



Hood River Valley Christian Church Newsletter

541-386-2608 hrcchurch@gmail.com
www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com

and on Face book

March 29, 2023

Sunday Worship Time

10:30am Worship

Minister

Rev. Alicia Speidel 541 601-1949
aliciaspeidel@gmail.com

Church Administrative Assistant

Kathy Holmson office hours as needed
hrcchurch@gmail.com

Website: www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com



Easter Egg CANDY & other TREATS needed!

We still need individually wrapped candy, stickers and other small items for filling eggs for our Easter Egg Hunt.

Please bring candy & treats to the kitchen. Thank you.



Order Easter Lilies \$13 Each

We are now taking orders for Easter lily plants for decorating the sanctuary for Easter. Order yours now—signup sheet and an envelope for cash/checks payable to HRVCC are in the lobby. Please deposit payment in the envelope.

Lilies will be available to take home with you after Easter Sunday worship.

Special music April 2

"The Holy City" Lauree Winfield & Betty Osborne

"Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne" Chime Choir

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

9:30am Adult Sunday school classes, nursery available

10:30am Sunday Worship with Children Worship & Wonder

EVENING PRAYER ON FACEBOOK

5:00pm Monday – Thursday (schedule permitting)

Links:

Sunday March 26 <https://www.facebook.com/100064940580441/videos/540175668186874>

Monday March 27 <https://www.facebook.com/100064940580441/videos/725379502466692>

Tuesday March 28 <https://www.facebook.com/100064940580441/videos/762311395406588>

Collecting for FISH Food Bank April 2

The first Sunday of the month is the day our church collects for FISH Food Bank—monetary donations are welcome

Most Needed Items, March 2023: Ramen noodles Jiffy mix shampoo/conditioner bar soap
gluten-free items skillet dinner/ hamburger helper mixes shelf-stable juice- any flavor

Canned Goods: tomato sauce canned meats soup/chili hominy

El Pato sauce molé sauce condiments lard jalapeños



EASTER WEEK EVENTS

At Hood River Valley Christian Church

April 2-9

Invite your friends, neighbors, and family



Sunday, April 2

10:30am **Palm Sunday worship with palm processional**

Thursday, April 6

6:30pm **Maundy Thursday** A service with music and autobiographical accounts of 3-4 disciples of Christ telling their stories to journey through the final days of Holy Week.

Good Friday, April 7

9:00am-9:00pm Prayer Vigil (Info below--sign up please)

Good Friday Prayer Vigil Information

On Good Friday, April 7, the congregation will hold a prayer vigil from 9:00 am to 9 pm. Please sign up at the table outside the pastor's office for a half-hour. There is a resource packet for each participant who wishes one; it contains inspirational ideas, a list of ways to pray for "people who can't sit still", and other suggestions.



Sunday, April 9

Easter Sunday

9:30am Breakfast served by church youth

(Fundraiser for youth activities;
Free-will donations gratefully accepted)

10:30am Easter Worship

bring flowers for our floral cross

11:30am EASTER EGG HUNT for kids



About Church Giving

Online Giving To donate online to Hood River Valley Christian Church, go to <http://www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com/donate/> and make a donation

Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement App

on your Smartphone or tablet. A onetime gift can be made or you can set up online giving on a regular basis. **USPS Mail** You can also give to Hood River Valley Christian Church by mailing a check to: HRVCC 975 Indian Creek Road, Hood River, OR 97031

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Layla Gaffney

Sharon & Gordon Cook

Lauree Winfield

Vicki White

Bev Thomas

David Nash

Katy White

Stacey Jubitz

Bonnie McCollister

Phyllis "Jinx" Woods passed away on Tuesday 3/21/2023. Her daughter Diane says Jinx's wishes were not to have a memorial service so her daughters plan to have a close family gathering sometime in the future.

Something New—Would You Like to Participate? We are starting a "Member Checking on Member" plan for our shut-Ins.. All you have to do is call, send a note, or even visit once a month. The sign up will be on the table in the lobby on Sunday. Thanks for your help making their day a little brighter. Barb Ritoch and Carol Sabins.



The Pastor's COLUMN

Holy Week is practically upon us. The week when we go from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. At least if you only attend on the two Sundays. That is why I am strongly encouraging you to attend the Maundy Thursday service on April 6 @ 6:30pm. It is a time to reflect and walk the final steps before the resurrection. It will be filled with music, prayer and disciples telling their stories. It is a time to gather as a faith community outside of a Sunday morning.

So, come, be moved, experience worship on a weekday. Bring a neighbor. Invite a friend. Take this journey where you move through the in-between steps, in addition to the Sunday steps or preparing you for the Sunday steps. Walk with Jesus. Learn from the disciples. Be filled with the music. Immerse yourself in Holy Week. It is practically upon us.

**If you would like to attend the Maundy Thursday service and need a ride, let the church know.*

Meal Schedule for Dave Nash – Fridays only – 5:00 p.m.

David Nash says it would help to have a meal delivered on Fridays. Suze Nigl is coordinating a meal schedule. A sign up list is on the bulletin board in the lobby or please contact Suze by phone or email mamafan11@aol.com to sign up.

March 31 **Barbara Ritoch** meat loaf, mashed potatoes

April 7 **Kragers**

April 14 **McCargars**

April 21 **Frances Henne**

April 28



Disciples Mission Fund Easter Special Offering 2023

The Easter Offering, received by most congregations on April 2 & 9, 2023, supports several of the general ministries of the Christian Church. Your gift supports college students in leadership development programs, global mission partners, health and social service ministries, the formation of new congregations, support for pastors and chaplains, and so much more.

General Ministries that receive support from the Easter Offering include:

- [Center for Faith and Giving](#)
- [Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries \(Obra Hispana\)](#)
- [Communication Ministries](#)
- [Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry](#)
- [Disciples of Christ Historical Society](#)
- [Disciples Home Missions](#)
- [Disciples Women](#)
- [Division of Overseas Ministries \(Global Ministries\)](#)
- [Higher Education and Leadership Ministries](#)
- [National Benevolent Association](#)
- [National Convocation](#)
- [New Church Ministry](#)
- [North American Pacific / Asian Disciples](#)
- [Office of the General Minister and President](#)
- [Treasury Services](#)

Your gift to the Easter Offering is part of God's enduring love...

Love that creates...

- Bible studies that challenge and inspire
- Opportunities for clergy to gather in prayer
- Spiritual care for those in prison
- Resources for mental health and trauma care

Love that inspires...

- Visionary leadership that calls the us to imagine new ways of being church.
- New congregations that worship in a variety of languages and worship styles
- Ministries of compassion and care

Love that makes a difference...

- Global ministry partners who work for justice, reconciliation and peace
- Colleges, universities and theological institutions that nurture Christian leaders who are transforming church, society and the world
- Collaborative response in the wake of disaster
- support for congregational service ministries that serve hungry neighbors

Your gift to the Easter special offering benefits general ministries, allowing us to do more together than we can alone. More ministry. More impact. More of God's love in the world.

[Please give generously to this year's Easter Offering](#)

Pastor Alicia's sermon from March 19, 2023

Scripture: John 9:1-41

It's the fourth Sunday of Lent and the second week of our really long scripture passages, forty-one verses today to be exact. And no, I'm not going to add any verses this week like last week. Even though one commentary I was reading said that these verses need to be read as a whole unit, from verse one of chapter nine, where our reading begins, to verse twenty-one of chapter ten, meaning twenty-one verses beyond the assigned passage, for a total of sixty-two verses.

Whether forty-one or sixty-two verses, that's a lot of verses. And as one of my Lutheran colleagues commented, she's not going to have her congregation stand for the Gospel reading as is generally the norm for when the Gospel is read. Can you imagine having to stand for the reading of this passage? That is common in quite a few denominations and don't worry, it's not something we are going to begin. So forty-one verses soon will be read while seated.

Now today's passage definitely has its fair share of entertainment as there are multiple characters involved and all kinds of ups and downs. It's not what you would expect when the healing of a blind man by Jesus occurs. Where's the celebration? Where's the excitement? Where's the turning to Jesus in adoration and then for more healing? Where is the basic joy and elation? Because isn't that how you would react in a moment such as this? Wouldn't you be jumping for joy if someone you knew was healed of their blindness? Wouldn't there be an abundance of thanksgiving? Yes, I think there would be, so why was that far from the reality in our passage today? Why were the different individuals skeptical and questioning? What was going on?

I could continue to speculate and draw my own conclusions, however maybe we need to hear the scripture passage first so you understand what I'm referencing. Maybe we need to identify all of the characters and pay attention to all of their different roles, including their different responses. Maybe this groundwork needs to be laid first.

Yes, it does. Here then, are the various individuals in our passage, seven different groups or individuals. Jesus, the disciples, the blind man, the parents of the blind man, neighbors of the blind man, the Pharisees and the Jews.

As I read the passage, pay attention to each of these individuals. Pay attention to their comments before the blind man was healed and pay attention to their comments after the blind man was healed. Really notice their responses. What did they say when they observed the blind man when he was blind? How did they treat him? What did they ask? And then once the blind man was able to see, what did they say? Who did they say it to? How did they interact with the now healed blind man? How did they interact with each other?

The before and after is very important in our passage. It set the stage for what Jesus said and how everything transpired. It is where the lessons lie for us today. So we really have to delve into those moments and acknowledge them for what they were. Listen very carefully then as I read the forty-one verses. And then we'll go through all of the characters to identify their response to see if that was what we noticed.

John 9:1-41

Jesus was honest as always. He didn't blame the blind man or the blind man's parents for being blind. He didn't judge. He made it clear that sin was not a part of the equation. He attempted to shift the disciples' thinking. Then after healing the blind man with mud and spit and after all of the various responses that we are going to get to, Jesus sought out the healed blind man to offer him the opportunity to believe. Jesus stayed the course as he generally did, being faithful to God, to the path he was to walk and to the path others were encouraged to walk.

The disciples on the other hand were judgmental and critical. They thought the blind man was blind because someone had sinned, directly asking Jesus about this. Beyond that, who knows what the disciples thought or how they responded? We only hear about them before the healing.

The neighbors of the blind man were a mixed bunch after the healing. Mostly though they questioned, not believing it was him, wondering how it happened and wanting to know where this healer was. They struggled even with the healed blind man right in front of them.

Next the Pharisees got involved. They took a slightly different angle, questioning Jesus because he healed on the Sabbath when healings were not to be performed, thus making Jesus a sinner. Jesus was not high on their list. There were issues. He had issues. Now it was compounded as Jesus wasn't even present to address those issues. Plus when Jesus did become present at the end of the passage with the Pharisees, offering his thoughts on who is blind in their faith and who is not, the Pharisees questioned again, having a problem with Jesus and his words. There was no love lost between these two groups.

The Jews, who were part of the synagogue, also struggled to believe. They questioned the parents of the blind man. They questioned the blind man. They questioned Jesus, not directly to his face though, instead to the blind man they questioned Jesus. They weren't having any of this healing. It didn't align with their beliefs. It wasn't a part of their teachings. Something was amiss with this situation. That's why they wanted no part of the blind man or his healing.

The parents of the blind man played a considerable role in their son's healing too or in the aftermath of it, having questions and skepticism thrown at them from all angles. People wanted proof from them that it really was their son who was healed. And they wanted to know how it happened. The parents were in on everything, from before his healing until after his healing. Or they were expected to be in on everything, knowing something about the entire situation, according to those grilling them. The parents though did not directly address the questions. They put it back on their son. They were not a part of the conversation or they clearly didn't want to be a part of the conversation. Move the discussion elsewhere. Their son was where it all needed to be directed. He was old enough to explain everything himself.

The blind man then is the final piece to the puzzle. He was there through it all because he was the thread holding it all together or weaving through every reaction and response throughout our passage because it was about him after all. From when he was blind begging in his town because that's how he was born to when he followed Jesus' instructions to wash off the mud on his eyes to saying over and over and over again to every person or group of people that yes, it was him that was healed.

Yes, this man named Jesus healed him. Yes, this is what happened, what I continue to tell you. To then being driven out of the town. Driven out only to have Jesus find him and offer him the opportunity to believe in the Son of Man, to believe in Jesus to which the healed blind man did. This was the journey he took over the course of these forty-one verses.

A journey that begs the question, what about all of those different responses and reactions? The ones before and the ones after? Where do we find ourselves in this passage? Or where would we if something shocking and unbelievable challenged our way of being, the norm we were used to?

To say we would be supportive and cheering on the sidelines is most likely not realistic. To be questioning and wanting to know what exactly happened is more accurate. We would be skeptical. We would be unsure. We would be having multiple side conversations trying to figure it out. It would not be a grand celebration.

That is a hard reality to face and sometimes it's the reality we have to face. We have to admit when we are the ones throwing up roadblocks. When we have closed doors, when we have turned our backs and made it impossible for the word, for the message, for the light before us to enter our lives and make a difference. We have to own that. It's not an easy thing to do. It's not the most comfortable thing to do. It often leaves us wanting to run in the opposite direction. And it's what we have to do. To grow. To develop. To come to terms with the fact that we have a long ways to go. We don't have it all going on. We simply don't.

So voice when we don't and then do something about it. Be receptive to what is right in front of us. Let it make a difference and impact us going forward. Let it change our hearts and our minds. Do not be blind as Jesus referenced at the end of our passage. Do not turn the other way. Do not question over and over again, preventing the truth from being realized. That path will not amount to the path we need to travel. It will not draw us closer to God. It will not be the change we are to seek.

We have multiple examples throughout this one scripture passage of what that path looks like. And we have Jesus saying, "Here, try this. Here, check this out. Here, allow this to be the way." That is the only proof we need. That is the only story we need to follow. That is where we will have it going on.

Pastor Alicia's sermon on March 26, 2023

Scripture: John 11:1-45

What a day, seriously what a day, from the beginning to the end and everything in between. It was one to remember. It is one that many different people will remember forever. And that so many will tell stories about. Plus from different perspectives because there were many involved or impacted by the day's events.

It wasn't unique to one person. I mean each person had their own unique experience that's for sure and the varying emotions that came with it. And it was an entire community that was affected. An entire community. Even within my own family we each experienced something different. Yes, there were some similar feelings and then there were vast differences.

All because my brother Lazarus was sick, very, very sick. He was going to die. Something had to be done. Nothing we were doing was working. And we had tried everything. So my sister Mary and I took matters into our own hands. We sent for Jesus. We knew he would come. We knew he could heal our brother. We trusted him. We loved him and we knew he loved us too. That was why we sent the message, "He whom you love is ill."

This would lead to Jesus coming to heal our brother. Except it didn't. Jesus didn't come. He didn't come. He didn't come. We didn't understand. Our brother was dying. Why would Jesus let this happen? Why?

It was heart wrenching. We watched my brother die. We laid him in a tomb and covered it with a stone. We cried. We mourned. The community came to pay their respects. They cried. They mourned. And we still wondered where Jesus was. Did we not matter? Did he not love us? Mary and I were so conflicted. We didn't know whether to be sad or angry or bitter or all of it at once. We were numb.

And then, four days after Lazarus died, we heard Jesus was on his way to our home. Finally he was coming. Four days too late and he was near. So I ran to him while Mary stayed at the house. I said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." And he said to me, "Your brother will rise again." I said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Then he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

And I did believe it. I do believe. It is what leads me in my daily life. And my brother was still dead, for four days. That wasn't going to change or so I thought in that moment. My whole world was crumbling before me. With that, I left Jesus and headed home, alone. Alone with my feelings and my grief. It was almost more than I could handle.

When I found Mary I pulled her aside and told her that Jesus needed to see her. She needed to go. So she went. And some of those who had been mourning with us followed her. I think they thought she was going to Lazarus' tomb. Of course she wasn't. She was going to see Jesus. As Mary shared with me later, she too told Jesus the same thing that I did. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

At this Jesus got it. He saw the pain my sister and those who were with her, those who followed her, were in. He understood. And he wept. Jesus cried. He was moved by the emotions we were all feeling. He told my sister to take him to the tomb.

Once at the tomb, with everyone there crying and lamenting, he said to move the stone. What? I couldn't believe his request. How could that be what he wanted us to do? It had been four days. Four days of our

brother being dead. The smell, the stench. Was Jesus crazy? No, this was a very bad idea. Very bad. This clearly couldn't be what Jesus meant. Still, to all of our shock, Jesus insisted.

And he said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." And then he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Are you kidding me? What? How is this possible? There's no way. Yes, we wanted and needed our brother back and he had been dead for four days. Did Jesus forget that? What was going to happen?

We all waited with anticipation. It was like time stood still for a moment. We collectively held our breath. And not just because of the possible smell. Because we didn't know if our brother would come out. My mind raced. What would we do if he did? What would he say? What would we say? What would the community say? What was going to happen? How would everyone respond? I knew Jesus said all of this stuff about living, life and the resurrection and yet, really? Was my brother really going to live again?

Yes, yes I was. I was going to live again. I was going to rise after being in the tomb for four days. I was going to come out with strips of cloth bound around my feet and hands. I was going to have my face wrapped in a cloth. I was going to hear Jesus say, "Unbind him and let him go." I was going to live again.

It is still all so unbelievable. I remember being sick, really, really sick, on my deathbed. I remember my family and friends gathered around me not knowing what to do. I remember that they tried everything. They were praying, wailing, taking turns by my bedside. They were surrounding me with love and care as we all hoped for the illness to subside. All of this while I faded in and out of reality. While I didn't know if I was going to live or die.

At one point I heard murmuring about Jesus, for someone to go get him because he surely could help. We were some of his closest followers. He loved us. He would have the answer.

And then the next thing I knew Jesus was calling to me. "Lazarus, come out!" His voice was commanding and loving at the same time. There was something in his voice, an emotion I hadn't heard before. A connection that drew me to him. It was powerful.

I wanted to obey. I needed to obey. It was time to come out. But where was I? Why did I have strips of cloth around my feet and hands? And why was my face wrapped in a cloth? Had I been dead? Was I in a tomb? What was going on? Why was Jesus calling to me?

Suddenly I was surrounded by family and friends. They were frantically unwrapping the cloth. They were crying and hugging me. They were shouting for joy. They were touching me and asking if I was really alive. It was overwhelming. I didn't know what to say or how to respond. I wept. I stood there and wept. I let them take off all of the cloth. I looked each one of them in the eyes. Martha. Mary. Neighbors. The disciples. The townspeople.

And then I looked at Jesus. I stood there with tears streaming down my face looking into the eyes of my Savior. I didn't move. He didn't move. It was beyond anything I could have ever imagined.

"Unbind him, and let him go." Those were the final words I spoke on that day in Bethany at Lazarus' tomb. "Unbind him, and let him go."

The emotions in the air were palpable, everyone's emotions, including mine. I mean I wept. I wept for my friend Lazarus. I wept for Mary and Martha. I wept for the entire community. I wept for this moment in time.

Yes, I knew there was more to the story. Yes, I knew a different outcome was on the horizon. Yes, I knew the tears would be wiped away. I just didn't know how much this would impact me. I didn't know the response I would have. I didn't know.

I was close with them. They were my followers. They had been with me through so much and I had been with them. It was different with them. A bond. A connection. So to see them hurting and completely heart broken. It was almost more than I could handle.

Yes, a message was sent to me from Martha and Mary about Lazarus being ill. Yes, I stayed two days longer after I heard this news. And then yes, the disciples questioned me when I said I needed to return to the land where Lazarus was, to where I had been ridiculed and threatened. Yes, it was time to go.

Then Martha came to me begging for me to save her brother. And Mary came begging for the same thing after I sent for her. I talked with both of them about rising again in the resurrection. I talked about this hope, about their brother being alive again. I shared this good news only to have them not fully understand. That was why it was so hard when I saw everyone weeping and heard them wailing. An entire community was affected. They were all moving together through this traumatic time. They were all there for each other.

And they needed to see what was right before their eyes, the raising of Lazarus. They needed to see what was possible. They needed to believe. They needed to believe in me, in their Savior, in the Son of Man, in the Son of God. We needed this moment, to move together, to cry together, to rejoice together. We needed it. To hear the words and speak the words, "Lazarus, come out!" And "Unbind him, and let him go."

Those words will always remain with everyone who was there. They will always be held right here. They will always be with me. And they will always tell what a day it was, from the beginning to the end and everything in between. It was a day to remember. For everyone who was there. It was a day to remember.

Church Calendar

Wednesday March 29

9:00am-Noon Quilters meet
9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop
5:30-8:30pm Master Gardeners, fellowship hall

Thursday March 30

7:00am Men's Study
1:30pm Chime Choir

Saturday April 1

9:00am-Noon Thriftshop open
9:00am-Noon Master Gardeners, fellowship hall

Sunday April 2 Palm Sunday

9:30am Gospel of Matthew Study, vista room
9:45am Sunday Adult book study
10:30am Worship
11:30am Coffee Hour
3:30pm Hope and Life church worship

Tuesday-Thursday April 4-6

Kathy Holmson out of the office

Tuesday April 4

10:00am Women's Bible Study
3:00pm TOPS Group

Wednesday April 5

9:00am-Noon Quilters meet
9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop

Maudy Thursday April 6

7:00am Men's Study
1:30pm Chime Choir
6:30pm Maudy Thursday service

Saturday April 8

9:00am-Noon Thriftshop open
9:00am-Noon Master Gardeners, fellowship hall

Sunday April 9 Easter Sunday

9:30am Easter **Breakfast** by the Youth
9:30am Gospel of Matthew Study, vista room
9:45am Sunday Adult book study
10:30am Easter Worship
11:30am Coffee Hour, **Easter Egg Hunt**
3:30pm Hope and Life church worship

Tuesday April 11

10:00am Women's Bible Study
3:00pm TOPS Group

Wednesday April 12

9:00am-Noon Quilters meet
9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop

Scriptures for Sunday April 2, 2023

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Matthew 21:1-11

SERVING Sunday April 2, 2023

Elder this Week Rod Parrott/Thelma Warnock
Communion Preparer Mary Finley
Coffee Hour Jennifer & Friends
Deacons **Serving Team #3**
Betty Osborne, Linda Meyers
Tatum Wyatt, Jackson Speidel

Scriptures for Sunday April 9, 2023

Acts 10:34-43 or Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10

SERVING Sunday April 9, 2023

Elder this Week Jerry Sawyer
Communion Preparer Kathy Holmson
Coffee Hour Barb & friends
Deacons **Serving Team #1**
Woody & Sue Eskildsen
Owen Waits, Ayden Phelps

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