

FMBC

Focus

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**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
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Why Christ Calls Us to Worship

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Easter services are usually well attended, but what about other weeks? What draws you to worship on an “average” Sunday, and what might Jesus have in store for people in the pews?

Consider this from Pastor Charles Aaron: “Did we come to church this morning thinking it was a safe thing to do? Did we come with some expectation of receiving a blessing, a bit of comfort, but no real challenge? Did we think about the possibility that encountering Jesus would rearrange our lives, explode our priorities, cause us to give more than we ever expected? Did we think we could get a little something from Jesus,

a dose of grace to help us through the week? Did we come for the fellowship, the music, the spiritual boost? No one can argue with those reasons.”

He continues: “The risen Christ, however, may have had other plans for this worship service. Christ may want to come under our skins and transform us. Christ may see through us so that something we have well hidden comes to the surface. Christ may kick out from under us the things we use to prop ourselves up but that we don’t really need. Are we ready for that? Did we bargain on that when we walked through the door today?”

—from The Wired Word

Church Events

9:00 FMBC Sunday School

9:30 FMBC Sunday Church Service

April 2-9, Holy Week

April 2, Palm/Passion Sunday

April 7, Good Friday

April 9, Easter Sunday

April 26, Administrative

Professionals Day

May 4, National Day of Prayer,

May 14, Mother’s Day

May 29, Memorial Day

June 14, Flag Day

June 18, Father’s Day

June 21, First day of summer

June 24, Armed Forces Day

Following God's Lead

Jazz musician Thomas Dorsey traveled an unlikely road to become the “father of black gospel music.” At age 11, he dropped out of school to be a vaudeville performer and blues pianist. While Dorsey recovered from a nervous breakdown at age 21, his mother urged him to serve the Lord with his talents. It took several years, but the musician committed to composing spiritual songs — rejected by many mainstream churches as “the devil’s music.”

In 1932, after Dorsey’s wife and infant son died during childbirth, he channeled his grief into the piano, writing “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.” Known to be a favorite song of Martin Luther King Jr., it ends with these lyrics: “Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.”

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17

Easter is Eternal



If Easter means anything to modern man, it means that eternal truth is eternal. You may nail it to the tree, wrap it up in grave clothes and seal it in a tomb. But truth crushed to earth shall rise again. Truth does not perish. It cannot be destroyed. It may be distorted. It has been silenced temporarily. It has been compelled to carry its cross to Calvary’s brow ... but with an inevitable certainty, after every Black Friday dawns truth’s Easter morn.

—Donald H. Tippet

From Death to Life

Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall — the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

—Christina Rossetti

An Invitation to Rest



Summer calls to mind a slower pace, time off from school and work. But many still face daily demands this time of year: farmers work long hours; teachers may take seasonal work to make ends meet; parents with kids now home all day may catch up on work late at night. Still, may the longer days and warmer weather beckon you into a bit of free time this season. Listen:

“When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.” — Eleanor Brown (Public Speaker & Educator)

Sometimes it’s important to work for that pot of gold. But other times it’s essential...to make sure that your most important decision in the day [is] which color to slide down on the rainbow.” —Douglas Pagels (author)

“Rest time is not waste time; it is economy to gather fresh strength. ... In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.” — Charles Spurgeon

“Come to me, all you that are weary ... and I will give you rest. ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” —Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30)

Getting a Glimpse

Marital love is a blessing but not necessarily “easy,” even when both spouses are Christians. When issues inevitably arise, couples who cling to one another and to God can benefit from that “threefold cord” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). During joyful times, changes, challenges and other adventures, married followers of Jesus can support one another while knowing that Jesus supports them both.

In *The Meaning of Marriage*, Timothy Keller describes falling in love as looking at another person, glimpsing what God is creating in their life, and then proclaiming: “I see who God is making you, and it excites me! I want to be part of that. I want to partner with you and God in the journey you are taking to his throne. And when we get there, I will look at your magnificence and say, ‘I always knew you could be like this. I got glimpses of it on earth, but now look at you!’”

Highly Esteemed

1 John 4:8 - He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

After returning from a lengthy mission trip overseas, John Huffman and his fellow passengers were held up in customs for two hours. When he finally made it to the packed airport lobby, Huffman realized it might take a while to find his family. But suddenly his 3-year-old daughter ran toward him yelling, “Daddy! Daddy! That’s my daddy!” and launched into his arms.

“What a welcome,” he writes. “I have never felt so loved and acknowledged in my life.” Perhaps that’s how God feels when we call on his name in worship and prayer, acknowledging him as our heavenly Father — and honoring him above all else



Short Stories

Quite a Story

During Sunday dinner, a mother asked her son what he'd learned in Sunday school that day.

"Well," he said, "our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge, and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, is that really what your teacher said?" the boy's mother asked.

"Well, no," he admitted. "But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

A Potluck of People

Many congregations enjoy gathering for potluck dinners — meals largely unplanned, when people bring food to share. Usually, the main dishes, salads and desserts balance out. The fun is the variety mixing together on a plate and the surprise factor of what's contributed.

Churches and communities — even families

— are potlucks of a sort, too. When groups assemble, each person contributes something unique and sometimes unexpected. When all is mixed together, the whole is truly greater than the sum of the parts. A beautiful balance often results: One is a good singer, the other writes well; some are strong leaders, others dependable team members; some are traditional, others innovative. Together, it's delicious!

Potlucks are sometimes called covered-dish dinners. But don't keep your gifts "covered"! Share them because you're a valued part of the whole.

Easter Possibilities

The message of Easter is not only that Christ is risen, not only that suffering is not the last word, not only that God gives new life, but this: Nothing is impossible with God.

—The Rev. James Martin, S.J.

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Christian Symbols

LILY—The lily that blooms around Easter is a symbol of Christ's resurrection because it rises from a seemingly lifeless bulb decaying in the ground. It is also used as a symbol of Christ himself. The lily, a symbol of purity, is often used to represent the Virgin Mary.

SEED—The Bible often uses seeds as symbols of faith or God's Word. In the Old Testament, seeds also refer to offspring. Jesus said people who believe in him can perform mighty deeds with "faith the size of a mustard seed" (Luke 17:6, NRSV). Many of Jesus' teachings use seed imagery; for example, in the parable of the four soils, he said the seed, God's Word, can grow only when people hear it, "hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance" (Luke 8:15, NRSV).

Olive—The olive branch is a symbol of peace, harmony and healing. Olive trees provide shelter, as well as oil used for ointment and consecration. The olive branch also represents deliverance from hardships and anxiety because a dove brought an olive leaf back to Noah's ark after the flood ended (Genesis 8:11).