

# Bellringer

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church

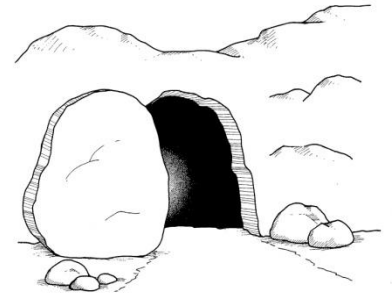
April 2016

## From the Pastor's Desk

### Rejoice, Rejoice

By Helen Steiner Rice

*Let not your heart be troubled  
Let not your soul be sad  
Easter is a time of joy  
When all hearts should be glad,  
Glad to know that Jesus Christ  
Made it possible for men (human beings)  
To have their sins forgiven  
And, like Him, to live again . . .  
So at this joyous season  
May the wondrous Easter Story  
Renew our Faith so we may be  
Partakers of "His Glory!"*



**"...Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery? He is not here, but raised up..."** Luke 24:4-8 (MSG)

As I was preparing the materials for my sermons during the Easter season, I have noticed that one of the common elements of the resurrection stories across the gospels is that no one expects the resurrection, even though Jesus predicted his death and resurrection several times across his earthly ministry.

Have you noticed that no one greets the news that God has raised Jesus from the grave and defeated death and the devil by saying, "Praise God!"? That no one shouted "Hallelujah!" when they hear that their friend and Lord has been raised to life? And absolutely no one, upon hearing the news that death itself could not hold the Lord Jesus captive, says, "I knew it – just like he said!"

That's right – no one expects resurrection and no one, quite frankly, believes it at first. This is true, as I said, across the gospels, and it is certainly apparent in the Gospel of Luke. The women come to the tomb expecting to anoint Jesus' dead body; they have no expectation that he has been raised. In fact, only when they are reminded by the "two men in dazzling clothes," do they recall Jesus' promise.

Empowered by this experience, the two women run back to tell the rest of the disciples who greet their tale with utter incredulity. In fact, Luke says that those who received the testimony of the women regarded their message as an "idle fable." (Luke 24:9-11). That's actually a fairly generous translation of the Greek word, *leros*. That word, you see, is the root of our word "delirious." So in short, they thought what the women said was crazy, nuts, utter nonsense. And, quite frankly, who can blame them?

Personally, I believe resurrection isn't simply a claim that Jesus' body was resuscitated; it is the claim that God entered the stage of human history in order to create an *entirely new reality* altogether. This is the foundation, the Heart of the Gospel and the foundation of our faith.

According to the translation of the Bible "The Message", The Apostle Paul put it in this words, "*The first thing I did was place before you what was placed so emphatically before me: that the Messiah died for our sins, exactly as Scripture tells it; that he was buried; that he was raised from death on the third day, again exactly as Scripture says; that he presented himself alive to Peter, then to his closest followers, and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time, most of them still around (although a few have since died); that he then spent time with James and the rest of those he commissioned to represent him; and that he finally presented himself alive to me. It was fitting that I bring up the rear. I don't deserve to be included in that inner circle, as you well know, having spent all those early years trying my best to stamp God's church right out of existence*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-9).

My wife Mariana and I invite you to experience with us the joy, hope and blessings of this season.

Your servant in Christ, **Pastor Rafael.**

## Help Me Be Better by Veronica Berry

*“Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.” Psalm 139: 1-6*

With all the ads about the upcoming elections, I often hear; “I hate politicians! They always say they’re going to make a change and never change anything!” When we want to blame politicians, world leaders, or other cultures for the state of our world, do we ever consider what can I do? Or does it feel so overwhelming that we chose to exit the responsibility and shrink ourselves into a tiny bit of insignificant matter so we can righteously put the blame on them? Is it easier to swallow our fear and diminish our hope by ignoring the spirit of God within us than to honor the purpose he has instilled in our soul to make a piece of this world a little bit better?

When I look at the state of affairs in our world today, my heart aches for peace. I long for more humanity and kindness. I want to see images of happy children and know they are loved, fearless, and well cared for. I want to see a world where all people have the right to think and speak freely, be educated, and practice the religion of their choice. I want to live in a world where we care about each other and realize how blessed life is, so we can actively live in each moment with gratitude and joy. The more I want these things the more I know that I can’t depend on an elected official to make my world better alone. I have a responsibility to ask God to help me be better and act accordingly. I need to find more peace within so I can become what I’m longing to see. And so I ask God:

### Dear God, Help Me Be Better

Help me seek the silence so I can find your truth and in truth find solace.

Help me dissipate the righteous anger I hold onto  
even when it feels justified so I can see clearly through my untangled emotions and be at peace.

Help me eradicate any cruelty I may harbor,  
so I can only see you who have sacrificed so much for my behalf and find mercy.

Help me search for understanding when blame and doubt are encircling my mind  
almost forcing me to believe that all hope is lost, so I can see your face in everyone I meet and find unity.

Help me remove the word hate from my vocabulary so I can easily speak words of love.

Help me see the depth of humanity through your eyes and  
know the vast capacity of our ability to accept and care for one another and find understanding.  
Help me have the courage to be significant so I can fearlessly exhibit how to live in this moment and find joy.

Lord, I ask you to remove any barriers I have created  
to close off my heart so I can be an open vessel which radiates your love.  
Help me be better so I can serve you and honor the purpose you instilled in my soul  
long before I was born and find fulfillment.

Help me be someone who helps quiet the madness that damages our souls  
by encouraging others to take a moment to listen to their hearts and react with peace and kindness.

Help me find words that heal bitterness, apathy, and hopelessness so I can shine a light on new doorways to you.

Help me be better so I can make my piece of the world better by following your teachings  
and be loving towards myself and others and find a deeper connection to you. Amen.

My prayer for all of you; is for God to help you become the light of love. See the love inside you even when darkness surrounds you. Have the courage to share the love with others, no matter how you feel or how others may receive your kindness. Trust God to show you where you are needed. May you find peace within so you can become more compassionate and clearly see the miracles of God that surround you.

## Connections by Craig Myrbo

## We connect through prayer

*1 Thessalonians 5:25 Brothers and Sisters pray for us.*

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church is held once every four years for 10 days. It is the policy making body of the United Methodist Church globally. GC is meeting in Portland, Oregon May 10-20, 2016.

Wisconsin Annual Conference is sending the following delegates:

- Lay Delegates to General Conference: Lisa King, Barbara Dick, Gail Burgess
- Clergy Delegates to General Conference: The Revs. Dan Dick, Sam Royappa, Steve Zekoff
- The following will go as alternates:
- Lay Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference: Katie Estrem-Fuller, Tom Popp, Judy Vasby
- Clergy Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference: The Revs. Amanda Stein, Jorge Mayorga Solis, Dan Schwerin

Please pray for them and all the 864 delegates as they prepare and attend the General Conference.

Here is the guidance provided by the Church.

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/praying-for-gc2016-what-will-happen>

### Stephen Recognition In the spirit of the Book of Acts

*"Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." Act 6: 3-4*

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church  
Certificate of Appreciation Presented to

### Chou Lee

In recognition of your volunteer service to our church as a trustee, serving at the homeless shelter, maintenance of the church, parsonage garden and grounds, as a jack-of-all-trades, and many other tasks of which few are aware.

We hope this certificate will serve as a lasting memento of our appreciation for your continued and dedicated service.

In the name of God, Thank You!

### Prayer Corner April 2016

For everything there is a season,

And a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant,

and a time to pluck up what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down,

and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to throw away stones,

And a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace,

And a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to throw away;

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate,

A time for war, and a time for peace.

Bible - Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

## What's Up with the Administrative Council?

The Council met on March 15<sup>th</sup> with Rev González, Director of Congregational Development, to review our Strategic Plan progress. Below are some highlights of our conversation.

The Communication Committee has been revitalized and is working on improving internal and external communications. Some of the committee's accomplishments are: the PowerPoint Sermon highlights, displaying announcements on the projection screen before service begins, and updated Facebook and Twitter pages. This committee is working on a church-wide survey of your needs and wants. Please contact Lisa Bobo if you would like to be a part of this committee.

A Discipleship Task Force is being developed. Pastor Rafael is the team leader for this group. More news on their progress at a later date.

There is a need for improved Hospitality. There will be a Radical Hospitality meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6 to 8. We need to clean up the clutter around and in the church to make it more attractive to visitors.

Our church-wide Bible study, **THE STORY**, has been successful. We need to work on a Children's program for the early service.

The UMW will be reorganizing in April. The Men's Group is going strong. We now have three commissioned Stephens Ministers. (Pastor Rafael, Emily Acheson, Cyndy Hoffman)

Each group will be working on goals and deadlines.

We did not change the Church name, however, we added "a multicultural community of faith" to our Mission Statement. We need to create opportunities to see ourselves as multicultural.

There is a full set of the meeting's minutes on the sign-up table in the Narthex. If you have any questions or suggestions, please see Patsy McDonald.

Yours in Christ, Patsy



### Men's Group Meeting

The Men's Group will meet Saturday, April 2, at 5:00 P.M. Mike McGaffin, one of the leaders of Stephen Ministry in Sun Prairie, will be the guest speaker. One Sunday in March, Pastor Rafael, Cyndy, and Emily, were commissioned as Stephen Ministers to serve in SAUMC and in the neighborhood around it. We are hoping Mike will tell us more about the Stephen Ministry and how men at SAUMC could play an important part in this program. He has a few other things to talk about as well. Please join us for a good evening of learning, fellowship and fun: Saturday, April 2, at 5:00 P.M.

### Multicultural Day

Please reserve Sunday May 15 for our Multicultural celebration. One combined service will be at 9:30 A.M. to be followed by a potluck and fellowship. You are invited to bring a dish to pass that reflects your heritage, a family specialty or just whatever you like. Sign-up sheets will be available by mid April. By committing to a main dish, salad or dessert, you will allow the committee to know what we can do to round out the meal. Feel free to wear something that represents your cultural heritage. We look forward to seeing you there.

# April 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Clean-up Day is Saturday April 16th 8:00am-noon</b> <b>Look for sign-up sheets in the Narthex</b> <b>Thanks for getting our ready church for spring!</b>					1	2 12:00 Men's Band 5:00 Men's Group
3 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	4 6:00 Cub Scouts	5 6:00 Mendota MSCR Staff 6:00 UMW	6 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group	7 6:30 Choir	8 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	9 10:00 Hazel's Party 10:00 Spanish Class 12:00 Men's Band
10 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	11 6:00 Cub Scouts	12 6:00 Mendota MSCR Staff 6:00 Discipleship 6:30 Trustees	13 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:15 Communications	14 6:30 Choir	15	16 8:00 Clean-up 10:00 Spanish Class 12:00 Men's Band 12:30 Multicultural Meeting
17 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	18 6:00 Cub Scouts	19 6:00 Mendota MSCR Staff 6:00 Admin Council	20 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Craft Night	21 6:30 Choir 6:15 Communications	22 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible	23 10:00 Spanish Class 12:00 Men's Band Homeless Shelter
24 Homeless Shelter 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 Blood Pressure Clinic 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	25 <b>5:00 Newsletter Deadline</b> 6:00 Cub Scouts	26 6:00 Mendota MSCR Staff 6:30 Outreach & Missions	27 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group	28 8:00 Copy/Fold 6:30 Choir	29	30 10:00 Spanish Class 12:00 Men's Band

## April Birthdays

STEVE Z	4/2
CHRIS K	4/7
JOHN L	4/11
BRIAN H	4/13
KONGMENG T	4/22
CURTIS V	4/22
BARBARA Z	4/24
CLIFF L	4/25
PASTOR RAFAEL C	4/25
JOHNNY L	4/28
VERONICA B	4/29
MELVINA D	4/29

**Please take a moment  
 to remember our  
 homebound members**  
**Contact Lisa in the office for  
 current addresses and phone  
 numbers: 244-0868**

**Linda Jungbluth**

**Marvel Mapes**

**Jean & Justin Kramer**

*These are the dates that are in the database. If you find  
 that your name is not included with the Birthdays or  
 Anniversaries, please call Matt Treadaway*