



# First Reformed Church News & Views

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**Holy Week** is the favorite part of the year for me as a pastor. I learn something new every time I take the up and down journey of Jesus and His followers in those last few days of His earthly ministry. I think it's hard for us to grasp how steady Jesus was in obeying the will of His Father as well as how shaky the disciples were in following the blatant clues their Teacher had repeatedly shared with them.

I want to invite you to take the whole journey this year, especially if you haven't made a habit of it. We begin with the positive triumphal entry parade on Palm Sunday. Jesus was publicly celebrated as the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The disciples were ready to follow their Teacher anywhere and do anything He asked. From our perspective, after the fact, we know Jesus' expectations of the Kingdom of God on earth were different than the disciples' unrealistic visions of power and authority. Reflect: Do you have Jesus on the throne of your life? Are your expectations of what our church and the Kingdom of God looks like here on earth in line with what Jesus told us?

In a short few days the shared journey went from celebration to chaotic violence. Jesus was betrayed and abandoned. Jesus was tortured with words and whips, accused unjustly and publicly executed. So-called faithful disciples kept their distance to avoid sharing in the humiliation and potentially losing their lives. Reflect: Do you attend a Maundy Thursday and/or Good Friday service and allow your heart and mind to sit for a bit on the unspeakable price the sinless Savior paid for you? As you receive communion do you allow God's Spirit to examine you and prepare you for what Jesus wants to do in you in the near future? It's easy to skip this part of the week and leap from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. I invite you to take the whole journey. Don't skip over the betrayal, the supper, the suffering, the death. Including it will make the next step much more glorious!

We know the end of the story. So maybe being dead for a few days doesn't seem like a big deal. Oh, but it is! The death Jesus died was for us. The suffering He endured was so we wouldn't have to experience an eternity apart from Him. God brought Jesus back to life to do more than prove a dead physical body could be resuscitated. The crucifixion of Christ was a punishment for sin we should have received, not the perfect Son of God. Easter, resurrection day, is about more than someone taking care of our sin and getting us into heaven when we die. Jesus shares that back-to-life power with us in order for us to continue to do His work here on earth. What an incredible privilege and joy to join in Kingdom of God work here on earth. How's the journey going? Pastor Rob

 **APRIL**  
Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 Art Johnson
- 2 Joyce Wearda
- 3 Kathy Swanson
- 5 Wyatt Krossman
- 6 Sharon Dragt
- 9 Junell Petersen
- 13 Austin Van Den Einde
- 16 Kara Bonnema
- 17 Vonna Faber
- 21 Marlys Dannen
- 23 Riley Krossman
- 29 Brielle Krossman
- 30 Zephaniah Bonnema

April

- 19 Ray & Gail Krossman
- 20 Gene & Beth Van Den Einde
- 28 Austin & Kayla Van Den Einde

*Women's  
Circles*

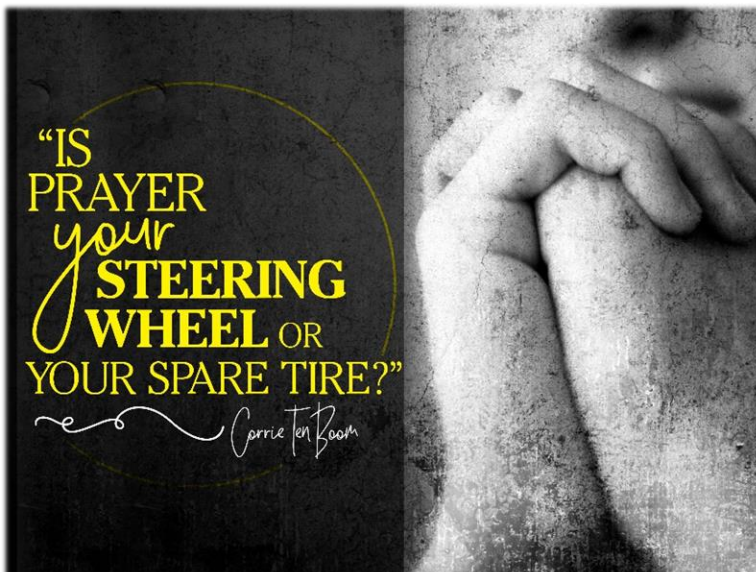


**Mary Circle**  
**Monday April 10 @ 9 am**

**Deborah Circle:**  
**Monday April 10 @ 2 pm**

**Rebekah Circle**  
**Tuesday April 11 @ 2:00 pm**

**Naomi Circle**  
**Thursday, April 13 @ 6:30 pm**



*Maundy  
Thursday*  
SERVICE

**Thursday April 6 @ 7 pm**

We will have Communion together  
and have a Tenebrae time of  
Bible readings and songs.  
Rock of Life CRC will be our guests.



## ***Death doesn't win***

In the final hours of 2021, a wildfire near Boulder, Colorado, destroyed 1,000 homes, including one belonging to Pastor Bill Stephens. His family, out of town at the time, lost all their possessions. After months of feeling buried in debris, insurance paperwork and mourning, Stephens decided that Easter 2022 would mark a fresh start.

During worship that morning, the pastor shared a photo of vibrant daffodils emerging on his charred property. Burned remnants were visible in the background, just as Easter's backdrop includes the pain and death of Good Friday. But the empty tomb in Easter's foreground means death won't win, reminded Stephens. Even when earthly life "isn't all daffodils," we have hope and eternal life through Jesus.

Easter reveals that God will "give us the joy, and it's going to be in the heart of pain that we go through as well," added the pastor. "And that just makes me draw closer to God."



### **Complete trust, even amid suffering**

**In a Good Friday column written during the pandemic, Michael Gerson said anguish is warranted in the face of death. As Jesus suffers on the cross, he asks why his Father has forsaken him. To Gerson, this proves that "anguish and questioning are not sins or weaknesses. They are the proper responses to the horrors of death. In the ninth hour, God gave permission for confusion. He dignified doubt."**

**But Christ's final words — committing himself into his Father's hands — "ring a different note," adds Gerson. "This was more than resignation; it was trust. In the end, [Jesus] found, not an answer, but a person — someone capable of reversing the verdict of Good Friday. That is all we are promised, and it is more than enough."**



### ***Facts, not futility***

"If the resurrection of Jesus Christ did not happen," writes Mary Fairchild, "then the apostles were all fakes and everyone throughout history who has ever testified of Christ's power is a liar. If the resurrection did not happen, then Jesus Christ has no dominion over life and death, and we remain lost in our sin, destined to die. Our faith is useless." Paul sounds a similar tone in 1 Corinthians 15:14-19, saying unless Christ was raised, any preaching about him is "in vain" and our faith is "futile" (ESV). Praise God that he doesn't leave us in suspense. Unlike Thomas, we don't need to doubt Easter's good news. With utter certainty, Paul continues: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (vs. 20, emphasis added). So let us rejoice with the apostle: "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 57)!





## MY KID MAKES ME SO ANGRY! WHAT SHOULD I DO?

*by Guest Author BJ Meurer*

Tell me if this sounds at all familiar:

- Do you have a child who seems to go from 0 to 60 on the emotions scale in 2 seconds?
- Do you find yourself walking on eggshells hoping to just make it through the day without screaming, fighting, arguing, or a meltdown?
- Do you even find yourself contributing to the yelling and you'd like to stop but just don't know how?

If you said yes to any of these questions, then congratulations! You're a regular family struggling with emotions like so many other families. Anger is a common emotion in family life. While we often see kids struggling with anger, the truth is us parents often need help with this too. So, what should we do when we start feeling angry?

**Anger is a Powerful and Important Emotion** ~ "Be angry and do not sin ..." Did you ever think the Bible would tell you to be angry? But that's exactly what Paul tells the Ephesians. That said, Paul is quick to also warn them to not sin since Paul knows how powerful and dangerous anger is. Anger itself is not a sin. It is an emotion that God designed as a signal for our hearts. Feeling happy is a signal that something enjoyable is happening. Feeling sad or disappointed is a signal that something special or meaningful was lost. Feeling angry is a signal that something is wrong or that there is a problem. So if anger is simply a signal to our hearts, then our goal should not be to ignore, suppress, or get rid of anger. Instead, it should be to become better at listening for anger in ourselves so we hear it sooner in the process and respond more appropriately.

**Listening For Anger** ~ Listening for anger is the first of 3 essential steps in learning how to develop emotional self-control. So we need to learn our own anger cues. How do we know when our child is feeling angry? Does he start to growl? Does she clench her teeth? Does he start to yell or bark at others? What are the signals that our child is getting angry? If we can identify these body signals in our child, we can identify them in ourselves as well.

**Learning to Stop** ~ The second essential step to managing anger better is learning to stop. Anger is a forward propelling emotion. It pushes us to act, but it rarely lets us act wisely. So we need to stop and take a break instead. We need to develop a plan for ourselves. That could be sitting on the couch, sitting on the edge of our bed, going on a quick walk, etc. When we have a plan in advance, we are more likely to respond to our children's misbehaviors calmly by using our plan than when we just wing it and hope we don't react with anger. One mom I worked with who struggled with anger told me she found great success in saying to her child, "I love you enough to go take a break. I'll see you soon" and then disappearing to her bedroom for a little while. What I loved about what she said is that she modeled for her child that it is an act of love to take a break, have a change of heart, and return with a new plan. This is the essence of what we want to develop in our kids.

Continued →

## Moving Forward with a Better Plan

Now while you're taking a break, you need to make a plan. Start by asking yourself: What was going on that I started feeling angry? Why was that wrong? What would be a better way for my child to move forward? How can I help him/her learn this? How could I respond next time my child struggles with this?

For example, sometimes a child's rude or argumentative response makes us feel disrespected. At that moment anger tells us that our child needs to respond better. He may even need us to model for him the right response. But yelling at that child isn't going to bring about the heart change we want to see. We need to make a better plan for how to respond to the situation. The more we take time to make better plans, the more we will find ourselves using those plans in the future without needing that break we were taking before. That's when we start seeing heart change.

<https://thrivingkidsconnection.com/my-kid-makes-me-so-angry-what-should-i-do/>

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**P.U.S.H.**  
PRAY UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS

How Can I  
Pray for My  
Unsaved  
Loved Ones?

Amy Swanson Christianity.com

*The softened heart and understanding mind pave the way for ears to receive the gift of grace found in Jesus Christ. Romans 10:17 reaffirms that faith can only come in this way, through hearing the Gospel*

**1. The Hardened Heart** ~ Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself (Romans 2:5, ESV).

### ***Requests to Bring to God***

That unsaved loved ones would be given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26). A humble heart (Matthew 18:4). A clean heart (Psalm 51:10). A pure heart (Matthew 5:8). A believing heart (Romans 10:10).

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, today I pray for (name). They are in need of a new heart, the kind of heart only You can give. For Your Word tells us the human heart is sick and wicked, needing to be changed. Please replace their heart of stone with a humble heart, a clean heart, a pure heart, a believing heart. The kind of heart that can accept God and the truth of the gospel. Above all, may they have a repentant heart, Lord. In Jesus' saving name, I pray, Amen.

### **2. The Mind That Doesn't Understand** ~

They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them (Ephesians 4:18).

### ***Requests to Bring to God***

That unsaved loved ones would be given a renewed mind (Romans 12:2). A mind that is turned to the things above (Colossians 3:12). A mind that is transformed in attitude (Ephesians 4:23). A mind that is no longer hostile toward God (Romans 8:7). The mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, today I pray for (name). Your Word says the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers causing great darkness and it is only the Light of Truth that can penetrate this darkness, Lord. Please allow that light to shine in their mind and bring with it the knowledge of the glory of God, found in Jesus Christ.

Please give them a renewed mind, a mind that is transformed in Christ, no longer hostile to You, a mind that is set to the things above, Lord. Praise God, You are a Savior that desires all to come to the knowledge of truth. May it be so for (name). In Jesus' saving name, I pray, Amen.

# FAITH &

## Is It Okay to Give My Time Instead of My Money?

JUL 26, 2022 By [Ramsey Solutions](#)

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We always say to start your budget with giving. Why? Because generous people tend to be better at managing their money—so it only makes sense that giving should be a part of your monthly budget, right?

There's plenty of charities and organizations out there to give to. And if you go to church, you probably do most of your giving by tithing. But now, between insane gas prices and more expensive trips to the grocery store, your wallet's probably feeling a little tight lately.

Maybe you're on Baby Step 2 and throwing every extra cent at your debt. Or maybe you're in the middle of a difficult work season and there just isn't any extra cash. Period. So, you ask yourself: Is tithing really necessary? I don't have a ton of money, but I do have time! Can't I just replace tithing by serving others or my church instead?

It's a great question, but there's more to it than a simple yes or no. Let's dig a little deeper into the why behind tithing and how you can give—even when money is tight.

### Two Different Forms of Worship

Tithing and serving are both ways to give, but they each have a unique purpose.

Tithing is a form of worship because it shows God you trust Him—not money—to provide. Matthew 6:24 (ESV) reminds us we can't worship God and money at the same time: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." So tithing is a way to show that we prioritize God over money.

Serving (like volunteering at your church or helping out in your community) is also worship because you're dedicating your time and talents to bless others, as God has called us to do. And Jesus says in Matthew 25:40 that whatever we do to serve others in need, we do for Him. Serving is an awesome form of generosity!

So, yes, God wants you to serve by giving your time. But He also wants you to put your faith in Him instead of money by tithing—especially since 100% of our money is His, and He only asks us to give 10% of it back.

Now, tithing isn't a salvation issue, and God won't condemn you if you don't do it. But tithing is for your benefit. God doesn't need your money. He wants your heart. Tithing is a way to give your heart over to God because you're physically reminding yourself that He provides what you need and your security lies in Him alone.

### To Give or to Serve?

Here's the deal: Giving your money and giving your time doesn't have to be a "this or that" question. In fact, you should give of both your financial resources and your schedule. Giving your time is a great way to honor God and show love to others. But it should be done in addition to your tithe, not as a replacement for it.

See, the Bible is pretty clear on the importance of tithing. And it doesn't offer another option when it comes to giving 10% of your resources back to God. But the Bible does promote giving both your money and your time—especially if you don't have the ability to give above your tithe.

Tithing is really a baseline for giving each month. The Bible encourages us to give generously far beyond the tithe. But that's not possible for a lot of people when they're digging their way out of debt or going through a tough financial season. In this case (and really, in any case), giving your time is an excellent way to give a little extra. But at the end of the day, serving isn't meant to replace the act of tithing.

## What to Do if Tithing Feels Tough??? Keep Tithing Anyway

So, what do you do if money is tight and you'd rather use your tithing check for something else? We know it can be tempting to pause your tithe to stash away more money for later. And yes, there are some crisis situations where you literally can't give (like if you lose your job). But don't let the fear of not having enough keep you from receiving the benefits that comes from trusting God with your money.

Continuing to tithe, even during uncertain or hard seasons, helps you learn how to trust God more. And you might just be surprised by how God blesses your obedience, regardless of how much you're able to give.

Luke 16:10 (NIV) also tells us He honors that choice: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." If you manage your money wisely when times are tough, you'll build the skills and discipline to manage it wisely when times are good.

## Get on a Budget

One reason tithing feels painful right now might be because you have no clue where your money is actually going. It's hard to give freely when you're wondering if you'll have enough to cover the kids' back-to-school supplies.

But a budget takes the guesswork out of managing your money and gives you a plan! When you set up your budget *before* the month begins, you can confidently give because you've already given every dollar of your paycheck a job. Just be sure to *immediately* set aside money for your tithe and other giving first, before you plug in numbers for your other expenses.

## Increase Your Income

But what if you're still having trouble paying your bills or putting food on the table? Well, then you might have an income problem—one that won't be solved just by stopping your tithe.

Instead, look for ways to increase your income or decrease your spending so giving doesn't feel as difficult. Maybe you need to downsize or cut unnecessary expenses (like getting your nails done every two weeks or constantly eating out). You could also pick up a side hustle or take on extra hours at work to get more cash flowing in the door.

Now, the goal here isn't to increase your income just to increase your tithe—though you should adjust it as your income goes up (10%, remember?). The goal is to have more money coming in to cover your basic needs and help you make progress toward your other financial goals (like paying off debt, saving, investing and, yes, giving!).

Remember, tithing is all about your heart and trusting God with what you have. And being outrageously generous—with both your money and your time—is some of the most fun you'll ever have!



# Hope HAPPENINGS

MARCH 2023

## FAITH|WORKS SUMMARY

Read more on the back page about how we all are "Giving Kid's Hope in Haiti". We are thankful for the relative peace that our families are experiencing locally. Children will attend school through July to catch up.

- **Projects** - Complex rebar assembly is underway for the foundation of the high school...
- **People** - Hearing the gospel through a ripped tarp...
- **Journey** - Missoule Bresil's journey as a senior in high school - Part 2...

ARTICLES CONTINUED ON BACK...

## A FEW WORDS FROM PETE...

I would like to share a bit about our amazing staff.

### Stateside:

**Jodi** (Director of Partner Relationships) - She manages our current sponsor and donor relationships, while working on growth in giving through networking.

**Jordan** (Director of Child Sponsorship) - She manages Haiti class lists, letters to and from sponsors, and newsletter mailings.

Please consider contacting us to set up a profile on our site to automate letter writing.

- To **assist with our programs and financials**, we have exceptional support from **Tiffany and Tammy**, as well as other help and many volunteers.

You can reach us by using our 800 number, direct email or one of the following emails (Finance@missione4, Info@missione4.com, Childservices@missione4.com).

### Haiti:

**Pastor Bazile** (Spiritual and Haiti programs senior leadership)

**Superintendent Jean Marie** (oversees the schools)

**Director Saint Ange** (Oversees construction)

- **Over 150 full time and many part time staff** (clinic, office, directors, teachers, security, food preparation, grounds keepers, pastoral, photography and logistics).

-Pete CEO/President

Pastor Armantoine Sejour & family



??????  
DID YOU KNOW  
?

### Haitian sayings continued...

- **Piti, piti, wazo fe nich li.** Little by little the bird builds its nest. (Some say "nothing good happens quickly" )
- **Nan tan grangou patat pa gen po.** - In times of famine, sweet potatoes have no skin.

## CASSANGE CORNER



I pastor Sejour, greet you who help our mission in Haiti. I work with Pastor Bazile. He helped me grow in maturity and faith so I could be a leader. I am married to Madam Midline Pascal Sejour, who is pregnant, and have a son named Marc Anthony Roodens Sejour. I teach a bible class and talk to students about Jesus and the word of God. Your support gives us faith. Thank you for all of the great development work throughout Leogane and especially in Cassange.

The mission of the believer - A mission is a burden or task given, like that given to the disciples. This is for you and me today because the disciples are not here. We must preach to all nations the good news. Brothers and sisters I encourage you to fulfill this mission Jesus entrusted to us.

My Favorite song - talks about "Work for the Lord before the sun goes down. We do not have to be discouraged despite the difficult path. There are many lost sheep that..do not even know that we have a good shepherd. When heaven is filled they must be there."

**Armantoine Sejour - May Holy Spirit help us, Amen**



# FAITH|WORKS

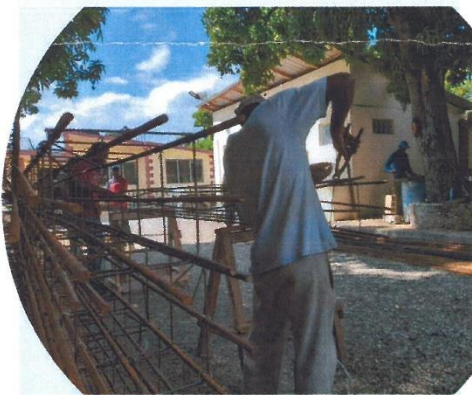
Exciting updates on what is happening in Haiti - Continued from the front...

## Projects



Our new **medical lab**, with multiple rooms, is now being prepared for equipment and staff. Everyone is excited for all of the benefits and new jobs this brings. Every week we see so many in need at the clinic.

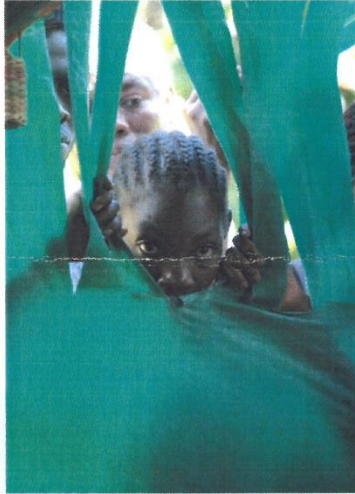
The next stage in the construction of the **high school** is building reinforcements for the foundation. It is assembled at our Cassange HQ, to secure the materials and use a few power tools via solar. It is then moved to the location, which is an engineering feat in itself.



## Pikliz & Prayer

Pray that peace will continue locally in Leogane, despite the issues elsewhere in Haiti. Pray also for a miracle to provide better care for Madam Bazile.

## People



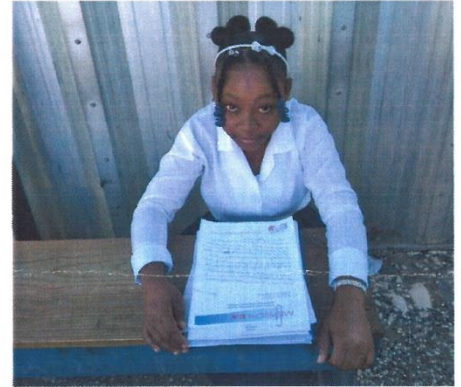
When we were in Haiti in October 2013, we went into a village that had never had a mission team there before. The children were very sick with parasites, skin disorders and fevers. As we sang and interacted with the children, Scott from Mission E4 decided to tell the the Gospel of Jesus...the very first time they had heard it. As he spoke to the children, parents began poking their heads through the ripped vents in the tarp to hear this Good News! They were several deep outside the tarp wall. Today, 10 years later, these very kids are in high school, healthy and serving Christ.

- Chelle



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## Journey



### **Month 2 of our journey following one of our students, Missoule Bresil.**

"Good day to all the staff and Mission E4, it is Missoule Bresil again. I hope you all are fine. Where I am, everything is very good by the grace of God. It is with great joy in my heart that I can write you these lines. Since I was a child I have done a lot in school, but what has always been more interesting to me is **history**. It is what I really like right now in 13th grade. In my opinion, it is one of the most beautiful subjects that could exist in school because it teaches us who we are from the past, what we are, and many other things. They talk about our ancestors and the history of many other countries. I am very happy to have the privilege to share with all of you. Big hugs to all of you!"

*Editor Note: Because Missoule can get an education, she can learn facts about history instead of stories that are often inaccurate. She also learns about her place in the family of God and her value as a beautiful creation.*

Palm Sunday April 2, 2023

## Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

*Ride on, ride on in majesty! / In lowly pomp ride on to die; / O Christ, thy triumphs now begin / O'er captive death and conquered sin. —Henry Hart Milman, in his hymn, “Ride on, ride on in majesty!”*

**A** long time ago in the far distant past, when paper was an expensive commodity and letter writing was the only way to keep in touch, writers found an interesting way to economize. One piece of paper could be made to hold twice as much information by practicing the art of *palimpsest*.

After filling the page, the paper was simply rotated 45 degrees and then *another entire page of writing was placed on top of the existing lines!* Can you imagine trying to read such a letter? A single page of correspondence could compress the maximum amount of news onto a minimum amount of paper.

There was only one drawback. It made for difficult reading. Like singing a round, it took intense concentration to keep focused on just one layer of the message at a time.

Perhaps you could send a letter to a friend using this palimpsest technique!

The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is like one of those many-layered palimpsests. While Luke is busy telling this story, we can see layers of tradition running under and through it. Every scene in the story draws its power from an earlier age, a previous incarnation.

We have Jesus' life and actions as the first layer of writing. But, set at a 45-degree angle, as it were, are the prophetic flashbacks to Zechariah, Isaiah, Micah and the Psalms and other Old Testament texts — another layer of writing. Both are necessary to give meaning to Jesus' life, and his death and resurrection.

On Palm Sunday, we see this technique at work: First, we see Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Soon, however, at cross angles, we see him brutally crucified and buried.

Today, we begin Holy Week. It will be a week of suffering, betrayal and heartache.

But, the cross is not the end of the story. Yet another layer of writing is yet to come!

—Adapted from HomileticsOnline by Timothy Merrill. Used by permission.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, you came into Jerusalem a popular hero, and left it scorned, beaten and in a tomb. But, we know that the power of the resurrection will defeat sin, Satan and death. Hallelujah! Amen.*



## Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:1-10

***Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. His cross stands empty to the sky. Let streets and homes with praises ring. His love in death shall never die. —Brian Wren***

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Throughout history, erroneous reports of people's deaths have popped up with exasperating regularity, most notably, the humorist Mark Twain, who remarked that "reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

On Friday of Holy Week, all the acquaintances of Jesus, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a safe distance from the cross and watched Jesus die (Luke 23:44-49). A righteous man named Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus off the cross, wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb. The women saw the tomb, and then they prepared spices and ointments to put on the body (23:50-56).

They wondered whether Jesus was dead.

Yes, he was. No doubt about it. Jesus died on a Roman cross. And when he was placed in a tomb, he was dead. Historically, the church has always considered any belief to the contrary to be heresy. Jesus had not fainted on the cross. He had not swooned. He was not in a state of suspended animation.

Jesus was dead. Jesus did not have a pulse. No brain wave activity. Nothing. Jesus was dead. He was so dead that the soldiers who were about to break his legs to hasten a death by suffocation, decided not to waste their time and energy on a dead man.

And remember, the people of Jesus' day lived with death. These were rough times. They knew what "dead" looked like. They weren't fooled.

His death was not just a rumor. This was not fake news. Jesus was quite emphatically dead, wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in a tomb.

Then they rolled a massive stone over the entrance to the tomb, effectively sealing it. Even if there were a strong, alive man inside, that stone was going nowhere.

Jesus was dead.

And then he wasn't!

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

*Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!*

—Adapted from HomileticsOnline.com; used with permission.

*Prayer: May my life, O God, be a living witness to your love, grace and mercy. Help me to act out the good news so that both my words and my life are in harmony. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Daily Bible Readings**

- Sunday:** Luke 5-9
- Monday:** Joshua 8-16
- Tuesday:** Joshua 17-24
- Wednesday:** Judges 1-4
- Thursday:** Judges 5-8
- Friday:** Ruth 1-4
- Saturday:** Psalms 36-39

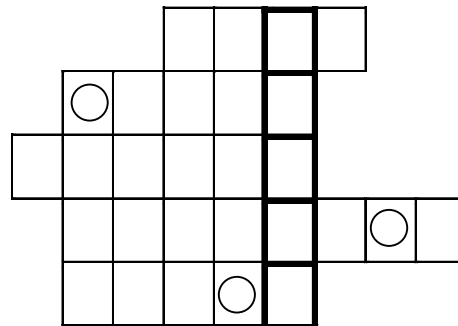
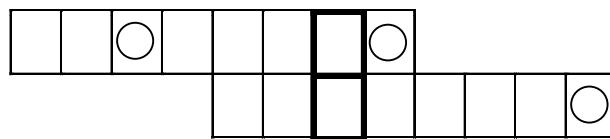
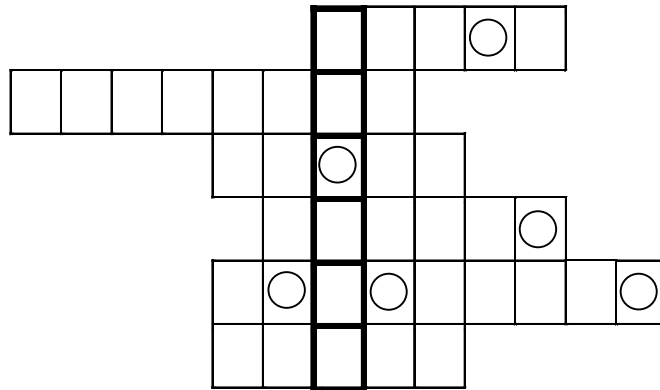
**The Bible Code**

If D=A and E=B, etc., decode this advice from Joshua 1:8 (NIV):  
 GR QRW OHW WKLW ERRN RI WKH ODZ GHSDUW IURP BRXU PRXWK;  
 PHGLWDWH RQ LW GDB DQG QLJKW.

Write the Bible Code answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

**TODAY IS EASTER SUNDAY! Let Us Rejoice!**

1. What Jesus was wrapped in
2. The site of the crucifixion
3. The king
4. He washed his hands of Jesus
5. Followers of Jesus
6. He denied Christ
  
7. A large hill
8. The feast celebrating escape from Egypt
  
9. Mother of Jesus
10. A Jewish religious teacher
11. The doubting disciple
12. Jesus was mistaken for this
13. One of Peter's names



**Unscramble the circled letters to reveal secret word.**



- Answers:**
1. cloth
  2. Golgotha
  3. Herod
  4. Pilate
  5. disciples
  6. Peter
  7. mountain
  8. Passover
  9. Mary
  10. rabbi
  11. Thomas
  12. gardener
  13. Simon
- Secret word:**  
resurrection

Sunday, April 16, 2023

## Scripture Reading: John 20:19-31

*Sometimes Jesus calms the storm. Other times, Jesus calms me. —Anon.*

Some time ago, I met a couple in their late 20s or early 30s, and they had a sailboat. They had turned into the harbor of the small town where we live on the Oregon coast to wait for better weather and to get some provisions for the next leg of their journey.

Their voyage started from a port somewhere in the Straits of Juan de Fuca up by Vancouver Island, and they were headed for San Francisco, and thence to San Diego and then to Mexico.

It was a tough life, yet a rewarding one. They spent many days on the open seas, always alert for changing weather conditions or the occasional crab pot floating like jetsam on the ocean. A squall or major storm might catch them despite the advanced radar technology and other monitoring devices they had onboard.

They kept a blog and called it “Sailing to Sunshine.”

I love the title. In some ways, this describes one’s life journey, does it not? We’re sailing to sunshine. Even when we are caught in a storm of adversity, we’re sailing to sunshine. We know the storm will pass; we know that if we stay the course, we will find harbor; we know that behind these clouds and beyond the storm there is sunshine.

And what’s more, we know who is at the helm, steering our frail craft through treacherous shoals. It is the same One who stood in a boat during a squall on the Sea of Galilee and said to the wind and the waves, “Peace! Be still!” (Mark 4:39). Hear the voice of 19<sup>th</sup>-century cleric, Edward Hopper, who was the pastor for many years of Sag Harbor Presbyterian Church on Long Island, and the Church of Sea and Land, in New York City, a church for sailors.

*Jesus, Savior, pilot me, / Over life’s tempestuous sea:  
Unknown waves before me roll, / Hiding rocks and treach’rous shoal;  
Chart and compass come from Thee, / Jesus, Savior, pilot me!*

*When at last I near the shore, / And the fearful breakers roar  
’Twixt me and the peaceful rest, / Then, while leaning on Thy breast,  
May I hear Thee say to me, / “Fear not – I will pilot thee!”*

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Increase my faith, Lord, so that I might steadily sail to sunshine. Thank you for being my Pilot and Captain! Amen.*

Week of April 16, 2023

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Sunday:** Luke 10-13

**Monday:** Judges 9-12

**Tuesday:** Judges 13-15

**Wednesday:** Judges 16-18

**Thursday:** Judges 19-21

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 1-3

**Saturday:** Psalms 40-42

**FISHY WORDS**

There's something fishy about these words. What is it?

See answer below.

**CARPET**

**CODES**

**SPIKED**

**SOLEMN**

**RUTH**

Last week, we read the book of Ruth. Let's review. It is a very moving love story. The words to the right are in the Word Search, and they are all from the book of Ruth. Can you find them?

B A W O N N I W S L S Z D R V  
 D E B O T B A O M H X Q A I R  
 X W T Q Y R L M C X G G V O P  
 N A A H A R V E S T E B I Z B  
 P O V M L S L A D N A S D N B  
 O G V N Z E R F I R I L S B F  
 N A N O M U H V L M M K S E J  
 L G O I M D L E O C F G H I J  
 C L L L H L Y A M B H L O Y A  
 E E H I F S N A E T F R B O D  
 S A A K F B E G U G P W E P S  
 N N M W X E V R R A A R M M J  
 E I G D J U D A H J E E W S G  
 A N X P E M Z I S T W K V H O  
 W G L H V I Z N U C I T V H K



Barley, Bethlehem, Boaz, David, Elimelech, gleaning, grain, harvest, Jesse, Judah, Kilion, kinsman, Mahlon, Mara, Moab, Naomi, Obed, Orpah, Ruth, sandals, threshing, vinegar, winnow.

**RIDDLE**

What is greater than God,  
 more evil than the devil?  
 The poor have it, the rich need it,  
 and if you eat it, you'll die?

**Fish:** carp, cod, pike, sole; **Riddle:** *Nothing* is greater than God, and *nothing* is more evil than the devil. The poor have *nothing*, while the rich need *nothing*. Finally, if you eat *nothing*, you will die. This riddle is known as Paul Harvey's riddle.

## Scripture Reading: Luke 24:13-35

*A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.*  
— Charles H. Spurgeon

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**B**arnacles, boats and believers. This is the subject for today's meditation. Let's start with *barnacles and boats*.

Barnacles are the scourge of the sea for most sailors, yacht or boat owners. Barnacles are small crustaceans that “secrete a glue-like substance which hardens like cement when they stick to a boat's hull or any other surface,” according to one source. They attach themselves to the bottoms of boats, and anything else that happens to be in water, such as buoys, docks, and even other sea creatures like turtles and whales.

They are a huge concern, because they can increase a boat's fuel consumption due to the drag effect. They also cause propellers to become sluggish. They damage the surface of a hull, ruin its appearance and clog the water intake valves.

Boat owners must take care to remove barnacles or prevent them from sticking to the prop and hull.

But how? By using antifouling agents. These are usually some form of silicon-based paint that keeps the hull clean and slick, making it hard for a barnacle to attach itself and begin its work of destruction.

Now let's talk about *believers*. Antifouling agents! Hmmm. Seems like it is so easy in our lives as believers to let bad stuff attach itself to our inner selves, souls or spirits. We live in such an ungodly world that barnacles are bound to float up and find a rough spot on our “hull,” as it were, and take a spot. Soon there are more.

The solution is an antifouling agent. And what better protection, what better antifouling agent is there but the holy word of God, the Bible. Many passages in Scripture counsel us to study and take to heart the word of God. Perhaps the best is the advice the Lord gave Joshua as they were about to confront the enemy. “This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, ... For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful” (Joshua 1:8).

The Bible: the best answer to spiritual barnacles ever!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, help me to keep up the maintenance on my spiritual “hull” by applying the antifouling treatment of your word. Amen.*



# **HOME TOUCH**® Activity Page

Week of April 23, 2023

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Luke 14-17

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 4-7

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 8-10

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 11-13

**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 14-16

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 17-20

**Saturday:** Psalms 43-45

## INCOMPLETE COUNTRIES

**Directions:** The numbered column (1,2,3, etc.) contains a list of countries, each with the **first two and last two letters** missing. Supply the missing letters and write the country in the blank provided. Match the **country** with its scrambled **capital** found in the column to the right. Hint: **Unscramble the capitals first, and then try to find** the country with the missing letters. The first one is done for you.

COUNTRY	CAPITAL		CAPITALS
GrEEce	Athens	1. EE	TATAOW
_____	_____	2. LGI	SMAABAILD
_____	_____	3. AZ	RENB
_____	_____	4. NA	RIOAC
_____	_____	5. NMA	TREMSAMDA
_____	_____	6. Y	<b>NESHTA</b>
_____	_____	7. STRAL	SCARACA
_____	_____	8. RA	XECIMO IYCT
_____	_____	9. XI	ELT VIAV
_____	_____	10. THERLAN	GNEHANEOPC
_____	_____	11. RW	SLOO
_____	_____	12. KIST	SELSSBRU
_____	_____	13. RTUG	RREBAANC
_____	_____	14. ITZERLA	IALSIRAB
_____	_____	15. NEZUE	BOSINL

**Answers:**  
 2. Belgium (Brussels); 3. Brazil (Brasilia); 4. Canada (Ottawa); 5. Denmark (Copenhagen); 6. Egypt (Cairo); 7. Australia (Canberra); 8. Israel (Tel Aviv); 9. Mexico (Mexico City); 10. Netherlands (Amsterdam); 11. Norway (Oslo); 12. Pakistan (Islamabad); 13. Portugal (Lisbon); 14. Switzerland (Bern); 15. Venezuela (Caracas).

**Verse to Remember:** "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart'" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Sunday April 30, 2023

## Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10

*Actions speak louder than words but not nearly as often. — Mark Twain*

Three strikes and you're out. It's the law in some states, and it is certainly the law in baseball.

Unless you are Yordan Álvarez of the Houston Astros. He gets *four* strikes. It happened last season on August 3, 2022, when the Boston Red Sox were in town. In the bottom of the fourth inning at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Alvarez went to the plate as the Designated Hitter. Rich Hill, the 42-year-old Boston starter, threw low for ball one, but then tossed a curve ball for strike one. Alvarez then fouled a second pitch for strike two. Hill then threw a sidearm fastball which was called a strike.

He should have been called out and sent back to the dugout. But everyone, Alvarez himself, the umpire, pitcher, catcher and even the broadcasters didn't notice the mistake.

Alvarez stayed in the batter's box and then grounded out.

Can you imagine the confusion and mayhem if he had used his fourth strike to launch the ball over the left field fence?

In the legal system, people who have three strikes against them are known as habitual offenders or persistent offenders. Or, *they are known as the inhabitants of Judah during the prophet Jeremiah's life in ancient Judah.*

In Jeremiah 7:1-7, God is the umpire. And God reminds Judah that three strikes and they're out. They are done for. Strike one is called in verse 3: *Improve your conduct and actions.*

Strike two is in verse 4: *Don't trust in lies.*

Strike three is in verse 5: *Reform your ways and your actions; if you treat each other justly.*

Note the stress on one's actions. It is not enough to profess our belief in some doctrine or ethical system. We must also illustrate that we are willing to walk the talk, and live in a manner that dovetails with our religious language.

If our actions are not gracious and kind and if we don't love justice, it doesn't really matter what we say, does it? And when our actions *are* gracious and kind, when we *do* love justice, well then you might say we've hit it out of the park!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, may I work with the balls and strikes given to me. Help me to have actions that match my faith language. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Sunday:** Luke 18-21

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 21-24

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 25-28

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 29-31

**Thursday:** 2 Samuel 1-4

**Friday:** 2 Samuel 5-8

**Saturday:** Psalms 46-48

*Verse to Remember*  
*God is our refuge and strength, an*  
*ever-present help in trouble.*

—Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

**Which foreign word  
doesn't belong?**

**oui si nein ja**

**Which word doesn't belong?**

**fedora, beret, moccasins,  
sombbrero, wig**

**Senior Trivia Quiz: DO YOU REMEMBER RADIO?**

1. THE JACK BENNY SHOW: Can you name two characters who appeared with Benny?
2. FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY: What place is still referred to as "McGee's" today?
3. BURNS AND ALLEN: How did George Burns end every show?
4. THE SAINT: Do you remember the Saint's name?
5. THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL: Can you name the Pimpernel's alter ego?
6. THE MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR: Why was one particular broadcast so memorable?
7. WALTER WINCHELL'S JOURNAL: How did Winchell open each show?
8. MAJOR BOWES AND THE ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR: How were winners chosen?

**Solution to riddles:** Foreign word: *nein*; it is the only word that doesn't mean "yes"; word: moccasins; it is the only word that doesn't refer to something worn on the head. **Do You Remember Radio?**: 1. Mary Livingstone and Rochester; 2. That crowded closet that would open to sound effects of all kinds of things crashing to the floor; 3. "Say good night, Gracie." Gracie would reply, "Good night, Gracie"; 4. Simon Templar; 5. Sir Percy Blakeney; 6. Orson Welles, the show's star, then 22, did such a great acting job, that many in the country believed they had tuned into a news broadcast and the invasion of Martians was indeed real; 7. "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. North and South America, and all the ships at sea, let's go to press. FLASH!"; 8. Most of the radio audience had telephones in their homes, and they called in to vote for their favorite acts.

