

West Swamp News

Volume 14, Issue 3

April/May 2025

A Ministry Team request

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FYI

- Spring Senior Luncheons are on Apr. 17 and May 15,
- Update: On Apr. 11 a federal judge sided with the current administration in allowing immigration agents to conduct enforcement operations at houses of worship for now, despite a lawsuit filed by religious groups over the new policy. Despite the immediate setback, the plaintiffs can continue to press their case in the lawsuit.

The Ministry Team encourages each member to complete a brief survey to provide congregational input as one component of Pastor Michael's upcoming evaluation. Use the link or QR code to access the Google form.

If you prefer to complete the survey on paper, copies will be available in the fellowship hall near the mailbox-

es. If you need assistance with completing the survey, please contact Katie Mood 267-733-2141.

Your responses will remain anonymous unless you complete the final question to request a meeting with Ministry Team members. The deadline to submit your survey is April 27.

<https://forms.gle/peaHFGHD1aSqq41k6>



~ **Katie Mood**
Ministry Team

The hope we find: Easter hope

From the Kate Bowler resource we've been using through Lent:

Hope is a kind of anchor, pulling us toward a future we can only glimpse. We are being pulled toward God and toward a consummation of things being made right.

And it isn't just the promise of heaven, but all creation restored. We ache as we sense the pull toward the res-

toration of all things amid the world's brokenness, the brokenness of our bodies, the brokenness of our institutions, of our relationships, the things that are fractured.

We ache as we long for what we hope for, the completeness that God wants for us, that someday we get to experience. Not the kind of 'best life now' hope, but the long game. The version where we have

our eye on the beautiful thing that will be. It doesn't blind us to the reality of the present, but asks us to keep moving forward with each other and with God, to a gorgeous future.

And that's gong to demand all the hard work of justice and service in the meantime, but we're hopeful because we're really going somewhere. Hope keeps us moving.

Pastor's Corner: Resurrection power

The key reality in all of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. When Peter preaches his Pentecost sermon, he declares “You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” (Acts 2:23, 24)

The religious and political forces of evil conspired together to kill Jesus, because his teaching and ministry were an existential threat to them. But God vindicated Jesus' obedience by raising him from the dead, as the Scriptures in the Hebrew Bible had foretold, and as Jesus himself had told his disciples would happen. Evil had done its worst, and God had decisively triumphed over evil in the resurrection of Jesus.

In our world today, there is a lot of evil. People around the world and in our own community live

in poverty, unhoused and hungry. War burns in different parts of our world. Lives are lost daily to violence in our cities and communities.

In the face of all that evil, it is encouraging to know that Jesus has been victorious over evil, and that one day God will put an end to all evil within creation. The day is coming when “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

But as we live between Jesus' decisive victory over evil in the resurrection, and God's final triumphant reunion of heaven and earth, how should you and I live? We should live as agents of the hope that is in Jesus.

In Ephesians 1:19 and 20, Paul says that the same power that God exerted when he raised Jesus from the dead is at work in each of our lives today as followers of Jesus. Wow! Not a similar power, not a power something

like, but the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work every day in you and me.

That resurrection power that is at work within us gives us the ability to love our neighbors, to love our enemies, to build the Kingdom of Jesus in our everyday actions. I invite you to ask God to cause your daily life to overflow with the resurrection power of Jesus.

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*



Worship: Holy Week services and beyond

Join us for Holy Week services:

Apr. 13—Palm Sunday. Celebrate the event of Jesus parading into Jerusalem, being praised and worshiped by palm-waving followers.

Apr. 17—Maundy Thursday. Join us for a simple meal of soup and bread at 6:30, followed by a

service of prayer, singing, foot-washing (optional), and reflection.

Apr. 20—This year we host the joint 7 am Easter Dawn service with Swamp Mennonite Church, along with a light breakfast afterwards. Sign up on the bulletin board to donate items that are needed. Continue celebrating our

risen Savior at the 10:30 service. Happy Easter!

Two special events in May are **Mother's Day**, when we will honor mothers—and all women—and **Memorial Sunday**, when we will have our traditional service of remembrance in the church cemetery.

~ *Joan Hallman*

DISCO: You are never done learning!

TLC Sunday School class is enjoying *The Chosen—Season 1* together. Each episode portrays a component of the start of Jesus' ministry. The group discusses the characterization and storyline as it relates to the scriptures. It is not too late to pop in for an episode!

The class anticipates this resource ending mid-May. From

that point on in May, and through the months of June, July and August, this class will take a break from meeting.

The Bible Project class continues its deep dive into scripture. They are currently going through the story of Joseph. Join them through Zoom or in person at 8:45 am. TLC members are espe-

cially welcome while their class is taking a break.

May 4 is the final Prayer Breakfast before a summer break. Join us for breakfast provided by the Community Commission and spend time praying around tables.

~ *Katie Mood*

Mission: Coins create food opportunities

Thanks to everyone who donated coins to My Coins Count, which this year supported MCC food projects. In just two Sundays we collected \$163.93.

Some of that money helps farmers in Colombia learn ways to improve their soil to grow more food. An MCC partner helps people make natural fertilizer from beets, molasses, grass and algae that grows in local waterways. When farmers can use the things

around them instead of having to buy expensive chemical fertilizers, it saves them money and helps them grow healthier food, like the corn grown by the mom of Deiver José and Leider David Salgado Pérez.

Thank you also to Rod Rush and Mark Kemmerer who took our coin bottle to the PA Relief Sale on Apr. 2.

~ *Karen Parzych*



Stewardship: Spring maintenance

Fortunately, typical and recurring church maintenance continues to be the focus throughout the winter into early spring. Generator checks, water softener refills, elevator systems checks, upcoming elevator inspections, drains, pest controls, etc...

One out-of-the-ordinary adjustment that was made was resetting the water pressure back up to 60 psi so that we hopefully have better flow at the kitchen sink fixtures. One increase to flow when I came on board should have been the swapping of the water filter itself that had not been swapped for a long time. If the flow still seems inadequate please let me know, as there are other things we can do such as cleaning aerators/screens, fixture swaps, etc.

We will be looking towards spring cleaning, mulching, maintenance, and lawn care as the weather is warming up. Dave's Services has offered (via discussions with Matt Mood) to do the lawn cutting and trimming for what I can only assume

is at cost, based on the price quoted per cut. I have accepted this generous offer and I hope that anyone in the congregation who knows Dave Gerstenberg shows their appreciation for this and the many other favors that he has performed for West Swamp.

One reminder that I want to make regarding trash/recycling is that **WE DO HAVE A RECYCLING CONTAINER WITH A YELLOW LID** that gets emptied weekly. Please use it rather than taking recycling home or tossing it in the trash.

Also, I'm not saying that it is someone from our congregation, but I regularly find trash bags in the container despite the fact that it says "RECYCLING ONLY" in bold block letters and has a bright yellow lid compared to all of the trash bins.

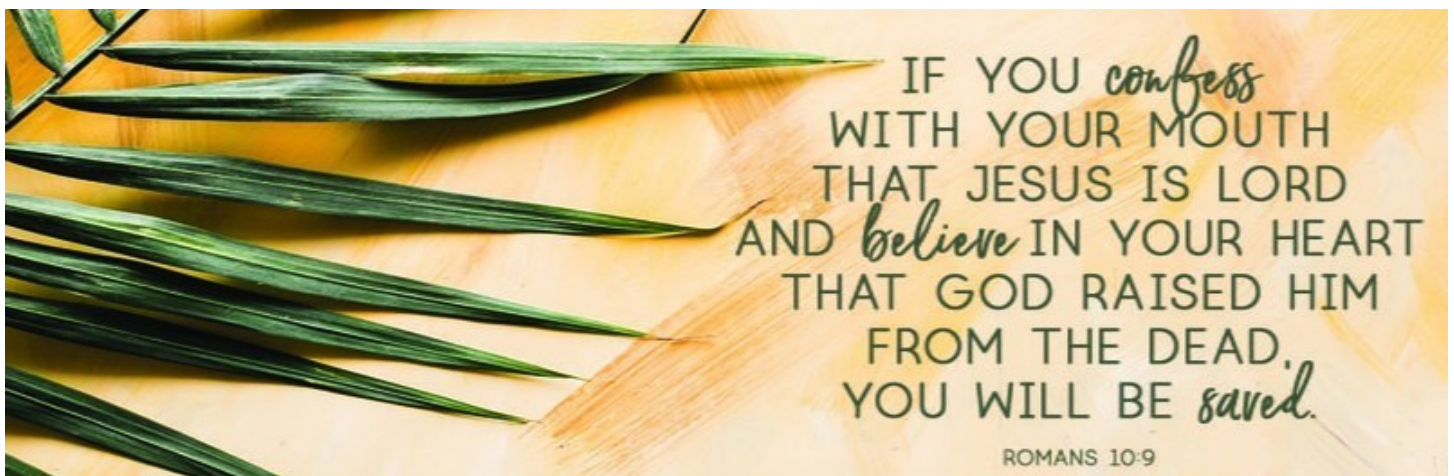
In regard to stewardship of communities around the world, and understanding some of the most difficult areas to live in such as Haiti which has been in the spotlight, I would also like to share a

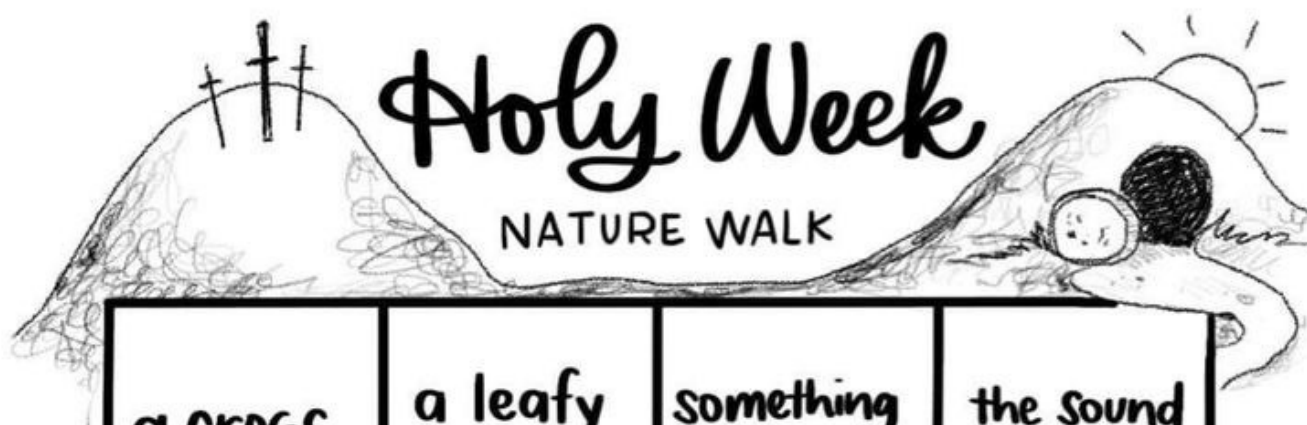
Youtube series. It's made by an independent individual who makes it his purpose in life to visit some of the most forgotten and potentially incorrectly portrayed communities in the world. He risks his life to show a first person perspective and interview people of all social classes and affiliations.

I am sharing this as what appears to be an unbiased source in a sea of biased reporting (not making a political statement). And I caution you that these videos are **NOT FOR THE LIGHT-HEARTED OR CHILDREN**.

These are real life people in real life dire situations, much like many of the more graphic and less comfortable portions of the Bible that we would not read verbatim to our children. See this link if you are interested... https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLN0FlxE6vY5BZh0F-drw_4SASB7kwezUf

~ Alex Parzych





a cross MARK 15:21	a leafy branch MARK 11:8	something broken MARK 14:3	the sound of a bird MARK 14:72
water JOHN 13:5	a heart JOHN 13:34	a table LUKE 22:14	twelve of something MARK 14:17
something sharp or thorny MARK 15:17	something purple JOHN 19:5	something hiding JOHN 20:19	a stone MARK 15:46
something empty MARK 16:6	something springing to life LUKE 24:5	a sweet or spiced scent JOHN 19:40	each letter of Alleluia! HE IS RISEN INDEED!



During Holy Week we tell the story of Jesus' last week, from the triumphal entry to the Last Supper, cross, and empty tomb. Take a walk and use all your senses to find the things listed above. Take a photo or check it off, then look up the verse.





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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving

Calendar of Events

April

6, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
8, 7 pm—Mission Com.
9, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
9, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
13, 10:30 am—Palm Sunday
15, 7 pm—Ministry Team
17, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
17, 6:30 pm—Maundy Thursday
20, 7 am—Easter Dawn
20, 10:30 am—Easter Service
22, 7 pm—DISCO
23, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
23, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
27, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch

May

4, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
6, 7 pm—Community Com.
7, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
7, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
11—Mother's Day
13, 7 pm—Mission Com.
15, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
18, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
20, 7 pm—Ministry Team
21, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
21, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
25—Graveside Memorial Service
27, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activity

Tuesdays, 8 am—Knotting & Quilting



April

4/4 Bev Mellan
Kimberlee Opdyke
4/7 Bryson Searfass
4/13 Karen Butenuth
Cara Riley
4/15 Carl Kiesel
Kyleigh Opdyke
Edna Rosenberger

May

5/5 Griffin Bear
Gretchen Isaak
Tim Scheetz
5/11 Jane Burkett
5/15 Lee Hallman
5/20 Judy High
5/22 Matt Mood
5/23 Tim Butenuth
5/26 May Keiser
5/29 Don Jacobs
5/30 Charlene Smoll