



The people of the United Methodist Church

E-MESSENGER

*Open hearts
Open minds
Open doors*

Saint Luke United Methodist Church

Volume 2025, Number 06

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Available at: stlukeumchaltomcity.org



What is Good About Good Friday?

I must have been around 12 or 14 years old when I first pondered the question: What is “good” about Good Friday? Life is filled with inquiries—at least mine is. Nowadays, my questions often revolve around mundane matters, like “How did those spots end up on my shirt or necktie?” This is something any man over sixty-five can relate to.

Yet, even after more than sixty years, the deeper and more profound theological issue concerning the goodness of Good Friday still resonates within me and stirs my spirit. I don’t possess the definitive answer that some of my friends claim to have. Explaining the soup stains on my necktie is a much simpler task.

Some more secular friends ask, “Why emphasize and focus on the cross? Isn’t there a more peaceful, less violent symbol?” Instead of answering, I think about the modern-day burdens people carry. I’ve been with families grappling with the aftermath of painful deaths, murders, rapes, or drownings. We’re faced with harsh realities like starvation, war, captivity, and financial hardship. Abuse and discrimination are crosses of different sort, represent different forms of suffering. Sin is interwoven into our human experience, and evil lurks all around us. Despite our wishes for something less brutal and more comforting, we cannot escape the existence of violence and death.

I reflect on historical theories of atonement, which present Jesus’s death as a Ransom, Substitute (suffering for others), Penal (suffering instead of others), Example, and Victor. Today, these theories are often interpreted through an individualistic lens, resembling a quid pro quo arrangement—Jesus made a sacrifice, and in return, we receive a reward. This transactional theology seems deeply rooted in St. Paul’s writings (see 1 Corinthians 15 or 2 Corinthians 5). It was my Systematic Theology professor, Charles Woods, who urged me to expand my thinking. He assigned me a word study on “atonement,” which means either redemption or ransom (as noted in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28). “What’s the context? Who benefits from this ransom, and why? How does it fit into the larger Biblical narrative?” he asked. What does “ransom” imply regarding justice? Could it be more than just an individual transaction? What if it embodies transformation for God’s entire creation? What if it extends beyond personal salvation to encompass ALL of humanity and the entirety of Creation?

Walter Brueggemann proposes that we refer to the execution of Jesus rather than simply his crucifixion. He contends that ALL THINGS are potentially redeemable: corrupt institutions, the brutality of empires, and the degradation of creation itself. Brueggemann highlights that

God’s purposes, reflected in the life of Jesus, embody prophetic imagination. He speaks of an alternative world that God has promised is actively bringing into existence before our eyes.

For me, amidst the food stains on my shirt, my spirit finds greater significance in these questions. This is the GOOD in Good Friday—God’s promise unveiled for every person and all of creation, if only we have the vision to recognize it and the determination to engage with it.

Our call is not to believe we hold a final word or permanent design as to what God is about. At our best we point the way, catch a glimpse of something better, and share what we have seen with others. We offer our best, our highest aspirations, mixed in with our frailties, our vulnerabilities. How then shall we proceed? In the places we live and work? In California, In Louisiana? In Paris, In Texas? In Gaza, In Thailand, In Myanmar? In The USA and in The World? My prayer is that you, that we, will practice our Easter prerogatives and that living our lives in light of resurrection will become routine. May it be our habit, our nod to that which is indeed eternal.

In Christian love and grace, Mel



Lenten & Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday

April 13 • 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Baptism of Shayna Wells
Confirmation Class of 2025

Maundy Thursday Worship Service

April 17 • 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday Worship Service

April 18 • 6:30 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt

April 19 • 10:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday

April 20 • 10:30 a.m. Worship Service



Saturday, April 19 • 10:00 a.m.
Fellowship Hall

Our children and their parents are invited to our annual Easter Egg Hunt and to have the opportunity to take photos with the Easter Bunny.



Palm Sunday, April 13

On Palm Sunday the children will be processing down the church aisle waving their palms and then later they will be singing during our worship service. Join us for this special day during the season of Lent.



Ione Louise "Lou" Braznell Coursey
January 4, 1932—March 26, 2025

Visitation, Celebration of Life & Burial:
April 3, 2025

Joe R. Crawford

August 7, 1925—April 5, 2025
(Arrangements are pending)

Please keep the families of Lou and Joe
in your thoughts and prayers.



**Wednesday Morning Prayer Group &
Bible Study**

April 16, 2025

Prayer Group † 9:30 a.m. • Bible Study † 10:00 a.m.
Book of Exodus • Fellowship Hall
We invite you to join us.



**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS
WEEK...**

Continued Prayer Concerns: Jeanne Anne Pharis; French Congregation & the people of the Congo; Pat Farmer; Jack & Jerrie Lucko; Betty Holshouser; Scott Paris; Barbara Jones; Charles & Pat Hooper; Melissa Lechler & her son, Lucas; Christin Osborn; Darren Isbell; Ed Baker; Sandra Mason; Mel & Susan Bishara's family in Nazareth and their nephew, Jimmy; Bob Watkins & family; David Stapp; George & Karen Angle's daughter, Sarah & daughter-in-law, Kristine; Roy & Joan Hudson's son, Richard; Ann Kiker; Barbara Provenzano; sister, Lynn; Lydia Acosta & her husband; Jean P. Isbell; Peggy Fallin; Ruby Lane's nephew, Dan Reynolds; Mary Steward; Mel & Susan's friend, Lisa Hart; Burt Moore; Anita McCullar; Doris Crocker; Bonnie Richards; Betty Longeway; Kaylan & Devin Jones with the loss of their daughter & sister; Cathy & Art Gordon & family with the loss of Lou Coursey; Dayna Cox's son, Brennan; Buddy & DeeDee Hill's grandsons; Milo & Levi; Roy Hudson

This Week's Concerns: Art Gordon; George Angle; Roberta Reeves; Michael & Claudia Turner; Bill Henderson; family of Joe Crawford; Beverly Bradley's grandsons; those affected by the earthquake in Myanmar and southeast Asia; those affected by the fires in California; those affected by Hurricane Helene & Milton; the people of the Nazareth, Israel, Gaza, Lebanon & Syria; those affected by flooding; wildfires; isolation & loneliness; gun violence each day in our country; the people of Ukraine & the world; prayers for our nation

Our Military: Ryan Kelly Hampton; Kyle Johnson; Krystal Calvert; Evan Hill; Matt Miller; Nathaniel Hill; Alex Sullivan-Green; Harrison Lenox; Junior Chowe



**Easter Sunday Flower
Cross**

On Easter Sunday, April 20,
we will continue our annual
tradition of having the Flower
Cross in the sanctuary for the
celebration of Easter.

Please bring your flowers,
whether from your own garden
or purchased to the narthex
by 9:00 a.m. and the cross will
be ready for our 10:30 a.m.
worship service.

Thank you in advance for
participating.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

EMMANUEL CLASS:

We had ten in attendance last Sunday. Prayer concerns: Beverly Bradley, Roberta Reeves, family of Joe Crawford.

Mary Ross

GENESIS CLASS:

We had a nice crowded table with 13 and plenty of discussion. Thank you George for all the research you do above and beyond. Next week we'll start chapter 13. Read it so we can discuss it. George will be out. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Cathy and Art in the loss of Cathy's mother, Lou; the Crawford family with the loss of Joe; George is having a procedure on his eye; Linda's friend and her husband; and Roberta Reeves recovering from a fall. LNO is Thursday, April 10 at 4:30 p.m. at Hoffbrau's. Come when you can get there.

Doughnuts:

April 13 - Dayna Cox

April 20 - Easter Brunch

April 27 - Amy West

Y'all have a safe and blessed week and we'll see ya

Thursday and/or Sunday. *Anita Bookout*

UPPER ROOM CLASS:

Greetings from the Upper Room. We had twelve in attendance. A big thank you to Gail for our delicious refreshments. Joys: Ann and Virgil's trip to Fredericksburg, and the celebration of their anniversary, (Ann brought everyone back a bluebonnet seed packet. Thank you, Ann.) Maya's joy, Sharon's granddaughter is having twins (one of each), and her niece doesn't have to go to Turkey. The Chapman family enjoyed the beautiful wedding of Evan Chapman and his bride Emily. Our prayer concerns are for the flood and tornado victims, Rose Mascari, Byron Lechler and Bonnie Richards. Gail delivered our devotion from the book *Manna in the Morning*. She first read "Sin is Popular" and then "How to Avoid Discouragement." Thank you, Gail. They fit into our lesson well.

Resale Shop: \$233

Devotion/Refreshments: Gloria and Darryl

Lesson: "Living as Salt and Light in the World"

Matthew 5:13-16, Philippians 2:15-16, Colossians 4:5-6, 1 Peter 2:9, John 8:12, Ephesians 5:8-9

Blessings during the week, Gloria



The next *E-Messenger* Newsletter will be published **April 23** and all submissions need to be in the church office by **April 21**. Thank you!



*Article by Alvin Eclavea,
Youth Director*

Subject: Continuing the Transformation & Exciting Opportunities Ahead for St. Luke UMC Youth!

Hello St. Luke Family,

We're thrilled with the progress we've made updating our youth group room over the past couple of weeks! It's truly becoming a more inviting and functional space for our young people.

However, the transformation isn't quite complete, and we need your generous support to help us furnish and equip it fully. We are currently seeking donations of items such as lamps, cozy blankets, comfortable pillows, and smaller furniture pieces to make the room feel more like home. Additionally, if you have any used electronics in good working condition, like TVs or video game consoles, that you'd be willing to donate, those would be fantastic additions!

If you have any of these items you'd like to contribute, please reach out to me directly so we can coordinate a convenient drop-off or pick-up time. Your contributions will directly impact the comfort and enjoyment of our youth.

Looking ahead, we have some wonderful opportunities for our youth to get involved:

- **Midwest Food Bank Service Project:** We have a valuable opportunity to serve our wider community on **Saturday, April 13 at 2:00 PM** at the **Midwest Food Bank, located at 6741 Midway Rd, Haltom City, Texas**. We'll be helping to build pallets of food for families in need in our area. **If your youth plans to attend this service project, please reach out to me as soon as possible so I can provide an accurate headcount to the organizers.**

- **Next Youth Group Meeting:** Our next regular youth group meeting will be on **Tuesday, April 23 at 6:00 PM**. I'm hoping to have more exciting updates to share about upcoming service projects, potentially in collaboration with other United Methodist youth groups in the area!

There are so many ways for our youth to connect, serve, and grow together. We are incredibly thankful for the continued support of our St. Luke congregation as we work to create a thriving youth ministry.

In gratitude, Alvin Eclavea



The youth will meet again on **April 23**.

The youth meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month.



**Second Chance Resale Shop
Yard Sale**

May 17, 2025 • 10 a.m.—3 p.m.



St. Luke United Methodist Church
3200 Denton Highway
Haltom City, TX 76117
Open hearts, open minds, open doors

The *E-Messenger* newsletter is published bi-weekly online. Deadline for submission of articles is 9:00 a.m. Monday. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space.

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Sunday Services: Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.

In-person and Online Worship • 10:30 a.m.

French Worship Service • 2:00 p.m.

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT:
www.stlukeumchaltomcity.org

Faith & Fellowship



Sunday, April 13, 2025

Palm Sunday

9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service
2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

Monday, April 14, 2025

No Activities

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

No Activities

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

9:30 a.m. Prayer Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
6:00 p.m. French Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 17, 2025

9:00 a.m. UMM Breakfast—Bluebonnet Café
6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Worship Service

Friday, April 18, 2025

10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop
6:30 p.m. Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Saturday, April 19, 2025

10:00 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt
10:00 a.m. Second Chance Resale Shop

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service
2:00 p.m. French Worship Service

Monday, April 21, 2025

9:00 a.m. Newsletter Submission DEADLINE

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

No Activities

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

9:30 a.m. Prayer Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
6:00 Youth Activities
6:00 p.m. French Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal



*Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for
In-Person Worship or Online Worship
via our Facebook page: SLUMC—Haltom City*

**Sunday, April 13, 2025 • 10:30 a.m.
Palm Sunday
Sunday School • 9:15 a.m.**

Weekly Attendance • March 19

Prayer Group—5
Bible Study—15
Youth—0
French Bible Study—9
UMM Breakfast • March 20—10

Sunday, March 23

Sunday School—65
In-Person Worship—66
Online Worship—272
French Sunday School—12
French Worship Service—20

Weekly Attendance • March 26

Prayer Group—5
Bible Study—14
Youth—8
French Bible Study—7
UMM Breakfast • March 27—9

Sunday, March 30

Sunday School—63
In-Person Worship—66
Online Worship—359
French Sunday School—12
French Worship Service—35

Weekly Attendance • April 2

Prayer Group—5
Bible Study—14
Youth—0
French Bible Study—8
UMM Breakfast • April 3—0

Sunday, April 6

Sunday School—54
In-Person Worship—69
Online Worship—265
French Sunday School—10
French Worship Service—53