Coexist: Only Jesus Is Way, Truth & Life

This message was preached on 13 January 2019 from the historic pulpit of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel as “Coexist: Only Jesus Is Way, Truth & Life” based on St. John 14:6. This sermon was one of seven in a sermon series entitled “De-Bunking Da-Bumper Stickers with Scripture.” It, along with over 500+ other titles, is available on CDs and DVDs.

How many times have you been driving down the road and taken notice of a bumper sticker? Some have been school stickers, others promoting a political party, and still others have been religious references. It’s interesting what people proclaim about their feelings to anyone who cares to glance at their car. I find it intriguing, because then I try to imagine what the driver looks like. Admittedly, I’ve tried to pass their vehicle to satisfy my curiosity. Maybe that sounds weird ... but that wouldn’t be the first time anyone has thought that about me.

I’m sure all of us have seen countless religious bumper stickers, which is not a bad thing. But there is one bumper sticker I see more than any other. It’s usually a blue background and has a bunch of white-colored religious symbols that resemble the letters that spell out COEXIST. So, what is this guy with the bumper sticker thinking? Maybe he is just playing the odds and putting bets on all faiths ... hoping that a little bit of this-and-that from each of the symbolic faith groups will be his ticket to life both here and beyond.

In preparation for this message, I decided to look up the meaning of COEXIST and what it means for the designer of the popular bumper sticker. One explanation stated—“COEXIST is a way to demonstrate your support of religious freedom, tolerance and understanding." Now I don’t think that’s necessarily so bad. Actually, it sounds like something I would love to have for what I believe. Another explanation was—"to encourage others in a greater religious understanding of other’s distinctive faiths, beliefs and practices; to promote friendship, goodwill and mutual trust among them." Again, I am not seeing anything terribly wrong or making me want to crash into the bumper of any vehicle having that bumper sticker.

Well, according to the dictionary COEXIST literally means—“to exist together at the same time or in the same place,” or “to exist together in peace.” The general solidity of the COEXIST bumper sticker design combines with the global peace movement that sways our emotions and makes us feel good inside. In case you’re a little confused about the use of the symbols put together in the bumper sticker designed by peacemonger.org, here is the explanation:

“C” – Islamic crescent
“o” – Peace symbol
“e” – Male/female symbol
“x” – Jewish Star of David
“i” – Wiccan/pagan symbol
“s” – Chinese Ying-Yang
“t” – Christian cross

Pretty clever, isn’t it? I’m a fan of peace; how about you? After all, who likes war? In an age where war, religion and hate make the headlines (internationally) more than maybe any other topics, the emergence of the COEXIST message immediately resonates with the majority of people ... especially with anyone who has traveled the world or has a vision for global peace.

Some Christians respond to the message of this bumper sticker by saying basically: “This is what Jesus taught and did. Like Jesus, we should love others no matter where they’re coming from.” They are quick to quote the Old

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President's Corner

OUR CHAPEL OF HOPE

Darkness appears to be enveloping our country. Many live in fear of what is happening in our country; a nation that calls good evil and evil good. A nation that has been promoting abortion and continues to rebel against His ways should expect darkness to overtake us. The Bible is replete with accounts of nations that violate God's commandments and have been punished by God until they overturn their evil ways. Our only hope is truly in God and His Son—Jesus Christ.

As Christians we live in this world but are not of this world. No matter how dark, we know that the light of Christ will lead us out of darkness.

Holy Week is coming soon. At the culmination of Holy Week is Christ’s resurrection. The Light of Christ that shines into men’s hearts and changes them for all eternity. It is that Light that is truly the hope for our nation and the whole world.

The Christian martyr, Bonhoeffer, during WWII looked to the “confessing church” as the Christian’s answer to the Nazi terror. I liken our Chapel to the “confessing church” as the Christian’s truth and light to the darkness of the world. Our Chapel’s deep faith in Christ’s resurrection is our great hope. With the help of God, we will stand firm!

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Offering Envelopes ... or Give On-Line

If you are blessed by this ministry ‘beyond the walls’ of the Chapel (i.e., Livestream, bi-monthly newsletter, CDs/DVDs, e-mails, and/or pastoral care), PLEASE consider calling our Foundation office at 952/888-1525 and request the pre-addressed envelopes to mail-in your plate offerings. Be sure to leave your name/mailing address so that we may send the envelopes to you.

OR— If you are home-bound, traveling, relocated or just appreciate this ministry, PLEASE consider making your contributions at our website at http://fortsnellingmcf.org/make-a_donation.php Thank you.

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Remaining Board Meetings in 2021:
Saturdays ... @ Foundation Office
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19 December (1:00 p.m.)

If you would like a copy of the 2020 Annual Report, please secure one in the Fellowship Hall or call the Foundation Office at 952/888-1525 and leave your name/mailing address that we may send you a copy of this impressive report.
Testament prophet who referred to the coming Christ as the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6); or quote Jesus as saying, “Peace I leave with you” (John 14:27), and of whom the heavenly host proclaimed that “peace on earth” would come (Luke 2:14).

Yet other Christians are truly offended by the message, believing that it dishonors Christ by making Him co-equal to all religions and even putting Him in partnership with ideas and belief systems that are completely contrary to His teachings.

So, what does the COEXIST bumper sticker mean to you? Does Jesus coexist? Does the Christian cross ... a symbol of sacrifice ... really belong amidst these other symbols?

Listen: If you believe in the ultimate “live together in peace” mantra, I gather you would not have stood up to Nazi Germany as they brutally killed millions in its conquest of Europe? What about other aggressors the world over? [If so, you probably ought not be very comfortable sitting in this military chapel surrounded by living combat veterans of WW2, Korea, Vietnam and the Global War on Terrorism.] And lest you think this conflicts with the Bible, I would ask you:
— Would David have overcome Goliath?
— Would Moses have stood up against Pharaoh?
— Would Jesus have died on the cross for His teachings and miracles?

Overcoming evil requires a willingness to be in opposition to others; a willingness to take a stand. The need for protection is an obvious problem with the COEXIST message.

Another problem with the movement suggesting that we COEXIST— is it merely is a band aid. There is no healing for wounds and no solution for complex problems. To encourage others to “live together in peace” is (at best) a high-reaching moral goal. It does not offer healing to an already broken world. Only Jesus offers a solution to the problem of sin, alienation, hostility, and bitterness in our culture. He gives us hope in a world that does not offer hope. The COEXIST message, though pragmatic, is not helpful. It does not compare to what Jesus did. The message does not address the need for personal and interpersonal healing. As we read in Ephesians 2:14-16 this is done only through the cross: “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh [crucifixion] the enmity [hostility], that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” (Ephesians 2:14-16)

It is only by the grace of Jehovah God— through the sacrificial, selfless love of His Son— that we can ever exist in harmony and peace.

Though there is some truth to what the COEXIST advocates are saying with their message, there are many problems with their philosophy and method. What about when one of the groups represented is doing wrong or harm to others? What about the need in life for reconciliation? What about the need for a love that overcomes evil? Love, as Jesus said, is to lay down one’s life for one’s friend (John 15:13). The Good Samaritan paid dearly to help his neighbor. The COEXIST bumper sticker does not address the need for love. Love is what followers of Christ should be concerned about modeling and teaching.

Do you recall when Jesus was resisted by some religious people who accused Him of doing the work of the devil (Luke 11)— What did He say? “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

Clearly, Jesus did not come to make enemies; He came to save, not judge. But there always came a point where He recognized error and spoke the truth. He would not let anyone slander Him and say that He was the same as a Satanist, a liar, a deceiver, a religious pawn or a lunatic. He confronted lies about who He was with the truth.

Not only this, but it might surprise many others who support the COEXIST message that Jesus is actually credited in more than one Gospel account with the words— “Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.” (Luke 12:51; Matthew 10:34)

Either these words were fabrications, as one might choose to believe, or they are telling us that Christ’s peace is supreme even to a peace that unites across religious spectrums. And if Christ’s peace is in fact superior to all, certainly this should be the peace reasoning people expend time and energy to promote.

Which leads me to Jesus’ claim— “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

Jesus is saying— If you want to find God and salvation for your souls, you must come through Him and Him alone.

Listen: When I agree with Jesus

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that He is the only way, I am also saying that everyone else who chooses a different pathway is wrong. It’s like saying—I’m right, and you’re wrong. It’s a little intimidating to say that to the rest of the people in the world who believe differently than I do. After all, can 4-billion people who disagree with [me] be all wrong? The answer is—Yes ... because truth is not determined by opinion polls or majority rule.

Is it possible that we are misinterpreting Jesus? Did He really mean what He said? Let’s ask one of his greatest spokesmen, Paul:

♦ “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)
♦ “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus ...” (1 Timothy 2:5)

Both of these passages clearly state that any religion, philosophy or creed that does not have Jesus Christ, as the mediator between man and God is wrong; and the adherents will not see salvation because they do not have His Spirit. That is exclusive and narrow ... as Jesus described the way to God.

Jesus said—“Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:14)

People take great offense at Jesus’ claims because they don’t like anyone telling them what to do or how to live. They value independence—free choice. They don’t like authority. They like to have options. A little bit of Christianity here—just the parts I like though—and a little bit of Islam there ... and top it all off with some Buddhism just to add a touch of spice.

Listen: It’s okay to be narrow-minded—when you are right. How would you feel about a fireman who in the middle of a blazing fire told you there was only one way to safely get out? What about a doctor who told you that there was a cure for your cancer that definitely would work, but there was only one way? Would you take it? Is that being narrow-minded?

Still people would rather take all the religions of the world, boil them down to their essential ingredients, find those things that we can all agree on and just concentrate on that stuff. That way, everyone can be right, and no one has to be wrong, and we can all feel really good about each other. After all, don’t all those differences lead to war and intolerance anyway? Sounds good, until you remember what Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me.”

Okay, fine; what if Jesus did say that? What gives Him the right to make that bold and arrogant claim?

Jesus and the men who wrote down the ‘Good News’—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—made some statements about His identity—both His human and divine nature. Humanly speaking, He was:

♦ Born from a woman (Luke 2:6,7)
♦ Went through the developmental stages of childhood (Luke 2:52)
♦ He got hungry and thirsty (Matthew 4:2; John 19:28)
♦ He got tired (Mark 4:38)
♦ He was sad (John 11:35)
♦ He got angry (John 2:13-17)
♦ His friends disappointed Him (Matthew 26:46-48)
♦ He bled and died (John 19:33-34)

The biographers of Jesus recorded details about His humanness to make it clear that Jesus was like us. The fact that Jesus was human means that He was able to go through everything that we face and so He is able to identify with us in our humanity. It means that we were important to Him—enough for Him to humble Himself and come down to our level. But His humanness (alone) doesn’t give Him the right to say that He is the only way to God. Let’s see what else is written about Him.

Aside from His ordinariness, Jesus from the point of His birth was also extraordinary:

♦ His birth was filled with signs and wonders (Matthew 1:18-25)
♦ He had great wisdom (Luke 2:41-49)
♦ He changed lives (Luke 19:1-8)
♦ He had supernatural knowledge (John 4:16-18)
♦ He confounded His enemies (Matthew 22:15-46)
♦ He considered Himself without sin (John 5:30-32; 7:18; 18:23)
♦ Those around Him considered Him sinless (John 10:31-33)

Okay, so maybe Jesus was more than just your average human being. Maybe He was special in a lot of ways. Still, we have a lot of extraordinary human beings in our human history—Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Houdini, Einstein, and Abraham Lincoln. But none of these people ever claimed to be the only way to God. We need something else about Jesus’ identity that would give us reason to accept this preposterous, bigoted, intolerant claim.

Well, Jesus and His followers claimed that He was more than just a human; more than just an extraordinary human. They claimed that He was divine—He was God. Listen to these things
that Jesus believed about Himself:

- He would judge the world at the end of time (Matthew 7:21-23; John 5:22)
- He should be honored as much as God (John 5:23)
- He gave eternal life to those who came to Him (John 5:21, 40)
- To know Him was to know God (John 8:19)
- To hate Him was to hate God (John 15:23)
- He could forgive sin (Mark 2:5, 10)
- He claimed titles exclusive to God (John 8:56-59)
- He claimed He and the Father were One (John 10:30)
- He had been with God in heaven and shared divine glory (John 17:5)
- He could hear and answer prayer (John 14:14)
- He was omnipresent (Matthew 28:20 compared with John 14:23)

The implication of Jesus actually being God (as He claimed to be) would be that all He said carries the authority of God. For those who are willing to accept Jesus’ claims to being God and accept His rule over their lives, they have reason for joy. Jesus made some great promises, and as God, He has the power to fulfill those promises. But for others who are faced with the reality that He just might be God, then it creates either fear or anger:

- Fear because they know that they have done some things that displease God, and it looks like they’re going to have to face judgment before Him.
- And anger because that means that Jesus has the right to tell them what to do.

So what are you to do with the claims of Jesus?

**Be Sure** – when you are confronted with the claims of other religions that there are alternate ways to God—that you are on the right and only pathway. Jesus validated everything that He ever claimed ... including His claim to have the only way to God.

**Be Thankful** – instead of complaining that there is only one way, be thankful that there is a way. God was never under any obligation to provide a way of salvation to anyone. He provided a way because of His grace and mercy.

**Be Loving** – when you are confronted with people who believe different than you do, don’t attack them and get all angry, obnoxious and loud. The Bible says that we are to answer with gentleness and respect those who differ with us. (1 Peter 3:15)

Christians are often accused of being hateful and intolerant by saying that Jesus is the only way. Other religions of the world teach their followers to kill and destroy anyone who does not believe as they do. Jesus taught His followers how to graciously react when rejected (in Mark 6). It is love that will keep us from becoming like them. And it is love that will convince people that Jesus is who He says He is and that His way is the right way.

**Be Talkative** – since Jesus is the only way, then we have a responsibility to tell. No, the world does not want to hear what we have to say, and the temptation is to just hide behind our church walls and let the world go to hell. But we, the ones who have the cure to the problems of the world, have a responsibility to be vocal about that cure. The way of Jesus is narrow in how you get to heaven, but He is broad in that He wants all men to go to heaven. “[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4)

Say the name of Jesus in public, however, in a way other than an obscenity, and stand back and watch the fireworks. This name is like a tiny detonator that triggers a nuclear warhead — articles will appear in the paper; reprimands will be posted; lawsuits will be filed by some civil liberties group. You will be told to keep His name to yourself; cloister it in your church; lock it in your prayer closet; close it between the covers of your Bible ... But for God’s sake, don’t voice it in the public square!

Only problem is:

- Jesus is God.
- Jesus alone brings salvation.
- All other gods are nothing.
- So speak His name aloud; shout it from the mountains. That’s not hate — it’s hope.

If Jesus is not the only way, then His death was a waste — a mistake. If Jesus is not the only way, then He is not a way at all ... because He claimed to be the only way. That makes Him either insane or a liar. Neither a crazy person nor a sinner can get you or me to heaven. But Jesus wasn’t crazy, and He wasn’t a liar. And His death was not a mistake. By crying on that cross, He provided the only way for you to receive forgiveness for your sins and a permanent home in heaven.

Jesus is alive (today). He wants a relationship with you. Will you submit yourself to the only way and find that it is the best way for all your needs to be met both now and for eternity? If so, then pray with me.
Dear Lord Jesus: I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins; and I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my personal Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Serving God and Country,
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The remaining Chaplain's articles for 2021 include:
May/Jun – “Evolution: By Him All Were Created”
Jul/Aug – “Socialism: The Right of Talents for Gain”
Sep/Oct – “Karma: Do Not be Deceived”
Nov/Dec – “Immigration: The Righteous Judge Rules”

Children's Ministry

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not onto your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5)

The classroom remains in the basement of the Chapel, but the DNR manages the building and due to the COVID restrictions, we are not allowed to occupy the classroom. I hold on to "maybe someday."

Our Chapel family is very fortunate—even though we have restrictions our Audio/Visual team broadcasts the worship services—and can be viewed on-line via Livestream at https://livestream.com/accounts/3709164.

You can also view Distance Learning Devotionals with age appropriate lessons for kids. Just click on the on the devotional you would like to view.

Since we cannot have “in-person” classes for children, Chaplain Ken took it upon himself to fill the void for children.

You see, God knows what each of us needs and He makes sure we get it. We just have to trust in the Lord, and not lean on our own understanding.

— Submitted by: Leslie Henschel, Children's Ministry Coordinator
GETTING TO KNOW...

SOJOURN TO INDIA

Chapel member Steve Zorn traveled to India for two weeks in late February, to visit the country where he was born and raised. The journey was something of a pilgrimage for Steve as he had not visited India in over 50-years! Other reasons for the visit were his desire to renew old acquaintances, visit his childhood home and hang out with former classmates. After 20-hours in the air, he landed in the city of Madurai in South India, and hired a car and driver to transport him to his hometown of Nagercoil. From there he explored places frequented by his family while a child including beaches on the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

India — is the second-most inhabited country of the world with a population of 1.3-billion people. Christianity, is India’s third largest religion after Hinduism and Islam and has approximately 28-million followers comprising 2.3% of the population. Christian missionaries have been active in India since the early 18th century and have played an important role in the development of the country and the introduction of a modern education system. Missionaries were also responsible for translating the Bible into many of the Indian languages including Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu.

In 1895, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) began mission work in India - sending 60-missionaries over the following decades to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and provide pastoral care and training to the local population. This outreach led to the formation of the Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) which today has approximately 115,000 baptized members. Steve’s parents served as missionaries for the LCMS for 25-years in Nagercoil, (1947-1972) where Reverend Herbert Zorn was a professor at Concordia Theological Seminary.

While in Nagercoil, Steve visited Bethania Mission for Kids — an organization started in 1987, by missionary friends to serve the needs of orphaned, abandoned and special needs children in South India. The program operates several programs including a daycare for children with cerebral palsy, after school centers and classes that teach textile skills to indigent women. Steve visited the daycare center and noted that the children were all under six years of age and eager to learn and play with one another. Without this daycare, the children would most likely be left unsupervised to care for themselves until their parents returned from work.

Steve also visited Shalom Home for Girls — a residence for school age girls that provides shelter, food, medical care and instruction in the Christian faith to girls who are abandoned, orphaned or unable to reside with their family. Steve was able to meet with the director of Shalom Home and address the 50 girls who reside at the home. He told them stories about growing up in India as a young boy and the girls responded by singing several Christian hymns for their visitor. What a blessing this program is for these young girls!

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Next, Steve traveled to Kodaikanal—a beautiful city located 200-miles north of Nagercoil in the Palani Hills at approximately 7,000 feet. It was in this setting that a boarding school was established by missionaries to educate their children. Steve attended this boarding school along with this two siblings for his primary and secondary education and it was in this environment that he learned to play golf, go hiking, sing and act in school plays. The Kodaikanal School has evolved into a well-respected International Baccalaureate Program that attracts students from all over the world. While visiting his alma mater, Steve was able to connect with the principal, a former teacher and other graduates. While this journey was personal in nature, it none-the-less reminds us of the diligent outreach performed by the many missionaries who ventured to India to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We owe these missionaries a debt of gratitude for their hard work and faithful witness. Steve returned to Minnesota on March 10th, after a series of long flights and is thankful for the blessing of safe travels and the opportunity to visit his homeland.

— Submitted by: Eva Zorn

Jesus gave this Great Commission—

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

(St. Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV)
Creation Corner

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

WHAT’S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT QUESTIONING THE SHAPE OF THE EARTH? (Part 2)

(Please re-read Part 1 in the Jan/Feb 2021 issue of The Snelling Spirit—archived on our website—before exploring Part 2)

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (Proverbs 18:13)

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called..." (1 Timothy 6:20)

Science: 1. "The comprehension or understanding of truth or facts by the mind." — Webster’s Dictionary, 1828

During the day of scientist, Michael Faraday, there was a dynamic search for knowledge using the scientific method, defined as observation, hypothesizing, experimenting and theorizing. Ah, but in classic science, where the goal is to discover Truth, a theory must be continually subject to re-examination. Without this open-ended process, science can be directed and controlled by governments and wealthy power brokers to further their own goals. It is not uncommon to hear rhetoric, these days, such as "The science is settled" or the "debate is over" or "all major scientists" believe this or that ... blah blah blah ... and always with a monstrous agenda lurking nearby. Alas, the once esteemed field of science has, over time morphed into "scientism", also referred to as "consensus science". The late and great perceptive writer Michael Crichton gives us his quote: "I regard consensus science as an extremely pernicious development that ought to be stopped cold in its tracks. Historically, the claim of consensus has been the first refuge of scoundrels; it is a way to avoid debate by claiming that the matter is already settled. Whenever you hear the consensus of scientists agrees on something or other, reach for your wallet, because you're being had. Let's be clear: the work of science has nothing whatever to do with consensus. Consensus is the business of politics. The greatest scientists in history are great precisely because they broke with the consensus. There is no such thing as consensus science. If it's consensus, it isn't science. If it's science, it isn't consensus. Period."

Today, the tv, radio, and newpaper medias are totally controlled and scripted, and only books and the internet remain as sources of truth, provided one is a cautious and skillful researcher, adept at weeding out the chaff. Free speech is also under attack by those who do not want Truth to come out, and today there is a wave of censorship infiltrating the internet as never before! Study grants from government are given only to those who tow the "Scientism" line. Peer review of studies keeps the prescribed science narrative at the forefront, so that any thinking done outside the box of "Scientism" is kept away in the shadows. We are now going to take a drive outside the walls of that restrictive box, and we'll venture (to borrow a phrase from God’s Word) down the narrow path. Please join me as we explore some Bible verses that, in the past, you and I just shelved, because it was all just beyond our understanding ... or too metaphoric for our palate at the time ... or just maybe ... because we have been programmed from birth to believe in only one theory of cosmology (the study of the universe). There are two ways to come to an acceptable truth —

1. We are either programmed by repetition (in place of proof) and controlled by the realization that everyone else buys into the same concept, and that anyone who dares venture outside that box of belief is put under immediate ridicule ... (this is, by the way, why the term "Conspiracy Theory" was rolled out – to make sure the main-line message is the only one taken seriously) or —

2. We undertake to research a subject thoroughly and do not stop until a solid sense of understanding comes about ... then we leave this formed theory open to be appended or amended at any time, in case, at some point, we discover that we dropped our guard and took a wrong turn in our research, or we allowed ourselves to accept as truth, a taise, and misleading concept. OK then, are you comfortable — is your coffee cup full? OK, let’s begin with a quote from an amazing scientist: "Nature is our kindest friend and best critic in experimental science if we only allow her intimations to fall unbiased on our minds." — Michael Faraday

As we proceed, all verses will be from the King James Version of the Bible (unless stated) — also referred to will be the 1st Book of Enoch, not an official book of the 66, but was found among the scriptures as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and contains quite descriptive, additional information for study, and is well worth the read. Also, a convention I use, to save paragraph spacing in a long article, will be used to denote a charge of thought. ( ) In the following sections, I will bring out for consideration and study, Biblical descriptions of our universe — known as heaven and earth, designed and created in six well-defined days following a point in time (and very possibly, marking the actual beginning of time itself) known as In The Beginning, as written in Genesis 1:1. Sometimes when researching scripture, it’s worth going to Biblehub.com and checking out the Hebrew or Greek word translations. I, myself learned about the importance of this from a very influential pastor in my life: Here is an example that he showed me: John 3:16 "For God so loved the world ... a person might just assume, and I’ve heard this many times: "He loved us SO MUCH that ... certainly true, but if you go to Strong’s Lexicon, and also Webster’s 1828, you find Thus, so, in this manner ... so now we might re-read it this way: For God so loved us, in this manner, that He gave ... or God thusly loved us (Continued ... on page ten)
that He gave... Is this a big difference? May be not, but I do feel that I have a more complete understanding of the translation. However... following the time of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler, let's say 400+ years ago, when a new cosmology, forced upon the world, began changing beliefs from what had been, not only the Biblical concept, but the almost universal belief, of virtually every civilization on earth: of a fixed, dome-covered, flat-plateaued earth where the sun, moon and stars were located within the covered sky— to a new concept of  a tilted, spinning, orbiting, globe earth which revolved around a very remote sun—the moon revolved around the earth, and the stars existed far away in "outer-space". Genesis 1:6—"And God said, Let there be a firmament (raqiya) in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters:" We also find here that the Hebrew word raqiya is translated to "an expanse" (used in several of the newer translations including NASB), where in the King James Version, we see the word "firmament" still used. (Expanse can be used to imply an open sky, beyond which "outer space" could still exist.) (You can see here, how present-day, accepted beliefs of science can creep into the scriptures, to try to explain away something that is not totally understood.) Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon still retained the original meaning for raqiya: extended surface, (solid) expanse (as if beaten out) 1 (flat) expanse (as if of ice... Ezekiel 1:26 (supporting "s'God's throne) 2 the vault of heaven, or 'firmament,' regarded by Hebrews as solid, and supporting 'waters' above it. Compare this description with the image of the Hebrew's concept of their world (below) and see why "expanse doesn't quite hack it. Other versions translate raqiya into dome, vault, horizon, canopy, or even... space.

THE FIRMAMENT IS THE KEY. The Bible continues in Genesis 1:7—"And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so." The firmament is in the midst of the waters... what? Let it divide the waters from the waters... Help me, Martha... the firmament is located somewhere, where for some reason, it needs to separate or divide, and possibly, then, support, a separate body of water above... from a different body of water below. Ok, I don't see all these bodies of water— I only see our familiar lakes and seas separated by land... then where is this "water above"? I read somewhere that the "waters above" is water vapor in the air (atmosphere) or a canopy of frozen ice surrounding our "globe", but I'm not going there. Well, let's take another verse: Psalm 19:1— "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth His handywork". "Handywork," to me is a description of something that has been hand-made, that the Maker has fashioned, and could be proud of. Confused yet? Job 37:18 asks a question: "Hast Thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?" Now it appears we are talking about something spread out above us defined as "the sky" and apparently is a strong, solid object, possibly such as a dome over a sports stadium, and made of something possibly translucent or transparent, since the description is... as a molten looking glass. (Here's the way I visualize the firmament— I imagine a huge glass bowl turned upside down over the flat surface of the earth.) Next Ezekiel 1:22-23 gives us— "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above." The terrible crystal composition described here is the Hebrew word "yare" that implies awe-inspiring. Then there is Psalm 148:4— "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens." I say this verse takes all the guesswork out of whether there is a body of water above the firmament, although I wish someone would show me where it exists on a spinning globe!! Revelation 4:6— "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal..."

Now let's go to Isaiah 40:22 and its complex description of the firmament: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." He sitteth upon the circle of the earth— He looks directly down on the circle that is the... (Continued ... on page eleven)
(Continued ... from page ten)

face of the earth (as a compass might inscribe a circle) (See image "Circle of the earth"). At this point, it might also be a good idea to refer to the ancient Hebrew’s concept of the earth (see image). (||) Genesis 7:11— "In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (How’s that for a precise description!) The windows of the firmament (the floodgates of the “waters above”) plus the fountains of the great deep (the “waters below”) were used to flood the world below during the great flood. Amos 9:6— “He that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is His name.” (the waters were poured out upon the face of the earth)... I’m not sure how you could possibly stretch this to mean the “face of a spinning globe.” Can a globe even have a face? (||) Genesis 1:16-17— “And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.” As you can see, in the image of the Hebrew cosmology, the greater light (our sun) is located in our sky, as is the lesser light (our moon). ... And I always wondered why God chose to have written: “He made the stars also...” It almost seems like an afterthought as in “Oh, and, by the way, He made the stars also”. What I now believe is: that this was done to emphatically tell us that the stars are completely different light structures from either the moon ... or... the sun! The sun is not a star... if ... you are to believe what is in scripture! The last thing I want to point out is that the lesser light (our moon) is in fact, a heavenly light and not some portland cement-dust-covered place where paper-mache-and-curtain-rod-constructed vehicles and "spacemen" can drive dung-buggies and walk around to leave ever-lasting footprints on ... And while we are on the subject of the sun and moon, the natures of sunlight and moonlight are significantly different from one another. Sunlight is a warm, sterilizing, preserving light and part of the photosynthesis process ... (fish and meat jerky can be dried and preserved in sunlight). Moonlight is a cold light and organic material will tend to putrefy under its effects. The temperature in the shade of the sun is always cooler than the temperature directly in sunlight, and we know this well, but ... the temperature of direct moonlight is always colder than the temperature in the shadow of moonlight. I proved this myself, using a high-quality digital laser thermometer, and found a real difference of 2 degrees F. I have seen reports of even 6 degrees or more difference, and I plan to repeat my experiment on a quiet, full moon evening in the future. Oh, “just one more thing”, as Columbo says ... those lights we see in the evening sky, known as Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and the rest of the Greek gods and goddesses, in fact are included in the Bible (certainly not by those names) but as stars... the Book of Enoch describes them as the wandering stars. Btw, the Bible also refers to angels as stars and stars as angels. (||) Where then is the earth? Isaiah. 66:1— “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?” So directly under the firmament of heaven is our created earth (where we live) and is described as God’s footstool. If I were to say the earth is under the whole heaven, that would describe, in just two words, where the earth sits. In fact, Scripture’s account of the great flood, paints just that word-picture for us, and for me, the image of a “snow-globe” being filled with water comes to mind: Genesis 7:19— “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.” They tell us the earth is spinning over 1000-mph at the equator and that the “magical force” known as gravity becomes the automatic solution to all sorts of physics problems, but that’s over Mach I, and logical reasoning tells me that any water on a spinning globe, at that speed, is going to collect by centrifugal force at the equator and go flying off into “outer space”! Ever spin a wet tennis ball and watch the water fly off? Hmmm. As you can see, the Biblical description is that of an enclosed world, where the upper boundary of our sky is defined by a strong, possibly transparent, possibly crystalline structure which is strong enough to support the “waters above” and it is also, the floor of heaven, where God’s throne sits. God, in fact told us where His throne is located, and even where the twenty-four elders sit, we just hav not been listening. Ezekiel 1:26— “And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.” The image (“sapphire blue”) is a match for the color of the sky “just sayin’...” Ours is a person God, who created us as individuals, with individually assigned gifts and talents ... and has positioned His throne, quite intimately, directly above the firmament— I’ve even wondered if God’s throne might be directly above the North Pole and thus, the North Star. That star alone, is fixed in place, in a position of distinction, since all the other stars revolve around it in a 24-hour clock-like fashion. It’s in the single, unique location that is central to everyone on earth. It’s referred to as the “guiding star”, and all compasses point there. Referring again to Isaiah 40:22— “the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers”; I love that description, because it reminds me, when I forget, that our heavenly Father is never farther away from us than the sky above. (But Hebrews 12:6-11 tells us that on the other hand of His fatherly love, we find discipline ... and, yes, He sees it all!) The enclosed earth is all there is.

There is no “space” beyond ... only the third heaven, where God’s throne is. The earth is the center of the universe. There was no “Big Bang” ... there was only a Word: The Word, who created it all. The uni-verse translates to “one verse”... and that verse is Genesis 1:1— “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. I don’t care what you saw on “Nova”! The phrase: "heaven and the earth" makes up God’s entire universe! Let me draw a conclusion that you may not have drawn: We’ve all been told that

(Continued ... on page twelve)
planets and moons formed over "billy-uns and billy-uns" of years by the action of heat and the magical attraction of "gravity" in the vacuum of "outer space", all of course, without the need for a Creator. But all that changes when you read the description of the firmament. That is one huge, designed, possibly crystalline, structure that spans from one end of the earth to the other! That is the work of a Creator God! No space accident constructed that awesome arch! I'm sorry about what you and I were told about the earth, sun, moon, stars, planets, the universe, the sky ... all the dazzling fancy computer-generated and photoshopped images of galaxies, nebulae, stars, planets, space stations, satellites, asteroids ... and Red Tesla sports cars orbiting in "outer space". That was all done to hide God from you. And, yes, the only Black Hole is NASA's budget of $62,000,000 every 24-hours! Do you think you could spend that much in your entire lifetime?

See you in Part 3.

— Submitted by: John Kruse

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April — Volunteer Month

In April, we will have a "recruiting station" ... where you can sign-up for a host of volunteer positions.

Your participation is critical to the success of our ministry!

An extensive list of volunteer positions will be provided for you to indicate those places you wish to render service ... one of the expectations of membership in the Chapel Foundation.

Persons will be on hand to answer your questions regarding the various opportunities to uphold the Chapel Foundation ... with your service.

— Your Executive Committee

The Church is full of willing people — Some are willing to work, and others are willing to let them.

For heaven's sake — What on earth are you doing?
Minnesota FoodShare

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave Me food ..."
(St. Matthew 25:35)

Please secure any of these items and deposit them on Sun, 7 Mar 2021 at the front curb of the Fort Snelling Veterans Memorial Chapel:

**Canned/Jar Food Items:** tuna, canned fish/meats, chili, beef stew, canned pasta products, Enfamil formula, fruits, juices, tomato sauces/paste, spaghetti sauces, peanut butter, jelly, cooking oil

**Boxed/Packaged Items:** cereals (hot & cold), powered milk, tuna/hamburger helper, macaroni, rice, pasta products, crackers, instant potatoes, pancake mix

**Hygiene Items:** toilet tissue, tooth paste/brushes, bar soap, paper towels, feminine products, facial tissues, shampoo, deodorant, shavers, shaving cream

**Baby Items:** disposable diapers (all sizes), formula (especially Enfamil with iron), baby wipes, baby powder, jar baby foods

Food shelves have access to discounted food that you don't. Cash donations feed more families. You can make your checks payable to "F.S.M.C.F." In turn, the Foundation will forward your contribution.

* Minnesota FoodShare is an interfaith collaboration, fighting hunger through community action.

— Your Fellowship Committee

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**Holy Week at the Chapel**

**Place an Easter Plant in the Chancel**

A special tradition at the Chapel is to adorn the altar area with beautiful plants on Easter Sunday. This tradition is made even more precious by the dedications which are made for each of the plants. It's a beautiful way to honor or remember your loved ones at this sacred and holy time of year.

You can select lilies and tulips (pink, purple, and yellow)
The cost is $13.00 each.

Plants making up the Easter Garden will be noted in the bulletin in memory of ... in honor of ... or to the glory of God. **Orders must be received by Sunday, 21 March.** Donors may take their plant after the worship service. The plants that remain will be delivered to the MN Veterans Home for their enjoyment. Bev Johnson will be taking orders beginning 14 February following worship.

— Your Worship Committee

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**Palm Sunday — Distribution of Palms**

28 March is Palm/Passion Sunday. At 11:00 a.m. each worshiper will receive palms to commemorate Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Chaplain Ken will present a timely sermon entitled, "Hail to the Chief" ... based on St. Luke 19:28-48. The special music will be Nancy Guertin.

— Your Worship Committee

**Good Friday — Holy Communion**

On Friday 2 April, we will have our Good Friday worship service at 2:00 p.m. Chaplain Ken will bring a message entitled, "Unveiling God's Heart" ... based on St. Mark 15:33-39. The special music will be Steve Zorn. At this worship service the invitation to commune at the Lord's Table is open to all who believe in the Lord Jesus for their salvation.

— Your Worship Committee

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**Easter Service**

On Sunday 4 April, our worship service will be held at 11:00 a.m. The special music will be the Wickman Duo. Chaplain Ken will bring a message entitled, "When Jesus Calls Your Name" ... based on St. John 20:1-18.

— Your Worship Committee
The Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel pipe organ was built in 1929 by the Kimball Organ Company of Chicago, Illinois. This company was founded by Wallace W. Kimball (1828-1904). His background was as a very astute salesman and businessman with no experience as a musician, carpenter, or organ builder. He was born in Rumford, Maine and lived in Boston, Massachusetts, and Decorah, Iowa, before moving to Chicago in 1857. Eventually, he bought and sold pianos and developed the unique idea of the installment payment plan. In 1880 he opened a reed organ factory that built over 400,000 instruments from 1880 to 1922. In 1888 he started manufacturing pianos. In 1890 Mr. Kimball hired F. W. Hedeland, an organ technician from St. Paul, Minnesota. Together they designed a small, totally self-contained pipe organ that could be shipped to small churches throughout the country. This design had all of the pipes and chests installed and glued into place at the factory, this needed a minimal installation time at the church. The organ company grew as did the size of the instruments. The first stationary instrument was built in 1894 with the last one being built in 1942. The organ shop was closed due to declining profits and the lack of materials due to the war effort.

The instrument at Fort Snelling is large cables connecting the keyboards and stop actions to the electrical relays and switching systems. This allows the use of borrowing or, better put, using one set of pipes (rank) at several different octaves and on all of the keyboards. This puts more stops on the same board and more flexibility to the instrument. On this instrument the only set of pipes available on all keyboards is the Liebich Gedeckt which has 97 pipes in the rank. Normal ranks only contain 61 pipes—one for each key on the keyboard.

The restoration of this instrument in 2004 required nearly complete removal of the instrument to the Rutz shop in Morristown, Minnesota. All of the pipes were cleaned, repaired as necessary, later returned to their place on the wind chest, tuned, and regulated to the original concepts of the Kimball Company in 1929. All old leathers and wiring were replaced with like materials. Split wood in the chests and pipes were repaired along with all of the leather in the pipe stopers. The console was completely dismantled, refinished, re-leathered and re-felted as in keeping with the original instrument. Many skins of leather, quarts of glue, 34,700 feet of wire (approximately equivalent to 0.56 miles), over 7,500 solder connections and a ton of elbow grease completed the project. The restoration was completed at a cost of $94,200.

In 2018 it was determined that further rebuilds and replacements were needed. This was made possible by memorials to the Chapel Foundation, the Historic Preservation Fund, and a major donation from AMVETS Post #1. The work was done in 2020 by Brian Sullivan of Obermeyer Organ Company of Burnsville, Minnesota at a cost of $77,000.

Our Organist, Dr. Desi Klempay, voluntarily served as the Consultant to this rebuild. He offers this compendium of the work done:

1. Replaced the original unreliable soldered connectors with a state of the arts solid state memory system.
2. Addition of an 8' Cornopean set of 61-pipes playable on all keyboards & pedal. This set continues as a 16' electronically produced sound as well. The Cornopean adds a rich and full brass like sound which was lacking in the organ.
3. Replaced the Great Diapason which was boisterous and unmusical at best with the Swell Diapason which was smaller in scale to the Great keyboard. It was revolved for a better blend. It became usable for a solo sound as well.
4. The made the Great div. Viola pipes superfluous, which was then moved to the Swell div. and when added to the other existing strings produces a rich string orchestra sound.
5. Replaced the anemic and barely audible 16' Gedeckt low octave with a used Moller Co. set of 12-pipes which produced a pleasant low bass sound. This also enhanced the sound of the original 32' Resultant sound, giving us a win-win situation.
6. Both the Harp and Chimes were rebuilt and are a beautiful pallet for our organ sound.
Combat ‘Cancel Culture’ with the Truth

History is clear: Empires that forget their founding ultimately collapse. At its core, the freedom and prosperity we enjoy in America are the consequences of individuals whose self-conscious acknowledgment of God, and their willingness to order and administer our constitutional republic consistent with the laws of nature and nature’s God.

Our heritage of faith and freedom is largely forgotten today or so distorted as to be unrecognizable. Add to this, the recent defying of statuary to many of these Godly people.

CD’s for Sale

CD’s of our Organist—Dr. Desi Klempay—on the Wooddale Church pipe organ—are available for purchase ($10 each) at the Chapel Foundation office—9031 Penn Ave So, Bloomington ... during office hours. Call ahead (952/888-1525) to confirm product and staff presence. Checks payable to “Desi Klempay.”

Christian Education

Join David Barton and Rick Green, Constitutional experts and advocates for the original intent of our founding documents, in this one-of-a-kind course on the meaning and purpose of the Constitution! You’ll go article-by-article through the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and learn about executive orders, recess appointments, the Electoral College, the powers of Congress and the President, freedom of religion, and much more. Shot on location in the amazing WallBuilders library of original documents and in Independence Hall (Philadelphia)—celebrating the 225th anniversary of the Constitution!

There will be an approximate 30-minute video followed by discussion. Each participant is suggested to purchase a $15 workbook which includes all the course notes, the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and its Amendments. You will not be disappointed with this lecture series.

Refer to your weekly worship bulletin for time and location of classes.
Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation
This is a non-denominational Christian church founded in 1967. We invite you to join us for worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. at this historic Chapel.

The Fort Snelling Veterans Memorial Chapel is a unique Minnesota memorial — a splendid monument to the patriotism, the moral earnestness and the convictions of the people of this state — a shrine to commemorate those who have died for their country. Weekly Sunday worship is sponsored by the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation and is not subsidized by the state.

For Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation information call the Foundation Office at (952) 888-1525, or write to the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation 9031 Penn Ave So Bloomington, MN 55431
or e-mail to info@fortsnellingmcf.org
or check our website at www.fortsnellingmcf.org

Chapel Foundation Staff:
Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr., Sr. Chaplain
Rev. Philip A. Winn, Jr., Associate Chaplain
Dr. Desiderius Klemay, Organist
Bev Johnson, Administrative Assistant
Carol Ngaard, Accounting Specialist
Eva Zorn, Musical Guest Coordinator

The Snelling Spirit Staff:
The Snelling Spirit is a bimonthly publication of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation. We welcome your input, your letters and your suggestions.

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<td>10:00 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Sermon: &quot;We Would See Jesus&quot; Music: John Kruse, Vocalist/Guitar</td>
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Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation

Office: 9031 Penn Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55431
Website: www.fortsnellingmcf.org

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<td>Sermon: “Unveiling God’s Heart”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting Specialist: Carol Nygaard — E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@fortsnellingmcf.org">info@fortsnellingmcf.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Music: Steve Zorn, Vocalist</td>
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<td>Administrative Assistant: Bev Johnson — E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@fortsnellingmcf.org">info@fortsnellingmcf.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical Guest Coordinator: Eva Zorn — E-mail: <a href="mailto:zorn@usfamily.net">zorn@usfamily.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4 Easter/Resurrection Sunday</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>8 3rd Anniversary of Chaplain Winn as Assoc Chaplain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:30 p.m. Finance Comm Mtg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: “When Jesus Calls Your Name”</td>
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<td>Music: Wickman Duo</td>
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<td><strong>3 Chaplain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11 2nd Sunday of Easter</strong></td>
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<td>**10 <strong>Chaplain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. Christian Education</td>
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<td><strong>9 Ladies Mtg.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: “A Personal Invitation”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Chad Shultis, Vocalist</td>
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<td><strong>9 Ken’s Personal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18 3rd Sunday of Easter</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>17 Personal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. Christian Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>16 Day</strong></td>
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<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<td><strong>15 Tax Day</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: “The Great Commission”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Singleton Street Band</td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>25 4th Sunday of Easter</strong></td>
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<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>24 Board of Directors Mtg.</strong></td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Christian Education</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m. Worship Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon: “Dead Man Walking”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music: Tamara Henschel, Flute</td>
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