



Bethlehem Lutheran Church



Bethlehem News



Dear Friends of our Risen Savior,

"The Folded Napkin"

Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection?

The Gospel of John (John 20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded, and was placed at the head of that stony coffin. Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!'

Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple out ran Peter and got there first. He stopped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side.

Was that important? Absolutely! Is it really significant? Yes!

In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the Master and Servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition.

When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch that table, until the master was finished...

Now if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, "I'm finished."

But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because the folded napkin meant, "I'm coming back!"

This is a story that is circling the internet, especially during Lent and Holy Week. Is it true? The simple answer is no.

The Greek word, soudarion, translated "napkin" in the KJV, is translated as handkerchief in the NKJV, and face/grave cloth in ESV, NASB, and others. The Greek word is defined in the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible as: soudarion, soo-dar'-ee-on; of Lat. or.; a sudarium (sweat-cloth), i.e. towel (for wiping the perspiration from the face, or binding the face of a corpse):-handkerchief, napkin. The word soudarion used in John 20:7 is clearly meant to be understood as a burial cloth. There is nothing to imply that this was a table napkin.

Additionally, the word soudarion appears three other times, none of which indicates table use: When Jesus resurrected Lazarus, he came forth from the tomb with his face wrapped with a soudarion (KJV, napkin: John 11:44)

The slave whose master gave him a pound hid it wrapped in a soudarion (KJV, napkin: Luke 19:20)

Paul's handkerchiefs (soudarion) that were brought to the sick and had power to heal and exorcise demons (Acts 19:12).

Historical Support Missing

The people in Israel at the time of Christ did not use table napkins. They used their hands to eat and they would use a piece of bread to wipe their greasy fingers and their mouth. They would then drop the piece of bread on the floor for the dogs to consume (see Mark 7:28). Greek writings and plays also offer historical evidence that bread was used to wipe the hands and mouth after eating. Table napkins originated in ancient Rome and the earliest English references for the use of table napkins as a European practice are found around 1385 AD.

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News and Updates



Please read about the field trip to the nature center on April 6th below. The kids are excited about going and we are inviting anyone else who would like to go to join us. Wednesday 10:30 Bible studies will begin again on April 3. Now is a good time to join us. VBS plans are coming together. Let your friends and neighbors know that they are welcome to bring the kids. We are getting ready to share the news of Jesus love and forgiveness to all who come through our doors. One of the Bible stories is about our risen Savior. Linda has Sunday School after church each Sunday while Pastor has Bible study. Have some refreshments and join us. Yearn to learn! *Sandy Grage*



Our April meeting will be a lunch to be held at Buckingham Farms on April 16th at 12:30 PM. All ladies are invited. This will be our last meeting until fall. *Pam Rugenstein*



Thanks to all who helped on our workday March 11th (pictured on page 4).. They have made our church grounds beautiful for Easter. Our A/C units were inspected and still functioning well. *Jeff Kirsch*

Youth Group Trip-Saturday April 6

We are going to the Calusa Nature Center & Planetarium, 3450 Ortiz Ave, Fort Myers. The trip is for our youth group and anyone in the congregation who wishes to attend. There is no cost as the fee will be covered by youth group funds. We will meet at Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 9:00 A.M. and return at 2:45 P.M. Bring a Sack Lunch, drinks will be provided. (Spending money optional) Dress for the weather, wear gym shoes (closed toed and heeled) with socks Please let Sandy know if you plan to attend so there will be enough drinks and we have a rough number of attendees. Thank you!

Pastors Note (continued from page 1)

I found this article from Dr. Terry Harman formally of Faith Lutheran Church of Corning NY. "Our text: And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. The linen cloths were just lying there. They hadn't been touched, that is, they weren't unwound nor were they cut. They were just lying there. You can imagine these linen cloths lying flat pressed down by about 100 pounds of aloes and myrrh. You can imagine the face cloth folded up in a place by itself, that is, still bunched up, rolled up at the end of the slab where the body had lain. What is all this a picture of? It's a picture of the linen cloths and face cloth laying there as empty shells of where the body had been but had slipped out, had passed through. They were like a deflated balloon. The outward covering was there but the inward/ what they covered was gone. Jesus' resurrected and glorified body simply went through the burial cloths. The body was gone, the cloths still trying to do their job and cover something that was no longer there. Just as Jesus could appear on Easter Sunday evening to His disciples who were behind locked doors—since doors and walls were no obstacle to Him coming physically and being with them bodily—so also now in the morning, the burial linens—and the stone barring entrance to the tomb—were no obstacle to His leaving the tomb."

Even those who are not in agreement would agree we don't need a "folded napkin" story to tell us that Jesus is returning or a "folded towel" story to tell us that "it is finished." We have Jesus' word that His atoning sacrifice was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins and that it was finished on the cross. We also know that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and promises of His first coming and will also fulfill those of His second coming. Jesus will return again ([John 14:1-4](#), [Titus 2:13](#), [Revelation 19:11](#)).

Jesus said, "It is finished." Jesus said, "I will come again."

"He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!"

Easter Blessings
Pastor Karl



APRIL 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 10:30 Bible Study	4	5	6
7 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School	8	9	10 10:30 Bible Study	11 Dinner 4-7 PM	12	13
14 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School	15	16 12:30 LWML Luncheon	17 10:30 Bible Study	18	19	20
21 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School	22	23	24 10:30 Bible Study	25	26	27
28 10:30 Worship 11:30 Bible Study; Sunday School	29	30				

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES	
17	Linda & Jeff Kirsch
25	Sharon & Larry Goers

APRIL BIRTHDAYS	
4	Joann Erdman
5	Doug Johnson
7	Don Kulbacki
14	Pastor Glander; Raul Puga
15	Jessica Puga
16	Holly Bell; Beverly Kogoy
19	Joy Kulbacki
21	Jeff Kirsch
24	Ralph Willis
25	Noel Schroskey
26	Paul Olson
30	Joe McVoy

May God Bless Each One of You As
We Celebrate Your Special Day!



Birthday Cakes
Above and Left
 The Schafers and the Hartmanns brought in this cake for Sharon's and Sue's birthdays
Right: The Lasers shared this cake for Carol's birthday



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Phone: 239-694-3878

Website: www.bethlehemplutheranfortmyers.org

Email: bethlehmlc@gmail.com

Sunday Worship

10:30 AM Worship Service

Rev. Karl Glander

pastorkarlglander@gmail.com

239-293-1489

Organist: **Holly Bell**

Church Secretary: **Linda Kirsch**

Prayer Chain Needs

Do you know that Bethlehem has a prayer chain that prays for the sick, dying and hurting needs of our church family?

Call or email Linda at (239) 693-5026 or jlkirsch3@comcast.net

Your needs will be taken to the Lord!



The Bethlehem tree trimming crew. (Not pictured Jeff Kirsch and Greg Murray)



Bethlehem ladies preparing the easter eggs for the hunt on Easter morning

Johnieann Smith (second from right) was selected to represent our district in the 2024 Pages and Messengers program.

Pages and Messengers are students who go to the Capitol and work one week during the 60-day Regular Session. Each of our 120 Representatives may sponsor one Page and one Messenger. Pages and Messengers assist the Representatives and their staff during the Capitol's busiest time of year while observing state government in action.

