

Vol. 12, Issue 4, April 2023

connect

LUKE 24:6

HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN!

H E H A S
R I S E N !



APR.

2023

**Can't be here
in-person?**

Join us live Sundays
at 9 & 10:45 am
on Facebook, Imbc.tv,
or our LMBC app.

31st/1st

**times & locations
on pg. 3*

**EASTER
EGGSTRAVAGANZA**

2nd

all services

**30 PIECES
OF SILVER**

**details
on pg. 12*

2nd

6 pm (WC)

A L L *love* F O R

AN EASTER MUSICAL

6th

7 pm (WC)

Medical Aspects
OF THE CRUCIFIXION
with Dr. Kevin Yingling

**service details
on pg. 12*

9th

8, 9:30, & 11 am (WC)

EASTER
AT LEWIS MEMORIAL

**nursery and extension
service details
on pg. 12*

Also this month:

13th

Widows Luncheon

- 12:30 pm, Renaissance Room

14th

**PrimeTime Celebrates the
Resurrection**

- 6 pm, Renaissance Room

Menu: Ham, chicken casserole,
mashed potatoes, bread and
drinks provided. You bring
veggies, salads, and/or desserts.
Sign up with Vida or Blanche,
or by calling the church office
(304-736-7676).

30th

Missionary Doug Hodges

- 7 pm, Worship Center

Other calendars:

Rooted (Bible)

pg. 13

**Lewis KIDS
connection**

Visit lmbc.org/lkc or
ask to join our
Facebook group

*We are looking for volunteers who would like to serve in our
K-3 age range once a month in the first and second services on
Sundays. If you are interested, please contact the church office
or Rebekah Shaffer at r.shaffer@lmbc.org.

***Sunday Mornings
WC lower level**

2: We should be sorry for sin
9: Jesus was Born
16: Jesus was Dedicated
23: Jesus was Baptized
30: Jesus was Tempted

**Weds @ 7pm
in the FLC**

5: LKC meets Thursday,
April 6 in the WC
12 & 19: Bible Basics
26: Canvas Painting Night

**4th Thursday
from 4-5:15 pm
@ Ebenezer**

27: Bible Club

Other Events

Mar. 31 @ 8 pm: Hunt in the Dark (SMB)

Apr. 1 @ 11 am: Traditional Egg Hunt (Renaissance Room)

**Spring
Calendar**
March thru May

Instagram YouTube
@REFUELSTUDENTS

DOWNLOAD THE
REFUEL STUDENTS APP
Download on the
App Store GET IT ON
Google Play

April

1 - Praise Band Workshop
6 - Passion Week Service
28 - Drop-In Night

May

3 - Walk Over Night
17 - Senior Night
24 - Color War/Summer Kickoff

Save the Dates

June 19 thru 23 - Backpack VBS
July 14 thru 20 - Mission Trip

PASSION WEEK GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This Passion Week guide is designed to help you make sense of the events of the most important week in the life of Christ while He was on earth. Each day has a brief summary of events that could serve as a devotional of sorts for that specific day. Scripture readings from all four Gospels are also included for each day. It is our hope that this guide will be helpful as you reflect on the importance of Passion Week this year, and every year after.

PALM SUNDAY, April 2nd

Today marks the beginning of the end of Jesus' work on earth. As Jesus and His disciples ascended toward Jerusalem, a large crowd gathered around them in anticipation of what was to come. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead a few days before, and it seems the news of this great miracle was the talk of the crowds. Entering Jerusalem, Jesus is riding on the unbroken colt of a donkey; His actions are intentionally symbolic. Almost 500 years earlier, Zechariah 9:9 prophesied this very day! The prophet said that the future King of Israel would come into Jerusalem on the unbroken colt of a donkey. Some recognized the significance of the event, and they lay down their robes and palm branches (this is why we refer to this day as Palm Sunday) to form a royal red carpet. Furthermore, those same crowds begin to chant a few lines from Psalm 118, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The religious leaders are completely taken aback by the whole event. Instead of responding with joy and excitement, they respond with jealousy: "we are gaining nothing, look, the world has gone after Him" (Jn.12:19). Some Greeks, who were among the Passover pilgrims in Jerusalem, come to Philip to ask him about Jesus. Philip finds Jesus, who responds to them by predicting His death and describing it as the very purpose for which He has come into the world; His words caused confusion (Jn.12:20-36). The Jews were looking for a king to be inaugurated, a king to lead them in the overthrow of the Roman government; instead, Jesus was talking about His upcoming death. The crowds looked for a Messiah who would rescue them politically and nationally as a people, but Jesus had come with a more important mission: He had come to save them spiritually. Remember, these same crowds who are chanting "Hosanna!" on Sunday are chanting "crucify Him" on Friday.

Before heading back to Bethany for the evening, Jesus makes an initial visit to the temple complex and heals the blind and the lame. He will come back to the temple tomorrow, but His actions will be drastically different as He calls out the corruption of the religious establishment.

Events that happened this day:

- Jesus enters Jerusalem: Mt.21:1-11; Mk.11:1-10; Lk.19:29-44; John 12:12-19
- Jesus predicts His death: John 12:20-36
- Jesus visits the temple: Mt.21:14-17; Mk.11:11

HOLY MONDAY, April 3rd

As Jesus and His disciples were returning to Jerusalem, He spotted a fig tree, hoping to find something to eat. However, instead of finding some edible fruit, He finds that the tree only has leaves on it. His response to the fruitless fig tree might seem strange, but we must consider both the larger context and the fact that Jesus often used object lessons to get His point across to His followers. Israel is often characterized in the Old Testament as a fig tree (Jer.8:13; Hos.9:10), so Jesus' cursing of the fig tree is symbolic of God's judgment on the generation of Jesus' day who would reject Him. It was evident that there was a segment of the religious establishment that made a showing of bearing fruit, but within, they themselves were fruitless. In other words, they were spiritually barren.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, He heads straight for the temple to deal with the problem of corruption that He noticed yesterday. Three times a year, every man in Israel must celebrate three festivals – one of which was the Passover (Deut.16:16). If you lived close to Jerusalem, then you would likely select a choice animal from your flocks, one without blemish or spot as the law required. During the short trip, however, there was always the danger of your sacrifice (animal) being tainted in some fashion. When you arrive at the temple to present your sacrifice, there is always a looming possibility that the priest might reject your sacrifice. Since the priests were known to have standards that no one could meet, most men would opt to bring money to buy a sacrifice when they arrived. Of course, the inflation rate of buying a sacrifice in the temple was exorbitant; and if you didn't have a coin minted in Israel – the shekel – then you had to exchange your money, which would incur yet another fee.

This exploitation from the priestly class angers Jesus in a righteous way. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and merchants, declaring to them that "My Father's house is a house of prayer," but you have chosen to exploit the poor under the guise of worship. Calling out this corruption, Jesus was directly challenging the religious establishment. However, the religious leaders will not put up with Jesus' challenge to their authority, and they seek a way to get rid of Him for good.

Events that happened this day:

- Jesus curses a fig tree: Mt.21:18-19; Mk.11:12-14
- Jesus cleanses the temple: Mt.21:12-13; Mk.11:15-18; Lk.19:45-48
- Jesus enters Jerusalem: Mt.21:1-11; Mk.11:1-10; Lk.19:29-44; John 12:12-19

HOLY TUESDAY, April 4th

The religious leaders are eager to question Jesus about His actions on the previous day. As soon as Jesus enters the temple and begins to teach, the priests and elders interrupt Him and demand, “by what authority are you doing all of these things? Who gave you the right?” Jesus, however, responds to their question with a question of His own about John the Baptist’s ministry. He asks them, “did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?” The priests and elders refuse to answer, knowing that whatever they said would not help their cause. The Gospel writer Matthew follows up this interchange with three parables (21:18-22:14); all three are about these religious leaders, and they know it! (21:45-46)

A second group comes forward to put Jesus to the test. This group, made up of the Pharisees (religious) and the Herodians (political), asked Jesus whether or not it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus answered them with a comparison. Just as the coin He was holding bore Caesar’s image and therefore testified to his ownership of it, so also human beings bear God’s image and therefore testify to His ownership of us: we are made in God’s image, we owe Him everything. The Pharisees and Herodians marveled at Jesus’ wisdom, but then another sect, the Sadducees, stepped forward with a theological question concerning the resurrection. The question is not only far-fetched, but it’s also illogical because the Sadducees don’t believe in the resurrection. The question was designed to make Jesus’ belief in the resurrection look ridiculous; however, Jesus showed them that the Pentateuch clearly implied the reality of a future resurrection. Why did Jesus use only the Pentateuch? Because that was the only portion of the Old Testament that the Sadducees believed was authoritative. They walked away in amazement. A fourth question comes from a scribe who was part of the Pharisee sect. He asks Jesus which of the commandments is the greatest, and Jesus replies, “all of them!” Frustrated with all these questions, Jesus goes on the offensive, asking a question of His own – a question that no one is able to answer. After this, He launched into a full-blown verbal assault on these religious leaders, calling them hypocrites and blind guides, laying the root cause of the nation’s rejection of Him at their feet! (Matthew 23:1-36)

As Jesus leaves the temple on Tuesday, He makes a comment to His disciples that one day this temple will be completely demolished. Later that evening, when Jesus and His disciples stop to rest on the Mount of Olives, they ask Him about the timing of the prophecy that He spoke of earlier concerning the temple. Jesus then launches into a discourse about future events that would lead up to the establishment of the kingdom; we call this the Olivet Discourse.

Events that happened this day:

- The lesson from the fig tree: Mt.21:20-22; Mk.11:20-26
- Jesus teaches in the temple: Mt.21:23-23:39; Mk.11:27-12:44; Lk.20:1-21:4
- Jesus predicts the future: Mt.24-25; Mk.13:1-37; Lk.21:5-36

SPY WEDNESDAY, April 5th

Wednesday of Passion Week was a relatively quiet day compared to the events of Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Knowing what was to come in the next few days, it seemed that Wednesday was purposely quiet. Maybe this was a day in which Jesus carved out some hours to spend privately with the Father. The Gospel writer Luke (21:37-38) notes that Jesus continues His daily teaching at the temple, after which He returns back to Bethany to lodge there for the evening. This day has no active debates, no lively discussions, and no extended teaching session from Jesus, but there is much that is happening in secret. Not everyone is impressed with Jesus and His teaching, and He has a powerful group of enemies that are determined to get rid of Him.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that two days before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests, scribes, and elders are plotting a way in which they can get rid of Jesus for good. The Gospel writer Matthews tells us that their brainstorming session took place at the house of Caiaphas the high priest. A strategy session was needed if they wanted to shrewdly rid themselves of Jesus without causing a major uproar with the people. If the people got word of their actions, then the results for the religious establishment could be disastrous. The group agrees to wait after the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Thursday) when the crowds disperse and return to their homes. This would ensure that they could arrest Jesus without fear of the crowds.

Events that happened this day:

- Jesus continues His teaching in the temple: Lk.21:37-38
- The Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus: Mt.26:3-5; Mk.14:1-2; Lk.22:1-2

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 6th

Jesus had already made initial contact with some of His followers in Jerusalem to secure a place in which the group would share in the Passover meal. Some scholars believe that Jesus' arrangement of the meal location was made secretly so as to prevent Judas' betrayal plot from interrupting the meal. Sometime during the meal, Jesus gets up and washes the disciples' feet, even the feet of Judas. Jesus knew that Judas had already planned to betray Him (Jn.13:11), but He still proceeded to wash his feet anyway – that is the epitome of love. After the foot washing, Jesus makes a public declaration that there is a traitor at the table; the disciples are a bit confused about what Jesus meant, but Judas understands and promptly leaves the group to commence his actions of betrayal. As Jesus and His disciples continued the Passover meal, Jesus abruptly introduced a completely new explanation of the symbolism of bread and wine. These two elements now become part of our present-day observance of the Lord's Supper (communion) as we remember His body and blood that were given in sacrifice for all humanity.

As the evening continues on, Jesus gives His followers some additional instructions because He knows that the time of His death is quickly approaching. These instructions are collected into a body of material that we often call the Upper Room Discourse. We can thank the Apostle John as he is the only Gospel writer that includes this material (John 14-17). Toward the end of this discourse, Jesus offers up a prayer for His disciples (Jn.17:6-19) because He knows that these same disciples that are sitting at the table will fail in the face of persecution that very night. Specifically, He singles out Peter, saying that before the rooster crows, Peter will have denied Jesus three times. Of course, Peter vehemently denies that this would ever happen, assuring the Lord that he would follow Him to prison, even to death.

The night is late, and Jesus and His disciples head to the Garden of Gethsemane. The time for teaching and instruction is over, and the time for sorrow and distress is here. Jesus instructs the disciples to sit in a certain location while He takes Peter, James, and John with Him a little further to pray. Jesus pours out His heart to the Father, asking Him if there is any other way in which redemption can happen that would not include the cross. He knows He is about to bear God's judgment as a sin sacrifice for all the world. Nevertheless, He knows that the Father's will is by way of the cross, and He willingly submits Himself to the Father's plan. Taking a break from His time of prayer with the Father, Jesus finds His disciples fast asleep. The only source of human support and help during the hardest moment of His life was sleeping away. Yet even in this shocking moment of the disciples' carelessness, Jesus is more concerned for their welfare than His own – He knows that they, too, must pray so that they can be equipped to face the difficulties that lie ahead (Matt.26:41).

Judas, who left the scene earlier, now returns with a group of chief priests, Pharisees, and some Roman soldiers. Jesus steps forward and asks the group who they are here for, and when they answer, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus replies, "I am HE." When Jesus spoke these words (reminiscent of the phrase "I AM" in Exodus 3:14), the power behind those words caused the soldiers to retreat back and fall to the ground! Jesus permits the soldiers to arrest Him so long as they don't arrest His followers. However, Peter does briefly resist by cutting off the right ear of the high priest's servant; Jesus miraculously heals the ear and tells Peter that He must follow the Father's plan. At this point, all the disciples flee the scene, leaving Jesus deserted and alone.

Events that happened this day:

- The Passover meal: Mt.26:17-29; Mk.14:12-23; Lk.22:7-30; Jn.13:1-17:26
- Jesus predicts Peter's betrayals: Mt.26:31-35; Mk.14:27-31; Lk.22:31-34
- The Garden of Gethsemane: Mt.26:36-46; Mk.14:32-42; Lk.22:40-46
- Jesus is betrayed: Mt.26:47-56; Mk.14:43-52; Lk.22:47-53; Jn.18:2-12

GOOD FRIDAY, April 7th

Now that Jesus had been arrested, the religious leaders wanted to try Him for His crimes. Jesus was tried six different times: the first three trials were before Jewish leadership, and the second three trials were before Roman officials. All six trials were expedited because the religious establishment wanted to arrive at the death sentence before the news of Jesus' arrest got out among the people. Also, they needed the death sentence to be carried out before the Sabbath Day, which started Friday evening. The sixth and final trial takes place before Pilate. He renders his decision on the basis of expediency rather than truth or justice; he firmly believes Jesus to be an innocent man, but he also fears a riot and wants to satisfy the crowds who are yelling, "crucify Him!" In just a few hours, Jesus is tried six times and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

It's almost 9 am as Jesus begins His journey to Golgotha by carrying His cross. At some point along the way, Roman soldiers force a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross because He is too weak. The site of Jesus' crucifixion was outside of the city in keeping with the Jewish law requirement for executions (Heb.13:12). None of the Gospel authors provide any details concerning the actual crucifixion; they simply note the fact that it happened. Jesus was crucified at the third hour of the day (Mark 15:25), which is 9 am. Even on the cross, Jesus' enemies continue to mock Him to the very end, "...He saved others, but He cannot save Himself..." (Luke 23:35-38). The irony is that if Jesus had come down from the cross, He would have saved Himself but not others. At noon, darkness descends on the land (Mark 15:33), lasting for three hours. At 3 pm, Jesus died for the sins of humanity (Luke 23:46). Immediately, the earth shook, and the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom, signifying that God's people will now have direct access to God because of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus was taken off the cross before sundown and placed in a tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea (Nicodemus assisted with the burial of the body). Two women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary (the mother of Joses) (Mark 15:47) observe Jesus' burial location. They believe His body has not been sufficiently prepared because of the hasty nature of His burial; they plan to return after the Sabbath with additional spices and ointments.

Events that happened this day:

- The six trials of Jesus: Mt.26:57-27:26; Mk.14:53-15:15; Lk.22:63-23:25; Jn.18:28-19:16
- The road to the Cross: Mt.27:27-34; Mk.15:16-23; Lk.23:26-49; Jn.19:17
- The crucifixion of Jesus: Mt.27:35-44; Mk.15:24-32; Lk.23:33-43; Jn.19:18-27
- Jesus breathes His last breath: Mt.27:45-56; Mk.15:33-41; Lk.23:44-49; Jn.19:28-37
- Jesus is buried: Mt.27:57-61; Mk.15:42-47; Lk.23:44-49; Jn.19:28-37

HOLY SATURDAY, April 8th

The Gospels do not provide any information concerning the activities of the Apostles on the Sabbath Day (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown). The previous day's rapid-fire events probably left them drained physically, mentally, and emotionally. Their hopes and dreams for the establishment of God's kingdom lie shattered as their leader was executed for religious crimes. Saturday must have been a truly quiet day, filled with plenty of introspection and fearful anticipation that the religious leaders would come after them next.

While the disciples are quiet on the Sabbath, the religious leaders are not. The book of Matthew tells us that the chief priest and the Pharisees approach Pilate and ask him to secure the tomb wherein Jesus was buried. Their concern was over something Jesus had said earlier in the week: "after three days, I will rise." These religious leaders were worried that the disciples had planned to steal the body of Jesus so as to make a resurrection plausible, which would make "the last fraud worse than the first" (Matt.27:63-64). Pilate agrees to their request and places a guard of men at the tomb, and a large stone is rolled over the entrance to seal the tomb. Ironically, it's the actions of the religious leaders in wanting to secure the tomb that make the resurrection of Jesus even more supernatural (if that is actually a thing?). Even if the disciples were to somehow maneuver past the guards undetected, they would still have to deal with a huge stone that sealed the tomb. God used this group of religious leaders to make sure that no one could get into the tomb, and if, humanly speaking, no one can get into the tomb, then how is the resurrection possible? It is possible because Jesus is exactly who He said He was – the Messiah! The resurrection event on Sunday would be undeniable!

Events that happened this day:

- Guards are placed at the tomb: Mt.27:62-66

RESURRECTION SUNDAY, April 9th

Resurrection Day is finally here! The story of Jesus is not over yet, and the world is about to be turned upside down! Near the early dawn hours of Sunday (perhaps at sunrise), a group of women head to the tomb (looking at all four Gospel accounts, we can gather a complete list). It's hard to be precise at this juncture in the narrative, but it seems that as this group of women arrived at the burial site, they noticed that the stone had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene immediately leaves to run back and tell the disciples what has happened. The rest of the women continue towards the tomb and are greeted by an angel who tells them the Good News, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen..." (Matt.28:5). The angel tells the group to go and spread the news to the disciples that Jesus has risen and that He will meet them in Galilee. By the way, women were the first eyewitnesses of the events on Resurrection morning, not the male disciples!

Peter and John rush to the tomb based on Mary Magdalene's report and find it empty. Peter enters first, followed by John. The presence of the linen cloths and the folded napkin point to a supernatural resurrection indeed. If grave robbers had taken Jesus' body, the tomb would have been turned over; and grave robbers would not have left behind the clothes and spices. John specifically recounts how the sight of the linen cloths and face cloth caused him to believe (Jn.20:8). Peter and John head back to their homes as Mary Magdalene comes back to the tomb. However, her spirit of sorrow and mourning is drastically altered as she encounters the resurrected Christ.

After Jesus' resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene, Jesus then appears to two disciples who are traveling back to Emmaus from Jerusalem. During their walk back, they discuss the week's events, trying to make sense of everything while Jesus appears beside them. Jesus curiously asks them about the events, and they reveal their disbelief. This does not sit well with Jesus, and he rebukes them: have you not read the Old Testament? Jesus takes these two disciples on a messianic tour of the Old Testament, demonstrating how all Scripture points to Him! Eventually, these two disciples finally recognize Who is with them, but it's too late as Jesus vanishes. They were so excited about what had happened that they immediately traveled back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples. As they are in the process of recounting their story, Jesus appears to all those in the Upper Room; the only one of the eleven who is not present is Thomas. In the coming days, Jesus would appear to all the disciples again; this time, Thomas would be present, and he would be able to see the hands and feet of Jesus.

Events that happened this day:

- The empty tomb is discovered: Mt.28:1-7; Mk.16:1-7; Lk.24:1-7; Jn.20:1
- News of the resurrection gets out: Mt.28:8-10; Lk.24:8-11; Jn.20:2-18
- Jesus appears on the Emmaus Road: Lk.24:13-35
- Jesus appears in the Upper Room: Lk.24:36-43; Jn.20:19-23

EPILOGUE

The Bible tells us that for forty days after the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to many other people and groups of people to demonstrate the reality of his resurrection! The Good News is that Jesus is alive today! Christ has defeated death and the grave, and one day He is coming back for those who believe in Him! But until that time comes, all believers are entrusted with one mission, "to make disciples of all nations" (Matt.28:19-20).

2nd

30 PIECES
OF SILVER

Turn the price of Jesus' betrayal into an offering of love on Sunday, April 2. Pray about what you would give towards spreading the Good News.

6th
7 pm (WC)



2nd
6 pm (WC)

A L L Love F O R

AN EASTER MUSICAL

Our Easter Musical "All for Love", will be performed on Sunday night, April 2 at 6 pm.

The week of Easter, instead of gathering for groups on Wednesday evening we will meet together on Thursday, April 6 at *7 pm to hear a medical perspective on the crucifixion of Christ. Dr. Kevin Yingling will present all that Christ endured for us on the cross.

You can read more about Dr. Yingling at Imbc.org/passion-service.

*nursery and children's ministry provided

9th
8, 9:30, & 11 am (WC)

EASTER

AT LEWIS MEMORIAL

8 am *baby nursery only

9:30 am *regular children's program and nurseries available

****Extension service available in the Student Ministry Building. By attending the extension service, you allow extra room for visitors in the main service. This service features its own music and a live feed of the message.**

11 am *regular children's program and nurseries available

PROPTIATION

Theological Word of the Month

During the Easter season, you might hear the old English word propitiation in a sermon, or maybe it's the discussion of your small group, but today's average Bible reader might not know precisely what the word means. Some translations will use the phrase "expiation," or "mercy seat" (RSV), "atonement" (NIV), or the more straightforward "sacrifice" (NLT); these additional synonyms can confuse many. Propitiation, at its one-word meaning, carries the idea of satisfaction. Think back to the Old Testament book of Leviticus. Once a year, the Jewish nation observed (even today) the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. The high priest would pull back the curtain, and only he entered into the Holy of Holies to offer a sin sacrifice on behalf of the nation. The only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant; it was for "holding" the presence of God. The blood of the sacrifice was to be sprinkled on the lid of this sacred chest, also known as the mercy seat. By this yearly sacrifice, God's wrath was appeased, that is, for the year.

Fast forward to the New Testament, to the words of Paul in Romans 3:24-25, "...Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood..." When people sin, they arouse the wrath of God (Romans 1:18) and become enemies of God (Romans 5:10); both the Old and New Testaments reveal a holy God whose nature demands wrath against all sin. God cannot set aside His wrath toward our sins and remain holy. This is where Jesus enters the picture. His perfect sacrifice does much more than appease the wrath of God; it satisfies God's wrath once and for all. But let's make sure we are crystal clear on one point: God is the One who put forth His son as the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). In His great love for us, He designed the perfect (and only) way that sinful humanity could be reconciled back to Himself.

The April-June Spiritual Yearbook is available at the Merch Station for \$8

ROOTED

Grow in your faith by staying rooted in the Word of God. Your Spiritual Yearbook can be found at the merch corner in the main lobby.

- 1st Psalm 90
- 2nd -
- 3rd Luke 19:28-40
- 4th Mark 11:27-33
- 5th Matthew 26:1-5
- 6th Matthew 26:17-29
- 7th John 15:1-11
- 8th Isaiah 52:13-53:6
- 9th -
- 10th Luke 24:13-27
- 11th John 20:24-29
- 12th John 21:15-19
- 13th Acts 1:1-5
- 14th Acts 1:6-11
- 15th Psalm 47
- 16th -
- 17th 1 John 1:1-9
- 18th 1 John 2:1-6
- 19th 1 John 2:7-11
- 20th 1 John 2:12-17
- 21st 1 John 2:18-23
- 22nd Psalm 5
- 23rd -
- 24th 1 John 2:24-29
- 25th 1 John 3:1-10
- 26th 1 John 3:11-18
- 27th 1 John 3:19-24
- 28th 1 John 4:1-6
- 29th Psalm 42
- 30th -

MISSIONARIES OF THE MONTH

IN AFRICA

JJ & Melissa Alderman, Togo

Bret & Katie Anderson, Tanzania

SECURED C. Family, Egypt

Adam & Faith Drake, Togo

Diana Ferrell, Uganda

John & Kidst Getaneh, Zambia

SECURED G. Family, Egypt

Pascal & Becky Grenade, Mauritius

Justin & Rachel Hoy, Senegal

Darin & Kathy Ishler, Kenya

Jim & Connie Jeremias, Kenya

SECURED W. Family, North Africa

Tom & Marilyn Wilson, South Africa

This month's mission focused letter is written by Alex Kocman, ABWE's Director of Communications and Media, His story about Cory, a doctoral student, raises the question, "what is your greatest concern in life?" I believe there is no better time than now, in the light of Easter, while our minds are drawn to Jesus, to the wounds of His flesh, and the agony of His heart as He hung on the cross, to ask ourselves this question. We share this story with you, in the 'light of Easter', in the hope that you will be encouraged to meditate upon the joy of seeing Christ in heaven and presenting to Him a life well lived. - MaryEllen

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose? I cannot tell. I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again."
(Philippians 1:21-26 ESV)

Cory was a jolly, big-bearded, thick-skinned doctoral student. An avid weightlifter, yet even-tempered as a family man and student of Scripture, Cory carried himself with gravitas. He was difficult to rattle.

So, my curiosity was piqued when, one day in the gym, Cory proceeded to share with me what he most feared in life. I will never forget his answer.

"Being put on a shelf," he said. "Not being used by the Lord."

I was caught off guard. Back then, if I had been honest, my greatest fear would have been something more mundane—failing to get married, start a family, or have a successful career. Cory's remark confronted me. Is my greatest concern in life a desire to be used by the Lord?

MISSION FOCUSED

For full updates, go to Imbc.org/missionary-updates

The Apostle Paul seems to have had little doubt that the Lord would use him. "Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death," he confidently asserts in verse 20 (emphasis added). He then explains the reason for his certainty: "to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (v. 21). His life's aim was to serve Christ ("fruitful labor," v. 22), while his aim in death was to see Christ (which "is far better," v. 23). Either way, he could not lose.

Paul indeed had distress—not at the prospect of death, but at the choice between serving Christ and seeing Christ. He was "hard pressed" (synechomai) between the two—the same Greek word used to describe Jesus' own internal distress when awaiting his crucifixion (Luke 12:50). Death, it is true, means the separation of the soul from the body—an alienation that is not redressed until the dead are raised at the end of history at Christ's return (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

But even to be "absent" from one's own body is to be desired if it means being "present with the Lord" (see 2 Corinthians 5:8). We do not know much about this intermediate state of the souls of the saints in heaven as they await the resurrection, but we know that enjoying the personal company of the glorified Christ makes this state glorious indeed.

What, then, could possibly motivate Paul to remain engaged in fruitful labor on earth? He recognizes that what is "more necessary" (v. 24) is the "progress and joy in the faith" of his disciples (v. 25). Consider Paul's absolute sincerity as a minister of the gospel. As a missionary, he conducted himself with "simplicity and godly sincerity" (2 Corinthians 1:12). He regarded his disciples as his "little children" with whom he was in the "anguish of childbirth" until Christ was formed in them

(Galatians 4:19). "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls," he writes elsewhere.

I have often heard it said in various Christian circles: "It is easier to die for Christ than to live for him." There is some naïveté in this maxim. To die as a martyr is no small thing. Yet the kernel of wisdom in this statement is that living for Christ does indeed require a sustained effort of dying to self and serving others. Yet missional followers of Christ must ask, in their spirits, "To live for Christ, or to be present with him—which do I value more?" If the answer is "neither," we must rearrange our priorities.

If we struggle to relate to Paul, for whom life meant certain fruitfulness and death was a genuine upgrade, perhaps we lack his sincere care for the souls of others. Maybe we are more concerned with worldly attainments than eternal impact—as I was in my conversation with Cory. Doubtless, many of us drift through life without sufficiently meditating upon the joy of seeing Christ in heaven and presenting to him a life well lived.

May we be discontent with living wasted lives. Let us pursue, even in great distress, fruitful labor for the Lord until we see him in glory.

May this be the prayer of us all -

*Lord Jesus,
When you called me to yourself and saved me,
you could have immediately brought me into
your presence. Instead, you left me on earth.
For as long as you would grant me to live, give
me the diligence to pursue faithful labor in your
name. Help me to be concerned with the souls
of others so that when we are face to face, I
may present to you a life lived for your glory.*

In your name, amen.



LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE IN APRIL

Dear LMBC Family,

Thank God Spring has sprung! And Daylight Savings Time is HERE! Oh yes! I love the extra hours of daylight. I love the month of April because I know the warmer weather is coming, but most of all, we get to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

So, what is our LWYL outreach plan for the month of April? Let me give you a few choices. First of all, during the month of April, plan to invite your neighbors to the various Church-wide EASTER EGG hunts (especially those who have children). The EASTER EGG hunts are a great way to introduce your neighbors to Lewis Memorial Baptist Church.

Also, send an Easter card to the five families on your Love Where You Live prayer card. Invite them to Church on Easter Sunday. Make sure to include the various times and locations of our Easter Services. If you invite them, they will come.

Plus, if you really want to get creative, make some homemade “Gospel Easter baskets” for a few special children in your neighborhood. Include some delicious Easter candy, gospel literature, and even a New Testament. Warning: Make sure to include plenty of candy.

Furthermore, if you really want to LWYL... host a Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt at your home. Hide plastic Easter eggs with candy and include an LMBC connect card in the egg. The connect cards are small enough to fit in the egg and give just enough information about our Church. If you need some connect cards, see me at Church or give me a call, and I’ll make sure to get them to you.

Easter Sunday is coming. Make sure you Love Where You Live during this special holiday season. We need to leverage every gospel opportunity for the glory of God to reach as many people as possible. God bless you, and enjoy the Easter celebration.

Because He Lives,



THE DATE OF EASTER

Why is the day we celebrate Easter different each year? Have you ever asked that question? When I was younger, the holidays that did not change were always easy to remember, mainly because we would be off from school, which is always a big deal! Of course, even as an adult, days off from “school” (a.k.a. “work”) are always nice too! If you’ve never taken a deep dive into why the Easter date changes, keep reading, especially you church history academics.

From the earliest days of church history, the celebration of Easter was often called the Christian Passover. Most churches held the festival on Sunday closest to the Jewish Passover, but sometimes there was doubt over which Sunday should be observed, the earlier one or the later one. By the second century, a debate arose over when to celebrate the Resurrection. The churches in the East (Asia Minor) celebrated Easter on the day of the Jewish Passover, even if that day was not Sunday. It was hard for the early church to standardize any of its festivals because it was under constant persecution; however, when Constantine became ruler of Rome and Christianity was legalized, he set out to fix this perennial problem.

The famous Council of Nicaea (325 AD) is not only known for its decision on the doctrine of the trinity but did you know that this council also decided the Easter date-setting? The council of Nicaea brought together the entire Christian church of the East and the West, and we might say it was the first ecumenical council. It seems that before this time, the celebration of Easter was not uniform in all Christian churches. Three regulations were put forth. First, Easter must always be celebrated on Sunday. Christ rose on the first day of the week (the Sabbath was the last day of the week for the Jews, and Jesus rose the day after the Sabbath day), so these seem appropriate. However, as you will

see in the subsequent regulations, the reason for Easter being celebrated on Sunday was not so “biblical.” The second regulation stated that Easter must never be celebrated on the same day as the Jewish Passover. Now that seems a bit odd, doesn’t it? Listen to the words of Constantine, “It was declared to be particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals, to follow the custom [the calculation] of the Jews, who had soiled their hands with the most fearful of crimes, and whose minds were blinded...” If you have a moment, check out Constantine I: On the Keeping of Easter (public domain sources), to read the rest of his letter, which is fairly heated.

Third, Easter must never be celebrated on or before the vernal equinox of any year. This third regulation has been added to: “the first Sunday after the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. If the full Moon falls on a Sunday, then Easter is the next Sunday.” It seems that the reason for this calculation was, once again, to ensure that the celebration of Easter had nothing to do with the Jewish Passover. The calculation of the Easter date was put into the hands of the Church of Alexandria, which was the center of astronomy, science, and learning for the Roman world. Of course, just because the Council of Nicea “settled” the Easter date debate doesn’t mean that all the churches followed through. Roughly 300 more years of debate over the Easter date ensued; even the hour at which Easter Sunday should start was also debated. It wasn’t until the British-led Synod of Whitby (664 AD) that all sides agreed to a unified Easter-date observance. So, it’s unfortunate, but not uncommon, that the decision for such an important date in the life of the church had become so politicized and debated. It sounds like the early church had it right – the Christian Passover. After all, Jesus is our Passover lamb!



TAKE A LOOK AT THE LATEST FAMILY NEWS

Births

- Maisie Jane Howerton to Jonah & MaKayla Howerton

Bereavements

- Larry Ellis, Trina Smith's brother
- William Lawman, Bethany Cyrus' grandfather
- Richard Smith, Cyndi Lamb's brother
- Phyllis Spencer, Bart Spencer's wife
- Joann Wackenheim, Susan Hinshaw's mother

New Members

- Jerry & JoAnn Aldrich
- Scott & Shawna Bumgardner
- Tom Christian
- Debbie Henderson
- Jacob & Breanna Roberts
- Brittany Robertson
- Chuck Zerkle (Baptism)

LOOKING FOR A STARTING POINT?

How to join our community of faith

Are you looking for a church home?
Would you prayerfully consider whether God
may be leading you to our family of believers?
If you are ready, follow these simple steps:

1st Baptism



Trust in Christ and
follow Him in believer's
baptism.

2nd Register (pick 1)



In Service: scan the QR
code on the pew in front
of you and let us know
you would like to join.
Online: lmbc.org/register
Call: 304-736-7676

3rd Discover



Check out the
information in the
visitor packet you
received when you
registered with us or
visit lmbc.org/what-we-believe to learn
about our core beliefs
and more.

4th Experience



Come to the next
Starting Point on
Sunday, Apr. 30
at 4:30 pm in the HIS
Way Cafe (SMB), where
you'll meet with our
Pastors to begin your
membership experience.
Call: 304-736-7676
Pre-register: [lmbc.org/
starting-point](https://lmbc.org/starting-point)

WANT TO JOIN A LIFEGROUP?

Come grow with us

SUNDAYS @ 10:45 am

Through the Bible (S104) Jared Blankenship
Wall Builders (S100) Steve Bragg
Cornerstone (S102) Tim Koletka
Maranatha (Renaissance Room) Chuck Daniel

TUESDAYS @ 1 pm

Fearless (S100) Estep/Wyrick

@ 6 pm

Life Together (HIS Way Cafe) Tim Yates

WEDNESDAYS @ 10 am

Encouraging Friends Ministry (112) Kate McMullen

@ 6:30 pm

At Home with the Word (Tardy Home) Steve & Vicky Tardy
Broken Together (Thompson Home) Dan & Terri Thompson
It's Always Something (S100) Chuck Daniel

@ 6:45 pm

Abundant Life (L108) Gary McMullen

@ 7 pm

Selah (L114) Nathan McClay
Friends of God (Renaissance Room) David & Mary Lemming
Friends of God 2.0 (Northside House) Sergeant/Ball
Just Prayer (L104) Donna Nash
Rooted in Christ (F207) Jonah & MaKayla Howerton
Whosoever (L112) Sargent/Fry

FRIDAYS @ 5:30 pm

Believing, Belonging, & Becoming (HIS Way Cafe) Thurman Lowder

SUNDAYS @ 10:45 am

Journey with Him (L110) Hale/Tritz

MONDAYS @ 6 pm

Daughters of the King (S100) Rebekah Shaffer

TUESDAYS @ 9:30 am

Kingdom Seekers (Tardy Home) Tardy/McMullen

@ 10 am

At His Feet (S100) Beth Jenkins

@ 11 am

Sewing for God's Children (L104) Barbara Keaton

WEDNESDAYS @ 7 pm

4Ever His (L107) Leah Adkins

Women of God (F205) Hager/Bashore

*Embrace Grace (L106) *for single pregnant ladies Angela Cantley

THURSDAYS @ 10 am

Women of Strength (HIS Way Cafe) Mullens/Foreman

WEDNESDAYS @ 10 am

Westridge Wisdom (S100) Jeremy Shaffer

@ 7 pm

Men of Truth (HIS Way Cafe) Steve Bragg

Iron Sharpeners (L110) Matheny/Miller

SUNDAYS @ 9 am

Willing Workers (L108) Richard Sexton

Young at Heart (L114) Bill Blankenship

FRIDAYS @ 11 am

Life Group (Victory Place Apartments) Charles Logan

Connect is the monthly news and
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Making disciples who
live and love like Jesus

5385 W. Pea Ridge Rd.
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304-736-7676
lmbc.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP
9 & 10:45 am (watch live
at lmbc.tv)

WEDNESDAY BIBLE
STUDY
7 pm

CONNECT STAFF:
Senior Editor,
David Lemming
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Mary Ellen Black
Graphic Designer,
Matt Waller

Read previous editions
of Connect at
lmbc.org/connect

ADULTS (COED)

WOMEN

MEN

SENIORS

LUKE 24:6

HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN!

H E H A S
R I S E N !