intake Specialist Team – Tues., Wed., or Thurs. 10am-2pm. Choose your day. Volunteers answer phone calls from our neighbors, listen to their stories, collect pertinent information, and provide hope for their future. Training provided.
- Childcare Team – Part of New Way program, takes place on Thurs. nights, 6:00- 7:30pm. Volunteers provide age-appropriate care for the program participants' children. Planned activities are provided.
- Home Repair – Days and times vary based on volunteer and neighbor schedule. Range of skills needed, from beginner to skilled. Also looking for team leaders.
- Tasting Grace Facilitator – Leader needed to teach 8-week class: 4 weeks nutrition and 4 weeks hands-on cooking demonstrations. Training provided. Contact Jenna at Love INC for more information. A full list of opportunities is on our website: loveincsheboygancounty.org

The Volunteer work we do with an open heart is very meaningful. ❤️

Love Story - All I Need is a Can Opener

One month to live. What would you ask for if you were told you had one month to live? David asked for a can opener. David is a veteran and has walked a challenging journey throughout his life. Once living in Sheboygan, he has now returned after living in Miami. He is here with a terminal cancer diagnosis and called Love INC in need of a few kitchen supplies, most importantly, a can opener. The Starter Kitchen Kit Ministry was able to provide David with some basic items to see him through yet another challenging time. But it wasn't the kitchen items that meant so much to David. It was the love of Jesus, displayed through the volunteers that touched him so deeply. David said, "When I answered the door upon the delivery of my kitchen kit, the lady was holding a can opener. The kit was more than I expected! I just wanted to go home with the volunteers; I didn't want them to leave. They displayed the caring attitudes I remember from when I lived here in the 60's." David has defied the odds given to him. If Jesus can work through the simple request of a can opener, can you imagine what else He can do!? I dare you to ask!

‡ A LOSS IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY

On Friday, April 15, Harriet Tershner was called to her heavenly home to be with her Lord and Savior. A funeral service was held at Bethany on Wednesday, April 20.

‡ GIFTS GIVEN TO BETHANY

Memorial Gifts in memory of Harriet Tershner were given by Julie Schuman, Lee & Barb Gumm, Dave & Sue Prange, Ray & Shirley Ottman, Ken & Jeanenne Thompson, and Bill & Judi Strenger.

If you would like to give a gift in memory or in honor of someone, cards can be found on the counter outside Pastor's office as well as in the back of church

THRIVENT MEMBERS OF BETHANY

We would like to extend a Special Thank You to the Thrivent Members who directed their Choice Dollars to Bethany. Our committee will be meeting soon to decide how to distribute some of these funds, so if you have a special charity or non-profit that you would like us to consider supporting, please let one of us know. God Bless!

Thrivent Committee

Lynn Luebke, Mary Madden, Dave Prange

thrivent[®]
Choice Dollars



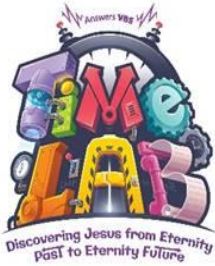
Sunday, May 22 will be the last day of Sunday School. During class, the children will celebrate a great year with some breakfast treats, Bible Bingo, fun, and prizes! During the church service, the Youth Choirs will perform, and after the church service the Sunday School will be hosting a coffee fellowship table with the proceeds going towards their new mission: Operation Christmas Child.



On Easter morning, Bill Strenger was talking to other members before the service. His tie became the focal point of the chat. Bill explained that he has had this tie for many years and always wore it on Easter. He told us that Jerry Sabrowsky had an identical tie. Just seconds later Jerry arrived. He had no idea people were talking about ties, and he looked surprised when several people chimed, "nice tie Jerry"! They all had a good laugh. It was deemed worthy to share this photo.

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY LUTHERAN CO-OP VBS

"Time Lab - Discovering Jesus from Eternity Past to Eternity Future!"



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

(1614 S. 23rd St. Sheboygan)

June 27 – 30

10am – 12pm

Cost = FREE!

K – 6th grade

This fun, hands-on, in-person event is a cooperative Vacation Bible School with all our churches and community children welcome. All lessons, games, and activities will be done in English. Come join the fun! Register as soon as possible so materials and snacks can be planned accordingly. Walk-ins welcome.

To register: Go to lutheranhigh.com and click on 'Activities' under the 'Summer Camps' tab. Scroll down to find Vacation Bible School and click on 'VBS REGISTRATION' to register your child.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

We are still in need of volunteers for VBS. Teachers, craft helpers, snack helpers, group leaders, games leader or helpers, music leaders. If you are interested in helping, or have questions, please contact Pastor Blas at 630-229-2455. Helpers can be 7th grade – Adult and can be members of any church. We need all of our church community to step up to help make this VBS a success!



SHOWTIME IN BRANSON

St. Paul's in Sheboygan Falls is organizing a bus trip to Branson, Missouri from September 19 – 23, 2022 to see the show "Jesus" at the Sight and Sound Theater. This theater was especially built to put on large scale productions of Biblical stories.

During the trip, we will also see the Blackwoods, the Duttons, the Grand Country Dinner Show, the Irish Tenors and Celtic Ladies, and the Circus Flora Dinner Show. Don't miss out on this fun trip with your friends. Everyone is welcome!

Get your reservation in today to Discovery Tours so you can be assured a seat on the bus. This is an open tour so please feel free to include your friends and family members. Brochures with more information and reservation details are available on the counter outside Pastor's office.

THOSE SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THE MONTH OF MAY 2022

Sunday, May 1
10:00 a.m.
w/Holy Communion

Elder: Gerry Luebke
Ushers: Dave & Sue Prange
Acolyte: Colin Mengel
Altar Guild: Liz & Ken Buesing
Scripture Reader: Lee Gumm
Door Locker: Diane Marotz

Sunday, May 8
10:00 a.m.

Elder: Lee Gumm
Ushers: Jerry Sabrowsky, Derek MacKenzie
Acolyte: Katelynn Regutis
Altar Guild: Barb & Lee Gumm
Scripture Reader: Steve Hazen
Door Locker: Ryan Brooks

Sunday, May 15
10:00 a.m.
w/ Holy Communion

Elder: Brian Faucher
Ushers: Brian Faucher, Dan Fibiger
Acolyte: Elanore Faucher
Altar Guild: Sue & Dave Prange
Scripture Reader: Todd Matte
Door Locker: Steve Marotz

Sunday, May 22
10:00 a.m.

Elder: Andy Fibiger
Ushers: Steve & Diane Marotz
Acolyte: Aidan Brooks
Altar Guild: Barb & Karl Kaeppler
Scripture Reader: MaryAnn Fibiger
Door Locker: Dan Menzer

Sunday, May 29
10:00 a.m.
w/Holy Communion

Elder: Andy Fibiger
Ushers: Mattes
Acolyte: Ryan Mengel
Altar Guild: Gina & Madison Fibiger
Scripture Reader: Sharon Werner
Door Locker: Patrick Johnson

May 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01 8:45am Sunday School Bible Study 10am Worship w/HC	02 6:30pm Elders	03	04 3:15pm Confirmation 5-8 grade	05 10am Adult Bible Study	06	07
08 8:45am Sunday School Bible Study 10am Worship	09 5:45pm Bd of Ed 6:15pm Finance 7pm Council	10	11 3:15pm Confirmation 5-8 grade	12 10am Adult Bible Study	13	14
15 8:45am Sunday School Bible Study 10am Worship w/HC	16	17	18 3:15pm Confirmation 5-8 grade	19 10am Adult Bible Study	20	21
22 8:45am Sunday School Bible Study 10am Worship 11am Coffee Fellowship Table	23	24	25 3:15pm Confirmation 5-8 grade	26 10am Adult Bible Study	27	28
29 8:45am Adult Bible Study *NO Sunday School* 10am Worship w/HC	30  Memorial Day	31				