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## Hood River Valley Christian Church Newsletter

541-386-2608 [hrcchurch@gmail.com](mailto:hrcchurch@gmail.com)  
[www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com](http://www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com)

and on Face book

**April 10, 2024**

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### Sunday Worship Time

10:30am Worship

### Minister

Rev. Alicia Speidel 541 601-1949

[aliciaspeidel@gmail.com](mailto:aliciaspeidel@gmail.com)

### Church Administrative Assistant

Kathy Holmson office hours 10am-1pm or as needed

[hrcchurch@gmail.com](mailto:hrcchurch@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com](http://www.hoodrivervalleychristianchurch.com)

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## Special Guest on Sunday

Interim Regional Minister Renee Bridwell for our region will join us in worship on Sunday, April 14. Join us for worship for a chance to meet Rev. Renee Bridwell

### Special Coffee Hour April 14 a travelogue by the Sawyers

*Enjoy a recent trip report about visiting Antarctica.*

Jerry and Gladys Sawyer will discuss their recent trip to Antarctica. This special coffee hour program is sponsored by the "Nifty Nineties Armchair Travel Group". New members (if you are 90 years +) will be inducted!

Get your coffee and set a spell with us. All are welcome (no matter what age you are) so please join us and enjoy. Thelma Warnock

## Sunday April 14

**9:30am Adult Sunday School in Vista Room**

**10:30am Worship**

**11:30am Coffee and visiting**

**Special Music**  
**Dawn Rankin, flute**

### LINKS:

Sunday Worship April 7 <https://www.facebook.com/100064940580441/videos/1189258435405909>

### 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

**In the Sanctuary** For offerings and tithes, there is a deposit box at the entrance of the sanctuary, inside the double doors. Offerings may be dropped off at any time. Thanks to Geoff Speidel for installing the locking deposit box last month.

# Hunting Easter Eggs!





## Second Sunday Recycling April 14

**Protecting  
God's World**

### What to bring:

Clear clamshells

Plastics with recycling triangles marked #1, #3, #4, #5, #7

Medicine bottles and caps; unused medications for safe disposal

Plastic film such as bags, bubble wrap, mailers

A small donation to help cover the recycling depot fee

***You are invited to a dress rehearsal.*** The chimes choir will play a short concert at the new community where Shar and Ron Wilkins live in Lake Oswego on April 18, so a dress rehearsal is in order—including an audience to toughen the choir up jitters-wise!

The dress rehearsal will be **Tuesday, April 16, from 11:15am to noon in the sanctuary.** Come if you can.

### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Layla, JJ & Rider Gaffney

Sharon & Gordon Cook

Lauree Winfield

Vicki White

Katy White

Bonnie McCollister

Stacey Jubitz

David Nash

Suze Nigl's niece Trisha

Barbara Frazier's friend Julie

The Wirt Family

Doris Lewis

Please pray for Bernie and Emily Krager and their family as Bernie is now under the care of hospice. Pray for peace where there is war.

*"I so enjoyed seeing my church friends on Easter at the breakfast and at church services. I love you all."* Judy Judd

### **Thank you from Mid Columbia Community Action Council**

To the Women's Fellowship and Congregation of Hood River Valley Christian Church, Thank you so much for the supplies you donated for our summer outreach bundles. They will provide support to people experiencing houselessness this coming summer.

We are truly grateful for you support!

Sarah Kellems

Development and Engagement Coordinator, MCCAC

### **Happy Anniversary to Donnamae & Glenn Grannemann**



They recently celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a big cinnamon roll at Cousins and flowers they put into Glenn's mom's pitcher.

Donnamae says "Can't believe it's been 10 years since we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at HRVCC."





## **SIMPLICITY SALE**

**Saturday April 27**

**9:00am-3:00pm**

**Furniture\*Art\*Books\*Kitchenware  
\*Sports Equip\*Toys\*Linens\*  
Craft Supplies\* & MORE!**

Funds from this annual sale support Church Summer  
Camp program for HRVCC youth.

Drop off donations in Fellowship Hall beginning April 21

### **Pastor Alicia's Sermon April 7, 2024**

Scripture: Acts 4:32-35

This passage has always amazed me. A group of believers selling everything they had, all of their possessions, their homes, their land, absolutely everything. Then all of those believers taking all of the proceeds from everything they just sold and combining it all together into one large pile or sum. Now everything was everybody's. Next everyone received what they needed, not what they wanted or what looked good or what would make them have more than someone else. They received just what they needed.

All of these believers' needs were met. Nobody was lacking anything. Nobody was without. Nobody had to beg, borrow or steal. Or even take out a loan. The community was solid. All was well. Things were going smoothly. Everything was functioning as it needed to be. It was a true coming together.

Do you see why this passage has always amazed me? Or made me wonder? Or caused some disbelief? Or has been just downright shocking? Can you imagine a community coming together and doing this? And I don't mean one family with just a few members. I mean a whole bunch of families, an entire community, a few thousand. Maybe even around five thousand as Luke writes earlier in this chapter. Although that might just have been a stretch to get the point across. Still, whether it be 10 families or 100 or 500 or 3,000 or more, the picture of this happening is hard to believe. It is beyond anything we have most likely ever experienced or witnessed or ever will.

So what do we do with this passage? Do we sell all of our possessions and bring the money in next week? Or at least by the end of the month? We'll give ourselves a little bit of time. Do we read books about how to live in this way? Because there are books out there teaching how to do exactly this. Do we commend this action, knowing though we are just going to fall short of it, so we would end up berating ourselves for not being able to live up to this potential? Do we toss it aside, thinking that the community back then was simply crazy and it probably didn't last long anyway? Or do we attempt it in minor ways?

Any of these responses is completely plausible. And all of these responses have probably been tried. The question isn't necessarily which avenue are we going to go through. Instead, I believe it is what are we going to learn from this passage. What is the take away? How is this wild story of a community coming together to meet everyone's needs going to impact our faith and move us? What does it have to do with our faith journey? As individuals and as a faith community?

Because there are nuggets here for us to grasp onto. There is learning waiting to happen. There is guidance within this passage for us as a whole. We simply have to find it and be open to the process. Which requires reading some of the back story that led up to why this community took this action.

We are in the time after Jesus' resurrection, when his followers, disciples and apostles were continuing his ministry throughout the communities, bringing the good news, expanding the witness and adding to those who believed. As their numbers were increasing and people were becoming devoted to following, one day Peter and John encountered a man who had been lame from birth laying at the gate of the temple. This man was seeking alms and had been brought to the gate every day to ask for them from those who passed him by.

When Peter and John passed him, instead of giving him alms, they told him about Jesus Christ, instructing him to stand up and walk. From that interaction the man was healed. This caused the authorities to arrest and question Peter and John for spreading the word about Jesus and the possibility of the resurrection of the dead. Peter and John held their ground, continuing to profess this important message to those questioning them.

The authorities, recognizing these men as followers of Jesus, that the lame man had indeed been healed and that the community people were rejoicing for this fact, let Peter and John go with the message to keep quiet, not spreading Jesus' teachings any longer. Peter and John of course stated otherwise, proclaiming, "for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard."

We then come to verses twenty-three through thirty-one, what leads us into our passage today.

Read verses 23-31

The people were gathered together. They were celebrating Peter and John's release. They were giving thanks for the witness of Jesus. They were requesting the ability to continue to speak of God's word with power and confidence. They were seeking guidance for how to keep the message alive.

They did all of this by being in prayer with one another. By praying together. By having that as their focus, filling them with the Holy Spirit and providing the direction they were to travel. They "spoke the word of God with boldness," as it states because of their decision to pray.

We see that all throughout the first few chapters of the book of Acts. Chapter 1 verse 14, "All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer." Chapter 1 verse 24, "Then they prayed." Chapter 2 verse 42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Chapter 3 verse 1, "One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer."

Prayer, over and over and over again. That was their focus. That was their passion. That was their witness. And that is why they made the decision to come together as a community with all of their possessions so there would not be any needy among them.

Prayer and the answer that they received. The way the Holy Spirit guided them and opened their eyes and hearts. The way they listened and responded. A journey they were receptive to and clearly made a difference in their lives, all because they began it with prayer.

That's the piece that is to speak to us. That's the piece we are to learn from. That's the piece we are to take to heart. The first step. The first engagement. The first act. Not the answer that they received because that was their answer, their path, their journey. Is it impressive? Yes. Is it amazing? Yes. Is that what we are to

strive to do? Probably not. I mean I guess it could always be a possibility, however at this moment we would have no idea. Plus, it's not about answering that question because that was their end result.

Are we to be in prayer though? Yes. Is that the beginning point? Yes. Is it the middle point too? And the end? And then right back to the beginning? Yes, yes and yes. Prayer is where it is at.

So, let's be in prayer. What about? I'm so glad you asked. This has been on my mind since before going on sabbatical and has only increased since returning from sabbatical. I have even begun having this conversation about prayer with the program council, worship committee, elders and will this next week with the board. I am introducing this to all of the small groups of this faith community or will and am now with you, the wider congregation. Basically I'm putting this out there in every way possible to everyone possible. It is that important.

So what specifically about prayer? Other than it's time to seriously engage in it? Well it pertains to what comes next for this congregation. What God is calling this congregation to do and be. That answer is only possibly through the act of prayer.

Which, after sharing the invitation to be in prayer at a recent program council meeting, Mary Anne brought to me the following week the book "Thrive: Spiritual Habits of Transforming Congregations" by Ruth A. Fletcher who was one of the clergy present during my time on sabbatical. This book offers some real guidance and push that I believe we are ready for and will embrace or I hope will embrace. Listen to her words that answer the question about prayer, why and how it will impact.

"Making intentional time to connect with the power and presence of the Spirit, both corporately and individually, allows transforming congregations to practice resting in God without having to control anything. It teaches them to trust the leading of the Spirit, even when they do not have all the answers. Prayer allows transforming congregations to let go of the anxiety that causes them to choose the safe, the expedient, and comfortable. It helps them to make bold decisions in order to become the people they believe God is calling them to be. It allows them to say yes to God's future, even before they know what that future will bring."

Prayer. Prayer for what God is calling this congregation to be and do. Prayer by every single one of us. Prayer because we need to listen. We need to spend time listening. We need to pay attention to how God is leading, the nudges, the pushes, the pulls, the direction. What is it we need to hear and respond to?

We don't know the answer to this question yet because we haven't intentionally been in prayer as a community. We haven't dedicated the time and energy to seeking God's guidance.

So, as with anything, we have to be diligent, patient and ready. We have to all make this a priority because I believe God is leading us in a direction. We simply have to discover it. We have to be open to it. We have to pray about it. And not just for a few days or even a whole week thinking the answer will come, that next Sunday we'll be ready to say what is next for this faith community because it doesn't work that way. This way of being, intentionally engaging in prayer, is going to take time. It's going to take perseverance. And that's okay because then we will be responding to God's call. We will be listening. We will know we are fulfilling what is next.

By prayer, through prayer, with prayer. That is our calling right now. Prayer for this congregation. Prayer for how this faith community will continue to serve and be a witness. Prayer for what we are to do and be. Repeatedly, continually, for at least the season of Easter, which is the six weeks from Easter, last Sunday, until Pentecost, May 19. There will be reminders to do this. There will be prayer practices done during worship. There will be invitations given in every way possible.

So let's do just as the disciples, apostles and followers back then did and gather together to pray. And then listen. Because the Spirit is here. It is moving in this place. There is the word of God waiting to be spoken with boldness even more. It is time to discover it. With prayer. Prayer, prayer, prayer.

# Church Calendar

## Wednesday April 10

9:00am-Noon Quilters meet  
9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop open  
5:00-9:00pm Master Gardeners  
**5:30pm Church Board meets**

## Thursday April 11

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

## Saturday April 13

9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop

## Sunday April 14 Second Sunday recycling

9:30am Adult Sunday School  
10:30am Worship  
3:30pm Hope and Life church worship

## Tuesday April 16

10:00am Women's Bible Study  
**11:15am Chime Choir Dress Rehearsal**  
4:00pm TOPS group

## Wednesday April 17

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

## Thursday April 18

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

## Saturday April 20

9:00am-12:00pm Thriftshop

## Sunday April 21 Earth Sunday

9:30am Adult Sunday School  
10:30am Worship  
3:30pm Hope and Life church worship

## Monday–Friday April 22-26

Set up for Simplicity Sale

## Monday April 22

6:00pm VOCI rehearsal here

## Tuesday April 23

10:00am Women's Bible Study  
4:00pm TOPS group

## Wednesday April 24

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

### **Scriptures for Sunday April 14, 2024**

Acts 3:12-19  
Psalm 4  
1John 3:1-7  
Luke 24:36b-48

### **SERVING Sunday April 14, 2024**

**Elder this Week** Carol Sabins  
**Communion prep** Kailey Speidel  
**Coffee Hour** Barbara & friends  
**Deacons** **Servers**

*Thank you to our deacons for serving communion as needed each week*

### **Scriptures for Sunday April 21, 2024**

Acts 4:4-12  
Psalm 23  
1 John 3:16-24  
John 10:11-18

### **SERVING Sunday April 21, 2024**

**Elder this Week** Rod/Thelma  
**Communion prep** Mary Finley  
**Coffee Hour** Judy & Friends  
**Deacons** **Servers**

*Thank you to our deacons for serving communion as needed each week*

## **VOCI Concert "Our Shared Humanity"**

**Friday, April 26 7:00pm**

**Sunday, April 28 2:00pm**

**at Hood River Valley Christian Church**

**Mark your calendar!**