

# Newsletter April 2023



Bremen-Bethel Presbyterian Church  
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Pastor: Rev. Larry Hoffmann; Clerk: Dee Mowry



## FROM THE PASTOR: Rev. Larry Hoffmann

Greetings,

Lent is coming to a close as we enter the most sacred time of the Christian year. Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. The events of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday are the defining moment of the faith we hold dear: the salvation story centered on Jesus Christ. Our story has its roots in the salvation story of Judaism, whose central meaning comes from Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This Maundy Thursday we'll remember this story through the liturgy of the Seder.

We will not have a Seder meal. Our liturgy will remind us of the elements of the story, and its connection with Jesus, who was celebrating Passover with his disciples in their last meal together. The information that follows will help us prepare for this year's Maundy Thursday Communion service.

Grace and peace,

Larry

### THE TRADITION OF THE SEDER

Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) recalls the time the Jewish people were held captive in Egypt. Taking pity on his people, God chose Moses to lead them out of slavery so they could go on to a new life.

The Seder is both a meal and a worship service. Special foods are used to elaborate the story: matzot, unleavened bread; maror, bitter herbs (often horseradish); haroset, a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine; pesach, a roasted lamb; karpas, a vegetable, often celery, radish, parsley or potato; and beitzah, a roasted egg. Each food has a particular significance which is described in this service.

Wine is an important part of Jewish rituals. In the seder, four glasses are drunk at specific times. These are symbolic of the promises which God made to the Jewish people: "I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians; I will deliver you from their bondage; I will redeem you; I will take you as my people." (Exodus 6:6-7)

Placed at the center of the table is a goblet of wine called "Elijah's Cup." Elijah is the prophet who is to foretell the coming of the Messiah, a time when all people will be one with God and with each other. Late in the seder the closed door is open in expectation of the redemption to come, as well as to let in the prophet Elijah.

## THE TRADITION OF THE SEDER (cont.)

The seder can be a meaningful observance for the church. The remembering of the salvation story of our Jewish roots points us to the salvation story told in our Christian texts. The promises of the service are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In celebrating the Passover seder, the Jewish hope is seen in the Christian experience. Remembering the mighty deeds of God on behalf of his people gives the confidence of God's love, grace and mercy.

### **CLERK OF SESSION: Dee Mowry**

After listening to the discussion at the Wednesday, March 29, Lenten session, this would be a good time to reprint an article from the June 2010 Newsletter. Cynthia McKay was our pastor at the time...

We have about ½ dozen churches with-in the village limits of Bremen and several more outside, but near, the village. Many of us pass by some of these churches on our way to Bremen-Bethel. Probably for some this is the only church home they have ever had, others may like the choir, others may like the seats, others may like the minister etc. Some (like your clerk) would say 'all of the above' but may add another dimension, which is the form of government.

Presbyterians tend to be a rather rebellious lot and it is rumored that in the founding of our country, about ½ of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Presbyterians. As a result, the English often referred to our fight for independence as 'that Damned Presbyterian Rebellion' (think John Hancock for example.) Much of what we know today as our democratic form of government or democracy had its roots in the same "historical pot" as the church. For example, we have 4 levels of church government or adjudications the same as the civil government. The session, or local church governing body, is equivalent to the town council, the Presbytery (ours is the Scioto Valley Presbytery) is equivalent to the county government. The Synod (ours is the Synod of the Covenant) is equivalent to the state government, and finally the General Assembly, the equivalent to the U.S. Congress. Representatives to each of these (church) bodies are called commissioners, and are elected to the position by the stakeholders or members in each representative body. It has been my privilege and honor to serve as commissioner to each of these bodies and to see how a democratically elected church body works. I served on the Polity Committee (church government) of the Synod for some time and chaired the committee for a short time. As commissioner to General Assembly, I was assigned the 'Governmental Relations Committee.' By Book of Order law, adjudications above the session level should be ½ clergy and ½ half non-clergy. This wise provision in our government puts into place a rather rigorous checks and balance requirement into church operations. Thus, we operate as a **representative democracy** where no one person can operate as a 'dictator.' The Presbyterian Church also goes to great lengths to avoid ostentatious titles. There are only two basic officers at each level of adjudication, the Moderator, who runs the meeting(s) 'decently and in order' and the Clerk who records the transactions of the body. It also is interesting to note that, at any level above the session level, wither clergy or laity may hold either of the two offices mentions above.



- Apr 2<sup>nd</sup> – Palm Sunday
- Apr 6<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday Service, 7 pm
- Apr 7<sup>th</sup> – Community Good Friday Service, 7 pm, at Calvary United Methodist Church
- Apr 9<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday** – Sunrise Service is at Bremen Bethel Presbyterian Church, at 7 am. Breakfast will follow in the church fellowship room. Easter Sunday Communion Service is at 10:30 am.
- Apr 16<sup>th</sup> – Zeta Alpha Meeting, 9:30 am, in the church basement, Lesson 7, Sabbath and Self-Care, Celebrating Sabbath Bible study.
- Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> – Earth Day
- Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> – Session Meeting after worship service



- Apr 1<sup>st</sup> - Rubin Rosario
- Apr 6<sup>th</sup> - David Burdett
- Apr 17<sup>th</sup> - Susan Hoffmann
- Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> - Corey Riley
- Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> - Abigail Grace McCandlish
- Apr 28<sup>th</sup> - Ryan Nicholas Ray



(There are no anniversaries for April.)

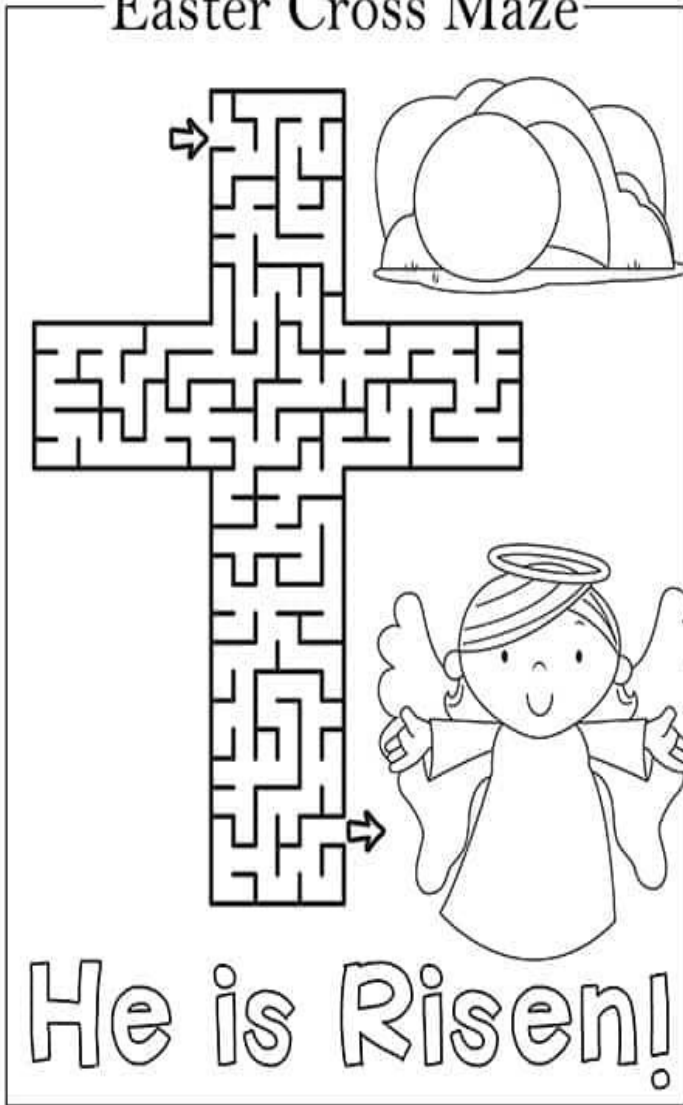


**April Ushers, Communion Servers, and Lay Readers**

- Apr 2<sup>nd</sup> – Cinda Keller : Lay Reader & Usher; Linda Embrey: Usher
- Apr 9<sup>th</sup> – Susan Henwood: Lay Reader, Easter Communion Server & Usher;  
Susan Hoffmann: Easter Communion Server & Usher
- Apr 16<sup>th</sup> – Mark & Tracy Embry: Ushers; Cinda Keller: Lay Reader
- Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> – Judy Turner: Lay Reader & Usher; Jane Griffith: Usher
- Apr 30<sup>th</sup> – Ila Bergreen: Lay Reader & Usher; Scott Bergreen: Usher



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| STONE     | CHRIST  | EMPTY     |
| SUNDAY    | CROSS   | MARY      |
| TOMB      |         |           |

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