



In the Spirit

A newsletter for the Libertyville Covenant church community about local happenings and Christian issues.

April 2023

Volume 30 Issue 4

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So Good He Told Us Twice

*“Christmas has it’s cradle, and Easter has it’s cross.”
But both have their swaddling clothes.*

I was part of a group of 7 doing and sharing together in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Weekly we met to discuss what we had noticed in our prayers, and what we had pondered about God. Once in a while, we were introduced to an article giving insight to our prayers which followed the liturgical year. And so as Easter approached one year ago, we read together an article by G. Ronald Murphy of the Society of Jesuits entitled, “Binding Cloths”. This reflection owes much to that one.

Luke was a poet. A far better one than I was. I tried to write this reflection as a poem, but just couldn’t do it. I’ll keep working on it, but for now, here’s the gist. Luke bookended his gospel so cleverly that most don’t even recognize it. I didn’t. But G. Ronald Murphy did, and he taught me.

The Birth of Christ and the Death of Christ are so shockingly parallel in Luke’s gospel that it cannot be coincidence. And they begin where all of Christ’s story begins, in prophecy. Both events are foretold hundreds of years earlier by prophets of the Old Testament. Ok, so that’s not very amazing, or even “parallel” since most of Jesus’ life was foretold by prophets. But this is just a first piece of a rather large puzzle. Bear with me.

Have you ever noticed how insistent Luke is that we notice the swaddling clothes? As Murphy points out, most every baby in Bethlehem and beyond was wrapped in swaddling clothes, so as an identifier, this wasn’t very significant. It’s kind of like, “You’ll know the Messiah because he’ll be the baby who sleeps every day!” So what’s with the cloths? Parallel.

After Jesus dies on the cross, they take down his body and... yup, they wrap it in linen cloths to prepare it for burial. The same cloths used to wrap Baby Jesus were used to wrap the Crucified Christ. Both unnecessary details from Dr. Luke, but both vividly included. Parallel.

But let's look further. In both stories, Jesus is laid in a borrowed bed, one a manger behind an inn, the other an unused tomb donated for this purpose. In both stories, Joseph carries Jesus to this borrowed bed, Baby Jesus by Joseph His father, and Christ by Joseph of Arimathea. In both, angels come to announce that Jesus is alive, to shepherds in Luke 2 and to the women disciples in Luke 24. And in both, these characters run off to tell others what they have experienced, shepherds and women disciples.

But the most important parallel is not one Luke writes about, not a story detail, but the meaning he draws from each. Jesus has come, and the world will never be the same. He came as a baby to grow with us as one of us, to teach us the Way to the Father, and to die for us so that we wouldn't have to die for our sins. He came again from the grave as a Resurrected Messiah to show us that He has defeated sin and death and is leading the Way to the Father.

The Good News is that Jesus came to us Twice, and both times He came with a message from God the Father. He came foretold by ancient prophets, announced by angels, wrapped in linen cloths, carried by Joseph, laid in a borrowed bed, and heralded by unlikely heralds. He came to reveal God to us, to show us God's love and power, and to announce the Good News, that God's love and grace can defeat anything we face, from our sin and guilt to death itself. This message from God to us was so important that God shared it twice. Christmas has its cradle, and Easter has its Lord.

April Worship



We finish our "A Table in the Wilderness" Lenten series this month and move into a study of 1 Peter. But most importantly, this month brings us Holy Week including Palm Sunday on Apr. 2, Good Friday on Apr. 7, and Easter Sunday on Apr. 9. This is the ultimate week of the Christian year and the most important time for us to join together in worship. So bring a friend and join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30am in the sanctuary or on our [YouTube channel](#).

Apr. 2	A Table in the Wilderness for Everyone	Matt. 14:13-21
Apr. 9	A Table on the Beach for Us	John 21:1-17
Apr. 16	Pastor Paul preaching	1 Peter 1:3-9
Apr. 23	Trust, Faith, and Hope	1 Peter. 1:17-23
Apr. 30	Guest preacher	1 Peter 2:19-25



Guys Night Out with No Agenda

Calling all the Men of the church for a night out!! We will gather April 21st, Friday from 5:30-7:30p.m. at an Old School covered pavilion right up the street from our church. Come to connect and simply spend some time together and enjoy fellowship with other men from LCC. There is no agenda for our time together. There will be a simple meal for folks to eat, chili, hot dogs, and a side or two. Feel free to bring along something to drink and or something to share with others. More details to come as we get closer to the date. Location subject to change in the event of inclement weather.

PURIM FUN

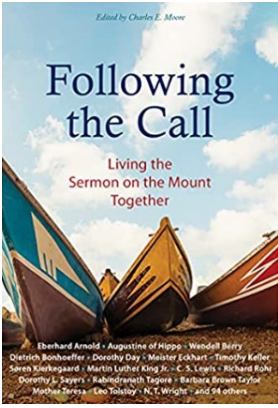






Men's Retreat at Covenant Point





Book Review: “Following the Call”

While I, like many of us, have my favorite authors and theologians, it is important to read widely and with an eye to people different than our usual fare. Do you read authors of different genders? Races? Cultures? Time periods? Theological bents? It is important to do so, and all the more as our world increasingly shuffles us off into echo chambers of single opinions. If we are to speak with any semblance of knowledge, we need to be more widely read.

When Dennis Dieball suggested the book, “Following the Call” to our small group as a study, I was intrigued. The book is The Sermon on the Mount broken into 52 parts.

Each part, often a verse or two, is then followed by three or four short writings from different authors. But the intriguing part of this book is that Charles Moore has pulled together short writings from 111 different authors across these spectrums I mentioned earlier. From Augustine of Hippo to Richard Rohr, C.S. Lewis to Rabindranath Tagor, Mother Teresa to Leo Tolstoy, Martin Luther King Jr. to Soren Kierkegaard, the authors vary in every way possible, and so we get a very well-rounded introduction to a variety of theologians and thoughts. And reading 2 chapters each week, which came out to be not much more reading than our current Immerse study, we finished the book in about 6 months.

We didn’t agree with every writer, and neither will you. But that is the power of Moore’s book – to see the various thoughts that are out there on some of the most basic teachings of Jesus. So if you’re looking for a bible study for the next year, take your 52 weeks, read a chapter a week, and share your thoughts with someone else. In the Covenant, we do our theology in community, and the community of authors in this book is something wonderful to behold.



Jill’s House campout of 2023 is coming up soon – April 14-16. Jill’s House is excited to have 3 new families sign up so come join us for more fun with these great kids and the bonus of seeing the beautiful frozen lake! If any of you are available that weekend, it is always a huge help for Kelly and Cherith to know that early as they are determining how many families they can accommodate for the weekend. Hope to see you there! Contact Kansas Dave Anderson



April 22nd, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

We hope that many of you are available to join Kerry and his team as we get the church and building ready for Spring!! Many hands make for light work.

LCC Coffee Hour & Wednesday Night Dinner



food.faith.fellowship - LCC FUN!

There are still many Sundays and Wednesdays with blanks that need to be filled in.
Thank you! -*Christy James & Heather Larson*

Sunday Coffee Hour: There are many Sundays that are still available, beginning with MAY.

Responsibilities:

- Set up and clean up Coffee Hour
- Make coffee (regular and decaf) and hot water thermoses
- Provide snacks (or use the ones we will have available in the kitchen downstairs; see Christy James or Heather Larson for info.)

Wednesday Night Dinner: is through April 26th. Help is still needed for set-up and clean-up

Variety of Options (you don't have to do it all)

Set-Up Responsibilities:

- Put up round tables and chairs
- Put decorations in the middle of the tables
- Help the person making dinner to put out food & supplies

Dinner Responsibilities:

- Purchase meal items (or let Christy or Heather know what you need purchases at least 1 week in advance; reimbursement is possible)
- Make dinner
- Help with setting up and serving dinner

Like to bake? - Bring a Dessert to Share (you don't have to sign up for this)

Clean-Up Responsibilities:

- Wash down tables and chairs then put them away along with the decorations
- Collect and store leftover food
- Do dishes and put them away
- Vacuum floor, if needed

Please click [HERE](#) to sign up.

April Special Events

4/7	Good Friday Service, 7:00 p.m.
4/14-16	Jill's House Weekend
4/22	All Church Work Day, 9 a.m. to 12 noon
4/26	PADS Event Senior High, 4:45 p.m.
4/26	LAST Wednesday Night Together
4/27-4/30	Central Conference Annual Mtg.



Children's Ministries

Wednesday Night Together

The children have been enjoying Wednesday evenings together. We have been exploring God through healing, courage, and his armor. We have really appreciated having the senior high youth help out.



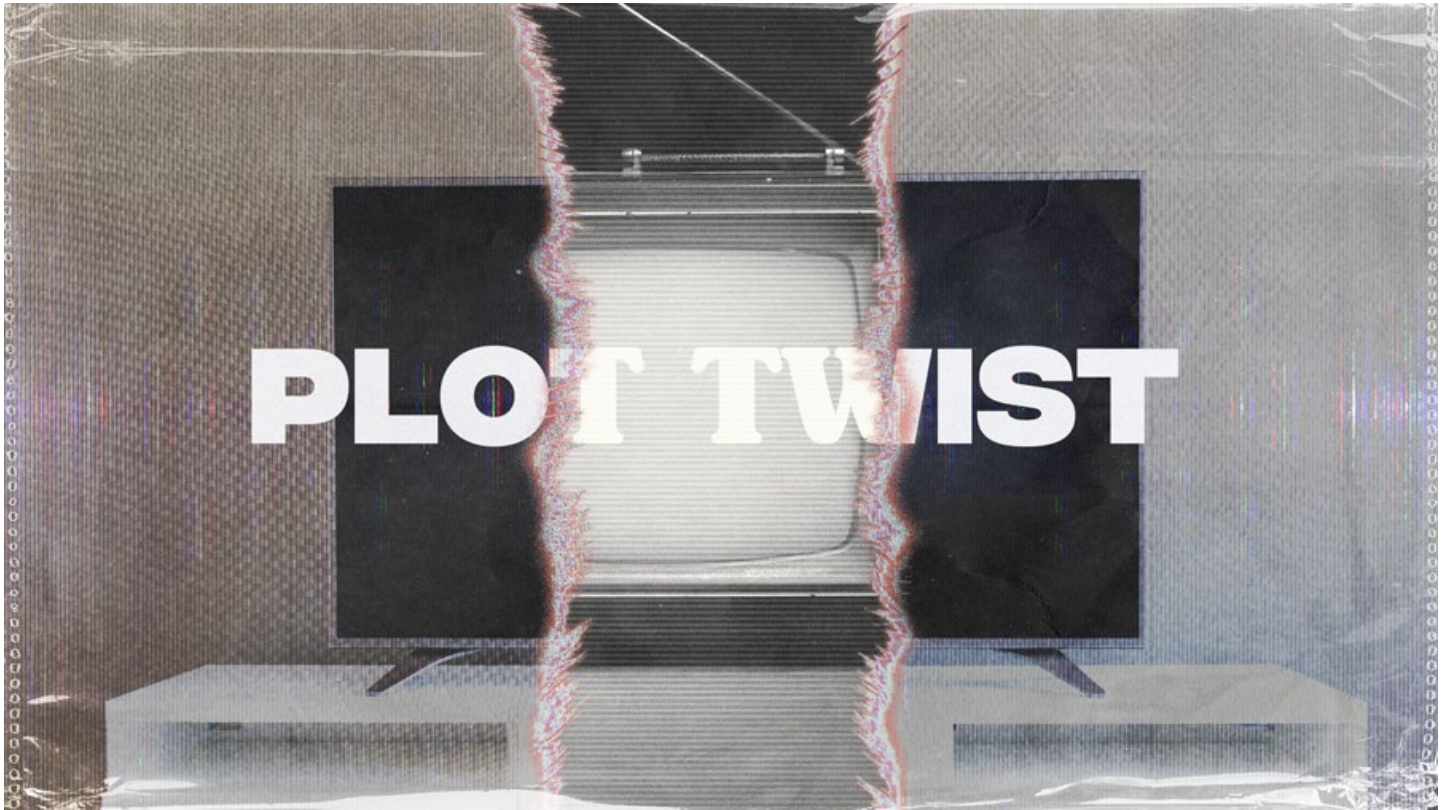
Upcoming Dates and Events

April 9 Easter Sunday

Children through 5th grade are invited to a special Easter celebration at 9:15 during the Sunday School hour.

April 26 - Last night of Wednesday Night Together for kids up to 5th grade.

Youth Ministries



PLOT TWIST: A 4-WEEK STUDY FROM THE GOSPELS ON EASTER

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Whether it's your favorite movie, book, or reality show, you know there's nothing like a good plot twist! Those storytelling surprises can keep us entertained, but they can do a lot more than that too. A good plot twist can make us rethink everything we thought we knew, see things in a brand new light, and get excited about what might happen next. That's never more true than in the most surprising and significant plot twist in history — Jesus' death and resurrection. In this six-week series, we'll look at six surprising stories from Jesus' death, resurrection, and last days on earth. These stories will show us that, when life takes unexpected turns, **God gives us help**. And even when we've messed up or are ready to give up, **Jesus never turns away from us, but gives us life, gives us hope, is with us, and gives us another chance**.

Junior High January Programming

(Confirmation) Sunday School Dates and Times: 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Youth Group Dates: 4/5, 4/12, 4/19, 4/26 from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

LCC Youth Groups & Parents** Join us on Saturday April 15th, from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon, for a few hours of engagement with our great neighbors in North Chicago. We will have the opportunity to learn about the history of the community, the mission of Transform Capital, ReNew Communities (Matthew Homes) and Mosaic House, while also engaging in a few hours of service / work. More details to come, but please save the date. Parents and students are encouraged to come together! Please RSVP to paul@libcov.org so we have fitting work for everyone that attends.



Senior High Winter Programming

Sunday School Dates and Times: 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. (We invite our youth to bring their Immerse Kingdom books each of the 16 weeks for the rest of the year.)

Youth Group Dates and Times: 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

(NO YG 4/9 due to Easter).



LAST PADS DINNER & LUNCH FOR THE SEASON!!

On Wednesday, April 26th, we will once again be serving dinner (and providing lunches for the following day) to PADS guests at First Presbyterian Church in Libertyville.

As usual, a Google Doc will be sent out some time before, asking for people to provide food items needed.

Starting at 4:45 p.m. that evening, our highly capable High School Youth Group will be setting up beds, serving dinners and making sandwiches for the lunches.

Giving through February 2023

	<u>2023 YTD - Feb</u>	<u>2022 YTD - Feb</u>
EXPENSES VS. BUDGET		
Budgeted Expenses	\$ 105,451	\$ 91,054
Actual Expenses	91,128	78,219
Cost Savings / (Overrun)	✔ 14,323	✔ 12,835
INCOME VS. BUDGET		
Regular Giving	69,485	71,055
Special Income	56	-
Total Income	✔ 69,541	✔ 71,055
Budgeted Giving	105,701	91,054
Giving Excess / (Shortfall)	✔ (36,160)	✔ (19,999)
INCOME VS. EXPENSES		
Actual Income	✔ 69,541	✔ 71,055
Actual Expenses	✔ 91,128	✔ 78,219
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (21,587)	\$ (7,164)

Actual expenses for the year are \$14k under budget and Giving is \$36k under budget through February, leaving us with a shortfall of \$21,500. As we start the new year, just a reminder that our new budget plan is 5.6% higher than last year. If you were giving \$100/week last year, are you able to give \$105.60 per week now? Or if \$500, can you increase to \$528? Many hands make light lifting!



ONLINE GIVING PORTAL: To give online, simply to go the LCC website (www.libcov.org) and click the “give” on the menu. Thank you for your ongoing support.

[LINK to online giving](#)

Checks mailed to the church will also be received and processed on a regular basis. If you have questions, contact John Bethancourt, jb covenant@gmail.com or 847/837-1690

The Leadership Team thanks you all for your continued generous support of the ministries of LCC. We thank God for you and His good work that can be accomplished through your faithfulness. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our finances, please contact our Treasurer, "Kansas" Dave Anderson at 847-910-1696 or danderson@proactiongroup.com.

Thanks, Dave for your work on our behalf!



LCC LEADERSHIP

Please pray for the church

LEADERSHIP TEAM, COUNCIL & STAFF

Contact them if you have questions, ideas or would like to get involved in a particular ministry.

STAFF:

Pastor: Steve Larson (815/508-4450)

Associate Pastor to Youth:

Paul Couleur (847/331-3640)

Pastor to Senior Adults:

Bruce Thorson (847/421-2732)

Office Administrator: Debbie Tometz

Choir Director: Kris Nikkel

Worship Leader: Jeanette Mottl

Tech Coordinator: Noah James

Organist: Su-Yi Su

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Church Council Chair:

Caren Vollrath

Church Council Vice Chair:

Dave Anderson

Church Council Secretary:

Karen Lundstedt

Treasurer:

Dave L. Anderson

LT Members at Large:

Julie Dahlberg

Dennis Dieball

Owen Youngman

Financial Secretary:

John Bethancourt

Christian Education and Discipleship (CED)

Angela Kocinski/Ann Frost

Deacon Team:

Wes Lindahl

Evangelism & Service Team:

Teresa Anderson

Worship Ministry Team:

Trevor James

Finance & Properties Team:

Kerry Monson

April Volunteer Schedule

Date	Coffee Hour	Lay Reader	Greeters	Ushers
4/2	Art and Kris Nikkel	Dave Oppedahl	Roger and Julie Clausen	Bob Hartnett & Al Nielson
4/9		Caren Vollrath	Dave and Darilyn Anderson	Same
4/16	Maggie and Vern Johnson	Dan Frost	Dennis and Carol Dieball	Same
4/23	Lori and Bob Hartnett	Tom Borkman	Dan Doherty	Same
4/30	Karin and Paul Lundstedt	Thor Papak	Wylie and Ardith Douglass	Same
	Sunday School	SS Nursery	Children's Church	Worship Nursery
4/2	Pre-School Angela Kocinski, K-2 Kansas Dave & Barb Anderson, 3-5 Merileen Thorson & Maggie Johnson		Jim Gillette & Vicki Herrick	Kat Tranel & Caren Vollrath
4/9	Pre-School Angela Kocinski, K-2 Kansas Dave & Barb Anderson, 3-5 Sarah Palmberg and Lee Vollrath		Same	Nancy Borkman
4/16	Same Pre-School Angela Kocinski, K-2 Karin and Paul Lundstedt, 3-5 Sarah Palmberg and Lee Vollrath		Same	Ann Frost & Dallas Family
4/23	Pre-School Angela Kocinski, K-2 Kansas Dave & Barb Anderson, 3-5 Sarah Palmber & Maggie Johnson		Same	Christy & Grace James
4/30	Same Pre-School Angela Kocinski, K-2 Kansas Dave & Barb Anderson, 3-5 Sarah Palmberg & Maggie Johnson	Darilyn Anderson	Same	Kirsten Peterson & Karin Hildebrandt

April Birthdays

Birthdays		Anniversaries
4/2 Karin Hildebrandt, John Nelson	4/20 Rachel Couleur	4/4 Brian & Cindy Johnson
4/4 Joan Groody	4/21 Jeanette Mottl	4/5 Steve & Ellen Hall
4/6 Sarah Larson	4/23 Jill Heath	4/12 Bob & Martha Peterson
4/7 Ben Beckstrom	4/24 Kristen Bethancourt, Owen Youngman	4/14 Carol & Dennis Dieball
4/8 Hanamel Gaiya	4/25 Dave L. Anderson, Christy Beckstrom	
4/9 Ann Frost	4/27 Al Nielson	
4/12 Jim Gillette, Jackie Splinter	4/28 Tim Albers, Brenda Monson	
4/15 Craig Sparks		
4/17 Grace James, John McLinden		
4/18 Caitlin Bethancourt		

April

Recurring Weekly Events

Sunday	9:00 a.m. Immerse Online	Wednesday	5:30 p.m. Wed Night Together
	9:15 a.m. Sunday School		6:30 p.m. Middle School YG
	10:30 a.m. Worship	Thursday	9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study
	12:00 Choir Rehearsal		4:00 p.m. 3 rd Leadership Mtg.
	5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group		7:00 p.m. Immerse Small Group
Monday	7:00 p.m. Monday Night Small Group		1 st /3 rd 7:00 p.m. Men's Ping Pong
Tuesday	7:00 p.m. 2 nd WMT Mtg./ 4 th Deacon Mtg.	Friday	7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study
	7:00 p.m. Immerse online (2x a month)	Saturday	8:00 a.m. 1 st Furniture Ministry 2 nd /4 th Women's Small Group

Libertyville Covenant Church

Our Mission is...

to grow disciples, grow the church, and grow the Kingdom of God

Our Vision is...

We grow disciples as we praise and learn together

We grow the church as we love and give together

We grow the Kingdom of God as we serve and share together

Our Core Values are...

Community: everyone is welcome to join us on the journey

Authenticity: being real people with real issues before our real God

Relationships: with God, each other, and the world around us

Engagement: all are gifted, all are called, all have a place in the ministry

Libertyville Covenant Church

250 S. St. Mary's Road, Libertyville, Illinois 60048

(Corner of Route 176 and St. Mary's Road)

Pastor: Steve Larson Church phone: 847/362-3308 www.libcov.org