
The Joyful Noise

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Easter is just around the corner. As grateful as I am that I was raised in the church, sometimes I think it is a disadvantage to have experienced Easter for so many years. It is hard to grasp the true wonder of the empty tomb when it feels like you've heard the news of the empty tomb so many times that it is old news. Sometimes I wonder what it would feel like to hear the story for the very first time and be as amazed as I should be by such news.

The amazing, good news of the resurrection is the foundation of our faith. It is news that should fill us with wonder, excitement and joy. Because of the empty tomb we have hope; hope of victory over sin and death and all that threatens to discourage and defeat us. That is **GOOD** news! We ought to be anxious to share it with everyone we meet. But all too often those of us who have spent a life-time in the church have kind of settled into an attitude of taking for granted what we have been given, and not really recognizing it as the amazing, wondrous, life-changing news that it is.

Maybe our prayer this Easter should be that God would shake us up a little, renew our sense of wonder; and help us to truly feel the power of the resurrection deep in our hearts and souls. I think I come the closest to having the wonder and joy of the resurrection sink in when I sing the Easter hymns. When I sing "Christ the Lord is risen today, alleluia!" and "He Lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!" and "He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!" I can't help but sense a little of the excitement.

Did you notice all the exclamation marks? I didn't add them; they are in the text of the hymns. That's because this is exciting stuff we are singing about! The phrase "Christ is Risen" should never be followed by a period. It should always be followed by an exclamation mark! Or maybe two or three!!! It should be sung or even shouted with joy, not mumbled as though the words do not have great power and glory and joy within them.

One of our newer hymns that I think does a good job of capturing the amazing news, the wonder, and the joy of the resurrection is "Christ Is Risen" by Brian Wren. I love how it begins; "Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna! Celebrate this day of days. Christ is risen! Hush in wonder; all creation is amazed." And I love the line "Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair." I especially like the idea that because Christ is risen we can tell the world's "grim, demonic chorus": "Christ is risen! Get you gone!" As you read the words of the hymn, may the wonder of it sink in:

Christ Is Risen

Words by Brian Wren

Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna! Celebrate this day of days.
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder; all creation is amazed.
In the desert all surrounding, see, a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace abounding bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend;
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven never more shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the First and Last is with us. Sing Hosanna everyone!

This Easter may God truly shake us up and allow us to feel the wonder of the great good news that "Christ Is Risen!!" And note that it isn't "Christ was raised." That might sound more correct to some, but that would not fully express the wonder of the resurrection. The true wonder is not that he was raised on that morning so long ago. He wasn't raised to die again years later. He was raised to live and reign forever.

It is "Christ Is Risen!" because the true wonder is that Christ's resurrection is for forever and always; that he *is* risen, and that risen, living Christ walks with us moment by moment through all the joys and sorrows of life. That is what makes it possible to say to anything in life that threatens to hurt or undo us, "Christ *is* risen! Get you gone!"

This Easter and every day, may we know the wonder, the power and the joy of this truth: **Christ IS Risen!!!**

Pastor Kathy

PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED

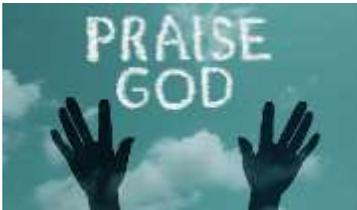
If you have recently moved, changed your mailing address, your **email address**, phone number, **or are only using cell phones**, please contact the church office with the current information. **Thank you!**



If you would like to be included in the **Weekly Prayer Partner EMAIL** which includes scripture readings, prayer requests, birthdays, and weekly reminders, please email or call the church; especially if you have not received these lately. If you have email, but do not receive information from the church this way, please give your email address to the office. We may not have it, and it's important that we do going forward so you can stay updated. Thank you.

HOSPITALIZED

Please contact the church office or Pastor Kathy if you know a member has been admitted to the hospital. With the new privacy laws being strictly enforced there are many times we are unaware of hospitalizations. We would rather get ten calls than none at all. Thank you. **Prayer concerns** can be called into the office (472-2324) or emailed to the office at rockrapidsumc@premieronline.net or Pastor Kathy at kathysides@hotmail.com and they will be sent out.



Praise God~

- ☺ Low Hanging Fruit Committee & husbands who worked hard rearranging our church.
- ☺ Sign-up sheets and information about the Church are now located by the Men's restroom.
- ☺ Greyson is back home!
- ☺ Thanks to the Quilters for redoing the Children's bags
- ☺ New Granddaughter of Mark & Sonya Peterson (Lena Jolee Olivier)
- ☺ Grandchildren
- ☺ Sunshine & warmer temperatures
- ☺ We want to express our gratitude for all of the cards, texts, meals and gifts for Kora Schar~ Schar family
- ☺ Good test results



Prayers~

- ✂ Continued prayers for Dave & Barb Fegan.
- ✂ The United Methodist Church as we continue to have open doors, Open hearts, and open minds.
- ✂ Depression
- ✂ Jim Hallebeck family
- ✂ Donna Inderwisch's cousin (Jim lived in Rock Rapids)
- ✂ Continued prayers for Mary Peterson
- ✂ Lena Jolee Olivier-hospitalized in Iowa City (granddaughter of Mark & Sonya Peterson)
- ✂ Our congregation
- ✂ Stephanie Slack
- ✂ Family of Jim Waagmeester
- ✂ Bonnie Postma (Vicki's Mom) suffered a TIA but doing well
- ✂ Continued prayers for Daxton
- ✂ Young girl bullied in Sioux Falls- committed suicide
- ✂ Prayers for 3rd Ave. Youth members and adults doing Urban Plunge in Sioux Falls



April Birthdays & Anniversaries

01~ Kim DeJongh	09~ Jackie Austin	17~ Tate Vande Weerd
04~ Barb Grimes	12~ Kaylee McIntire	18~ Sam Sides
04~ Mark & Sonya Peterson	14~ Veronica Waagmeester	21~ Connor Maxwell
05~ Lainn Menning	16~ Jim & Char DeGooyer	24~ Helen Schol
06~ Char DeGooyer	17~ Dave & Char Krahling	26~ Erica Rice
07~ Mary Holland	17~ Kathy Van Berkum	29~ Sydney Wells

*We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information. Please contact the office with the correct/missing information. Thank you!

Reminders and Announcements



Community Bingo will be held the 1st Friday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Rock Rapids Health Centre. All are welcome.

April Greeter & Fellowship Schedule

GREETERS



Sunday, April 7
George and Margaret Shurr
Sunday, April 14
Dean & Tami Schweitzer
Sunday, April 21
Steve & Jackie Wells & family
Sunday, April 28
Dave & Roxanne Ackerman

FELLOWSHIP



Sunday, April 7
Camp Sunday
Sunday, April 14
Mark & Sonya Peterson
Sunday, April 21
Easter- NO FELLOWSHIP
Sunday, April 28
Tom & Amy Menage



Community May Breakfast

Please join us for a spring morning of sharing breakfast, sunshine and fellowship!

Saturday, May 4th, 2019 @ 9:00 a.m.

First Reformed Church ~ 512 S. Union ~ Rock Rapids, IA

"Bloom Where You are Planted" Speaker: Mary Hoogers

Special Music: Sherri De Jong & Judy Gacke

Bring a favorite artificial flower.

Meal Ministry

RRUMC MEAL MINISTRY – SACK SUPPERS

Well, it's been a wonderful year!! We learned a lot, talked a lot, had a lot of productive meetings, prepared meals, delivered meals, had a wonderful soup supper and icecream social, met many new friends, wrote grocery lists, wrote menus, wrote Grants. Great Big help from ATLAS and Sunshine. We received donations from the youth and the tractor ride. Many of you contributed monetary donations, grocery products, baking bars and prayers. A big thank you to Amy Menage and Jamie Schar with their meal planning and support. We are steadfast on 100 sack suppers in Rock Rapids. Now we are at 150 to 175 with 50 going to George, Iowa. This year we gave 1540 sack suppers with over 120 volunteers.

This Iowa winter was a challenge for energy, excitement and time, etc. I asked a friend one day for much needed prayer to combat my struggle and this is what she sent me:
Lord, the people who get the meals- may they be fed spiritually as well as nutritionally and feel Jesus' love through this ministry and may you continue to have those serving, be blessed abundantly. As a boy with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread, Jesus made it work.
Amen.

A big thank you to all of you for your prayers and your valuable comments. We have heard from many of you that this is adding a new energy. We agree. Let us trust in God and see where it takes us. Please contact Rhonda Menning 712-470-6375 or Kathy Van Berkum 605-496-1696 with any questions.

Any monetary donations may be given to Evelyn Baldwin.



LUKE 6 VS .38 "GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU. A GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER AND RUNNING OVER, WILL BE Poured INTO YOUR LAP. FOR WITH MEASURE YOU USE, IT WILL BE MEASURED TO YOU."

Feedback for UMC Sack Supper Meal Ministry!

It's awesome! A meal to take home. After work it's nice to have a quick meal ready. We enjoy it a lot. Very friendly. Very much appreciated!

Good! Thank you. God Bless. Always tastes good!

Thank you very much. It's great!

God Bless you for your Ministry!

Great! Thanks a lot!

Thank you for all you do! Always tastes good.

Thank you so much. Nice supper after a long day. Bless you!

It's a good idea. Helps people out. The Best! Very convenient.

They are really good. Always gone by the time we are home!

Thank you very much. It's great!

God Bless you for your Ministry!

Great! Thanks a lot!

Quotes from staff team/recipients

Wonderful/huge blessing
Great outreach
Caroling encouragement
Positive



A Challenge from the Finance Committee.....

We currently have 22 giving units who are giving to the church through automatic payments transferred directly from their bank account to the church's account. Thanks to all of you who are already giving in this way! We would like to put out the challenge to double that number to 44. We encourage those of you who have not set up an automatic payment to do so now! Here are some reasons to consider making the change:

Top 10 reasons for giving through automatic payments –

- #10) It's available!** You can start automatic payments at any time during the year.
- # 9) It's convenient!** No more writing checks or looking for an offering envelope!
- # 8) It's flexible!** You can choose to make payments once or twice a month.
- # 7) It's easy!** Just fill out a form and you're done!
- # 6) It's changeable!** You can stop or change the amount of your payments at any time.
- # 5) It's consistent!** It enables you to give on a regular basis, not just when you attend worship.
- # 4) It's appreciated!** The weekly offering often fluctuates with attendance, but the church's financial obligations do not. Expenses are constant even if the offerings aren't.
- # 3) It's thoughtful!** You may already pay such things as your car payment or utility bill this way. If it is important to give those places money on a regular basis, why not the church?
- # 2) It's biblical!** Well OK, the Bible doesn't actually mention automatic payments. But it does say we should give our "first fruits" to God and not our leftovers. Automatic payments from your account means your gift to the church is a planned, regular gift and not dependent upon whether or not you have something left after everything else is paid.

And the #1 reason for signing up for automatic payments.....

- #1) It's faithful!** God's blessings to you are given on a regular basis. Shouldn't your giving back to God be the same?

Please pick up a form from the church office and sign up today!!



Thursday, April 18th 7:00 pm- Holy Thursday service
Friday, April 19th 7:00 pm- Good Friday Service
Sunday, April 21st 7:00 am- Sunrise service at Immanuel
9:30 am- Worship