



Connections

Newsletter of Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas • April 2019

“CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO CHRIST!”

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Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Do you tend to take things for granted? Sure, you do. We all do. It is human nature to take essential things for granted, isn't it? Consider this: When you're sailing along in your car or truck and suddenly see bright red taillights just ahead, you don't bother to think, "I wonder if the laws of friction will still apply today?" No, you slam on your brakes—all the while praying a three-word-prayer: "Lord, help me!" Or what about when you get up in the morning, you don't pause and wonder, "Might this be the day that the earth's gravitational pull ceases, and I just slowly drift off into space?" No, you step out onto the sidewalk or the driveway. You take for granted that your feet will stick to the earth. Let's face it. We tend to ignore the universal principles that hold our lives together.

So, what about Easter? Do you take it for granted too? What if Easter hadn't happened? Has it become for you just another holiday to celebrate, another excuse to feast on food and fuss over fancy clothes? If Christ has not been raised from the dead, everything you think you know about Christianity begins to crack and crumble. You would be just like a building with no foundation in a windstorm. If Christ has not been raised from the dead,

here's the scariest part of all: *Your sins remain unforgiven and you will be judged for them.* And your loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ would be lost. "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men," Paul said.

Now, please listen closely. Here's the good news, the great news, the life-transforming news. The Bible assures us, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). You see, Christ Jesus is the first installment of the resurrection. Because He burst out of His grave on Easter morn in soul and body, you and I are immortal. His resurrection guarantees our forgiveness. And His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. His resurrection guarantees our victory over sin, death and the devil.

A single mother of four children recently built a 3,500 square foot home by herself—using only YouTube videos. Can you imagine? She didn't know a single thing about how to build or what all went into a build. Apparently, she was rebounding from a really hard time in her life. She had just gotten out of an abusive relationship. Due to the pain, the emotional trauma, or for whatever other reason, she decided to build a house on her own. And she did. As her



ALLELUIA! He Is Risen!

four children got older, they too ended up assisting their mother in the construction of the 3,500 square foot house—all with YouTube videos teaching them along the way. It turned out absolutely beautiful.

Easter reminds us that we have something far better coming our way. Jesus went to great lengths to provide an eternal home in Heaven where there is no more death, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more suffering. And Jesus didn't use YouTube videos to build it! He did it with His own precious blood, His own sacred life. He did it because of His profound love for us. He didn't take us for granted. Easter reminds us that God considers us worth it. And because Christ's tomb is empty, we can overcome anything and everything that tries to bring us down on earth. So, don't take Easter for granted. Don't take your relationship with the Risen Savior for granted either! Have a blessed Easter! ✠

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CHILDREN'S Ministry NEWS

By Kim Bestian
Director of Children's Ministry

"Let me learn of Jesus, He is kind to me. Once He died to save me, nailed upon a tree." Those are the words in the first verse of a child's song. How beautiful they are! Many of you may remember singing that song when you were a child in Sunday School. I remember it still; and even to this day find myself humming and thinking about those words while folding clothes or doing the dishes. One of our young members, Lila Hannemann, a third grader, is scheduled to sing that very song in church on Sunday, April 7. Enjoy listening to her as she expresses her faith in this way.

My parents brought me to the waters of Holy Baptism when I was just two weeks old. That day was May 3, 1959.

The Holy Spirit began His work in me as my parents continued to nurture my faith. I credit my parents for having family devotions each night after dinner, reading me Bible stories and praying with me at bedtime before closing my eyes in sleep. They brought me every Sunday to Sunday School and Sunday worship. More than that, we al-

ways attended the special Wednesday evening worship services of Advent and Lent. Attending a Lutheran elementary school also reinforced those Bible truths and made a deep impression on me. I remember Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services that we worshiped together as a family and then driving home from church as our whole family would talk about how much God loves us and what Jesus did for us. We also talked about ways we could show our love back to Him. It has made me passionate about our Lord and Savior to this day. I am very thankful to God for giving me the parents that He gave me.

Here at Ascension, we have many opportunities that provide spiritual nurture for our children that reinforce what is taught at home about

God. The children's ministry provides faith nurture and opportunities for children to express their faith. It also partners with parents to provide faith expression opportunities that would be difficult for parents to provide their children. And, of course, the children's Christian education opportunities are wonderful. To support and resource parents is always one of the goals. Those are all great blessings! I will add that while those things are provided, it takes two to partner. It is not the church's responsibility for the child—it belongs to the parents. But, it's great to be partners!

You are encouraged to bring your children to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services. It makes the Resurrection celebration so much more meaningful and will set a pattern for your children to follow and pass on to their children in the future. (Your grandchildren!)

On Sunday, April 7, each family with children will receive a very special devotional book about Easter, *Waiting In Wonder for Easter!* Use it with your family! Learn from it with your family! Then, attend the Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, New Life Festival, and Easter Sunday celebrations. It will be an amazing time for your family—together with Jesus!

PARENTS: Remember Kid's Praise Choir, Sunday School children, will be singing in the 10:30 a.m. worship service for Palm Sunday in full Bible time costume and palms! Also, there are still many opportunities to serve at the New Life Festival. Sign up today!





NEW LIFE FESTIVAL

Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas

SATURDAY • APRIL 20, 2019 • 9:00-11:30 AM

Come for a morning of great fun and learning activities!

The **New Life Festival** is like an "Easter Vacation Bible School" for the **whole family**—*all in a single morning!* Children's activities focus on both **Lent** and **Easter** where our Lord's death and resurrection become a very real and meaningful experience. Everyone first gathers in the sanctuary for an Opening Time. Afterwards, the children are divided by age groups and then travel to the various **Celebration Centers**, which include:

- Egg Hunt
- Egg Coloring
- Butterfly Craft
- Egg Roll Game
- Seed Planting
- Live Animals
- Music
- Food



For children under the age of one-year-old, **infant babysitting** is provided at no charge. Children ages one and two will need a parent to accompany them throughout the morning.

Adults and **teens** will watch an inspirational movie entitled, "**The Week that Changed the World.**" **Dr. Paul Maier** presents a historical look at Easter. The resurrection of Jesus happened! And this is not just the belief of Christians, but is borne out by history, archaeology and science. This informative documentary takes viewers step by step through the events of Holy Week, shedding light on the key players, unraveling the political intrigue, and answering longstanding questions about what happened, and why. Maps, graphics and new footage bring Holy Week alive in a whole new way.

The New Life Festival concludes with everyone—children, teens and adults—gathering back together in the sanctuary for the Closing Time and an **outdoor balloon release**. All children should have a parent or guardian with them, at that time.

Admission is FREE! Dress casually. New Life Festival T-shirts of various sizes and colors are available at a low cost. **Pre-registration is required** to insure a space as well as adequate supplies and food for everyone. See the reverse side of this sheet for the registration form.

Bring a Friend with You and an
Easter Basket for the Egg Hunt!



Scars



Do you have any scars? Do you remember how you got every single one of them?

Some scars come from making not so intelligent decisions—like trying to jump twenty steps all at once or using the parking space concrete bumpers as a balance beam. You know what I’m talking about, right? Others result in events beyond your control or due to someone else’s actions.

I don’t remember how I got one of my few scars—the small one over my left eyebrow. My mother has told me the story many times, but as I was an adventurous infant learning how to crawl, I can’t recall the memory myself. Apparently, I had decided to try standing up at the wrong place and lost my balance ... as you can imagine, it was a traumatic event for both my mother and I, yet I do not remember it at all.

We all have scars—physical, emo-

tional, psychological ... even spiritual scars. They are evidence left behind by traumatic events, whether it be an accident, a break-up, a hurtful word or an unanswered plea to God for relief. Some of those scars we do not remember, or have repressed, while others are constantly in the back of our minds. We’ve taken those scars and turned them into a learning experience, a badge of victory, or a yoke of self-pity.

When the trauma is not dealt with, we grow to resent those scars—we seek for ways to cover them, so we won’t be reminded of how they came to be.

Have you ever thought why, if Jesus came back to life in a glorified body, He still had those scars left behind by the nails and lance? Not only were they left behind, but He showed them to the disciples to remind them of what He had done—He’d hung on a cross for their sins! He suffered a gruesome and horrible torture before dying because they, that is we, were incapable of doing what was good and right before God’s eyes.

“...Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet.”

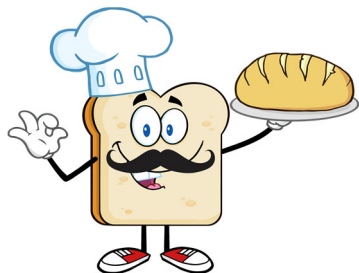
Luke 24: 36b-40

Every time we think upon those scars, we encounter—once again —

our Savior and the sacrifice He made to give us His righteousness. Not only can we look upon His physical scars and see His sacrificial love for us, but we can also look upon everything He endured which left behind emotional scars (abandoned by his friends), psychological scars (mocked, beaten, spat on), and spiritual scars (abandoned by His Father as He became sin for us) and see how it was all done for us. Through His scars, we can see the victory over death, the remission of our sins, the gift of a new life in Him.

As you go through life—from being a teenager to becoming an adult—you will acquire all kinds of scars, but thanks to the scars our Savior attained, you can remind yourself you are not those scars ... instead, those scars are a reminder of Whose you are.

After all, that little scar over my left eyebrow could have been so much worse were it not for my Heavenly Father watching over me. As you learn to see the scars you have as a testament to God’s love, grace and mercy, remember to thank Him, not just for those reminders—scars you carry, but for the Scars our Savior carries for us.



Easter Breakfast

April 21, 2019

9:15 am

Youth will provide juice and service!
Please sign up to bring a breakfast
casserole, bread or fruit

Free-will offering will support the 2019 Youth Mission Trip

Greater Things

2019 Youth Mission Trip!

Furthering the Kingdom of
God through simple acts
of kindness!

Secure Your Spot!

Ask Luz for more information!

New Life Festival

April 20, 9:00 am

Sign up to help with this
amazing community
outreach event!

Maundy Thursday

April 18, 7:00 pm

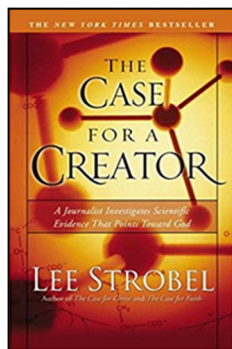
Parents & Youth will be
partnered to help strip the altar

**Required Practice is Wed, April 17
at 6:00 pm**

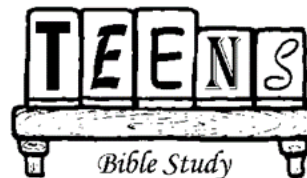
Teens Bible Study Series

God's Word states, "In the beginning..." Science
teaches evolution without a beginning...

We are delving further into Scripture and
science, where our youth will encounter the
mind-stretching discoveries from cosmology,
cellular biology, DNA research, astronomy,
physics, and human consciousness presented as
astonishing evidence in Lee Strobel's *The Case
for a Creator*.



April 2019



Sundays

9:15 - 10:15 am

Continuing

The Case for A Creator

April 7

April 14

April 21

April 28

All junior & senior
youth will meet in
the **YOUTH
ROOM**
for **Sunday
Morning
Bible Study.**

Contact Info:

Luz M. Soto, DYM

(915) 219-1686

luzsoto07@gmail.com

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Family Bible Hour: Pastor Bestian will continue the study on the Book of Acts Sundays at 9:15 a.m. All members & friends of Ascension are encouraged to attend.

Men's Bible Study

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Bible Study: this group meets every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. They recently started the Lutheran Hour Ministries "We the People" study.

Tuesday Night : This group meets every Tuesday at the church at 6:00 p.m. The study is, "Discerning the Voice of God" by Priscilla Shirer.

Ladies' Bible Study

Woman-to-Woman: This group meets Tuesday morning at the church at 10:30 a.m. They continue the Bible study "Family Trees & Olive Branches."

Tuesday Evening: This group meets every Tuesday (except on Church Council meeting nights) at the Wade home at 6:30 p.m. They are on break during Lent but will resume meeting on April 30; topic to be determined as of this printing. Please contact Anita Werner (915-494-2335) for more information.

Thursday Morning: This group meets at the Schlak home at 9:45 a.m. They recently began the study of Ecclesiastes.

Another resource available to you can be found at www.lhm.org.
You will find the Lutheran Hour daily devotions at this website.



MINISTRY & BOARD REPORTS

Biblical Literature Online



By Judy Pinal on behalf of the Board of Christian Education

If you own an iPad or Kindle there is a world of Biblical literature and media you can explore. To put you on the right path, here are a few suggestions:

Websites:

www.cph.org (has a special e-book section)
www.amazon.com (check Amazon's CPH e-books and various Lutheran sites (Books/Lutheran))
www.alconnect.faith (includes Ascension's newsletter, service folder, Bible class sessions in audio and much more.

For books on your iPad or Kindle, is the search areas in either Kindle Search or Apple's App Store. The Lutheran Hour and LHM Studies are available in Apple's App Store, Kindle Fire and on Google Play.

Bible Versions/Resources:

New King James Version (NKJV)
21st Century King James Version (KJ21)
Lutheran Study Bible (English Standard Version-ESV)
Lutheran Bible Companion
Concordia's Complete Bible Handbook for Students

Authors:

Too many to list them all, but check your favorite author at CPH, Amazon or other book seller websites. If you do not have an electronic device, read your personal Bible and check out our church library for print books. Watch for our church library grand opening on May 19! For literature or media questions, let Pastor Bestian guide you.

Preschool Enrollment

As the year is winding down for our teachers and students, registration is in full swing for the 2019-2020 school year. Enrollment will continue throughout the next few months, although we are anticipating classes to fill up soon. We have had a very successful year under the guidance of Marhel Cueva, our new director, and news has traveled quickly as to the Christian atmosphere filled with love, laughter, and learning that is present in the school. There have been many inquiries from new families, and tours of the school are happening on a regular basis. If you are planning to register your child/ren for next year, don't delay! Be sure you secure a spot for the coming year. Remember, members of Ascension Church receive a 15% discount. For more information contact the school at 833-4849.

The Preschool will be closed on April 19 in observance of Good Friday. Classes will resume on Monday, April 22. Happy Easter!



Finance Update

Treasurer's Report

Approved Council Minutes are sent to Ascension members with the Friday e-mail when they are received by the Church Office. Please call 833-1009 to request a copy of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: 2019 Income & Expense Statement [February]					
			January	YTD	Budget
Income:	Offerings		\$22,971.50	\$ 45,013.36	\$ 50,050.00
	Other Income		\$ 4,590.56	\$ 9,884.91	\$ 8,567.82
	Total		\$27,562.06	\$ 54,898.27	\$ 58,617.82
Expense:			\$28,623.47	\$ 58,320.49	\$ 63,666.50
Raise The Roof					
	Donations		\$ 9,151.00	\$ 12,567.00	
	Total 2017-2018			\$ 124,992.00	

Board of Christian Service



The Board of Christian Service will collect paper products for Ysleta Lutheran Mission and Opportunity Center on alternating months.. Paper towels, paper plates, napkins, toilet paper, etc are suggested donations—please be generous!

Items can be placed on the appropriate table in the Fellowship Hall.

Upbring® News



Natasha suffered nine years of unspeakable abuse and neglect that left her with deep emotional wounds. Because of her childhood trauma, she bounced among multiple homes in the foster care system before coming to Krause Children's Center.

Working closely with our therapists, Natasha began to heal through eye movement desensitization and processing (EMDR) therapy. EMDR is a cutting-edge therapy that activates the brain's natural healing processes. With her therapists' guidance, Natasha learned to exchange painful feelings for peaceful, loving and resolved feelings.

Like many girls who call Krause

when she came into our care. Through our partnership with Trinity Charter Schools, we provide on-site education to the girls. Because of our generous donors, students have access to Chromebooks loaded with powerful educational software. The software allows Natasha to focus only on the concepts she has not mastered.

"I am doing really well. I love learning, and I get the resources I need at Trinity Charter School." Natasha said.

Some of Natasha's peers have discovered their knack for math and science at Trinity Charter School. But Natasha is a gifted artist who is hap-

piest when she's drawing portraits of people or working on a novel about her life story.

Natasha's teachers are working hard to ensure her story has a happy ending. With their support, she has recovered her credits and caught up to grade-level. After graduating from high school, she wants to go to college, and then teach English in Japan.

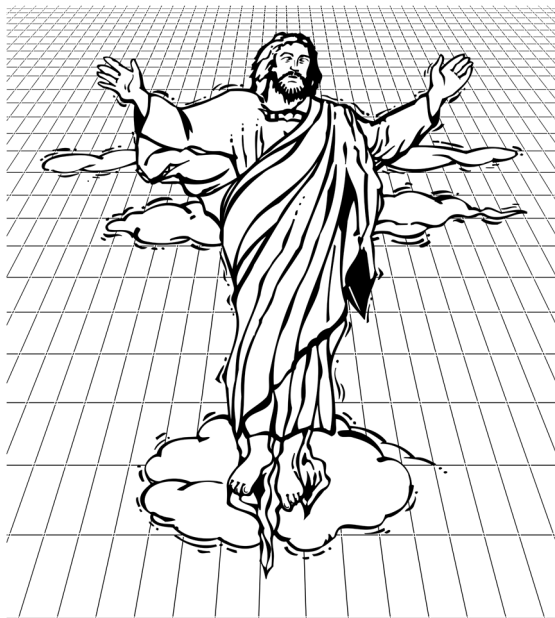
Source: "Upbring News" (formerly "Lutheran Social Services of the South") Natasha's story is true, but a pseudonym and stock photo were used to protect her identity.

God's ways are not always our ways, but they are always best. Therefore, we pray, "Your will be done."

Jesus prayed, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).



Stewardship Minute—Whom Are You Looking At?



The disciples were thrilled. They had their Lord back in their presence once again. Since His Resurrection, He had appeared to them and others several times. They were still a little confused, though, when He talked about *"waiting for the gift [His] Father promised"* (Acts 1:5), and, then, *"He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight"* (Acts 1:9).

You can imagine their bewilderment. He had died and been buried and then had risen from the dead! He had walked among them and taught them again, and now ... He is taken up into the clouds. No wonder they stood

there—probably with mouths agape—looking into the sky where they had last seen Him.

It took *"two men dressed in white"* (Acts 1:10) to bring them back to their senses. *"Men of Galilee," they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, Who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into Heaven'"* (Acts 1:11).

Back they went to Jerusalem. Their eyes were no longer on the clouds, but they were still looking at Jesus. They waited. They prayed. They chose another disciple. And they waited some more—all the while looking at Jesus.

Whom are you looking at? Yes, Jesus has ascended. We can only imagine His joyful, triumphant return as all the hosts of Heaven welcomed back the risen, victorious, Savior. Because He is that Savior, because He is the Author and perfecter of our faith, *"let us fix our eyes on Jesus"* (Hebrews 12:2). Through His Word and Sacraments, He will lead us in His ways; He will teach us obedience and self-sacrifice; He will teach us love for our neighbors. With joyful and generous hearts, we celebrate the new life that Easter brings us by sharing the message of the Cross and the Empty Tomb with all who will listen. Keep looking at Jesus until in Heaven you see him face to face!

PrayerTime



PrayerTime takes place every first Sunday of the month. Please join us as we each pray silently for the many prayers received in the church. You may come to the altar or pray in the pew as well. **The next PrayerTime is April 7 from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Ronald McDonald House



Please save the aluminum pull tabs from canned drinks and bring them to the kitchen area. They are used by the Ronald McDonald House to provide a home away from home for hundreds of families with seriously ill children.

Ysleta Lutheran Thrift Store



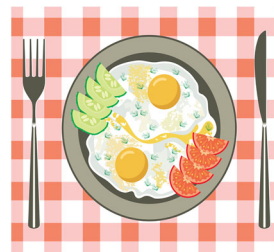
Remember that you can donate used clothing and other household items to the Mission's Thrift Store, the proceeds of which go to help the work of the Mission. You can put your donations in the container located in the Fellowship Hall; the Ysleta Mission staff will pick up the donations.

Prayer Chain



Prayer Chain of Ascension is composed of congregational members who have agreed to pray for members and non-members concerns. Requests can be sent to Olga Sullivan (phone chain—581-1450) or Jan Schlak (e-mail chain-oveja6925@aol.com), and they will activate the Prayer Chain. Contact Olga or Jan to be notified of prayer requests via phone or e-mail. **If you would like your request to be spoken at the Altar on Sunday morning, please call the church office at 833-1009.**

Mercy Meals



These volunteers bring meals to families of Ascension who need assistance. The church office will get in touch with the group's leader when they hear of a home that needs assistance. If you have a need, please call the church office at 833-1009.

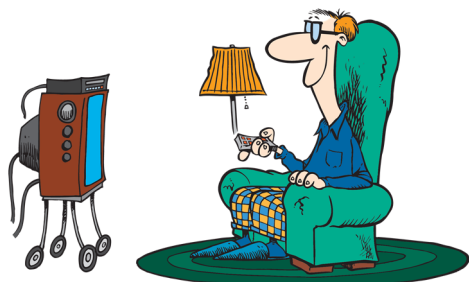
Altar Care Committee



Looking for a way to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in a meaningful way? Being a part of the Altar Care Committee is very rewarding. We insure that the Altar is prepared for all services so that our Lord is glorified by a proper Altar setting. In signing up for Altar Care, you will be given instructions both personally and given a handout. You may sign up to work with someone already dedicated to the month, either 8:00 a.m. service or the 10:30 a.m. service. Anyone who would like to serve the Lord in this capacity may contact the Church Office at 833-1009.

Altar Care for April
8:00 a.m.: Mielke Family
10:30 a.m.: Spott/Botello

"Worship Anew"



There is a TV program called "Worship Anew" and it's produced by Lutheran Ministries Media which is based on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary Indiana. It can be seen via satellite on DIRECTV Channel 377 Sundays at 9:30a.m. MST. That channel is the Total Christian Television (TCT); if you don't have DIRECTV, it may be on your TV provider's listing. Check this program out when you are unable to attend our Sunday services or video tape it and view during the week.

Men's Resources



The Lutheran Hour Ministries has a website specifically for you!

The website has specific devotions, Bible studies, discussion groups, etc. for men. Check this out at lhmmen.com. You will need to register and create a password; there are no fees to be a part of this resource.



Church Calendar of Events

April 1

7:00 pm Board of Trustees

April 2

8:30 am Pastor's Conference

April 3

6:00 pm Lenten Meal

7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Service

April 6

9:00 am Board of Christian Education

10:00 am Board of Children's Ministry

April 7

11:30 am Board of Youth Ministry

11:30 am Liturgical Dance Practice

5:00 pm PrayerTime

April 10

12:15 pm Board of Preschool

6:00 pm Lenten Meal

7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Service

April 13

10:00 am LWML Brunch & Bible Study

April 14—Palm Sunday

9:00 am Board of Christian Service

11:30 am Board of Evangelism

11:30 am Liturgical Dance Practice

April 18—Maundy Thursday

3:00 pm May Newsletter Article Deadline

7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Worship Service

April 19—Good Friday

7:00 pm Good Friday Worship Service

April 20—New Life Festival

9:00 am New Life Festival

11:45 am Liturgical Dance Practice

April 21—Easter Sunday

6:30 am Easter Sunrise Worship w/Comm

8:00 am Easter Celebration w/Comm

9:15 am Easter Breakfast

10:30 am Easter Celebration w/Comm

April 25

6:30 pm Ladies Night Out (Carino's Italian)

Weekly Events

Sun: Worship @ 8:00 & 10:30 am
(Communion on 1st & 3rd Sundays)
Family Bible Hour @ 9:15 am
Confirmation @ 11:30 am

Tue: 10:30 am Woman-to-Woman Bible Study, church
6:00 pm Men's Bible Study, church
6:30 pm Women's Bible Study, Wade home
6:45 pm Boy Scouts

Wed: 8:45 am Preschool Chapel
10:00 am Weight Watchers Meeting
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
(regular schedule resumes 4/17)

Thu: 9:45 am Women's Bible Study, Schlak home

Sat: 8:00 am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast, church

**If you're not sure or don't have a schedule already,
please call the church office at (915) 833-1009 to verify
if a specific Bible Study is being held that week.*



Our Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Brian R. Bestian

Director of Children's Ministry:

Kim Bestian

Director of Youth Ministry:

Luz Soto

Preschool Director:

Marhel Cueva

Music Director/Organist:

Ruth Ann Ostergren

Office Administrator:

Lynn Burchfield

Tender Care Nursery Attendant:

Haleigh Gonzales

Custodian:

Gail and David Regalado



Articles for the
May 2019
newsletter are due
**Thursday,
April 18.**



Our Sunday Schedule

Worship: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Fellowship: 9:00 a.m.

Family Bible Hour: 9:15 a.m.