



Pilgrim Lutheran Church

BROADWAY AT FLOREY KILGORE, TEXAS

Mission Statement: Pilgrim Lutheran Church is to glorify God in proclaiming the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with Word and deed in our midst, in our community, and throughout the world.

APRIL 2013 NEWSLETTER

Are you a “fool” this April?

Dear Members and Friends of Pilgrim Lutheran Church,

I suppose I enjoy a good practical joke or prank as much as the next person, especially if it is clean and no one gets hurt, but I have never really gotten into the whole April Fools’ Day thing. Apparently April 1st has long been associated with foolishness around the world, at least since Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* of 1392, though even earlier in history there were others days for foolishness, such as the Roman festival of Hilaria on March 25 and the Medieval Feast of Fools on December 28. On such festivals and at other times, however, what the world judges to be foolishness is a lot different from what the Bible regards as foolishness.

The Old Testament—especially its wisdom literature, such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes—contrasts well spiritual wisdom with foolishness. An Old Testament fool may be an ignoble and disgraceful boor, but a more serious problem (if you will pardon the pun) is that the fool’s insensibility to God and his moral insensibility close his mind to spiritual reason. Old Testament Folly can include such immorality as homosexuality and premeditated rape (see Judges 19:23-24 and 2 Samuel 13:12, respectively), but perhaps the clearest indictment of the fool is given in Psalm 14:1 and 53:1: “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

Such foolish people wrongfully give regard to what fools say. The prophet Isaiah foresaw a time when that backwards situation would be reversed and people would no longer respect the fool but the wise (Isaiah 32:5-6). Even if some never make that reversal, Proverbs 1:7 and other similar passages make clear that those who fear (or believe in) the Lord have knowledge (or are wise), while the fool lacks true knowledge of God and fails to acknowledge and confess God.

The New Testament similarly thinks of the fool as generally deficient in intellectual and spiritual capabilities. Cases in point are the parable of the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-27) and the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). Judgment looms, and, since the day and hour when the Lord will return (or one will die) are not known, we are to be wise at all times, living every day repenting of our sin and believing that God forgives our sin for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The same sort of reversal envisioned by Isaiah is evident in the writings of St. Paul. As he knew from his own personal experience (Acts 17:18, 32; 18:15; 26:24), believers and all things associated with them are judged to be foolish by the world. St. Paul writes, “The word of the

cross is folly to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18), and “We preach Christ crucified, ... folly to Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Even we by nature apart from the Holy Spirit judge such spiritual things to be foolishness: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Already thinking about April and fools, on Tuesday of Holy Week at the First Presbyterian Men’s Breakfast, I heard Brian Nutt, the senior pastor of Grace Fellowship in Kilgore, talk a little about the world’s judgment of the Gospel as foolishness. Nutt suggested the reason for the world’s judgment was the Gospel’s claim to be the exclusive path to heaven. That claim of exclusivity may well be part of the reason for the world’s judgment of foolishness, but there seems to be more to it.

Ultimately, the world is hard-hearted and needs to repent. People need to give up what they think is wisdom and strength, instead holding onto what they previously thought to be foolishness and weakness (1 Corinthians 1:25). For, God judges the world’s wisdom to be folly (1 Corinthians 3:19). Through what the world perceives as weakness, God works His strength (1 Corinthians 2:26-29; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 13:3-4).

Jesus Christ, St. Paul writes, is the wisdom and power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). Preaching about Him and His cross has power not because of any sophistication of the words used but in and of itself (1 Corinthians 1:17, 21; 2:1-16). The preaching of the Gospel and the Gospel attached to such things as water, bread, and wine seem foolish and powerless but, in fact, are wise and powerful, forgiving sins and thereby imparting salvation, eternal life.

As we continue to celebrate The Resurrection of Our Lord through the whole month of April, we do well to remember that the world regards as foolish not only Christ crucified but also Him resurrected, along with any resurrection of the dead, believers or unbelievers. In my Ancient Philosophy class in graduate school, I remember writing an essay question refuting philosophers’ arguments against any and all such resurrections. Reason redeemed by the Holy Spirit does have its place, subordinate to the teachings of Holy Scripture.

Out on the internet there are some fun lists of infamous April Fools’ Day pranks (Burger King’s Left-handed Whopper was one that struck me as particularly funny). As Christians we can appreciate such good-natured foolishness, but, unlike the world, we do not list Christ’s death and resurrection among the jokes or pranks!

*His and your servant,
Pastor Galler*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Julia Heil - April 1
Tiffani Erickson - April 4
Harold Engebretson - April 7
Carolyn Holcombe - April 10
Miles Gill - April 22
George A. Heil - April 26



LWML REPORT

LWML member, Barbara Wuthrich, has been very busy coordinating the Lenten meals, which were very well attended. Thanks to her and to all who volunteered to help cook, serve; and clean up. The meals were wonderful times of fellowship.

Shannon Gage, an LWML member, coordinated the food for the Circuit 14 Pastors' Conference, which was held on April 21st, here at Pilgrim. Arcele Wilburn and Arlene Kuehn also deserve thanks for their help in making the conference a success.

The LWML Spring Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, May 11th, at 9:00 a.m. in Gun Barrel City. Remember, we are hosting the Fall Rally on Saturday, October 5th. Attending the workshop would help us in preparing for that date. Please come to our next meeting, April 8th, at 6:00 p.m. to help us decide on a theme and to make plans for the Rally.

Keep Your Gospel Light Shining,
Sharon Sampson – President

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees met after a Lenten Vespers Service and elected George A. Heil chairman.

The Trustees discussed purchasing the vacant lot to the north behind the Church property, which purchase an anonymous donor had offered to fund. At a Special Voters' Meeting in March the decision was made to make an offer to the City of Kilgore on the lot, and the City subsequently accepted the offer. Trash and some brush were removed from the lot on the clean-up day held in March. Later, a heavy-equipment crew was contacted, and over March 25-26 the crew finished clearing the lot and graded it in preparation for subsequent use.

The Trustees discussed the cleaning of the church buildings. There is a pair of ladies who come the second Tuesday of each month from 2:00-5:00 p.m., and people are asked to avoid using the church buildings at those times. The Trustees are revising the list of other cleaning responsibilities, and would like volunteers to help with those duties each month.

The carpenter crew who worked on the church renovations last year has been contacted to repair subsequent damage to the steeple and to fix the doors going out of the Parish Hall. Soon decisions will be made regarding the ceiling, lighting, walls, and flooring in the Parish Hall.

APRIL EVENTS

ONCE-A-MONTH-SOCIAL OUTING Rangerette Revels April 10-13 (\$20)? Salvation Army Family Fun Run in Longview April 12 (\$25)? Something else?

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY resumes Wednesday, April 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.

LWML Monday, April 8th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

ELDERS Tuesday, April 9th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

VOTERS' MEETING FOLLOWING POTLUCK Sunday, April 28th, in the Parish Hall.

Easter 2013: Because Jesus lives, you also will live!

“Christ is risen!” “He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” The ancient greeting and response continues in our time, as the joyous news of the Jesus’s resurrection is affirmed by those who hear it and add their own praise to God for the miracle. The oldest Christian feast, the great 50 days of Easter are the center of the Church Year because everything for Christians depends on the resurrection of the Lord. Jesus shows Himself to be alive and gives to us the benefits of His death and resurrection in His own body and blood.

As our Synod’s *Explanation of the Small Catechism* summarizes (Questions 144-145), the Bible clearly teaches that on the third day Jesus Christ victoriously rose from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples (Matthew 27:62-28:20; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1:3; 10:40-41; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8). His resurrection is so important and comforting because it proves that He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4), that His teaching is the truth (John 2:19; 8:28), that God the Father accepted Christ’s sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world (Romans 4:25; 5:10; 1 Corinthians 15:17), and that all believers in Christ will rise to eternal life (John 11:25-26; 14:19; 1 Corinthians 15:20).

On Easter Sunday, March 31, Pilgrim will have two services celebrating The Resurrection of Our Lord: “Sonrise” Matins at 8:00 a.m. and Divine Service at 10:45 a.m., with an Easter Breakfast, Egg Hunt, Sunday School, and Adult Bible Class in between. Everyone is invited! At the Matins Service, we will conclude our special services’ sermon series considering consider the Lord’s Prayer in light of the words and deeds of our Lord during His passion and resurrection, focusing on the Prayer’s Conclusion, “For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.” At the Divine Service, the sermon will be on the appointed Gospel for the day, Luke 24:1-12.

The Easter celebration continues not only for a week but for a week of weeks, a 50-day-long Sunday, as it were. Counting the Resurrection Day, there are seven Sundays of Easter, in a sense making for one extended feast, with themes of resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The following are the Sundays of Easter in 2013 and their Gospel Readings (appointed by *Lutheran Service Book*’s three-year lectionary series B).

- Second Sunday (4/07): Jesus appears to Thomas (John 20:19-31)
- Third Sunday (4/14): Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-14)
- Fourth Sunday (4/21): Jesus the Good Shepherd speaks of His flock (John 10:22-30)
- Fifth Sunday (4/28): Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-22)
- Sixth Sunday (05/05): Jesus promises peace despite tribulation (John 16:23-33)
- Seventh Sunday (05/12): Jesus prays for future believers (John 17:20-26)

The Day of Pentecost, the 50th day of Easter, will be observed on May 19th. Pilgrim will also offer a Vespers service marking The Ascension of Our Lord on Thursday, May 9th, at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to any of our services!

Read and hear the sermons at Pilgrim online at <http://www.pilgrimlc.org/sermons>.

THANK YOU

We appreciate all who provided food, paper products, and clean-up for the Lenten meals in March, those who helped with the Spring clean-up day and fed the crew on March 16th, and those who helped with the Easter Breakfast, Egg Hunt, lilies for the altar. *TO GOD BE THE GLORY!*

Why do Lutherans worship the way they do? What about the “new” hymnal?

At their January 2013 meeting, Pilgrim’s voters decided to consider using for worship the LCMS’s newest hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*, which was put out in 2006 by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Commission on Worship in conjunction with the Synod’s Concordia Publishing House. Following that meeting, donations were made and 30 copies were purchased, both for people to peruse at their leisure and to be used in the Parish Hall as we studied why Lutherans worship the way they do and how the newest hymnal fits into that practice. Beginning The Second Sunday of Easter, April 7, 2013, our Sunday Morning Bible Study is answering those and other questions about worship and *LSB*.

While there is no perfect hymnal, a great deal of study and field testing over nearly ten years went into producing *LSB*, and the result is the best-possible new hymnal available for us to use. *Lutheran Service Book* combines some of the best liturgies and hymns from *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) and *Lutheran Worship* (1982) with new materials, some of which were found in *Hymnal Supplement ’98* (1998).

All are welcome to join us for the study: on-site Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 a.m. (come early for refreshments at 9:15 a.m.) or on-line at any time using the links below to any audio and handout files.

When the Sunday Morning Bible Study is concluded, the actual decision whether or not to use *LSB* will be made, possibly either at Pilgrim’s July or October 2013 Voters’ Meeting. If the congregation at one of those times decides to use *LSB*, additional donations will be requested and more copies purchased. The earliest the hymnal might actually be in the pews for use in worship would likely be the First Sunday in Advent, December 1, 2013. (Theoretically, we could move into *LSB* today and notice very little change in the content of the services we have at Pilgrim.)

OTHER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HELPING HANDS OF KILGORE: Items needed for April are oatmeal, mac and cheese, jello, shampoo/conditioner, and kleenex. Helping Hands can also use clean plastic bags and bread wrappers for distributing the items. A container for your donations is located in the Narthex. If you want to make a monetary contribution, send your check or money order to Helping Hands of Kilgore, PO Box 1576, Kilgore, TX 75662 .At the center, they also will be collecting sleeping bags, socks, and backpacks to distribute to the homeless. The annual duck race fundraiser is coming up on Saturday, May 4. If you would be willing to help sell tickets, advertise, or collect prize donations, please let them know. Prayers specifically for the spiritual side of this ministry would be appreciated. Thank you for your continued support of Helping Hands and so sharing the love of Christ with those less fortunate.

News and Announcements continue on the next page.

REPORTS FOR VOTERS' MEETING: Officers and chairs of boards, committees, and societies should turn in their written reports for the April 28th Voters' Meeting to the church office by April 14th so the reports can be available in advance to expedite the meeting.

SUNDAY MORNING REFRESHMENTS: There is a sign-up sheet on the wall in the Parish hall next to the thermostat if you would like to take a turn providing refreshments.

PRAYER CHAIN: Are you a part of the Pilgrim Lutheran Church Prayer Chain? Do you want to be? Are you getting notifications the way you want to get them (that is, by email or by phone)? Let Pastor Galler know.

FLOWERS: A sign-up chart is located in the Narthex if you would like to provide flowers for the altar at any point during the year.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: Sarah and Josie Land have graciously volunteered to head up VBS this year. We are contemplating using the VBS material from "Higher Things." The Higher Things material shares the same "Baptized for this Time" theme as the LCMS 2013 Synodical Convention and is less expensive than the material produced by Concordia Publishing House, though we would be copying more on our copier and needing to provide our own craft materials. Watch the bulletin for the dates of VBS this year so you can block out that time to help and invite children and adults you know to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Higher Things annual conference for confirmed youth will be held July 9-12 in West Lafayette, IN, with the theme "From Above 2013". Registration is \$375 For more information, see <http://test.higherthings.org/conferences/fromabove2013>.

MAY EVENTS

ASCENSION DAY SERVICE Thursday, May 9th, at 7:00 p.m.

LWML SPRING WORKSHOP Saturday, May 11th, at 9:00 a.m. in Gun Barrel City.

LWML Monday, May 13th, at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

ELDERS Tuesday, May 14th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

ONCE-A-MONTH-SOCIAL OUTING What's your pleasure?

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
(1 Corinthians 15:51-58 ESV)

April's Daily Bible Reading

1	Isaiah 25:1-9 Romans 1-3
2	Ps. 114 Romans 4-6
3	Ps. 115 Romans 7-9
4	Ps. 116 Romans 10-13
5	Ps. 117 Romans 14-16
6	Ps. 118 1 Cor. 1-3
7	Ps. 119:1-8 1 Cor. 4-6
8	Ps. 119:9-16 1 Cor. 7-9
9	Ps. 119:17-24 1 Cor. 10-11
10	Ps. 119:25-32 1 Cor. 12-14
11	Ps. 119:33-40 1 Cor. 15-16
12	Ps. 119:41-48 2 Cor. 1-4
13	Ps. 119:49-56 2 Cor. 5-7
14	Ps. 119:57-64 2 Cor. 8-10
15	Ps. 119:65-72 2 Cor. 11-13
16	Ps. 119:73-80 Galatians 1-3
17	Ps. 119:81-88 Galatians 4-6
18	Ps. 119:89-96 Ephesians 1-3
19	Ps. 119:97-104 Ephesians 4-6
20	Ps. 119:105-112 Philippians 1-2
21	Ps. 119:113-120 Philippians 3-4
22	Ps. 119:121-128 Colossians 1-2
23	Ps. 119:129-136 Colossians 3-4
24	Ps. 119:137-144 1 Thessalonians 1-3
25	Ps. 119:145-152 1 Thessalonians 4-5
26	Ps. 119:153-160 2 Thessalonians 1-3
27	Ps. 119:161-168 1 Timothy 1-3
28	Ps. 119:169-176 1 Timothy 4-6
29	Ps. 120 2 Timothy 1-2
30	Isaiah 25:1-9 2 Timothy 3-4

The seasonal canticle for April is again a song of praise from Isaiah. This one from chapter 25 celebrates the deliverance brought about by the judgments detailed in chapter 24. Note well the heavenly banquet described in vv.6-10 and remember that Jesus also spoke of heaven as a banquet and that we have a “foretaste of the feast to come” in the Sacrament of the Altar.

As usual, the seasonal canticle begins and ends the month, and the cycle of Psalms continues on April's other days. Note of Psalm 119, which occupies our attention for 22 days this month, that it is a “devotional” of sorts on the Word of God itself. Law and Gospel are themes throughout this meditation on God's Word, but the word translated “law” does not always mean “law”. This psalm is an “acrostic poem”, where the verses of each stanza begin with the same Hebrew letter.

In April we read through nearly all of St. Paul's letters, also called “epistles”. St. Paul made three primary missionary journeys (more about those next month with Acts), and his letters are generally to churches he founded. Though originally directed to specific churches, the Holy Spirit also speaks to us through them.

We read the letters in canonical order (that is, the order they appear in the New Testament), but this order is not the order in which St. Paul likely wrote them. The order of writing is far more likely: Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy. The epistles were likely authored over a period of some 20 years.

In these letters, you also will notice the strong emphasis the Divinely-inspired Paul places on both law and Gospel, as he lovingly and caringly follows-up with his children in the faith. His letters encourage and chastise when each is appropriate. They have a clear focus on teaching, but they also boldly preach Christ and Him crucified.

Paul's letter to the *Romans*, whom he had not yet visited, is a fairly complete treatment of the fallen human condition, Jew and Gentile, and the Gospel's solution for it.

In the letters to the *Corinthians*, Paul concentrates on problems in their congregations and how they should be resolved in grace.

Paul in *Galatians* strongly emphasizes that law and Gospel cannot be confused and that salvation is by faith.

Ephesians clearly excludes the role of works in salvation, which God has elected in advance. Paul talks about the Lord's gift of the Office of the Ministry (but watch for bad translations of 4:11—the KJV has it right).

Philippians, gives us a wonderful “hymn” about Christ (2:6-11) and shows the results of faith. Watch the NIV translation of 2:6, “form” is correct.

Paul in *Colossians* holds up the truth of Christ against a false teaching.

In the letters to the *Thessalonians*, persecution is a central theme, and Paul relates it to the truth about the Lord's coming.

In the letters to *Timothy*, Paul encourages the young pastor and his people to trust the Gospel.



APRIL 2013

Pilgrim Lutheran Church

(903-984-4333)

Pastor's Regular Study Hours
 Tuesday 5:00–8:00 PM
 Wednesday–Saturday 9:00 AM–12:00 PM

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 6:30 PM Pastor at Rotary Board Mtg. Julia Heil (B)	2 Noon Ministerial Alliance Lunch	3 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	4 Pastor gone to North Texas Confessional Lutherans Study Group in Plano Tiffani Erickson (B)	5	6
7 SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15-9:30 Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service No Adult Instruction Pastor Wied's Installation in Tomball Harold Engebretson (B)	8 6:00 PM LWML Meeting	9 Cleaning Ladies 2:00-5:00 PM 7:00 PM Elders	10 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study Carolyn Holcombe (B)	11 7:00 AM Small Church Pastors' Breakfast	12	13 Reports for Voters' Meeting due tomorrow
14 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15-9:30 Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Matins 12:30 AM Adult Instruction	15	16	17 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	18	19	20 Newsletter articles due tomorrow
21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15-9:30 Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service 12:30 AM Adult Instruction	22 Miles Gill (B)	23	24 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	25 Circuit Pastors' Conference in Palestine	26 George A. Heil (B)	27
28 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (W) 9:15-9:30 Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Matins 12:30 AM Potluck & Voters' Meeting (No Adult Instruction)	29	30				