

CROSS



WORDS

Volume 11, Number 4

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United Church of Christ, Warren IN

April 1, 2023



Gather
& Grow
WUCC GROWING TO SERVE

Each of you should use
whatever gift you have
received to serve others, as
faithful stewards of God's
grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10

Looking Up WITH PASTOR TROY

The Power of Easter Hope

The Bible is the story of two gardens, Eden and Gethsemane. In the first, Adam took a fall. In the second, Jesus took a stand. (Max Lucado)

It is also fitting as we consider "The Power of Hope" that we look at the writings of the Apostle Peter, since he is known as "The Apostle of Hope."

Faith, hope and love are all tied to the resurrection of Christ, which we celebrate at Easter. The three Apostles whose works we have read from all personally experienced what they were writing about! They all gave eyewitness testimony of seeing Jesus after He was raised from the dead! They all had first-hand knowledge of the great faith, great hope and great love because of their assurance of Christ's resurrection! There's great power in that kind of testimony – the testimony of people who are certain about spiritual realities. In this article let's look at the great power in hope from the pen of a man full of hope. Consider this tremendous Bible passage on hope from the writings of the Apostle Peter.

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9. Peter wrote these words about 30 years after Christ's death and resurrection. He was writing to encourage the persecuted Christians of Asia Minor. It was a very anti-Christian society, sound familiar? So, how do you stay hopeful when your life is undergoing these kinds of tests? What do you do when life seems to have more questions than answers? You've got to have hope to keep on going. You're going to have to have "a hope that never dies."

I. WHAT IS THE "HOPE THAT NEVER DIES?"

The New Testament idea of hope is different from the way we use the word hope today, like we say, "I hope it doesn't rain." We're referring to the uncertainty of future events. You might be surprised to know that that is not the same thing as the Bible meaning of hope. When the Bible speaks of hope it is talking about the very opposite of uncertainty. It is communicating with assurance, with confidence that these future events spoken of are surely going to take place.

II. HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN THIS "HOPE THAT NEVER DIES?"

So, how can you activate this powerful tool in your life? This hope is ours because Jesus was raised from the dead. To have "a hope that never dies," you must be born again. How can you be born again? Being born again, or spiritual birth, is by faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

So, first of all, we obtain this hope by being born again. The Apostle Peter was one of over 500 people who saw Jesus after His resurrection. (1 Corinthians. 15:5-6) He was certain that he could place his hope in Jesus because Christ met and conquered death. Since Christ rose from the dead you can firmly place your trust in Him. You can place your life and your soul in His hands. You can depend upon His love and care. You can follow His wisdom for your life. You can rest assured that God is for you and not against you! Romans 10:9, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." The moment you accept Christ's death in your place on the cross and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead the Bible says you are "born again." That's how you obtain this powerful hope! You're born again when you entrust yourself and commit yourself to the truth of Christ's death, burial and resurrection!

That's the hope the born-again follower of Christ has! God's kindness toward us is that we are being made more like Jesus in this life, and in the life to come we will get to be like Him! We won't be tempted to sin anymore. No faults. No failures. No mess ups!

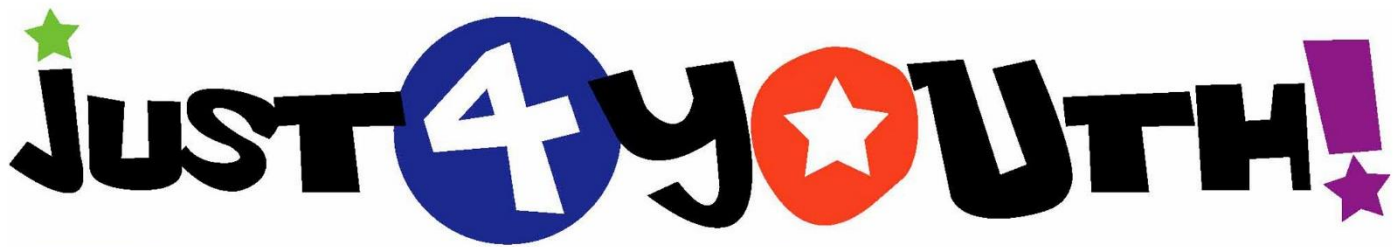
A young man was trying to establish himself as a peach grower. He worked hard and invested everything he had in a peach orchard. Finally, it blossomed, but later came a frost and killed his chances of having a good peach crop. He did not go to church the next Sunday, nor the next, nor the next.

His pastor went to try to encourage him to get back to church. The young man complained, "I'm not coming back to church. Do you think I want to worship a God who cares for me so little that He will let a frost kill all of my peaches?" The minister looked at him in silence for a few moments, then kindly said, "God loves you more than He does your peaches. He knows that while peaches do better without frost, it is impossible to grow the best men without frost. His object is to grow men, not peaches."

God wants you to experience the power of "the hope that never dies" in your life!

A field of yellow daffodils in bloom, with green leaves and stems visible. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, some fully open and some just starting.

God's blessings to you all.
Pastor Troy and Mindy Drayer



We have Easter goodie bags to give to all our kids this month. We also have some fun easter crafts planed centered around the Christ's victory over death and the story of easter.

IDENTITY AND SELF-WORTH THROUGH CHRIST

What does God say about our worth?

Our worth it taught to us in the bible. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are so loved and so important that God sacrificed his perfect son for us so that we could become a part of his family. God loves all his children deeply and calls us to love ourselves and others. 1 John 4:8 "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 Corinthians 16:14 "Let all that you do be done in love." We are loved, we are forgiven, we are redeemed, and we are adopted!

Getting our worth through Christ.

When we know and understand the way god sees us and loves us, we can get our worth through Christ. This means that we do not need to accomplish anything to be worthy of God's love. We do not get our worth from accomplishments we achieve. Our worth does not come from worldly things such as how much money we make or how beautiful or how smart we may be. In addition, we do not obtain worth through any roles we might play in life, for example, being a mom, a student, a star player on a team. Lastly our worth is not defined by our sins, nor does it depreciate because of our sins. God knew that all of us would do things we shouldn't. God also knew we would all fall short at our attempts to follow Christ's example, but he still loved us, and he still made a plan to save us all.

How the devil attacks our identity and self-worth.

Satan attacks Jesus in a lot of different ways but one of the ways he chooses is to attack his identity. The devil says to Jesus if you are the son of God turn these stones into bread. The devil questions who Jesus is thus attacking his identity. So how does this translate to us? The devil says to us you are bad, and you are unworthy not that our sin is bad but that we ourselves are bad. The devil contaminates our thoughts with doubts so that we will never raise up to meet the callings that God has for us. The bible tells us that Christ did not come to earth to condemn us. John 3:17 says "For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." In making these attacks on our character the devil denies what God has said about us. He denies that we are children of God. Would we also deny what God has said about us? Has anything uplifting or empowering ever come from a worthless view of self or a pridefully arrogant view of self? Neither of these are examples of the way that God sees us. When we know and understand the way god views us it uplifts us and helps us to achieve the things that God designed for us. God loves you and he wants the best for you. When we see ourselves the way God sees us it helps us recognize and resist Satan's attacks.

Blessings, Takarra



Holy Week Schedule



Sunday, April 2nd – Palm Sunday
Service begins at 9:30am

He is *risen*.



Thursday, April 5th – Maundy Thursday

Service will be held at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. Communion will be served.



Saturday, April 8th – Station of the Cross

The sanctuary will be open for all who want to come and pray. This is a devotional exercise of visiting and praying in front of each of the stations and meditating on the events of Jesus' Passion and death on the cross.



Sunday, April 9th – Easter Sunday

Breakfast served in Fellowship Hall from 8-9am.
Easter Service begins at 9:30am.



What is the Easter Story?

On Easter, or Resurrection Sunday, we celebrate what is arguably the most important event in all of human history: Jesus rising from the dead. All of Christianity and all eternity hinges on the truth of the resurrection. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our faith is lacking in meaning and is just another interesting philosophy. But if the resurrection is true, then it is the clearest proof that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be – the Son of God and the Savior of the world. All of the evidence points to the truth of the resurrection, and the result is changed lives. You can dive into both the big and seemingly smaller events of the story of Easter, and understand how each is significant to the entire redemption story. Visit our church's website (warrenucc.net) to read and learn more about Easter.

Join us for our: FOOD PANTRY CHALLENGE

April Collection!



Any brand of Biscuit, Muffin
or Cookie mix.

WARREN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



JUNIOR CHURCH IS
AVAILABLE
SUNDAY MORNINGS
FOLLOWING
THE CHILDREN'S
MESSAGE.

COME SEE US
EVERY SUNDAY!



Please mail to: Honor Flight Northeast Indiana
P.O. Box 5
Huntertown, IN 46748

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

WUCC Youth

YOUTH AGES: PREK-5TH
EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT
6-7PM
202 EAST 2ND ST, WARREN

JOIN THE FUN!



Operation Mail Call

Please consider sending a card or letter for
one of the veterans to receive upon returning
to Fort Wayne. More information is available
on the bulletin board in sanctuary.

BIBLE STUDY

Join Mindy beginning on Wednesday,
April 12, for the bible study "Fruit of
the Spirit." Whether we need some
major pruning or just a little shaping
up, all of us could benefit from
studying and applying what God's
Word says about the fruit of the Spirit.

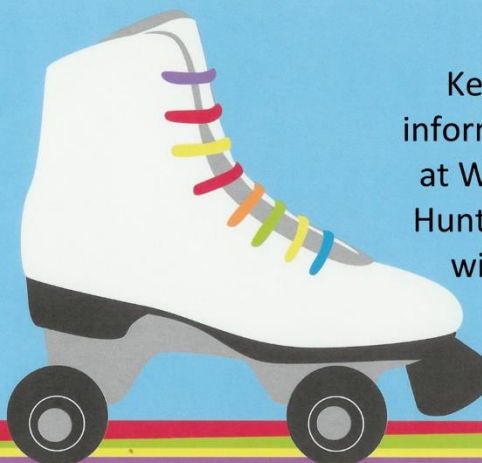


6pm
Fellowship Hall

Warren United Church of Christ Four:12 Youth Skating Party

Hey Youth!

Keep a look out for more
information on our skate party
at West Park Skate Center in
Huntington!!!! Date and time
will be announced soon.



Let's Roll!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

We are searching for volunteers to help with
youth during Sunday School, Wednesday Night
Live, Four:12 Meetings, and activities through
the summer. Please remember for a successful
youth program we need to fully support
Takarra which includes giving our time when
needed. Let us know if you can help!

Warren United Church of Christ
202 East Second Street
PO Box 344
Warren, IN 46792



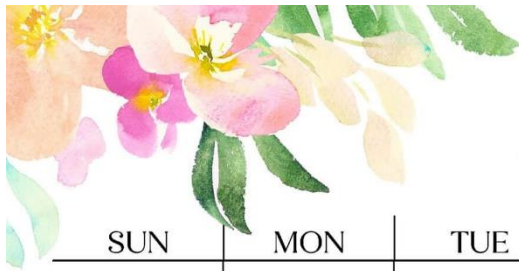
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Pastor Troy Drayer Cell Phone: 260-228-0064
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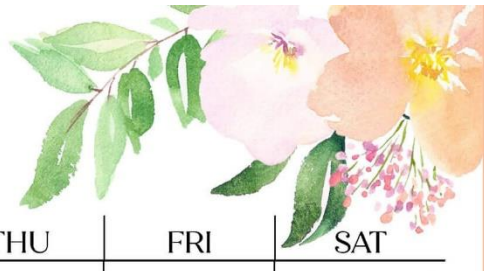
**Join us Palm Sunday and Easter
Sunday for the conclusion of the
sermon series "Passion."**

AND THEY CRIED OUT "CRUCIFY HIM"
AND PILOT ASKED THE THIRD TIME
"WHY, WHAT HAS THIS MAN DONE WRONG?"
BUT THEY INSISTED HE BE CRUCIFIED
SO PILOT DELIVERED JESUS TO THEIR WILL
THEN THE SOLDIERS LED HIM TO THE HALL
THEY CLOTHED HIM IN PURPLE
AND PUT A CROWN OF THORNS ON HIS HEAD
THEY HIT HIM ON THE HEAD AND SPIT ON HIM
THE BEATING MADE HIM UNRECOGNIZABLE
THEN THEY LED HIM OUT TO CRUCIFY HIM
THEY BROUGHT HIM TO GOLGOTHA
"THE PLACE OF THE SKULL"

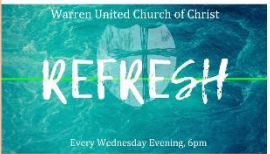
NOW IT WAS THE THIRD HOUR
THEY HAMMERED NAILS INTO HIM
HE SAID,
"FATHER FORGIVE, THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."
NEAR THE CROSS STOOD HIS MOTHER – WATCHING
NEAR THE NINTH HOUR JESUS CRIED OUT:
"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"
THEN JESUS SAID,
"IT IS FINISHED."
AND HE GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT.
THE NAILS REMAINED IN HIS HANDS AND FEET.
BUT IT WASN'T THE NAILS THAT HELD HIM THERE.
IT WAS LOVE



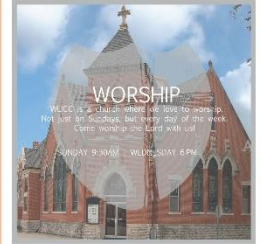
2023 April



Join us every
wednesday evening at
6pm for REFRESH!



Stay Informed!
warrenucc.net



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Communion 9:30am Guy Jackson	3	4	5	6 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> Service 6:30pm Communion	7	8 <i>Stations of the Cross</i> Sanctuary 9am - 3pm
9 <i>Easter Sunday</i> Breakfast 8-9am Service 9:30am	10 Greg Stucky Jo Spade	11	12 <i>Refresh & Youth</i> 6pm	13 Carrie Miller	14 Kevin & Sarah Thiele	15 Craig & Connie Mounsey
16 <i>Service 9:30am</i>	17	18 <i>AB Board Meeting</i> 6:30pm Don & Kristi Williams	19 <i>Refresh & Youth</i> 6pm	20 Sarah Thiele Ruth Booher	21	22 Max Tyner Chris Brubaker
23 <i>Service 9:30am</i>	24 Jeff & Becky Souder	25 Kristi Williams John Sneed	26 <i>Refresh & Youth</i> 6pm	27	28 Melissa Jones	29 Janet Smith
30 <i>Service 9:30am</i> Troy & Mindy Drayer						

Photo: warrenucc.net