

March 2024

# BROADCASTER

*A magazine of Worship Anew*

*Hope*

**IN THE MIDST OF  
HARD TIMES**

# In the Shadow of Hope:



*Matthew F. Leighty*

**Matthew F. Leighty**  
Executive Director

Over my many years of visiting people throughout the church, a moment remains with me and drives my passion for the work of our mission. In the quiet dining hall of a senior living center, I found myself in conversation with an elderly woman. Her eyes, glistening with both joy and sorrow, hinted at a depth of life experiences. As we spoke, she shared the weight of recent loss, her tearful eyes betraying the lingering ache of grief. Her children and grandchildren didn't visit her anymore. She had questions, moments when she wondered why God still had her on this earth, especially in the face of the pain and loneliness she carried.

With vulnerability, she unfolded her journey — a tapestry woven with the threads of joy and sorrow. As she shared her story, I recalled the words from Isaiah 25:8-9 (ESV), *"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"*



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*Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.*



# Lent, Easter, and God's Enduring Promise

It is in moments like these that God's promises are woven into our lives. The anticipation of a day when God would fulfill His promise, eradicating the sting of death and wiping away every tear, provides us with the ultimate source of comfort and hope.

As we journey through this Lenten season, heading toward Easter, the timeless message of Isaiah rings forth with the promise of eternal joy. It invites us to await the day when grief will transform into gladness, and salvation will be our eternal song. In the midst of life's complexities, Worship Anew has become a beacon, illuminating the path with a message of hope and redemption for all who seek solace in the arms of our loving Savior.

Amid this Lenten journey, the ministry of Worship Anew brings the message of hope and comfort we have in our God. Through the Worship Anew television program, daily devotions, and our care package ministry, lives are touched with the message of Christ's love. As we reflect

on Isaiah's prophetic words, Worship Anew is a channel through which God's promise of eternal joy is shared. The ministry resonates the message of hope, providing comfort and inspiration during Lent and beyond.

In a world where hope can be elusive, the Holy Spirit calls us during this Lenten season to embrace the enduring hope found in God's promise of salvation, magnificently fulfilled through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. As we journey through Lent toward the triumphant culmination of Easter, may our hearts resound with profound gratitude for He is the Lord we have long awaited; indeed, let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

**"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"**

*Isaiah 25:8-9*

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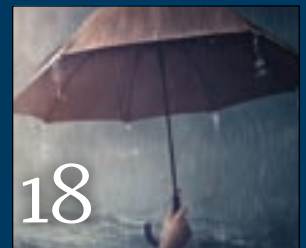
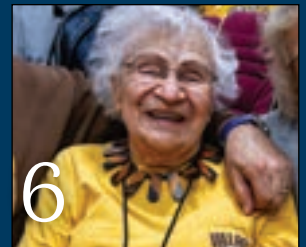
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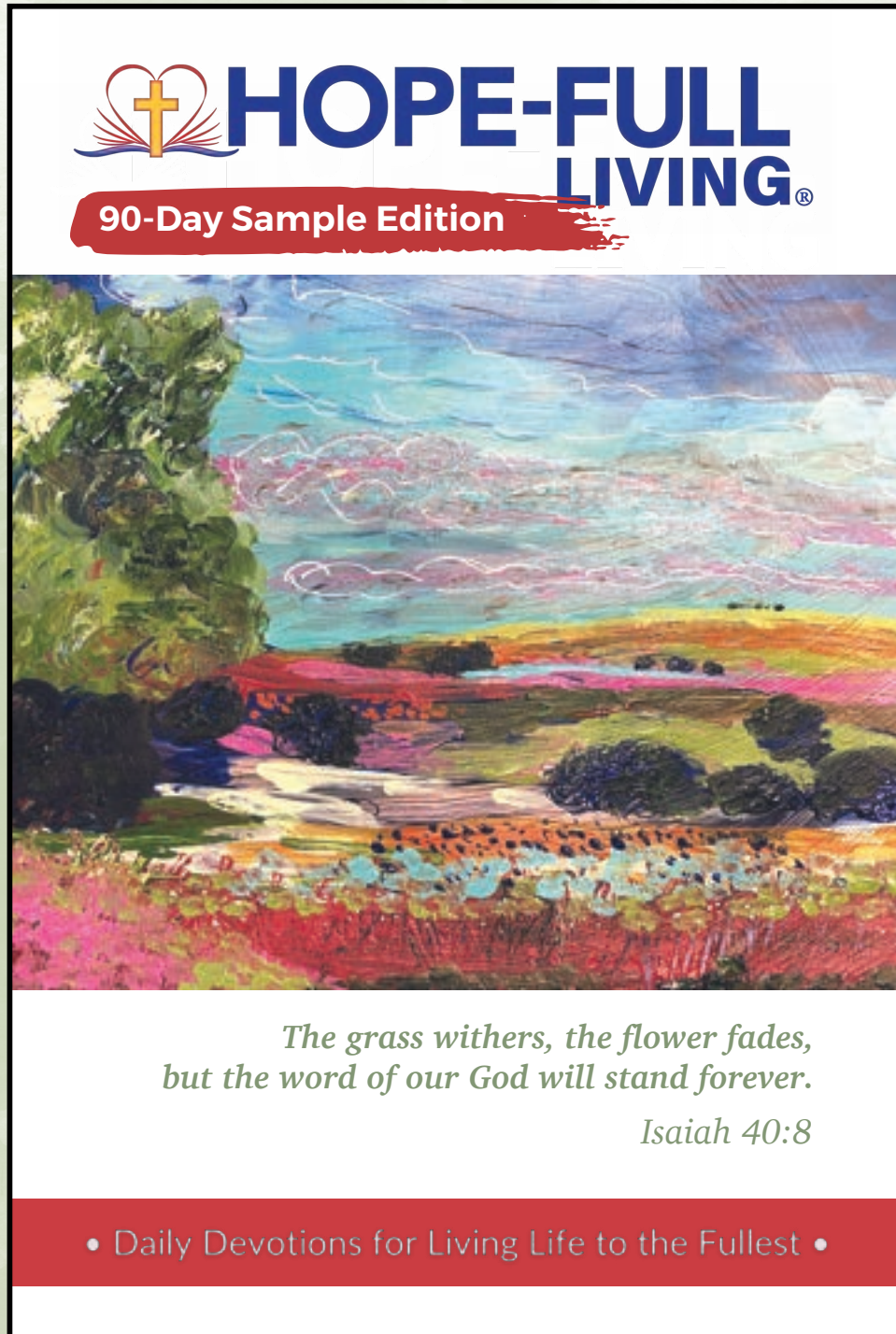
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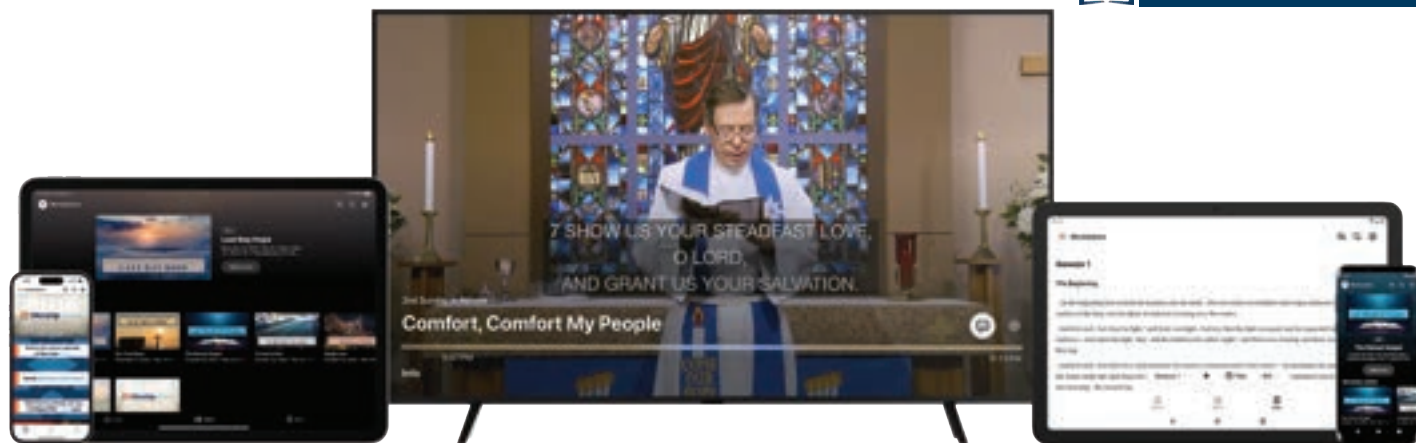


# ARE YOU LOOKING TO GROW IN YOUR FAITH?



Hope-Full Living is a quarterly devotional written by seniors, for seniors. This devotional provides a daily dive into God's Word to inspire and uplift you. We would like to offer you a sample copy of our devotional.

**If you would like to receive this free sample, please contact us at 888-286-8002 or by email at [info@worshipanew.org](mailto:info@worshipanew.org).**



# TV app expands the reach of the ministry

A newly launched Worship Anew TV app is giving viewers the opportunity to watch the weekly program anytime and at their convenience.

“God has given us the unique tool of technology and media to reach countless people with His Word. Therefore, I’m excited about the launch of our TV app,” said Matthew Leighty, executive director of Worship Anew. “This opportunity allows more and more people to have access to the gospel through our Worship Anew program and other resources that we offer through the ministry.”

The TV app is available through Roku, Apple TV, Google TV, and Amazon Fire TV. Search for “Worship Anew” in your device’s app store for the free download. The app allows viewers to stream the weekly program as well as

past programs. To learn how to download and use the TV app, please visit [WorshipAnew.org/App](http://WorshipAnew.org/App).

Worship Anew is also available on Smart TVs through YouTube as well as on our app for iPhone and Android devices.

Since 1980, Worship Anew, headquartered in Fort Wayne, Ind., has been broadcasting weekly worship services for aging adults who seek to help them live an abundant life in Christ. Today, Worship Anew reaches thousands of people each week across the nation and around the world on television and streamed online. To learn more about Worship Anew and other ministries, including the care ministry and Hope-Full Living daily devotions, please visit [WorshipAnew.org](http://WorshipAnew.org).



Open your camera app and focus on the code. Click the link that appears.



Photos provided by Valparaiso University  
Connie Bretscher, center, (with her son and daughter-in-law) is a regular at Valparaiso University men's basketball games. In January, they recognized her over the PA for her 103rd birthday.



# LIVING 103 years IN GOD'S SERVICE

By Ashley Wiehe  
Director of Communications



Photo provided  
Connie Bretscher smiles for a photo in her home.

Constance “Connie” Bretscher lives each day to spread her joy in Christ — all 103 years of them.

Bretscher is an author for Worship Anew's Hope-Full Living devotional. She has been writing for the publication for eight years, but writing has been a lifelong passion.

She graduated with a degree in journalism from Valparaiso University and has been writing ever since, including for her church's paper. When she was approached about writing for Hope-Full Living, it was an opportunity to share the joy that she knows in Christ to even more people.

“My inspiration is simply that I want to spread my joy in Christ,” Bretscher said. “I’m glad to do it now because I have things to say. I have a joy in my life that I want to share.”

Bretscher grew up in southern Illinois and now lives in Valparaiso, Ind., where she stayed following college. She is an avid writer and pianist. She loves to exercise, and cheers on the Valparaiso Beacons whenever she has the opportunity.

“I’m thankful for what He lets me do, and I don’t cry in the corner for what I can’t do,” she said. “I have a thing on my fridge that says ‘Never, never stop moving.’”

Twelve years ago, Bretscher was diagnosed

with macular degeneration. Since that time, her eyesight is not what it used to be. Writing is a struggle, but she can do it, and she can only play music on the piano that she knows from memory. And yet, she does not get discouraged and leads her life, knowing that God has a plan for her.

“He is leading me on,” she said. “It’s just what God has put in front of me to do.”

On January 21, Bretscher celebrated her 103rd birthday. She went to a Valparaiso basketball game and saw friends and family who brought by flowers and candy. For her, it was just like any other birthday.

“I’m amazed at how people look at this as a huge thing,” she laughed. “I felt like it was a normal birthday.”

Bretscher lives alone in her own house with the help of her son and daughter-in-law who live nearby, and as she says, “people that God sends to help me.” She attends as many Valparaiso basketball games as she can. Even though she can no longer see the numbers of the players on the jerseys, her family is there to help her enjoy the game.

“I’m active at the basketball games. I sit way up in the bleachers. I don’t sit in the chair backs. Those are for old people,” she chuckled. “I’m close to the players. They are kind of my guys.”

Day by day, she is not complaining, but living her best life. She helps others, not only through Hope-Full Living devotionals, but also through those who just need to talk. For her, it’s a consistent calling — spreading the joy that she has in Christ.

As she writes in her Hope-Full Living devotion this month, “With new aches or pains or fading vision and memory that may come to us with the advancing years, we can say, nevertheless, I can walk with my hand in your powerful hand through whatever may come, with joy, knowing your love supports me, and my years are in your hand.”

**“I have a joy in my life  
that I want to share.”**

*~ Connie Bretscher  
Hope-Full Living Author*



*Photo provided*

Connie Bretscher, right, poses with Rev. Dr. Tim Puls during a visit. Puls and Bretscher are both writers for Hope-Full Living. Below, read the devotion written by Bretscher in the Quarter 2 issue of Hope-Full Living.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024**

## Nevertheless

“... let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt.”

*Matthew 26:39*

The nevertheless theology comes clear in many biblical illustrations. St. Paul tells his student, Timothy (2 Timothy 1:18) that he will find Christians who have “swerved from the truth.” “Nevertheless God’s firm foundation stands, the Lord knows who are his.” The great example, the great *nevertheless* comes when Jesus contemplates the walk before him — the scorn, suffering, even tortured death, and he cries out, “Let this cup pass from me.” *Nevertheless*, not as I will, but as thou (my father) wilt. With that example clearly before us, with new aches or pains or fading vision and memory that may come to us with the advancing years, we can say, *nevertheless*, I can walk with my hand in your powerful hand through whatever may come, with joy, knowing your love supports me, and my years are in your hand.

*Constance Bretscher  
Valparaiso, IN*

**Dearest Lord Jesus**, give me the strength, wisdom, and joy to serve you as I am able. Amen.

**Reflect:** Teach me to focus on what I can still do to serve you with true joy.

**Read:** Matthew 28:8-18 and John 11:27-30



# How is the date of Easter determined?

This year Easter is Sunday, March 31! Or, is it May 5?

The early Christian Church had a hard time agreeing on a date all Christians would celebrate Easter. Some celebrated Easter on the day of the Jewish Passover. The problem many Christians had with this was that the Jewish Passover (the 14th day of Nisan) didn't always fall on a Sunday.

A decision was made in A.D. 325 at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea that Christian churches would celebrate Easter Day on the Sunday after the first full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. That settled it, right? Wrong.

The difference now between the Western Church and Eastern Church is that the Eastern Orthodox Church chooses its Easter Day based on the older Julian Calendar while the Western Church celebrates Easter according to the newer Gregorian calendar.

So, in the West and at Worship Anew, we'll be recognizing Easter on March 31, and our Eastern brothers and sisters will be celebrating on Sunday, May 5.

As you celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord, we pray that you might live every day with Easter joy!

## FUN FACT

**In the western church, Easter cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25.**

**2025 — April 20**

**2026 — April 5**

**2027 — March 28**

**2028 — April 16**

**2029 — April 1**

**2030 — April 21**







# Worship Anew in March

Year 2024 | Series B



## Christ Cleanses the Temple

**March 3, 2024 – Third Sunday in Lent****Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III**

Christ's cleansing of the temple was one incident in his fight against evil. His carrying on that fight is good news for us, and guides us as to how we believers are to live in today's world.

*Sermon Text: John 2:13-16**Readings: Psalm 19:1, 7-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-16*

## Lifted Up

**March 10, 2024 – Fourth Sunday in Lent****Rev. Thomas Eggold**

There is not a story or sign in the entire Old Testament that points more directly to the Cross than the serpent on the stake. Here, a bronze serpent hangs from a cross, and it was put there by God precisely because of sin. The sign of our sin and the image of the death we deserve is suspended between heaven and earth and between God and man. And there, on the wooden pole, God saved His people.

*Sermon Text: John 3:14-15**Readings: Psalm 107:1-9; Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21*

## Greatness In His Glory

**March 17, 2024 – Fifth Sunday in Lent****Rev. Shayne Jonker**

Jesus alone was qualified, there is no one on earth who can lift this miserable cup of death to his lips and drink it to the bottom. There is no one on earth who can be baptized into our death and rise up out of it to life. Only Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh can stand in our place and do for all what we can't do for ourselves.

*Sermon Text: Mark 10:45**Readings: Psalm 119:9-16; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mark 10:32-45*

## The Suffering Savior

**March 24, 2024 – Sunday of the Passion****Rev. Paul Shoemaker**

Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all people for all time. On Calvary's cross He paid for those sins in full. His resurrection on Easter was God the Father's "Well done." He accomplished His task. His victory is complete.

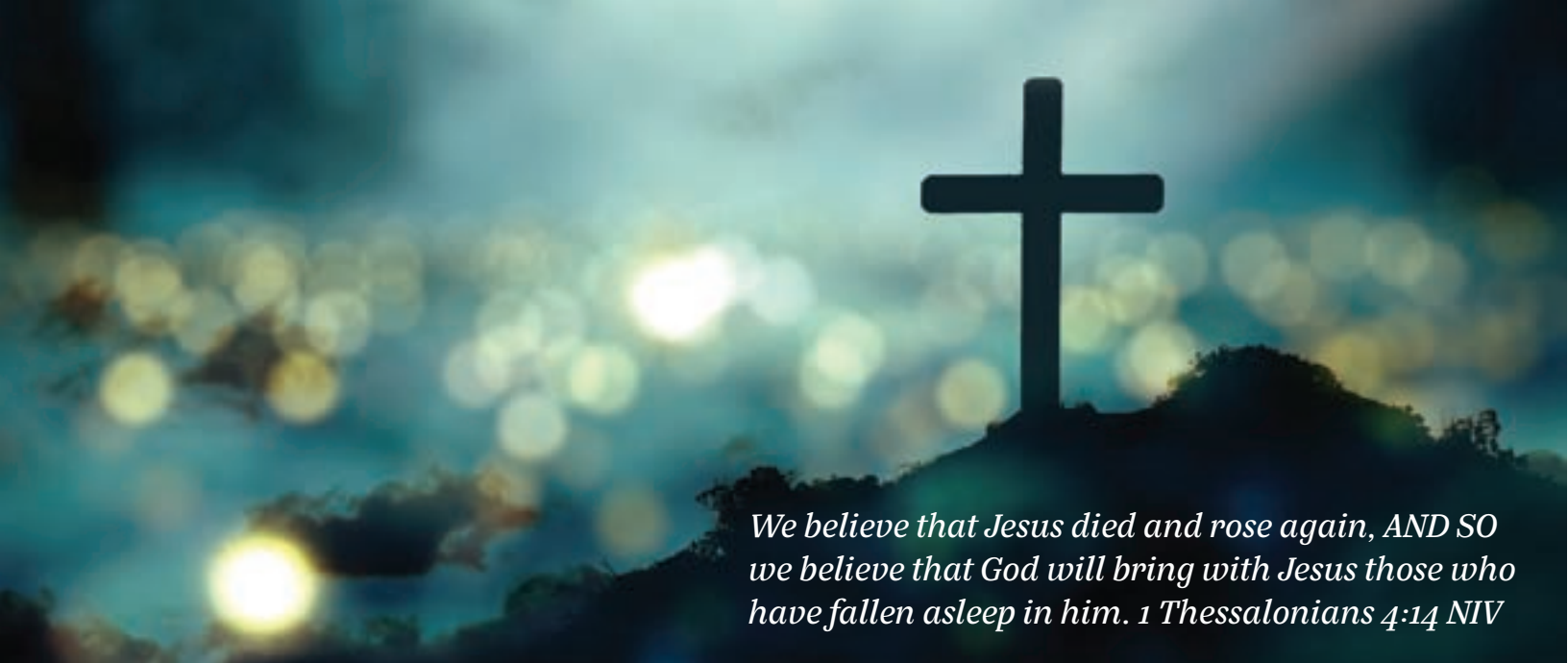
*Sermon Text: Mark 15:1-47**Readings: Psalm 31:9-16; Mark 15:1-47*

## Boy! Do I Love Him!

**March 31, 2024 – Easter Sunday****Rev. William Mueller**

Easter Sunday is so filled with joy! The sudden turn of events in the life of Jesus and His disciples. Even though He had told the disciples about it ahead of time, no one remembered this would be. Death is swallowed up in victory. In the resurrection of Jesus, death is undone. The plug is pulled on death. And this brings us great joy!

*Sermon Text: Isaiah 25:6-9**Readings: Psalm 16; Isaiah 25:6-9; Mark 16:1-8*



*We believe that Jesus died and rose again, AND SO we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 NIV*

# “And So ...”

*By Rev. Richard Koehneke*

**A**ND SO ... Jesus died and rose again ... AND SO ... we are confident that our sins are forgiven, our penalty has been paid on the cross, the debt of sin has been cancelled by the blood of Jesus, the stone has been rolled away from the tomb, death is defeated, and the door to heaven is opened. Christ is the open door to life with God forever.

As you breathe your last, Christ will say to you, “Don’t be afraid. I paid for all your sins. I am with you now, as I have always been. And soon, in only a moment, you will be with me.” And you will open your eyes to behold the face of the One who loved you to death: both his and yours.

Jesus died and rose again ... AND SO ... our grief at the loss of loved ones is not a hopeless grief. We sorrow, yes, but not as those who have no hope. Those who have died trusting in Christ are now safe in the arms of God. They are with Christ. Christ is with us. In Christ, we are still together. One day Christ will bring all his people together in a resurrection reunion that will be all hello and no more goodbye, all laughter and no more tears, nothing but embracing and no more letting go.

Jesus died and rose again ... AND SO ... we who are baptized into his death and resurrection rise daily to live a new life. We are Easter people! We are victorious in Christ! We are more than conquerors through him who loved us and gave himself up for us. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me! Death has no more power over us. Sin is no longer our master. Satan is no match for

the power of Jesus Christ in us.

Jesus died and rose again ... AND SO ... our relationships are renewed and transformed by his resurrection power. You are a new creation in Christ; the old has passed away, the new has come! Today is the first day of the rest of your life. You can’t go back to yesterday and change it, but you can start today to make a new tomorrow. Learn from the past; don’t live in it!

There are battles yet to be fought. Daily the God-despising world must be resisted and rejected, and accommodation will not work. Daily Satan must be rebuked and renounced, and you must not be gentle. Daily the self-serving sinful nature in each one of us must be drowned and crucified. It takes both drowning and crucifixion because it’s so strong and persistent.

The victory is ours because Christ has won the victory. He has called us, and He has claimed us, to be His people: His victorious Easter people. Whatever struggle or sorrow each day may bring, it bears no comparison to what Christ went through on Good Friday to accomplish our salvation.

Good Friday was not the end for our Savior, and it is not the last word for us. As with Jesus, so it is for his people. Jesus died and rose again, AND SO ... God’s final word, God’s forever word, is LIFE, JOY, VICTORY!

***Rev. Richard Koehneke retired as senior pastor of Holy Cross in Fort Wayne, Ind. in 2009. He also previously served as one of the regular preachers on “Worship for Shut-Ins,” (now called “Worship Anew”).***



# Strengthening Your Body, Mind, and Soul

*By Elizabeth Puls  
Editor-in-Chief of Hope-Full Living*

As the Lord continues to bless us with more years, we should all be looking for ways to strengthen our bodies, minds, and spiritual health. Often, the hardest part is getting started. Here are some ideas to get started in maintaining a healthy body, mind, and soul:

## Body

- Get out for a neighborhood walk. Stop to greet the neighbors.
- Join a gym. Many healthcare plans cover the cost of a gym membership.
- Get out and enjoy nature. If you are still able, go for a hike along a nature trail. Remember to always carry your cell phone in case you run into unforeseen issues along the way.

## Mind

- Try completing a puzzle, crossword, or word game (like the one at the back of the Broadcaster!).
- Join friends for a card game.
- Attend a lecture that will pique your interests.

## Soul

- Begin your day with a devotion.
- Attend a weekly worship service and a Bible study.
- Become a mentor to a younger person who could benefit from your wisdom.

As the warmer spring weather greets us, we can all find ways to become physically, mentally, and spiritually stronger in the Lord.



# The Soul and Spirit in Aging

## *Constant Waxing and Waning?*

By Dr. John D. Eckrich, M.D.

Author of "Resilient Aging and Wellness"

**N**ow I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen."

Recently, I came across a couple of additional lines that I cherish:

*"And if in morning light I wake,  
Show me the path of love to take."*

You might have knelt at the bedside and recited this children's prayer in the presence of your parents as did I, or again with your young ones. The words of this prayer succinctly encompass the core of soul-ness in each one of us. They portray the simple faith of childhood, but powerfully linger especially in an aging body, mind, and spirit. The words also encompass the core of soul-ness as the capacity to fear, love, and trust God.

As Christians, we know and believe that we have a spiritual aspect to our being. We each have a soul in which the spiritual essence of who we are in Christ resides. Our souls are what Christ came to save, and our souls are where faith and hope in him are found. God is faithful to the relationship restored in God's creatures and creation through Christ's sacrifice. God does not falter or change. In Christ, we are assured of God's unconditional, unalterable love.

But doubt and uncertainty about the nature of our souls from our human perspective can creep in, especially as we grow older, and particularly in light of a deteriorating body or a confused and wandering mind. Additionally, we may find ourselves asking, "What exactly happens to me when I die?" We see and know that our physical bodies

cease operating and will turn to dust, but what about our souls?

Much remains, and will remain, an enigma until we meet our Creator face to face and until God brings complete healing to a fallen, disordered, and diseased creation. But what we know to be true from Scripture is that the soul is mysterious and integral to being human and that it is a precious gift to each of us from a loving, continuously engaged, trustworthy Creator.

### THE SOUL DEFINED

In Genesis 2:7, we read, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (soul)." The Creator God forms humankind not only out of created material elements, but also makes the material a living being, a whole, a soul, by placing God's spirit or breath within it. It is our soul that flows from a relational Being, God. Our God is a relational God, a God who loves us and wants to be with us.

But though we were made in God's image and were meant to live in harmony with our God, when sin entered the world that perfect unity was lost; God sought to reestablish the relationship with us. God did that through Jesus, God's Son, who died to redeem creation from this horrid separation, from the clench of death.

Furthermore, the human creature may be made in the image of God, but is not God. That "capacity to love" appears to be a special, highly significant, shared,





relational nature of the human creature and the Creator. The rest of God's creation, and that would include lesser animals, relates to God as Creator and Sustainer, and man as their steward (Genesis 1:26-27), but, scripturally, does not appear to share with man or God the love-centered image of God.

So, God and humankind share a relationship distinct from other animals. Yet man and animals also share a relationship distinct from God; neither humankind, nor animals, nor anything else in creation are immune to the effects of sin. Both humans and animals have physical natures susceptible to sin.

There is a most important second aspect of love as a part of the soul of a human, and that is the soul's assurance of being loved by the Creator. (Matthew 10:30-31 and John 3:16) I suspect, at the root of most of the distress and emotional ills we face as humans, the doubting that we are loved turns out to be the very seed of our troubles. That seed of doubt is sin.

Now there is much speculation on how this redemption of our souls will happen when we die; we will never truly know the exact details this side of heaven. What we do know for sure as Christians is that, at death, we will be with God, joined with God in inconceivable joy, eternally. What we can know without question (because we are told so in God's Word) is that God is loving, so loving that God sent Christ from the splendor of heaven into the pain of earth, and even into the depths of hell, in our place so that we could be with the Creator into eternity. God has the plan; God has the vision; God provides the pathway in Jesus. Jesus is preparing the way and the destiny (John 14:2-4), even as we are aging.

As Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NIV: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That's good enough for me, and I pray through Jesus that it is for you.

## CARE OF THE SOUL IN AGING

Until that time when our souls are reunited with God in heaven, how should we care for our souls as we age?

Of course, you might think, is he finally going to explore the topic of yoga, or medication, or mindfulness, or the host of guided cognitive therapies or mood-altering medications, or aroma and phytonutrient self help strategies for reducing the distress of anxiety and conflict

and pain within our soul? As a board-certified physician, I certainly know the value of many modalities to reduce fear and anxiety, alter emotions, and assist people in coping with all sorts of distresses to their psyche or their aching physical states.

Surprise, readers: I am not going into these therapies! If those are of further interest to you, let me refer you to my earlier book, "Fear, Anxiety and Wellness," or refer you to your personal physician or mental health guide. I'm not addressing these care modalities because, frankly, they don't get at the very core reality and foundational illness harming us — the scourge of sin on our very body, mind, spirit — our soul and all of creation. For this care you need God's Word, the working of God's Holy Spirit in your soul, and the ministries of those companions on your earthly journey who assist in bringing that message to you: pastors, priests, Christian educators and therapists, and your faith community.

Furthermore, in the course of any given day, you can "pause" (take a breath) and "pivot" (turn to the Spirit's leading). I invite you to incorporate these "pause and pivot" moments to help you in the care of your soul:

- ▶ Many of us within the Christian faith community make the sign of the Cross when we arise in the morning or throughout the day as a sign of our Baptismal covenant — we pause and pivot by professing our identity as children of God on the forehead, lips, or heart (Romans 6:3-11 ESV).
- ▶ Daily, we pause and pivot by placing ourselves at the foot of the Cross, the empty Tomb, the mount of Ascension, as we enter the reading, hearing, and listening to God's Word led by the Holy Spirit to learn, mark, and inwardly digest God's loving relationship to us, and the Spirit's processing and empowering of God's will and ways to restoration through God's Son, Jesus (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV; John 16:12-14 ESV).
- ▶ Daily, we are encouraged through the Scriptures to acknowledge and confess our sinfulness; ask for forgiveness and receive God's mercy. We pause and pivot by professing our sin, partaking of God's forgiveness in Word and Sacrament, and by providing the same forgiveness to others within our lives seeking restoration. We are called to point them to the Cross (2 Corinthians 2:10; John 20:23; Matthew 18:18; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Matthew 3:6).

*continued on page 14*

- ▶ Daily, we are pausing and pivoting through prayer focused on God's good will for us as expressed, centered, and anchored in God's Word. One form of that prayer might be meditatively praying (Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; and of course, Matthew 7:7-8 and Matthew 6:5-8).
- ▶ Daily, we pause and pivot by pondering and proclaiming our faith as one's made passively righteous because of Christ's death (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 3:21-28, 4:18-25).
- ▶ Daily, we pause and pivot by participating actively in righteousness as we mindfully steward the gifts of our bodies, intellects, emotions, relationships, vocations, and resources. (Galatians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:29; Titus 1:6-8, 2:12; Ephesians 3:1-3; Luke 16:11; Matthew 13:12, 25:23; Romans 6:19).
- ▶ Daily, by Christ's power, we cry defiantly in the face of Satan and all foes brought on by sin and its sequelae displayed in an aging body, mind, and spirit — we pause and pivot by protesting and then progressing to live out our Baptismal covenant abundantly (Romans 6:12-14; 1 John 1-2, 3:14; Galatians 3:29; 1 Corinthians 12:25).
- ▶ Daily, we pause and pivot when we acknowledge that this renewal posture is not of our own doing, but the power of Christ and his Holy Spirit, alive and working within us to mature our faith (Titus 3:5; Philippians 3:9; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- ▶ Daily, we pause and pivot by turning from self-gain and instead provide thankfully and generously of our gifts and talents to God's glory and in service to God's people (Leviticus 25:35-37; Psalm 41:1-3; Psalm 119:36; Matthew 10:42; Luke 6:37-38, 21:1-4; Acts 20:32-25).
- ▶ Keep in mind that we don't live in these disciplines because it is necessary for our relational wellbeing with God. We walk in these behaviors and live life together in Christ because we are joyful and thankful for God's mercy. Christ's presence, Christ's spiritual DNA touching, repairing, and healing our spiritual DNA, thus compels us. Participating in disciples' lives in and of itself does not bring resilience; these are reflections of the work God has already created in us through Christ to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

Are we within the Christian faith community living perfectly? Of course not; impossible. We know ourselves truly to be the worst of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). But we are moved by the Spirit to walk, like the Emmaus disciples, our Baptismal journey with hearts on fire, daily (Luke 42:33-35).

I'm a physician, so one way to consider these disciplines, rather than as resilience prescriptions, is to think of them as wellness outcomes of the Holy Spirit's presence, even as fruit of the Spirit's working within us (Galatians 5:22-23). We remember our identity — who and whose we are. From our baptism and affirmation of faith on, we are new creations in Christ as St. Paul reminds us (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Remembering our wellness outcome status is important especially when we see no other human being, or when, because of cognitive dysfunction or physical separation, we are unable to connect to others within relationships. A discipline of prayer focused in God's Word may then become the consistent conversation, connection, and link that is quintessential for our human existence.

Additionally, there may be particularly stressful circumstances that sadden and trouble our soul due to conflicted relationships within family or community. Does St. Paul provide what I might call clinical concise or "best practice" advice as to how we die to sin and rise to new life in Christ, especially in relational distress? I believe he does within his letters to the early Church.

In Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV, Paul invites us to three steps in this relational resilience-renewal:

- ▶ "Put off your old self." This is the process of confession, and it involves a recognition of your deeply embedded, automated, behavioral responses to stress, fear, and challenges (v. 22).
- ▶ "Be made new in the attitude of your minds." Through prayer, be in Christ's presence. This requires you to do a reality check of yourself. You need to ask is it more important to protect your personal feelings, or to be in the healing and highly valued relationship with Christ, and subsequently with the neighbor you are in conflict with (v. 23).
- ▶ "Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Connect the actions of the body and the thoughts of the mind to the heart of Christ, His desire to be a peaceful and non-anxious presence is our lives. Instead of being a worrywart, be "content in all things" knowing that Christ is there right in the midst of the storm (Philippians 4:12 NIV). You



then truly become the nonanxious, forgiving, and loving presence of Christ in all relationships.

We return to Paul relational wisdom regarding resilience of our weary soul, and it comes in his inspired words in Colossians 3:12-14 NIV:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all of these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

In the end, it’s all about forgiveness — forgiving as Christ has forgiven us. The act of forgiving can be so very difficult, but it is truly the beginning of healing (Matthew 9:5). Being forgiven and sharing forgiveness softens hardened hearts, renews love, and restores a resilient soul.

Once again, we can’t alter our attitude, being, or behavior by our own doing.

This is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit building and maturing our faith, healing those damaged segments of our emotional, physical, and spiritual DNA, and gradually guiding us to more Christ-like patterns of interrelating with our Creator, God’s people, and all of God’s creation. We are resilient because of our Redeemer! Live well in body, mind, and spirit — live well with your whole soul by his grace!

***Dr. John D. Eckrich is a Lutheran physician and author. A chapter from his book “Resilient Aging and Wellness: Mindful Stewardship of Body, Mind and Spirit into the Next Season of Living” is featured here.***





# RESILIENCE

## *Enduring the fall and then springing back up*

By Gina Teeple

Director of Development & Ministry Relations

I was at a concert recently, and as the music started, a little girl began to twirl. The adults around her chuckled and immediately shifted to give her space as she twirled and twirled and twirled.

No one was surprised when the girl fell (that is what happens when you twirl and twirl and twirl!), but no one moved toward her. Everyone silently agreed to let the girl decide for herself if she was hurt and whether she needed help.

When no one came to her aid, the girl examined the palms of her hands and knees for a moment, got up, and began to twirl again.

There is a fancy word for what the girl exhibited that day: Resilience.

The definition of resilience is “the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness” and “the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.”

So, to be resilient is to be both tough and elastic. It is enduring the fall and then springing back up.

But how do we do that? As Christians, we always look to Christ. And as we journey through Lent this year, we can specifically look to the words Christ shares with His disciples during their last meal together on Maundy Thursday.

The Gospel of John tells us on that night, “Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (13:1 NIV). How does he love them? He begins by washing their feet and tells them to do the same for others (14-15).

This must have been incredibly disorienting for the disciples, as evidenced by Peter’s reaction. But that was just the beginning. Jesus goes on to predict His own betrayal and tells Judas to do what he is about to do quickly (21-27). After Judas leaves, Jesus tells them He will only be with them a little longer, that they cannot go where He is going, and that Peter is going to deny Him (33-38).

I imagine the disciples felt very much like they had been spinning and spinning and spinning and were

about to fall down.

Before they do, Jesus gives them the tools they need to be resilient after He is gone:

He gives them work to do.

Jesus gives His disciples (and us) a new commandment: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (34-35 NIV).

What an amazing motivation to get back up when life knocks us down! We have important work to do, and this work is bigger than us.

He sends help.

Jesus tells His disciples (and us), that even in our darkest times, we are never alone, and we have help.

Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it



neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (14:15-17 NIV).

God is always with us. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

He reminds them to whom they belong.

Jesus reminds His disciples (and us), that even though He is going away, they (and we) can remain in Him.

Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (15:5-8 NIV)

When we remain in Him, we will bear fruit, despite how things may appear from time-to-time.

He warns them it will not be easy.

Jesus warns His disciples (and us) that things will not be easy. He tells them (and us) that they (and we) will be persecuted.

Jesus says, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (16:33 NIV).

As the disciples listened that night, they could not understand all that Jesus said. They did not yet know how Jesus would overcome death, hell, and the grave. But we do.

The next time you feel yourself bending to the point of breaking — the next time you feel you cannot recover from an injury or fall — remember, in Christ you are resilient. You can be both tough and elastic, and you can take heart.

Remember, God has given you work to do, but you are not alone in doing it. God is with you, He is for you, and He has already overcome anything the world throws your way!

### What is Palm Sunday?

Palm Sunday, observed this year on March 24, is the start of Holy Week. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling what Zechariah 9:9 (NIV) says about our Savior. “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The irony here is that some who were praising Jesus as he entered Jerusalem were most likely the same who were yelling, “Crucify him!” later that week. None of this was a surprise for Jesus. He wasn’t entering Jerusalem campaigning to become the king of the universe. Jesus knew He was riding into town in order to walk the hard road to the Cross. He died and then rose to win our salvation so that one day we might praise Him with pure hearts that recognize Him as king over all.

### Can an individual or a group make arrangements to come watch the production of a Worship Anew program?

Yes! We frequently have groups come in to see productions and to learn about our ministry. Our tour coordinator is Julie Beers ([julie@worshipanew.org](mailto:julie@worshipanew.org)) and you can reach out to her directly to set up your tour if you’re interested.

### How many services do you tape in advance of them airing?

All of our services are taped in advance since we have to distribute them around the country and through the Armed Forces Network (which is shown overseas). We film about three programs in one day which will include everything our pastors present. These programs are recorded typically 5 to 6 months before they air. Choirs are filmed at different times throughout the year as they come in for a school visit or are on a college tour.

## *A note from the Editor ...*

In our Letters to the Editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about aging well. Please send your questions to [editor@worshipanew.org](mailto:editor@worshipanew.org). Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can.

Thank you and enjoy!



# Five things I have learned from living with depression



*By Rev. Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn*

**O**n Good Friday in 2006, my life took a profound turn for the worse and for the better. I was on partial disability for clinical depression, and I was barely hanging on. Trying to live with a disability, be a pastor, and a father to two girls and a newborn only weeks old, it was all getting the best of me. I was barely holding on, only I didn't know it at the time.

When I got back from my morning constitutional (nine holes of golf), I received a phone call from my insurance company. They told me matter-of-factly that they had determined I was no longer ill, and that my disability had been canceled/revoked as of two weeks previous. I hung up the phone. It was the last straw, the end. I could not hold all of this together anymore. I was (so my disease was telling me) not worth anything to anyone, and it was time to give up. I resolved to end my life.

Well, after church, of course. I was a pastor, after all.

So the day continued. I didn't tell my wife anything. She was quite used to me wandering around the house as a zombie. By that time it would have been strange if I did anything else.

I went to our noon service, a joint Good Friday Tre Ore that we held with our sister congregation in town. I was preaching. Right before we went in I told my pastor (my colleague and friend), that I was going to kill myself after the service. It probably didn't come out sounding that dramatic. I have no idea what I actually said anymore than I have any idea what I said in the sermon. But I will say that it is a, well, unique experience to preaching on the death of God for the salvation of the world while you are planning your own death.

But I didn't die.

My pastor wouldn't let me out of his sight after the service. We eventually went to Panera and stared at each other over a cup of coffee for an hour or two (six? Half an hour? I have no idea). Eventually I came out of the fog enough to call my counselor. Somehow we/they developed a plan to get through the weekend, appeal the determination of the insurance company, get me to someone's home where I could stay without responsibilities for some weeks, and slowly, slowly, rebuild my life.



“No matter how I feel, Christ is present, delivering His gifts to me. My mood or health doesn’t keep Him away. My confusion or hurt doesn’t deter Him.”

Rev. Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn

Now, I’ve written about this many times. But after years of living with this, it strikes me that it might be useful to highlight a few things I’ve learned about a life that was saved:

First, my story is not unusual. While it may seem strange or unusual because I’m a pastor, there are many, many people with stories that are much like mine. Sometimes they are darker, sometimes brighter, but in almost every case, there are commonalities. A sickness that no one fully understands. A low point that no one could see coming. Friends and family, or even a stranger stepping in so that life may go on. At the time it felt like no one could possibly understand what I was going through. Today I am more amazed that someone doesn’t understand, at least a little bit. We all have darkness in our lives. It is either our own darkness or someone else’s. But it is there. I have come to recognize that as a part of our common humanity.

Second, one can never be too grateful for the people around you. Family, friends, pastors, doctors, counselors, all of these and more are God’s instruments to bring you life, to hold you together, and to give you a glimpse into God’s mercy when the darkness surrounds you. The kindness that has been shown to me and to my family just never seems to end, and I am constantly amazed at the people that God continues to place into our lives so that we might be cared for and loved.

Third, recognizing our common humanity can serve as the beginning of healing. C.S. Lewis once wrote, “Friendship ... is born at the moment when one man says to another “What! You too? I thought that no one but myself ...” (“The Four Loves”). If this is true of friendship, how much more is this true of our weaknesses, our diseases, and our need for mercy! Speaking with others

who suffer, giving them permission to say *this stinks!* (or something more colorful), it is a liberating thing. While it is sometimes hard, very often I benefit more from the conversations of those who have reached out. We are never alone.

Fourth, healing never really stops. The most recent years have had plenty of ups and downs, health wise. I’ve tried going off medication (not a good idea for me). I’ve tried and transitioned through different counselors, and doctors, and even pastors. Each of these have held their challenge, but they have all pointed to the simple fact that while life is fragile, things do change. And that is okay.

Finally, it is the Lord’s Supper that continues to give life. I know, the pastor had to get one “pastor” answer in to this. But it is true. No matter how I feel, Christ is present, delivering His gifts to me. My mood or health doesn’t keep Him away. My confusion or hurt doesn’t deter Him. He gives Himself in the Eucharist, and in doing so, is with me to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20). That rock, that certainty beyond all doubt, is what sustains me when everything else seems to go dark.

If you are suffering with depression, bipolar disorder, or any myriad of other mental illnesses that seem to afflict us day by day, know this: you are not alone. Christ has suffered for us, and we in turn suffer with each other.

***The Rev. Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn has been a member of the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW) faculty since 2021. He serves as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Director of Vicarage and Internships, and as Director of Residential Pastoral Formation Programs.***

***“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalms 73:26 ESV)***

# He has Risen

By Rev. Gene Brunow

**S**unday, March 31 is Easter. On Easter morning, the women went out with spices so that they could anoint Jesus' dead body. The idea was to preserve it a little while longer. They were very single-minded about their undertaking. They had one concern, however, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" (Mark 16:3 ESV).

When they got there, all their concerns and plans proved to be useless. The stone was not blocking the entrance, but Jesus wasn't there either. There was a young man (an angel) sitting in the tomb. The women were alarmed! People were often filled with awe and fear in the presence of angels.

The angel had a message for them that helped calm them a bit. He says, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here" (Mark 16:6 ESV). As we live in a confusing time, the angel's message still comforts us as we seek him today.

The most important news that the angel shared with them was "He has risen, He is not here" (Mark 16:6 ESV).

There is no greater news than that! Luther says, "The blessed resurrection ... is pure joy." It is our greatest delight as well. As Christians, we are Easter people, and every day of our lives is Easter.

*Rev. Brunow is a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. Find more of his devotionals at [genesbrunotes.com](http://genesbrunotes.com).*

## This month's study text:

### ***The Resurrection***

*1 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back — it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*

**Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)**

## Reflection Questions:

If the women didn't know how they would roll the stone away, why do you think they still went to the tomb? What does this say about their faith?

Even though the women going to the tomb didn't have a complete plan, they most likely had an idea of what they would find and what they would do. This plan was derailed when they saw the open tomb and an angel. When have your plans fallen through or turned out differently than you expected? When have things not worked out the way you planned, and it turned out to be a great thing?

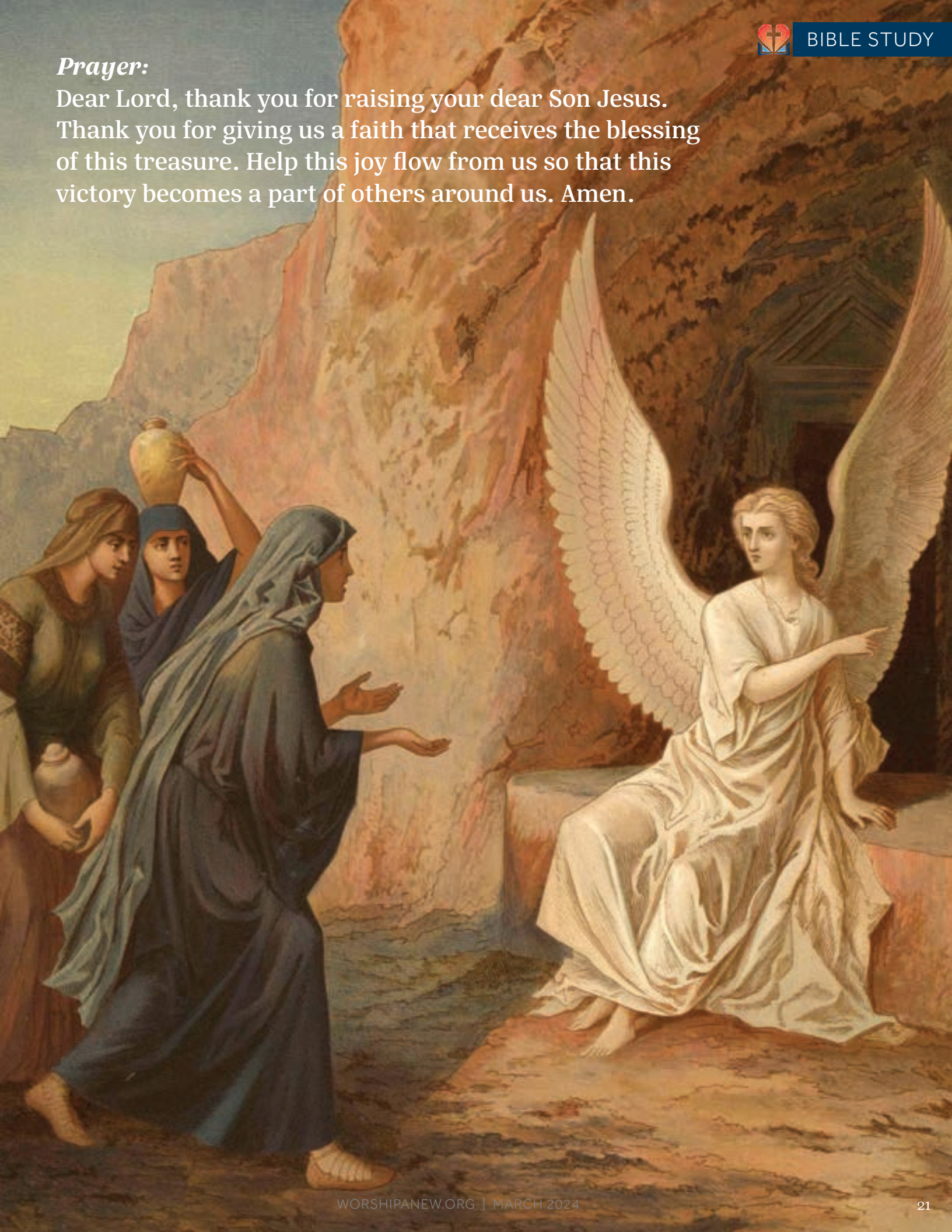
The women and the disciples were surprised by Jesus' resurrection even though Jesus told them what was going to happen. What are some promises of God that you know, and believe, but sometimes doubt when life gets difficult?

What is a daily reminder you could use to remember the pure joy of the resurrection?



***Prayer:***

Dear Lord, thank you for raising your dear Son Jesus. Thank you for giving us a faith that receives the blessing of this treasure. Help this joy flow from us so that this victory becomes a part of others around us. Amen.





# Happy Easter

## word search

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











DYE  
CROSS  
JESUS  
PARADE

EGGS  
BASKET  
MIRACLE  
HOLY

EASTER  
HOLIDAY  
BOUQUET  
BUNNY

# 10 Ways to use an Egg

By Rich Bimler

-  Be a good EGGxample for your family and friends.
-  EGGxercise your body and mind.
-  EGGxpand your horizons.
-  Be EGGxuberant in your next meeting.
-  Share your EGGxpertise with someone.
-  EGGxceed everyone's EGGxpectations.
-  Use EGGxclamation points all day long!!!!
-  EGGxplore new opportunities.
-  Get EGGcited about celebrating EASTER every day!
-  No EGGxcuses for missing celebrating God's love every day!



Happy Easter

## Quotes I have heard at Church

By Rich Bimler

- “The 5th commandment is ‘Humor thy father and mother.’”
- “It is difficult to hear in church because the agnostics are so loud.”
- “The plane that brought Jesus to Egypt was flown by Pontius the Pilot”
- “Noah’s wife was called Joan of Arc.”
- “An elderly person asked his doctor how his body compared to other men his age. The doctor asked, ‘Living or Dead?’”
- “Our monthly Bible study will be held next Tuesday morning. It will be gin with breakfast at 6:30 a.m.”





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

But he was pierced for our  
transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that  
brought us peace, and

*with his wounds  
we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5 ESV

