

HIGHWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

April 2023

The Newsletter of Highwood Lutheran Church



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PASTOR'S MESSAGE FOR APRIL

Is it ok to yell "Movie!" in a crowded firehouse?

Steve Martin 1978

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:44

Coming to answers to ethical questions can be difficult. Indeed, ethical questions and dilemmas have become more complex and nuanced as there are often multiple perspectives or factors to consider when trying to come up with one's ethical answer. Additionally, advances in technology, science, and changes in social norms have created new ethical challenges that were not addressed in the past.

The conflicting nature of such topics and the lack of a singular arbiter means conflict and division have taken hold in many areas of society. When former arbiters of ethics are no longer considered authoritative, there are significant implications for society, including a breakdown in law and order, increased political polarization, and difficulty in implementing effective policies. It is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted solution that addresses the root causes of the problem.

In 2023, ethical issues often involve conflicting values, principles, and interests, and the right course of action may take time to be apparent or evident. For example, privacy, data security, environmental protection, and social justice, often require careful consideration of various ethical frameworks and moral theories as well as an understanding of relevant laws, regulations, and cultural norms. This breakdown is not a new development and has roots in the Middle Ages. Lutheranism and the reformation find their genesis in investigations into authority, which historians refer to as the *Crisis in Authority*.

One of the challenges raised by having no central authority is found in the self-evident presentations where an individual becomes their own sole arbiter for deciding what is right and wrong. They base their morality and decisions solely on selfish experiences and beliefs, which can lead to conflict over a lack of shared values and principles to guide society.

When traditional sources of authority such as government, religion, and institutions are no longer respected or trusted by a significant portion of the population, conflict can manifest in various forms, such as social unrest, protests, or declining election participation. Several factors contribute to authoritative breakdown, including:

- *Distrust in government:* When people perceive their government is corrupt or ineffective, they lose trust in its ability to provide for their needs and make decisions that benefit society.
- *Media fragmentation:* With the rise of social media and personalised news feeds, people can easily find information reinforcing their pre-existing beliefs, leading to a need for more consensus on what constitutes authority and expertise.
- *Cultural shifts:* Changes in societal values and norms can lead to rejecting traditional sources of authority such as organized religion or hierarchical institutions.
- *Economic inequality:* When people feel that the system is rigged against them, they may be less likely to respect the authority of those in power.

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Addressing ethical questions and dilemmas requires critical thinking, empathy, and an appreciation for diversity and complexity. It also involves seeking out affected perspectives and engaging in respectful dialogues to arrive at an informed, thoughtful, ethical answer. It means having compassion; therefore, self-arbitration of morality is the antithesis of ethical thinking.

Expressing root understandings can be challenging. Understanding their origin may be even more complex in our current pluralistic context since people are approaching ethics from many different cultural and religious backgrounds. It must be noted that, as a society, we do have a set of common-good understandings.

St. Augustine's definition of sin, (being curved in on one's self) often cited in Lutheran discussions of morality, is particularly informative in this context. While not everyone may share Augustine's religious beliefs, his emphasis on the importance of external moral guidance is a valuable reminder of the need to express shared values and principles to guide society. Whether through religion, philosophy, or other means, it is crucial to recognise that morality is not simply a matter of personal preference but rather a shared responsibility to uphold certain principles that promote the common good. While heavily influenced by Augustinianism, Lutherans offer a unique perspective on the state of humanity. Realising our historical development becomes critical as we understand where we draw our ethical basepoints. Also, as Christians, we strive to address ethical questions through reflection on scripture. Indeed, Ethics without scripture becomes a matter of cultural mores. Conversely, if we glean no meaning for our lives from scripture, the Bible becomes a textual relic without life or relevance.

Reforming means not being locked in past morality and practice. Reforming also comes with pitfalls. Indeed, it is a challenge to carry forward historical traditions and morality while remaining open to new insights and perspectives. What historically might have been considered proper ethical behaviour may no longer be appropriate or relevant today. As well, blindly applying judgements based on ethical basepoints of the present to the decisions and actions of people in the past is to be engaging in what has become a common error that ethicists call presentism.

Pr. Mike

How I do ethics will be discussed in Part 2 of "Ethical Questions" in the May issue of the Highwood Highlights.

Book reference - available free on [archive.org](#)

Walking the Way: Christian Ethics as a Guide Terence R. Anderson Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993.

SPY WEDNESDAY

The week before Easter, we as Christians commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. In that weeklong pageant, Wednesday, we remember that one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. Recently I was explicitly asked about that Wednesday, the Wednesday of Holy Week, how it got its name "Spy Wednesday," and what this day has to do with spies.

Spy Wednesday is the name traditionally given to the Wednesday of Holy Week, which is the week before Easter Sunday. This is the day when Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. He made a deal with the Jewish leaders who wanted to arrest Jesus and kill him. He agreed to show them when and where Jesus would be vulnerable, thus eliciting the description as a spy in Jesus' inner circle, hence the name Spy Wednesday.

The motivation of the spy is always a question for some reflection, and valid as we examine how come Judas was motivated to sell out his master and friend. Here we get into speculation. There are different theories and opinions about this question. Some say he was greedy and wanted money. Some say he was disillusioned with Jesus and expected him to be a political messiah who would overthrow the Romans. Some say he was possessed by Satan or influenced by evil forces. Some say he was trying to force Jesus' hand and make him reveal his power and glory. Finally, some say that as the most trusted of the disciples, he was chosen by Christ because he would do as Jesus asked of him. This last theory motivated the storyline of "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Whatever his reasons, Judas handed over the Son of God, that loved him and died for him. He deceived his fellow disciples, who trusted and shared their lives with him. He went against himself and his conscience. When he realised what would happen, he tried to undo it by returning the money and confessing his sin. The legalism of the Jewish leaders meant they did not care about his remorse or repentance. Scripture says that Judas could not bear the guilt and shame of his duplicity. He went out and hanged himself from a tree (Matthew 27:3-10). His death was tragic and gruesome (Acts 1:18-19), and his name became synonymous with treachery and infamy.

Such "espionage" is the root of how come we call this day Spy Wednesday. Interestingly it also shows us God's amazing grace and mercy; because it reveals God's plan of salvation as it prepares us for the Triduum and Easter Sunday. God turned evil into good, death into life, and sin into grace. God allowed Jesus to be handed over by one of his own so that he could hand over himself for all of us on the cross. Please now look at John 18:9, and then remember Article 2 of the Apostles' Creed, Ephesians 4:7-10, 1 Peter 3:19, Psalm 16:10, and Revelations 1:18. Appreciate the love that Christ would descend into the dead so that not one of us would be left behind.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- Melisa Anderson
- Bruce Beamer
- Ivy Cress
- Selena Crisanti
- Al Fedkenheuer
- Nevin McTavish
- Michael Patychuk
- Jacob Rath
- Edward Smith
- William Strand
- Riley Woycenko

**CONGRATULATIONS
NORMA GUMMO**



On March 17th Norma celebrated her 100th birthday. Norma is a long time member of the congregation. May God bless her.

**HOLY WEEK AND EASTER
AT HIGHWOOD**

**Sunday of the Passion
Palm Sunday**

April 2, 2023 at 10:30 AM
Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday

April 6, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Holy Communion

Good Friday

April 7, 2023 at 10:30 AM
Worship

The Resurrection of Our Lord

April 9, 2023 at 10:30 AM
Festival Holy Communion

**ARTICLE FOUR OF THE AUGSBURG
CONFESSION**

Article 4 of the Augsburg Confession is one of the most important and central articles of Lutheranism. It deals with the Doctrine of Justification, which means how a person is "made right with God" and saved from sin and death. According to this article, humans cannot be justified by their own efforts, merits or works. Only by God's grace, that we come to understand through faith in Jesus Christ, are we liberated. This faith is a gift from God that trusts that God has forgiven our sins for Christ's sake. This faith is counted as righteousness by God and gives us peace and assurance of salvation.

This article was written by Philipp Melanchthon, a close friend and colleague of Martin Luther, who based it on earlier Lutheran statements of faith and on biblical passages, including Romans 3 and 4. The purpose of this article was to show that the Lutherans did not depart from the Catholic Church on essential matters of doctrine. Differences were only in some practices and traditions that they considered abusive or unbiblical.

The article was presented to Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, along with 27 other articles that make up the Augsburg Confession. The Catholic theologians responded with a Confutation that rejected some of the articles, including Article 4. Melanchthon later defended Article 4 in his Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531), which is also part of the Lutheran confessional writings, which collectively are known as the Book of Concord.

Pastor Mike

TREASURER'S REPORT



**2 month ended Feb. 28, 2023
Financial Summary**

February current offerings were \$11,857 and church rental receipts were \$1,635. Synod benevolence receipts were \$95 and non-budget benevolence receipts consisted of \$50 for the Calgary Foodbank and \$250 for CLWR. Total February 2023 offerings and church rentals of \$13,492 were \$159 less than last year.

February expenses of \$15,890 were \$1,418 over budget mainly because of high utility costs.

Highwood had a shortfall of \$2,398 for February 2023 compared to a shortfall of \$1,580 last year. Year to date, Highwood has a shortfall of \$3,495 compared to a shortfall of \$4,984 last year. Church receipts for 2023 were \$2,638 higher than last year (\$1,865 higher on Offerings and \$773 higher on church rentals) and church expenses were \$1,149 higher than last year again because of higher utilities.

Capital fund – \$85 was donated to the Highwood Lutheran Women fund and \$85 was donated to the building fund. The balance in the capital account at the end of February was \$45,782.

Memorial fund – \$5,000 was donated to the Memorial fund. The balance at the end of February was \$10,375.

THE LAST PAGE

SYMBOLS OF EASTER

EASTER EGGS



Christians view the egg as a reminder of the tomb from which Jesus Christ arose (Luke 24:1-4).

Around the first century, Christians in Mesopotamia dyed Easter eggs red to remember the blood that Christ shed while hanging on the cross. They also dyed eggs yellow and green. Yellow symbolizes the sun and green symbolizes grass and fertile lands. Eggs are an ancient symbol of fertility. Pysanka eggs were dyed by Ukrainians before Christianity.

THE BUTTERFLY



Long before the time of Christ, Egyptians saw a similarity between the cloth wrappings of their mummies and the butterfly's cocoon. For these early people and the Greeks, who placed golden butterflies in their tombs, this insect was a symbol of resurrection, new life, and

immortality.

The butterfly has long been a Christian symbol of the resurrection, for it disappears into a cocoon and appears dead, but emerges later far more beautiful and powerful than before. The three stages of the butterfly's metamorphoses are symbolic of the three stages in the life cycle of Christ and the Christian. Caterpillars "entomb" themselves in what appears to be lifeless cocoons portraying the crucifixion and burial of Jesus and the death of all humans. The third and final stage is the appearance of a butterfly with jewel-colored wings and the ability to soar, which represents the resurrection into a new and glorious life ,

THE CROSS

The Easter Cross indicates the triumph of good over evil, goodness over badness and life over death. Easter Cross spreads the message of both crucifixion and resurrection. On one hand, it symbolizes sacrifice and on the other, it signifies a new life. The cross was the symbol of Crucifixion and not Resurrection. But Constantine, at the Council of Nicaea, in 325 A.D. declared Holy Cross to be the official symbol of Christianity. The Easter Cross indicates the triumph of good over evil, goodness over badness and life over death. Easter Cross spreads the message of both crucifixion and resurrection. On one hand, it symbolizes sacrifice and on the other, it signifies a new life.



THE MAGIC OF THREE DAYS

By Pat Barnes

It was a beautiful spring day, and a sense of peace stayed with me as I left the cathedral on Easter Monday morning. I paused for a moment on top of the steps leading to the avenue, now crowded with people rushing to their jobs. Sitting in her usual place, inside a small archway, was the old flower lady. At her feet, corsages and boutonnieres were parading on top of a spread-open newspaper.

The flower lady was smiling, her wrinkled old face alive with some inner joy. I started down the stairs – then on an impulse, I turned and picked out a flower. As I put it in my lapel, I said, "You look happy."

"Why not?" she answered. "Everything is good."

She was dressed so shabbily and seemed so very old that her reply startled me. "You've been sitting here for many years now, haven't you? And always smiling. You wear your troubles well."

"You can't reach my age and not have troubles," she replied, "only it's like Jesus and Good Friday..." She paused for a moment.

"Yes?" I prompted.

"Well, when Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, that was the worst day for the whole world. When I get troubles I remember that, and then I think of what happened only three days later—Easter—our Lord arose from the dead. So when things go wrong, I've learned to wait three days... and somehow everything gets much better.

"She smiled good-bye, but her words still follow me whenever I think I have troubles. "Give God a chance to help. Wait three days."

Easter Joy

Jesus came to earth,
To show us how to live,
How to put others first,
How to love and how to give.

Then He set about His work,
That God sent Him to do;
He took our punishment on Himself,
He made us clean and new.

He could have saved Himself,
Calling angels from above,
But He chose to pay our price for sin;
He paid it out of love.

Our Lord died on Good Friday,
But the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter morn
That fills our hearts with joy.

Now we know our earthly death,
Like His, is just a rest.
We'll be forever with Him
In heaven, where life is best.

So we live our lives for Jesus,
Think of Him in all we do.
Thank you Saviour; Thank you
Lord.
Help us love like you!

*By Joanna Fuchs
Good Housekeeping Magazine*

CHRIST HAS RISEN

Christ lives within our
Heart and he has
Risen from the dead
In order to offer us
Salvation and eternal life
Today and forever more

He's our Savior and
Almighty God, forgiving of
Sins and cleanses our souls

Remembering always that he
Is our brother and
Saves us for all
Eternity and he will
Never turn his back