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Monthly Newsletter of Hosanna Lutheran Church

May 2011

Not just Sunday people

A Few Words From Pastor John

A few days ago, I was just sitting there thinking about all that happened during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Those thoughts were occurring to me as I was actually taking a day to rest; the Monday after Easter Sunday. I began to think of all those events such as the soup suppers and worship on Wednesday evenings, a funeral, a wedding and all of the worship services during Holy Week, along with all of the normal Sunday worship services. As I was replaying that rather "full tape", it dawned on me that there were literally hundreds of people who did so many things, large and small, to orchestrate this mission and ministry.

It seems that often, when we are in the midst of a whirlwind of events and a full schedule, we plug along and the scenery is going by so fast that we don't catch the full glimpse of everything or everyone around you. But on that Monday, I took pause and put my memory bank on rewind. That's when it struck me that I am surrounded by so many amazing and gifted people who simply pour themselves out for the sake of ministry. And I cherished the moment, letting my memory pick up all the actors in the drama of our life together at Hosanna.

The list of people is actually quite long so I will simply end this brief reflection by saying "Thank You!!" to everyone who came for worship and to everyone who was behind the scenes creating all the extra opportunities to draw closer to God in Christ during this past Lenten season. I am truly grateful. Pastor John

P.S.: My vote for the best soup during Lent? Pat Gibbons "Cheesy Broccoli"!

From Dale Bargmann

Hosanna Communications

May is a month of major fundraising events at Hosanna, and your help is needed, no, necessary!

- **Saturday, May 7 - Annual "Gianormous" Garage Sale** benefiting Northwest Assistance Ministries and Habitat for Humanity.
- **Saturday, May 14 - Mulkey Scholarship Endowment Dinner.**
- **Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) rotation starts May 15.**

For the Garage Sale... People are needed the week before the sale to set up tables, price donations and help in other ways. Then, on the day of the sale, people are needed as cashiers and other functions. Use the special

In This Issue

From Pastor John
 From Dale Bargmann
 Family Life Update
 May Book Discussion
 May Seniors Trip
 Behind Closed Dorrs
 National Day of Prayer
 Mission of the Month
 African Initiative
 Step-By-Step Plan
 Autism Now
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 A Call to Discipleship
 Bible Boot Camp 6
 Some Photos to Share
 Video: Resurrection
 May Highlights

Quick Links

Hosanna Website
 Living Lutheran
 Hosanna Blog



**Hosanna Lutheran
 Church**

insert in the Sunday bulletins to indicate the days and times you will be available to help. Or, call Nickie Brooks.

For the Mulkey Dinner... Everyone needs to sign up to attend! Cost is \$14 per person -- child or adult.

It all begins with a great dinner, a choice of steak, salmon or chicken -- with salad, mashed potatoes and drink -- from Outback Steakhouse. Dessert is a choice of cobblers baked by several Hosanna members who simply love to cook and share their creations with others. The competition is fierce, so "get ready to rumble." All during the evening there is another battle, of sorts, to see who who wins the bidding on goods and services donated by individuals and businesses (see the list in the North Narthex). 80 people attended last year; let's beat that this year! All proceeds for this fun evening go to help Hosanna's young people reach their higher education goals.

Then, there is our week-long **Interfaith Hospitality Network** rotation, beginning Sunday, May 15. We will be hosting up to four homeless families. Your help is needed to set up rooms, prepare and serve meals and otherwise be a loving presence. Look for the large sign up sheet in the Narthex.

Looking ahead to June

On Easter Sunday, Bernie Brown reminded me that the next **Blood Drive** is scheduled for Sunday, June 12. See future Cyberlines and This Week at Hosanna for further information, or call Bernie.

Family Life Update - May

CREW:

Sunday, May 1 - Last breakfast. We will start back up in September!
Sundays, May 8 and 22 - Bible Study continues.

Kids Church - Each Sunday except for May 22 (Worship & Mentoring Service)

Milestone Ministry - Sunday, May 1 we will 'Bless & Wrap High School Seniors Chelsey Oden, Emma Hartmann, Colin Haight and Amanda Boethel.

Confirmation - Banquet is Wednesday, May 11.

Hosanna Day Camp Open Registration Sunday, May 15!!!

Hosanna Book Discussion

The Hosanna Book Discussion is for all who love to read and to talk informally about what they have read.

The next session will be Saturday, May 7, at 6:00 PM. The topic is "**Major Pettigrew's Last Stand**" by **Helen Simonson**. Sixty-eight-year-old Maj. Ernest Pettigrew has settled into a genteel life of quiet retirement in his beloved village of Edgcombe St. Mary. He is refined, gentlemanly, and unwaveringly proper in his sense of right vs. wrong. So it is surprising when he is gently smitten by the widowed Mrs. Ali, the lovely Pakistani owner of the local tea shop. This dinner and discussion will be held at the home of

group members Bill and Susheela Beteet. Contact Nancy Agafitei for driving directions.

May Seniors (50+) Outing

Friday, May 20 - Seniors (50+) Outing to the Rosenberg Train Museum in Rosenberg, TX; lunch is at **Another Time Soda Fountain** across the street from the museum. The Harris County Precinct 4 bus departs Hosanna at 9:00 AM. Museum admission is \$5 (under 55), \$4 (55+). See the sign up sheet on the table by the north entrance doors.

Behind Locked Doors

Michael A. Dubsky

It's the Sunday after Easter, and the crowd is gone, the lilies are fading and the atmosphere is more relaxed. The Easter story continues even without the drama of an empty tomb or a woman crying out "I have seen the Lord!" In the Gospel of John (20:19-31), the disciples were so scared they locked themselves in an upper room. They were freaked out. Their leader, the one who they had begun to believe in as Lord, had been brutally killed.

They were left without a guide, without the Shepherd, without the person of whom they had always been able to ask tough questions. Until they saw Jesus with their own eyes, they were going to stay put.

The doors were locked because of the disciples' fear. Into this locked room, the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples. This only added to their fears. Jesus was dead, they had seen it with their own eyes. They panicked. The first thing Jesus addressed was their fear. *Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ... Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you."*

We live in a world that causes fear in our hearts: the worries of the ages -- health, grief, broken relationships; the worries of this century -- war, terror, the Great Recession; the worries of this day -- from oil spills a year ago to earthquakes and radiation scares of the last few months. Any of which could make us want to hide behind locked doors.

And yet in each of our lives, in every case, in every moment, our God appears to us as one who offers us peace. Just as Jesus came to the fear-filled disciples through locked doors, he comes to us when we are filled with fear and the first thing he says to us is, "Peace be with you!"

Jesus is bigger and stronger than either our hopes or our fears. He is present among us as surely and as fully as he was with the disciples in the locked room on that first Easter. He frees us from our fears speaking his peace into our hearts, forgiving our sins, turning our sorrow into gladness and blessing us.

And the peace that Jesus gives isn't just for our private use. Jesus goes on to say, "As the Father sent me, so I send you." The peace the risen Savior gives is to be shared, passed on to those around us who may also be paralyzed by fear.

Talkback:

- What is causing fear in your heart (making you want to hide behind

locked doors)?

- How or through whom is Jesus offering words of peace to you this very day?
- With whom or where are you being sent to share this word and gift of peace?

Michael A. Dubsy is executive director of the Lutheran Home and Hospital Foundation, Inc -- a foundation that gives out grants supporting health and wellness ministries -- and has served for 10 years as pastor of St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Hampden neighborhood of Baltimore.

National Day of Prayer

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

Thursday, May 5

The critical challenges facing America and the culture at large call for faithful, persevering intercession -- not only on the National Day of Prayer, but throughout the year. As Martin Luther once said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness." What comfort and encouragement are available in the assurance that our sovereign God is attuned to our pleas, that He waits to intervene on our behalf, and that He is "mighty to save" (Zephaniah 3:17).

The 60th annual observance of the National Day of Prayer will take place Thursday, May 5th, and the theme we've chosen is A Mighty Fortress is Our God. This was inspired by Psalm 91:2, which states, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

At this perilous and uncertain juncture in our country's history, it is critical that we remain in prayer. The American people continue to be plagued with challenges that defy simple answers, and our hope lies in humbly seeking the Almighty's guidance, protection, and blessing.

Please join (us) in endeavoring to spark a revival of prayer throughout our country. There is no better time than this! It is the hope for America.
Shirley Dobson, Chairman,
NDP Task Force

Houston Area Observances of The National Day of Prayer
(If you cannot attend one of these prayer events, please consider pausing at noon on Thursday, May 5, for a moment of prayer for America.)

Houston City Hall (900 Bagby) - National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 5 - 12 noon-1:00 PM

Pastors and Ministry Leaders from across Houston will be gathering on the footsteps of Houston's City Hall to call upon the Name of the Lord for His forgiveness, mercy and grace and for the salvation of our nation.

Contact: Pastor Brian Gowan -- 713-363-2585 -- <http://www.grace.tv>

National Day of Prayer Breakfast

Thursday, May 5 - 6:30-8:00 AM

Champion Forest Baptist Church, 15555 Stuebner Airline Rd., is holding its

annual NDP breakfast. Presentation of colors, brief program with an hour of prayer for our nation, our officials and our military. Meal Cost \$6.00. Public is welcome. Paying for the meal is not required; you may attend for prayer only at 6:45 AM.

Contact: Dennis Hoerr -- 832 661-9744 -- www.championforest.org

Montgomery County Eagle Forum National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 5 - 7:00-8:00 PM

Evening prayer event. Local pastors and community leaders praying for our families, nation, military, schools, churches, government and leaders. Local boy scout troupe will place our flags and lead pledges, and local choirs will lead patriotic (verses emphasizing God) songs.

Conroe 1st Assembly of God, 3993 I-45 North, Conroe

Contact: Raymond Baker -- 936 856-5261 -- <http://www.mceagleforum.org>

May Mission of the Month "Noisy Offering"

Sunday, May 29 - Lutheran Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry provides an ELCA presence at more than 180 state and private colleges and universities, with cooperating congregations in campus ministry at an additional 400 campuses nationwide.



Drawing on the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, Campus Ministry bears witness to God's amazing grace within the context of higher education. Sensitive to the pastoral needs of those on campus and engaged in the intellectual discourse of the university, Campus Ministry strives to communicate the Gospel in fresh ways.

Through worship, study, fellowship, and service, members of the academic community taste the fullness of God's grace. As expansive as Christ's love, Campus Ministry reaches out to all who teach and learn, inviting them to experience the challenge of following Jesus.

Lutheran Campus Ministry: a Lutheran ministry on campus, not just a ministry to Lutherans.

[Information on Lutheran Campus Ministry locations in Texas and around the US \(including addresses, contacts, email, etc.\)](#)

Make some noise. Make a difference in the world.

African Initiative

Elevating the Kagera Scholarship Program

As a result of growing financial support, we are able to strengthen the mission of the Kagera Scholarship Program. The objective of the Kagera Scholarship Fund is to provide disadvantaged students from Ngara, Tanzania with an education so that they will have an opportunity to become contributing members of their society.

For the current school year, Hosanna will be sponsoring 34 scholarship students -- 26 in secondary school (grades 7 - 10), 6 in high school (grades 11 & 12) and 2 in college. In addition to funding 34 scholarships, we have made the following two important enhancements:

We will improve the management of the scholarship program by formalizing a relationship with WomenCraft Social Enterprise and Reverend Aaron Nkware, the Social Impacts Project Manager for WomenCraft. Reverend Aaron, who manages the scholarship fund, has the responsibility of participating in the selection of scholarship students, meeting with students to discuss their performance, being a signatory at both secondary schools, supervising the distribution of funds to students at secondary schools and notifying the college students of their scholarships. Reverend Aaron is responsible to Megan Stalheim, the on site WomenCraft Director from the United States.

We will improve scholarship students' access to tutorial assistance so that they are able to complete their studies and advance in their education. In 2010, fourteen secondary students (grades 7 through 10) sat for the National Examination and only five were selected to join high schools (grades 11 and 12). The main reason for the poor performance of the scholarship students and all students throughout the region is the critical shortage of teachers in secondary schools. This shortage causes some subjects to go untaught and forces students to pay for after-school tutoring assistance in order to learn their lessons. In addition, teachers throughout the region are overwhelmed with their workload and no longer have the ability to provide mentorship and counseling to students. Mentorship is especially important to our scholarship students, most of whom have lost one or both parents and are without parental support and guidance. As a temporary measure, WomenCraft will hire two assistant teachers who will work exclusively with the scholarship students to serve both as mentors and as tutors.

These efforts will be on a trial basis for this year. Continuation will be dependent upon funds being available and an improvement in the passing rate on the National Examination.

Our high school and college students continue to do well in school.

Step-by-Step Plan on How to Get More Young People (and Others) Into the Church

1. Be genuine. Do not under any circumstances try to be trendy or hip, if you are not already intrinsically trendy or hip. If you are a 90-year-old woman who enjoys crocheting and listens to Beethoven, by God be proud of it!
2. Stop pretending you have a rock band.
3. Stop arguing about whether women are okay, fully human, or are capable of being in a position of leadership.
4. Read the Scriptures. Go buy a Bible and read it. Start with Genesis, it's pretty cool. You can skip some of the other boring parts in the Bible. Remember though that almost every book of the Bible has some really funky stuff in it.
5. Start worrying about extreme poverty, violence against women, racism, consumerism, and the rate at which children are dying worldwide of preventable, treatable diseases. Put all the energy you formerly spent worrying into figuring out ways to do some good in

these areas.

6. Do not shy away from lighting candles, silence, laughter, really good food and extraordinary music. By "extraordinary music" I mean genuine music. Soulful music. Well-written, well-composed music. Original music. Four-part harmony music. Funky retro organ music. Hymns. Taize chants. Bluegrass. Steel guitar. Humming. Gospel. We are the church; we have a uber-rich history of amazing music. Remember this.
7. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
8. Learn how to sit with people who are dying.
9. Notice visitors, smile genuinely at them, include them in conversations. Don't ignore them, but do not overwhelm them.
10. Be vulnerable.
11. Stop worrying about getting young people into the church. Stop worrying about marketing strategies. Take a deep breath. If there is a God, that God isn't going to die even if there are no more Christians at all. Figure out who is suffering in your community. Go be with them.
12. Remind yourself that you don't have to take God to anyone. God is already with everyone. So, rather than taking the approach that you need to take the truth out to people who need it, adopt the approach that you need to go find the truth that others have and you are missing. Go be evangelized.
13. Put some time and care and energy into creating a beautiful space for worship and being-together. But shy away from building campaigns, parking lot expansions, and what-have-you.
14. Make some part of the church building accessible for people to pray in 24/7. Put some blankets there too, in case someone has nowhere else to go for the night.
15. Listen to God (to Wisdom, to Love) more than you speak your opinions.

This is a fool-proof plan. If you do it, I guarantee that you will attract young people to your church. And lots of other kinds of people too. The end.

Autism Now

In April PBS aired a six-part series called **Autism Now**. Autism is a developmental disorder that appears in the first 3 years of life, and affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills. The series is hosted by former anchor Robert MacNeil, whose 6-year-old grandson, Nick, has autism.

Watch the entire series: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/news/autism>. Each video has been posted on YouTube. Scroll down and look in the right column for links to each of the six segments.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors of autism

Autism is a physical condition linked to abnormal biology and chemistry in the brain. The exact causes of these abnormalities remain unknown, but this is a very active area of research. There probably is a combination of factors that lead to autism.

Genetic factors seem to be important. For example, identical twins are much more likely than fraternal twins or siblings to both have autism. Similarly, language abnormalities are more common in relatives of people with autism. Chromosomal abnormalities and other nervous system

(neurological) problems are also more common in families with autism.

A number of other possible causes have been suspected, but not proven. They involve:

- Diet
- Digestive tract changes
- Mercury poisoning
- The body's inability to properly use vitamins and minerals
- Vaccine sensitivity

Autism varies in its characteristics and in the degree to which it affects a person's life. That is why experts use the terminology **autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**.

How many children have autism?

The exact number of children with autism is not known. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects on average 1 in 110 children. Boys are on average four to five times more likely to have the disorder than girls. Parents with one child with ASD have a 5-10 percent chance of having another child with ASD.

There is no known cure for ASD. However, with effective early intervention (i.e., treatment), individuals with ASD can improve significantly, some so much they may show little or no sign of having the condition as adults. However, for most affected individuals, ASD results in significant symptoms and challenges that will exist throughout their lifetime.

State rankings of services for people with developmental disabilities

According to a United Cerebral Palsy analysis, Vermont provides the highest quality Medicaid services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Arizona and Alaska also rank high.

Meanwhile Illinois (48), **Texas (49)**, Arkansas (50) and Mississippi (51) round out the bottom of the list of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Although federal law mandates educational services for children with autism, there are virtually no support services provided once they become adults.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

by **Martin E. Marty**

Visitors today can still imagine something of what it must have been like for a captive to squirm or pace in the 10-foot by 7-foot floor space of a dismal cell at a Nazi prison called Tegel.

All the senses can come into play during such imagining. For instance, the odor of the whole third floor in which this cell stood, the prisoner's pen for a year and a half, was barely endurable.

From that cramped space designed to



kill creativity and bury hope, however, there issued letters and papers that became the substance of one of the great testimonial books of the 20th century.



Since there is so little to observe in the shadowed picture of this room, we are left other reminders and, later, his words written there, to fill it in with a human portrait, that of the author.

He was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the best-known German Lutheran pastor, who resisted Hitler and paid for his actions and expressions with his life. He was a man of many paradoxes: a longtime pacifist, something that Lutherans were not supposed to be; an inconsistent pacifist who became a conspirator in an assassination plot against Adolf Hitler; a thinker who took citizenship seriously but technically was guilty of treason; a still young world traveler who did his most memorable work in this cramped cell.



Many who view the photo of this enclosure do so knowing in advance, from his writing and that of his friends, something of what was occurring in his mind and in the cell. His letters tell us, but in any case it is not difficult to conjure up a sense of what his aloneness meant to the confined man, who was a naturally gregarious and friendly sort.

For a time he was unspoken to, even by guards. In his first days in the cell, they tossed in his meager breakfasts. They were forbidden to recognize the humanity of such a locked-in person.

We learn from a letter that succumbing to despair was tempting to the prisoner and that at a low moment suicide was even an option, because he considered himself to be "basically" dead.

We learn that, instead of killing himself, he began to write, especially as his material circumstances eventually, if only slightly, improved. Many of his notes, of course, were personal letters, some passed on through authorities and some smuggled out and then transmitted to his best friend, Eberhard Bethge, a pastor who saved them.

No publisher would have seen a potentially attractive book in the letters or his other various jottings, musings and poems written in prison.

Against all odds, a book was being drafted. After World War II, Eberhard - who had hidden the scraps and scribbles in the days of danger -- evaluated and organized them.

This meant deciphering scripts and arranging pages to fashion the book that the English-speaking world knows as *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Issuing from that 70-square-foot cell, this little work came to be known,

read and used around the world well into a new century. While the physical setting of its letters and papers was a place capable of inducing claustrophobia, spiritually these contents served readers everywhere as a testimony to openness, possibility and hope.

The letters and papers from prison reveal much about Bonhoeffer's spiritual life and vocation, and they served a new generation of collegians and seminarians who were looking for models of witness and courage.

Martin E. Marty is professor emeritus of religious history at the University of Chicago. He is the winner of the National Book Award and the author of more than 50 books. He has recently written the biography: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison.

A Call to Discipleship

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. - Matthew 28:19-20a

Jesus' words are the propelling mission of the ELCA.

That call is fresh today as Christ's example leads us out into the world to be a dynamic church of disciples (of all ages) initiating God's mission in the world!

With the advent of the new millennium, the ELCA embarked on a journey that embodied this church's desire to "teach the faith." The Call to Discipleship was developed as a key expression of the ELCA's Initiatives for a New Century.

Now, 11 years later, it's time to reissue the call. It's time to challenge one another to learn to "live in Christ." It's time to employ creative and profound ways and to develop effective models for discipleship that deepen spirituality and transform individuals and congregations!
What is discipleship?

As disciples we are called to follow Christ on a life-long journey, imitating the heart and mind of Christ.

Disciples are not born; they are formed in a community that learns, encourages, prays and worships together. This process of spiritual growth and transformation continues as disciples become apostles (those that are sent) on God's mission to love, serve and witness in the home, community, workplace and world.

God's presence and promise, given to us in Baptism and affirmed each day, calls us to a "vocation" of discipleship in our day-to-day encounters.
Faith practices

Our call to discipleship propels us to act as Christ would in our daily encounters with others and in our growing relationship with God.

The ELCA names seven common practices modeled by Christ: prayer, study, worship, invitation, encouragement, service and charity.

Faith practices are the tools of discipleship, which deepen our relationship

with Christ, equip us to live out our vocation and demonstrate how we are to love, serve and bear witness in the world.

What does a discipling congregation look like?

Most congregations "learn as they go," discovering what it means to be disciples in their particular context. "We'll try something and if it doesn't work, we try something else." They are open to new possibilities at the Spirit's nudging. Here are a just a few examples:

- While Christ Lutheran Church of Jefferson, Iowa, averages about 48 people at worship, this congregation typically tithes 15 percent in addition to special offerings. The people of Jefferson consider themselves disciples, sent to serve others. Their Lenten offerings support mission congregations and sustain a day camp for children from the community. Their "maternity ministry" provides a Christian children's book to every family taking a newborn home from the local hospital.
- For more than 25 years, Principe De Paz, Miami, has trained lay leaders in an ongoing School of Discipleship. Learners experience the basics of discipleship grounded in study, prayer and spiritual formation. Through this school many ministries in Miami have been supported.
- Grace Lutheran Church, Loves Park, Ill., is on a Mission from God. The congregation calls its members to recommit to deeper discipleship through an integrated process involving study, prayer, worship and service.
- Worshipers at Peace Lutheran Church, Charlottesville, Va., are reminded of their invitation to step into God's mission through seven simple, yet profound, murals painted on the walls of the sanctuary. Each depicts a mark of discipleship that encourages the congregation as it follows the call of Jesus Christ.

Bible Boot Camp 6

Jesus' Appearances After His Resurrection

Matthew 28

- As Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" were running from the empty tomb to inform the disciples that he is alive, Jesus tells the women to instruct the disciples to go to Galilee ahead of him to greet him (Matthew 28:10).
- To the eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had directed them.

Luke 24

- In the Road to Emmaus appearance to Cleopas and one other disciple as they walked to Emmaus. At first "their eyes were restrained" so that they could not recognize him. Later while having supper at Emmaus "their eyes were opened" and they recognized him.
- To "Simon." This appearance is not described directly by Luke but it is reported by the other apostles. It is not clear whether this happened before or after the appearance at Emmaus.
- To the eleven, together with some others (including Cleopas and his unnamed companion), in Jerusalem.

John 20-21

- To Mary of Magdala. At first she did not recognize him and thought that he was a gardener. When he said her name, she recognized him.
- To the disciples, except Thomas, on that same day. They were indoors "for fear of the Jews." Jesus entered and stood in their midst while the doors were shut.
- To the disciples, including Thomas, called Didymus. This was a week later, again indoors, and resulted in the famous doubting Thomas conversation.
- To "Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons and two other of his disciples," by Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee), which led to the miraculous catch of 153 fish. The disciple whom Jesus loved was present in this group.

Mark 16 - The so-called "longer ending of Mark" contains three appearances:

- To Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome.
- To two of Jesus' followers as they were walking in the countryside (Jesus appeared to them in "another form").
- To the eleven while they were dining.

Acts

- To the Church in Jerusalem. Forty days after the resurrection after which he ascended into heaven, with a prophecy to return (1:1-11).
- To Saul (Paul), on the Road to Damascus, though according to the text, it was a voice, not a vision, as Paul was blinded by a light (9:3-9, 22:6-11, 26:12-18) and also when Paul was in a trance he saw the Lord speaking (22:17-21).
- Stephen saw the Lord just before his death (7:55).
- Peter also heard a voice while in a trance (10:9-16, 11:4-10).

1 Corinthians 15

- "seen of Cephas, then of the twelve" 15:5
- "seen of above five hundred brethren at once" 15:6
- "seen of James; then of all the apostles" 15:7
- "last of all he was seen of me" (Paul) 15:8-9, also claimed in 9:1

The Road to Emmaus

These post-resurrection appearances all took place over a 40-day period, which concluded with Jesus' ascension. Luke's Gospel has what is perhaps the most unlikely one: along a parched and dusty stretch of road running (most likely west) from the city of Jerusalem to the insignificant village of Emmaus (meaning "warm baths" -- it has never been positively identified).

Cleopas, a relative of Christ's family, and another disciple (why is this person unnamed? Was this a woman, perhaps Cleopas' wife?) were walking along this road and talking about the shattering events that had just happened: the crucifixion, their likely peril as followers of Jesus, and now the reports of an empty tomb. The women of their company were talking about visions of angels and a gardener who resembled Jesus. What can it all mean?

As the two walked along, they were joined by a stranger. He seemed to be

from a far country for he appeared to know nothing of what had happened. So Cleopas and his friend filled the stranger in, telling him about Jesus, the carpenter's son from Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in deed and word, whom we had trusted should have been he to have redeemed Israel."

Now comes the twist in the story: Instead of expressing surprise or commiserating with them in their loss, the stranger instead began to expound the messianic scriptures from Moses through the prophets.

The travellers reached the end of their day's journey and the stranger made as if to travel on. Cleopas and his companion pressed the stranger to stay: "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

These last words were to be echoed by an asthmatic English parish priest, Henry L. Lyte, who shortly before he died wrote a poem called Eventide and gave it to a friend. The friend tossed it in a trunk where it languished unseen for 14 years; eventually, the poem was retrieved and set to music by William Monk (1823-1889) at a time of deep sorrow in his own life; it became one of the best beloved hymns -- Abide with Me:

*"When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."*

When Cleopas, his friend and the stranger sat down to supper, the stranger "took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them." What a moment of illumination that must have been, recalling so vividly the first Eucharist earlier that week. In that moment, Cleopas and his friend finally recognized the stranger as the risen Lord. And then he was gone.

Cleopas and his friend jumped up and set out on the approximately seven-mile trek back to Jerusalem to tell what had happened. As they ran back, perhaps stumbling as much from sheer excitement as from the dark, they said one to another: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

And so the Easter story is complete: the hill called Golgotha; the empty tomb; and the road to Emmaus. Miraculous it is that these three locations and events were to shape the succeeding 2,000 years of human history -- even today in our "post-Christian" era not quite forgotten.

In the 1960s, the great British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge made a BBC television series on the life of Christ; in the last scene, Muggeridge and a friend walked the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Muggeridge wrote:

"As my friend and I walked along like Cleopas and his friend, we recalled as they did the events of the Crucifixion and its aftermath in the light of our utterly different and yet similar world. Nor was it a fancy that we too were joined by a third presence. And I tell you that whatever the walk, and whoever the wayfarers, there is always this third presence ready to emerge from the shadows and to fall in step along the dusty, stony way."



Remains of the 4th or 5th century Byzantine basilica that was substantially rebuilt by the Crusaders at Emmaus Nicopolis, near Latrun Junction along Road 1 between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israel. This is one of four locations identified over the centuries as the place where Jesus appeared to Cleopas and his companion.

This particular site, which was the ancient city of **Nikopolis**, has been identified as the biblical Emmaus since the fourth century or earlier, and it became an important pilgrimage destination throughout the Byzantine era and Middle Ages. However, some scholars think it is unlikely to be the biblical Emmaus, mainly because it is too far (18 miles) from Jerusalem, based on the distance from Jerusalem to Emmaus in Luke 24:13: "Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called *Emmaus*, **about seven miles** from Jerusalem."

Today Emmaus Nikopolis is the Muslim village of Am'was with excavated ruins of a Byzantine basilica with Crusader renovations, a small archaeological museum, and a modern Trappist monastery.

Some Photos to Share



From excursion boat "Chorazin" on the Sea of Galilee. Not a sea, but a large, heart/pear-shaped lake, 8.5 miles wide x 13 miles long and some 700 feet below sea level. In Hebrew it is called Yam Kinneret (meaning unknown; perhaps from kinnor, harp or lyre). One of Jesus' post resurrection appearances, recorded in [John 21:1-14](#), took place, perhaps on the lake's north shore, when the disciples had a miraculous catch of 153 fish.



A trio of Evening Primrose, taken during a morning walk. A reminder, this particular morning, of Jesus' words in [Matthew 6:28-34](#):

"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? "So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we

drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."

"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Resurrection

Video by Rob Bell



May Highlights

Sunday, May 1

- 11:30 PM - Church Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 3

- 7:00 PM - Care Team Meeting

Thursday, May 5

- National Day of Prayer

Saturday, May 7

- 8:00 AM - Annual Garage Sale
- 6:00 PM - Hosanna Book Discussion

Sunday, May 8

- **Equal Exchange Coffee Sunday**
- **Rachel's Day**

Wednesday, May 11

- **5:30 PM - WELCA Board Meeting**
- **Confirmation Banquet**

Thursday, May 12

- **10:00 AM - Bishop's Worship Excellence Team Meeting**

Saturday, May 14

- **8:00 AM - 2nd Annual Men of Hosanna Fishing Trip in Galveston**
- **John and Nancy Mulkey Scholarship Endowment Dinner and Auction**

Sunday, May 15

- **Begin IHN Week at Hosanna (May 15-22)**
- **11:30 AM - Congregation Meeting**

Friday, May 20

- **9:00 AM - Seniors Outing to the Rosenberg Train Museum**

Sunday, May 29

- **Mission of the Month Noisy Offering**

Monday, May 30

- **Memorial Day Holiday - Office Closed**

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