

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH
APRIL 2019

From the Pastor's Perspective

Easter: Thresholds Opened!

Jesus' death and resurrection threw open closed thresholds! You may remember that the rock that sealed Jesus' tomb was rolled back on Easter. But take a closer look at Matthew 27:50-53 and you will see miraculous openings at the moment of Jesus' death, too: "Jesus, having cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit; and behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and having come out of the tombs after His resurrection they went into the holy city, and they appeared to many." Once again we see thresholds in the dramatic moments of story of salvation in the Bible. The Temple veil torn: God's very presence is no longer hidden and separated. Rocks split: creation itself torn open in a transformative upheaval. Tombs opened: those who had died in faith were raised back to life. They go back into Jerusalem: resuming normal life, but also taking the miracle of salvation right back into everyday life.

This Easter we'll throw open the barriers that shut us in. We'll proclaim Jesus' resurrection power that splits wide the bondage that holds us back. Our graves are broken open and we look forward to life eternal. Easter is God opening closed doors! We have God's Easter power to open new beginnings. We're included in the Bible's story of salvation. Easter is for you!

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Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

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| April 3 | 5:30 pm Shared Meal (Pot luck) |
| | 6:15 pm Family Game Show Night |
| | 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal |
| April 4 | 12:00 pm Sarah Circle |
| April 5 | 7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study |
| April 6 | 9:00 am United Methodist Men |
| April 7 | HOLY COMMUNION |
| | 8:30 am Prayer |
| | 8:45 am Grow group |
| | 10:00 am Worship |
| | 11:15 am Grow group |
| | 11:15 am Missions Trip Meeting |
| 4:30 pm Volunteer week at St. Andrews begins | |
| April 10 | 5:30 pm Shared Meal (Pancakes) |
| | 6:15 pm Epic of Eden/ECHO/Confirmation/Youth Group |
| | 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal |
| April 11 | 1:00 pm UMW Board Meeting |
| | 6:30 pm AMT Meeting |
| April 12 | 7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study |
| April 13 | 9:30 am Discipleship Training |
| | 12:00 pm Lunch |
| | 12:30 pm Spring De-clutter Day |
| | 5:45 pm Adult Fellowship |

Pastor's Perspective Cont'd

So, be sure to come in through our church doors for worship this Easter. It starts on Friday, April 19, at 7 p.m. with our Good Friday worship service. That service starts the Easter Prayer Vigil: we're turning our church building into a 24-hour prayer house! Be sure to sign up for a time to come in and pray, any time from Friday evening through Easter Sunday. Saturday morning, April 20, is the Community Care Food Distribution. We're inviting Community Care folks to be a part of the Prayer Vigil that morning! You can also come that morning to serve and wish folks the blessings of Easter in a very tangible way.

Easter begins with a 6:00 a.m. sunrise worship service at Veteran's Memorial Park, downtown Forest Lake. Back at church, the youth will host the Easter breakfast from 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. as a fund raiser for their summer mission trip to Alaska. The main worship service, at 10:00 a.m., will be filled with overwhelming joy and exuberant celebration. We'll be sent out through open doors to carry the good news of Jesus' resurrection back into our world!

This Easter, open your homes to family and friends to celebrate this triumphant victory. Open your eggs to celebrate the new life that Jesus brings. And open your hearts to the incoming Jesus. May the risen Jesus cross our thresholds to bring His salvation to us. Then, may His Holy Spirit carry us back over them again, out into our daily lives, so we can live as Easter people every day forward. The thresholds of the biblical story of salvation now include the thresholds of our lives. We are set free and given a new beginning, thanks to Jesus' empty tomb. It's time to cross the threshold...it's Easter!

Pastor David

Spring Cleaning Time!

On Saturday, April 13, we'll gather for lunch at Noon and then declutter the church building. We could use your help, so please show up! We'll go through all rooms, closets, and hidden spaces to pull out all the things that have slowly accumulated over time. Anything we have not used recently will be put out for grabs in the fellowship hall! Then after worship on Sunday, April 14, everyone is invited to walk through the fellowship hall and rescue whatever they can use. Whatever is left will be donated to the church rummage sale April 25-26.

Then, on May 4th, we will have an outdoor cleaning day! We will again meet at the church at 9 am for coffee and pastries, and then clean up the yard! We need YOU to make this a successful clean up effort! We also need your garden tools, (rakes, garden tools, etc.). Teresa Gruber will be supplying the pastries, so come prepared to begin the morning with a nice treat, and then get dirty!

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| April 14 | 8:30 am Prayer 8:45 am Grow group 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Grow group |
| April 16 | 10:00 am Rebecca Circle |
| April 17 | 11:30 am Romeos and Juliets 5:30 pm Shared Meal (Soup bar) 6:15 pm Epic of Eden/ECHO/ Confirmation/Youth Group 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal |
| April 19 | GOOD FRIDAY 7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study 5:00 pm Unload Community Care Truck 7:00 pm Good Friday Worship Service 8:00 pm Prayer Vigil Begins |
| April 20 | 6:00 am Community Care Set-up 8:00 am Community Care |
| April 21 | EASTER SUNDAY 6:00 am Sunrise Service 8:00-10:00 am Easter Breakfast 10:00 am Worship Service |
| April 22nd | Rummage Sale Prep begins |
| April 24 | 5:30 pm Shared Meal - Hosted by Nancy 6:15 pm Epic of Eden/ECHO/ Confirmation/Youth Group 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal |
| April 25/26 | 8:00-5:00 pm Rummage Sale 7:30 - 9:30 pm - Meal Packing for FMSC at Hosanna Lutheran Church |
| April 28 | 8:45 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship 5:00 pm YPA Auditions 6:30 pm Lifeline |



Annual celebrations are a great thing: Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays like Christmas and yes...Easter. It is good to come back around to these events once a year and discover them again. After all, life would be exhausting if we had to celebrate our birthday every day. It is helpful to set a specific day aside and treat it as special when that certain milestone rolls around again.

However, when it comes to those "holy days" that shape our faith, annual celebrations have their downside. If the resurrection power of Easter is not something we live into daily, then our faith will lack the abundant life Jesus talks about. If we leave it up to the calendar to tell us when to celebrate, we will be spiritually deprived indeed.

The same is true in our weekly cadence. If we wait until Sunday to interact with our faith, then we will never become mature in Christ. Following Jesus is an everyday enterprise. It takes diligence and dedication. And unless we can live as true disciples, we cannot hope to reach the next generation.

Easter begins the proclamation of a gospel that gives victory over death itself! As a church, we are to ECHO that message to all who will hear, especially to those who are under our care. Our children need to see the gospel at work in us, hear the gospel from our lips and understand that they too are called to share the gospel with others. We want to be disciples who make other disciples!

ECHO is for kids, parents and grandparents, as we seek to make disciples out of whole families! As ECHO starts up again on April 10th, consider joining in as we Love, Grow and Serve in Christ together.

For the King,



Eyeglass Collection!

Carol Humphrey is collecting used eyeglasses and cases for the Forest Lake Lions Club. If you have any old eyeglasses, or know someone that does, they can be brought to the church and put in the box on the shelf in the lobby. Carol will then make sure the Lions Club gets them!

Forest Hills Youth Group

The youth group is starting a new series called "Upside Down Kingdom". We will be discussing how God has a central purpose for His kingdom: to bring Himself glory. The question we have to ask is, what does God's glory for His kingdom have to do with me? We are called to reveal His glory through the way we live. When people look at our lives and the way we live, they should be able to see the glory of Jesus shining through us because we pursue Him, His glory, and His kingdom.

March 28th, will be an outing day. We will be headed to Splitrocks for an afternoon (1-3pm) of bowling during spring break. This a great time for the confirmation kids and the youth group to interact. April 26th (7:30-9:30pm), we will be headed to Hosanna Lutheran to help pack food packs for Feed My Starving Children.

We are in the midst of our spring fundraiser for the summer mission trip to Alaska. Buying a mile for \$2 will help all of us get a little closer to our \$6000 goal. We are over half way there, by filling out a check or envelope and marking it mission trip, we will get one step closer.

There is still time to sign up for the summer mission trip to Alaska! This trip is inter-generational so adults and teens are welcome. Also, the more people, the more excitement and work we can do in the Anchorage community. We have 6 teens and four adults already looking into coming with. The cost per person is around \$1400, this includes airfare, lodging, food and transportation. For more information talk to Cassi Betker.

Cassi Betker
Director of Youth Ministries

AMT Update

Spring is in the air, birds are singing, temps are rising, snow is melting! It's time to wake from our dormant winter and put on the cloak of newness. Open the door! Let the stale air out and let the breeze blow in fresh air.

Please pray for AMT this weekend as we take time away to seek God, sit with Jesus and be filled by the Holy Spirit! A special thank you to Rev. Janet Morey who will be leading us in our guided meditation time. I will update you next month on how our goals were met for the weekend.

For this month, I would like to share some experiences Amanda Lucas and I have had the past month or so. We were asked by Rev. Cindy Gregorson if we would come and give our testimonies to the upcoming HCI (Healthy Church Initiative) candidates at a dinner at White Bear UMC. There were at least 50 people there from approximately 7 churches, plus our D.S. Rev. Susan Nienaber and Bishop Ough. We also received a couple of emails from churches asking questions about the process. We hope our sharing will allow others the chance to bypass some of the "pitfalls" we dealt with.

Amanda and I shared with everyone our excitement, trepidation, frustration and joy following the acceptance by our church of the recommendations from the HCI Conference committee. We told them of the structural leadership changes that were implemented to simplify our many, many ministry teams and many, many meetings each month. This paring down has not only helped us from being stretched in

in too many different directions, but also freed us to hone in on what God's Plan is for our church, through much prayer and meditation.

Amanda spoke about "How it has all worked": "So far, I'd say from where I sit that it has been very nice having simplified our "chain of command." It has allowed for very little guess work in where to go for what things, etc. That being said, the congregation has at times felt that communication is not what it should be because fewer people are involved...word doesn't get around as well, etc., so making a conscious effort to share updates is extremely important. Eventually there has to be an individual responsibility to stay up-to-date on changes as well.

As I referenced above, our new structure has worked very well but it wasn't always smooth sailing. We've had some personality conflicts within our teams so what I caution in your team selection is to make sure prayer surrounds the entire situation and really discern who should be working where. We didn't appoint every volunteer we received to either of these teams, for various reasons. Make the invitation open but be prepared to sift through the "applicants" when they come in to put together the strongest team possible.

Logistically, having two teams has worked well. I haven't experienced any hiccups in process yet. It's very streamlined. Decision making seems quick; things don't have to bounce to 3 or 4 different teams for approval. One, to the other, and we're done!"

And "What we've learned": "HCI wasn't a fix all or a quick fix so we're still learning. Specifically, for our new two-team structure we've learned that we need to get volunteers from OUTSIDE of the groups to make things run. We cannot run every single ministry we decide to do as our 12-person team. Congregation wide buy-in is absolutely necessary. It is easy to think we have to do it all, we learned that we don't. That is very important.

Transitioning to this structure was difficult sometimes; other times it was easy. Transition is easiest when as much information and explanation is presented as possible to as many people as possible, as many times as possible. You still won't get everyone but you need about a 38% overall buy-in to create acceptance of a new idea, then it takes off.

We've learned that less is definitely more in the running of our church. Going forward, we'll have to decide if we'll keep this structure beyond our 3-year HCI plan and so far I think we will. It has gone very well so far for us."

For my part as lay leader, I mainly spoke about HCI and AMT from my own perspective.

"I, wholeheartedly, recommend the HCI process. As Amanda said, it has been hard work, with many hours of discussions, coaching and communicating with our church family.

As the Lay Leader, I have felt that my job was to develop this talented group of people into a unified team. Our main job was to discern what new "dream" or "vision" God had planned for us. Our church family voted all of us in as leaders for this process. We spent a lot of time in prayer. Next, we had to convince the congregation to jump on board with what we discerned. This is an ongoing endeavor. In 2019, our goal is to help each and every ministry of our church develop meaningful ways to Love.Grow.Serve. Each ministry team is required to include all three pieces of our "grounding principles". To do this, we have created a "New Ministry Proposal Form", which also led to a "Current Ministry Evaluation Form". One of our coaches, Rev. Jim Haun, helped us with coaching techniques when speaking to current ministries. Mainly, it was to have an open heart, open mind and hold the ministry accountable to what they say they will do. Our job is to avoid

“fixing” the ministry, listen to what their passion is and help them incorporate the 3 guiding principles into their ministry.

As the Action Ministry Team (AMT), we discerned that God’s plan for us was to “make disciples who make more disciples”. Rev. David Werner is guiding us into developing a discipleship pathway for all ages and Christian maturity within our church. I see excitement growing within our team as we get the ball rolling. One of the things that has helped us tremendously this past year, has been “going on retreat”. Our team has had 2 retreats with another one the end of March. We have been off site, praying and working together, with even an overnight. I have felt unity build during this time of sharing and also find that we accomplish much more there than during our monthly meetings.

I believe Amanda talked about how much our meetings have changed from previous years. As a member of LLMT, I felt our meetings were just about reporting what the ministries under us were doing and passing on pertinent news/needs. The only good part of the meeting was the book study that Pastor David led. Now I find our meetings invigorating. We are talking about God, not about the carpet colors or fellowship hall chairs. We so dearly want to reach people for Christ. With God, we know all things are possible, through Him who knows our every need. I pray that your church will move forward, mightily, with a new vision. The Methodist Church has been shaken up recently, but as Bishop Ough said :

We have committed our lives to the calling from God to lead this church and to offer a gospel of grace and love that is the core of our Wesleyan theology. Our hearts deeply desire to live out this calling with grace and integrity. My heart is broken to see this church that has been our home so divided in this season when all you and I want to do is offer the love of Jesus to all people.

May your church also uphold this same prayer as you move forward with the HCI process.”

As always, God is good, all the time!

Marilee Leonard
Lay Leader



Andrea Hendrickson April 16th

Lois Werhan April 17th

Jennifer Berglund April 18th

Jacob Hendrickson April 22nd

Bergie Bergerson April 26th

Matt Hendrickson April 26th

Dona Yetter April 27th

To all of you! Have a wonderful birthday and a blessed year! If your birthday is missing, please call the office and let us know!

SAVE THE DATES!

March 31st - Reese Werner preaching

April 21st - Easter Sunday

April 3rd - Game Night

April 25-26th - Spring Rummage Sale

April 7-13th - St. Andrew's Family Shelter
Volunteer Week

May 4th - Spring Yard Clean-up

May 5th - Womens' Sunday - Rev. Karen Seavey preaching

April 13th - Discipleship Training followed by Spring De-clutter Day

Also, please remember that Tax Aide is using the church on Tuesday and Wednesdays until April 11th to complete taxes for seniors and low income individuals.



Events and Info

Adult Fellowship

**Saturday, April 13th, 5:45pm See
Rozanne Foster for more details!**

Discipleship Training/

Saturday, April 13th 9:30 am to noon

Spring De-clutter Day - April 13th

**Noon - Lunch; De-clutter to start right
right after lunch, and until finished.**

Romeos and Juliets

**Romeos and Juliets meet on
April 17th at 11:30 am.**

Community Care

5pm 4/19 - Unload Truck

6am 4/20 - Set-up

8 am 4/20 - Distribution

Easter Sunday April 21st

**6:00 am Sunrise service
8:00 -10:00 am Breakfast
10:00 am Worship**

Lifeline Sunday April 28th at 6:30 pm

**Lifeline is a way for us to come together to be
with God. There will be songs to sing and
prayers to pray, but you can simply come to
enjoy the presence of God. All are encouraged
to attend. because we need Jesus! Our church
needs Jesus! Hang on tight to the lifeline.**