



Share n Care

Volume XLIX, Issue 3

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There is no one holy like the LORD; There is no one besides you; There is no Rock like our God. —1 Samuel 2:2

Easter Around the World

The Pacific: is home to thousands of islands with a variety of landscapes. You're probably familiar with countries in the Pacific like **Australia** and **New Zealand**. And since they're both in the Southern Hemisphere, Easter actually occurs during the fall instead of springtime there. And a lot of **New Zealand** residents (who are called "Kiwis") enjoy eating hot cross buns during Easter.

While we typically associate Easter with images of rabbits in the U.S., some **Australians** don't use rabbits for their Easter festivities because they're considered to be pests. Instead they use the holiday to celebrate an endangered Australian animal called a bilby. It has long ears and looks similar to a rabbit so they dub the animal the "Easter Bilby."

Africa: In **Ethiopia**, Christian churches celebrate Faskia, which is the 55 days leading up to Easter. Faskia is actually a bigger deal to people than Christmas, and that's why it's celebrated longer than our Easter in the U.S. During this holiday, people spend 55 days fasting from meat and animal products. The night before Easter, Christians have a vigil that begins somber; but when morning comes, dancing and music breaks out. Families and communities spend Easter Sunday at church services and in homes, eating and celebrating.

Asia is the largest continent on Earth, and contains a vast number of people groups, cultures and traditions.

Easter is a major religious holiday in **the Philippines**, which is home to more than 7,000 islands! In this country, two processions happen during Easter — the men are in one procession and follow an image of Jesus risen from the dead while the women make up another procession and follow Jesus' mother, Mary, who's wearing a black veil. The two groups meet at the church as a symbol of Jesus comforting Mary after he was raised from the dead.

Then girls who are dressed up as angels for Easter take off Mary's veil (called a *lambong*) and people celebrate!

Europe: On Easter Monday in **France**, something unique happens. Volunteers in the French town of Bessières gather to cook a giant omelet. 10,000-15,000 eggs are cracked and cooked to create this huge dish. So why do they do this? Tradition says that Napoleon and his army were traveling through the south of France one day and stopped in this small town. They ate omelets there, and Napoleon liked them so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelet for his army the next day. The town has been doing this holiday tradition since 1973!

Since **the Americas** contain North, South and Central America, there are a lot of different Easter traditions and celebrations.

In **Bermuda**, people like to fly kites on Good Friday. The tradition started one year when a teacher wanted to help his students learn about Jesus ascending to heaven. So he took a kite decorated with Jesus' face on it, and let it soar into the sky. It was like Jesus ascending!

In **Colombia**, Easter Sunday itself isn't celebrated with lots of fanfare. But Holy Week is celebrated widely throughout the country, with many people having off work part of the week or the entire week. Many people go on vacation during Holy Week, while some travel from bigger cities to smaller Colombian towns for traditional Holy Week processions and to observe decorations in churches.

So whether you're celebrating Easter by attending a sunrise church service in the U.S., eating a traditional breakfast in Europe or fasting from animal products in Africa, may we all take the time this season to remember the significance of 1 Peter 1:3-4: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.—Jennifer Stasak, Wycliff content contributor

(Adapted from: <https://wycliffe.org/blog/featured/how-easter-is-celebrated-in-countries-around-the-world/>)

Birthdays



March

- 9 Kevin Roelofs
- 11 Sylvia Pulscher
- 12 Charles Miller
- 13 Judy VandenEinde
- Deanna Jacobson
- 17 Diane Plowman
- 20 Jean TeBrake-85th
- 29 Clinton Kamstra
- Pat Dahlseid
- 30 Caroline Kreps-96th

April

- 11 Marv Moorlag
- 12 Karen Leenstra
- 18 Darcy Roelofs
- 22 Christina Jurgenson
- 28 Clara DeRonde
- 30 Gaye Mellema

Anniversaries



March

- 19 Adam and Heather Ruplinger

April

- 13 Duane and Alvina Noordmans

Sunday & Worship Events

2nd Sunday Offering

March 10

- CMCS
- Cadets National
- Hope Pregnancy Center
- Food Shelf

April 14

- CCS
- GEMS National
- Family Promise
- Calvin Seminary



Palm Sunday: March 24-10:00 am Worship Service

Maundy Thursday: March 28-7:00 pm with First Reformed Church at First Reformed

Easter: March 31-10:00 am Worship Service

Pulpit Supply Schedule:

- March 10:** Rev. Eldon Nelson
- March 17:** Josh Ottoson
- March 24:** Steve Toledo
- March 31:** Chris Alle
- April 7:** Rev. Les Kuiper

Prayer Corner



In his letters, Paul writes to the Christians in the early church to pray: at all times, without ceasing, continually, constantly, always, never forgetting...

It's difficult just to spend a few minutes daily in prayer, so how do we go about it continuously? What Paul is really asking is to make prayer a way of life. We should aim for a prayer life that becomes an ongoing relationship with God. God becomes a friend to whom we open our hearts and minds. Below are some practical ways prayers could grow beyond "Quiet Times":

- Thinking short sentence prayers for people around you who have an obvious need
- Using "dead time" (waiting in lines, driving to work, taking a walk, etc.) to talk to God or to think about Him
- Setting aside a regular time each day for prayer, Bible reading, and reflecting on God
- Being open to God's revelation in creation and in other people
- Bringing all your problems and deepest feelings to God
- Whispering or thinking "thank you" to God for helping you in some special way
- Just being quiet and thinking about God
- Seeing God's hand in the good things that happen around you
- Experiencing God through music, art, film video and so on

(Excerpts from "More Than Words Prayer as a Way of Life" by Leonard Vander Zee, pp 14-17)

CS Lewis was the author of the widely read children's books, *The Narnia Chronicles*, as well as many novels for grown-ups and books on issues surrounding the Christian faith. The movie *Shadowlands* (directed by Richard Attenborough and produced in 1993) tells Lewis' story, focusing in particular on his relationship with his wife, Joy Gresham. Gresham and Lewis meet while Lewis is a don at Oxford University.

After Joy is diagnosed with cancer the couple marry. The movie invites us to witness their love, their pain, their grief, their struggles with faith and God. Eventually Joy dies.

At one point in the story a friend says to Lewis, "Christopher can scoff, Jack, but I know how hard you've been praying; and now God is answering your prayers."

Lewis replies "That's not why I pray, Harry. I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God, it changes me."

Remember in Prayer:

Our Shut-ins

Gloria Epema
Gerri Hillenbrand
Martha Kiel
Margaret Negen
Jean Rolighed
Mae Ryks
Burton Ulferts
Bea Visser

Our Servicemen

Jacob Lefever
Joe Pavelko

Our College Students

Regan Bos-St. Benedict
Simon Brouwer-North Dakota State
Avery Dierenfeld-U of M Duluth
Eleanor Ryder-Dordt University

Faith Promise Missions Update-Little Lambs in Ukraine

December 2023

It is hard to believe that this war in Ukraine goes on for almost 2 years! Dear God, there is so much suffering in this world! As we look back this year, it's hard to comprehend that human hearts can be so evil.

The summer began with the disaster that the Russians caused by blowing up the Kakhovka Dam, just north of Kherson City, on June 6th. As we all watched helplessly the heartbreaking pictures of the people trying to save themselves on trees and on their roofs, we prayed for mercy and safety for the people. We knew we needed to help. We wanted to buy a few rubber boats to help a pastor and his team in Kherson to rescue people, but a day later he called and said we need a metal boat, because the Russians were shooting at the boats. The situation only got worse a few days later when people sitting on the roofs in the sun, ran out of food and water. Many houses were under water up to the roofline. A week after the dam was blown up, over 3000 houses were still under water. Everything the people had was gone, their animals, their homes, their gardens. Hundreds of villages and their farmlands were destroyed leaving dozens of people dead. Many are still missing and we don't even know how bad it is on the Russian occupied side of the Dnipro river. People were devastated and depressed and needed help. Our team organized in two groups, loaded up generators, fans, shovels, buckets, drinking water, and food and set out to help the people in the Kherson region.



For 3 weeks our teams were helping the families in the flooded areas. Praise God that in the midst of despair and disaster, our teams are able to share the gospel with the people and that their only hope is in Jesus. Thank you all who are helping and supplying our teams, helping with materials and equipment, enabling our teams to help people in the flooded area of the Kherson region.

Musings

Resurrection Rumbblings

In *Easter Earthquake*, James A. Harnish explores the "earthshaking promise" of Jesus' resurrection. Easter Sunday "shatters the power of fear," he writes. "Because Christ is risen, we no longer allow fear to dominate, control or manipulate us. We don't remain imprisoned in the tombs of our past failures or buried under the weight of present anxiety. In the risen Christ, old things pass away and everything becomes new."

Easter, Harnish adds, is proof that God hasn't forsaken us and is present among us. "The Resurrection contradicts the assumption that Christ resides on an ethereal cloud in a distant heaven. Rather, we find him on the dusty road that leads to the real stuff of our ordinary world."

Jesus' followers can find him everywhere, Harnish concludes. "The risen Christ will meet us along the confused, chaotic, fearful paths of our lives and speak the same words the women hear at the tomb, 'Do not be afraid.'"

Quips About Life

My wallet is like an onion. Every time I open it, it makes me cry.—Unknown

Life is a bowl of soup, and I'm a fork.—Dave Clark

I finally found a machine at the gym that I like: the vending machine.—Unknown

A diamond is just a lump of coal that did well under pressure.—Henry Kissinger

Whatever you're doing, always give 100%. Unless you're donating blood.—Bill Murray

Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.—Dr. Seuss

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.—Albert Einstein

Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results.—Unknown

Pressed

Gethsemane, the name of the place where Jesus prayed before his betrayal, is an Aramaic word for "olive press." During Bible times, olives were pressed three times to remove all the valuable oil. Before being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus felt the full pressing weight of our sins on his shoulders. Surrounded by olive trees, praying fervently while sweating drops of blood, the perfect Son of God asked his heavenly Father three times to remove the cup of suffering.

Instead of removing that trial, God used it to redeem and save humankind. Likewise, God uses our hardships to refine and strengthen our faith.

In *The Rock, the Road and the Rabbi*, TV host Kathie Lee Gifford and Messianic Rabbi Jason Sobel speculate that if Peter, along with James and John, hadn't fallen asleep in Gethsemane, he may have had the strength to not deny Jesus later that night.

"All of us must be vigilant to watch and pray so that we don't succumb to the temptation to deny the Lord when we go through the olive presses of life and feel like we are being crushed by our situation and circumstances," the authors write. "We must remember that it is the crushing that brings out the true inner value and worth of the olive."

Bulletin Bloopers

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

Next Sunday Mrs. Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience."

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Nelson's sermons.

The ushers will come forward and take our ties and offerings.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.



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Rock of Life CRC Statements

Purpose Statement

Worship
 God in obedience to His Word

Equip
 God's people to do His work

Proclaim
 God's love and grace to His World

II Timothy 3:16&17

Values Statement

Loving
 God above all, and our neighbors as ourselves

Praying
 in all circumstances because God controls our ministry

Preaching
 and teaching from God's Word, the Holy Bible

Giving
 of our time, gifts and money which are blessings from God

Seeking
 the Lord's will and direction in everything we do

Helping
 others to find and follow Jesus.

Ephesians 4:1b-2

Vision Statement

Reaching Up
 to God as we listen for His voice in our prayers of thanks, confession and praise.

Reaching In
 becoming more Christlike, clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness

Reaching Out

Boldly through the power of the Holy Spirit, with words and deed, in our Community and worldwide.

Colossians 3:12-14

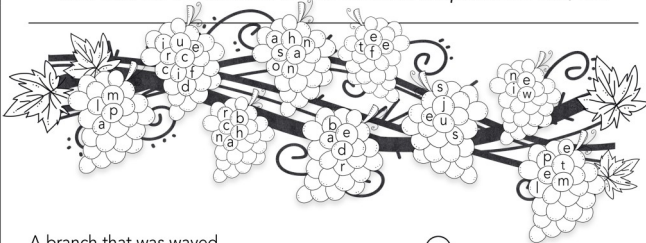
All to the Glory of God



A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.



- A branch that was waved _____ ○
- How Jesus was put to death _____ ○
- A stick attached to the vine _____ ○
- People shouted this to Jesus _____ ○
- Jesus washed these _____ ○
- This was broken and eaten _____ ○
- The Messiah _____ ○
- A drink from grapes _____ ○
- Jesus drove the money changers from here _____ ○

"I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear _____ ;
 apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5, NIV

Answer: palm, crucified, branch, hosanna, feet, bread, Jesus, wine, temple; much fruit

Bible Quiz

What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples – twice – when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. "Love one another as I have loved you."
- B. "Peace be with you."
- C. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."
- D. "I am risen!"



Answer: B (See John 20:19, 21.)

The "Christ hymn" in Philippians 2 proclaims that after Jesus humbled himself even to the point of death, God exalted him, and that eventually all will worship him. What two body parts are named as part of that worship?

- A. knee; tongue
- B. hands; feet
- C. arms; lips
- D. heart; mouth



Answer: A (See Philippians 2:10-11.)