

Currents

Newsletter of University Lutheran Church, April 2026



Triduum

The days leading up to Easter, starting with Maundy Thursday, through Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and then Easter Sunday, are the high point of worship and theology for Christians. We celebrate this time, called "Triduum" (three days) with a vigil of worship, which feels like several separate services but is regarded as a single vigil to carry us through the events at the end of Jesus's life, as we have them in the Gospels, and into resurrection. This series of worship can be very healing, as it makes space to name the brokenness of our lives and to feel that, but then leads us through and out of it to God's promise of new life.

All are welcome to worship, of course, but I especially encourage you to participate if you are feeling the heaviness of the times we are living in. We will gather as community (along with Immanuel Lutheran for Thursday and Friday) and together with each other and with Jesus, we will pass through grief to encounter joy. It takes time- three days- but the reminder that death does not get the last word will last for the rest of our lives.

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace- only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us." Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies*, p. 143

Welcome to Holy Week.

Pastor Lori



110 Garfield Ave, Eau Claire, WI
(715) 834-8026
office@universitylutheran.org
Rev. Dr. Lori Ruge-Jones

Worship Sundays at 10:00 AM, and Wednesdays at 5:30 PM, followed by free meal

The top of the page features a graphic of three crosses of varying sizes on a dark silhouette of a hill. The background is a gradient of blue and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The largest cross is in the center, flanked by two smaller crosses.

Bishop's Easter Message

2026

To the beloved of the NWSWI,

Happy Easter to you as we celebrate the most sacred day of the year when Jesus squarely looked death in the face and overcame the grave! When I think about what that says about our God, I am continually overwhelmed by feelings of gratitude because of the sheer depth of God's love. To think about what Jesus went through in those final days, it is simply the best illustration of what God's grace looks like – a gift to us as individuals and as a family of faith – all without merit.

While on a Civil Rights pilgrimage last month, I found myself quite perplexed when listening to the central message of many civil rights leaders, including many that I met in person. While visiting Birmingham, I worshiped at the 16th St. Baptist Church, which was bombed on a Sunday morning just before worship on Sept. 15, 1963. Four young women (all teens) died in the blast as they were preparing to serve in the youth led service. As our group heard about the story in the tour the day before our worship, this central message was proclaimed – love. Later that day we spent time with another black leader in the city whose ancestors were also victims of white supremacy. She too acknowledged the central message that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught over and over in his messages – a message of love, even for your enemies.

That struck me. When victims of oppression look at their oppressors and can maintain a posture of love in hopes that the hatred they've experienced would someday be extinguished, I could only think about the depths of God's love. While most of us would at minimum defend ourselves from the oppressive actions taken against them, if not fight back and seek retribution, they instead turned to love and forgiveness. It is their faith in God that could give them the strength to practice love.

We still live in a world where hatred and prejudice exist. But the story of Easter is rooted in love. Jesus went to the cross after praying in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, yet not my will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42) Your will be done. This is true sacrifice rooted in love for humankind. This is love revealed to broken and sinful people. This is a love for us all – no exception.

As we celebrate the day Christ rose from the dead, offering forgiveness to all humankind, let us rejoice in acts of love. Let us respond to God's gift of grace through acts of love!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Martin Habon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Bishop Martin Habon

APRIL EVENTS & NOTICES

The ERC will be closed Easter Monday, April 6

Thurs, April 9, 7:30 pm, Sophie DeByl senior recital, Gantner Hall

Sat., April 25, Synod assembly, Rice Lake
(Cindy Rasmussen, Greg Granlund are voting members)

Sun, April 26, senior Hannah Schindler will be preaching

ULC Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 26 after worship

Please submit all reports to the office by Monday, April 6

Monday, April 13 (Tentative date) “What to do if ICE comes to your church”

Brad Bishop will lead us through some ACLU training on how to respond if ICE agents come looking for someone at our church (with the hopes that we will never have to implement a plan, but we need a plan anyway!). This training will take 2 hours; please [sign up here](#) and indicate a time that will work for you. The more people we have trained for this, the better prepared we will be if we need it.

Please consider participating!

ULC Wednesdays Spring 2026



Please sign up [HERE](#) for Wednesday meals

More info or questions contact [Wendy](#) (715-456-9649), [Carol](#) (715-456-1936), or [Kathy](#) (715-829-5516).

April 2 — HOLY WEEK — meal on Thursday, 5 pm, worship 6 pm, 3 soups, bread, fruit

April 8 — salad bar, dessert

April 15 — pasta bar, dessert

April 22 — breakfast for dinner (egg bake, French toast bake, etc.), dessert

April 29 — rice bowls with assorted toppings, dessert

May 6 — potluck (picnic?)

Wednesday schedule this semester

We will have worship on the first and third Wednesdays, and a different kind of interactive activity on the second and fourth. This will allow for faith formation to happen in various ways through learning, conversation, service, and fellowship, during the same timeframe that students have already committed to attending. We will always begin at 5:30, and supper will always follow.

The April schedule will be:

Apr 8- Fellowship - faithful futures

Apr 15 - Worship - Amanda, housing advocate, at supper

Apr 22 - Learning - guest speaker

Apr 29 - Worship

LEARN & GROW

Sunday April 12 & 19, 11:15 a.m., in the ERC library

Discussion “After Ten Years”: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Our Times

“How does one read the signs of the times? What does it mean to resist? How do we engage faithfully in struggle? Dietrich Bonhoeffer has achieved iconic status as one who epitomizes what it means to struggle and resist tyranny and fascism and how one acts in faithful witness as a religious and political commitment. Bonhoeffer’s witness and example is more relevant than ever. A testimony to that is a crucial essay penned by Bonhoeffer in 1942; “After Ten Years” is a succinct and sober reflection and remains one of the best descriptions ever written about what happened to the German people under National Socialism. This volume presents this timely and unique essay in a fresh translation, with a penetrating introduction and analysis of the importance of this essay—in Bonhoeffer’s time and now in our own.” –from Augsburg Fortress

All 10 copies purchased by L&G have been picked up! The whole text is just 30 pages, divided between two 15–page sections: a scholarly introduction and Bonhoeffer’s essay. The best plan would be for us to have read it through at least once before our first meeting, but do what you can and join us!

Dates to note: In December 1942, Bonhoeffer wrote his essay "After Ten Years"; four months later, on **April 5, 1943**, the Gestapo arrested him. From then on Bonhoeffer was imprisoned until he was executed on **April 9, 1945**.

Saturday April 18th: Our synod is one of six co–presenters of the 2026 EcoFaith Summit of the Upper Midwest

“From Fear to Fire: Igniting Community for a Planet in Peril”

Saturday, April 18, 9:30am – 5:00pm

First Lutheran Church in Duluth (Livestream option via Zoom)



[To register and for more information including a group discount—note, free registration under age 30—click the link.](#)

JONAH



Our JONAH ULC Core Team meets once a month. Anyone can join us at any meeting! Our next meeting is Thursday, April 9 at 4 p.m. at the Coffee Grounds.

Happening at ULC this month!

Wednesday, April 15 during evening prayer and meal, Amanda Babb, Director of the Tenant and Landlord Resource Center, will join us. She will share information about their mission and services and provide resources. We are hoping this will be beneficial for students and community members. We hope you can make it!

JONAH's Film Festival

April 8-11 (see flyer)

JONAH Book Club

April 16, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. at Dotters Books

Stories Our Scars Tell: Hope, Healing, and Honesty about the Wounds We Carry by Brittany Tinsley

Hosted by the Mental Health Task Force

JONAH Public Meeting

April 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the JONAH office (Hope Methodist Church) and via zoom

[Register here for Zoom Link](#)

5:30 p.m. Meeting

6:30 p.m. Mini-Training Topic: Who Is My Neighbor? With guest trainer, Sara Bishop

To learn more about JONAH- Eau Claire, visit their website. jonahjustice.org

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of the members.

JONAH ULC Core team members

Elecia Oleson

Jill Granlund

Carol Rudd

Joyce Anderson

Dave Anderson

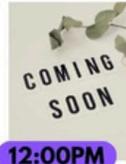
Cindy Rasmussen

JONAH'S 3RD ANNUAL

FILM FEST

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Hosted by Wisconsin Farmers Union



TITLE TO BE ANNOUNCED
TOPIC: WATER

12:00PM



GREENER PASTURES
TOPIC: FARMER MENTAL HEALTH

5:30PM

LOCATION: MARKET ON RIVER, CHIPPEWA FALLS

THURSDAY, APRIL 9



BREAKING BARRIERS
TOPIC: MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Hosted by UWEC
Social Work Macro Group

8:30AM



TITLE TO BE ANNOUNCED
Hosted by UWEC
American Indian Studies Department

4:30PM



SOLD OUT: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

Presented by JONAH ECTLRC

6:30PM

LOCATION: UWEC, EXACT ROOMS TO BE ANNOUNCED

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Hosted by UW Extension Eau Claire County



AGING IN AMERICA: SURVIVE OR THRIVE

TBA



RAISING THE FUTURE: THE CHILD CARE CRISIS

12:00PM

LOCATION: UWEX IN ALTOONA

BONUS: APRIL 24

Hosted by Unity Eau Claire Spiritual Center and Unitarian Universalist Congregation



BUY NOW: THE SHOPPING CONSPIRACY

LOCATION: UNITY - 1808 FOLSOM ST, EAU CLAIRE

7:00PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Hosted by JONAH and First Presbyterian Church



ALIEN: AMERICAN DREAM DENIED
TOPIC: IMMIGRATION

9:00AM



HEART REVOLUTION
TOPIC: UNITY & SPIRITUALITY

11:00AM



PLASTIC WARS
TOPIC: ENVIRONMENT

4:00PM



WISCONSIN IN BLACK AND WHITE
TOPIC: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN WI CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

6:00PM

LOCATION: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 2112 RUDOLPH RD, EAU CLAIRE

TOGETHER: What Affects One, Affects Us All

Coming up in May:

May 3, Eau Claire Marathon, no worship at the ERC

May 6, final Wednesday worship and meal, potluck!

May 7-9, Beacon House serving

May 10, graduate blessing

May 11-15, Finals week, meals served at the ERC M-Th, 11am - 1:30pm

May 24, final Sunday worship at the ERC

May 31, 10:00 am - Praise in the Park at Phoenix Park begins, ULC hosting

Summer 2026 ~ Wednesday Evening Bible Study

The Learn & Grow ministry is seeking suggestions for what we might read this summer. Here's a list of the most recent studies:

2025 Paul's Letter to the Romans

2024 Gospel of John

2023 Gospel of Matthew

If you're interested in participating, please give this some thought—informal conversations are welcome and encouraged!





Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Click [HERE](#) for the Synod website:

Nearbor to Nearbor/Vecino a Vecino

The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin supports an outreach ministry for our Latinx neighbors, providing health fairs, networking, ridesharing, a pop-up food pantry, and monthly worship services in Spanish. The ministry is coordinated by Deacon Lidixe Montoya. The April worship service will be Sunday, April 5, 6 pm at Immanuel Lutheran, followed by a meal.



 Neighbor to Neighbor Thrift Sale

DROP OFF DONATION DAYS



Please consider donating

- Home goods & small furniture
- Tools & garden supplies
- Clothes & toys
- Books & crafts
- No tube TVs, mattresses, and electronics

Baked goods & plants the days of the sale

MAY 8 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

MAY 9 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Spirit Lutheran Church

1310 Main St
Eau Claire, WI 54701



EXTENDED DEADLINE - APRIL 5 -
Registration forms are by the bulletin board and in the ULC office

ELCA WOMEN'S CHIPPEWA VALLEY CONFERENCE
DAY OF RENEWAL | 2026

CARING FOR GOD'S
CREATION
BEGINNING WITH YOU

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026
8:00 AM - 1:30 PM

SPIRIT LUTHERAN
1310 MAIN ST. | EAU CLAIRE

\$25 REGISTRATION FEE
(INCLUDES LUNCH)

COME BE PART OF THIS YEAR'S DAY OF
RENEWAL, AS WE FOCUS ON BODY, MIND,
AND SPIRIT — AND DISCOVER HOW
CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION
BEGINS WITH YOU.

REGISTRATION AND
PAYMENT ARE DUE BY
MARCH 22.

HMONG & ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER

Heritage Month 2026

**APRIL
1ST**

Stitching Asian Identities Together

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM, Multicultural Student Services,
RC Room

Join MSS in collaboration with the Asian American & Pacific Islander Association and Friends of Islam to create embroidered tote bags to celebrate AAPI Heritage Month. There will be a limited number of supplies so please RSVP on Blugold Connect+. Finger foods provided. See you there!

**APRIL
15TH**

Blugold Dialogue - How to be the first: Collaboration, Courage, and Community with Dr. Kaishan Kong

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM, Centennial 1920

This Blugold Dialogue features an insightful discussion with UWEC's very own Dr. Kaishan Kong! Come with friends to learn more about the trials, joys and complexities of the immigrant experience.

**APRIL
21ST**

Asia Night Market: Celebrating our Cultural Roots in America

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM, Ojibwe Ballroom, Davies Center

This pop up market will feature vendors selling clothing, cultural crafts, jewelry, food and much more. Support local Asian-owned businesses and organizations and be in community together.

**APRIL
28TH**

Indigo Processing and Batik: HMoob Ancestral Knowledge and Cultural Wealth with Dr. Mai Neng Vang

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, Hibbard 311

Learn about the art of Batik indigo dyeing with Dr. Mai Neng Vang! This hands on workshop will teach you the basics of Batik and help you make your own dyed craft. RSVP on Blugold Connect+!

Questions? Contact Xia Xiong at xiongxi@uwec.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday Worship Services at ULC at 10:00 AM
and Wednesdays at 5:30 PM, followed by meal

April

Apr 2	5:00 meal 6:00 worship	Maundy Thursday @ ERC
Apr 3	1:00 PM & 6:00 PM	Good Friday Worship @ Immanuel, 3214 Golf Rd.
Apr 5	10:00 AM	Easter worship @ ERC
Apr 11	8:00 AM-4:00 PM	<u>Women's Day of Renewal</u> , Spirit Lutheran, EC
Apr 12	11:15 AM	Bonhoeffer discussion, ERC library
Apr 18	All day	EcoFaith Summit , Duluth, MN
Apr 19	11:15 AM	Bonhoeffer discussion, ERC library
Apr 25		NWSWI Synod Assembly
Apr 26	11:15 AM	ULC Annual Meeting

May

May 3		EC Marathon, no worship at the ERC
May 3	6:00 PM	Neighbor to Neighbor worship @ Immanuel
May 6		Final Wed evening meal
May 7-9		Beacon House serving
May 10	10:00 AM	Graduate blessing
May 11-15		Finals Week, meals served M-Th 11:00-1:30
May 24	10:00 AM	Final Sunday worship @ ERC
May 31	10:00 AM	Praise in the Park, Phoenix Park, ULC hosting

See our [calendar](#) for more ministry and event information

ULC Ministry Contacts

Gracefully Welcome

Joyfully Serve, Wendy Kinderman

715-456-9649

wendykinderman@hotmail.com

Carol Rudd

715-456-1936

cjrudd52@gmail.com

Learn & Grow, Dr. Kate Hale Wilson, Chair

715-829-8620

kate_hale@me.com

Thankfully Worship, Pastor Lori Ruge-Jones

JONAH ULC Core Team, Elecia Oleson, Chair

715-579-6712

olesones98@gmail.com

ULC Staff Contacts

Rev. Dr. Lori Ruge-Jones, Pastor

715-834-8026

pastor@universitylutheran.org

Joanne Erickson, Parish Assistant

715-834-8026

office@universitylutheran.org

Andrea Gapko, Parish Administrator

608-886-3148

gapkoam@uwec.edu

Council Contacts

Cindy Rasmussen, Council President

715-271-0727

cindyjhr@gmail.com

Sara Bryan, Council Secretary

715-829-1885

sarakdb808@gmail.com

Sue Diel, Financial Secretary

715-210-8896

sjdiel720@yahoo.com

Brad Bishop

715-651-3072

bradandsarabishop@gmail.com

Dan Behnke

715-697-9543

danbehnke@gmail.com

Elizabeth Packer

218-349-3793

ecpack304@gmail.com

Dr. Kate Hale Wilson

715-829-8620

kate_hale@me.com

Pastor Lori Ruge-Jones

715-834-8026

pastor@universitylutheran.org



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

