



April 2023

Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. Are you in any way procrastinating believing the one thing that surpasses everything else? Plenty of people in the church are. God is giving you some signs. Please look carefully at them.

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3 Good Friday Signs Say That It Is Finished

By Pastor Don Ginkel

Matthew 27:51, 54, 59, 60, At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life... When the centurion and those with Him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and exclaimed, "Surely He was the Son of God!" Jesus has just died. God now speaks loudly. Three signs occur simultaneously the moment He died. Each sign is emphatic.



Sign # 1: The inner curtain, about four inches thick and measuring 60 x 30 feet, which hung between the Holy and Holy of Holies in the Temple, was suddenly torn in two. As if by an unseen hand it is ripped starting at the top. Suddenly the Holy of Holies is exposed. Absolute consternation must have occurred. This happened at 3:00, at about the time the priests were preparing the evening sacrifice. Only once a year the high priest alone could go behind this curtain on the Great Day of Atonement when he sprinkled blood on the mercy seat for the forgiveness of sins of the people. Once two young men went into the Holy of Holies. They were not authorized to do so. Do you know what happened to them? They were killed on the spot by God, instantly, right there in the Holy of Holies. When the curtain was ripped and the priests could look right into the Holy of Holies, what do you suppose they thought? "We're going to die!" What was God saying? He was saying that all these Old Testament functions were finished because Jesus, the great High Priest, had come and entered the Holy of Holies with His atoning blood.

Sign # 2: The earthquake and the breaking of huge stones indicate the presence and power of God, a God of grace for those who believe and a God of judgment for unbelievers.

Sign # 3: The tombs broke open and the bodies of many believers arose and appeared in Jerusalem. Matthew leaves the impression that they were raised the moment Jesus died. This sign said that Jesus' death conquered death. Those raised from the dead offered proof of this conclusion: "Surely He was the Son of God!" The Jewish church leaders said Jesus was a devil. Here we have pagan Roman soldiers with no religious learning and what do they say of Jesus? "SURELY He was the Son of God."

How strange that many within the church were going straight to hell, and some

outside the church were going straight to heaven. If the soldiers, with as little as they knew about Scripture, could come to this conclusion, then today, after all we've been through from Scripture for this long a time, there is no reason in heaven or earth you cannot say in your heart of hearts, "Jesus, You are God's Son. You are MY Savior."

Won't you please say that right now? **it is not enough to call Him God's Son. You must call Him your Savior.** You will be without excuse if you do not believe in Christ. What would your excuse be? Can you say, "Oh, I don't know." My friend, you know! You've been told - in the clearest of terms. You know much more than the centurion ever knew. What will be your excuse in the hour of your death and on the the day of judgment if you do not confess Him as Your Savior and honor Him? My friend, you will have none. Please take care of this now. If you have done so, great! Hallelujah! Now pass these signs on to a friend.

Stack of Stuff

For Easter Sunday or Easter Week

A free Easter Bible study on 1 Corinthians 15:12-28. Brief commentary and discussion questions by Pastor Don. Just click [\[Bible Study\]](#).

Begin planning now

to make worship on the first Sunday after Easter a "smashing success." With no planning, it could be the "same old same old."

There are

many reasons for having Sunday School during the summer months. One of them is this: Parents of children who do not attend summer Sunday School have a tendency to skip going to church themselves. We are strong proponents for Sunday School all year long.

Say it a lot and really mean it:

"Thank you!" and "Good job!"

Update your church's website with Easter information

Most newcomers will check out your church's website before they walk through your doors. Post and highlight your Easter service times online as early as possible.

What is the National Debt

for each American? \$94,000 and climbing! How in the world will we ever pay that debt off? The future is not bright. Pity our children and grandchildren who will "pay the price," and the price is staggering. Pray God that He will give us a modern day "Moses" to lead us out of the "Egyptian mess" that we're in. Shame on our politicians! Shame on our people who keep asking for more and more freebies. Enough already!

Augustine rightly observed:

"Whatever I love is my god."

Follow up with Easter guests

This final step is of utmost importance and may require a special team with even more focus than your church's usual guest follow-up. Have a plan to follow up with these Easter guests. It's also a good idea to plan an adult membership class a week or two after Easter.

Jim Elliot, martyred missionary (think his statement through):

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Harry and Myra Stolle

moved from Iowa to a new community in Denver. The first thing they did on Sunday morning to visit the closest LCMS church. No one spoke a word to them when they entered and when they left except the pastor at the door. "Just passing through?" asked the pastor, and Harry responded, "Yes, just passing through."

To the first pastor who emails us

we'll send a free digital Bible study on Revelation by Pastor Don. 106 pages. Includes a Leader's Guide. There are 22 Lessons, one for each Chapter of Revelation. Features (1) A hymn which ties in with the Lesson. (2) An opening paragraph to introduce the Lesson. (3) Verse-on-verse study of the text. (4) 202 discussion questions to better understand and apply the text. (5) 66 application points for daily living. A \$19.95 value. Just **email** us and ask for #372.

A good wife

laughs at her husbands jokes - not because they are clever, but because she is.

How am I loving others?

That might seem like a simple and broad question. However, if we define love as putting others before ourselves and freely sacrificing our own resources for the sake of others, it is worth asking. This helps us live a life that is not primarily about our own advantage, progress and self-preservation. Ask yourself, "Have I taken time recently to meet the needs of others even though it comes at a cost to me?"

Special Paragraphs



De-Escalate the Heat

Don't allow yourself to be provoked; instead, do all you can to lower the division-causing conflict. Ask questions. Find agreement. Get on common ground. Insist on conversation over debate. The nature of debate carries with it a competition in which someone wins, and someone loses. Debate requires someone to be right and someone to be wrong. Avoid that at all costs. Instead, say: "I'd love to have a conversation with you, but if you want a heated debate where one of us loses, and one wins, I'm going to pass." My

willingness to walk away from an unproductive argument is not fear of conflict; it's about my passion for being productive and redemptive.

Regular training

Many church leaders hand new group leaders a list of names and nothing more. They assumed small group leaders knew how to lead a Bible study group. Others handed group leaders the curriculum and assumed that, by simply reading the material, they'd figure out how to lead a group. Let's not make that assumption. Without training, we default to teaching the way we've seen others teach—and that's often nothing more than a monotonous lecture. Training can help group leaders discover the best ways to use the material to engage people in effective Bible study.

This training should be periodic and regular. A periodic refresher course is good for all of us, regardless of what field we're in. And a quarterly or annual training event can help teachers stay fresh and even motivated. Many group leaders think they don't need training. But experience has taught me that those who need training the most are often the ones who don't think they need it. - Lynn Pryor

The 5 "R"s to Remembering Names of Everybody You Meet

By Brandon Hilgemann

You walk into the hall after church. A young man bounces up to you and starts talking like he has known you forever. He looks familiar, but you can't remember his name to save your life. Sound familiar? Remembering names is hard! If half the people in your church knew your dirty little secret – that you don't know their name – they would be deeply offended. The bigger the church, the harder this gets.

Remembering a person's name is important. You never know how such a small detail might have a profound impact on someone's life.

I once talked to a girl about her testimony. When she was in high school, she attended a church youth group with her friend once. It was OK, but she didn't bother coming back. However, a while later her friend invited her back and she reluctantly agreed to go. When she walked into the church, the youth pastor said hello and used her name. She was so shocked that he cared enough about her to actually remember her name that she came back every week. Eventually she gave her life to Christ. You may try to excuse yourself saying, "I'm not good at remembering names." But I don't buy that.

Name memory is not a spiritual gift or some kind of genetic trait you inherit. People who are good at remembering names simply try harder and place a higher value on remembering names than others.

The good news is that you don't have to be a genius. Everyone can remember names if they work at it. Most of us just don't know how. Here is a system I have used to help myself remember names better. **Here Are the Five R's to Remembering Names:** [\[read more\]](#)



Teen Girls in Crisis

By James Emery White

Nearly one in three high school girls have considered suicide, reflecting a 60% rise in the past decade. Nearly 15% have been forced to have sex. About six in 10 girls were so consistently sad or hopeless they stepped away from regular activities.

Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, notes that part of the problem is that digital media has displaced the face-to-face time teens once had with friends, and that teens often don't get enough sleep. In addition to those influences are the hours teens spend scrolling through social media. For girls, she said, this often means "comparing your body and your life to others and feeling that you come up wanting." While noting that not everything people do on smartphones is problematic, Twenge says that "social media in general and Internet use show the strongest correlations with depression."

What may be most alarming among the data collected by the CDC was the rise of suicidal thoughts among teen girls—24% of teen girls have planned a suicide while 13% have attempted. That is almost twice the rate for boys. Most teens would say that adults should listen to them more and believe what they say more, instead of dismissing their concerns as mere "drama." In short, take what they are going through seriously.

But I would add another that would be the most important of all: Introduce your child to a vibrant faith in the living God. Note how today's parents place a ridiculously low priority on their children embracing their faith. Which, of course, speaks volumes about the priority those parents place on their faith.

Does it even enter her mind to pray? To seek out Christian support? Does she even have a Christian community of peers? Does she know to rely on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit coursing through her spiritual veins to gain peace beyond all understanding in the face of the world's torments? Is her self-esteem grounded in how God views her?

Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

By Pastor Don

Idea # 1: In my efforts to reach unbelievers with the Gospel of Jesus, I have some times used the "What then?" question. For example, when speaking to a high school young man, I would ask what his plans are for he future. "Go to college." What then? "Get a good job." What then? "Get married and have a family." What

then? "I suppose grow old and retire." What then? "That's the end of me" or "I don't know." Jim, I've got some really Good News for you. Can I share it with you? Then, in your own words, share Jesus with him.



Idea # 2: Before and after weddings and funerals, make it a point to chat with all non-members. If they live in the area and do not have a church, jot their name down with a few details on a little card you will keep in your shirt pocket. The next day hunt that name and address down and place the info on a prospect card or prospect list, and then go and visit them. **Two very important keys to a growing church are to (1) have this list grow and (2) then for you to go visit them.** I cannot count the number of people who joined the church and went on to become very active Christians.

Ideas for Easter Sunday

Encourage members to bring their Easter lilies to church before worship to adorn the chancel area. They should tuck a piece of paper inside with their name on it.

For churches that feel comfortable with it, have a traditional egg hunt. Plastic ones work fine - with candy inside. Last year a church in Michigan had over 200 children participate. Many of them came to Sunday School that Sunday.

Invite your community to a free pancake breakfast Easter Sunday morning put on by the men. Serve pancakes, sausage, eggs, milk, juice, coffee and tea. Put an ad in your local paper. Encourage each family to bring an unchurched family to breakfast and then worship.

Be sure the Easter message clearly tells how those without saving faith may come to faith then and there. "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call on Him while He is near" (Is. 55:6). For some worshipers this will be the last Easter service they will attend. Pretty sobering.

Develop a plan to contact all Easter Sunday visitors in person or by phone. A third option is to mail the *"Thank You For Visiting Us in Worship"* card, #404, \$16.95 per dozen.

Remember the Woman



When yo feel all out of step with life,
When you feel totally unacceptable,
Remember the woman, Mary Magdalene,
She had two things going for her.

She came to Jesus and
Presented herself, a sinner.
He presented Himself, the Savior -
"Old things have passed away,
Behold all things become new!"

When you feel all out of step with life,
When you feel totally unacceptable,
Remember the woman, Mary Magdalene.
Christ can do the same for you!

General Qualifications & Duties for Church Secretary

These are just general thoughts which may or may not apply to all congregations. We should always remember to show her our appreciation. She is our sister in Christ and deserves the greatest respect.

GENERAL

- Must be a Christian and represent not only our church, but Jesus Christ Himself and demonstrate a real love and concern for all people.
- Must be pleasant, discreet, tactful, and capable of honoring confidential communications.
- Must have general knowledge of all office equipment and supplies and a willingness to further their training.
- Must possess good telephone and communication skills.
- Must be able to deal with various types of personalities, both on the phone and in person, in a professional manner.
- Perform general office work, under the supervision of the Pastor and cooperation with other staff members.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Keep church staff informed of member's needs such as deaths, illness and other crises.
- Answer the phone and screen calls for staff per their direction.
- Perform general office work; maintain supplies and various files; keep records and compile these into periodic or occasional reports. Accuracy and attention to detail is a must.
- File sermons, reports, correspondence and other assigned materials.
- Exercise tact, courtesy, confidentiality and diplomacy in receiving callers, in person or by telephone; keep calendar of appointments.
- Transcribe dictation; type letters or other documents as needed; use word processing equipment as required.
- Edit and prepare weekly bulletins and other documents as requested.
- Make outgoing calls such as ordering materials or supplies; pick up supplies as needed.
- Prepare and maintain mailing lists and church roster.
- Photocopy documents and assemble as needed.
- Do routine letters and documents as needed/requested.
- Keep accurate church records, (e.g. church members, prospects, calendar, etc).
- Scheduling and following church policy regarding building usage and key checkout.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- At least a high school diploma, some college preferred.
- Experience with Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and ability to work with graphics.
- Basic accounting/bookkeeping procedures and good organizational skills

5 Options to Recreate the Church Property

By Desmond Barrett

As you wander around the campus, the echoes of what the church used to be speaks to your soul. Where families and children filled the halls, today, you hear the shuffling of feet from the current members, a reminder of what has changed throughout the decades. The church building and property may be too large for your current needs, and you may wonder what the church should do. Here are five options that I would encourage you and your church leadership team to review.

Option 1: Do Nothing.

Change is difficult in the most desirable circumstances. But change in a low season is almost impossible without a robust and determined group of leaders who want to see the church live again. If a church chooses to stay stagnant and waits on someone to show up

without doing their part, then nothing will happen. Nothing plus nothing equals, well, nothing. When church leadership does nothing, nothing happens. When the church's culture is nothing, God rewards the church with nothing. Over time, a nothing mindset will slowly destroy the church until nothing is left. [\[read more\]](#)

Mistakes of The Young Pastor

Most people grant young pastors a certain amount of slack. "Well, he's young." "He'll learn." "Let's give him time."

Example 1: One young pastor criticized a church member to another one, not realizing they were cousins.

Example 2: Missing a funeral service

Example 3: Asking a women: "When is your baby due?" when none was expected.

Refusing God's Help

By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)

This is why people are condemned: The light came into the world. Yet, people loved the dark rather than the light because their actions were evil.

John 3:19

To us, God may appear to be angry. He seems unjust, harsh, and a stern judge. But God is saying here, "Now then, I will cancel the charges against you. You will no longer have to mourn. To be sure, you have sinned and earned the judgment of God. But your sin will be pardoned. The death penalty will be removed. I will no longer remember the sinfulness of the world - the sin in which people were born and in which they have lived. Everything is settled. I will no longer look at your sin. Simply believe in My Son."

What's missing? Why does judgment still hang over us if the Son has removed our sins? This judgment remains because people reject Christ, the Son of God..

Suppose a physician were treating a sick person whom he definitely knew he could help. Suppose he promised to get rid of his patient's pain. The physician suggests a remedy to get rid of his patient's illness or antidote to counteract the poison his patient has ingested. Suppose further than the sick person knew without a doubt that the physician was capable of helping him. In spite of all this the patient says, "Get out of here. I don't need your advice. You're not a physician. You're a fraud. I'm not sick. I didn't eat any poison. And besides, it probably won't hurt me." Then what if the patient tried to choke and even kill his doctor? Wouldn't you say that person was not only sick but also stark raving mad? The spiritual madness of refusing the help of God's Son wants to give us is ten times worse than this.

**The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side the Savior He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need His power is displayed**

**To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome
Yet not I but through Christ in me**



Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Just listen or sing along

Click [Risen](#)

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