



Vestry Voices

The Church Family Newsletter

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What Jesus' Resurrection Means for People Today

Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life;
he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live ..."

John 11:25 (RSV)



Rev. Gary Kiontke



When Jesus addressed these words to Martha while her brother was still in his tomb, He began by using the Divine Name – I AM.

John's Gospel takes the reader through three progressive definitions of the life Jesus is talking about.

"Eternal"

First, it is "eternal" (John 3:16). This is good; but, people who do not know God in Jesus, and find life overwhelming, will respond: Who would want to live (like this) forever?

"Abundant"

Second, it is "abundant" (full, rich – John 10:10); but, deep down, people know life is more than just material wealth. The Beatles sang: "Money can't buy me love." Jesus Himself said: "life is more than food, and the body more than clothing" (Luke 12:23, RSV).

"Purpose" and "Meaning"

Third, and most important, Jesus is the life who gives to all who follow Him (in humble, child-like obedient faith) great "purpose" and "meaning": to bear fruit for Father God that will remain forever (John 15:9-17).

This answers the question: Why am I here? The answer is to know, love and serve God. And we can do this because we know that our life makes a difference. With this as the greatest incentive to follow the resurrected Jesus, even eternal life that is painful in this world is bearable. We can consider whatever material abundance we receive to be a tool that God can use to make us more fruitful in sharing Jesus' love with our neighbors so they may have new, eternal, full and meaningful life IN Jesus. The three-fold life

we may receive because Jesus rose from the dead is truly the greatest blessing of all.

In the apostle Paul's chapter on the significance of the resurrection of Jesus, he states that His resurrection guarantees the hope of our resurrection: "if in this life we have hope in Christ only, of all men we are most to be pitied. And now, Christ hath risen out of the dead – the first-fruits ... so ... IN ... Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20, 22, YLT); then he concludes: "so ... my brethren beloved, become ye steadfast, unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord at all times, knowing that your labor is not vain IN the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58, YLT). People are IN Christ by the gracious gift of faith received because Christ Himself is faithful (Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 3:9, KJV). Faith is the key. Jesus says whoever is hearing Him and is believing IN Him who sent [Jesus] has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).

Until Jesus returns, all people will die (Hebrews 9:26-28). All labor would be in vain if He did not rise from the dead on the first day of the week: "Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb ... the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid ... for [Jesus] has risen, as he said' ... Jesus said to them: 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren ...'" (Matthew 28:1-10). Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. Therefore, whatever we do IN His Name has great eternal meaning and purpose.

Furthermore, our labor IN Jesus Christ must be done as members together in His Church. Paul wrote to all the members of the church in Corinth that, together, they have become new creations IN Christ and His ambassadors sent to people in the world who are lost and without hope, to let them know they may be reconciled to God IN Christ because He took our sins on Himself to give us His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). He wrote to the (continued on page 2 ...)

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What Jesus' Resurrection Means ... (... continued from page #1)

church in Rome, to let them know that when they die to their own efforts to follow God's instruction in their own power, then they belong to the one raised from the dead so that they may bear fruit for God (Romans 7:4-6). This is important, because many people get discouraged because they try to individually fulfill all God's promises to the church of Jesus Christ. The American church struggles greatly because of the American ideal of "rugged individualism." This might be the biggest sin of the largely unfruitful American church. (If you have read this far, please take this exhortation to heart; and, pray about it if you disagree.)

In conclusion, I believe I saved the best for last; consider what the apostle Peter wrote to scattered, persecuted Christians (1 Peter 1:3-9). He begins his letter giving details about the living hope that Jesus' resurrection from the dead gives to His local churches, the assembly of those born again. They have an inheritance that will never spoil (the new heavens and earth with God forever, Revelation 21:1-4). They are shielded by God's power through faith until the salvation to

be revealed in the last time (Second Coming of Jesus). This is cause for great rejoicing, even in trials. (Suffering in Jesus, and for Jesus, is the theme that runs throughout this letter). Peter gets to the heart of the matter when he gives the reason why Jesus' resurrection gives hope and joy in all trials, such as when jewelers test gold by fire to determine if it is genuine (Job 23:10): "Our faith IN Jesus will be proved more genuine than gold and result in praise, honor and glory at the (final) revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter concludes by declaring we will then receive the end of faith, namely eternal salvation with God forever.

There is more to discover about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for those in His Church. I pray that as you read through the Bible, day after day, you will find more about what God has to say about the importance of the resurrection of the Messiah-Savior. Hint: You will find more than you expect in what many call the "old" testament, including the popular Easter text of Psalm 16 (and Job 19:25). ~v~

Worship in April

After Easter, we will return to the life of David as told in the books of Samuel.

We will have Communion on April 5 and 19.

Here are the details on the sermon texts and themes for each of the worship services:

Date	Scripture	Theme / Title
April 5 Easter	Matthew 28:1-17; Matthew 27:50-53	Let us reverently worship our risen Savior All who die in the faith of God will be bodily resurrected
April 12	1 Samuel 28:1-12; Psalm 78:29-37	Those who forsake God will deceive others out of fear Success can lead to pride, deceit and rejection by God
April 19	1 Samuel 28:13-25; Psalm 52:6-9	Turning from God in disobedience leads to despair and destruction Those who trust God for His strength will flourish
April 26	1 Samuel 29:(1-11); Psalm 69:1-7, 33-36	Sometimes God rescues us in unexpected ways When we confess our guilt to God, He will save us in our humility

We will have fellowship and food on April 12 and 26.

Missions Report By Sally Camara

It has been a while since I've given an update on The Widows Friend in Bangladesh. Elections were held in Bangladesh in February. The Bangladesh National Party, led by Tarique Rahman, won the majority parliamentary votes while the Jamaat-e-Islami party, which was previously banned under the last government, gained traction in the parliament. The Jamaat party advertised that failing to vote for them would be a sin, that they gradually plan to implement Sharia law, and that a vote for them would assure them a place in

heaven. The BNP party has been accused of extortion and their leader is untried, but they achieved a clear victory. There seems to be, at this time, a peaceful relationship between India and Bangladesh. The ministries of the Widows Friend have received approval from the NGO Bureau to continue on with their work, thankfully.

Widow's Friend operates seven different areas of ministry: an orphanage (Home of Joy), Tongi Sewing Center for

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Missions Report (... continued from page #2)

women, a girls hostel, a clinic, an elementary school, a secondary school, and a school for handicapped children. Bible readings, prayers, worship songs, and sharing are done by the Christian staff in the hope of leading the children and women to Christ in this largely Muslim country. Widow's Friend is blessed to have dedicated, industrious leaders in each of their projects. The school for the handicapped houses 12 residents and 4 staff. During the week, they have 40 additional students for 8 hours a day. Eight additional staff teach singing, reading, physical therapy, bathing, and other activities of daily living.

The Home of Joy cares for 52 abandoned or orphaned children. The teachers and staff take special interest in each child. During morning and evening prayers, the children gladly listen to Bible stories and sing about God's love. The younger ones settle into their routines, but the older teens face uncertainty after high school. One such teen was James. He was placed in HOJ, by his father, at a young age. Fortunately,

he admired Henry, who oversees HOJ. He enjoyed life there, excelled in some of the activities, and graduated from secondary school. Henry writes: "James's life journey is one of resilience, faith, and hope. His story reflects how compassion and opportunity can shape a young life. He received care, education, and moral guidance in a Christian environment that helped build his character and discipline." Three years ago, a man who claimed to be his father came to take him home. The man provided documents to prove his claim. After several visits, James cheerfully moved in with his new family. He is attending college, helps his father manage the property, helps his sister with her bakery business, and still maintains a good relationship with Henry. His future looks bright, thanks to God's compassion shown through the Home of Joy. This is only one story of a child's life cared for by the ministry of The Widows Friend. Please remember them in your prayers. ~V~

It Just Happens*... "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand"

By Petros

Work on the Bluegrass Gospel Barn started with a fury of trees falling and dirt flying August 2024. It looked like we were going to have a shell up by year's end. Not!!! My contractor, which I had always felt was a Godsend, presented my vision for the BGB on paper that got me a building permit; and the plans were followed to dig and pour the foundation. Ever since, the barn build was constantly interrupted by his absences.

Fast-forward to early March. "It Just Happens*..." my neighbor, being a contractor as well, relayed he felt bad for the condition of the barn weathering two winters without a roof, and for me. His advice was to get a start and finish date. I didn't feel a need to act, due to the amazing work of my contractor when he was on the job.

I got a scare when an "official business blue plate" vehicle pulled in to visit. I thought I was in trouble with the law but soon realized behind the dark sunglasses was the Building Inspector. "It Just Happens*..." he was driving by and stopped for a visit. I told him my contractor told me he would resume work once the weather broke. We discussed the possibility of me being the general contractor. His visit empowered me to take charge of the build and get a start time and finish from my contractor. "It Just Happens*..." that Sunday, I felt we should go out for quality time with the Mrs. While online, I found a restaurant with an Irish band. After dinner, the Mrs. suggested we go check out "a marketplace." It felt like we walked two miles and arrived just before closing. Ernest was at a juice vender that I met. We talked, and the next day he came out and looked at some repairs on the house he could do. "It Just Happens*..." I called him before he came to put on his work clothes and we spent four hours

transferring windows and installing them on the barn. I realized he had the experience to help with the barn build and asked him to start the next day. "It Just Happens*..." after completing a full day of work on the Barn with Ernest, I turned on my Bluegrass Gospel station and was stunned to hear "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand." I didn't understand why I was so taken aback, but I knew it was humbling and good. God's hand is unchanging and faith-building; even when He provides a vision that makes me abide in His time. He can also provide a better way, overnight.

In the days Ernest isn't prepping or working at his juice kiosk, his wife runs a bakery kiosk next to his, so he can work on the barn a little longer. The first week he built, stood up, leveled, and anchored a 10' gable wall after coming up to speed with the design. My original contractor and I agreed he would come for his tools. To his credit, he stayed several hours, transferring design details. He also suggested attaching the roof truss to the next gable wall as we build it. "It Just Happens*..." with the higher walls, the pole jacks were at their limit of raising the wall at 10'. We had a very precarious situation, where the 17' wall is 4-6' from standing straight up and we couldn't go up nor come down. Thank God the wall did not crush us as we scrambled underneath trying to get more push to get the wall standing straight. "It Just Happens*..." in our attempts to push the wall straight, we discover the limiting pole had no weight of the wall on it. It was astonishing how the middle had no weight on it; as if God was holding it from falling back on us. But we had to disconnect the pole by climbing to the top of a leaning wall to unscrew the attached plate preventing us from removing the limiting pole. "It Just Happens*..." I saw a video where they made a push-board and attached it to the very top for support.

(continued on page 4 ...)

It Just Happens*... (... continued from page #3)

We had attached a similar one and could continue pushing the wall straight. “It Just Happens*...” our two side jack poles reached the straight up position before they hit their limit. I was watching the wind blow the “right way” just before we started putting up the wall. “It Just Happens*...” during the rising of the wall the wind had disappeared.

“It Just Happens*...” the way the work is going, there may be a roof covering the Barn by the next “It Just Happens*...”

BTW: “It Just Happens*...” when Charlie and I were picking up windows, we bought two large 5’ tall windows, which was unknown as to why, because they were too tall for the barn. “It Just Happens*...” they will be used to create the cupola that will have a Light for the world to see and remind

everyone the Light of Jesus is here. Everyone will also see it in the people who come to praise and dance to God in the Bluegrass Gospel Barn.

PTL!!! *“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor uselessly.” Psalm 127:1*

Author’s note: This article’s title “It Just Happens*...” counters the cliché ... things just don't happen. “It” will stand for the world view one chooses to abide in. “Just” is the character of the God who wants to be our God. He has made us in His image – righteous; by faith in God. “Happens” will be the events and experiences God uses to grow our faith. All things work for the glory of God. When we turn from our ways and we look to God and live His Word – His plan for us unfolds. ~v~

Local Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services

Maundy Thursday (April 2):

- **7:00 PM** — Trinity Church, 14 Wattaquodock Hill Rd., Bolton, MA — Maundy Thursday worship service with Holy Communion.

Good Friday (April 3):

- **6:00 PM** — Steeple Fellowship, 793 Main St., Lancaster, MA — Good Friday worship service.
- **7:00 PM** — Trinity Church, 14 Wattaquodock Hill Rd., Bolton, MA — Good Friday worship service.



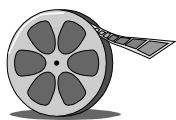
Game Night — In Fellowship Hall ***Friday, April 10 at 7:00 - 9:00 PM***



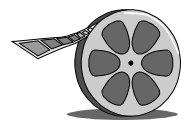
The next Game Night will be held on the second Friday in April, instead of the first Friday, due to the various local Good Friday services occurring on April 3, which people may wish to attend (see article, above).

We will have Scrabble, Monopoly, Cribbage, cards, and ping pong available. Feel free to bring your own games, also.

Invite your friends, neighbors, relatives!! Hope you can join us! Bring a snack!



Movie Night ***Friday, April 24 at 7:00 PM***



We show a movie once each month, in Fellowship Hall, usually on the fourth Friday. The movies shown in the past have covered a range of genres, and were usually thought provoking.

We are able to show these movies based on the church’s CVLI® license. However, this license does not allow us to advertise or publicize the names of these movies to the general public, and they are always free of charge.

We usually have free snacks available, and you are also welcome to bring your own meal, if you wish.

So, please join us for a night out at the movies!





APRIL 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1 (††)	2 (**) Maundy Thursday (Note #1)	3 Good Friday (also see Note #1)	4
5 Communion & Easter Sunday (Note #2)	6	7	8 (††)	9 (**)	10 Game Night (Note #3)	11
12 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #4)	13	14	15 (††)	16 (**)	17	18
19 Communion Sunday (Note #5)	20	21	22 (††)	23 (**)	24 Movie Night (Note #6)	25
26 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #7)	27 May "Vestry Voices" Articles Due (Note #8)	28	29 (††)	30	1	2

Calendar Notes:

- #1) 4/2 & 4/3 — Maundy Thursday & Good Friday (see the article on page 4, for times and locations of three local services).
- #2) 4/5 — Communion and Easter Sunday (Resurrection Sunday): **10:27 AM.**
- #3) 4/10 — Game Night, in Fellowship Hall: **7:00 PM.**
- #4) 4/12 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour/Fellowship after Worship.
- #5) 4/19 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM.**
- #6) 4/24 — Movie Night — in Fellowship Hall: **7:00 PM.**
- #7) 4/26 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour/Fellowship after Worship.
- #8) 4/27 — Articles are due for the May issue of "Vestry Voices" (for assembly/mail-out on April 28).

(††) Wednesday Bible Study: **11:00 AM** (in FCC Parlor).
 (**) Thursday afternoon prayer: **3:00 PM** (in FCC Parlor).

