



Westover Reflections

April 2025



“When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloth that had covered His head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that He had to rise from the dead.”

-John 20:6-9

Good day, Saints,

As I am writing this for the April newsletter, it is now three days since the beginning of Spring. Warm weather is upon us, or so I believe! You see, I start around January 20th saying to my wife, Mo, **“Spring is in the air.”** She simply shakes her head because she knows that a winter chill will come just as soon as I say, **“Spring is in the air.”**

Well, my eternal optimism has paid off. **Spring is here.** Warm days tempered by still cool nights have arrived. All of the despairing appearances of winter are passing: the flowers are bursting forth from the cold, dark soil; the trees are blooming; the birds are singing their song of jubilation, declaring in their tunes that the earth has been re-created, redeemed, and that out of the depths of winter...life is springing forth into God's intended beauty.

You do know that that is why we hold onto hope during those dark, cold winter nights. We long for the beauty of the earth to return in all her splendor. And suddenly...it does!

Here is a truth for you to ponder: Without such hope why would we keep living and believing when that which we see seems to pass on and pass away? Everything is here, then gone. Everything passes. Spring becomes summer; summer begets Autumn when the warm, gentle breezes send the falling leaves scurrying across the terra firma into winter's night. But holding to hope brings renewed life with the coming of Spring once again. Again, without such cosmic hope, we would all become cynics. Yet, the Christian promise is that God will replace all things with His immeasurable and infinite life. Easter gives us Jesus as the standing promise that this is true.

What the Resurrection is saying, more than anything else, is that love is stronger than death. You and I stake our faith-our life and our own death-on: nothing dies forever, and all that have died in love will be reborn in an even larger love. Spring will come again!

Still in His Peace,
Pastor William





What Are We Telling God When We Worship?

A little girl says to her Mother after running across a busy street, “Mom, you’re saying with your mouth that you’re glad I’m safe, but your face is telling me I may not be so safe!” We send mixed messages every day, encounters where we are upset, but try to put on a socially acceptable face, and add in the elements of sarcasm, and there is a lot of “double-speak” in our daily lives. When it comes to our closest relationships – our spouses, children, as well as extended family and friends – we ought to make sure that what we are communicating is what we truly feel in our heart.

This is even more applicable for our relationship with the living God. Here’s a hard question for us all: Is what we are saying in worship with our body language, our face, and our heart what we want God to receive as the message? Too often, we go through the motions in worship – rituals of prayers, doxologies, songs, even the order of worship itself – and we find that we have not given the thought and emphasis of heart to them. What message are we sending to God when we do that?

Psalms 16:8-9 encourages us to not only focus on God, but to express joy in His presence.

*“I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure”*

Every moment we spend in worship singing, praying, and meditating is a moment we can tell Him He matters in our life. We are communicating something powerful to the ever present God when we choose to sing full-throated, giving our full attention to Him in worship. That hour on Sunday is devoted to Christ, not to the Pastor, or the musicians, or to the bulletin. It is time we can take refuge in His sanctuary and leave the troubles of the world behind us and give Him the praise and adoration He deserves.

The amazing thing is, as we give to Him, He returns the blessing of insight, confidence, strength, and recommitment to help us with that toxic world we encounter each day. I love the story of Peter walking on the water to Jesus during the storm. It reminds me that we can do amazing things if we will only focus on the Lord in the midst of our challenging moments.

*“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”
“Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” Matthew 14:28-30*

Peter’s greatest moment of danger was when he took his eyes off Jesus and started focusing on the wind and waves. The same is true for us. When we allow ourselves to be distracted in our worship, we miss the blessing and sadly, miss being the blessing for Christ. So, what are we telling God with our faces, our bodies, our spirit when we sing, pray, and meditate on Sunday mornings. He sees our hearts, He knows our thoughts, and He deserves the very best from us for all He’s done for us. He deserves our “First Fruits”, the best sacrifice we can give Him.


“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Cor. 4:16, 17

So as we gather each Sunday, let’s “fix our eyes” on Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Then we can truly communicate to Him what we really feel in our hearts!



Easter Morning worship services

Westover will have a sunrise service at 7:00 AM on Easter morning. We will also have our normal 9 and 11 AM service. All are welcome, so let's worship together.



Easter Egg Hunt

Our annual Easter egg hunt is April 19 at 10:00 AM, starting in the Wesley Hall. We would love to have your help! We welcome donations of individually wrapped candy. We need *everyone* to come help fill the eggs at 12:30 on April 12. (Bring your lunch and join us at noon if you want!) We also need volunteers to help hide the eggs and help with set-up, clean-up and crafts on the 19th. Questions? Please contact Sharron Gibson.



BBQ sign ups and desserts

The United Methodist Men are planning their BBQ for Friday, May 30. They need volunteers to help and to bake and donate desserts. Sign-up sheets are in the Hobby Chapel and Fellowship Hall Contact Les Watkins with questions.



Mark your calendar

April 11 6:30 PM Dinner and movie night
April 12 10:00 AM UWF
April 12 12:00 PM lunch
April 12 12:30 PM Craft circle & Easter egg stuffing
April 13 Palm Sunday
April 17 Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 PM
April 18 11:30 AM Ladies Lunch
April 19 10:00 AM Easter egg hunt
April 20 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 AM Worship services
May 30 UMM BBQ

UWF and Craft Circle

Times for our meetings this month will be a little different. United Women of Faith will meet at 10:00 AM on April 12 for our book study and to make cards. Lunch will be at 12:00, so bring something yummy for yourself and join us! At 12:30 we encourage *everyone* to come help fill the over 1,000 eggs for the children's Easter egg hunt. We hope to see you there!



Movie night

Movie night is April 11 and our movie this month is *Fireproof*. A hotdog dinner will be served at 6:30 PM, followed by the movie. Join us for a fun night of food, film and fellowship!

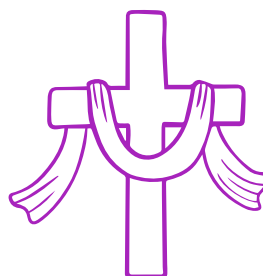


Westover Ladies' lunch

All ladies of Westover are invited to a "ladies' lunch" on Friday, April 18. We'll meet at Pam's Restaurant at 11:30am. Please RSVP by April 16 to Susan Denny: call or text 919-710-6951 or church office 919-851-4431 or call or text Barbara Smith at 919-454-6200

Adult Sunday School

We are continuing our study of the book of Matthew. What a jam packed book this gospel is! There is always a seat for you, so please come and learn with us.



Happy April birthday to:

3 Liza Medlin
3 Marley Medlin
5 Tom Overby
7 Davis Poole
9 Meg Sargent
11 Wade Troutman
13 Clara Worsley
13 Seyi Adebisi
15 John Carter IV
16 Alice Batts
19 Callie Barefield Carter
23 Vicki Carter
24 Nettie Shafer
29 David Price

Happy Birthday



FREE CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG HUNT

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

10:00 AM

WESTOVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
300 POWELL DR, RALEIGH

EASTER STORY

LUNCH

CRAFT

OVER 1,000 EGGS!

