

# *The APRIL Leaven 2023*

Dear Friends,

You will receive this issue of the Leaven just as Holy Week is about to begin. We will go on a journey this Holy Week. We will begin with Palm Sunday and also begin to see the change of scenes as Jesus journeys from the Palm Sunday procession into his conflicts with the authorities – and we will see this through the lens of the Psalms as we have journeyed through Lent with the Psalms. On Thursday, April 6 we will journey from the upper room, to the garden of gethsemane, to the Cross. And then on April 9 we will watch as the light enters into the Sanctuary once again as we rest in the assurance that Christ is Risen.

And then....the Easter Season begins. One of the tasks I was given when I was called to be the interim pastor here at First Presbyterian Church, Leavenworth, was to help the congregation contemplate what it means to be a “Matthew 25” congregation. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) describes the Matthew 25 project in this way:

*“The themes of the Matthew 25 invitation are grounded in the gospel. Jesus calls us to serve with and for “the least of these” — not as a group to be pitied, but as people who are deeply loved by Jesus. There are already PC(USA) congregations that identify themselves as Matthew 25 churches. We aim to help multiply this loving commitment to radical and fearless discipleship by partnering with mid councils and congregations to help them embrace one or more of these three focuses: • Building congregational vitality by challenging congregations and their members to deepen and energize their faith and grow as joyful leaders and disciples actively engaged with their community, seeing new disciples engaged in ministry and longstanding believers develop in faith as the gospel of Jesus Christ is shared in word and deed. • Dismantling structural racism by fearlessly applying our faith to advocate and break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color. • Eradicating systemic poverty by acting on our beliefs and working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.”*

The biblical text that birthed the Matthew 25 project is as follows:

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did*

*not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” — Matthew 25:31–46 (NRSV)*

Through the Easter Season we will offer two opportunities to study what it means to be a Matthew 25 church. Those opportunities will be on Sunday morning at 9:00am April 16, 23, 30, May 7, and May 14. We will also gather via Zoom on Tuesdays at 7:00pm April 18, 25, May 2, 9, and May 23. (The gap is because I will be on vacation May 15-21). If there are other times you would like to meet (Monday morning for example) I am happy to have another group gathering. May your Easter and Easter season be blessed. Peace - Krista



## **APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

The Mission Committee will be collecting new stuffed animals for the Child Advocacy Center. The Child Advocacy Center of Leavenworth and Atchison Counties is a nonprofit organization under the First Judicial District CASA Association. Together with Law Enforcement and the Department for Children and Families, the Child Advocacy Center utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigations (<https://www.casalvks.org/cac> ).

The CAC works with children ages 3-17 who have been the victims of physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, or are witnesses to violence. The Child Advocacy Center responds to the needs of children by providing safe, child friendly, and culturally sensitive services. Last year they completed 134 forensic interviews with children who were victims/witnesses of violence and abuse. When a child is interviewed, they are given a new stuffed animal. Stuffed animals provide comfort after a traumatic experience.

This month the Mission Committee has decided to support the CAC by collecting new stuffed animals (cash donations will also be accepted). They also like to have a few KC Chiefs items for the older teens. Carolyn Schreiner, Family Advocate at the CAC, reported, “We're really excited that you are willing to do a stuffed animal drive for us and appreciate your efforts so much! We've had a busy couple of months already in 2023, so our stuffed animal shelves are starting to look bare. I have so many caregivers tell me that their child still takes their stuff animal that they picked out with them everywhere they go, including one of my clients who took hers with her to college.”

## Join Us to See “Freedom Writers” After April 23 Pot Luck



Picture source: BBC News article [Ukrainian orphans reach safety thanks to Bristol donations](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-60728096) dated 3/13/22  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-60728096>

When Erin Gruwell walked into an English classroom at Wilson High School in 1994, she had no idea how the lives of her diverse students, and her own life, would be changed. You are invited to attend a viewing of the movie, "Freedom Writers" on April 23, 2023 after the pot luck in the Fellowship Hall.

A Matthew 25 church is tasked with raising awareness of racism, prejudices, and poverty. This movie is based on the true story of these students and their experiences with all three. (As such, it is rated PG-13 due to some violent/abusive content, themes, and cussing that some may find offensive.) It is also timely to view this movie, as April 23rd is the end of Yom HaShoah, the week of Holocaust remembrance. The movie includes a scene with four actual Holocaust survivors; Renee Firestone, Eddie Ilam, Elisabeth Mann and Gloria Unger.

As the book "The Freedom Writers Diary" is inscribed, "To our incredible teacher Ms. Gruwell, who taught us to believe in ourselves. To Anne Frank, who inspired us to write, to Zlata (her book "Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo"), our friend, who passed us the torch. To our beloved Miep, who recognized the hero in each of us. To the Freedom Riders, who paved the way. And to kids everywhere, whose lives were lost to senseless violence but whose spirits live on."

Let us not forget the past so we can learn from it. Let us think about the violence in the world and the children like Anne, Zlata, and the children of Ukraine who are affected by it. And during this month of Child Abuse Awareness, let us not forget the children here in the United States and in our own community who suffer from trauma and abuse.

## **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

The first denominational offering of the year, One Great Hour of Sharing, is to be received Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday, so please mark that date on your calendar if you haven't already done so.

As you learned from or were reminded by Pastor Krista last month, this offering benefits three different things, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (the tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and wildfires just keep coming), the Presbyterian Hunger Program (we don't have to look real far these days to find hungry people) and the Self Development of People project (we also don't have to look real far to find people who simply need a little boost to help them realize their dreams).

The cardboard One Great Hour of Sharing fish that like to hang out in the sanctuary still want to be fed, so if you have some loose change you're willing to turn loose of for a good cause, please bring it to church on Palm Sunday, Sunday, April 2, and drop it into one of the fish. Remember, when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

Please prayerfully consider giving generously to the 2023 One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Easter Sunday. Thank you.

## **BETTER LATE THAN NEVER**

While cleaning out the car recently I came across the notes I took during the Rev. Dr. Sean Chow's talk at First Presbyterian Church in Independence, Mo., last September, the occasion being that month's Stated Presbytery Meeting.

Yes, that was more than half a year ago, but I think what Rev. Chow had to say that afternoon is still worth sharing with you and needs to be kept in mind as we look for ways to grow the church in what continues to be a challenging environment for America's mainline denominations.

Rev. Chow described the current climate surrounding organized religion as the "ice age" and said that because of the pandemic, the larger church finds itself in what amounts to an opportunistic position he called "The Great Reset." With this in mind, he thinks each local church needs to be asking itself this basic question: "Do we want to cling to the past and run the risk of becoming a relic, or do we want to be a part of what God is calling us to do?"

Two rhetorical questions relating to this general subject that were asked by him were "What are we preserving?" and "What are we protecting?"

Rev. Chow stressed that the larger church must be "organized for resilience" as well as pro-active. He also mentioned two questions it needs to be asking on a regular basis, those being "What does it mean to be vital?" and "What does it mean to be relevant?"

One rhetorical question Rev. Chow had for his listeners was this: "How do we bring the spirit of adventure into our church?" He then touched on the importance of the local church engaging the community around it, identifying the needs of the community around it, and praying for the community around it.

Rick Nichols, Clerk of Session

## A CENTURY-OLD CLASSIC WITH A KANSAS CONNECTION

I hadn't paid all that much attention to the much-loved hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" until I finally noticed about 15 years ago that the piece was written in 1923, the same year the aunt I never knew (and for that matter the older sister my father never knew) was born.

Had she survived the illness that ultimately claimed her life in May of 1924 (and whatever else might have come her way in the years that followed), Amie Jean Nichols, the oldest child of Garland and Amie (Britt) Nichols, would have turned 100 in January. Now I can report here that the next girl in this family of four girls and only the one boy still has a chance to reach the century mark - she hit 99 in March - but I digress, as they say.

Anyway, according to Wikipedia, in 1923, after Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960) penned his poem titled "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" in response to the extent to which God had been faithful to him up to that point in his life, he sent it to his friend and fellow Methodist minister William M. Runyan (1870-1957), who was associated with Moody Bible Institute and, equally important, Hope Publishing Company, and just happened to be living in Kansas at the time.

The Wikipedia entry states that Runyan, who played the organ and began writing "gospel songs" in 1915, moved from Wichita to Chicago in 1923, but in a story that appeared in the Lawrence Journal-World on July 8, 2004, John Buehler, the chair of the Department of Music at Baker University, was quoted as saying Runyan was living in Baldwin City when he composed the music for "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

Runyan, the son of a minister, was a professor and preacher at Baker University, according to Wikipedia.

Runyan is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Baldwin City.

--- Rick Nichols

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Great is Thy faithfulness  
Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

Great is Thy faithfulness  
Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine with 10,000 beside

Great is Thy faithfulness  
Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – AVAILABLE CAMPS

Heartland Center ([heartlandcamps.org](http://heartlandcamps.org)) has several camps for children and families. Christian Education will help pay some of the cost for a youth camper from this congregation this summer. Let Rick Nichols, Jim Garrett, Rev. Kiger, or Ann Keeling know if your child is going to a camp at Heartland Center this summer. Day Camps are for youth who have completed Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Overnight camps are for youth who have completed 2<sup>nd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade which range in cost from \$240 to \$735. There are also camps for grandparents and grandchildren (June 17-18) and family camp (June 23-25). There is also a intergenerational handbell camp ([handbellcamp.org](http://handbellcamp.org)) July 9-13 for youth who have completed 6<sup>th</sup> or older and adults. The cost ranges from \$550 to \$580 for double occupancy. New handbell campers can apply for a \$75 scholarship. In the past commuters pay slightly less because they will not be sleeping at the camp for four nights.

We will not be doing our own VBS, but will be helping First Methodist in the mornings during the week of July 17-21 and in the evenings that same week at First Christian. This is an opportunity to get to interact with children and help our neighbors. Contact Ann Keeling if you are willing to help.

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO CHURCH MEMBERS!

If you're a granting high school senior, or know of one, or a college student continuing higher education, there is a \$1,000 scholarship available to you – thanks to the generosity of previous members who established scholarship endowments for First Presbyterian members. Please contact Debbie Anderson for details. The deadline for applying is May 5, 2023.

## PRAYERS

**Immediate:** Michael Brock (Cindy S.), Patricia Sibblee (Cindy S.), Lisa Rees, Kari Anderson and family, Sharon Smith & family, Dale (Cindy S), Holly Allen (from Valley Falls, NOT related to the Anderson's) (Peg Nichols), Cathy Tillotson, Sam Sanford, Erika Johnson, People of Turkey, Syria, Ukraine and Iran, Dana Guanciale (Ginnie S.), PNC, Sidney, Elaine Coffman, Brianna Hoffman and Family (Cindy S)  
**Ongoing:** Margie Holland, John Clinton (Linda Barry), Jim and Lorna Mathison, Maria Gordon (C. Tillotson), Shirley Rockwell, Barbara-Sue Rose, Le Thomas, Mike Graham (Norma Graham), Greta Sharp, John Garner (Carolyn T.)

## **APRIL FELLOWSHIP TREATS**

**April 2**–Circle 4    **April 9** – Circle 5    **April 16** – Deacons  
**April 23**-Potluck    **A-C**-Main Dish    **D-M**- Salads, Sides, and/or Bread    **N-Z**-Dessert  
**April 30**-Session

## **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

**2**- Dody Marsh    **10**-Jacob Litewski    **19**-Judy Jahn    **20**-John Strand  
**23**-Rev. Dr. Krista Kiger    **27**- Cathy Corley    **30**-Cindy Geiger

## **APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

**1**- Bill and Cindy Geiger                      **2**-Gerald and Miriam Bowman



# MATTHEW 25

**Join us for a Matthew 25 Conversation!**

**You can join us on Sunday mornings at 9am  
(April 16, 23, 30, May 7, and 14)**

**OR.....**

**Join us on Zoom on Tuesday Evenings at 7pm  
(April 18, 25, May 2, May 9, and May 23)**

**(The zoom link will be emailed the Monday before the gathering)**

# April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	<b>1</b> 10:00am Flute Practice
<b>2</b> Fellowship Treats-Circle 4 Mission Committee Meeting 9:00am Adult Study 9:15am Choir Practice 10:30am - 11:30am Worship	<b>3</b> 7:00am Men's Morning Discussion Group 5:30pm - OISS 7:00pm - 8:30pm Cody Choraliers	<b>4</b> 10:00am Adult Study 7:00pm Zoom - Book of Confessions	<b>5</b> 9:30am Crafts & Fellowship 11:00am Deacons Meeting 4:45pm Flute Choir 6:00pm Bell Choir	<b>6</b> Holiday- Church Office Closed 7:00pm Maundy Thursday	<b>7</b> Church Office Closed 1:00pm ESL	<b>8</b> 10:00am Flute Practice 1:30pm - 4:30pm Book Club
<b>9</b> Fellowship Treats-Circle 5 9:15am Choir Practice 10:30am - 11:30am Worship	<b>10</b> 7:00am Men's Morning Discussion Group 8:30pm Cody Choraliers	<b>11</b> 10:00am Circle 3 11:45am Endowment Committee Meeting 6:00pm Circle 5 6:00pm Special Needs	<b>12</b> 9:30am Crafts & Fellowship 4:45pm Flute Choir 6:00pm Bell Choir	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Church Office Closed 1:00pm ESL	<b>15</b> 10:00am Flute Practice 10:00am League of Women Voters
<b>16</b> Congregational Meeting after worship Fellowship Treats-Deacons Worship Committee Meeting 9:00am Adult Study 9:15am Choir Practice 10:30am - 11:30am Worship	<b>17</b> 7:00am Men's Morning Discussion Group 10:00am Circle 4 7:00pm - 8:30pm Cody Choraliers	<b>18</b> 10:00am Adult Study 5:00pm - 6:00pm Community Meal 7:00pm Zoom Matthew 25	<b>19</b> 9:30am Crafts & Fellowship 4:45pm Flute Choir 6:00pm Bell Choir	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Church Office Closed 1:00pm ESL	<b>22</b> 8:00am City of Leavenworth Clean Up Day 10:00am Flute Practice
<b>23</b> Fellowship Treats-Potluck 9:00am Adult Study 9:15am Choir Practice 10:30am - 11:30am Worship 11:30am Christian Ed. Committee Meeting	<b>24</b> 7:00am Men's Morning Discussion Group 6:00pm Building and Grounds Committee Meeting 7:00pm - 8:30pm Cody Choraliers	<b>25</b> Presbytery Meeting 7:00pm Zoom Matthew 25	<b>26</b> 9:30am Crafts & Fellowship 4:45pm Flute Choir 6:00pm Bell Choir	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Church Office Closed 1:00pm ESL	<b>29</b> 10:00am Flute Practice
<b>30</b> Fellowship Treats-Session Session Meeting Lunch 9:00am Adult Study 9:15am Choir Practice 10:30am - 11:30am Worship	1	2	3	4	5	6