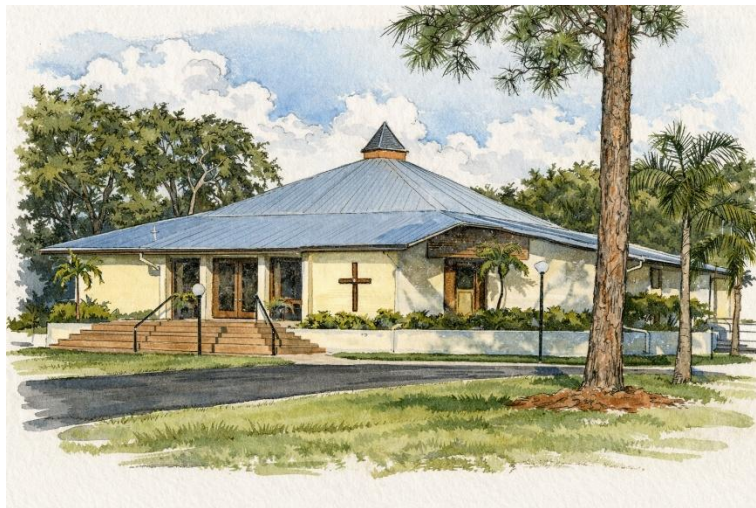


April, 2026



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear church family,

As we step into April, our hearts turn toward the garden. In our Gospel passage for Easter Day (John 20:1-18), we find Mary Magdalene standing in the morning mist, weeping at an empty tomb. Her grief is profound until the Risen Christ speaks her name, transforming a place of death into a site of ultimate hope. This “empty” space was not a sign of loss, but the first breath of a new creation. For us, the empty tomb is the foundation of our life together and a reminder that, no matter how deep the shadows of our world may seem, after Good Friday, there is always Easter, and God’s love has already won the day.

This month, I invite you to walk the full length of our Holy Week observances. Our journey begins with the intimacy of a Maundy Thursday Meal Service, where we gather around the table to remember Jesus’ last meal with his disciples before He faced the cross. We then transition into the solemnity of our Good Friday Tenebrae Service, where the deepening darkness allows us to contemplate the gravity of the cross. Finally, we will gather for our Traditional Sunday Easter Service, lifting our voices in the hymns that have sustained our faith for generations, celebrating the truth that Christ is risen indeed.

Besides Holy Week, April is also special for a different reason. In April, we celebrate “Earth Day” and “Arbor Day.” There is a holy resonance in the fact that Mary Magdalene initially mistook the risen Jesus for a gardener. In a way, He is the Great Gardener, the

author of all life who sustains the world with a steady hand. While we may not all be out planting new trees, we can certainly pause to offer thanks for the beauty of God's creation. For us, these days are simply a reminder to look out our windows and praise the One who made the heavens and the earth, and who finds Creation "good".

It is a profound joy to serve as your pastor here at FLCRW. Lutherans are a people of both the Cross and the Resurrection, anchored in the promise that we are held firmly by God's grace alone. I look forward to walking through the darkness of Tenebrae and into the brilliant light of Easter Sunday with all of you for the first time. Let us celebrate the "new things" God is doing in our midst and throughout the world. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

God bless you and your family.

Yours truly,

Rev. Syl Estevez

Designated Interim-Pastor

Faith's Happenings ...

April, 2026

Mark Your Calendars...

Thursday, April 2

- 5:00 pm - Maundy Thursday Meal Service

Friday, April 3

- 5:00 pm - Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Sunday, April 5

- **Easter Sunday**
- 9:00 am - Adult Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Divine Service (Gottesdienst)**

Tuesday, April 7

- **7:00 am - Men's Breakfast**
- 8:00 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop

Sunday, April 12

- 9:00 am - Adult Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Divine Service (Gottesdienst)**

Tuesday, April 14

- 8:00 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop

Wednesday, April 15

- **12:00 pm - Ladies' Luncheon (see details below).**
- **3:00 pm - Bible Study**

Sunday, April 19

- 9:00 am - Adult Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Divine Service (Gottesdienst)**

Tuesday, April 21

- 8:00 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop
- 10:00 am - Council Meeting

Sunday, April 26

- 9:00 am - Adult Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Divine Service**
(Gottesdienst)

Last Month's Recap

March Ladies Luncheon



A few of our wonderful ladies gathered last month at ... for some enjoyable conversations and great food. Make sure you are joining them **this month at Grove City Bar & Grill** (Formerly Ricaltini's). This one has been on our list for over two years and they finally opened recently. Come and join them on **April 15, 2026 at 12-noon**. The restaurant is located at 1997 Kentucky Avenue on the corner of Placida Road (near San Casa intersection & stoplight) in Grove City. Our ladies will be sitting inside this time. A menu is on bulletin board with signup sheet. They have a somewhat limited menu but with lots of great choices, such as pizzas, sandwiches, salads, as well as a nice selection of entrees for those who like a little bit more at lunch. Please join us for another fun luncheon! Deadline for signing up is Sunday **April 12**. More information with Kathie Wiley at 941-662-5383.

Upcoming Events

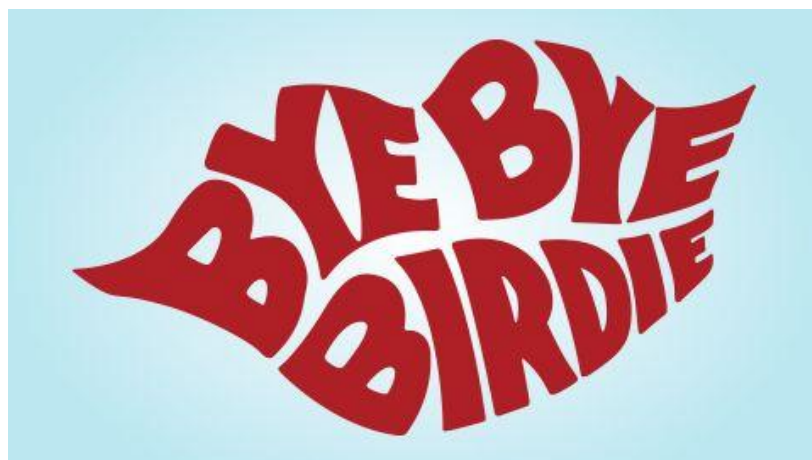
Walk the Path of Holy Week with Faith



Have you ever wondered what it felt like to sit in the Upper Room, sharing a final Passover meal with Jesus? This year, we invite you to step back in time on **Maundy Thursday (April 2)** at **5 pm**. We're reviving a beloved tradition from our church some years ago: a banquet-style service where we'll explore the sights, sounds, and tastes resembling a traditional Seder through small, symbolic bites. It is a deeply moving way to connect with the roots of our faith and the heart of Christ's final hours. Invite a friend or a neighbor for this one, for it will be quite special.

The journey continues on **Good Friday (April 3)** at **5 pm** with our Tenebrae Service—a powerful time of shadowy reflection. Finally, we gather in full joy for **Easter Sunday (April 5)** at **10:45 am** to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! We can't wait to share these holy moments with you.

See Y'All Soon



As April arrives, it brings a bittersweet moment for our church family. While we are so grateful for the warmth and laughter you brought to our gatherings this winter, it is time to say “see you soon” to our northern friends.

We have truly cherished every moment spent rekindling our friendships over the past few months. Your presence and your smiles have been a blessing to us all. As you travel, we pray for your safety and a summer filled with peace. Please know that your spot in the pew will be waiting for you—we already look forward to the joy of welcoming you back this fall!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to...

04/04 - Mary Lou
Fitzgerald

04/13 - Gary Boehler

04/13 - David Jacobson

04/14 - Ann Banting

Happy Birthday to...

04/22 - Kathy Myers

04/25 - Joan Thoren

Happy Anniversary to...

04/24 - Gary & Marcia
Wilkins

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, we're sorry. Please notify Barbra in the church office to have your special dates added.

We are Praying for

Sandy Despreaux - Health issues

Ginny Linsberg - Health Issues

Tracie Thompson - Health Issues

Bob Ash - Health Issues

Shirley Rice - Health Issues

Debbie Porter - Health issues

Jim Hughs - Health Issues

Barbara Rodvik - Hospice

If you would like to add your name or someone else's to the prayer list, please notify Barbra in the church office. We remove names every three months, unless individuals request to remain on the list.
