



FIRST CHRISTIAN

FAIRFIELD, IL

Encounter Grow Serve

April 2021

CRAIG'S COLUMN

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Easter is right around the corner. And when I think of the resurrection my mind also goes to the cross. And I think about what a paradox it is. There is suffering, agony, horror, destruction, and embarrassment, but there is also wonder, joy, freedom, relief, and forgiveness. Most of us look at the cross with sadness and the resurrection with celebration. I learned a number of years ago the price for my sins was paid at the cross and that is cause for celebration.

There are certain passages of Scripture that remind me of this paradox of sorrow mixed with celebration. Isaiah 52 and 53 is a prophecy that reminds me of how awful this time was for the suffering servant but how blessed I am because of His willingness to endure these horrible actions. I wanted to share some of these passages of paradox as we move to the time when we recognize the cross and the resurrection.

"See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there are many who were appalled at him – his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form was marred beyond human likeness – so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him." (Isaiah 52:13 – 15)

We are reminded in this passage the suffering servant acted wisely but He was going to be disfigured so He would not be recognized and that He would "sprinkle many nations" which is to bring forgiveness.

"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4 – 5)

He bore our suffering, He was punished by God but He did this for our sins. What He did for us there was to bring us peace and healing.

"Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life and offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he is suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." (Isaiah 53:10 – 11)

Here we learn it was the Lord's plan to cause Him to suffer and make His life an offering for sin and because of that offering I was justified.

The last verse in the chapter reminds us that because He was willing to go through such great difficulty He would be blessed and He would be great.

"Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

Paul in his book of Philippians also reminds us because of this great sacrifice;

"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9 – 11)

I hope you will take the time to read some of these wonderful, tragic, beautiful, horrible, awesome, difficult, and incredible passages that draw our minds to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the resurrection.

On April 4 we will be gathering to remember what Jesus did for us and to celebrate the resurrection. I hope that you will join us. We will be having two services in which you can join us; 8 AM and 10:15 AM. We will also be having Sunday school at 9 AM. The 10:15 service will be meeting in the MPR although there will be an overflow in the sanctuary. I hope you will join us for the celebration of the resurrection in person or online. We are excited and looking forward to a fantastic day as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

FAMILY EASTER ACTIVITIES

Often I write about different resources for elementary students and their parents or I write about what the elementary students will be learning that month. This month, however, I want to provide a resource for preschool parents. Finding ways to celebrate the real reason for Easter with your preschool kids can be difficult; I know it's difficult for Diana and I to find ways to celebrate with our kids in a meaningful way. Here are four ideas to effectively celebrate the resurrection I've come across that you may find interesting:

1. Plan a special meal with your friends/family. As you prepare the meal with your children, talk about how Jesus had a special meal with His friends before He went away and then breakfast with His friends after He came back.
2. Plant an herb garden. After you bury the seeds, talk about how Jesus was buried but He came back, just like He promised. Use 1 Corinthians 15:35-38 as a reference point.
3. Decorate "Good News" cards. Create handmade cards using construction paper, crayons, markers, and stickers. Write "Good News! Jesus is alive!" on the card. Talk about who they will share the Good News with and then help them deliver the cards to those people.
4. Go on an egg hunt. Egg hunts are a lot of fun, but the Easter story can get lost quickly in the mad dash. Put Easter story-related pictures in some of the plastic eggs as you hide them. Later, when your kids open the eggs, use the pictures to help retell the story.



Have you ever forgotten something important? If you're like me the answer is an overwhelming "YES!" But there are some things even the most forgetful of people should never forget: your anniversary, your family's birthdays, or where you put your keys are just a few. In the month of April, the elementary kids will be learning about some important things to never forget.

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 04/11 | I Will Bring Others To Jesus |
| 04/18 | God Gives Me Peace In Every Storm |
| 04/25 | Jesus Can Forgive Every Single Sin |

GRATITUDE

As I sit down to write my final article, I am overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude. How do you reflect on five years of living, working and worshipping? I have forged incredible relationships I will carry with me into eternity. I have witnessed heartbreak, re-birth and miracles. I can honestly say I have witnessed the goodness of God in my midst.

I am humbled by the years of love, care and support our family has received here. Your generosity and care have changed our family and expanded our capacity to love exponentially. A simple "thank you" is not adequate enough to convey the deep sense of gratitude we have. I am a better husband, father and follower of Christ because of this church and the many people here that I am honored to call friends.

It is my hope we were a blessing to your families, as well. Our sole desire was for your children to know Jesus better and capture a fresh vision for living fully in the kingdom of God. I have been blessed to be present to watch so much transformation in the lives of your children. I am thankful that we will still be in the area to watch their journeys continue. Thank you for trusting me and loving well.

Missions: Haitian Christian Outreach

Haitian Christian Outreach (HCO) is dedicated to evangelizing the Haitian community with facilities throughout Haiti: Port-au-Prince, Seguin, Peredo, Drouliard, Cyvadier, Kapotier, Grand Bois, Terre-Neuve, Bordin, Chota, and Belle Anse.

FCC has been blessed with first-hand involvement in the building phases of Peredo Community Hospital and projects over the years. Several of our church members traveled for short-term trips and Jorja (Coomer) Aeilts worked one summer with HCO ministry.

“Despite the obstacles...only God could use the events of 2020 to fertilize and cultivate such a bountiful, eternal harvest.” *(Annual Report)*

Baptisms numbered about 140, just under 2019 and above the 2018 count, consistently adding to the Kingdom.

Church plants, currently 8, operate building believers and church leadership with a combined church membership of over 1,500.

Community efforts often partner with other ministries to transform the area economy. Projects include digging wells for clean drinking water or providing rabbits that serve as a way to provide income and food. During the 2020 pandemic 1,800 meal kits were delivered to families.

Children’s outreach involves educational and spiritual training in one of 6 HCO schools. This ministry is vital as only a small percentage of Haitian children attend school. Children sponsorships are available that support basic expenses.

Healthcare mission continues to expand with dental added in 2020 and Phase III of the Surgical suite at Peredo Community Hospital. Goals in 2021 include opening the recovery floor, installing solar power panels, and bringing in specialized surgical teams.

“When I see where we are today, after a humble beginning and what God has done through Haitian Christian Outreach, we can conclude that with God nothing is impossible, though it may take time.” RoRo Eustache

Our goal is to evangelize, equip, empower, and encourage our partners using a biblical model of ministry.

NURSERY SCHEDULE

| | 9:00 am | 10:15 am |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | Barbara Bozarth / Elizabeth Long | Cindy Hayes / Diana Higginbotham |
| Week 2 | Amy Doty | Laura Simpson / Kelly Scott |
| Week 3 | Matta Gray / Drew Vaupel | Jackie Gre pares / Jodi Poole |
| Week 4 | Connie Mitchell / Toby Hucker | Bob & Dena Hall |
| Week 5 | Diana Higginbotham / Toby Hucker | Heather Neuman / Caleb Higginbotham |

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| April 1 Shaelynn Hall Joshua Read | April 4 Sharon Mazza | April 10 Bryce Kovacich | April 14 Terry Legg | April 17 Talan Keoughan | April 20 Bruce Gualdoni | April 24 Lydia Green | April 28 Dwight Reever Radley Wright |
| April 2 Eric Basnett Jill Mitchell | April 6 Jenesis Rockett | April 11 Nash St. Ledger | April 15 Rhett Simpson | April 18 Charles Dalton | April 21 Lucy Britt | April 25 Sheri Lavine Linda Vinson | April 29 Bruce McKibben Curt Robbins |
| April 3 Mark Burkett Matthew Legg | April 8 Dayne Gray | April 11 Faith Gre pares Steve Liston | April 15 Terri Carter | April 18 Betty Hodge Jeff Lyon Levi McCulley | April 22 Becky Hildebrand Olivia Vaughan | April 26 Brandon Webb | |
| | April 9 Andrew Gifford Hudsyn Moore | | April 16 Matta Gray Fred Read | April 19 Deakin Dagg Clinton Legg | April 23 Karsen Keck | April 27 Nate Carter Terry Weedman | |

FEBRUARY 2021

| Fund | Beginning Balance | Income | Expense | Ending Balance |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| General | 325,346 | 61,271 | 64,865 | 321,752 |
| Mission | 132,185 | 39,819 | 24,134 | 147,870 |
| Totals | 457,531 | 101,090 | 88,999 | 469,622 |

April 2021

FCC PRAYER CALENDAR

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | | 1 Easter Worship: open hearts, moving of the Holy Spirit, no technology distractions | 2 Easter Message: openness to the Gospel, conviction and motivation | 3 God's Glory will be seen at the Easter Service: that we will be used to present His message |
| 4 Easter and Beyond: that souls will be saved, passion for the lost will be renewed, people will be drawn to Jesus | 5 Feed My Sheep Soup Kitchen | 6 Local Leaders | 7 Children's Ministry | 8 Jacob & Kami Butcher, their boys, their transition to Dyball, our search for a Youth Minister | 9 Strong Christian Relationships | 10 Our Prayer List www.fccfairfield.com/ prayer |
| 11 That we would apply God's teachings to our every action | 12 Heartland Evangelistic Association | 13 State Leaders | 14 Youth Ministry | 15 Jeff & Lisa Lyon | 16 Solid Biblical financial decisions | 17 Our Prayer List www.fccfairfield.com/ prayer |
| 18 That we would apply God's teachings to our every action | 19 Restoration House Ministries | 20 National Leaders | 21 Benevolent Ministry | 22 Caleb & Diana Higginbotham | 23 Ability to recognize Satan's lies and deceit | 24 Our Prayer List www.fccfairfield.com/ prayer |
| 25 That we would apply God's teachings to our every action | 26 Korean Christian Gospel Mission | 27 Your position as a community leader | 28 Prayer Ministry | 29 Craig & Kelly Scott | 30 Boldness to share our faith when God provides the opportunity | |

| Mondays Missions | Tuesdays Government | Wednesdays Ministry Teams | Thursdays Leadership | Fridays Congregation |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>You can find links to the missions we support on www.fccfairfield.com.</p> <p>They usually list current prayer requests & praises. Take a moment to get to know our missionaries as you pray for them.</p> <p>Missions are listed under the Ministries tab. Scroll down that page to find "Missions We Currently Support". (They are separated by Local, National & Global). Choose the Mission corresponding with the days prayer focus. If they have a website available you can access it by clicking on the name. You can look up their specific prayer requests for the day or simply pray for their ministry as God guides your thoughts.</p> | <p><u>Pray for...</u></p> <p>Leadership seeks and is guided by biblical principles</p> <p>Godly men and women seek positions of leadership</p> <p>Boldness for those Christians in position of power</p> <p>Support from other Christians for Godly leaders</p> <p>Unity of Christians advising and supporting leadership</p> | <p><u>Pray for...</u></p> <p>Leaders who will seek and follow God's direction</p> <p>Unique and inspiring ideas for ministry in a pandemic</p> <p>Volunteer willingness and enthusiasm</p> <p>Unity in vision and implementation</p> <p>Support and encouragement from congregation</p> | <p><u>Pray for...</u></p> <p>Sustained passion for ministry during difficult times</p> <p>Marriages and family relationships</p> <p>They will feel God's hand guiding as they plan and prepare</p> <p>Proper resources for growing their ministries and reaching those in need</p> <p>Guidance in recruiting and training volunteers, willing volunteers to seek places to serve</p> | <p>Pray specifically for our congregation and / or Christians in general to develop these aspects in their personal lives as we seek unity for the future.</p> |

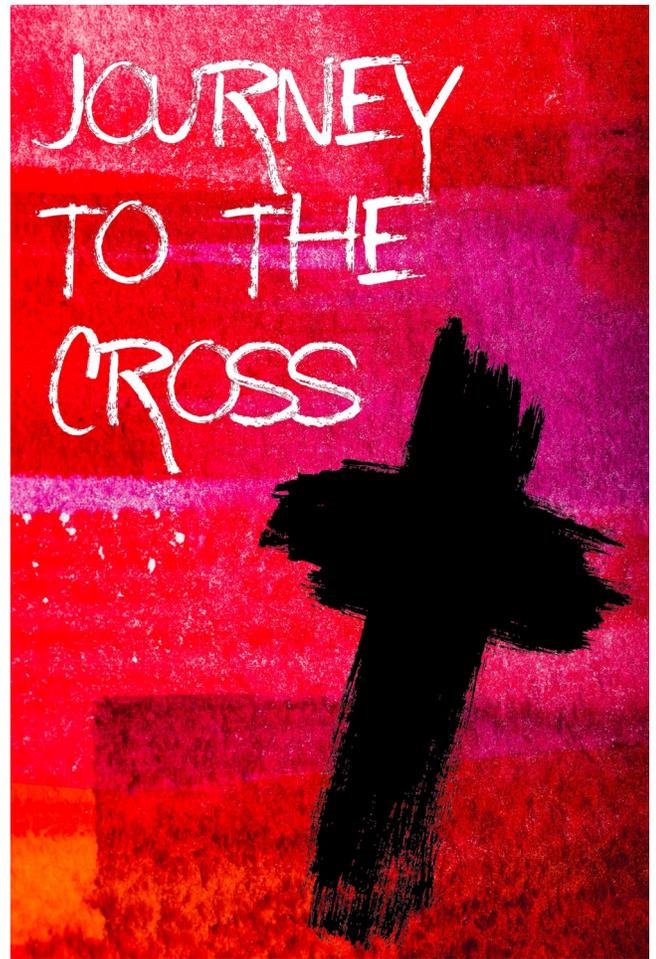
The FCC Prayer team invites you to take a

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Experience Easter week in a moving way with this interactive devotional and prayer experience for all ages. You'll walk through downtown Fairfield, and be guided through the last few days of Jesus' ministry here on earth.

Your self-guided journey begins and ends at the gravel parking lot across from the Hanna House museum, at the corner of Center and 1st Street in Fairfield. A printed Guide will be available in a box at the corner of the parking lot. It will give you directions to the next station, which will be clearly marked with a sign like the graphic to the right.

For each station, the Guide will also have a short devotional reading, a scripture, and a directed prayer. It will help you reflect on each station's relevance to the story of Easter, and how the truth of the Resurrection can impact your life today. You can also download the Guide here: <http://bit.ly/jttc21>. You can print it out or just use it on your phone. Enjoy this journey with your family, Sunday School class, Small Group, or just by yourself as your schedule allows. The Journey is less than a mile long and should take you 60 – 90 minutes to complete.



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