



*“She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she did not recognize Him.” John 20:14*

**Easter Sunday** is always special! The world around us is seemingly being **reborn**. The birds are singing, flowers are blooming, there is the greening of new life taking place. I love the dawning of the new day!

This coming **Easter** is especially meaningful to Mo and me because **Easter Sunday** this year is also our son Matthew's birthday. He will celebrate his birthday in some distant land away from us, but we will recall the moment when we first laid eyes on him and rejoiced at our **gift from God**; for I can still see the moment in my mind's eye.

**John's Gospel** says that Mary Magdalene *“was standing outside the tomb weeping...She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she did not recognize Him.”*

And, so, I find myself pondering on this moment, trying to visualize the scene in my mind's eye. And I am asking, *“How could she not recognize Jesus?”* In fact, she not only failed to recognize Jesus for who He was, she actually thought Him to be merely the gardener! *How could she possibly have mistaken Jesus for...a gardener?*

**I mean:** Let's remember that Mary Magdalene had dropped everything to follow Jesus. She had spent months in His presence, traveling with Him and His merry band of disciples as they traverse the countryside. Why, she was one of the few friends—mostly the women—who actually stayed with Jesus to that heart-breaking, earth-shattering moment at the Cross. *How could she not recognize HIM?!*

**Perhaps,** Jesus had His back to her. **Maybe** His face was hidden in the shadow of His cloak. **Maybe** there is something taking place that I have failed to grasp—something more, seeking to illuminate us. **I don't know, for sure.**

**I do know** that Jesus taught His disciples that *“whatsoever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40)*. I understand these words to mean that **we encounter the Risen Christ in others** more times than we know, especially those in need, those who others make feel unwelcome, those who **give us the opportunity to serve Christ** in the world, yet others that we too often find offensive to our way of thinking.

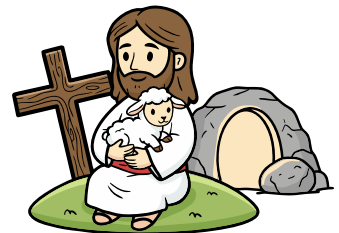
We may not always act like we have Jesus in the moment, **but** that does not negate the truth that Christ is present in the needy—in the child without a home, a lonely elderly friend, in a hungry family looking to make a living in this *“land of opportunity.”*

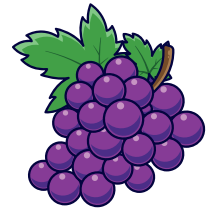
We may not want to admit it, but **there are those who we encounter every day in whom we fail to see Jesus**. There are those we walk by, seeing Jesus, but failing to recognize. There is the person we sit across from at Pam's Farmhouse Restaurant, the grocery clerk at Food Lion, the guy who mows our lawn. There is the individual who appears different in so many ways from us, who speaks a different language, who sees the world through a different lens than we, perhaps, do. However, it is sadly true that we encounter Christ in the world around us more times than we know, while, too often, seeing only a gardener.

I have learned in life that I see what I want to see. If I want to see Jesus in others, I will see Jesus, I will experience Jesus, and I will serve Jesus.

When my son Matthew was born, I saw him as a *“gift from God,”* as one for whom Mo and I had prayed. In much the same way, I tend to see the world around me, and all who dwell in it, including those with whom I agree and disagree, those who speak my language, and those who don't, as a part of God's loving creation; thus, as those in whom I might well see Christ, if I but have eyes willing to see.

**Still in His Peace,  
William**





## Why “Flow” Is So Important In Worship

Have you ever been in the middle of reading a great book when a phone call from a family member or friend who wants to gossip interrupts? Then when you go back to that great book you find your mind wandering between the book and the details of that phone call. If you’re like me, you end up reading pages that you can’t recall. It drives me crazy!

That’s how it can be when we are in the midst of worship. We can easily be so distracted by the world around us, that we lose our connection with God. Whether it’s what’s for lunch, what’s on our “to do” list for today, or where we’re taking our children this afternoon – we’re like God’s little ADHD sheep, distracted by those “bright shiny objects” in our mind. Why do you think churches have crafted calls to worship, gathering songs, and reflective moments at the beginning of worship services? The intent is to remove from your attention all those distractions and focus on this experience called “worship”.

Yes, I called it an “experience” – because it is just that – a moment with you and God together - sometimes enjoying the family of God gathered, and sometimes just you and God in a moment of love, adoration, and receptivity.

***“Worship is an ‘it-is-well-with-my-soul’ experience”***

*Robert Webber, Founder of The Institute for Worship Studies*

It is a relational moment between you and God, and as such, we do not want that moment to be broken up by distractions and lost attention to our Lord and Savior. It’s like when you are engaging your spouse in a deep and intimate conversation and you see your spouse checking his/her phone or the TV. It breaks the connection.

That connection in worship is called “the flow”, and it is vital to maintaining a meaningful worship experience. This is why it is so important to craft worship services that keep the flow moving throughout the service. It is why “announcements” and “church business” are flow killers – because they take the attention off of worshipping God and onto everyday housekeeping matters of the church. More deeply, the flow needs to be preserved in the midst of worship. Music serves as a wonderful “connective tissue” in keeping that flow. Having a piano or guitar playing over prayers help keep the focus on God and what we’re doing to honor Him. Moving quickly and purposefully between songs in a service is also important. Using introductions to songs to connect the themes of song/hymn 1 and song/hymn 2 also keeps the worshippers following the thread of worship. Awkward pauses give the impression of a concert rather than worship and lead the congregation to lose their focus on the object of their worship – Jesus.

***“As John 4:23 says, It’s time, as worshipers of God, to give him all we have. For when he is exalted, everything about me is decreased. So many times we stand in the way of really stepping into the secret place of worship with God.”***

**Jessica Leah Springer, Writer**

The God of all the universe deserves all of our attention and focus. We do this thing called “worship” for Him. We were made to do this, and we receive amazing benefits and blessings from it. But, it is all for Him. So, let’s put our smart phones away, set our “to do” lists aside, forget about what’s for lunch – and let’s give ourselves completely to honoring, exalting, and worshipping the God with whom we want to be in relationship. Let’s enter the “flow” and remain there as long as we can!

***“No man gives anything acceptable to God until he has first given himself in love and sacrifice.”***

*A.W. Tozer*



### Children's Easter Egg Hunt & celebration

Our annual Easter egg hunt and party for the children is Saturday morning, April 4 at 10 AM. We'll have crafts, story time, lunch and of course our 1,000+ eggs to hunt! *ALL children are welcome!*

We'd love to have adult volunteers to help hide eggs! If you can help, please meet in the Wesley Hall at 9:00 AM. If you have any questions, please contact Sharron Gibson.

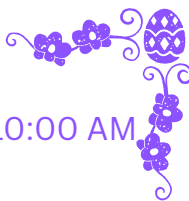
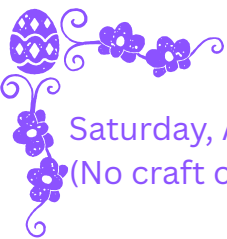


### Blessing Box Donations

Our blessing box is such a blessing indeed to those in need! The donations from our "souper" bowl lunch were so generous, that we want to give everyone the opportunity to keep our box stocked.



Soon there will be a donation box in the Hobby Chapel. *Donations are welcome at any time, of course, but let's make the first Sunday of every month our Blessing Box day.* Needed items are tuna, canned soup and pasta, cereal bars, peanut butter, canned fruit, pasta sauce & pasta and personal hygiene items.



### Mark your calendars

Saturday, April 4 - **Easter egg hunt** -10:00 AM  
(No craft circle or UWF in April)

Sunday, April 5 **Easter Sunrise Service** 7:00 AM  
Sunday, April 5 **Worship Service** 11:00 AM  
(no 9:00 AM service or Sunday School)

Friday, April 17 **Movie night**

Friday, May 22 **United Methodist Men BBQ**

### Moments with children



Remember the "moments with children" when all of our young friends would come to the front of the sanctuary for a short message especially for their age group? We want to bring this time back for the young ones who worship with us! To do that, we will need some volunteers. Please prayerfully consider being one of the loving adults to help out. This is a great way, that doesn't take a big time commitment, to share our faith with the children.

### BBQ

The United Methodist Men will have their annual BBQ on Friday, May 22. This year the fellows will be cooking chicken in addition to pork. It takes many hands to host this, and the men welcome everyone who is able to help that day. Donations of homemade desserts are also needed. For more information, please contact Les Watkins or Kent Gibson.



### Movie Night

This month's movie is *Amazing Grace*. We'll enjoy dinner together on Friday, April 17 at 6:30 PM. The movie will start about 7:00 PM.

### Happy April birthdays 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
- 24 Nettie Shafer
- 29 David Price