



April 2026

# FAMILY OF GOD

Monthly Newsletter

“Children by grace, extending Christ’s embrace”

## CHURCH NEWS AND EVENTS

### WORSHIP & COMMUNION

Sundays at 9:30 am

In-person and  
livestreamed on our  
website [fogchurch.org](http://fogchurch.org)  
Just click on YouTube



### THIS MONTH’S REMINDERS

- Young Adult Bible Study Friday at 6:30 pm
- Tuesday Bible Study at 9:30 am and 7 pm
- Easter Services on 4/5/2026 at 9:00 am and 10:30 am
- The One Act Play That Goes Wrong April 23-26

Family of God Lutheran Church, ELCA  
8625 Zane Avenue N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443 763-424-8625  
[fogchurch.org](http://fogchurch.org)

The Sunday after Easter always has the same Gospel reading—when Thomas refused to believe Jesus was raised from the dead until Jesus appeared to him and offered to let him touch his wounds from the cross. Though Thomas has the nickname “Doubting Thomas,” he’s really not a bad guy. In fact, he’s a lot like you and me.

Could Jesus really be raised from the dead? In a criminal case, the jury has to conclude the person on trial is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. In a civil trial, the burden of proof has not so high a bar. The accused can only be called guilty if the preponderance of evidence shows that the claim is true. In other words, more likely than not the claim is true. That’s quite a difference.

If Jesus is risen from the dead, can we back the claim beyond a reasonable doubt? Or the other way around—can we say the witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection were lying beyond a reasonable doubt? Or is it more likely than not that the disciples were lying? What do you think?

Where is the body? It apparently was never found. A bunch of his disciples and others saw him raised, and Thomas was convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus lives. Some of the major theories are that Jesus’ body was stolen by the disciples and reburied somewhere else. Or a little tougher to believe is that he did not really die on the cross, but was taken down and revived and lived for a bit longer so he could appear to his disciples. Do you find either of these assertions true beyond a reasonable doubt or most likely true?

Unless you can find a body, there will always be a lack of evidence that he really died and was not raised. And that’s the core problem—the remains of Jesus have never been found. So at best can it be claimed that more than likely the disciples were lying? After all, such a claim breaks the laws of nature.

In other words, in court it is probably a hung jury, and at best it can be said that more likely than not his body was stolen and reburied.

What do you think?

We can never prove that Jesus is raised. We have the testimony of the witnesses, and that is all. But many Christians throughout the ages have somehow experienced the presence of God or of Jesus. And this testimony carries as much weight as the disciples themselves. Have you ever experienced the presence of God, or Jesus?

Doubting Thomas was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus lives. Legend and post Biblical writings suggest Thomas was chosen to travel to India to preach the good news of the risen Christ, and was martyred there for his faith. Why would someone give his/her life for a lie?

Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

Greetings to everyone at Family of God —

I have served here as associate pastor for nearly four years now. In addition to being on staff at FOG, I am also a member of the congregation, as is my family. Generally speaking, pastors are supposed to officially join the congregations to which they are called. It might seem like an unnecessary formality (after all, it's fairly obvious the pastor is a part of that faith community!) but it is a meaningful statement.

On April 19, we are having a new member class. We periodically offer these, usually about twice a year. People interested in membership can attend one or two classes with Pr. Paul and me. We discuss many topics, from church history to Lutheran theology. The material changes depending on the needs of the attendees. It's helpful information and you're welcome to join us if you want a refresher or an opportunity to meet our new folks.

What is the purpose of membership? I've been asked this question before. Why can't someone just show up and participate? Well, the short answer is that they can. People are always welcome to join us for worship, events, and so forth. Membership does provide some benefits, though. The first benefit is that members can vote at the annual meeting. It might not seem terribly exciting but we make important decisions at these gatherings. Being a member ensures your voice is fully heard there.

The other benefit of being a member is more personal. I think of it this way: imagine you're

in a loving relationship with someone and you see a future. You could continue to date indefinitely and it wouldn't mean you don't love them. But marriage can be a wonderful thing because it's a public recognition of the connection you have (and it offers legal benefits). Obviously church membership isn't as serious and binding as a marriage, but I hope this metaphor helps illustrate my point. Membership makes us all "officially official!"

If you're a longtime member, I am glad you've found a community that plays such an ongoing role in your life. If you're a newer member, I am grateful you've found a spiritual home with us. And if you have been worshipping with us but don't wish to pursue membership, I am pleased you are here in the capacity that fits best for you. See you at church!

Blessings to you and your loved ones!

— Pr. Erin Koster

Devotions were led by Allison Tieman. A meditation on Lazarus. Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM.

### Old Business

Audit Committee: No update; review pending.

HVAC: Approved bid; paying cash to reduce fees; includes 1-year service plan.

Outdoor Cross Project: Pavers can be personalized in memory of loved ones for the cost of etching. Dedication in May.

Outdoor electronic sign refurbishment options being explored;

### New Business

CPR Training: Exploring options; possible Thrivent grant to defray costs.

Outdoor Services: Approved to continue every other week.

Member Outreach: Pastors to identify inactive members for follow-up.

Garage Sale: 2026 Sale planning is underway; Committee is meeting May 3.

New Members: Class April 19; reception April 26.

Leadership: Larry Parson confirmed as VP; installation March 22.

### Financials

Rick reviewed the January and February reports with the new Quickbooks format.

Treasurer's report was approved.

### Staff & Committees

Ongoing pastoral care, Lenten services

Upcoming events were discussed (Drama Play, Easter services, VBS, Youth plant sale).

Routine committee updates were given.

March Food drive continues;

Live-streaming of church services has had past issues with wifi connection. A correction has been put in place and should be fixed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

**Tuesday Bible Study:** Please join us for a fascinating look at the Prayers of the Bible. Of course, we know Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer, but what about others who prayed? We will study the prayers of Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Hannah, Elijah, the apostles and more. We can learn from these people how to pray and also learn about God, who hears our prayers. We meet Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am and 7 pm Tuesday evenings. All are welcome.

## LINUS QUILTERS

Project Linus donation  
for March  
16 quilts to Head Start  
10 Quilts to CEAP  
7 hats to Dennis

### "Just for fun" dates in March

**Apr. 1: Have Fun at Work Day**  
**Apr. 10: Siblings Day**  
**Apr. 11: Barbershop Quartet Day**  
**Apr. 12: Grilled Cheese Day**  
**Apr. 13: Scrabble Day**  
**Apr. 14: International Moment of Laughter Day**  
**Apr. 17: Haiku Poetry Day**  
**Apr. 22: Jelly Bean Day**  
**Apr. 26: Pretzel Day**  
**Apr. 30: Honesty Day**



**Book Club** meets the third Monday of the month at 1pm. The following are the books they are reading:

April 20 Man's Search for Meaning  
Viktor E Frankl  
May 18 Fever  
Mary Beth Keane



New members welcome!

**Contact Joan Hermanson with any questions.**



## Sunday Flowers

4/12 Withers

4/19 Pam Williams

4/26 Alecksons

**2026 Flower Chart** is posted on the narthex kiosk.

The cost of the flowers is \$35.



## Global Mission Support

4/5 Davon Stedje

4/12 Loos

4/19 Lenthes

4/26 Knoells

**2026 Global Mission Support Calendar** is posted on the kiosk in the narthex. Your \$35 weekly donation goes to support Megan Tee and Tee Sieng's ministry work in Japan.

## Family of God Memorial Garden

The cross that was hidden in the pine trees in the front of the church has been repaired, repainted, shortened and moved to become the focal point in our new memory garden.

We are now taking orders to create engraved pavers in memory of lost loved ones. Engraving specifications and cost are included on the order form. Forms are narthex and must be turned in to the church office by April 12th to be included in the May 17th dedication. See Joan Hermanson (763-229-5110) if you have any questions.

## BIRTHDAYS

David Loos 04/01  
Alexa Borgstrom 04/01  
Joshua Young 04/01  
Terry Lindberg 04/02  
Dixie Umland 04/09  
Vicki Garberick 04/10  
Jack Umland 04/11  
Jill Walker 04/11  
Anita Baerg 04/12  
Neil Nelson 04/13  
Christopher Burow 04/14  
Alicia Campos 04/16  
Ben Zahalan 04/19  
Carolyn Jahns 04/20  
Courtney Baerg 04/26  
Kathy Behrens 04/26  
Rev. Dan Burow 04/26  
Linda Jorenby 04/26  
Sue Aleckson 04/27  
Henry Kitoski 04/28  
Nancy Rhinhart 04/28  
Jeri Oswald 04/29  
Ginny Lanctot 04/30  
Jonathan Meier 04/30

## ANNIVERSARIES

Alan & Sue Aleckson 04/06  
Chris & Robyn Courchane 04/15  
Sheldon & Linda Johnson 04/29  
Glen & Darla Noah 04/28  
Andrew & Alissa Ventura 04/27

If your birthday or anniversary does not appear, please bring this to the office's attention.

### **Corrections from last month:**

Last month we accidentally omitted Bob Budd's Birthday (3/11) and missed Hyacinth Balzer's first name.

We apologize to them both.

Years ago, there was a master violinist in Europe. He would play in concerts, and he had a magnificent Stradivarius violin. He would play the Stradivarius violin in concert and everyone would whisper in the crowd, "Listen to the beautiful sounds of the Stradivarius." He would play in churches, and people would say, "Listen to the beautiful sounds of the Stradivarius." He even played before kings and queens, and they, too, would turn to one another and say, "Listen to the beautiful sounds of the Stradivarius." All the glory went to the instrument.

Then one day this master violinist was walking by a pawn shop. He noticed an old, beat-up, worn-out violin. He walked into the pawn shop and asked how much it would cost. The owner of the pawn shop told him the American equivalent of five dollars. He bought the violin, and he took it home. He polished it, and he refined it, and he tuned it, and he re-tuned it, and he built some character into that violin. Then, when he was to play the greatest performance of his life in a concert hall, he

took out the little, five-dollar, worn-out, beat-up violin that he had polished and refined. He put it up to his chin, and he began to play, and everybody in the concert hall whispered, "Listen to the beautiful sounds of the Stradivarius."

It should be our goal to allow God to "play" us and use us for His glory and honor to the point that people see Him, and not us. The Bible says in: Matthew 5:16 – Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. This is truly reflecting the praise to the master musician.

Blessings to you all!

Judy Blomgren, FOG music director



## Amazing Assurance

An old rugged cross, a deepening darkness, and a tempestuous sea are all images from well-known hymns sung at funerals and memorial services. All Ruth Circle members as well as Family of God congregants have attended many such services in recent years.

The preference in hymns is primarily personal for the family and friends of the deceased, though there may be some guidance from spiritual leaders. Some funeral hymns fall out of favor and new ones take their place. "Amazing Grace" (John Newton 1725 – 1807), however, seems never to have diminished in appeal. It may seem to have an especially Lutheran theme but is universally beloved.

(Names in parentheses are the lyricists and their dates.)

What exactly is the purpose of singing hymns at funeral services? Of course, they give comfort and solace to those who are grieving. Perhaps it is possible to break this thought into a few components.

For one thing, such hymns give a promise of a friendship, companionship, and solidarity with Christ. "Jesus Loves Me" (Anna B. Warner 1820-1915) as well as "Blessed Assurance" (Fanny J. Crosby 1820-1915) were both included in the March 20 service for Chuck Baerg at Family of God. The first line of the sec-

ond song con-

tinues, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!" "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (Joseph Scriven 1820-1886) is another commonly used funeral hymn on a similar idea. At my grandfather's funeral in 1965, we sang "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" (Edward Hopper 1816-1888) which speaks of Jesus' care, concern, and immediate presence. Additionally, "Abide with Me" (Henry F. Lyte 1793-1847) moves from darkness to light, stressing the Lord's presence.

Not only do funeral hymns highlight our connection with Christ, but they also give a connection to the "realm of glory." At my cousin Joanne's recent funeral, we sang "I'm But a Stranger Here" (Thomas Taylor 1897-1935), the first line of which continues with "Heaven is my home." Many songs acknowledge that Christ died for us so that we may attain our heavenly home. "The Old Rugged Cross" (George Bennard 1873-1958) was a reliably emotional addition of my grandmother's funeral in 1987. "How Great Thou Art" (Carl G. Boberg 1859-1940) continues the theme with these lines, "When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, And take me home, What joy shall fill my heart!"

Perhaps a third comfort of funeral hymns is not only the connection with Jesus, and a connection to an eternal home,



but also a connection with those who have gone before us. This connection is not as prevalent as the previous themes, but still one we hold on to. Many funeral hymns refer to “home,” and we interpret that in two ways—our heavenly home and the home of our loved ones. “Shall We Gather at the River” (Robert Lowry 1826-1899) swells with its refrain, “Yes, we’ll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river, gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.” Who are those saints other than those who have left life on earth and achieved life immortal? “I’m But a Stranger Here,” quoted above, includes the lines, “Heaven is my home, There are the good and blest, Those I love most and best, and there too I shall rest.”

Again, our loved ones, the good and blest, are waiting for us.

This meditation on funeral hymns touches only the surface of a complicated topic. Also, it seems as if all the hymns mentioned above are truly beautiful and profoundly touching. None can be sung without great depth of emotion. All provide amazing assurance.

Myra Madsen

## Church Wide Spring Clean-up

On Saturday, April 11, 9:00 am-noon, you are ALL cordially invited to join in the Spring clean-up, both inside and out (weather permitting) at FOG. This will include cleaning windows, sanctuary pews, and vacuuming carpets (especially corners). Lots to do outside: clean out landscaping, trim branches. Prep front for grass seed, mulch, etc.

Lunch is provided.

Thank you for all you do! A sign up sheet is in the narthex.

- Property Committee



## Social Ministry Corner

Thank you to all who contributed money for emergency boxes for Second Harvest Heartland. We were able to forward \$1350 which would be enough to fund 675 boxes!!!

Thank you to all who contributed to MN Foodshare. We will share totals next month.

In April, we will be collecting for Champlin Park HS, The Shelf. They do not have room to store canned goods. Here is a list of their current needs:

- Clothing: Socks, variety of sizes, ankle or athletic in length. Black is preferred, white okay too
- Spices and pantry basics: salt, pepper, cumin, oregano, paprika, italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder, sugar, vegetable cooking oil, etc
- Hygiene: toothbrushes, large family-sized tubes of toothpaste. Shampoo/Conditioner
- Laundry Soap, pods, powder

### **CALLING ALL FOG CRAFTERS!**

FOG Crafters will meet the second Friday and Saturday of each month. Subject to holidays and the church calendar. Scheduled weekends are in the Narthex.

Stephanie Statz 612-850-8220 [StephStatz24@gmail.com](mailto:StephStatz24@gmail.com)

LeAnne Tieman 612-508-7921 [lrtieman@comcast.net](mailto:lrtieman@comcast.net)



All types of crafters are welcome. We will set up in the Cornerstone Room to utilize the tables. Any questions, please call/text Stephanie Statz at 612-850-8220 or LeAnne Tieman at 612-508-7921.



**Drama Ministry and  
the Hospitality Committee  
Need You!!**

\*Volunteers are needed to help with ushering, concessions and treats for the  
April 23-26 performances of

**The One-Act Play that GOES WRONG**

**Treat Bakers and Donators**

- Help by baking or purchasing treats to donate for the concessions.
- Drop off treats no later than a half hour prior to the performance.

Feel free to be creative with your treats to fit the "everything goes wrong theme"

Please pre-wrap or bag treats:

Bars: 12 out of a 9 x 13" pan

Cookies: 3 medium to a bag or 2 large to a bag

Snack Mix: approximately 1 cup to a bag

\*Please label if treats include any allergens

**Thank you for Volunteering!!!**

**See sign-up Poster in Narthex for details**

Family of God Lutheran Church Proudly Presents...

# THE ONE- ACT PLAY THAT GOES

by Henry Lewis,  
Jonathan Sayer, and  
Henry Shields

Tickets: \$10



Thurs. - Sat.  
April 23-25  
7:00 pm

Sunday  
April 26  
2:00pm

8625 Zane Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN



A portion of the proceeds from these performances will be  
donated to CEAP.

Presented by special arrangement with Concord Theatricals/Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York



# April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>5</b> Easter Services 9:00 AM & 10:30 AM Sunday School Crossways 11 am 12pm Eternal Life			<b>1</b> Connie's Quilters 11:00 am Choir 7:00 PM Lent Service 7 PM	<b>2</b> Riverlyn AA 7 PM Maundy Service Service 7 PM	<b>3</b> Good Friday Service 7 PM YA Bible Study	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>7</b> Bible Study 9:30 am and 7pm  No Bull AA 7 PM	<b>8</b> Connie's Quilters 11:00 am	<b>9</b> Ruth Circle 9:30 am  Riverlyn AA 7 PM	<b>10</b> Craft Group 5 pm Fri & 9 AM to 4 PM Sat YA Bible Study	<b>11</b>	Church Clean up
<b>12</b> 8:30 AM Confirmation 9:30 AM Worship Sunday School Crossways 11 am 12pm Eternal Life	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Bible Study 9:30 am and 7pm  No Bull AA 7 PM	<b>15</b> Connie's Quilters 11:00 AM Choir 7:00 PM	<b>16</b> Riverlyn AA 7 PM	<b>17</b> YA Bible Study 6:30PM	<b>18</b> Men's Breakfast at 8:30 AM
<b>19</b> 8:30 AM Confirmation 9:30 AM Worship Sunday School Crossways 11 am 12pm Eternal Life Drama 2-4 pm New Member Class	<b>20</b> Linus Quilters	<b>21</b> Bible Study 9:30 am and 7pm  No Bull AA 7 PM  	<b>22</b> Connie's Quilters 11:00 am Choir 7:00 PM	<b>23</b> Church Council 7pm Drama Ministry Riverlyn AA 7 pm	<b>24</b> YA Bible Study 6:30PM  Musical 7 PM	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 8:30 AM Confirmation 9:30 AM Worship Sunday School Crossways 11 am 12pm Eternal Life	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Bible Study 9:30 am and 7pm  No Bull AA 7 PM	<b>29</b> Connie's Quilters 11:00 am Choir 7:00 PM YA Bible Study 6:30PM	<b>30</b>		

# April worship helpers

## Lectors

5 1st Service: L. Blackorbay

2nd Service: Ginny Lanctot

12 Andrew Peterson

19 Ali O'Mara

26 MaryLou Gorres

## Refreshments

5 1st Service:

2nd Service:

12

19

26

## Altar Care

5 1st Service:

2nd Service: Elsass

12 Cindy Buesgens

19 Davon Stedje

26 Nancy Knoell

## Ushers

5 1st Service: R. Blackorbay

2nd Service:

12

19

26

## Greeters

5 1st Service:

2nd Service:

12 Nancy Kneoll

19 Nancy and Joe

26 Sue Elsass

## Nursery Care

5 1st Service: Madison

2nd Service: Claudia

12 Claudia

19 Claudia

26 Madison



If you are unable to serve on a Sunday you have signed up for, please inform the church office as soon as possible. Thanks!

**\*\* IF YOU CAN FILL IN A BLANK SPOT**

**PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO**

**[admin@fogchurch.org](mailto:admin@fogchurch.org)**

**SO A MASTER LIST CAN BE KEPT AND SO**

**Family of God Lutheran Church**

8625 Zane Ave North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

**Change Service Requested**

**Rev. Paul Burow**, Senior Pastor  
pburow@fogchurch.org

**Rev. Erin Koster**, Associate Pastor  
Perin@fogchurch.org

**Allyson McDonald**, Admin Assistant  
admin@fogchurch.org

**Judy Blomgren**, Music Director  
judyb305@gmail.com

**Claudia Peterson & Madison Benton**, Nursery

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday  
9:00 am—1:00 pm

Website: [www.fogchurch.org](http://www.fogchurch.org)