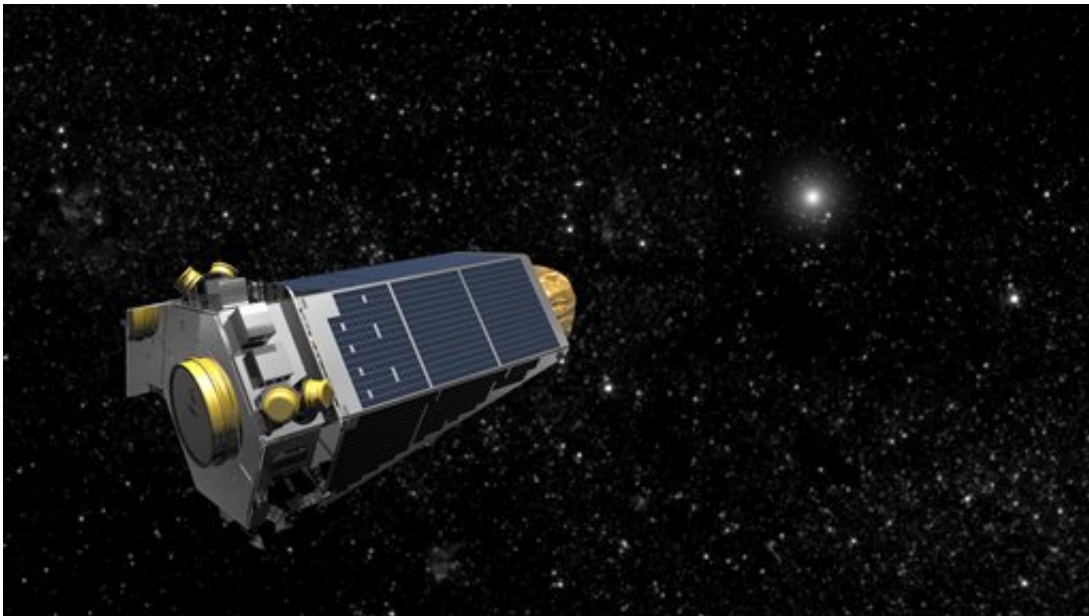# Reprieve for NASA's planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft

April 11 2016, by By Marcia Dunn

An undated artists concept provided by NASA shows the Keplar Spacecraft moving through space. On April 10, 2016, NASA is trying to resuscitate its planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft, in a state of emergency 75 million miles away. The treasured spacecraft, responsible for detecting nearly 5,000 planets outside our solar system, slipped into emergency mode sometime last week. The last normal contact was April 4. Ground controllers discovered the problem right before they were going to point Kepler toward the center of the Milky Way. (AP Photo/NASA)

To astronomers' relief, NASA's planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft has won another reprieve.

The spacecraft [slipped into emergency mode last week](#) nearly 75 million miles from Earth. Ground controllers managed to stabilize the probe Sunday, and NASA announced the good news Monday.

Engineers still don't know what went wrong and will study incoming data for clues. They also want to be certain the spacecraft is healthy enough to resume observations. The trouble occurred right before Kepler was to be pointed toward the center of the Milky Way for a new kind of planet-searching campaign. Mission manager Charlie Sobeck promises the team will remain vigilant.

This isn't the first time the 7-year-old Kepler has cheated death. Controllers managed to keep the spacecraft working a few years ago, despite repeated breakdowns.

More information: Mission Manager Update: Kepler Recovered from Emergency and Stable—[www.nasa.gov/feature/mission-m … emergency-and-stable](#)

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