

# First Baptist Church of Peoria

## FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

APRIL 25, 2017



### EVERY SUNDAY IS EASTER

By: The Reverend Dr. Rodney Kennedy

Easter lasts until June 3. From Resurrection Sunday to Pentecost the church celebrates Easter. In the Gospels there are multiple appearances of the raised-from-the-dead Jesus. There's doubt and skepticism and fear in the disciples, but they are also thrilled, excited, and encouraged. From a scattered, scared-out-of-their wits bunch, they start gathering once again for prayer, for Bible study, for communion. One by one they return. One of the last to come back is Thomas.

What matters about Thomas is what the story is doing. Concentrate on the story of Thomas and not all the awful things preachers have long said about Thomas. The story's action is that we can bring our doubts to church, parade them right up front, let them out for a walk, and find help for them. Doubt is not to be feared or shunned. Look at Thomas and know that you don't have to have all your beliefs lined up before showing up on Sunday.

Thomas has been dragging the millstone of a critical modifier for over 2000 years: Doubting Thomas. What modifier would the church hang on each one of us? Back in the day, I gave modifiers to church members to mollify my anger. Whining Willie, Crazy Charlie, Grumbling Gus, Angry Albert, Proud Mary, Devious Dan. We should have empathy for Thomas because he is only one in a long line of people unfairly castigated by the church, spurned by the church, mistreated by the church, left in the ditch bleeding and dying by the church. I want to give Thomas his good name back. I petition the court to drop the charge. I say Thomas is crying for help. He's merely the last holdout.

Thomas is no more or less a doubter than all the other disciples. There are more suspects for the body of Jesus being stolen than in a Sherlock Holmes case: The soldiers, the gardeners, the chief priest, other disciples or someone else might have taken away the body. Mary was absolutely convinced that someone had taken the body. Numb with grief and confusion, Mary kept repeating the same lines over and over. Again, Mary speaks to the angels (shouldn't that have been a clue?): "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Cut THOMAS SOME SLACK! His lack of belief is aimed at his fellow disciples more than anyone else. He's not sure they are telling him the truth. Look, most of you have been Christian long enough to know that you can't believe everything a Christian tells you.

But you can believe the Gospel, and the Gospels tells us that Jesus comes back for Thomas. This is really good news. He doesn't leave Thomas out there in the dark to struggle alone. He comes for him to offer him a new kind of future. "Do not doubt but believe." When the new creation, the new previously thought impossible appears before him and brings history and faith together in a rush, Thomas cries, "My Lord and my God." Give me a thousand men and women like Thomas: MY LORD AND MY GOD! I think the time has come to call him Honest Thomas.

#### Contact us:

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## WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00 A.M. WORSHIP & CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL  
11:00 A.M. FELLOWSHIP TIME

APRIL 30, 2017

### "HOW JESUS 'EASTERS' IN US "

Luke 24:13-35

Set the scene: Two disciples of Jesus, not two of the twelve, but of the second band of followers, are on the road to a place called Emmaus. A SCATTERING OF DISCIPLES AND A REGATHERING BY THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Luke says Emmaus was seven miles from Jerusalem. Archaeologists have never uncovered a town seven miles from Jerusalem. They trudge along, sandals kicking up the dust and despair, shoulders slumped, their eyes bearing the telltale signs of grief. This is the ROAD TO NOWHERE.

Some of us are on that road this morning. We are busy people and we live important, cluttered, tension-filled lives. The Emmaus Road is where we stop connecting the dots, no longer work at improving our spiritual practices, and put our faith on hold. Once on this road we are smothered by complacency or murdered by despair. If you have never been on this road before, let me tell you that people refuse the truth of resurrection out here, preferring the old crippling identities, the old quarrels and silly resistances, and the old patterns of war, hate, and greed (Walter Brueggemann).

The Emmaus Road leads away from the church/resurrection. Emmaus stands for our culture and its energy-consuming, time-eating, death-dealing realities. The Emmaus Road is where people go to throw in the towel. Two of our people – two disciples of Jesus – are on the road to Emmaus. THE ROAD TO NOWHERE. NO ENTRY.

#### Music: Jazz Sunday

"Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" - Chancel Choir

"My Prayer will Rise" - Kaity Paternoga

Service music by a jazz combo of church musicians

Welcome Center: Gordon Brown

May 7, 2017

### "I SHALL NOT WANT"

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is a panoramic view of the long march of human history set to music. This is our story in poetic expression. Life is a journey, and you have never been where you are going before. Maybe you think that all you need is a GPS, but you might want to think again. The tough terrain of life needs more than a piece of technology. From my perspective, we need a guide because we are going through a lot of dangerous territory up to and including death. The journey can seem easy at the outset: green pastures; still waters; joyful, peaceful lives. Then it turns harsh and unrelenting: the valley of the shadow of death, the presence of enemies, and then there's the last mile on the road to home. I have a recommendation: **THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.**

Music: "Use Me, I Pray" - Chancel Choir

Welcome Center: Coralynn Green



Work Day, Saturday,  
April 29, 8:00 a.m.

Our rebuild work will be done at the home of Herman "Hazel" West, 1350 West Widenham, Peoria. Work to be done includes: yard clean-up, repair/scrape/paint the front ramp, replace walkway ceiling, kitchen repairs and painting, and repair the ceiling in the upstairs bath. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided to volunteers at the work site. If you are interested in helping, please let co-captains, John or Jen Dusek, know or just show up and help in this important project.

John & Jen Dusek, Project Leaders



**SATURDAY, APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>**  
**8:00 A.M.—2:00 P.M.**

Donations may be left in  
Fellowship Hall, April 27-28  
during office hours.

## THANK-YOU NOTES

To Our Wonderful Church Family,  
Words cannot express how comforting your prayers, calls, cards and visits have been. Your caring concern has helped us remain positive. Thank you.

—Bob & Diane Brown

We would like to thank our church family for your cards, thoughts and prayers during this recent time of loss with the passing of Pam's mother, Janet Newell, in Ottawa. We appreciate your love and support. Thank you again.

—Doug & Pam Miller

Thank you to everyone for all of the cards, calls, visits and prayers after my recent knee surgery. Each was very much appreciated.

—Bob Atwater

## CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Friendship Day Celebration, Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. at Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church, 511 N. Richard Allen Drive in Peoria. Brunch will be served. A \$5 per person donation will be collected. Contact Thelma Hopwood (309-699-6950) to make reservations.

## 2017 GRADUATE RECOGNITION

The Board of Christian Education will recognize 2017 graduates of high school or college on Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. If you have a 2017 graduate, please contact the church office (phone: 309-682-5491 or e-mail: fbcpeo@mtco.com) and provide the student's name, the name of the school they will graduate from, and the degree, if applicable.

# May 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> 10AM MUGS 2 (@ Panera's)	<b>2</b> 8AM FBC Exer. (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Parlor)	<b>3</b> 5:15PM Guitar Reh. 5:30PM Bell Reh. 6:15PM Choir Reh.	<b>4</b> 8:30AM FBC Exercise (chapel)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 8AM Men's Breakfast (Fell. Hall)
<b>7</b> <b>FOOD DONATIONS</b> 9AM Music Reh. 10AM Worship 10AM Children's Sunday School 11AM Fellowship	<b>8</b> 10AM MUGS 2 (@ Panera's) 11AM Heart- Warming Hats	<b>9</b> <b>NEWSLETTER</b> 8AM FBC Exer. (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Library) 12:30PM Circle of Friends (Fell.Hall) 6:30PM Board Meetings.	<b>10</b> 5:15PM Guitar Reh. 5:30PM Bell Reh. 6:15PM Choir Reh.	<b>11</b> 8:30AM FBC Exercise (chapel)	<b>12</b> 6:30pm Gourmet Group (var. locations)	<b>13</b> 10AM ABW Brunch (Fell. Hall)
<b>14</b> 9AM Music Reh. 10AM Worship 10AM Children's Sunday School 11AM Fellowship	<b>15</b> 10AM MUGS 2 (@ Panera's)	<b>16</b> 8AM FBC Exer. (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Library)	<b>17</b> 5:15PM Guitar Reh. 5:30PM Bell Reh. 6:15PM Choir Reh. 7PM Spanish GED	<b>18</b> 8:30AM FBC Exercise (chapel) 4:30PM FRUT Mtg. (Parlor)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 2:30PM Pastoral Relations Comm. Mtg. (Parlor)
<b>21</b> 9AM Music Reh. 10AM Worship 10AM Children's Sunday School 11AM Fellowship	<b>22</b> 10AM MUGS 2 (@ Panera's)	<b>23</b> <b>NEWSLETTER</b> 8AM FBC Exer. (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Library)	<b>24</b> 5:15PM Guitar Reh. 5:30PM Bell Reh. 6:15PM Choir Reh. 7PM Spanish GED	<b>25</b> 8:30AM FBC Exercise (chapel)	<b>26</b> 6:30PM Dining Out Group (var. locations)	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9AM Music Reh. 10AM Worship 10AM Children's Sunday School 11AM Fellowship	<b>29</b> <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b> <b>Church</b> <b>Office Closed.</b> 10AM MUGS (@ Panera's)	<b>30</b> 8AM FBC Exer. (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Library)	<b>31</b> 7PM Spanish GED			



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**THE MISSION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS TO MINISTER TO OUR CONGREGATION, THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD, SO THAT ALL MAY EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD.**

## PRAYER CONCERNS

Ruth Turner      Happy Dean      Pam Orrill      Barb Twist  
Rose Kimpling      Carol Conover      Marvin Olson      Jay McGee  
Alyssa Russell      Wally Webber      Bob Brown      Rosemary Walk  
Dorothy Cumming      Jacquelyn Kellogg  
    Dick Sternberg (Jo Sternberg's husband)  
    Elaine Bolen (Paul Grove's sister)  
    Jake Teel (Cornelia & Mark Teel's nephew)  
    Ted Osborn (Dr. Rodney Osborn's brother)

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## AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING

The Mission Board would like to thank everyone who contributed to the America For Christ offering this year. Thanks to your generosity we received \$2,042.00 and were able to surpass our \$2000.00 goal. The money received in this offering will help so many important mission programs throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Neighborhood action program Christian centers like Friendship House will also receive much needed funds through your donations to the America For Christ offering. Thank you so much for caring!

—Janet Middleton

## ENJOY MOVIES?

If so, you might like to join us. First Baptist Movie Lovers meet in members' homes once every two months to discuss movies we have chosen to view on our own time. We meet on Thursday evenings and, of course, dessert is served.

Please contact Bob Ryan (309) 444-1936 with any questions or to join.

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## CONGRATULATIONS

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School presented Distinguished Alumni/ae awards to four remarkable graduates on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, during the annual Distinguished Alumni/ae Dinner. One of the four recipients of this award was our own **Joan Criswell**. The CRCDS newsletter which announced the awards said the award recipients "together and individually exemplify the core values of CRCDS, and have dedicated their lives in service to God and their fellow human beings." Congratulations to Joan on this most deserved award.