



# ONE VOICE

Churches: ♦Bethany ♦Immanuel ♦Lunder ♦Silver Lake ♦Winnebago

Pastor Randy Baldwin & Pastor Bill Peters

Volume 15, Issue 4

April 2022

## *From the Pastor's Desk*



*"And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there." John 19:42*

We are to about to begin the journey of Holy Week, once again. We are familiar with the journey, but those who experienced the journey the first time had no idea what was coming.

Jesus had been to the Temple several times in the gospel of John. Each time when Jesus had taught the people in the Temple, the religious authorities were not happy. Thomas reports that they were looking for ways to kill Jesus, so Jesus had left. As Jesus and the disciples traveled to Jerusalem this time, the disciples picked up that something was different. As they left Galilee to travel to Jerusalem, Jesus seemed distracted. They could tell he was intent to arrive at Jerusalem. On the way, three times Jesus taught them that when they arrived at Jerusalem, Jesus would be rejected by the Elders, mocked, killed, and be raised on the third day. They didn't understand this teaching. They understood, properly, that Jesus was God's Messiah. So how could God's Messiah bring in the Kingdom of God, if the Messiah was killed?

Along the way to Jerusalem, Jesus did many of the same things he had always done. Jesus taught the people about God the Father. Jesus taught the people about the Kingdom of God. Jesus healed people. Jesus cast out demons. The disciples were always amazed at Jesus' teaching and the miracles of healing they witnessed.

When they arrived at Jerusalem, Jesus received a wonderful reception by the people. It was the kind of reception the disciples were expecting. The people were waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." It was a reception of a king, God's Anointed, God's Messiah. The disciples were happy and proud.

But things changed on Thursday. Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Jesus talked about going away to a place they could not follow. Jesus talked about the disciples betraying him and abandoning him, even Peter. Jesus led his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. During the night, Jesus was arrested. On Friday, the religious authorities convinced the people to cry out for Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate relented. Jesus was crucified. Jesus died. Jesus was buried in a tomb by Josephus and Nicodemus.

What if that had been the end of Jesus' story? What if it all ended with Jesus buried in the tomb? The disciples would probably would have gone home in great sadness. As the disciples on the road to Emmaus said, "We had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah of God." The disciples would have remembered Jesus' teachings and his miracles. They probably would have talked about Jesus amongst themselves once in a while. Would we even know about Jesus? We know about Jesus because we read the Bible. But the New

Testament wouldn't have been written if that would have been the end of the story. There would have never been any Pentecost with the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. Maybe we would have heard about Jesus' teachings as moral teachings. But we have heard about Buddha and that he was a teacher about moral living and community living. But we don't really know much about Buddha. So, we would have had to find some other source for the foundation of our ethics to live by. We wouldn't have Christmas. We wouldn't have forgiveness. We wouldn't have a communion of saints that we grew up with to worship along side and to walk alongside us. We wouldn't have the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding. We wouldn't have hope. We wouldn't have the gift of eternal life. So, when we lost loved ones to death, there would only be the devastation of death.

But Jesus' story didn't end with his dead body being buried at the tomb. Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses and Salome went to the tomb. The tomb was empty. The angel declared, "Why do you seek the living amongst the dead? You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here. He is risen!"

Jesus is alive. Jesus lives.

As we are amazed by this wonderful news, we cannot help but cast our thoughts back to what had happened three days before, Jesus' death and suffering on a cross. Why



did Jesus do that? Jesus did that because he didn't want to be just a story taught amongst some in some synagogues in Israel. Jesus didn't come to just be a teacher. Jesus came for you. Jesus came that you would know your Creator as your Heavenly Father. Jesus came that you would know his love. Jesus came to defeat the power of sin, so he could declare to you, "I forgive you and your sins are no more." Jesus came to give you his peace, as he is present walking alongside you with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works to create faith as the Spirit bears witness to the truth of God's love for you. The Holy Spirit creates the "Communion of Saints", brothers and sisters to walk alongside you, to lift each other up, to bear witness to God's love to one another. Jesus also came to destroy the power of death. Jesus lives and he gives you and all those who call upon his name, the gift of eternal life with the Father and Jesus, living and loving with God's perfect love. Jesus came to bring you into his Father's grace, mercy, and love.

Jesus' story didn't end at the tomb. Jesus lives. Jesus gives us a new story; a story forgiveness, hope, peace, joy, community, newness of life and eternal life. Jesus has risen and this is a new story.

*Pastor Randy*



# WANDERINGS AND WONDERINGS



There is a celebrative mood as one enters the Easter season. **“Hallelujah! He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!”** We leave behind the sullen sadness of Good Friday, and consume the joy of the resurrected Jesus.

I show a “Jesus” movie in confirmation, and the resurrection scene always strikes as odd, joyfully odd. Mary awakes sleeping disciples announcing to all they have taken his body. Peter and John run to the tomb, find it empty as Mary told them, and Peter become depressed – “They stole his body” he says. John says, “No. He told us. His risen.” And Peter gets this three-year-old smirk on his face ... he gets giddy ... he wants to



believe it, he believes it, and in a joyful way he can't believe it.

With God there is this childlike giddiness in this Easter event.

All who surrender to Him become like little children. Lord Chesterton once argued that when it comes to this kind of joy, God may be the only thoroughly childlike spirit left in the universe, while all the rest of us have lost this ecstasy because of sin.

Chesterton asks us to consider how God might have created daisies. Did He create them all at once, with one swoop of His hand? Or did God create them one by one, experiencing childlike delight in each new flower?

If you throw a child up in the air and bounce the child off your knee there is every chance that the child will shout out, “Do it again!” And if you, do it again, you probably will get the same response. In all likelihood, each time you toss the child in the air the laughter will become more



uncontrolled. Twenty times later the child, never tiring of the fun, can be counted on to be overwhelmed with hysteria while still

shouting “Do it again!”

So it might be with God, suggests Chesterton. In the beginning God may created one daisy, and something within His spontaneous, childlike spirit whispered, Do it Again! And daisy number two came into being. And once again God said, “Do it again!” And there was a third, and then a fourth, and then a fifth daisy.

And so, He went on creating daisies. Until after a hundred billion trillion daisies the great creator God, who spun the galaxies



into space and created all the animals, that same God is still creating daisies, and shouting with childlike glee, “Do it again!”

That is the Easter experience. Do it again! The resurrection – Jesus did it and then tells us that that we too will be part of that experience. I never grow tired of hearing **“He is Risen. He is Risen Indeed!”** To hear ... to understand ... to experience ... this uncontrollable joy, it overwhelms us. To experience “salvation” is to be in His image and in His likeness. We transcend the sense of dullness and boredom that seems so evident in our world and are able to greet even that which is repetitious in our mundane world with joyous declarations of “Do it again!”

This energizing joy that come from God as one of the fruits of His Spirit makes us into people who cannot help but share our laughter and joy. It is out of this God-created vibrancy that we can't help ourselves but say “Do it again!”

That is how we are to celebrate Easter. **He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!**

Wanderings and Wonderings,  
Pastor Bill Peters