



Winter Fun Festival

Sunday, Jan. 29, 2-4 p.m.
Easter by the Lake

Celebrating the Gifts God Gives Us!
Nature - Relationships - Faith

Outdoor games and activities

- * Sliding
- * Cross-country skiing
- * Snow-shoeing
- * Broomball
- * Skating
- * Bonfire
- * Medallion Hunt: Join others and follow clues to discover hidden prizes.

Indoor games and activities

- * Chili or Soup Cook-off: Bring a pot of your favorite chili or soup to share. Prizes will be awarded!
- * Food & beverages
- * Board games
- * Puzzles
- * Tricycle Races
- * Bean Bag Toss
- * Indoor Bowling
- * and many more!



February: Global Mission Emphasis

As Jesus has been born in our hearts once again, we remember that He came to save not only us, but His children throughout the world. His children in Tanzania and Guatemala are not as fortunate as we at Easter, and they have many needs. Global Mission emphasis is coming in February. Watch for more information in coming weeks.

Visit and Dinner with Pastors Amanda Olson de Castillo & Horacio Castillo

**Monday, January 9, 6:30-9 p.m.,
Easter on the Hill**

Pastor Amanda Olson de Castillo and Pastor Horacio Castillo, our partner pastors in Guatemala, will be visiting the United States during January. We invite the congregation, especially those who have served as ambassadors and those considering future travel, to come and renew friendships and celebrate our mutual ministry. This dinner is sponsored by the Global Mission Committee. To attend this dinner, please RSVP by January 6 to Kathy Bahrke at zinnia618@comcast.net



From the Pastor



Dear Friends,
For most of history, Christians have not given gifts to each other on December 25, but on January 6, the Epiphany of

our Lord. This marks the coming of the Magi to Bethlehem where they knelt before the Christ Child and presented their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

This year for the 12th Day of Christmas, I would like to give you the gift of good and hope-filled news. When I started thinking of the good things that have happened this past year at Easter, my list quickly got very, very long--but here's my short-list:

- God has been with us transforming lives and giving us His Spirit in worship, education, and service.
- Pastor Jim's 38 years of ministry at Easter was celebrated with joy-filled events at the Lake and at the Hill. The people of Easter and the surrounding community joined to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

- After a long and prayerful search, the Call-Transition Committee, the Easter Church Council and the Congregation strongly affirmed the call to Pastor Kris Capel as Lead Pastor. Everyone involved in this process experienced the strong wind of the Spirit leading and affirming this call. The transition to Pastor Kris' leadership has gone smoothly and is full of promise for a strong future for Easter's ministry.
- Easter's people have shown their love of God and their confidence in the vitality of Easter's ministry through their strong financial support and loving prayer.
- Easter's global commitments have been strong and effective in both Guatemala and Tanzania. In Tanzania, 41 students who would not otherwise have been able to go to secondary school are getting educations. In addition, eleven theology students are preparing for ordained ministry through their studies at Tumaini University. A few miles outside Nyanzwa, the Mogowelo Preaching Point had its first Christmas in its new church building. (Most people had to stand outside for worship at the old building.)
- Easter's faithful people have responded wonderfully to the Fall

Hunger Appeal and Horn of Africa Emphasis. Over 78,000 meals were packed at Feed My Starving Children and over \$28,000 was contributed (\$18,722 goes to pay for the transportation and the food packed).

- The continued strong financial support of Easter's ministries is a sign both of God's graceful movement in our hearts and of the members' and supporting friends' confidence that Easter is effective in its ministry and gets maximal "bang for the buck" as it pursues its mission: To grow in faith and carry on the work of Jesus Christ.
- I wonder what is on your short-list of what you thank God for at Easter in 2011? If you can, please email me at paulharris@aol.com.

I believe that the best is yet to come. We know that 2012 will be a year of grace and that what has been begun by God's grace will continue to change and grow by God's grace. We walk into this new year confident that we've come this far by faith and that God has great things in store for us in the time to come.

Cheers and God bless,

Your Church Staff

12/27/11

Pastors	Kristen Capel, Paul Harris, Kevin Olson, Sarah Clark, Jim Borgschatz
Director of Music.....	Kris Henry
Director of Music & Media	Kent Henriksen
Minister of Youth Music.....	Jason Hansen
Director of On Purpose Ministries.....	Mary Kay DuChene
Director of Children's Ministry.....	Rachelle Gill
Director of Administration	Laurel Gaard
Director of Frontline Ministries.....	Cindy Wilson
Wellness/Parish Nurse	Stacy Wollmuth
Office Administration.....	Jennifer Peloquin, Lisa Day, Deanna Heise, Becky Briggs, Judy Hansen
Children, Youth & Families	Rachel Kucker
Coordinator of Encore!	Judy Pascoe
Worship Lead Coordinator.....	Debbie Finley
Nursery Lead Coordinators	Danielle Dufault, Cindy Lutz
Custodians.....	Eric Wilson, Butch Stodolka, Rosemary Dulas
Easter Preschool Director.....	Alicia Borman
Easter Preschool Teachers.....	Theresa Graves, Patty Goehring, Katie Ossell, Julie Fineran, Nancy Hensch, Darla Landmark

WORSHIP TIMES

Easter on the Hill:

Sat. 5 p.m., Sun. 8:30 & 10 a.m.

Benediction: Sun. 5 p.m.

Easter by the Lake:

Sun. 9:30 and 11 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Offices are at Easter on the Hill.

Monday-Friday..... 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Saturdays..... 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Office closed

Monday, January 2

Worship, Bible Studies and Prayer

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Tuesdays, 6:45-7:30 a.m.

Easter on the Hill

- Bibles and coffee provided
 - Meets every week
 - Led by Pastor Paul
- Not meeting January 3

Great Stories

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon

Easter on the Hill

Learn about pivotal events in the history of Christianity; led by Pastor Paul.
Not meeting January 4

The Big Story

Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

Easter by the Lake

Led by Pastor Kevin. A weekly study guide is also available for pick up at either site.

The Big Story

January 1: John 1:1-18, Word Made Flesh;
Church School: Jesus the Word, page 240 of Spark Bible

January 8: John 1:19-34, John the Baptist;
Church School: John the Baptist, page 234

January 15: John 1:35-51, Call of the Disciples;
Church School: The Disciples, page 258

January 22: John 2:1-11, Wedding at Cana;
Church School: Wedding at Cana, page 410

January 29: John 2:13-25, Cleansing of the Temple;
Church School: Jesus Goes to Nazareth, page 252

Dig deeper by participating in a Weekly Big Story Bible Study!

Meet with Pastor Kevin on Thursday nights from 7-8:30 p.m. at Easter by the Lake. Attend as often as your schedule permits! You can also pick up the Weekly Bible Study Guide at either location for self-study. Back issues are available at easter.org

In a Small Group? There are also Small Group Monthly Big Story Study Guides available. The current issue covers up to Lent.



benediction



RELEVANT.
SPIRITUAL. REACHING.

Sundays, 5 p.m.
Easter on the Hill

Benediction is a community searching for where God is in the world. We feature new music, raw questions, and real connections. feel the love, come and check it out. Facebook group "Benediction"

Sigmund Freud and C.S. Lewis: The Question of God

Tuesdays, Jan. 17, 24, 31, Feb. 21 & 28, 7-8:30 p.m., Easter on the Hill

Pastor Paul is leading a class based on the remarkable book, *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life* by Dr. Armand M. Nicholi of Harvard Medical School. The book was also the basis for a PBS television series. Lewis and Freud were both concerned about ultimate questions and each came up with very different answers about the meaning of life and the existence of God. The class will explore these questions in a stimulating and memorable way. Contact Pastor Paul at paulharris@aol.com for more information.

Easter Prayer Team

Saturday, Jan. 7, 9-10:30 a.m.,

Easter on the Hill

This is a ministry of prayer that links participants with others who offer prayers at Easter. It helps us feel connected to the power of God's healing Spirit in the lives of many who are hurting or in transition. This ministry strengthens the work of the whole congregation in countless seen and unseen ways. We welcome anyone to join us. Come one, come all!

Altar Flowers

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers at worship services at either site in honor or memory of an event or loved one, please contact the church office at 651-452-3680 at least one week before the service. The cost is \$35.

Job Transitions Group

**Tuesday mornings, 7:30-9 a.m.,
Easter on the Hill**

The goal of this free job transitions group is to inspire and empower community members to get hired faster, in a job that's right for them. All are welcome! There is no charge to attend.

Upcoming Presentations:

For additional information, check the group's webpage at www.easter.org/CareerConnections

Jan. 3: "Interview to Win," presented by Catherine Byers Breet. You've come this far. Don't leave your interview success to chance! Join us to learn how to prepare, show up and follow up when you've got an interview for a job.

Jan. 10: Breakout Bonanza

Jan. 17: TBD

Jan. 24: Breakout Bonanza

Jan. 31: "Navigating Life's Crises: Understanding the Grief of Job Loss," presented by Pastor Kevin Olson

Are you LinkedIn?

Our group is called Easter Job Transitions Group. Find it and click on "Join this Group" and you'll be approved within 48 hours. Neighbors and friends are welcome as well. In these difficult economic times, our Job Transitions Group is especially appreciative of opportunities for networking.

Ways to Connect



Women of all Ages

Welcome at Chick Talk!

**Mondays, 7-8:30 p.m., Easter on the Hill, and
Thursdays, 9:30-11 a.m., Easter by the Lake**

Are you a Christian woman looking to connect and grow in faith with other Christian women? Chick Talk may be a great ministry for you.

We'd love to see some new faces for the new year and our new study. Chick Talk will resume meeting the week of January 9. Please join us at either weekly session. Childcare is available Thursday mornings for \$4/visit. The kickoff session for 2012 is a study on contemporary Christian music. We will listen to songs, read and discuss the lyrics, refer to Bible passages relating to the same theme, and explore the energy and influence music creates in us. After this 4-week study, we will explore "*Sacred Rhythms: Arranging our Lives for Spiritual Transformation.*" Questions? Contact Deanna Heise at 651-452-3680.

Getting Involved at Easter

Easter is a large community, which is wonderful! There is a place for every person to feed his or her passion, to grow spiritually, and to serve. Sometimes, because it's such a large place, it can feel daunting when you decide you want to get more involved. You might not know how to do that, or even what you want to get involved in! If you're feeling the desire to get more connected to this community in some way, even if you don't know what that looks like, please contact Mary Kay DuChene at marykay@easter.org or 651-452-3680. She'll help you get it done!

Mixed Volleyball League

Fridays, January 6-March 23, 6:30-9 p.m., Easter by the Lake

Join the Easter Church Adult Volleyball League! If you played in the league last year, you can assume you're signed up again (unless we hear differently from you). If you'd like to join us, contact Pastor Kevin at revkev@easter.org or 651-452-3680.



Love for a Lifetime: A Marriage Retreat

Friday, January 27, 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, January 28, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Easter by the Lake; Registration deadline Wednesday, January 25

Cost: \$45 per couple, includes snacks and a light lunch on Saturday

Even for the happiest couples, marriage is hard. Successful couples don't eliminate their differences; they learn to live with them, making forgiveness a constant part of their marriage. This retreat will bring together married and engaged couples from Easter to focus on the most common challenges every marriage faces – and to bring us back to God's promise of love for a lifetime. There will be a variety of presenters, including Easter clergy, on topics ranging from finances to fidelity. Some of the speakers for the weekend include:

- Dan & Sara Currell presenting on the book, "Love and Respect" which they say helped to dramatically improve their understanding of conflict in their own relationship – how to resolve it, and how to prevent it.
- Julia Holtze, a seasoned retreat leader and speaker presenting "For Better, For Worse" – how to survive and thrive through both the good and bad times of marriage.
- Joe Bortscheller, a financial consultant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, presenting "From Me to We" a workshop encouraging healthy conversation around finances in marriage.

To sign up, please call Jennifer Peloquin in the church office at 651-452-3680 or email jpeloquin@easter.org.

Ways to Connect

DivorceCare

Sundays, January 8-March 18
5:30-7 p.m., Easter on the Hill
***no childcare available**

Find help and healing for the hurt of separation and divorce. DivorceCare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. Don't go through separation or divorce alone. DivorceCare is led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. If you have questions, please contact Pamela Oettinger at oettinger3@hotmail.com

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, Jan. 14, 8-9 a.m.
Easter on the Hill

Gather with other men in an inviting fellowship of breakfast and Bible study (bad jokes and bad puns leading to excessive laughter and eye rolling are also welcomed!) Our Bible study is taken from "The Big Story" worship texts that will be discussed in worship that weekend.

Women's Retreat: What on Earth Am I Doing Here?

Saturday, February 4, 9:30 a.m. -
Sunday, February 5, 11:30 a.m.
Villa Maria Retreat Center,
Frontenac, MN

Overnight retreat cost (including 3 meals) \$120 (\$45 Saturday only)

Enjoy a relaxing, contemplative weekend with like-minded women. Rejoice in the wonder of discovering the life God intends for you. Experience the beauty of winter by walking, snow shoeing or simply watching the woods while sitting by a blazing fire with friends. Let your guard down, be the woman God wants you to be, and enjoy the company! Brochures with the registration form are available at each site. Return your form and check (with Women's Retreat" on the memo line) to Easter. Contact Denise Sjoberg at denise.p.sjoberg@gmail.com with questions. Space is limited, so please sign up by January 15.

Small Group Corner

Connecting the hearts of people with others and God

"A Christian small group is an intentional, face to face gathering of three to twelve people on a regular time schedule with a common purpose of discovering and growing the possibilities of the abundant life in Christ" –Roberta Hestenes



The Small Group Ministry Team at Easter continues to be excited and inspired by the passion and energy we have seen around the idea of small groups and the impact we know many small groups have already had in the lives of our members.

Easter member, Chris Nechanicky, remembers the fall of 2009 when she met her other small (life) group members. "On the sign up sheet, we had indicated our age and life stage, but none of us were able to make it to the kick off meeting. As such, I think we were a couple stragglers who got put into a group together. We could not have been four more different lives, but God knew what he was doing when he brought us together. We immediately connected on a personal level and have enriched each other's lives ever since."

The group Chris affectionately calls, "The Misfits," continues to meet once a month even now. They don't have a standard meeting place; it may vary from coffee to dinner to lunch depending on scheduling, but they make sure to get a meeting in to connect with each other and with their faith.

As we embrace the New Year, we often think about things in our lives we want to change, improve, or try. Are you looking for more time to learn and grow in Christ? Are you wanting to get more connected to the Easter community? Small groups are a great way to do that. Join a group we already have going or we'll help you create your own. Small groups can be based on life stage (e.g. parents of young kids or empty-nesters) or interests (e.g. bowling, gardening, restaurant-trying). Let us help you find a way to make a small group at Easter a part of your life. Contact Deanna Heise at 651-452-3680 or dheise@easter.org

Yogadevotion Class

Tuesdays, Jan. 10-Feb. 28
6:30-7:30 p.m., Easter by the Lake
New Year! New Yogadevotion session! Start the year out right by joining instructor Marie Baker for this faith-based yoga class. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat. Registration forms are available at the Information/Welcome centers or online at easter.org (Connect/Recreational Groups). For more information, contact Stacy Wollmuth, parish nurse, at 651-452-3680 or swollmuth@easter.org.

Sip & Stitch Sewing Bee

Saturday, January 21
9:30-11 a.m., Easter on the Hill
Lots of squares have been knit and crocheted, but now they need to be sewn together into blankets! You are invited to come and help! NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY! The blankets go to local charities. If you have questions, contact Barb Moon at 651-454-9561.



Providing opportunities for adults to serve, learn and gather throughout all seasons of life

Events are further detailed in the **Encore! Happenings** brochure, available at each site and also at www.easter.org (**Connect/Encore!**)

Learn

CPR

Monday, Jan. 16, 1-3 p.m.

Easter by the Lake

During this workshop Shelley Kilgore, RN, certified CPR instructor, will guide you through the chain of survival by offering the latest information on CPR practices for adults, children and infants. This is NOT a certification class and no skills testing or written exam is required.

Contact Stacy Wollmuth, Easter's Parish Nurse, at 651-452-3680 or swollmuth@easter.org to register or for further information.

Three Persons, One God: The Trinity

Thurs., Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 & March 1, 1-3 p.m., Easter by the Lake

The doctrine of the Trinity is routinely misunderstood in churches. We'll consider: how the Trinity is identified, prayed to and preached in sacred worship, special contributions from Lutheran theology and why this essential teaching matters. The instructor is Stephen Paulson, Professor of Systematic Theology at Luther seminary. Contact Dorie Erickson at 651-454-2250 or doriejerickson@yahoo.com for more information.

SALT

(Senior Adults Learning Together)

Monday, April 23, 30, May 7 & 14
Church of the Risen Savior, Burnsville,
9:30-11:45 a.m., optional lunch.

Join a group from Encore! and attend one or more of SALT's spring sessions. Brochures describing the sessions will be available at both sites. Cost is \$5 per session per Monday. Pre-register for all sessions and save! Contact Roger Fredlund at 952-953-4569 or ottofocus@yahoo.com with questions.

Gather

Golf in January (!)

Saturday, January 14, 6-9 p.m.

Easter on the Hill

Learn and play "Golf," an easy, fun card game. We'll start the evening with sloppy joes and conversation.

Contact Carolyn Bratland at 952-223-2444 or carolynbratland@yahoo.com for more information.

Simple Steps in Winter

Mondays, starting January 9, 9:30 a.m.

Eagan Community Center,
1501 Central Pkwy

Walk the indoor track at the Eagan Community Center and chat with other Encore! folks. Cost per walk is \$2. For more information, contact Dorie Erickson at 651-454-2250 or doriejerickson@yahoo.com.

Friday Night at the Movies

Friday, February 10, 7-9 p.m.

Easter by the Lake

We'll watch a movie on the big screen and munch on popcorn and theater candy. Bring a lawn chair if you choose. Contact Judy Englund at 651-687-0910 or judyke1@comcast.net for more information.

O.W.L.s (Older Wiser Lutherans)

Thursday, January 12, 1-3 p.m.

Easter on the Hill

Come for fun and fellowship during our Games & Puzzles afternoon! Bring a finger food or snack to share. If you have questions, contact Carol Kearns at 952-847-3429.

If you would like to receive email bulletins about Encore! events, please send an email to jpascoe@easter.org and request "Encore! Updates."

Serve

Feed My Starving Children

Wednesdays, Jan. 11 & Feb. 8,
9:30-11 a.m.

990 Lone Oak Road, Suite 160
Hand-pack meals specifically formulated for malnourished children. To sign up for one or more of the above dates, call Rita Tester at 651-452-7342.

Dakota Woodlands

Mondays, Jan. 23 & Feb. 20,
10 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Prepare and serve lunch for the residents at Dakota Woodlands, transitional housing for homeless women. Contact Judy Pascoe at 651-454-8540 or jjpascoe@easter.org to volunteer.

LSS Tour

Wed., Feb. 29, 9:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

Tour Lutheran Social Services Center for Changing Lives, have lunch at their café and do a service project for Camp Noah, LSS summer program for children who have been personally affected by natural disaster in the past year. Meet at Easter on the Hill to car pool to LSS. Contact Terolle Turnham at 651-452-4474 or t.turnham@gmail.com for more information.

Encore! Serves Easter (ESET) Team

Wed., Feb. 1 and Wed., April 4,
9 a.m.-noon

Choose to work on a service project at Easter Church. Choice of projects may include painting, dusting furniture, cleaning & organizing the kitchen, etc. Contact Dave Woodward at 651-681-1578 or c_dwoodward@q.com for more information.

From a Council Member

Presented by Kate Franken at the December 20 council meeting



This is Kate's 2nd year on the Council. She is liaison to the Justice & Advocacy and Stewardship Committees. She and her husband Matt have one son, Henry.

I've been thinking a lot about snow over the last few weeks with forecasts for a brown Christmas this year in the Twin Cities. When the predictions began coming in early December, I thought to myself, "that can't be right; we always have a white Christmas in Minnesota." In fact, the odds of a white Christmas in Minnesota range from 62% in Redwood Falls to 100% in International Falls, largely depending on the area of the state.

When I remember Christmases of the past, I picture a beautiful white blanket of glistening snow covering all outdoor surfaces. To me, that is part of the magic of winter time here in the northland.

I love snow for so many reasons. I love the way it looks as the sun reflects off it creating a bright and blinding display. I love how a fresh snowfall looks on the ground before anyone or anything has made tracks on the surface. I love the way the light makes it sparkle and makes the whole world seem bright and new. I love all the fun activities we get to do when we have snow like

snowshoeing, sledding, cross-country skiing, building snowmen and having snow ball fights. Even though it is a great escape to go south for a winter escape, I would really miss winter in Minnesota if I didn't get to experience a winter with snow.

Christmas is a lot like snow to me. The birth of Jesus Christ signifies a bright new start for each of us in this world and that is a lot like snow. Part of what is so refreshing and beautiful about a fresh snow fall is that it covers up anything that is dirty or dingy or ugly on the ground.

Around here after the leaves all fall down from the trees and all the green plants turn to wilted brown, the landscape looks kind of barren and dead. But then, when we get a covering of snow all the brown and ugly disappears under the clean and fresh snow.

It is like that for each of us with the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. Jesus Christ came to provide a new covenant between God and his people and to forgive us for all our sin. Without Christ we are like the brown, dead ground before the snow. Our hearts are stained and ugly from sin without the cleansing forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

God is light and in Him is no darkness ... " (1 John 1:5) In Psalm 51:7, the psalmist writes, "Cleanse me, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be

whiter than snow." Through Christ we can be cleansed and be made whiter than snow.

In that way, the odds of a white Christmas for each of us are 100% through Jesus. The joy, brilliance and wonder that come from a fresh snowfall can be ours everyday of the year through Christ.

Even if we don't get a snowfall for Christmas this year, I hope each of you experience the gift of joy and wonder that only Jesus can give. In my heart and mind, this Christmas will be as white as ever with the birth of Jesus and the promise of everlasting life.

Dear Lord, Thank you for all the seasons of the year and the beauty that we find within each one. Thank you especially for snow and the way it creates a beautiful clean blanket of white to cover everything below. The gift of your son, Jesus Christ, and his birth to come and live among us is beautiful beyond measure. Through Christ, we have forgiveness for our sins and have the gift of eternal life. This forgiveness is like a brilliant covering of white snow and a fresh new start. I pray that you would draw us near to you this Christmas season as we celebrate Christ's birth. And, help us to experience your love anew every season of the year.

Telemark Men's Retreat

Friday-Sunday, March 23-25, Telemark, Wisconsin, Cost: \$60

Men's Retreats are a great way for men to meet other men, develop sustaining relationships and to grow in the faith. Easter's minibus will leave Easter on the Hill at 6 p.m. Friday, and men will return refreshed and strengthened Sunday by 5 p.m. There's room for fifteen men; reservations are made by leaving a check (made out to Easter) in Pastor's Paul's mailbox. Please put "Telemark Men's Retreat" on the memo line. For more information, contact Pastor Paul at paulharris@aol.com or 651-587-1999.



Like us on Facebook!
[www.facebook.com/
EasterLutheranChurch](http://www.facebook.com/EasterLutheranChurch)

A HUGE thank you to all of the people who helped to make Encore's Christmas Daze an event to remember!
A complete list of those who helped is available at easter.org (Connect/Encore)

Ways to Serve Generously

Feed My

Starving Children

Tuesday, January 10, 6-7:30 p.m.
(990 Lone Oak Road,
Suite 160, Eagan)

Bring your family, neighbors, Life Group, or book club to experience the

mission and ministry of FMSC.

For online sign-up instructions, go to www.easter.org (search Hunger Ministries) or contact Rita Tester at 651-452-7342 or fmsc@easter.org with questions.



Justice and Advocacy Reading Group

Sunday, January 8, 7-8:30 p.m.,
Easter on the Hill

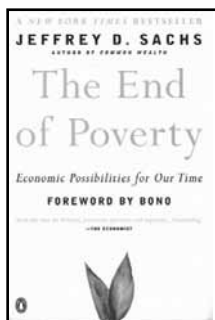
Copies of the book are available in the church office and church library

We will talk in small groups about "The End of Poverty" by Jeffrey Sachs. Subsequent books will be chosen based on group interest. There is no long-term commitment to a small group. Join to read just one book or join for the long haul. You will have the chance to change small groups each time we meet, based on finding or inviting people with shared interest.

All are invited. No need to register in advance, and you can attend one or all classes, as your schedule permits. Consider this a possible small group

activity. Read the book or just join for conversation, as long as you want to "see the naked" and put compassion into action!

If you have questions, contact Sara Galligan at sariegalligan@gmail.com or 651-454-0916.



"Easter's Got Talent"

Family Talent Show & Potluck Lunch

Sunday, February 12, Easter by the Lake
12:30 p.m. potluck, 1-3 p.m. Talent Show

See who takes home the prize...

Start practicing!! We want to see your act in Easter's talent show!

Easter is looking for youth and families to perform in a FUN afternoon of talent!

Youth of ALL ages and their whole families are invited to show off talents from the brilliant to the wacky. We want musicians, jugglers, jokesters, magicians, tumblers, cart-wheelers, and all other talents to be represented. A panel of judges (to be announced) will determine who will take home the prize!

Also, get ready for a special performance by the Easter's Children, Youth & Family staff!

SIGN UP before Sunday, February 5 by contacting Jason Hansen at 651-452-3680 or jason@easter.org

A Letter of Thanks for Easter Lutheran Church

I am writing you this letter hoping that our Lord is blessing you in your church and in each one of the homes of the members of your church.

The reason I am writing this letter to you is to thank you for the opportunity you have given me in order to continue my education. Thanks to God and to you, that have been a fundamental part in my education, this year I had the opportunity to graduate as an elementary school teacher.

It has been a wonderful gift for me since many years ago this was just a dream for me and a goal that I did not know if I was going to be able to reach. But today my dream became true thanks to you and to the support that you have given me. Now I have the dream, that seems to be far away for now but I know I will be able to accomplish, that is to attend University where I want to continue my education in order to immerse myself more in the field of education.

I feel infinitely thankful to all of you. I hope I can thank you personally and I invite you that next year you visit the ILAG here in Guatemala to share God's word.

I take leave of you, your brother in Christ,

Jorge Mario Aba Arana

"He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come". Mark 4:26-29

Ways to Serve Generously



Easter Community Theatre presents... **GODSPELL!**

Casting:

Adults and high school ages throughout the Twin Cities

Auditions:

February 20-21, 6 p.m.
Easter on the Hill

**Also looking for production and tech crew

Questions or to get involved contact Jason Hansen
651-452-3680 or jason@easter.org

Laptops for Tanzania

Pastor Paul is looking for reasonably new laptops to be used by theology students or Radio Furaha in Iringa. If you have a well-functioning PC laptop with XP or later to give away, please contact him at paulharris@aol.com.

The laptops will be sent to Iringa soon after Christmas.

Food Drive for Eagan Resource Center

January 14 & 15, both sites

Please bring food donations when you come to worship! Increased need has depleted the shelves at the Food Pantry. Please help to refill them!



A list of current needs can be found at www.eaganrc.org.

Excellent news about the Fall Hunger Appeal!

As of December 14, people contributed \$28,374 to the Hunger Appeal and Horn of Africa Crisis Response:

- \$1,265 for the Eagan Resource Center
- \$1,265 for Bread for the World
- \$5,060 for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal
- \$20,784 to the Horn of Africa Family Crisis Response

In addition,

- About 78,000 meals have been packed for the Horn of Africa at Feed My Starving Children; that food will soon be on its way to the refugee camps in Kenya.
- Thousands of pounds of food have been donated to the Eagan Resource Center (ERC)
- About 1,600 gifts have been provided for children through the Giving Tree Program and the ERC.
- Dozens of letters were written to Congress asking that emergency aid to the Horn of Africa not be cut or eliminated.

Thanks be to God!! And thank you for your generosity! More details are available at easter.org.

Loaves & Fishes

Tuesday, January 3, 2:30-7 p.m.,

Creekside Community Center, 98th and Penn in Bloomington

Prepare and/or serve a meal to 200+ families in need. Be part of a team from 2:30-5 p.m. that prepares and cooks the meal, or from 5-7 p.m. to serve and clean up. To sign up, contact Barb Carlton at pixelhawk@comcast.net or 651-452-7557.

Did you know...

Every time a natural disaster occurs, 25% or more of those affected are children. Camp Noah, created by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, is a week-long, faith-based day camp offered for elementary-age children in grades K-6 who have experienced disaster. Since 1983, there has been a 500% increase in global humanitarian emergencies and in this past decade the United States has experienced 250% more major natural disasters than 40 years ago. In addition, human-caused disasters like Oklahoma City, 9/11, the 35W Bridge collapse and school shootings have left children with a multitude of mental health issues:

1. A study published in *Psychiatry* 2002 showed that 69% of all school-age children were likely to suffer severe impairments after disaster trauma.
2. In a study of 665 displaced Hurricane Katrina families, nearly half reported at least one child with emotional or behavioral difficulties.
3. Many studies following 9/11 indicate that the mental health issues faced by those children will continue to manifest for years to come.
4. Since 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, there has been an increasing awareness of the long-term psychological effect of disaster on children and yet little has been done to address this very issue.

In February, Easter Encore! participants will be packing kits for children to use during their Camp Noah experience. Perhaps you can assist by donating some of the needed materials. Watch for the supply list.



Children, Youth & Family

Faith Formation

Pray-&-Play

Warm, dry and lots of fun!

Open Gym Time (for ages birth – 5 years old)

Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m., Easter by the Lake

Come play! There are balls, scooters and toys for the kids to play with...or bring toys to share! The weather is always fantastic in the Great Room for kids to run, be loud and let go of that energy! Come often and star as long as you can! No registration is required! Bring your friends, it's FREE!

No Pray & Play Jan. 27 or Feb. 10 (ISD 196 no school)

Come and Play with Kids!

Adult leaders are needed for Friday mornings during Pray-&-Play. The responsibility of the leader is simple. Set up and put away toys in the Great Room, play and talk to parents/guardians, read a simple Bible story and pray. Please contact Rachele Gill at 651-452-3680 or rgill@easter.org if interested.

Welcome Wagon

This ministry is God's blessing to expectant parents, and parents of a new baby! If you have recently had a baby, please inform the church office at 651-452-3680 of the arrival of your little one. Easter's Baby Welcome Wagon ministry would love to greet your new arrival and provide your family with a gift from Easter.

Join the Baby Welcome Wagon Team!

What a great way to be part of the excitement of new parents! Welcome new babies in the Easter Church community by making a meal for the busy parents and bring a gift from Easter. Please email Erin Wolfe if interested at erinmark99@msn.com

Baby Blankets

If you love to sew or knit, you may be interested in making a baby blanket for the Baby Welcome Wagon Ministry. Blankets will be given to families of newborns in our congregation. Baby Welcome Wagon will accept blankets made of fleece or flannel, quilted, knit, or crocheted. A standard baby blanket size is 45"x60". If you would like to contribute a blanket or materials to make a blanket, please contact Erin Wolfe at 651-454-5177 or erinmark99@msn.com.

Church School: The Big Story

Church School registration forms are available for 2011-12 Church School at both church sites and www.easter.org (Learn/Elementary)

**Calendar: No Church School
Sun., Jan. 1
See you in Worship!**



1st Gr Family Faith Night: The Ten Commandments

Saturday, January 21

Easter on the Hill

5 p.m. Family Worship; 6 p.m. enjoy pizza with families. At 6:15 p.m. 1st graders and their parents have an activity/lesson time led by Pastor Kris. The cost for pizza is \$5/person the night of the event (age 3 and under are free). Childcare is provided for siblings. Please RSVP by emailing Rachele Gill at rgill@easter.org if you will be coming for pizza and if sibling care is needed.

EARLY First Communion

Sundays, Jan. 15, 22, and 29

6:30-8 p.m., Easter on the Hill

This First Communion Class is for students YOUNGER than 5th Grade and is designed to help young children prepare for the sacrament of Holy Communion. Each student must be accompanied, at all sessions, by at least one parent or guardian. Registrations are available at both buildings and on Easter's website; www.easter.org. (If your child is not yet baptized, please call the church office at 651-452-3680 to arrange a baptism date prior to first communion.) Questions, please contact Pastor Kevin at 651-452-3680 or revkev@easter.org.

Christmas Pageant Thank You

Over 1,000 people were there to "Welcome the Child." The Christmas story was retold by the church school cast, church school choir, Youth Choir, Youth Band, dancers and all the pre-pageant musicians. A special thank you to directors/writers Dan and Sara Currell for their numerous hours of casting parts, rehearsals, and preparing the message. Thanks parents who donated cookies for fellowship!

Children, Youth & Family

Faith Formation

Youth Band rehearsals resume on Wednesday, January 4
Youth Choir resumes on Sunday, January 8

Summer Youth Intern Positions Open

Easter Lutheran Church will be hiring Summer Youth Interns (at least one year out of high school) for summer 2012 youth programming. If you love Jesus, if you love kids of all ages (and preferably have at least some experience leading children/teens), and are excited about working with Easter's Children, Youth, and Family Team, please submit a resume and cover letter to Pastor Sarah Clark via email, pastorsarah@easter.org or by dropping it off at the church office at Easter on the Hill by January 8, 2012.

6th Grade Confirmation Information Meeting Sunday, January 22, 1-2 p.m. Easter by the Lake

The purpose of this meeting is to allow families the opportunity to discern which confirmation option for the 7th and 8th grade years is best; Wednesday nights or summer camp.

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to attend this session together. Please bring your checkbook, medical insurance information, and emergency contact numbers with you if you wish to register for confirmation on this day.

Fee information, confirmation service and growth hours, and other details of confirmation ministry will be shared. Summer confirmation camp will be held at Camp Wapo the week of Sunday, August 12 through Friday, August 17.

If you have questions, contact Pastor Sarah at 651-452-3680 or pastorsarah@easter.org.

Join the Youth Choir!!

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Easter by the Lake

We're always looking for more 6-12th graders to get involved. We're singing a bunch this winter and spring starting with some pop tunes and a rap to mix in with the choral music so jump on in! Questions? Contact Jason Hansen at 651-452-3680 or jason@easter.org Does not meet January 1 and 22

High School Youth: Winter-Break Lock-in

Sunday, January 1, 7 p.m.-Monday, January 2, 7 a.m.

Easter by the Lake Cost: \$10

Hang out with your friends after Christmas. Play some games in the wintery night. All high schoolers are welcome to have a great time at a New Year's Day lock-in! For more information or questions, contact Stephen Gray at thestephengray@gmail.com

ComedySportz for COGS and ALL Easter People!

Sunday Jan. 15, 7- 8:30 p.m., Easter by the Lake

**Cost \$10/person or \$25 for families (purchased at door)
(COGS students stay until MIDNIGHT!)**

Calling all Easter's families, children, teens, and friends... Come to the Lake for a night of great fun that is sure to be epic! You don't have school the next day... so celebrate the right way! Bring your friends. The event will begin at 7 p.m. when Easter's Youth Band plays an opening concert for ComedySportz. ComedySportz is improvisational comedy played as a sport! (If you've ever seen *Whose Line is it Anyway*, you've got the general idea.) Two teams of actors compete for the biggest laughs while a referee calls the fouls and gets suggestions from you, the audience.



Easter Preschool Open House and Speaker

Tuesday, January 10, 6-7:30 p.m., Easter on the Hill

Easter Preschool will host an open house for prospective families. The event begins with a time to explore the classrooms and move with Cardio Kim.

Dr. Sue Starks, an assistant professor in early childhood education, will be speaking about the important role of play as learning (the basis for Easter Preschool's curriculum) from 6:40-7:10 p.m. Current members of Easter Preschool's staff and Parent Advisory Committee will be available to answer your important questions and guide you through the preschool experience.



Easter Lutheran Church
4200 Pilot Knob Road
Eagan, MN 55122-1822
www.easter.org

“to grow in faith and carry on the work of Jesus Christ”

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Welcome to Hans Vigesaa

It is with GREAT excitement that we welcome Hans Vigesaa to our staff as our full-time Director of Youth Outreach and Engagement. This is a brand-new position for Easter’s Children, Youth, and Family Team focusing on growing both the depth and the width of Easter’s teenage ministries. Hans comes to us with over fifteen years of experience in youth and family ministry. For the past nine years, Hans has served at Calvary Lutheran in Bemidji, MN. He has a Master’s Degree in Children, Youth and Family Ministry from Luther Seminary and is an Associate in Ministry in the ELCA. Hans is passionate about sharing faith with youth and their families and is especially gifted at bringing faith to life for youth – helping them to live out their faith in the world. Hans will begin this new ministry position on January 10.

Hans is married to Amy and they have five children – Soren, Sophie, Krister, Tait and Finn—and two big dogs. They love hiking and spending time on the North Shore.



Larry Pray to Exhibit in the Fireside Commons **December 21 - February 1**

Easter welcomes an exhibit by Minneapolis watercolor artist Larry Pray! The artist writes, "Life changes in ways we could scarcely imagine. In 2003, the life I knew as pastor and writer fell away as a stroke took its toll. A new life had to find its way. Slowly, slowly, ever so slowly, watercolor became part of the new creation. When colors mix to become something new, I see transformation, hope, and perspective. What I once knew and loved began to express itself in a new way. With watercolor we never quite know what is going to happen when paint touches paper and water finds its way. As it is with painting, it is with life."



Meet & Greet Hans!
Sunday, January 22
9:30-10 a.m., Easter on the Hill
10:30-11 a.m., Easter by the Lake