



Rush River Weekly Worship & News
Sunday, March 28, 2021 ~ Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Edition # 50

ALL indoor services/activities/events are cancelled until further notice.

Church contact information

Pastor Dave Teig cell: 715-557-0094 home: 715-268-9663
Church: 715-684-3701



Website

www.RushRiverLutheran.org



Facebook

Facebook.com/RushRiverLutheran



Email

PastorDave@RushRiverLutheran.org
Office@RushRiverLutheran.org



Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday (Using the ELW hymnal)

GATHERING

Prelude

Procession with Palms: Reading ~ Pastor Dave and Karen Cowles

Gift of Music: Choir

Prayer of the Day: Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

- **First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a** ~ Reader: Karen Cowles

The image of the servant of God is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

⁹It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

- **Psalm 31:9-16**

⁹Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;

my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

¹⁰**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;**

my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.

¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances; when they see me in the street they avoid me.

¹²**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot.**

¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around; they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

¹⁴**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD. I have said, "You are my God.**

¹⁵My times are in your hand;

rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶**Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."**

* **Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11**

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death.

Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

⌘ **Gospel Acclamation:** Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name. (*Phil. 2:8-9*)

Response after the announcement: **C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

⌘ **Gospel:** A Reading from Mark

Response after the conclusion **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

March 28, Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday ~ Sermon by Pastor Dave

Well, we're used to change. This year will be no different. On Palm Sunday we usually do the short celebration of Jesus' triumphant entry to Jerusalem and then we jump right into the passion story. As you know, many times since I've been here, we have read the passion story together. This time I'm going to stick more with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The other night I was watching public TV and they had a clip from the Ed Sullivan Show of the Beatles first time in the United States. I think back on that and think how misguided and brainwashed I was as many people thought they were such an evil group. I looked at them on the show, how neat their hair was, and I remembered how people were so aghast at their long hair. And as I looked at them, I thought, "That was long hair?" John Lennon didn't endear himself into the Christian community by declaring his band, The Beatles, were more popular than Jesus. Would you guess that set off a firestorm? But with most of the teenage girls it was probably true. At that time, we didn't know what fake news was. It was not a word in our vocabulary. And it's why I was so surprised when doing a bit of research, they didn't become famous on just their music and talented song writing, but there was a marketing genius behind them, Brian Epstein. Brian hired hundreds of teenage girls. He hired actors to dress up as policemen and paramedics. Then he rented police cars and ambulances and had them on sets for the madness that was about to unfold. Brian created and used different stage settings. Some settings had The Beatles coming off a bus; others had them stepping off a plane; most of them coming off stage. With the cameras rolling, the girls were instructed to lose their minds at the sight of The Beatles. They were to start screaming and going berserk with excitement. Several girls were instructed to pretend to faint, at

which time the paramedics would rush in and carry them off into waiting ambulances. While all this was going on, the would-be police officers were instructed to fight a losing battle in trying to contain the hysteria in the crowd. And then the camera showed the signs saying, “I am a Beatles fan” or “We love you Beatles.” When the filming was done, the videos, which were really advertisements, were shocking yet convincing. They were then packaged up and sent to every major broadcast studio in America. Then, for several weeks in advance of the Beatles arriving, those videos were played on every TV and radio station in the country. The result? “Beatle Fever” and “Beatle Mania” took the country by storm and swept from state to state like wildfire. When the Beatles finally did arrive in America, guess what happened? They were met by thousands of screaming girls who were losing their minds and fainting for real all over the place. And as they say, the rest is history.

For most of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus tried to discourage his disciples from publicizing his work. The last thing Jesus needed or wanted was a marketing genius hyping his ministry. But, when you’re someone who can heal the sick, raise the dead, and feed 5000, it’s difficult to keep from getting the word out. And so today we have the text from Mark 11. “And as they neared Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his disciples into one of the villages. He told them; near the entrance of the village, they’d find a colt tied there which no one had ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here,” Jesus said. Now if I had been there to give Jesus some advice, I would have said don’t do it. An unriden colt; and we could have a small rodeo. Or as we’re going in the parade, we’d have to stop those people from waving palm branches, or they would scare the colt. But as usual, Jesus seems to know more than I do. He said, “Tell the people the Lord needs it, and we’ll send it back when we’re done with the colt.” When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, he was ready to ride into the city—not in triumph, but in great humility. Once again, I, and many other people, would have given him some great advice. Riding a donkey into this great celebration is like riding a Ford Pinto into your inauguration. Mark says though, people did spread their cloaks along the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David, Hosanna in the highest heaven!” All this joy and wonderous celebration was based on misguided expectations. Many people along the way, when they saw Jesus riding a colt on his way into Jerusalem, immediately thought Jesus would enter the city to smash and break up the established order. They thought it would be a showdown between Jesus and the Roman officials. That was what they wanted and were hoping for. “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” rang out everywhere.

Pastor Steven D. Spencer says that years ago, when his younger son was about five years of age, the boy was frustrated and angry as they left church. His face was all scrunched up, his cheeks puffing with breaths of displeasure. When they finally made it to the narthex of the church, Steven asked him, “Phillip, what’s wrong?” Phillip replied, “I thought we didn’t sing about Santa Claus in church.” “What? What do you mean, son? We don’t sing about Santa Claus in church,” his father replied in dismay. To which Phillip responded, “Then why did we just sing ‘Ho-Santa, Ho-Santa, Ho-Santa in the highest?’” We can appreciate young Phillip’s confusion. Hosanna is not a word found in our daily lexicon. It’s a word we associate with church.

People were asking Jesus to throw off their Roman oppressors and restore the throne of David as the legitimate rule over Israel, and do it right away. Jesus was riding a colt of a donkey, a symbol of humility, not a horse, a symbol of conquest. Jesus approached Jerusalem in peace as a humble servant and not a mighty warrior king. The people were so preoccupied with the notion of political and economic power, they were blind to what was taking place before them. God was at work, but not in a way they could comprehend.

We have to remember that God is still at work even when we can’t see him. Sometimes we have to look for him. The late Albert Hitchcock, one of the most influential and extensively studied filmmakers in the history of cinema, was known as the master of suspense. But he had a strange little habit that was endearing to many of his fans. As some of you know, if you look closely, he made appearances in a number of his films. But you have to look closely to really notice he’s in the picture. For example, in “The Birds,” he can be seen winding a clock; in “Dial M for Murder,” he can be seen walking a dog. But you have to look.

We have an artist in our community in Amery named Paul Oman. When he starts painting on a big canvas in front of church, I see him adding texture and other colors to the canvas as it is taking shape. When the painting looks like it's pretty, with the color and shapes, all of a sudden, you'll see him making some marks on it and you'll think, "Paul, you just ruined the painting!" And then he turns the painting on his easel, and you realize, we've been looking at it upside down. And, it is just breathtakingly beautiful. And I thought how foolish I was to cringe at some of the moves Paul had made with his brush. I began thinking how typical this is in my Christian life. Many times, after much struggling and hardship, I have come to a place where I am comfortable. As I'm basking in the goodness of the Lord, God has chosen to institute a change I neither expected nor wanted. This is when I cry out, "No, Lord; you're ruining the picture!" But as I allow God to continue his work on the canvas of my life, to my surprise the picture begins to look pretty good. Finally, I thank him for the addition or subtraction in my life. But then I think that there are times where the change never looked good to me, and probably never will. During these times, I must remember that God is still painting. The picture has not been completed yet. I must travel on in faith, knowing that when I see him face to face, the painting will be what he wants.

The people on that first Palm Sunday were looking for a conquering king. Jesus knew these hopes were short-sighted. God had a different plan; a plan that would change the world forever. And so, it's our job to make God visible to the world. People are not likely to see God unless they see God in us. What the people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem that day did not realize, what God was offering to them was an opportunity to join him in doing a new thing. He was beginning at the bottom to build a new world order. He was starting with a small group of men and women that would grow person by person through the ages until it transcended all the governments of the world. The ragtag army now numbers in the millions and is still growing. Wherever it grows, hospitals, universities and schools appear. It is healing the wounded and setting at liberty captive peoples. It's bringing people from darkness into light. This is, of course, the church of Jesus Christ. This is why we lift our anthems of praise this Palm Sunday. It is why we're shouting Hosanna! Christ is alive and is still leading the Church until the day comes when oppression is no more, and everyone lives in dignity and peace and freedom together under the leadership of Christ. Your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven. Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen.

- Hymn: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" (ELW #338)

- 1.) Beneath the cross of Jesus, I long to take my stand; the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land, a home within a wilderness, a rest upon the way, from the burning of the noontide heat and burdens of the day.
- 2.) Upon the cross of Jesus, my eye at times can see the very dying form on one who suffered there for me. And from my contrite heart, with tears, two wonders I confess; the wonder of his glorious love and my unworthiness.

Apostles' Creed: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Prayers of Intercession

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change (*especially*), grant relief from natural disasters (*especially*), and nurture new growth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer (*especially*); grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You called followers to tend Jesus' body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Peace

MEAL

Offering: Please consider making your offering online at <https://rushriverlutheran.org/give/> or mail your offerings to Rush River Lutheran, N8623 County Rd Y, River Falls, WI 54022

✠ **Offertory Prayer:** Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

✠ **Words of Institution**

Distribution/Communion

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer after Communion:

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

Blessing: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

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****In our prayers: Dave Anderson, Norma Anderson, Barb Hoyt, Sonia Kotz and Evan Peterson.** (If you would like your name added, or to add anyone else to our list, please call Kathy Swenson at 715-425-6046 or see the church website at rushriverlutheran.org/prayer-request.)

(Norma is dealing with back pain; Lisa asked that cards to be sent to her to brighten her day. Norma's address is: 1425 East 7th St., St. Paul, MN 55106.)

“Blessing of the Palms”

“Congregations across the world were asked to refrain from worshipping in person during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to stem the spread of the deadly virus. For many, the loss was felt most sharply on Palm Sunday just as Holy Week services were scheduled to begin. One congregation in Central Washington State worshiped in their homes that morning via conference call. They hadn’t been able to distribute palms to one another, so pretending to wave imaginary branches in their own homes felt inauthentic and strange. Absent their usual practices, the pastor of the little church composed a non-traditional “Blessing of the Palms” for worship as they gathered in the safety of their homes. Instead of blessing palm branches on that Palm Sunday morning, the assembly was invited to bless the palms of their own outstretched hands.

The word *hosana*, shouted by those witnessing Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem in Mark’s gospel, can be translated, “Help, please, now!” With this very word on our lips, today we are invited to lay down more than coats and leafy branches at the foot of Jesus. We are invited to lay down our very own palms just as they are.

Imagine today that the palms laid out at the feet of Jesus today are the very palms of hands we meet every day in our own community and in the world. Some of these will be cracked, old, and tired with work; others will be sweating and nervous with worry; still others might be hopeful and open, excited or twitching with anticipation. Today we are invited to lay every one of those things that excite, demand, and trouble us at the foot of Jesus with a word of “Hosanna!” on our lips.”



Northwest Synod Assembly

This year our synod assembly will be held on Thursday, April 15 and Saturday, April 17 via ZOOM. An internet connection is required. The theme is *Justice and Joy: When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous. Proverbs 21:151*

Rush River can have 2 voting members, one male, one female, who will represent our church. Registration must be completed by April 1.

While this is different than the usual in-person synod assembly, it should prove meaningful and informative. Please contact Toni Matz (715-426-5217), Pastor Dave, or a member of the council if you are able to attend. Thank you!

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Fifth Week of Lent ~ March 24, 2021 ~ Sermon by Pastor Dave

Sometimes it’s interesting to think about court trials that have happened in our country. I don’t know which one would come to mind for you, but certainly the Scopes Monkey Trial comes to mind in 1925. This allowed our schools to teach evolution. Or maybe for us, remembering Hitler and WWII, it was the Nuremberg Trial. Or, some of us certainly remember the sensationalism of the O.J. Simpson Trial and the famous black glove. And of course, there are a number of trials with black men in our country who were innocent but found guilty. The most important words in a trial are “innocent, guilty” and “free.” We will use these three words to understand the most famous trial ever, the trial which takes place in Pilate’s judgement hall. The accused? Jesus. The accusers? The Jewish leaders. The judge? Pontius Pilate. Innocent—that’s Jesus. Pilate knew it was out of envy that the Sanhedrin had delivered Jesus up. While Pilate was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered much because of him in a dream today.” As Judea’s governor, Pilate is sitting on the judgement seat. That’s because Pilate has the power to decide formal death penalty cases. In Judea, Pilate alone has the power to let you live or die. Jesus is innocent! Pilate doesn’t

completely understand it. Pilate's wife understands it! I'm going to beat some of you women to the punch tonight because I know what you're thinking. Even then, women were smarter than men. Pilate's wife knows that Jesus is innocent. The New Testament assures us that Jesus is absolutely and perfectly innocent. In Hebrews 4:15, it says Jesus was without sin. We know of Jesus' trials in the wilderness where he defeats sin. We know about the temptation in Gethsemane to not follow through—but he did. I guess you could say Jesus was perfect, honest in the midst of lies, kind in a world of hatred and self-centeredness, heavenly focused in spite of countless distractions. When it came to sin, Jesus never did it. Innocent. That's Jesus.

Guilty—that's Barabbas. "And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas." (Matthew 27:16) Barabbas was a Jewish Robin Hood. Barabbas took money from rich Romans and gave it to poor Jews. I really don't have a problem with that. That's so unlike our government, which takes from the poor to give to the rich. Barabbas was famous as an insurrectionist. Insurrectionists were anti-Roman fighters, who belonged to a political group called the Zealots. Zealots had one agenda, get Rome out of Judea, period. Barabbas wasn't a petty thief or a second-hand scoundrel. Rome wouldn't condemn a small-time crook to crucifixion. Rome would execute a notorious insurrectionist. That was Barabbas. They say he was a heartless, brutal criminal. Barabbas had anger in his heart and blood on his hands. Barabbas would be crucified by noon, dead by sun-down. His only future was a hammer, three nails and a god-awful death, by hanging on a cross. Innocent—that's Jesus. Guilty—that's Barabbas. Guilty—that's us, for sure. Listen to some of the Bible verses that tend to point to our guilt. Ephesians 2:1 says we are all born dead in sin. We are lost, according to Luke 19:10. Or as the hymn says, "Prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love." Or as Ephesians 2:12 puts it, we can be so hopeless. Our finest deeds are "dung" or "rubbish" and "manure;" just call us Barabbas. I couldn't help but be reminded of former President Harry Truman saying, "That's just manure." And people were critical of him and asked his wife Bess, "Can't you do something about it?" And she said, "You just leave him alone. You don't know how long it's taken us to get him to say that instead of the other word." Paul puts it this way in Romans 7:24, "What a wretched man I am." He doesn't say I was a wretched man; he says I am a wretched man, and truth be told, we can use the present tense also, I'm still a wretch. The Bible calls it sin. Sin isn't a regrettable lapse or an occasional stumble. Sin is a coup against God's rule. Sin storms the castle. Sin claims sovereignty against God's throne. Sin says, "Get out, God! Get lost, God! I'm in charge here, God!" It's easier in church to want to live in peace with all people. It's harder to act on that when you didn't get promoted at work because you didn't have the right connections. It's easy in church to want to help the poor, but it's hard to do that when you see how nice a new flat screen TV would be. It's easy in church to say one thing, and then go out into the world and do the exact opposite. As the prophet Isaiah said, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray and each of us has turned to our own way." I don't like to confess it. I would just as soon avoid it. I'm Barabbas. I'm a prisoner to my past, my low-road choices, and my high-minded pride. God has declared me guilty. What's the sentence? Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Death. Let that sink in. Innocent, that's Jesus. Guilty, that's Barabbas. Guilty, that's us. Free, that's Barabbas. "Now the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed... Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." (Matthew 27:20-21) The Sanhedrin had all their ducks in a row long before the early morning trial. This crowd is different from the crowd on Palm Sunday. The Palm Sunday crowd consisted of Galileans. This crowd on Good Friday consisted of Judeans, up at 6am to get Barabbas off the hook. The Galileans are camped outside of Jerusalem, still sleeping.

Listen! Can you hear him? It's the Roman guard with the key. He unlocks the prison door, swings it open and shouts, "Barabbas, you're free." Barabbas stumbles into the light of day. Shackles gone. Crimes pardoned. Free! We have seen this scene played over and over even now as guilty men get set free with a pardon. Free, that's Barabbas. That's why God placed all of our sin on Jesus. It's accurate, therefore, to say, "Christ substituted himself for the world." It always reminds me of The Tale of Two Cities, in the French Revolution when a person takes the place of his friend at the guillotine. It's life changing to think that Christ substituted himself for me. God's mercy? It is more, so much more. We're free! Psalm 146:7, "The Lord sets then prisoners free." Or, there is another place that talks about Christ setting us free

so we could be free indeed. Or in Revelations 1:5, Jesus has “freed us from our sins by his blood.” There are a million ways to become a prisoner. There’s only one way to be free. His name is Jesus. Amen.

Hymn: “Ah, Holy Jesus” (ELW #349)

- 1.) Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended that we to judge thee have in hate pretended? By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted.
- 2.) Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee. ‘Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.
- 3.) Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee; think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.

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John Coughlin Food & Resource Center

**FREE Food Distribution
(COVID Food Assistance Program)**

Open to households that are in need.

April 22, 2021; 11 am – 1 pm (while supplies last)

**Pierce County Fairgrounds: 364 N Maple St.,
Ellsworth, WI East entrance**



**Each household
will receive 1 large
box of assorted
food items.**

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Treasurer Position



Rush River Council is currently seeking someone to fill the Treasurer’s Position which is held by Emily Pierson. This is a paid position. The Constitution states that the Treasurer must be a voting member of the congregation. Emily has done a superb job in managing Rush River’s finances and attending to general bookkeeping, fundraising, and tax responsibilities. She will be available to make the transition run smoothly.

Time commitment varies throughout the year and includes attending Council Meetings (2nd Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.), working with Quicken, Excel, and Revelations (giving program), collecting and recording offerings, providing financial and donation reports, paying employees, maintaining tax records, etc.

If you are interested or know of someone who might be, please let me or a Council member know. There is a more specific list of duties available and we welcome any questions. Rush River Lutheran Church has a very caring and helpful Council to work with you.

Peace,

Toni

715-426-5217



From the Cemetery Board

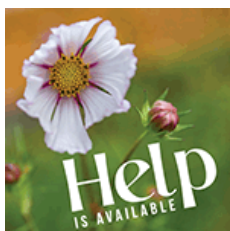
We are accepting bids to mow the RRLC cemetery lawn. Bids should be submitted by April 15th. You may contact Tim Wells if interested.

Mail: 1665 18th Ave., Hammond, WI 54015; or call 715-684-9995.



Need Assistance?

Some individuals are offering help, such as grocery store gift cards, for anyone from RRLC who may be in need during this pandemic. If you would like assistance (it will be kept anonymous), please contact the church office.





Hope for Creation is Hosting a Virtual Community Book Study

BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE TEACHINGS OF PLANTS

By Robin Wall Kimmerer

Five Tuesdays, April 6 – May 4, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. ~ Via Zoom

Participants will be randomly placed in small discussion groups each week.

Sign up Now: hope4creationRF@gmail.com

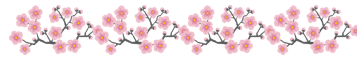
Sign Up Deadline: Tuesday, March 30

Each participant is responsible for securing their own copy of the book. Consider supporting a local business by purchasing the book from Fox Den Books on Main Street, River Falls.

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She lives in Fabius, New York, where she is SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment.

“Robin Wall Kimmerer shows how the factual, objective approach of science can be enriched by the ancient knowledge of the indigenous people. It is the way she captures beauty that I love the most. The images of giant cedars and wild strawberries, a forest in the rain and a meadow of fragrant Sweetgrass will stay with you long after you read the last page.”

~ Jane Goodall, author of *Seeds of Hope* and *My Life with the Chimpanzees*



Luther Point Bible Camp

Brochures are available in the church office. Registration for Summer Camp 2021 is open. (\$15 Early Bird Discount when registering by May 1; \$55 Member Discount: You qualify if your church contributed all the Association Member Church assessment for 2020; Incentive Discounts: \$20 Invite a Friend – Invite a first-time LPBC camper; \$20 Sibling – Oldest camper pays full price.) Plans at this time are for limiting capacity to 50%, subject to change with updated information from the WI Health Dept., Burnett County Health Dept., and the CDC. The LPBC website will continue to update with the most up-to-date information. For more details, go to www.LutherPoint.org.



Phone: 715.689.2347

E-mail: info@lutherpoint.org

Also, LPBC is looking for persons willing to help in various ways. Contact the RRLC church office or the camp for more details.

Upcoming Retreats at LPBC: Easter Vigil, Sat., April 3, for all people and families, 2-5 pm, ending with a meal.

Renew and Recharge for Church Leaders, Apr. 11-13 (call the church office for more details)

Crafting for the Soul, Apr. 15-18; Artists of all mediums and levels; Take time to focus on your creative passion and surround yourself with the beauty of God’s Creation. Luther Point will supply the space, food and faith inspiration!

Family Weekend Getaway, Apr. 16-18; Includes morning worship, bible study and family activity. Spend the rest of the day with your family and end your day with campfire worship.

For more information, contact the church office or Luther Point (with the above contact information).

Luther Point is welcoming back small groups to the Retreat Center, with enhanced cleaning, special offers and pricing. We hope you consider booking your men’s/women’s group, church council retreats, or youth groups. Call for more details: 715-689-2347 or retreat@lutherpoint.org Retreat Center starts at \$75 per person per night and includes meals, bedding, and our beautiful Retreat Center and Camp Facilities. * Minimum of \$750 per group.



Email from Patrick Singel, River Falls Blood Drive:

The goal for the last blood drive was exceeded with a total of 166 units collected. We are grateful to the many donors and to all those who support this lifesaving effort. American Legion Post 121, River Falls

Email Received: "Kudos to Rush River. I just had to share this email (below) with you from Stephanie (a Lenten Devotional). As a church, I think it is just so important to see how much we connect with our children and how truly important that is obviously for their futures. I hope that all of our children feel this kind of love from their church family!

God Bless!!"

Annette Kelley



For Tuesday, March 16

"Community of Christ"

Stephanie Kelley,
Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor



"So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." Romans 12:5

Growing up, I was fortunate to have a very active childhood and the opportunity to explore many interests—karate, piano lessons, volleyball, violin lessons, forensics. I had an abundance of interests but nothing stuck long term. By the time I started getting good at something, I'd get bored and want to move on to the next thing (sorry Mom and Dad).

The one thing that did stick was church. I loved my childhood church! I wish I could flatter myself and say it was because of the compelling sermons and the opportunity to memorize Bible verses but most of my memories of that church aren't centered around theology or the bible. My love for Rush River Lutheran Church (ELCA) came from the deep rooted, intergenerational community and the bonds that were created in the most Christ-like ways.

It was the place where I felt that sense of unconditional love from people outside of my family. It was the place where, at a very young age, I felt empowered and supported to take action and make change for causes I felt passionate about. It was a safe place where I could be vulnerable and explore my doubts about religion without fear of judgment.

Most impactful of all, the church was a place where we joined in collective communal joy and grief. It is in this community that I learned that other people's pain and sorrow became my pain and sorrow. Other families' joys and celebrations became my joy and celebration. And in return, my pain, my loss, my joys were embraced by the church family.

I didn't realize it then, but it was a community with Christ. It was present in the mundane and every day, in the potlucks, overnight retreats, bake sales, and service projects. Christ was not forced upon us but welcomed amongst us.

Divine Love, we welcome you amongst us in the mundane and every day.

We give thanks for the gift of community and the ability to see you amongst our siblings in Christ. Amen.



Friends of Rush River – LWR Personal Care Kits



Recently, Lutheran World Relief sent out a request for Personal Care Kits, as their warehouses are getting empty. Friends of Rush River purchased items and assembled 50 of those kits and will take them to the LWR Warehouse in South St. Paul. Kits include new items: a lightweight 52" x 27" (or smaller) bath towel, bar soap, adult toothbrush, nail clippers, and a comb.



There are also 14 completed Baby Kits that will be delivered to LWR as well. If you have items you would like to donate toward more Personal Care Kits, please put them in the blue tub by the church basement door and they will be collected. During this time of COVID and devastating disasters, the needs of those in poverty have grown.

~ We continue to Reach Out in Love!

Thank You!



Individuals Age 65 and Older are Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccines in Wisconsin. Book your appointment with Pierce County Public Health. No cost: Vaccine and appointment is free. Call 844-684-1064. Calling on Mondays is advised as

appointments open for reservations each week at 8:30 AM on Monday. Or book online:

<https://piercecountycovid19vaccine.as.me/> It is important that Pierce County residents remain vigilant and continue to adhere to prevention measures while Pierce County Public Health and local healthcare organizations work diligently to vaccinate priority populations.

More Covid Vaccine Information

Freeman Drug has a Covid vaccination clinic available for persons living, working, or going to school in Wisconsin. Check their website, freemandrug.com/covid-19-vaccine-scheduling, for details on vaccination criteria and signing up for an appointment for yourself or for someone else. The number is 715-307-9465. Please do not call the pharmacy for scheduling. Western Wisconsin Health, Baldwin, has a waitlist you can access online and they will call you when an appointment is available. Check out the Western WI Public Health Readiness Consortium for a listing of locations:

<http://wwphrc.org/covid-19-community-testing/>.

Walgreen's Pharmacy: Limited supply for those who meet state-specific eligibility criteria. Make an appointment ~ Online:

https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid19?ban=covid_vaccine_landing_schedule

Address: 1047 N MAIN ST River Falls, WI 54022 ~ Do Not Call. You'll need to create a [Walgreens.com](https://www.walgreens.com) pharmacy account.



COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Community Testing Site Continues into 2021

(with less invasive swab)

COST: FREE. No insurance is needed.

WHO: * Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms

***Close contact to someone who tested positive**

NOTE: Parents must be present to consent to testing for minors (5-17 years)

WHEN: The new hours for this site will be mornings only, from 9AM to 12PM on Mondays.

WHERE: Pierce Pepin Cooperative, W7725 US-10, located at the corner of Hwy 10 and Hwy 63 in Ellsworth (enter the testing site on Hwy 63). Ellsworth, WI. All drive-up, no appointments. Make it faster (recommended) by pre-registering on the day of your test: <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov>

****Guard Site testing extended through May, same location.**

****Gov. Evers and the DHS has moved up the vaccines for people with medical conditions for COVID-19 vaccination eligibility to March 22. Go to <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-about.htm>**



Rush River Lutheran Church

**N8623 County Road Y
River Falls, WI 54022**

Blessed is he
who comes in
the name of
the LORD!
Psalm 118:26, ESV



Rush River Lutheran Church ~ Weekly Worship & News

Sunday, March 28, 2021 (Palm Sunday)

Church contact information

Pastor Dave Teig cell: 715-557-0094 home: 715-268-9663

Church: 715-684-3701



Website

www.RushRiverLutheran.org



Facebook

Facebook.com/RushRiverLutheran



Email

PastorDave@RushRiverLutheran.org
Office@RushRiverLutheran.org