

The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
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April 2020

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Pastor Chris's Message

Our church will not likely be gathering this year as we normally do for Easter Sunday, which in many ways is heartbreaking. If you would have asked me of this possibility a few months ago I would have parroted Wallace Shawn from *The Princess Bride* with a staunch "inconceivable!" It is still shocking to me that we're in this moment of "shelter-in-place" orders and social distancing, in which the world we knew a few weeks ago is starkly different than the world we know now.

After years of services that follow the trajectory of Jesus entering into Jerusalem, celebrating the Passover, and then going to the cross to finally emerge out of the empty tomb, I think we've taken for granted the experience of these stories. We always start the story knowing how it ends, perhaps cheating ourselves out of what it was like for the disciples to enter Jerusalem triumphant only to have their world turned upside down at the death of their leader. But it sure feels like we're living this experience now. We can relate to that space between Friday and Sunday, when time disappears because all our plans, expectations and hopes have been upended.

As a pastor I live in the seasons of the church. The landscape right now feels on par with the season of Lent, a time of reflecting on our need for the divine and waiting for its fruition come Easter Sunday. But now that Covid-19 will stretch us beyond Easter, I have found myself wondering if Lent will end and if we'll have Easter at all this year. I've had low moments begging God for that Easter experience to be here now and I've had hopeful moments reminding myself that it will come and to just live in the present. However, it has been in those low moments when the greatest hope of Easter has hit me and filled me with promise. We are not destined to experience the cross and the empty tomb separately, but rather a balance of Lent and Easter all the time.

Even though I feel the pangs of the longing for Easter, in the last few weeks I've experienced the Easter promise through so many little acts of compassion and love. I've seen local restaurants donate food and meals to families in need; I've seen churches suspend services, but continue donating and distributing food; I've seen individuals volunteer to bring groceries and medicine to people quarantined in their homes; I've seen people pool their money to be distributed to those hardest hit; I've seen people choose social distancing to protect the most vulnerable in our community; I've seen children prepare cards and art full of love and beauty for nursing and retirement home residents; I've seen people once divided along political lines suddenly cast those divisions to the wind and come together to help others. The truth is the Easter experience has been present this whole time in these subtle yet remarkable ways, and when I can pull myself away from the encroaching fear, I see these glimmers everywhere and they give me hope.

I've also encountered the Easter experience in a rather provocative way. Someone sent me a news report of dolphins swimming in the canals of Venice - something that hasn't happened in a long time because of all the traffic. It dawned on me that human activity has been curbed so drastically that much of creation is having an Easter experience...from us. Creation has been given room to breathe in ways it hasn't been able to for a long time. I'm not putting any divine intent into this, but I also can't help but see God in creation that has renewed vigor. And I pray we can see this part of Easter too.

I know that big Easter moment is coming - that time when we'll be rid of social distancing and engage in physical community. While we're waiting, I pray that you encounter those subtle Easter moments, the ones that show God is present with all of us in these special little acts of beauty, love, and compassion. I pray these moments can carry you to the point when this is past us. But I also pray that when we get there, we allow this to change us, to see how love triumphs division and crises tend to highlight how much we need each other, to see ourselves not as the center of our planet, but in partnership with it, to see that we aren't destined to either pain or joy, but that we can choose to experience the balance of both, which enables us to find hope in either.

**In God's Love,
Reverend Chris Brown**

Youth and Family Ministry

Heath and Peace to you,

As many of you know scheduled events have changed due to our current pandemic. VBS is June 22nd-26th, but may be rescheduled. The camp cannot happen without the help of many hands. It is thanks to these volunteers that year after year, our VBS grows in attendance as children and parents are excited to return and bring more friends along. Our volunteers are the most wonderful and integral parts of this event! Please contact me directly if you'd like to help this year.

Until we know more, I've compiled a list of necessary supplies. If you have any spare items at home to lend or you'd like to donate to the camp please see below:

Masking tape	Silver duct tape	Stacks of white & blue & black paper
Yellow & red tissue paper	X-Large cardboard boxes	White & Blue fairy lights
White & Blue iridescent paper	30 flip flop sandals	Polyester fiberfill/ batting (decor)
Variety of plastic colored tablecloths		Artificial Christmas trees (decor)
2 pairs of rain boots (adult size)		2 armor breast plates (costume)
Plastic toy knights helmet (costume)		

Praying you all remain safe and healthy,

Livier Ghamari-Brown, Director of Youth & Family Ministry
livierghamari@yahoo.com (909) 962-9366

Bethania Preschool and After School

Greetings from a very quiet preschool and after school. Following the directives of the Santa Barbara County Education Office, the Health Department, Community Care Licensing, the CDC and others the program is closed for the time being. Staff has thoroughly cleaned the classrooms and the Fireside Room in preparation for our return hopefully sometime in April. As we navigate through these difficult and stressful times we wish you well from the Preschool and After School.

“When you get to your wits end, you will find God lives there.” (Unknown)

**Blessings,
Eileen**

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

Please tune in to Bethania Lutheran Church, Solvang on YouTube for the service at 9:30 on April 5.

Lilies

25 Easter lilies will adorn the church on Easter Sunday. If you would like to have a lily and have a dedication for Easter, please fill out the form below with payment and return it to the church office. Please email Kristyl at bethanialutheranch@gmail.com with your dedication and desire to order a lily. She will make some kind of email notice to send out on Easter. You can also order through Bethania's app, Bethania Church. You may pick up your lily in the church after the service on April 12.

I/We would like # _____ Easter Lilies at \$ _____ /each.

I/We would like the dedication to read:

Given by _____ in memory of/in celebration of _____

Payment enclosed.

Good Friday, April 10

Pastor Chris will livestream a service at 7 pm on Good Friday, April 10. Visit Bethania Lutheran Church, Solvang on YouTube.

Easter Chalk Drawing for Everyone, April 11 & 12

One of Bethania's Easter traditions is to create a giant cross with chalk drawings on the concrete in front of the sanctuary doors. We usually have a fun gathering to do it, but obviously we can't do that this year. That shouldn't stop us, though!

So we're going to have our chalk drawing, social-distancing style. Starting Saturday and continuing on through Easter Sunday, chalk will be available in front of the church to decorate. Bring your kids or come on your own. Draw any kind of Easter picture, whether religious or just fun. Please be mindful of social distancing. The bathrooms will be open to wash your hands and gloves will be available inside the church. The only thing you have to remember is ONLY DECORATE THE SQUARES WITH AN "X" IN THEM. Oh, and have fun!

Easter

Worship Service on Easter Sunday, April 12 - 9:30 a.m.

We will be streaming the Easter Service at Bethania at 9:30 am on April 12. See it live on YouTube, at Bethania Lutheran Church, Solvang, CA.

Old Traditions and New

If you are missing some familiar things or gatherings, do your best to be creative and innovative. If you can't gather for Easter dinner or brunch, do something at home and Facetime or video chat with family. You can also make your special family favorites. Find a way to make hot cross buns. There are several recipes on-line. If you don't bake, you can buy Hawaiian Sweet rolls and make a simple icing with powdered sugar and milk for the cross design. Olsen's Bakery is open for business and has Hot Cross Buns. You can have an Easter egg hunt for your children. Be sure to decorate your home with whatever you have, flowers, drawings, art, and music.

Decorate the Easter Cross

The Easter cross will be on the sidewalk in front of the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. While we can't gather for service, we can still be responsible and carry on one of our traditions of decorating the Easter cross with flowers. It's been a gorgeous Spring so far and flowers are blooming. So come by the church and place some flowers in the cross. We'll leave it out for the whole community to see as a symbol that Easter is still here and He Is Risen!

Below find more information from <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com>

“Greening of the Cross”/“Flowering of the Cross”

“On Easter Sunday morning some Episcopal, Lutheran, and other Protestant churches incorporate a folk ceremony called the flowering of the cross. Members of the congregation bring flowers or greenery to church. A bare wooden cross, dotted with pin holes, covered with chicken wire or strung with vines, stands in the church. (at Bethania it is on the sidewalk in front of the church) At some point before people approach the barren cross and place a blossom in one of the holes continue until flowers cover it completely.”

“The flowering of the cross represents the transition from Good Friday to Easter, from meditation on Jesus' death to joyful celebration of his resurrection. The ceremony transforms a barren cross, a reminder of Jesus' death, into an Easter symbol. Covered with fresh, living flowers, the cross serves not only as an emblem of Jesus' resurrection but also of the continuing presence of Christ among today's Christians.”

You can also make one at home. I am going to make one out of wood, sticks or cardboard and use flowers from my yard. I am also going to make one on my craft room door since it has a cross inlay.

- Kristyl

Cross with Flowers

If you are unable to come to Bethania to add flowers to the cross, you can color your own. This cross is from <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/flowers-in-cross>. You can use it home. If you want to share it please take a picture and send it to bethanialutheranch@gmail.com. The cross is also printed later in the Beacon.

Faith in Action

Hike Against Hunger

We are planning to hold the Hike Against Hunger after the quarantine period. It will be more necessary than ever to raise funds to fight world hunger. Please keep supporting our regular church programs while we plan this event for the future. We are focused right now on fighting hunger in our local community.

Emergency Food Distribution Site at Bethania ***Tuesdays, 4-6 pm “ Drive up and Walk up”***

Bethania is operating as an Emergency USDA Food Distribution site during the pandemic. We receive food deliveries from SB County FoodBank at 10 am each Tuesday, which we then sort and bag for families. We also have received fresh vegetables through Veggie Rescue. Distribution is through drive up or walk up, from 4-6 pm. There are no restrictions on income or family size at this time.

If you would like to help, please contact me or just show up. We practice COVID-19 safety procedures, and ask if you are sick in any way that you do not come to help. Additionally, if you are in a risk category, please do not come.

Our first distribution on March 24th helped 179 families which numbered a total of 743 individuals. We moved over 5000 lbs of food and 120 lbs. of fresh vegetables. There is a huge need out there, which will probably increase as the days pass. We could use your prayers and support for this challenging mission.

Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing Day is coming: ***Sunday, May 3 at 10:30 a.m.***

Mark your calendar to help us pack brown bag breakfast items for needy local seniors on Sunday, May 3 at 10:30 a.m. Hopefully we will be back at worship, but if not, we still need to do a packing. Currently, with the COVID-19 pandemic, distribution of these bags has increased to 185 per week. This is due to the seniors being unable to leave their homes and get even routine shopping done.

During the pandemic, if you are sick at all, please do not come, even if you want to help. This is for the health and safety of all of us: packers and the seniors we are trying to help. Additionally, if you are uncomfortable with this in any way or are in a high-risk category, please do not feel pressured to attend. We all understand these are extraordinary times. We will have gloves and some wipes for those who attend, and we will need to stay 6 feet apart while packing if the guidelines are still in place.

You can also help out by donating any of the following items. Donations may be left in the box in the church.

Protein Drinks (such as Ensure or Atkins)	Soft Granola/Cereal Bars
Protein Bars	Oatmeal Packets (Protein type)
Instant Cup of Soup/Lunch or Noodles	Fruit Cups or Applesauce
pudding (non-refrigerated)	
Small Juice Boxes or Plastic Bottles of Fruit Juices (such as Apple, Cranberry, Orange)	

A big THANK YOU to the Kei Lin Foundation for supporting us with their recent grant. These grant funds will be purchasing the Brown Bag Breakfast items for the next several months, but we still encourage your donations, especially as we are now going to be using up our funds faster than predicted.

YOUR PARTICIPATION makes a difference in the health and happiness of someone living right here in our valley. Thank you!

Linda Marzullo, Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Noisy Sunday April 26: Blessing Bags/Box Food Items

The next Noisy Sunday is coming on April 26th. Although it looks like we still won't be together in worship, please consider sending in your coins and cash towards this month's important project: Blessing Bags/Blessing Box Food Items.

Our BLESSING BOX is arriving soon! This is a box with shelves and doors (similar to the Little Book Library) that will hold items for struggling families. Our goal with this is to have the community be able to access assistance at any time, without any stigma, from the items within it. In addition, we will be encouraging the people in the SYV to donate a "blessing" when they are able, to keep it stocked. The Blessing Box has been in the works for over a year, and with the pandemic, we are really seeing how important this project is to so many.

With so many people struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, we jump started the Blessing Box and have made up "Blessing Bags." These Blessing Bags are located in the narthex of the church, so they may be picked up any day between 9 am and 5 pm. If you or someone you know is in need, please be aware that these programs exist at Bethania.

Financial donations and food donations are welcome for these projects. Items needed include canned and dried foods, snacks, cereal, coffee, diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies basically whatever you use in your household, we would like to have to distribute. You can drop items off in the church between 9-5 daily, or contact me if you like: (805) 688-5219 or (805) 451-5548. You may also email me at vikingpressprint@verizon.net.

*We all really make change for the better with the Noisy Sunday! **So send in your coins and cash and make a joyful jingle for someone on April 26th.** Together, we can CHANGE our world.*

Linda Marzullo, Chair - Social Ministry Committee

Church Business

February Meeting:

The February 2020 monthly Council meeting was held at 7 pm on Feb. 20, 2020. Members present were Emily Abello, Josh Bratt, Pastor Chris, Stewart Fries, Lynne Hemming, Carol Lake, Lori McConnell, Carolyn Schuit, and Anne Twigg, Wendy Bevier and Jeanelle Needham were not present. Linda Marzullo and Elizabeth Breen were also present representing the Social Ministry Committee.

Linda Marzullo provided the council with a very thorough presentation on the Bethania Social Ministry Committee and their plans for the coming year.

Council members revisited and discussed the application of the Long-Range Plan and the Congregational Gift Policy which were approved at the Feb. 9, 2020 Congregational Meeting Part 2.

Council members present also discussed a variety of administrative topics including:

Election of Treasurer Lori McConnell	New signors on checking account
Pastor's paternity leave schedule	Ministry funding protocols
Internal Control Checklist	

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2020.

March Meeting:

The March 2020 monthly Council meeting was held at 7 pm on March 19, 2020. Members present were Emily Abello, Wendy Bevier, Josh Bratt, Pastor Chris, Stewart Fries, Lynne Hemming, Carol Lake, Lori McConnell, and Carolyn Schuit. Anne Twigg and Jeanelle Needham were not present.

Considering the rapid onset of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic and the necessity of social distancing leading to the suspension of church gatherings, the March Council meeting was held on-line via Zoom Conference technology. Attendees started signing on at 6:30 pm to allow enough time to get everyone comfortable with the process.

The Pastor provided an update of the actions taken by the church in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. We discussed how the church could help our congregation during this stressful time. We also discussed how the church could provide some care for the community.

The council also discussed the impending financial impact expected as a result of the suspension of church gatherings. The Business Manager presented an analysis of the projected cash flow shortfall through April and the council discussed possible courses of action. The council tasked the Pastor, the Business Manager and the Treasurer with preparing a more in-depth projection for a 6-month period which would look toward eliminating or reducing non-critical expenses. The council also passed a resolution asking the Endowment Fund to provide funding to cover the short-term deficit outlined in the March-April projection provided by the Business Manager.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16, 2020.

**The Peace of Christ be with you all,
Stewart Fries, Bethania Council President, 805-245-0041**

Treasurer's Report for February 2020

- **Balance Sheet:** At the beginning of the month the checking account balance was \$662.37. We will need to look at alternatives for keeping cash for operating expenses.
- The balance sheet remains strong with over \$3,800,000 in total assets.
- The money market fund is up \$50,00.00 from January due to the adjustment of the fund accounts at the end of 2019.
- We have no long term debt and all liabilities are current and all bills paid.
- It should be noted that less than \$5,000 of cash on the balance sheet in the money market fund is designated and not available for general church expenses.

Profit & Loss Budget Performance:

Income:

- Offerings are below budget by -\$3,251.00. Considering the current situation this is not likely to improve in the near future. During the church closure the expenses of the church will not be going down by much, if at all.
- The first two months income of the year were below budget by \$6,100.
- We will need to look at alternatives for keeping cash for operating expenses.

Expenses:

- Salaries and related expenses were down.
- Computer expenses up in January due to an Intuit Payroll subscription.
- Most other expenses are at or below budget.

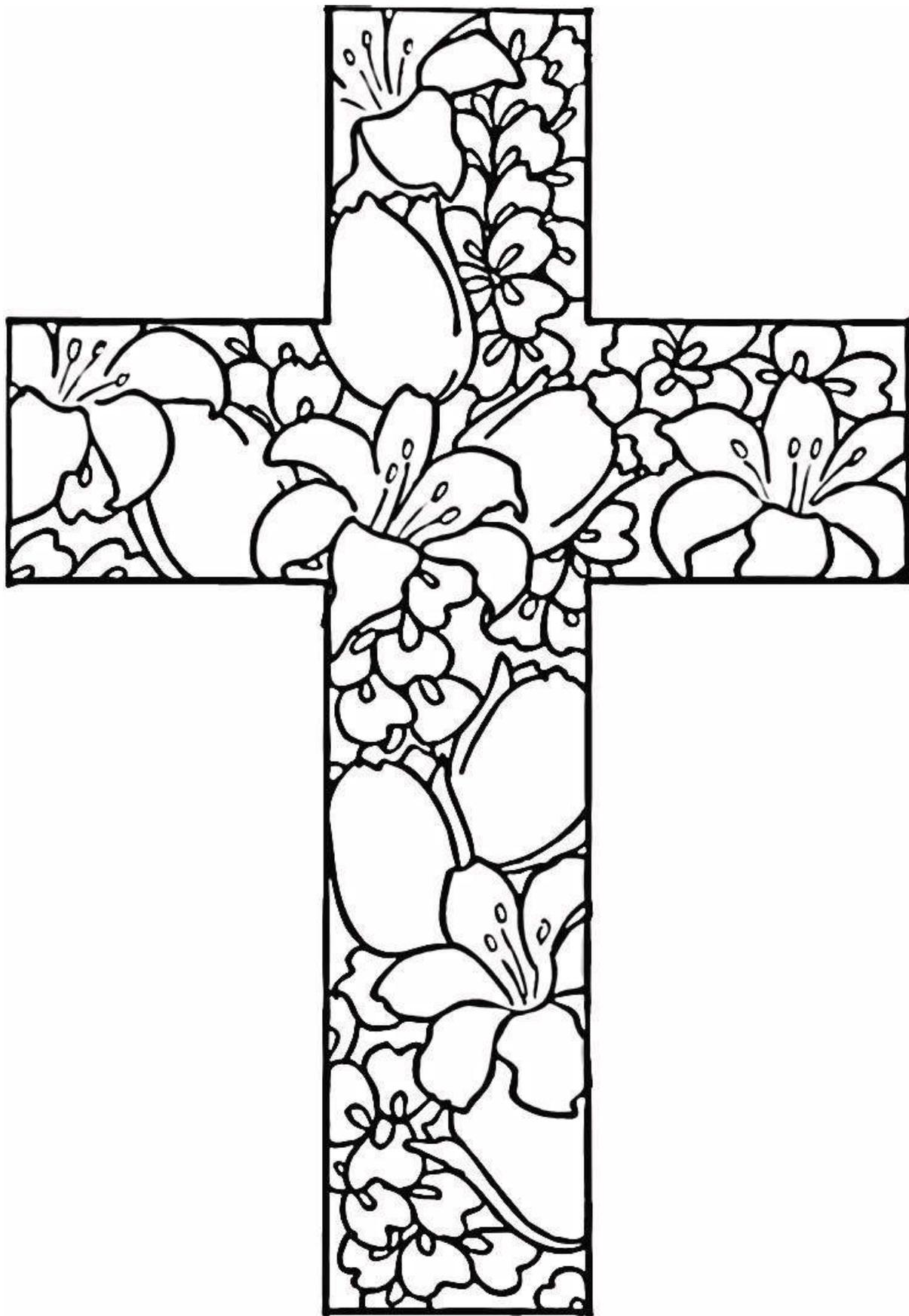
- Ron Walsh

In Our Hearts, In Our Prayers

We uplift in prayer the following people in our congregation and community. May we minister to and bless all who need God's help.

The friends and family of Harlan Burchardi and Karena Hvinvgelby. Both Harlan and Karena died in March.

Andy Blanton, Dennis Bornhoft, Brianna Ceballos, Denise Chaboya, Annette Clausen, Caylin, Katy & Kay Corlee, Terry & Jo Daly, Sharon Espinoza, Chris Frederiksen, Debbie Fritts, Jenie Galindo, Chris Gideon, Sheldon & Pat Green, Kathy Hackler, Belle Hoger, Jennifer Howell, Glen Jacobsen, Michael Jech, Robert & Gail Jennings, Carol Lake, Betsy & Steve Logan, John Marzullo, Stella Miller, Brian Merrick, Denise Morris, Denny Norrenbrock, Barbara & Charles Osborn, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearrson, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Joyce Purvis, Tim Reed, Craig Schorr, Jesse Tovar, Lou Vitelli, Robert Workman, David & Yolanda Yanez, and those who serve our country both at home and abroad



Easter Coloring Page



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Preschool/After School
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Easter Service, April 12
Live Stream at 9:30 am on YouTube
Bethania Lutheran Church, Solvang