

# Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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March 2021

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***“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” (John 12:31-33)***

Jesus spoke these words as He was preparing to go to the cross to pay for the sins of all people. As He was lifted up, nailed to those wooden beams, He would take the place of every sinner, bearing the dreadful curse for our soul. God the Father would forsake His own beloved Son instead of us, making Him suffer the hellish wages of our sin.

When Jesus cried out on the cross, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30), it was the guarantee that in Christ, all our sins were paid for, once and for all. Therefore in Christ, God is no longer counting our sins against us. In Christ, God forgives us.

When He was lifted up on the cross, Jesus says He would draw all peoples to Himself. The eyes of every child of Adam and Eve are drawn to the cross of Calvary, standing at the center of history. The eyes of all are drawn to Christ as our one Redeemer.

When our first parents fell into sin, they fell away from God, and they fell into the hands of Satan. As children born in their sinful image we fell with them. But at the cross, God fulfilled His promise to redeem fallen mankind from sin, Satan, and death. As Christ took away our sins, He released us from the power of death, which was due to sin. At the same time, He redeemed us from the power of Satan, whose only hold on us was through sin.

Thus at the cross, we see the hour of judgment, the hour of decision for the whole world. At the cross, the evil ruler of this world is judged and cast out. At the cross, God reconciles sinners to Himself in Christ. Where one stands in relation to Christ determines where one stands in eternity: *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

That Good Friday long ago, as Jesus was lifted up on the cross, He drew the eyes of all to His amazing love in saving sinners. He opened wide His arms, inviting all to believe and receive: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

But as we see at the cross, not all will believe. Many who looked upon Jesus hanging on the cross mocked any claim He made as the Son of God. Even one of the criminals on the cross joined in blaspheming Him, and he perished in his sin.

But by the grace of God, many will believe. There before the cross on that dark day, as God in our flesh died, there remained a few faithful followers. By the grace of God, even one of the criminals crucified next to Jesus was brought to repent and believe. As that man acknowledged the just judgment his own sins deserved, he looked to the righteous King of heaven on the center cross, who was paying for his forgiveness and eternal life. He prayed to Jesus: *“Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”* And Jesus answered: *“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:40-43).

Now by the grace of God, we are drawn to Him who was lifted up for us. By the work of the Holy Spirit in our heart, we repent of our sin and cling to Christ crucified as our only Savior from sin, Satan, and death. We cling to Him who not only died for us, but rose again for us. We cling to Him who lives to bring us His forgiveness and salvation, through His Word and Sacraments. We cling to Him who one day will bring us to be with Him in the everlasting joys of Paradise.

In His saving name,  
Pastor Smith

## If I Cannot See God, How Can I Know He Exists?

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Some people doubt that God exists, since they cannot see Him. If God is invisible, it would seem there is no firm basis for believing He exists. But on closer inspection, this line of thinking is mistaken—not just about God, but also about knowledge in general and even about scientific knowledge in particular.

Let's start with science. Yes, science is based on observation. But no, not everything a scientist accepts as real can be observed. For example, no one has ever seen an electron. Or gravity. Scientists conclude that electrons and gravity are real because they see effects that are best explained by a theory of electrons or a theory of gravity.

Next, let's consider knowledge in general. People often reach conclusions that go beyond what they see or hear with their own eyes and ears. We trust our friends when they tell us what they saw or heard, even if we were not present to experience it. That's also how we study history: we look at records left behind by people who were there at the time, who personally observed important events. Based on their testimony, we can know the truth.

Now let's return to belief in God. We can know that God exists in several ways.

One way is similar to how science works. The theory of gravity is the best explanation for why the planets move as they do, and why apples fall from trees, and so on. Similarly, the existence of God is the best explanation for quite a number of things. Take, for example, the cause-and-effect relationships that scientists study. If every effect has a cause, then even that cause must also be an effect resulting from a prior cause. The cause-effect chain can be traced backward in time until—until what? Surely there must have been a First Cause that started the process. The First Cause is God.

Marveling at the design in nature is another example. Where did the design of the human eye come from, unless there is a divine Designer?

Another way to reach the conclusion that God exists is through the study of history. It turns out that God has not always been invisible. At an event known as the transfiguration, the apostles Peter,

James, and John **saw** the man Jesus of Nazareth revealed in glory as the Son of God, and they **heard** the voice of God the Father affirming who Jesus really is. (Matthew 17:1–9) As Peter later wrote, “We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16)

John similarly emphasized his direct contact with God who had come in the flesh—Jesus. “That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our **eyes**, which we have **looked upon**, and our **hands** have **handled**, concerning the Word of life....” (1 John 1:1) Luke the evangelist also referred to “**eyewitnesses**.” On the basis of their reports, Luke became the first historian of Christianity, writing “an orderly account ... that you may know the **certainty** of those things in which you were instructed.” (Luke 1:1–4)

There's more evidence, too. Over 500 eyewitnesses saw Jesus alive after He had died on the cross. (1 Corinthians 15:6) They saw a dead man who had come back to life—and based on everything they saw and heard, that man was no ordinary man. He was God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, the one whom the Old Testament prophets had promised would come in order to save people from sin and death by giving His life in their place.

Does God exist? Yes, but there's more! Through the word of the apostles' testimony (the New Testament), the Holy Spirit also grants faith in order that we may go beyond mere knowledge of God's existence and have a firm trust in Jesus as our Savior.

*Dr. Ryan C. MacPherson is director of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews at Bethany Lutheran College, where he teaches courses in history, philosophy, and legal studies.*

**Learn More:**

[www.els.org/apologetics-resources](http://www.els.org/apologetics-resources)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 <i>Happy Birthday Charles Brumble</i>  Midweek Lent 3 Service – 4:00 PM	4  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	5	6
7 <i>Lent 3</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	8	9	10  Midweek Lent 4 Service – 4:00 PM	11 <i>Happy Birthday Grace Smith</i>  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	12 <i>Happy Birthday Aydin Smith</i>	13
14 <i>Lent 4 (Daylight Savings Begins)</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	15	16  Pastors Meeting (Myrtle Creek)	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>  Midweek Lent 5 Service – 4:00 PM	18  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	19	20 <i>Spring Begins</i>
21 <i>Lent 5</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	22	23	24 <i>Happy Birthday Jackie Bednar</i>  Midweek Lent 6 Service – 4:00 PM	25 The Annunciation of Our Lord  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	26	27
28 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	29 <i>Monday in Holy Week</i>	30 <i>Tuesday in Holy Week</i>	31 <i>Wednesday in Holy Week</i>	1 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> 	2 <i>Good Friday</i> 	

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