



OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

**HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
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**APRIL 2024**

Hello all,

I'm in Ann Arbor at U of M Hospital with Deb, yet again. Its Friday morning March 22, 2024, her improvement remains slow and steady. Deb got a tracheotomy on February 21<sup>st</sup>. Last month I wrote "It seems like she has turned a corner toward real improvement". That has seemed to be a very slow turn. Although we still see improvement daily, they are very small steps. Early last week we were discussing rehab at a facility close by here in Ann Arbor but, that evening she went into respiratory distress and has been on the vent since here in the SICU.

This scary adventure into the unknown has become a journey fraught with many bumps, twists and turns. It has matched my drive today to Ann Arbor to be with Deb. My normal 90-to-100-minute drive, took me three (3) hours this morning, US 23 was a parking lot for an hour, 20 miles north of Ann Arbor we just sat as two accidents were cleared, just a crazy morning with the early spring snowstorm... So glad I'm here with Deb safe and sound...

The season of Lent is ending but, next week the last week of Lent & March will be a busy week with March 24<sup>th</sup> is Palm Sunday, as we baptize little Willa Jo Godwin, Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> is our Food Distribution at Hope UMC, Good Friday Service on the 29<sup>th</sup> at Hope UMC, Then Easter Sunday with our regular services. Hope will have an Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday 12 noon.

March came in like a lamb, and if today is any indication, its going out like a lion. 6 to 8" of snow, didn't spring already get her? I must say I'm itching to get planting my new garden area....

**I read this the other day...**

THE ENTIRE BIBLE IS ABOUT JESUS.  
THE OLD TESTAMENT SAYS HE'S COMING.  
THE GOSPEL SAYS HE'S HERE.  
ACTS PROCLAIMS HIM.  
AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION SAYS HE'S COMING BACK...

*The Empty Tomb*

<sup>1</sup> Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” <sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

*Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene*

<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. <sup>13</sup> They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

**The Tomb was Empty!**

As tough as Good Friday is, we always have to keep in mind that without the events of Good Friday, there would not be an Easter morning! There would not be an empty tomb, there would be no joy...

I want to clear up one more thing. When the crowds cheered to free Barabas and send Jesus to be crucified! **We are Barabas** or should I say that Barabas represents us, our sin, our love for the world, our fear of the truth.

As children of the resurrection let us never forget and always remember each of the fine details of the Easter story.

Two personal notes: Yesterday I had my **D-com** meeting with the Central Bay District, and I was unanimously approved to continue serving as your pastor for another year. Thank Heavens. # 2, as I just had rounds with the ICU team a few minutes ago, Debs Kidneys have started to work finally. Dialysis was not run yesterday, and tomorrow’s dialysis session has been put on hold as well. This will also begin to end her fluid retention problems as well. This is an answer to prayer, the dialysis ports were removed on 3/27/2024...

Blessings Always,

Pastor Bill & Deb Cleland

## He Lives!

With Easter just past, I thought it was only fitting to look at the story behind a famous hymn that speaks of the wonderful truth that Easter shares to the world. That truth of course is that our Savior lives.

Though it was foretold over seven hundred years before that this would come to pass from the prophet Isaiah, the glorious truth that our savior rose from the grave has brought shock and wonder for over 2000 years.

The famous hymn's opening line truly brings to light what all believers in Jesus Christ have said and continue to declare:

*I serve a risen Savior,  
He's in the world today;  
I know that He is living  
whatever men may say;  
I see His hand of mercy,  
I hear His voice of cheer,  
And just the time I need Him,  
He's always near*

The story behind this song also brings joy to my heart because just as the song it is a testament of a believer trying to share that wonderful truth.

In 1933, Alfred Ackley, a musician and preacher, wrote the famous hymn "He Lives." At the time, Ackley was challenged by a young student who was confused as to why Christians worshipped someone who had died centuries earlier. In response, Ackley is quoted as saying, "He lives! I tell you, He is not dead but lives here and now! Jesus Christ is more alive today than ever before. I can prove it by my own experience, as well as the testimony of countless thousands."

Fueled by the student's questions, Ackley wrote these popular lyrics. His refrain is joyous, reminding us all that Jesus rose from the dead as promised and remains alive today in the heart of every believer. Refrain:

*He lives, He lives,  
Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way.  
He lives, He lives,  
Salvation to impart!  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.*

What a wonderful song and even more wonderful truth? It is truly what the Gospel is all about, the hope that we should tell the world about, "He Lives." Let us pray that this very hope brings us strength and guidance as we live out his grace and truth so that the world may see Jesus Christ in us. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4

God bless all of you,  
Randy

### **HOPE UMC NEWS FOR APRIL**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** meets every Sunday during worship hour and after Children's moments. The Children are collecting money to help children and their families by purchasing livestock chickens, and seeds to have a garden to feed their families. If you would like to help them, there is a jar in the Narthex. Please put your coins and bills in the jar. Thank you.

There will be an **Easter egg hunt** on the lawn for children after Easter service. For more information contact Lynsey Crego

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN** will meet on April 24 at 3:00 pm. Please be there to share fundraising ideas for the summer.

**POTLUCK** will be on April 14, 2024, immediately after church. This will be the annual Chili Cook off as a fund raiser for the Youth group. Sign up with Brian Hock and bring your best Chili. YUM!!

**POPUP FOOD PANTRY** will be April 25 from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. The truck will arrive around noon so plan to be here around noon to help. Please park in the parking lot on the east side of the fire barn

**MAY POPUP FOOD PANTRY** will be on May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Note the time change.

### **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

3 Duff Sova  
4 Bill Elmore  
9 Kathy Arthur  
12 Katie Terwella  
15 Brian Hock  
16 Jillian Brady  
19 Dale Shedden  
23 Phil Leigeb  
24 Avery Crego  
24 Roni Cassaday  
27 Shelly Brady  
27 Amanda Heatherington

### **MAY BIRTHDAYS**

4 Allie Goodwin  
12 Judy Cassady  
15 Doug Fillmore  
15 Lowell Thomas  
15 Chris Leigeb  
16 Cathy Smith  
20 Charli Hock

**Happy Birthday to all of you marvelous Christian people. God loves you.**

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**