

Messages of Easter inspiration from area churches

What will it take for you to accept the resurrection of Jesus

By Jonathan Enz
Heppner United Methodist

In the April 1996 issue of the "Joyful Noiseletter", there is a report regarding a Roman Catholic priest who was speaking to a group of second-graders about the resurrection of Jesus. When one of the 'students asked, "What did Jesus say right after He came out of the grave?" Another student's hand shot up and the student excitedly shouted, "I know! I know!" So the priest asked this second student "What did He say?" And the student replied, "Tah-Dah!"

We read in the four Gospels, that the disciples were told by Jesus several times - that He would be arrested, tried, killed, and raised on the third day. They also had witnessed the many miracles through which Jesus had healed the sick, raised the dead, transformed nature. They had heard His teachings and His proclamations that He was the Son of God Peter, James, and John had witnessed His Transfiguration during which He talked with Moses and Elijah: Two of the disciples, including

Peter, were informed by Mary Magdalene that she had seen the Risen Christ. These two disciples then went to the tomb and found it empty. And yet, when Jesus appeared before them on the evening of the day of His resurrection He found them in a locked room hiding in fear of the Jews, fearing that they, too, would be arrested.

It was only upon Jesus appearing to them that they believed the "Tah-Dah" of Easter, the "Tah-Dah" of the resurrection of Jesus from death to life.

Unfortunately, one of their group, Thomas, was not with the rest of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them. So, when he returned, they excitedly, told him that Jesus was alive! He had risen from the dead! Thomas went on to say that he could not believe in the resurrection of Jesus until he could see the mark of the nails in His hands and put his fingers in the nail marks and his hand in Jesus' side. Eight days later, Jesus, again, appeared to the disciples, this time including Thomas. When Jesus said to Thomas, "Put

your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side" Thomas answered saying, "My Lord and My God!" and Jesus said; "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Do you believe? If not, what will it take for you to accept the resurrection of Jesus? What will it take for you to believe that Jesus is the Risen Christ? What will it take for you to accept His teachings as the truth of God's love?

I invite you to come and see, come and experience the "Tah-Dah" of Easter, this Easter morning, March 31, at the football grandstands at 7 a.m. or at any of the church services on Easter morning, or both. If you plan to attend both the Sunrise Service and a church service (which will be a double blessing for you) plan on having breakfast at Hope Lutheran following the Sunrise Service.

If you can only attend one service, invite you to join us at the United Methodist Church at 10:30 a.m.



Today's Easter is just as powerful as the first one

By Katy Anderson, Pastor
All Saints Episcopal and
Hope Lutheran Churches

The Passover season is a celebration of freedom. It is a celebration of God's deliverance from oppression and slavery and Jerusalem would be filled to overflowing with worshippers that have come to celebrate. During that Passover some 2000 years ago there would have been the added excitement of the Rabbi and Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth. Many fantastic stories would have been told of this Prophet; stories of his miracles, teaching and conflicts with the Jewish leadership. Perhaps they had even heard of him raising Lazarus from the dead just a short time before.

As he enters the city the people treat him as a coming king. They anticipate him as the Messiah. One who would throw off the oppression of the Romans and challenge the puppet leaders of Israel. His riding in on a donkey would remind them of Solomon as he challenged for the throne, the real anointed

king. They shouted "Son of David, save us now!" Their confidence would rise as he "cleanses" the Temple of the money changers and speaks parables against the corrupt leaders of the Temple mount.

But these hopes would be publically and brutally crushed. These corrupt leaders had already plotted to kill the prophet. They feared a revolution and were worried that they would lose their positions of power and privilege. They convinced one of his own disciples to turn on him. He is arrested, illegally tried in a kangaroo court, convicted and savagely beaten and crucified. Their hope of a new king crushed, the leading disciples of his movement feared for their lives and abandoned him. The entrenched corrupt leadership wins again. The common folks will continue to suffer under Roman rule and the privileged locals.

But then reports began to trickle in... Guards with fantastic stories of angels and empty tombs, people all around the city that witnessed this prophet alive. His disciples became bold

and no longer fearful. They began to preach that this prophet Jesus was alive, resurrected from the dead and not just a prophet, but the Messiah, the anointed one who would come to transform the world. These disciples no longer feared the corrupt leaders and told them so, right to their face. Thousands were transformed by the message and became followers. This started a movement of the advancement of the Kingdom of God that continues to transform to this day. It is amazing what people can do when they are empowered by God and no longer fear death...

We celebrate Easter today and it is just as powerful as that first one. It is a season of freedom from the ultimate powers that bind us... sin and death. It was amazing how those early disciples were transformed when they no longer feared death and we can be transformed and just as bold if we are empowered by the Spirit of the resurrected Messiah Jesus. You will become truly alive, because He is alive.

Know who our builder is

By Pastor Lynda Liu
Elohim Covenant
Ministries, Heppner

When I first started traveling to other countries, I saw such poverty in the midst of lands that had a much longer growing season and greater natural resources than the US. But why are we so blessed in this country I asked?

The only conclusion I have come to is that we

have been one nation under God. A government by the people, and for the people. A country whose strength was in its middle class. In other countries I saw the very rich and the very poor. That has been changing here. I see our government becoming an island unto itself. And yet in the midst of all of it I hear, "Equal rights." Yet when cuts in budgets are needed they stand as kings and cry

out "Give me more."

I have watched the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. The middle class continues to diminish with each passing day. I pray we will wake up soon. To know who our builder and maker is once again. That we might stand as a nation and as a people in this evil day. That we might say as a nation once again "Our God Lives on Resurrection Day."

Share the story of the love that we find in Christ

By Stacy Shelton, Pastor
Ione Community Church

In preparing to write this article I looked at what I had written last year. Last year at this time we had been given the news that, while we thought my father had cancer for the second time, he did not. That was good news, except for the fact that a couple of weeks later, we found out that the original diagnosis was correct, and that he did indeed have cancer, and

that it had metastasized to his bones. Six months later he died.

While many might think that my profession would cause me to think a great deal about the afterlife, I have chosen to focus more on this life and what I believe we are called to here. But since my father's death I have had a little more cause to think about the afterlife. I have not experienced his "ghost" coming to me, but I have been distinctly aware of his presence, in a peaceful and loving way. But, for all the comfort that is to me, I would still rather have my father in the flesh sitting in front of me, or even on the other end of the phone line.

This Easter I am preaching on John 20:19-28 and in it, Jesus tells Mary "Do not hold onto me" when she sees him outside of the tomb. How hard that must have been for Mary! Maybe she had felt Jesus' presence before the day she went to the tomb, but

the opportunity to see him physically present would have been astounding. And it would have been tempting, in fact almost irresistible, to try to hang onto him. But his next words send her out to tell the story. He reminds her that she still has work to do.

I am so saddened by my father's death, but while he wasn't a perfect man, he did tell me the stories of his faith, he did the work that Jesus calls all of us to do.

I would love the opportunity to hold onto my father again, but I know that he too, would remind me that my work isn't done. I hope you have a blessed Easter, and while we may be reminded of those we are missing during this season, let us also be reminded that their loving presence in our lives also calls us to share the story of love that we find in Christ.

Ione Community Church will be celebrating Christ's Resurrection with an Easter brunch at 9:30am and Worship at 11:00am followed by coffee hour. All are welcome!

Nothing equals the feast of the Resurrection

By Fr. Kumar Udagandla
St. Patrick's Church
Heppner

March 31, 2013 is a great day and we, the Christians in the world, are celebrating the greatest feast of Easter. It is one of the greatest and solemn feasts in the church among other feasts. "If we were to keep all feasts together, none could be equal to the feast of Resurrection" says St. Irenaus. The feast of Easter teach us that the first Adam brought death by sin, whereas the second Adam destroying the power of death and restoring the eternal life to our human temporary life. St. Paul meditating on the event of resurrection said "O death where is your power and sting" (1 cor. 15/55).

"I have risen and I am still with you, forever." These words invite us to contemplate the risen Christ, letting his voice resound in our hearts. With

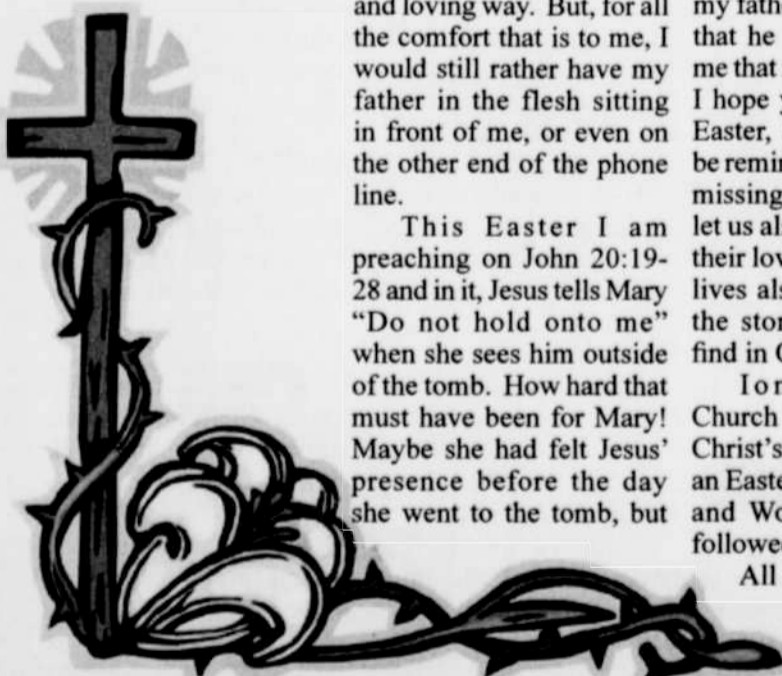
his redeeming sacrifice, Jesus of Nazareth has made us adopted children of God, so that we too can now take our place in the mysterious dialogue between him and the Father. We are reminded of what he once said to those who were listening, "All things have been delivered to me by my father; and no one knows the Father except the son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal to him." (Mt 11/27)

Easter is a day of celebration because it represents the fulfillment of our faith as Christians. St. Paul wrote that, unless Christ rose from the dead, our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). Through his death, Christ saved mankind from bondage to sin, and He destroyed the hold that death has on all of us; but it is His Resurrection that gives us the promise of new life, both in this world and the next. The resurrection of Jesus in the history of mankind and in the life of all the Christians has become a milestone to divide the Era and destiny of human beings. It has become solid foundation

for all Christians for their hope of resurrection and the everlasting life.

Easter is the spring of Faith. From the Bible we read Mary Magdalene with her physical eyes saw only the empty tomb but with the eyes of faith, she saw not the Gardner but the Risen Lord. (Jn20/11-18) The disciples on their way to Emmaus in their physical eyes saw only a traveler but with the eyes of faith saw the Risen Lord at the breaking of the bread. (Lk 24/13-35)

If we want to really meet the risen Jesus, experience the bliss of our bodily resurrection then we need to be freed from the clutches of our sins, temptations and being slaves to the passing and perishing world and cherish the values of Risen Christ. Let us allow the light that streams forth from this solemn day to enlighten us; let us open ourselves in sincere trust to the risen Christ so that his victory over evil and death may also triumph in each one of us, in our families, in our cities and in our nations. Let it shine forth in every part of the world. Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia.



The young salt is turning into an old salt!
celebrating 90 years March 27, 2013



Come join us as we
celebrate Melvin Brady

March 30, 2013 2:00-5:00 pm
Milton-Freewater Elk's Lodge
611 N. Main St.
Milton Freewater, OR

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem,
help is available and that help is FREE of charge.

If YOU have a family member who suffers from gambling addiction, YOU can also receive FREE treatment even if the gambler is not receiving treatment. If you are a resident of Morrow County and you wish to take advantage of the services above or desire more information, Please call any of the following numbers to set up a LOCAL appointment or just to talk: Bobby Harris @ 541-676-9925 or 541-256-0175 Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) @ 541-676-9161 OR 1-877-695-4648 (1-888-MYLIMIT)

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