

The Masthead

Monthly Newsletter

"Equip, Support, Serve and Witness Where God Calls Us!"

APRIL 2020



Church Office: 248-541-0613 & School Office: 248-546-6555



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page.....	1
Ministry	2-5
Stewardship News	5
School News	6
Notes & Directory.....	7
Birthdays	8

APRIL DATES OF INTEREST

- 5 Palm Sunday
- 9 Maundy Thursday
- 10 Good Friday
- 12 Easter Sunday



5 Characters of the Easter Story You're Probably Forgetting

Say the names Casey Affleck and Emma Stone, and people will immediately recognize them as the 2017 Oscar award winners for Best Actor and Actress. Say the names Danny Trejo and Wallace Shawn, however, and you'll doubtless find only a few who can tell you who they are and what they're known for. Despite the fact that Trejo and Shawn have acted in dozens of movies, people often overlook them because they aren't high profile stars. Every Easter drama and passion play also has headliners. So does the biblical account of the Easter story—Oscar-worthy leading men and women who held up-front roles in the story of Jesus' crucifixion. But behind the headliners stand characters who played significant, if under-recognized parts. I'd like to spotlight five men and women we often forget when we study the Easter story.

1. Simon of Cyrene

Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention Simon as the man who carried Jesus' cross to Golgotha. Most criminals were forced to carry their own crosses, but Jesus was apparently too weak from his brutal lashing to be able to carry it. Simon was jerked from the crowd and forced to help him.

Because Cyrene is located in modern-day Libya, some have speculated Simon may have been a dark-skinned black man who had come to worship in Jerusalem for Passover. Many Jews lived in Cyrene at the time, however, so it's more likely he was a dispersed Jew. Mark 15:21 records that Simon had brought his sons, Alexander and Rufus, to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

Because people from Cyrene were some of the first to place their faith in the resurrected Christ on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10), many scholars believe that Simon, his sons, and even his wife may have been among those early church members. Romans 16:13 gives us a possible connection. The apostle Paul wrote, "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well."

Considering that Simon probably lifted the blood-spattered cross from Jesus' shoulder onto his own, witnessed his crucifixion, and heard the news of his miraculous resurrection, it's easy to understand why scholars believe Simon may have become a follower of Jesus.

2. The Centurion at Jesus' Tomb

We know little about this minor character in the passion of Christ. In ancient Rome, *centurion* means "captain of 100," so we know he was a man of power within the Roman government. As a law enforcement officer, he would have seen the dregs of society and also rubbed shoulders with the rich and famous.

Lori Hatcher, Author
Continued on page 2

MINISTRY

5 Characters...continued

During one of his shifts, the centurion witnessed Jesus' tortuous death on the cross. He saw his humanity when he cried out, "I thirst." He felt his agony when he screamed, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He felt his compassion when he heard Jesus pray, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing."

This man, a formal instrument of Roman justice and punishment, weighed Christ's charges against his character and spoke two sentences: "Truly this was a Son of God," and "Certainly this was a righteous Man." Unlike the religious leaders of the time, this pagan soldier recognized what others refused to see—the true human and divine natures of Jesus.

3. The Apostle John

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, all his disciples forsook him and fled. Gospel accounts later tell us Peter and "another disciple" followed him into the high priest's courtyard (John 18). Some Bible scholars suspect this "other disciple" was John. In the Gospels John is often referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

The Bible also lists John as the only disciple present at Jesus' crucifixion. While the others hid in fear of arrest, John bravely stood beside Jesus' mother as she watched her beloved son die (John 19:26).

From the cross, Jesus spoke to them. "Woman, here is your son," he said to Mary (John 19:26).

"Here is your mother," he said to John. Scholars agree that with these two statements, Jesus was reassuring his mother that she would be cared for while also bestowing the responsibility for his mother's care upon John. "From that time on," John 19:27 states, "this disciple took her into his home."

True love often demands that we put another's welfare above our own. Although John's courage failed in the Garden of Gethse-

mane, his deep and abiding love for Jesus ultimately caused him to do the right thing. Not only did he stand beside his Friend in his deepest hour of need, he accepted the responsibility to care and provide for his mother for the rest of her life. John, a sometimes-overlooked character, deserves the Best Supporting Actor award for the crucial part he played in the Easter drama.

4. Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph, like Nicodemus of John 3, was a secret disciple. The Bible describes him as a member of the Sanhedrin, the judicial body of the Jews. Despite being a "respected member of the council," (Mark 15:43), Joseph "had not consented to their decision and action" to arrest and prosecute Jesus (Luke 23:50-5). Passion plays sometimes portray Joseph as a cowardly, conflicted man who remains silent

when the votes are cast for Jesus' condemnation. Perhaps this is true. I prefer to give Joseph the benefit of the doubt, assuming he hoped to quietly influence others to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and perhaps even use his prominent position to protect him.

Regardless, Joseph demonstrated great courage after Christ's death. Risking the ridicule of his peers, endangerment of his wealth, and expulsion from the council, he boldly petitioned Pontius Pilate for Christ's body. He purchased a linen shroud, took Jesus' body from the cross, and transported it to his own tomb. There he and Nicodemus quickly anointed the body with burial spices and placed it in Joseph's tomb, "for the Sabbath was drawing on."

Joseph goes down in the cast of characters as a man who voted his conscience, used his influence for good, and courageously stepped up to do the right thing no matter what it cost him. We'd do well not to forget him.

5. Pilate's Wife

It seems odd to end the list of noble yet easily forgotten characters in the Easter story with Pilate's wife, a person we know little about. Unlike

her well-known husband, she isn't even named in the Gospels. We can assume, because she was married to a prominent Roman governor, that she was high-born Roman, well educated, and wealthy. With little more than assumptions however, it's best to focus on what she did rather than who she was.

On the morning of Jesus' trial, she sent her husband an urgent message, "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him" (Mat. 27:19). Scripture records that Pilate "knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him" (Mat. 27:18), but chose instead to disregard his wife's wise advice. Like Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate's wife took bold and courageous action against a very powerful man.

Women of the Bible website accurately describes her heroic deed: "Pilate's wife is the only recorded person who spoke up against the decision to kill Jesus." Female in a world where women were devalued, and powerless in her own right, Pilate's wife was used by God to deliver timely advice. Her one-line cameo appearance unequivocally earns her a spot on the list of characters you don't want to forget in the Easter story.

During this season, why not take time to reread the Easter story with an eye for the marginalized and obscure? I'm confident you'll find other unforgettable characters who will inspire and deepen your appreciation for God's ability to use ordinary people to do extraordinary things.



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE STREAMING LIVE ON YOUTUBE



HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST

4/05 - PALM SUNDAY 8:15 A.M.

"WITH THE CROWD" -REV. RON FARAH



IT IS FINISHED

4/10 - GOOD FRIDAY TENEBCRAE 7:00 P.M.

"CRUCIFIED, DIED, BURIED"



4/12 - EASTER SUNDAY 8:15 A.M.

"AT THE EMPTY TOMB" -REV. RON FARAH

HE IS RISEN

Rest Assure He is with Us!

The threats of this world are real, but we do not stand against such threats alone. Our Heavenly Father stands with us, and in Him, we can find all we need to face such times. The Lord offers to us a spirit of peace in place of fear and a spirit of hope in a place of worry.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 it reminds us to humble ourselves before Him and to seek Him for healing upon our land. This earth is His creation for His people, and we know that He Who died for His creation intends to sustain it. Draw upon His strength each day for the worry that day holds, and rest securely that He is indeed faithful to be with us, even to the end of the age.



BIBLE VERSE OF THE MONTH

ISAIAH 41:10



So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

OUR MISSIONARY RACHEL MEYER



Since the visit back in January from Rachel Meyer, our church missionary, she has now returned to Uganda and accepted a continued call there.

Council has recently approved an additional 3 year commitment to Rachel for \$3,000 a year to help her continue her mission. So please continue to help give by using the missionary envelopes in your contribution packets. You may mail these to the church office.

From Rachel Meyer's Recent Feb/Mar Newsletter-

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, For the last two years, I have been serving in Uganda as a GEO (Globally Engaged in Outreach) missionary through the LCMS. The service I was called to was specifically focused on teaching Bible classes at one Lutheran school for a period of two to three years. I thank God for the opportunity He has given me to serve among His field of hearts at Hope Lutheran Church and School in Bufuula during this time. It has been a blessing to see how God has worked through His Word in their lives and continues to do so to grow these children in faith. However, God is now expanding the field in which He is calling me to serve. Hope Lutheran in Bufuula is only one of 32 Lutheran primary schools in Uganda. Each of these schools is a rich mission field where the Lutheran Church of Uganda has the opportunity to share God's Word with hundreds of children. The Lutheran Church of Uganda has expressed a need for an LCMS missionary teacher to help them as they develop the ministry throughout their Lutheran Schools. Thus, God has now called me to serve in a new position. I have accepted a Call issued by the LCMS Board for International Missions to serve as a Lutheran Education Consultant here in Uganda. This is a career position without a specific term-length. While I will continue teaching children, much of the focus in this new position will be in working alongside church leaders, pastors, school chaplains and administrators, and teachers to support them in their ministry to the children. One of our initial projects is to develop a uniquely Lutheran Religious Education curriculum for use in the primary schools. As I transition into this new position, I am thankful to continue working with the students in Bufuula, whom I have developed relationships with these last few years. I am also grateful to begin serving alongside the chaplain and teachers at the primary and secondary schools in Nakabango this year. As time continues, I will also have opportunity to work with other schools. I am humbled that God has called me to continued service here in His field. Thank you for your continued prayers as I transition into this new position

with its added opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities. Thank you for partnering with me as fellow workers to share God's Word with these children. May all glory be to God who gives the growth.

Email: Rachel.Meyer@lcms.org

Update from Rachel on Coronavirus in Uganda:

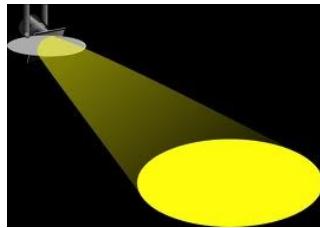
Thank you so much to all who have already reached out to see how I am doing these days. It is such a blessing to receive reminders of God's love through the body of Christ. Uganda has had its first confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the last week. The government has put in preventative measures such as closing all schools and discontinuing large group gatherings including public worship until at least April 20.

So, like many of you, I am working and worshiping from home these days. While our students are not able to engage in distance learning, I am busy preparing lessons and working on curriculum from my home in Uganda to be prepared for when we are able to return to classes. The Lutheran Church of Uganda is finding ways to minister to the congregation members through means such as radio broadcasts and phone calls.

Please know that all of you are in my prayers constantly. My students said to let you know that they are also praying for you. While the world is facing so many unknowns these days, what a blessing it is to know that our God is constant, and He still reigns. As He calls us all to be still in His presence right now, we can rest in the assurance that He is with us and is still in control.

I have been so encouraged to see how pastors and teachers, congregations and schools in America are working hard to continue sharing God's Word in creative ways throughout this time. If you are looking for ideas for connecting with your students, congregations, or Bible study groups via technology these days, let me know if you would like a "visit" from a missionary. I, as well as many of my fellow missionaries around the world, are also homebound at the moment, and can be available for connecting via video or the internet.

I know we are all joined together praying for people in Uganda, America, and around the world at this time. May God bring healing to the sick; peace to the distressed; comfort to the lonely; wisdom to the leaders, scientists, and medical workers; and strength, guidance, and safety to all who continue to serve others in so many ways. May He strengthen the faith of each and every one of us so we may truly be still and know that He is God. I am confident that in the midst of what may look like chaos, uncertainty, and evil around us, God can and will work all things for good. May He be exalted! Rachel Meyer



Spotlight on Service

Stewardship Basics

Stewardship! When you hear the word, when there is a sermon or a Bible study focused on Stewardship, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Frankly, the first thoughts that come to mind for many are not necessarily focused on faithfulness and joy. Money, time, work, "Not again", "Oh no!" Any or all these thoughts may come to mind at first. Our perception of stewardship which may be tied to life-long messages of tithing and stretched budgets at church (which do need the attention of congregational members) get in the way what stewardship was intended to be from the very beginning; a personal relationship with God in which He gave us responsibility to take care of all He has provided to us, which is everything!

During the month of March, many folks have been taking part in a stewardship focused Bible study shared by the LCMS, *Stewardship Basics*. The study has thoughtfully and intentionally paved the path to reflecting about our relationship with God, the Creator, the Savior and Redeemer in a very different way. It challenges us to reset our perspective on what God intended us to be from the very beginning; His stewards, working and keeping His creation, this world, according to His will. The study establishes God as the Owner of all things through the biblical fact that He created all things. As part of that creation, God made Adam & Eve and set them apart from the rest of it, giving them dominion over it. God effectively create humanity to steward creation, making humanity the main instrument of God's interaction with this perfect new world.

We all know what happened shortly after Adam and Eve became stewards of creation...they were tempted and choose to eat from the tree that God forbade. Their relationship with God was in that moment, damaged, changed forever. Their relationships with each other and with creation God provided would never be the same. The stewardship they provided, faithfully and joyfully, turned into work, burden, pain and toil. Sin got in the way. In the same way, sin gets in our way. It keeps us from intentionally and joyfully living each day with God's purpose for us at the center. He wants us to take care of our bodies, our families, our neighbors, the things he provides us, our wealth, and the Gospel.

The study ultimately leads us what our response to God's love and generosity should be: faithful stewardship of all that God provides. We need to be intentional, thoughtful of God's plan for us as stewards, letting the Holy Spirit work in us and through us all day, every day as we go through life. Stewardship isn't part time. It isn't in response to needs of the church alone. It isn't just volunteering or tithing. Stewardship as God intended, is simply how we live, each day and each moment.

The study concludes that as stewards, when we reflect God's love by showing unexpected care for others, it gives opportunity to show love. This care is not a replacement for sharing the Gospel message. However, it is key in that it allows us the opportunity to speak. Love is an action. God's love moves us to action for the sake of others. Our love can be used by the Lord to open a door for sharing the ultimate message of love: Jesus.

If you have not been a part of the *Stewardship Basics* Bible Study, and you are interested to learn more and reflect on your personal relationship with God, a link to the study guide can be found on the St. Paul Church website under Ministry, Bible Study Groups.



SCHOOL MINISTRY



by Dr. Margie Baldwin, Principal



Well, the world certainly has changed for all of us! COVID-19 certainly has impacted the school but it has been an opportunity for us to meet the challenge. Our teachers very quickly converted their teaching to distance-learning and they are providing quality Christian education. We have made some significant decisions to also stay connected as a community. Each day we provide the Pledge of Allegiance in the morning devotion via Facebook and in the evening a teacher reads a bedtime story to the students. Our teachers call our parents and their students as well.

I am really proud of our entire community. The teachers, students, and parents have adjusted to this challenge and met it with faith. We know that the Lord is in control and our trust is in Him.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION 2019-20

It is time to begin the reenrollment process for next school year. *"Training your child in the way that they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it".* (Proverbs 22:6)

Early reenrollment helps us immensely in planning and purchasing books and supplies for the new school year. Listed below is the Registration Fee Schedule for the 2019-2020 school year. **This year we are having an early registration incentive. Register early, and save!** (*Early registration cannot be accepted if your tuition payments are not current.*)

Registration Fees-

\$300 - paid by April 30, 2020

\$350 - paid by May 31, 2020

\$400 - by June 1, 2020 or after.

Preschool Registration Fee Per Child \$130.00

Contact the school office for enrollment forms or to inquire about our school.



ST PAUL TOTES: These canvas bags can carry all your essentials, keep you organized and ready for anything! Show your support for our school by purchasing a tote today! Cost is only \$15. Proceeds will go towards our playground.

WASHINGTON DC TRIP:

Our 7th and 8th grade Washington DC trip of **May 11—15th** has been cancelled. If you have any questions, please call the school office.

FUNDRAISERS

Pizza! Pizza! Please continue to save your Little Caesar's pizza box proof of purchases. You may leave proof of purchases in the brown bag pinned on the bulletin board in the lobby or at the school. And don't forget **Box Tops for Education** too!

Kroger Community Rewards—Go online to kroger.com/communityrewards to create an account. Kroger Community Rewards makes fundraising easy... all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card! A very convenient way to support St. Paul. Our organization # is HG674.

CALENDAR

April 5-11

Palm Sunday-Holy Week

April 12

EASTER SUNDAY



Church NOTES

Directory

For Pastoral Services

Pastor Ron Farah
(cell) 248-642-3137

Pastor Jon Reusch
248-932-5374

Pastor Rick VanBriggle
586-925-3260

Church Office
248-541-0613

School Office
248-546-6555

Church Fax
248-541-6965

School Fax
248-546-8096

Church E-Mail:
prodway@
stpaulroyaloak.org

School E-Mail:
slutheranscho113880@
comcast.net

Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/
stpaulroyaloak](http://www.facebook.com/stpaulroyaloak)

Web:
www.stpaulroyaloak.org

PRAYERS

Church Boards

Board of Education
Board of Elders
Board of Evangelism
Parish Fellowship
Fund Operating

Music Ministry
Board of Stewardship
Board of Trustees
Women's Guild
Board of Youth

Prayers for our Homebound

Jean Frincke
Marion Havrilla
Leona Jackson
Alan Lacey
Shirley Lenz
Donna McMinn
Laverne Nancarrow
Betty Saunders
Jean Schneider
Charlette Schroeder
Ralph Schroeder
Kathleen Ulrich
Don Whitbeck
Teri Whitbeck

Prayer for our Missionary
Rachel Meyer in Uganda

Prayers for Military

Eric Banker
Mark Bowdich
Paul Bowdich
Matthew Canfield
Sam Eskew
Brandon Newton
Brendan Sharp
Hayden Sharp
Joe VanDamme
Tirzah VanDamme
Jason Zuniga
Gabrielle Zuniga

To Add/Remove a prayer,
please email the office at prod-
way@stpaulroyaloak.org.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

St. Paul Church

In memory of *Alwine Petri* by Clara Lichtenberg, M/M Richard Pidsosny, Charlene Taylor, Jeanette Till, Dorene Kepes, LWML-Our Redeemer, M/M Chester Limbaugh, M/M Al Harris, Edna Lentner

In memory of *Dolores Gralinski* by Jeanette Till

In memory of *Rev. David Schneider* by M/M Bob Rutledge, Edna Lentner, M/M Art Steiber, Sr.

St. Paul School

In memory of *Rev. David Schneider* by Clara Lichtenberg, Eyla Russ, Gay Eskew

In memory of *Alwine Petri* by M/M Michael Rasmussen

In memory of *Walter Cole* by Jane Butala, Gay Eskew

St. Paul Praise Team

In memory of *Alwine Petri* by Gayle & Tom Flynn, Kathy Harmon

Garden Club

In memory of *Herbert Huff* by Dorothy Huff

CEF Debt Reduction

In memory of *Alwine Petri* by M/M Richard Baker

Tuition Assistance Fund

In memory of *Walter Cole* by M/M David Hemming

GIFTS—Donate to the church by giving a memorial or honorarium by using the card located in the lobby. This is a two part card, one to go with the gift to the church and the other to be mailed to the family. Contact the church office, 248-541-0613 for any questions regarding these.

OFFICIAL ACTS

Baptisms:

Eli, Samson & Henry Bartolovich
Parents: Kyle & Carolyn

Date:

3-8-2020

MEMBER UPDATES

Brian Collins, 150 Birch Hill Dr, Oakland Twp
Steven Carpenter, 1868 Grace Ave, Rochester Hills



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

If we've missed listing your birthday, please contact the church office 248-541-0613

1	Logan Hansen Julie Thomas	18	Olivia Pierce
2	Parker Bowlds Angela Harris	19	Jennifer Ball Audrey Garcia
3	Richard Baker	20	Carolie Brockmiller Cheryl Dirkse Liliana Szerdi
4	Charles Calhoun	21	Sydney Harris
6	Matthew Canfield Julia Ciccone Eyla Russ Brendan Shaw	22	James Hermann
8	Tom Anderson	23	Susan Beyerlein
9	Carter Bock	24	Iris Louwers
12	Chip Eising	25	Tyler Morey
13	Evelyn Bergman	26	Susanna Schneider
14	Darrel Martin Rich Ohngren	28	Gabrielle Kienman Kathleen Thomas
15	Pamela Stasko	29	Lena Brown