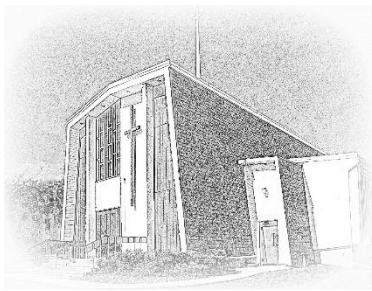


HIGHWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

April 2025

The Newsletter of Highwood Lutheran Church



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1340591 PW: highwood

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Passcode: 592794 #

Pastor's Message for April

We live in a world that often feels fractured and is currently filled with fear and uncertainty. As we look around, we see echoes of ancient struggles that the prophet Jeremiah knew all too well. The book of Jeremiah is a chronicle of Judah's descent into self-destruction and speaks to us across the centuries, reminding us of the human condition and the enduring sovereignty of God.

Jeremiah's warnings to Judah were stark: turn from your idolatry, your self-reliance, and your rebellion against God! Yet, Judah remained trapped in a cycle of sin, a condition that Martin Luther, echoing Augustine, termed *Incurvatus in se*—turned inward. Sin, therefore, as a focus on ourselves, is rooted in our fear and lack of faith. *Incurvatus in se* refers to the human tendency to turn inward and concentrate on our desires and needs rather than on God and others. This self-centeredness lies at the heart of our fear and foolish self-reliance on our strength, causing us to forget that true security is found only in God.

In his treatise, *The Bondage of the Will*, Luther spoke to the heart of the Reformation: the sovereignty of God's grace in our salvation. He showed us that our will is bound by sin and that we cannot, by our own power, choose righteousness. Jeremiah laments the hardened hearts of Judah that refused God's call for repentance.

Jeremiah condemned the false prophets who offered false peace and spoke soothing words while destruction loomed. These false prophets claimed to speak for God, but they were leading the people astray with their comforting lies. Today, we see similar voices in leaders who prioritise short-term gains, spread misinformation, and lead us astray. They mirror the rulers of Judah, leading us into crises born of pride and self-deception.

Jeremiah prophesies and offers a word of hope that we, as Christians, see as finding its fulfilment in Christ. This hope is not the product of our efforts but a gift of God's grace, received through faith alone (*sola gratia, sola fide*). Luther, grounded in *sola scriptura*—the belief that the Bible is the sole authority for Christian faith and practice—recognised that any teaching offering human autonomy apart from God denies the very essence of the Gospel. "When they assert free choice, they deny Christ," he declared. Our salvation rests solely in Jesus Christ (*solus Christus*), who broke the chains of our bondage.

The third article of the creed explains that we are not left to our own devices. In faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we no longer live under fear and despair. As Luther proclaimed, "We don't live under a yoke or burden any longer... we're set free!" This freedom, this liberation from the bondage of sin, is the gift of the Gospel. It enables us to face the challenges of our time with faith and courage.

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Jeremiah proclaimed God's truth despite facing rejection and hostility. He challenges us to do the same, to stand firm in our faith, relying not on our strength but on God's grace. "Man cannot will good apart from God; therefore, we must rely entirely on His grace." This reliance empowers us, strengthens us, and gives us spiritual resilience.

The story of Jeremiah and the destruction of Jerusalem serves as a warning, yes, but it is also a testament to God's enduring love and promise of restoration. Through the lens of Luther's theology, we understand that our hope lies not in ourselves but in the God who justifies us by grace through faith. This abiding love of God should reassure us during times of fear and uncertainty and fill us with hope for the restoration that God promises.

As we confront challenges like climate change, political corruption, war, and societal divisions today, remember that these issues are not merely political or social but also spiritual, rooted in our *incurvatus in se*, our turning away from God. Despite our shortcomings, God, in His mercy, offers us hope through forgiveness, reconciliation, and a new life. The Gospel embodies hope and freedom that comes from being Christian, allowing us to live as people freed by grace. We proclaim the Gospel, uphold truth, and love our neighbours, even in the face of fear and opposition. Despite our doubts, we trust God's promises, knowing He is faithful in restoring all things.

Remember that the Law, as Jeremiah proclaimed, reveals our sins and our inability to save ourselves. In contrast, the Gospel- the good news of Jesus Christ- proclaims our liberation, justification, and new life in Him. This Gospel is not merely a message; it is a source of empowerment and hope, a beacon of light in the darkness for us all.

Peace,
Pastor. Mike



Financial Summary

February current offerings were \$10,790 and church rental receipts were \$2,757. Synod benevolence receipts were \$125 and non-budget benevolence receipts consisted of \$100 for the CLWR and \$50 for Calgary Foodbank. Total February 2025 offerings and church rentals of \$13,546 were \$140 less than last year.

February expenses of \$15,605 were \$154 over budget.

Highwood had a shortfall of \$2,059 for February 2025 compared to a shortfall of \$1,685 last year. Year to date, Highwood has a shortfall of \$586 compared to a shortfall of \$6,571 last year. Church receipts for 2025 were \$4,556 higher than last year (\$4,540 higher on Offerings and church rentals higher by \$16) and church expenses are \$1,428 lower than last year.

Capital Fund – \$117 was donated to the Highwood Lutheran Women fund and \$40 was donated to the Building Fund and \$100 to the Adopt a Family account. The Highwood Lutheran Women donated \$150 to the Calgary Foodbank and \$150 to the Calgary Veterans Foodbank and \$1,000 to Highwood's Building Fund to help cover the expense of the duct cleaning project. The remaining balance in the Highwood Lutheran Women fund is \$644 at the end of February.

Memorial Fund – \$1,000 was donated to the Memorial Fund. The balance at the end of February was \$13,000.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT HIGHWOOD

April 13th – **Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday** – Holy Communion at 10:30 AM

April 17th – **Maundy Thursday** – Holy Communion at 7:00 PM

April 18th – **Good Friday** – Solemn Liturgy at 10:30 AM

April 20th – **The Resurrection of Our Lord** – Holy Communion at 10:30 AM

HAPPY
EASTER

A decorative graphic for "Happy Easter". The word "HAPPY" is in a smaller, all-caps serif font above the word "EASTER", which is in a larger, all-caps serif font. A large, stylized cross is positioned behind the letter "P" in "EASTER". To the right of the cross is a lily flower with its stem and leaves.

OUR HIGHWOOD FAMILY



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Melissa Anderson	Michael Patychuk
Bruce Beamer	Bardiilo Poromon
Russel Brown	Jacob Rath
Hazel Conner	David Richardson
Ivy Cress	Rose Sinclair
Serena Crisanti	Edward Smith
Al Fedkenheuer	William Strand
Nevan McTavish	Riley Woycenko



THANK YOU, KNITTERS

Pictured above are some of the prayers shawls produced by the Knitting Circles. These are distributed to those who are ill and shut in.

ON THE WEB BEYOND OUR WEBSITE

Bishop Trish Schermund's message for April can be found [here](#).

Luther's bondage of the will:

<https://www.1517.org/articles/luthers-bondage-of-the-will-an-uncompromising-gospel>

A life lived "inward" for oneself rather than "outward" for God:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incurvatus_in_se

APRIL COMMEMORATIONS

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, April 9



Dietrich Bonhoeffer (4 February 1906 – 9 April 1945) was a German Lutheran pastor, neo-orthodox theologian and anti-Nazi dissident who was a key founding member of the Confessing Church. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have become widely influential; his 1937 book *The Cost of Discipleship* is described as a modern classic. Apart from

his theological writings, Bonhoeffer was known for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Adolf Hitler's euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of Jews. He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and imprisoned at Tegel Prison for 1½ years. Later, he was transferred to Flossenbürg concentration camp.

Bonhoeffer was accused of being associated with the 20 July plot to assassinate Hitler and was tried along with other accused plotters, including former members of the *Abwehr* (the German Military Intelligence Office). He was hanged on 9 April 1945 during the collapse of the Nazi regime.

ALBRECHT DURER, April 6



Dürer (21 May 1471 – 6 April 1528), sometimes spelled in English as Durer, was a

German painter, printmaker, and theorist of the German Renaissance. Born in Nuremberg, Dürer established his reputation and influence across Europe in his twenties due to his high-quality woodcut

prints. He was in contact with the major Italian artists of his time, including Raphael, Giovanni Bellini and Leonardo da Vinci, and from 1512 was patronized by Emperor Maximilian I.

Dürer's vast body of work includes engravings, his preferred technique in his later prints, altarpieces, portraits and self-portraits, watercolours and books. The woodcuts series are stylistically more Gothic than the rest of his work. He is perhaps best known for his pen and ink drawing, *Praying Hands*.



CONGRATULATIONS

We are thankful for our parishioner, David Wong. He was called by the Holy Spirit to be a tireless volunteer Visitor with the Lutheran Hospital Ministries - Southern Alberta Society. He has been visiting with patients at the Foothills Medical Centre and people at the Calgary International Airport's Chapel.

In 2025, Lutheran Hospital Ministries - Southern Alberta Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Dave was surprised to realize that he has been serving as a Visitor for twenty years. His humble nature shows as he gives "All Glory to God!" for this milestone. We thank you, Dave, for all you do with the Lutheran Hospital Ministries and Highwood Lutheran Church. God bless you with many more years in His service.

CLEANING BEE

A huge Thank You to everyone that came out for the Cleaning Bee. A lot was done cleaning, repairing the hymnal ribbons, and staining/painting the napkin holders. A few repairs were done, including the furnace and vents. Great job everyone! The Sanctuary looks and smells great. – Al and Ruth Gummo

THE RESURRECTION

We hold so close to our hearts
The cross where Jesus died,
But so much more than the blood-stained cross
Is that Jesus came back to life

The stone's been rolled away;
The tomb lay open and bare —
They looked for Him, and then the angel said
That He is no longer here

Oh, what joy they must have felt
To see Him just once more,
To eat with Him, to drink with Him,
To receive Him back as Lord

So much did He accomplish
Through His death upon the cross
And in His rising from the dead,
He reconciled us back to God

Nothing else could bridge the gap
That sin had wrenched apart —
Now we can freely go to God
And receive Christ in our hearts.

By M.S.Lowndes, Used with permission.

THE CHRISTIANS WHO UPSTAGED THEIR ATHEIST RUSSIAN LEADER

You probably do not remember the name Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, nor should you.

But during his day he was as powerful a man as there was on earth. As Russian Communist leader he took part in the Bolshevik Revolution 1917, was editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda (which means Truth), and was a full member of the Politburo. His works on economics and political science are still read today.

There is a story told about a journey he took from Moscow to Kiev, in 1930, to address a huge assembly on the subject of atheism. Addressing the crowd, he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity hurling insults, argument, and proof against it. An hour later he was finished. He looked out at what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith.

"Are there any questions?" Bukharin demanded.

Deafening silence filled the auditorium, but then one man approached the platform and mounted the lectern standing near the communist leader. He surveyed the crowd, first to the left then to the right. Finally, he shouted the ancient greeting known well in the Russian Orthodox Church: "CHRIST IS RISEN!"

En masse the crowd arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of thunder... "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

**Have a Blessed Easter and Rejoice... for Christ is risen!
Hallelujah!**

