



# The Good Tidings

Arena Congregational Church

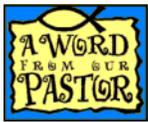
April 2017

CELEBRATING OUR PAST-EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

Affiliated with the Wisconsin Congregational Association

## Thoughts from here and there...The Transforming Power of Jesus

Loren Wilkinson, in an article "How Green Is Easter?" writes about "being in Scotland<sup>1</sup> and worshiping in a church that was, at first, a great blessing to them. On the Sunday after our Easter walk through the town shouting "Christ is risen!" the regular minister was on vacation



and an associate preached. He began by referring to the discovery - which made headlines that year - of three boxes of bones at a cemetery in Palestine, bearing the names of Jesus, Mary and Lazarus. His point was that though we don't know whether those were the bones of the Jesus of the New Testament, it wouldn't really matter if they were. He quoted an Anglican bishop: "God isn't interested in conjuring tricks with bones" and went on to say that Easter is more important than whether Jesus physically was raised from the dead. What Easter means instead is that the Spirit of Christ blossoms wherever we go, in that new life that is symbolized by the return every year of flowers and green from the grave of the earth.

He went on to observe: "[We] live in a time that is rapidly dissolving all truths, including the truth of the Resurrection, into a matter of personal belief and preference. And in the spring, it is all too easy to reduce the empty tomb to a symbol of returning life, bending the stark uniqueness of the event back into the cycles of nature."

However that choice is not really open to Christians. Paul said it most succinctly: "If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Our understanding of Easter is vital to our understanding of who Jesus is and what he accomplished for us. As Ron Rolheiser reveals in his blog:<sup>2</sup>

"Jesus took away our sins in the same way as a filter purifies water. A filter takes in impure water, holds the

impurities inside of itself, and gives back only the pure water. It transforms rather than transmits.

"We see this in Jesus: Like the ultimate cleansing-filter he purifies life itself:

- He takes in hatred, holds it, transforms it and gives back love;
- He takes in bitterness, holds it, transforms it and gives back graciousness;
- He takes in curses, holds them, transforms them and gives back blessing;
- He takes in chaos, holds it, transforms it and gives back order;
- He takes in fear, holds it, transforms it and gives back freedom;
- He takes in jealousy, holds it, transforms it and gives back affirmation;
- And he takes in Satan and murder, holds them, transforms them and gives back only God and forgiveness.

"Jesus takes away the sins of the world in the same way a water-filter takes impurities out of water, by absorbing and holding all that isn't clean and giving back only what is."

Jesus does all this for you and for me. This is only part of the promise of Easter, but it is an important part. We may not understand it all. This is not necessary. It is only necessary that we acknowledge Jesus resurrection and his purposes for those who believe in him.

### Sermons for April

April 2, Fifth Sunday In Lent, Communion Sunday:

Lessons: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11,

**SERMON**



**SCHEDULE**

Sermon Title: Dry Bones Live

Them bones, them bones gonna walk around/Them bones, them bones gonna walk around/Them bones, them bones gonna walk around/I hear the word of the Lord. The Spirit gives life to dry bones.

<sup>1</sup> Loren Wilkinson, in an article "How Green Is Easter?" Christianity Today, April 5, 1999, 48-49.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Rolheiser, "The agony in the garden -- the place of transformation," April 4, 2004. <http://ronrolheiser.com>. Retrieved August 20, 2014.

*(Continued on [page 2](#))*

April 9, Passion/Palm Sunday: Lessons: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Philippians 2:5-11, Sermon Title: The Humble God/Man

There is no question of Jesus' modesty. In his humility he gave up his place in heaven to take his place with us.

April 13, 6:30 P.M., Maundy Thursday, Communion and Potluck Supper: Lesson: 1 Peter 1.17-22, Sermon Title: Purification

God spoke to Moses about the Passover. The people who obeyed were spared the agony of the loss of the first-born. Our purification is provided if we accept Christ's sacrifice and apply it to life.

April 14, Good Friday, 1:00 P.M., Mazomanie United Church of Christ, 109 West Hudson Street, Mazomanie, Pastor Shultz, preaching.

April 16, Easter Sunday at the Arena Congregational Church: Lessons: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; John 10.1-10, Sermon Title: The Gate Is Open

Easter is a gate, a door that is opened for the wise and accepting person who is willing to enter with all one's doubts, fears, and conviction.

April 23, Holy Humor Sunday: Lesson: Corinthians 1:18-27, ISV, Sermon Title: Clowns for Jesus

Clowns create honest and exuberant humor for the watcher. We are to be clowns for Jesus to bring light and laughter into the lives of those we meet.

April 30: Lessons: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23, Sermon Title: Ransom Paid

Jesus paid the price to free us from bondage to the enemy of our souls. The price was high, but he paid it anyway. Thank You Jesus!



## Special Days in the Secular and Church Calendar

April 1, April Fools Day

April 2, (S), Fifth Sunday in Lent, Communion Sunday

April 9, (S), Passion/Palm Sunday

April 13, Maundy Thursday, 6:00 P.M. Potluck Supper, Candlelight Communion

April 14, Good Friday Service at United Church of Christ, Mazomanie

April 16, (S), Easter at the Arena Congregational Church

April 18, Tax Day

April 22, Earth Day

April 23 (S), Holocaust Remembrance Day

April 26, Administrative Professionals' Day (Secretary's Day)

April 28, Arbor Day (State Tree: Sugar Maple)

April 28-29, Wisconsin Congregational Annual Meeting, North Shore Congregational Church, Fox Point, WI.



from *The Joyful Noiseletter*  
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## A Promise and A Prayer

### A Promise

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Corinthians 15:57, NRSV).



### Thoughts

Easter is a day to celebrate victory. The victory of good over evil. The victory of life over death. The victory of Christ over Satan. Easter is a day to celebrate victory. It is also our victory. Thanks be to God who give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### A Prayer

Blessed God thank you for making it possible for me to live a victorious life. Because of what you have done I can live with confident hope and rejoice in the faith which you have made possible. Help me not only to enjoy what you have done for me, but to share this grand news with others. Amen.

## Spotlight on the family



### Earth Day

#### Save the Planet<sup>1</sup>

Earth Day on April 22 is a great way to teach your children that God wants us to take good care of this earth. As a family try these green ideas:

1. Read aloud Genesis 1. Discuss what these verses tell us about being good caretakers of the earth which God created and gave to us.

2. Adopt a trashed out area in your community to clean up once or on an ongoing basis.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright © 1998 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY Magazine, P.O. Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539-0481, March/April, 1998, page 59 (Used by Permission).

3. Plant a tree in your yard.
4. Beautify an elderly neighbor's yard by weeding and planting flowers or shrubs.
5. Instead of getting rid of old clothes, crate a quilt out of scraps from the clothing. Work on the project all year long and personally deliver the quilt to a homeless person at Christmastime.
6. Commit to a family recycling project such as collecting aluminum cans or newspapers. Choose a charity to receive any profits from this project.
7. Do a thorough spring cleaning and give unwanted toys, clothes, and household items to a charity or directly to people you know who have needs.
8. Go on a "paper fast" for an entire month. Refuse to use any paper products in your kitchen, such as paper towels, napkins, cups or plates, etc.
9. Create new ways to use old things. Choose several recyclables items, such as plastic rings from soft drink six packs, milk containers, or newspapers. Have a family brainstorming session to think of new ways to use these items. Choose one idea for each item and then do it.



## Officers for 2017 - 2018

### Governing Board

President: Jim Favreau, 753.2334

Vice-president: Joanne Brown, 753-2316

Treasurer: Steven Wilkinson, 753.2131

Clerk: Joe Hodgson, 753-2520

Financial Secretary: Ray Johnson, 753-2845

Church Secretary: Steve Wilkinson, 753.2131

### Officers

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## Recipe of the Month

### Cream Cheese Finger Cookies (very easy)

From the recipe files of Helga Shultz

1/2 c butter, softened	1/4 cup sugar
4 oz. cream cheese, softened	dash salt
1 teas Vanilla extract	1 c finely chopped pecans
1 3/4 c flour	Confectioner's sugar

In a mixing bowl cream the butter and cream cheese, beat in Vanilla. Combine the flour, sugar and salt: gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in pecans (dough will be crumbly)

Shape tablespoonful into 2-inch logs. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 for 12 to 14 minutes or until lightly browned.

Roll warm cookies in confectioner's sugar (makes about 2 dozen)



Sunday School Superintendent, Karen Wilkinson, 753-2131

Choir Director, Leslie Shultz, 574-0707

Head Usher Jim Favreau, 753.2334 and Ray Johnson, 753.2845



### Meetings

**Governing Board:** Second Monday 6:30 p.m.

**Men's Breakfast:** Because of Holy Week, we will not meet for breakfast on April 15. In early May, we will have an informal meeting to prepare for our Mother's Day breakfast.



### Greeters

April 2 – Steve and Karen Wilkinson

April 9 – Judith Rouse

April 16 – Jeff and Joanne Brown Family

April 23 – Pastor and Helga Shultz

April 30 – Kathy Johnson

May 7 - Jim Favreau Family



### Adult Study Group

We are meeting at the home of Steve and Karen Wilkinson, 817 Brown St., Arena.

Our study is on World Religions from a Christian Perspective. We are studying "Popular Christianity." What is the state of Christianity in our country today? These studies are informative and helpful in understanding World Religions. They also help us to better understand our own Congregational Christianity.

We will not meet on April 12.



### Worship On Compact Disks

The Worship Services are recorded each week on a CD so that you may share in the fellowship and enjoyment of worship. If you would like to listen to a service to share the music, pray the prayers and learn from the sermon call either Steve Wilkinson, 753-2131 or Pastor Shultz, 574-0707 and a CD will be delivered to you. Let us know if you need a CD player.



### Missions

We are supporting the Congregational Mission of Jardin America with a gift of \$40 a month through the missions program of the National Association of Congregational Christians. We also contribute \$50.00 a month to the Arena Food Pantry, and \$25.00 a month to

the Food Pantry at the Spring Green Community Church. If you would like to donate canned or dried food products you may put them in the barrel in the entry. Thank you for your support of our local and foreign mission projects.



### Something to Think About

I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.

~Thomas Jefferson



### Humor

Hailey told me (Janet Hunt) last night that she needed an early bedtime.

"Why?"

"Because tomorrow I want to wake up and be a totally good person, even better than I have ever been. I want to be 100% good. And hopefully that will help me learn to be 100% good all the time and make a good habit. So I need energy to make the right choices."

- by Janet Hunt (my niece) about her youngest daughter docsdailychuckle@associate.com



Three-year-old Zoe watched her father Phil working in the garden.

"What are you doing, Daddy?" she asked.

He replied, "I'm making a flower bed."

Soon Zoe started digging in the dirt, prompting Phil to ask, "And what are you doing?"

Zoe replied, "I'm making pillows and blankets."

- from Da Mouse Tracks docsdailychuckle@associate.com



One of my jobs at a bank is to answer the phones and put callers through to the right person.

When a customer called one day asking to speak with a bank representative, I said, "Of course, Sir. What is it about exactly?"

Dryly, he replied, "It's about money."

Pastor Tim <posts@cybersaltlists.org>



In promulgating your esoteric cogitations, or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable, philosophical or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous  
*(Continued on page 5)*

ponderosity. Let your conversational communications possess a clarified conciseness, a compact comprehensibility, coalescent consistency, and a concatenated cogency. Eschew all conglomerations of flatulent garrulity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations.

Let your extemporaneous descantings and unpremeditated expatiations have intelligibility and veracious vivacity, without rhodomontade or thrasonical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vacuity, ventriloquial verbosity, and vaniloquent vapidness. Shun double-entendres, prurient jocosity, and pestiferous profanity, obscurant or apparent.

In other words, talk plainly, briefly, naturally, sensibly, truthfully, purely. Keep from slang; don't put on airs; say what you mean; mean what you say.

And DON'T USE BIG WORDS!

Pastor Tim <posts@cybersaltlists.org>



Our reserve chaplains unit was training with a Navy landing-craft unit at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center pier at the same time a Navy divers unit was embarking for a mission in Lake Michigan.

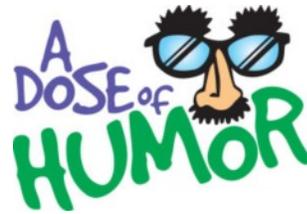
Just before the divers' boat left, six of us chaplains walked up the plank and boarded. A startled diver looked up and asked a buddy, "What kind of a mission did they say they're sending us on today?"

- from Reader's Digest, "Humor In Uniform," by Lt. William W. Gasser, USNR Received from Doc's Daily Chuckle. The Good Clean Funnies List <gcfl-info@gcfl.net>



**No Movie in April**

**Next Movie  
7:00 p.m.  
May 13**



**Holy Humor Sunday  
April 23.**

**Bring your humorous jokes,  
cartoons and stories.**

**Share a smile!  
Share a laugh!**



**Earth  
Day**

**April 22**

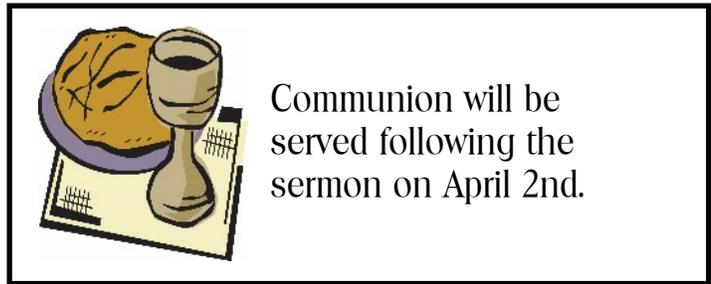
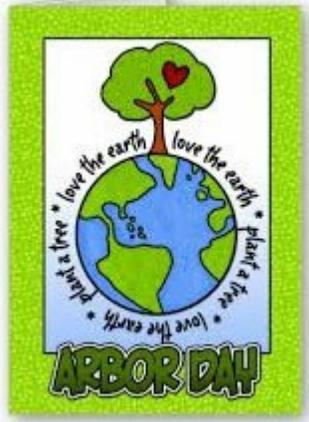
### **Earth Day**

The idea came to Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, then a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, after witnessing the ravages of the 1969 massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Inspired by the student anti-war movement, he realized that if he could infuse that energy with an emerging public

consciousness about air and water pollution, it would force environmental protection onto the national political agenda.

As a result, on the 22nd of April, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies.

Earth Day achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, city slickers and farmers, tycoons and labor leaders. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. "It was a gamble," Gaylord recalled, "but it worked."



April 28, 2017



Our Lenten project this year is Bread for the World. There are "Lenten Prayers for Hungry People" cards and envelopes on the table in the entry. Please turn in your gift on April 16, Easter Sunday. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs, and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live.

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