



April 2025

## *Hosanna in the Highest!*

### **Palm Sunday, April 13**

*All are welcome* to join God's family for the start of Holy Week. We will be celebrating Communion on this Sunday instead of Easter Sunday this year.

Dish-to-Pass Luncheon will follow Church.

## *He Is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!*

### **Easter Sunrise Service, April 20**

Easter Sunrise Service is scheduled for 6:30 a.m., outdoors by the Cross, weather permitting, followed by light refreshments in the Fellowship Hall. *All are welcome!*

### **Regular Easter Service, April 20**

There will be no Berean Class Easter Sunday. Regular Easter Church Service will be held at 10:30 a.m. *All are welcome!*



The Resurrection of Christ by Ron DiCianni

## **LEPC Rummage Sale - April 4 and 5, 2025**

*There's still time to clean out your closets and cupboards and donate those goodies to the LEPC Rummage Sale!* Please place donations in the Fellowship Hall behind the large dividers.

Volunteers are needed to help bring rummage sale items up from the basement on March 27th, at 6:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed to unpack boxes and put things on tables during the days March 28, 29, 31, and April 1, 2. Usually someone is at the church from 9-4 those days. Volunteers are needed the actual days of the sale, from 9-5, Friday 4/4 and 9-11 on Saturday 4/5. Don't go away yet, at 11, we will box up the leftover items to donate elsewhere. Any hours you can offer are appreciated. See Carol Griffen to sign up.

Carol Griffen (cbgriffen@yahoo.com)



## **NITE LITE Gospel House**

11 Griswold St. • Avoca, NY 14809

### **Friday, April 11th Musical Concert with The Millers - Southern Gospel Trio**

Doors open at 6:15 PM,  
all concerts start at 7 PM.  
A Love Offering will be taken.  
The Snack Shop has coffee, tea,  
sodas & Fresh Baked Goods  
available for a donation.

*Organized by  
Tim and Bernadette Negus,  
Missionaries that LEPC support.*



**Pastor David Missel**

585-658-1197 Residence  
djmguided1947@gmail.com  
585-382-3311 Church

*It is our desire to assist anyone who is seeking help, if possible, whether it be spiritual or otherwise. Please contact Pastor David or any Session Elder if you would like us to be of help.*

**When Pastor David is unavailable:**

*Pastor David is presently scheduling Fridays as his day off so matters of less urgency could be left on the church office answering device, or call one of the Ruling Elders:*

- George Briggs 585-382-3038
- Patty Gregg 585-245-1311
- Carol Griffen 585-382-3681
- Shirley Matthews 585-382-3171
- Cathy Mlyniec 585-322-6669
- Leo Richardson 585-382-3153  
*(Clerk of Session)*

**Other Contacts**

**LEPC website:**

www.seekinggodtogether.com

**LEPC Email Address:**

grichardson001@rochester.rr.com

**LEPC Food Pantry:**

(by appointment only)  
585-245-3448

**Sunshine Person:**

Cathy Mlyniec  
cmlyniec@gmail.com

**The Cat's Best Gift**

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or stow away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Matthew 6:25-26 (NIV)*

A kindhearted woman who used to work at my dog's vet now runs a rescue organization for dogs and cats. Several weeks ago, she posted a plea on social media. An 18-year-old cat who calls the rescue his home is very attached to a particular bunny toy that he has had for many years. Unfortunately, over time the toy wore out. The woman at the rescue asked if anyone had this years-old toy shoved in an old toy bin, but nothing came of her request.

Last week, as I watched my senior dog playing with his favorite toy, my heart ached for this cat. Time and age take a toll on all creation, and to still find joy in a toy or special treat is truly a gift for a pet as it ages. With a heavy heart and feeling a bit silly, I petitioned God to please provide that same bunny toy for this aging feline. I'll be honest – I did not expect God to do it. My prayer seemed so insignificant in the general scheme of life.

Imagine my surprise when I signed on to that social media platform this evening and saw a picture of the cat with the bunny toy. Turns out, a family who keeps up with the rescue and knew about the bunny search has a dog themselves. Last week, with no provocation, the dog went to his toy bin and pulled out an old toy he hadn't played with for years. He carried it into the living room to show his pet parents. You'll never guess what toy he found. The exact, same, bunny!

The family promptly donated it to the rescue for this elderly cat to enjoy.

Friend, God cares about the details of your life. If He can provide a stuffed bunny for an 18-year-old cat from a mustard seed of a prayer, just imagine how much more He loves you.

Father, when the circumstances of life distract me from You, I begin to doubt Your presence in my life. Remind me just how deep and sweet Your love is for me today, and help me, in return, to share Your love with others.

By Ashley Clark

Submitted by Pastor Missel

**The 2025 A. David Hurd Organ Recital Series**

*Presented by Central Presbyterian Church*

**Featuring organists:**

**Sunday, 3/30 at 3 p.m. - James Jeffery**

**Sunday, 4/6 at 3 p.m. - Katherine Jolliff**

**Sunday, 4/13 at 3 p.m. - Andrew Van Varick**

Central Presbyterian Church  
31 Center Street, Geneseo, NY  
585-243-0669

*Donations to the recital fund are gratefully accepted.*



## Monthly Celebrations

### April Birthdays

30 Laurie Maggio

### April Anniversaries:

None listed

## Liturgists Signup for April

For those who want to read scripture during Sunday worship, please remember to sign the "Volunteer" list on the Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!

May God Bless!



### Fatu Thoronka

We recently received a letter from Fatu Thoronka our EduNations Sponsored Student. She thanks us for our sponsorship. She also shared a little about herself. She lives at the Mayatta Village and has three brothers and 3 sisters. Her hobbies are dancing, singing and reading.

She welcomes prayers for her education.

Submitted by Cathy Mlyniec

## Prayer Shawl and Lap Robe Ministry

If you know of someone who has serious health problems and would find some encouragement, warmth and comfort from receiving a handmade shawl or lap robe, please contact Carole Missel.

## LEPC Session Highlights of 3/20/2025

### Sharing Life, Spiritual Focus and Prayers for the Church and Others we meet:

Concern raised about locking the Church doors during worship service, but Session is committed to the lock door policy for now. The Session prayed for several individuals going through difficult times and in need of financial assistance, healing, and opportunities that have arisen for ministering to others. Thanksgiving was raised to God for His grace, mercy, goodness, and guidance and that His will would be done.

**Treasurer's Reports:** This year's Per Member Asking will be sent to our Presbytery as well as the yearly support to General Assembly.

**Clerk's Report:** EPC Annual Church Report completed and submitted on 2/24/2025.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor changed the church outreach sign out front. He also gave assistance to an individual that needed gasoline. Pastor has done some visitations for individuals outside of LEPC and was asked to visit certain individuals within our church.

**Witness Report:** Session to request free copies of the "Our Daily Bread's Easter Devotionals" and will also make a contribution to ODB.

**Missions:** A letter from our EduNations' sponsored student has been posted in Fellowship Hall. Session approved to pay the annual student sponsorship amount for 2025. Session moved to support EduNations' "Save The Teachers" fund toward teacher salaries.

**Property:** Drainage repair on the

sledding hill should start 5/6/2025. Step construction will also be starting shortly.

**Miscellaneous:** Next Regular Session Meeting date was scheduled for April 17, 2025.

## Healing the Broken Heart of Israel

"Something snapped in me this week," said Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch. "After 16 months of keeping it together, my heart finally cracked. The plight of the Bibas family struck me so deeply, that I do not even know where to place all of these emotions running rampant inside of me."

For more info, go to this website: <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/404720>

## Please pray for Israel

**– Pray for Israelis to look to God — and to find Him! Please read and pray Ezekiel 36 over their nation.**

*"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)*

**– Pray for broken hearts to be comforted and healed — both Jewish and Arab.**

**– Pray for unity to grow and strengthen between Jewish and Arab believers.**

**– Pray for protection, deliverance, and salvation.**

**– Pray that they would not be overcome with evil, but that they would overcome evil with good, that God may be glorified.**

OneforIsrael.org



**Voice of the Martyr's:**  
icommittoprayer.com

January 30, 2025 | India

**Hindu Father Charges  
Christian Son with Illegal  
Conversion**

Chhatar Singh, a schoolteacher in India, placed his faith in Christ in 2002 and has planted churches in seven villages. In 2010, when his mother died, he refused Hindu funeral rituals for her, which turned his father against him. On Jan. 27, 2021, the police arrested Singh and three other Christians on false charges of forced conversion. They spent a month in jail; consequently, Singh was suspended from his school. In July 2024, after Singh's father cut off his inheritance, he filed a criminal complaint against Singh of trying to convert him to Christianity. Singh spent 20 days in jail before bail was granted. His children asked their grandfather to withdraw the case, which he said he would do if they denied Jesus. The children told their grandfather that they were proud of their father for standing up for his faith and that they would never deny Christ.

February 06, 2025 | Benin

**Standing Firm After Her Husband's Murder**

Victorie and her husband had become followers of Christ, but their families and most of the people in their village follow traditional Voodoo practices. Victorie's in-laws were not happy that the young couple had become Christians. They threatened them and tried to scare them into converting back to pagan beliefs. "We would see blood around the house," Victorie said. One day her husband's parents threatened her. "They told me, 'If anything happens to our son, it is your fault.'" As Victorie and her husband were returning home from a visit to his family one night, he suddenly collapsed and died shortly afterwards. Victorie believes he was poisoned by his family. Victorie lost all she owned after his death, and relatives are still trying to convince her and her two young boys, ages 8 and 11, to return to Voodoo practices. They have even threatened to take the boys from her, but she remains committed to following Christ.

February 13, 2025 | Cameroon

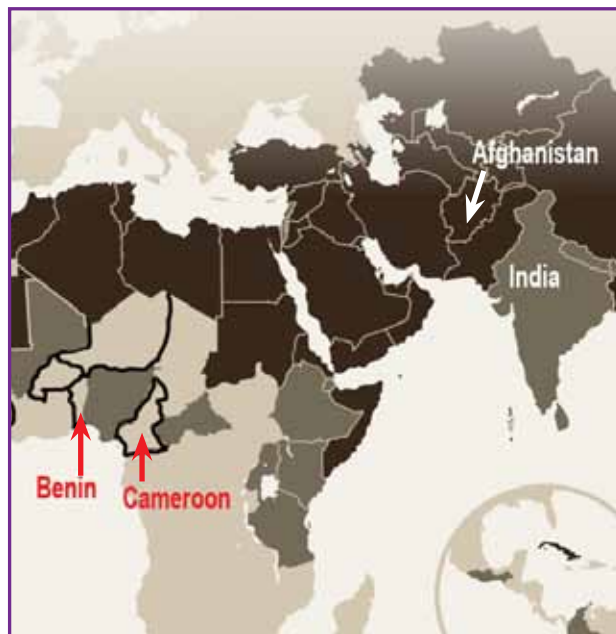
**Christian Convert Rescued  
from Captivity**

Mahamat, a young Christian living in northern Cameroon, was imprisoned by his parents but later rescued. Mahamat was studying to become a teacher of the Quran when he rejected Islam and turned to Christ. On Jan. 3, 2025, his parents learned of Mahamat's new faith and tried to convince him to recant. When that failed, they locked him inside a house. They also summoned Islamic clerics to persuade him to return to Islam. But when a relative who had also become a follower of Christ learned what was happening, she rescued Mahamat, who had been held captive for about a week. Front-line workers rejoice that Mahamat is free and are thankful for the rescue because they worried he could be poisoned or forcibly married to a Muslim woman. They request prayer for Mahamat and his Christian relative: for safety, for Mahamat to continue growing in his faith and that "every evil plan from the kingdom of darkness against his life will be destroyed."

February 20, 2025 | Afghanistan

**Christian Convert in Hiding  
After Husband's Murder**

Asmaan is in hiding with her children after her husband was murdered. She and her family had fled Afghanistan when the Taliban took over the country. While displaced in another country, they met some Christians and became followers of Christ. But when Asmaan's brother-in-law learned his brother had rejected Islam, he poisoned him, leaving Asmaan a widow with several young children to raise. Without her husband, Asmaan lost the ability to pay her rent and was evicted from her home. Her brother-in-law does not know that Asmaan also became a follower of Jesus. Fearing what he might do if he discovered her new faith, she has gone into hiding along with her children. "Her faith is strong, but she needs God's direction," a front-line worker said.



## Understanding Biblical Christian Fellowship

by Freddy Cardoza  
Grace Theological Seminary

*Mutual cooperation in God's worship, God's work, and God's will being done in our midst.*

Think a moment about the people you know and the relationships you share. Each of us is constantly enriched by family and extended family, friends, and acquaintances. Beyond that, many of us have literally hundreds of other connections in the virtual world of social media. Simply put, relationships are the most important aspect of our lives. Our associations with those in the body of Christ are especially important. As Christians, we have become brothers and sisters in the family of God through the blood of Christ. The Bible gives these relationships a special distinction beyond mere friendship. That's because bonds between believers are capable of developing a degree of spiritual closeness that far surpasses the limitations of natural human friendships. Christian relationships enjoy biblical Christian fellowship.

### *What is Biblical Fellowship?*

The word fellowship is derived from the Greek word *koinonia*. *Koinonia* can be defined as "holding something in common" and is specifically used 20 times in the New Testament (e.g. Phil. 2:1-2, Acts 2:42, 1 John 1:6-7). *Koinonia* describes the unity of the Spirit that comes from Christians' shared beliefs, convictions, and behaviors. When those shared values are in place, genuine *koinonia* (biblical fellowship) occurs. This fellowship produces our mutual cooperation in God's worship, God's work, and God's will being done in the world. Because of the

importance of Christian fellowship, it is essential to distinguish biblical guidelines to govern our interactions with other professing believers. This is especially true in a world such as ours, where there exists tremendous diversity in the beliefs and behaviors among those who call themselves Christians.

### *Principles of Biblical Christian Fellowship*

One of the most helpful understandings of biblical fellowship came from a close associate of Martin Luther, the man whose convictions led to the Reformation of the Christian church in the 1500s. Luther's protégé was the great German educator and intellectual leader Philip Melancthon. Melancthon clarified the three main principles of biblical Christian fellowship in his famous quote: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

#### *In Essentials, Unity*

Though many Christians seem uncomfortable with insisting that believers maintain unity over our various doctrinal distinctives, this is a necessary part of what it means to be Christian. The Bible outlines several essential theological convictions that are non-negotiable in legitimately calling oneself a Christian and for fellowshiping as believers. These core beliefs comprise what have historically been called "orthodox" beliefs. Without holding these beliefs, the essence of biblical teaching is lost and a person's primary beliefs are inconsistent with the main tenets of God's Word. Some theological essentials on which all biblical Christian fellowship is based and on which we must insist from fellow professing believers are:

1. The inspiration of Scripture

- (2 Tim. 3:15-16).
2. The Holy Trinity: Father, Son, Spirit (John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9; Acts 5:3-5).
3. The Deity/Godhood of Christ (Col. 2:9).
4. The virginal conception (virgin birth) of Jesus (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).
5. The literal, physical resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:14; Luke 24:38-39).
6. Salvation by grace through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9). Beliefs that fall outside these clear biblical teachings are called heresy. Biblical fellowship in the worship of God, the work of God, and doing the will of God with others should be based on these fundamentals, apart from which genuine Christian fellowship cannot exist (Gal. 1:6-10).

#### *In Non-Essentials, Liberty*

Things not included in the six cardinal doctrines that have been mentioned fall into the area of non-essentials. It is important to understand, however, that non-essential does not mean unimportant. Indeed, several so-called non-essentials are issues of life and death — but because they deal with areas not directly related to salvation or God's identity, they are considered non-essential. Philip Melancthon challenged believers to give varying levels of Christian freedom to one another in these areas. Depending on the clarity of scriptural teaching on any given subject, believers should show humility and understanding to those holding different perspectives. I suggest three categories of non-essentials to guide our understanding of biblical fellowship. They are matters of conviction, matters of conscience, and matters of choice.

#### *Matters of Conviction*

Matters of conviction involve issues of moral or theological importance

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that the Bible addresses in what you believe to be clear or unmistakable ways. These would include issues like one's position on the biblical mode of baptism, eternal security, abortion, homosexuality, and other matters of serious importance. Whereas these are not issues that are as foundational as, say, the validity of the resurrection, they are incredibly important. As such, though we should extend liberty to other Christians, we may sometimes have a sharp disagreement on issues such as these with professing believers who maintain alternative positions. Even the apostles had forceful discussions, so confrontation cannot always be avoided (Gal. 2).

### **Matters of Conscience**

Matters of conscience involve those things either not specifically addressed in the Bible or that are not absolutely clear in Scripture due to nuances of language, cultural considerations, or challenges of interpretation. These are issues about which, while important, even mature and devoted believers sometimes disagree. In New Testament times, circumcision (Gal. 5:1-4) and eating meat offered to idols (Gal. 2:11-16) were examples. Today's conscience-related issues might include Bible version preference, the nature of the tithe in offerings, boundaries surrounding Sabbath days, the validity of certain spiritual gifts, social drinking positions, political affiliations, and so on. Because these are matters of conscience, believers should know, uphold, and discuss their positions on these issues, while patiently giving love and honor to those who differ with them (1 Cor. 8; 1 Cor. 10:29).

### **Matters of Choice**

Matters of choice are those issues that fall outside of explicit biblical

commands. These are things on which Scripture is silent and about which believers must exercise discretion and discernment. In this case, believers are dealing with preferential and permissible matters. These include both issues of no serious consequence and things that are minimally to moderately important, but are not concerns that rise to the level of doctrine (Col. 2:16-17). These include basic lifestyle decisions and personal issues of taste. Included in these matters of choice might be some selections of clothing, hygiene and grooming, personal appearance, Halloween participation, the role of Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny in holiday celebrations, civic involvements, dietary choices, and various advocacy efforts. These are all things about which some believers have strong opinions, yet they remain matters of choice and, as such, they have been historically considered areas of Christian liberty.

### **In All Things, Charity**

Biblical Christian fellowship is an important issue for Christians and the leaders who equip them. But in any case, the unity of believers around the truth should always be sought and maintained. Melancthon, and the Bible itself, say that the means to that end is charity — Christian love for one another (John 13:34-35) Because of the centrality of their biblical office, deacons play an important role in developing the spiritual strength and maintaining the Christian unity of the congregations they serve. Becoming equipped in both the threats to and principles of biblical fellowship will enable you to be an effective leader who equips your church to make an impact on the kingdom of God for the glory of God.

*This is the way of Grace.*

Freddy Cardoza, is the Dean of the School of Ministry Studies at Grace College and Vice President of Grace Theological Seminary.

Submitted by Leo Richardson

### **Woman, Believe Me**

Inspiration comes from:

#### **It Is Finished**

by Charles Martin

Woman, believe Me. — John 4:4–26  
*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.”<sup>21</sup>*

Believe. The Gospel of John uses the word eighty-four times. This use is the first. “That all might believe through him.”

John continued, *“He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”<sup>22</sup>*

Looking back to the garden, at what was lost, this is one of the most astounding statements in Scripture: “To all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” Think through the ramifications. The undoing of what was done in the garden? Can you see the progression?

From orphan. To child. To heir. Okay, but how do we do that? Sounds a bit too good to be true. According to Scripture, we receive and believe in. But what does that mean? It's one thing to believe that His

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words are true and that Jesus is the Son of God, and it's quite another to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and place our whole trust in Him. In short, "believing that" is not "believing in." Many "believe that," but far fewer "believe in." And Jesus wants disciples who "believe in." Let's look first for examples of what it means to "believe in."

Get ready, Jesus is about to use the word believe twenty-two times in just the first five chapters of John. He did so to make a point. Jesus is invited to a wedding in Cana where He performs an undeniable sign, witnessed by several, in which He turns water to wine. Of this John recorded, *"This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him."*<sup>23</sup>

Following the miracle at Cana, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for Passover; and first thing, He walks into the temple, makes a whip of cords, and cleans house, driving everyone out. *"Take these things away; do not make My Father's house a house of trade."*<sup>24</sup> Jesus is not angry that they are selling animals. He is angry they are selling blemished animals and profiting off fellow Jews who had traveled long distances intent on obeying the Law and offering a sacrifice, only to be charged an exorbitant price. The Jews, who can't stand the fact that Jesus has just called God His Father, want a sign to support His authority to do what He's done. Jesus then says something they can't understand: *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."*<sup>25</sup> They think He's talking about the actual temple, which took forty-six years to build, but He's talking about His body. *"When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."*<sup>26</sup>

The very next verse goes on to say, *"When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs that He was doing."*<sup>27</sup>

While in Jerusalem, Jesus bumps into Nicodemus, who asks how a man can be born again. This is the first real conversation about what it means to become a child of God. Jesus answers, "You must be born again."

Nicodemus scratches his head, "How can this be?" Jesus puts it in language Nicodemus can understand. *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life."*<sup>28</sup>

Which brings us to the most famous verses in all of Scripture. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because He has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."*<sup>29</sup>

*"You must be born again."* ~

Jesus then walks into the Judean countryside with His disciples and begins baptizing people. (His disciples did the baptizing.) Coincidentally, John the Baptist is also baptizing people. A local Jew notices the two camps and the possible competition for followers and begins a conversation with John the Baptist. John responds, "I am not the Christ" and then goes on to point out, *"The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."*<sup>30</sup>

When Jesus realizes that the Pharisees have heard that He and

John are baptizing and that Jesus is baptizing more disciples than John, Jesus departs Judea for Galilee. To do so, He passes through Samaria and a town called Sychar. Being thirsty, He stops at Jacob's well about noon when a woman from Samaria stops to draw water, and Jesus says to her, *"Give Me a drink."*<sup>31</sup> This is unusual in that Jews and Samaritans have been enemies a long time. Regardless, Jesus engages her in conversation about the water, her husbands, and how He is the Messiah. In the middle of the conversation, Jesus says this: *"Woman, believe Me."*

He then goes on to talk about worship. Seconds later, the woman says, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things." To this, Jesus responds: *"I who speak to you am He."*<sup>32</sup>

These are mind-blowing words. "Believe me — I am the Messiah." Jesus leaves Samaria, where "many believed" based on the testimony of the woman — which might make her the first evangelist — and He walks by a pool at the Sheep Gate called Bethesda. The sick, blind, lame, and withered are waiting for an angel to stir the waters because the first one in after the stirring will be made well. Jesus speaks to a man who has been lying there thirty-eight years and asks him, *"Do you wish to get well?"*<sup>33</sup> *The sick man responds, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool."*<sup>34</sup> So Jesus, who is the fount of living waters, says *"Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."*<sup>35</sup> Which the man does. The Pharisees are watching Jesus through skeptical eyes. Trying to trap Him. *"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal*

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with God.<sup>216</sup>

***There it is. The reason they killed Him. Because He called God His Father and claimed to be the Son of God.***

Which He is.

Jesus responds with this: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”<sup>217</sup>*

Five chapters into John’s gospel and he’s now used the word believe twenty-two times. Over the course of his gospel, John used it eighty-four times! As a writer, if I mention something twenty-two times in the first five chapters of any book I write, trust me, I’m beating you over the head. It’s akin to ringing a church bell three feet from your ear. I’m wanting you to hear me. I’m telegraphing that this is probably the most important thing.

Why does Jesus do this?

After Jesus walks on water, a crowd gathers and asks Him, *“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”<sup>218</sup>* Jesus answers it simply: *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”<sup>219</sup>* Then, moments later, He says this: *“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day.”<sup>220</sup>*

Because without “belief in,” there is no life.

1. John 1:6–7. 2. John 1:8–13. 3. John 2:11. 4. John 2:16. 5. John 2:19. 6. John 2:22. 7. John 2:23. 8. John 3:14–15. 9. John 3:16–18. 10. John 3:28, 35–36. 11. John 4:7. 12. John 4:21–26. 13. John 5:6 NASB1995. 14. John 5:7. 15. John 5:8 NIV. 16. John 5:18 NKJV. 17. John 5:24. 18. John 6:28. 19. John 6:29. 20. John 6:40.

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Submitted by Carole Missel

## **Empowering EduNations Students Through Skills Training: A Transformative Partnership with Lighting The Path**

Published March 06, 2025

Written by Dana Kaltenberger

In February, EduNations had the privilege of hosting Dawn Malcom, director and CEO of Lighting The Path, at our schools in Sierra Leone. Dawn’s visit marked a significant step forward in a new partnership between EduNations and Lighting The Path, a global organization dedicated to “sharing Christ, empowering people, and changing lives.” With a background in humanitarian work in countries like Burkina Faso and Ghana, Dawn brought a wealth of experience to Sierra Leone, where she helped establish skills training for our students.

This partnership builds on the foundation of support Lighting The Path has already provided, including the distribution of feminine sanitary kits to our students. However, the recent visit allowed us to explore deeper opportunities, particularly in vocational and skills training, which have the potential to transform the lives of our students and their communities.

During her visit, Dawn worked directly with our students in hands-on workshops focused on tailoring and crafting. As we look ahead, EduNations is excited to deepen this partnership and continue working together to empower students with practical skills that lead to self-reliance and long-term life transformation.

**A Focus on Practical Skills:** Skills training is essential for creating opportunities that enable individuals to achieve financial independence and contribute to their local econo-



mies. At EduNations, we recognize that teaching practical crafts like tailoring, soap making, and hand-crafting is key to equipping students with the tools they need to build a better future.

The following are some of the skills students learned during Dawn Malcom’s visit:

**Tailoring:** Students learned how to design, cut, sew, and repair clothes, a valuable skill in high demand as clothing is a necessity. Tailoring not only allows students to create custom garments but also opens doors to entrepreneurship in the fashion and garment industries. With proper training, students can start their own tailoring businesses or secure employment in established enterprises.

**Soap Making:** This training focused on producing handmade soaps, an essential product for hygiene. Students were taught how to create various types of soaps, which can be sold in local and international markets. Soap making empowers students to create a sustainable business in a field where demand is constant.

**Hand Band Making:** Crafting

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hand bands using beads, threads, and other materials is an art form that is particularly popular among artisans. Students learned to create fashionable accessories that can be sold in markets, boutiques, or online platforms, providing them with another avenue for entrepreneurship.

**Headscarf Making:** Students were also introduced to the skill of sewing headscarves (head capes), which involves fabric selection, design, and basic sewing techniques. This practical skill can be used for personal needs or as a business opportunity to sell headscarves in local markets.

**Making Sanitary Kits:** Students were trained to make reusable sanitary kits, which are crucial for menstrual hygiene, especially in communities with limited access to disposable products. These kits not only promote health and sustainability but also empower girls to stay in school, addressing a major challenge for girls in developing countries.

### **Transformative Impact on EduNations Students**

The introduction of skills training at EduNations has the potential to transform students' lives in profound ways. By learning practical crafts like tailoring, soap making, and sanitary kit production, students can create income-generating opportunities for themselves and their families.

Tailoring enables students to make and sell clothes, school uniforms, and headscarves. Soap making and hand band production offer opportunities for small business ventures, helping students become self-reliant. Making reusable sanitary kits directly addresses menstrual hygiene challenges, allowing girls to stay in school, while locally produced soap promotes hygiene and reduces illness in the community.

### **One student, Sonita Koroma, shared her experience:**

“Before I learned how to make sanitary kits and headscarves, I felt limited in what I could do. But now, I can not only take care of myself but also help other girls in my community stay in school. This training has given me confidence, and I’m proud to be able to create something useful for myself, my family, and others.” – Sonita Koroma, EduNations Student.

### **Conclusion: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Through Skills Training**

Integrating skills training into EduNations’ programs provides students with life-changing abilities that

enable them to become self-reliant, support their families, and improve their communities. These skills are not just tools for personal growth; they contribute to the overall economic well-being of entire communities, breaking the cycle of poverty for future generations.

As EduNations continues to strengthen its partnership with Lighting The Path, we remain committed to equipping our students with the skills they need to thrive and make a lasting impact in their communities. Together, we are empowering students, fostering economic growth, and transforming lives—one skill at a time.

## **Blessed Inconvenience - Learning to Delight in God’s Detours**

Article by Andrea Hoglund, Guest Contributor

One winter morning, I got a last-minute phone call that our school carpool fell through. Someone was sick, and so I was asked to drive instead. A few scrambling minutes later, I was driving north, then backtracking south, before finally heading west on the road to school with a minivan full of kids. An already long commute became twenty minutes longer. Internally, my heart was stuck on how very inconvenient this was. I was annoyed by the detour God had providentially planned for that morning.

Those extra minutes on the road gave me extra time to look into my heart. Why was I valuing convenience above serving my neighbor? If I was honest with myself, wasn’t my annoyance evidence that I had become unwilling to go out of my way for others? Was I even thinking about convenience and inconvenience in biblically sound ways?

God seems to prioritize something other than convenience as his plan of salvation unfolds. He was in no hurry to bring the promised offspring, Isaac, to Abraham and Sarah. He provided manna in the wilderness just one day at a time. Resting every seventh day was an inconvenient boundary for God’s people, considering how often they failed to keep the Sabbath. A suffering Messiah, an infant born of a virgin, and an already-not yet kingdom are neither comfortable nor convenient methods for redemption by human standards.

Might it be that delayed fulfillment, desert detours, and daily bread are effective teachers precisely because they are inconvenient? Maybe the high value our world places on convenience — from smartphones and GPS to grocery delivery and overnight shipping — makes us wrongheadedly expect God to change us in some easy way, apart from uncomfortable circumstances. In times when convenience is so valued, expected, and even demanded, it might be worth asking how God matures us specifically through inconvenience.

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Consider four benefits that regularly come to us through inconvenience.

### **1. Welcome the fruit of the Spirit.**

Inconvenience is an opportunity to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit. Uncomfortable, inconvenient circumstances are often the very means the Holy Spirit chooses to cultivate his fruit in us, perhaps patience most acutely. Like many others before me, I thought of myself as a patient person until God gave me children. The baby that wouldn't fall asleep, the toddler who needed so many reminders, the teenager who kept losing his newest coat — these have revealed to me just how impatient I truly am. But how can I grow in patience unless my patience is tried? *“In his wise providence, God ordains convenience and inconvenience alike.”*

Just as God tried his people in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10), so God tries me in the furnace of inconvenience. If I am honest with myself, even the most petty inconveniences can cause impatience, grumbling, and self-centeredness to flare up in my heart and my speech. How necessary joy, patience, peace, gentleness, and self-control are in such moments, however insignificant they seem — and what an opportunity such moments offer for growing in these precious qualities!

### **2. Heed the call of Christlike love.**

Inconvenience caused by others' needs gives us an opportunity to practice costly love. In Matthew 5, Jesus gives our heart a reality check. Easy love, he says, is neither remarkable nor a mark of God's kingdom. *“If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”* (Matthew 5:46). Instead, he presses us to do something much more difficult and costly, something that he does —

love sacrificially, looking to a greater reward than convenience (Matthew 5:44–45; John 15:12–13).

Sacrificial love is not convenient. It assumes a loss, a sacrifice of some kind, whether large or small. It could be the sacrifice of time or a good night's sleep. It could be the sacrifice of comfort in order to have a difficult conversation or helping to bear the burden when someone is going through a difficult trial. It could be the sacrifice of a kidney donation to a relative or postponing needed chemotherapy for the sake of a child growing in the womb. Whatever the sacrifice, it won't be convenient. But the heavenly joy that comes from giving of ourselves for others is far greater than the temporary benefits of convenience.

In Philippians 2, Paul reminds us that sacrificial love begins with humility, ends in glory, and is always a reflection of Jesus: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind in yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus ... He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death ... Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name ... to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:3–11)

If we are determined to keep our lives convenient, then our lives will display little of the glorious love of Jesus. Inconvenience is often an opportunity, however small, to look out for the interests of others and be rewarded by our Father in heaven.

### **3. Embrace your creaturely limits.**

When I drive from Minneapolis to St. Paul, I'm limited to roads with bridges across the river. The Mississippi is an unavoidable reality, at

times an inconvenience, but it is the kind of inconvenience that reminds me that God made this world and I am only a creature in it, hemmed in by God-ordained limits. Just as a river moves within the borders of its banks, I too live within the mortal limits that God has given me. I can rage and rebel against those limits, and my life will grow increasingly chaotic and destructive, like the Mississippi in flood season. Or I can embrace the limits God has given me and thank him for hedging in my days and my ways.

Sickness regularly reminds us of our humble creatureliness. Food poisoning, pneumonia, a high fever and aches — these have the ability to cancel whatever fine plans or high demands we had for the day. We're often tempted to feel anxious about how this sickness will slow us down, and we lose sight of the opportunity to stop and surrender our mortality to God. Home or car repairs are often inconvenient, expensive, and frustrating, but they are yet another reminder that created things don't last forever. Moth and rust will destroy, but our treasure in heaven is imperishable (Matthew 6:19–20). When we lay our heads on the pillow each night, we're reminded that we cannot work nonstop, even if we want to. We lie down and rise again in the morning because our heavenly Father continues to sustain us (Psalm 4:8).

### **4. Remember that God is in control.**

Inconvenience reminds us that God is in control. In his wise providence, God ordains convenience and inconvenience alike. Not only our sleep but also “rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, poverty and prosperity — all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but by his Fatherly hand” (Heidelberg Cat-

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echism, Lord's Day 10). The closed road, the canceled appointment, the snowstorm that prohibits travel, the school lunch that was left on the counter — all these inconveniences announce to us, like a neon sign, that God is in control and we are not.

When we find ourselves rolling our eyes in the grip of the most recent inconvenience, it may be time to take a deep breath and praise God that although *"the heart of man plans his way," the Lord "establishes his steps"* (Proverbs 16:9). Every inconvenience provides a concrete circumstance in which we can live out a glad submission to our heavenly Father.

I've learned to laugh at myself for my rising impatience when traffic slows to a halt. How can I feel so busy and then be annoyed when God literally slows me down and gives me a minute to rest? The traffic jam, the power outage, the long grocery line, the empty printer cartridge, the lost library book, the misplaced keys — in every inconvenience, we can pray, as Jesus taught us, *"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:10).

Though there is far more to our lives than inconvenience, God wills that we experience it nearly every day and that we respond with faith and grace. May there be enough inconvenience in our lives that when we get a last-minute call to help a friend in need, our first response is not impatience but delight in the God-ordained detour, giving us extra miles on the road to love God with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Andrea Hogle is the Women's Discipleship Coordinator at Cities Church. The Hogle family served as cross-cultural missionaries in Ukraine and Vietnam.

Submitted by Carole Missel

## Will You Drag Anchor or Set the Hook?

Inspiration from:  
*Catching Whimsy*  
by Bob Goff

Sweet Maria and I live down by the water in San Diego, and we enjoy watching the boats pull into the harbor. They will usually circle the bay a few times as they decide where they will drop their anchor. What happens after they have picked their spot distinguishes the experienced sailors from the novices.

There is a big difference between the boats that just drop anchor in the bay and those who set the hook. While both approaches look the same on the surface, merely dropping the anchor will give you a big piece of metal on the sand that has not dug into anything. Everything is fine until the winds and waves come. Then these boats drag their anchors and end up on the beach in front of our house. On the other hand, the captains who set their hooks dig their anchors into something firm by putting the boat in reverse and giving the anchor a tug when they arrive in the bay. When the storms come, the anchors, which are already dug in, don't drag to shore. In fact, these anchors dig themselves in farther and provide

greater protection and staying power the more the wind and waves rise.

### Set the hook!

You might be facing headwinds right now. But you get to decide whether you will drag anchor or set the hook. It is easy to drag anchor if you are spending time with people who are acting religious but don't follow Jesus. Sure, everything might look the same on the surface, but when you only have the appearance of faith, when the winds come you'll easily be dragged away.

If you set the hook, however, if you dig deep and develop more than a surface-level faith, you'll be ready for the storms.

And the apostle Paul said the suffering you endure will produce perseverance, and perseverance is going to result in character, and character has the power to turn into hope in your life and in the lives of the people around you.

Much of what we experience we won't fully understand this side of Heaven. The promise of Scripture is that if we dig deep in our faith and continue to endure, God will make something useful out of our pain.

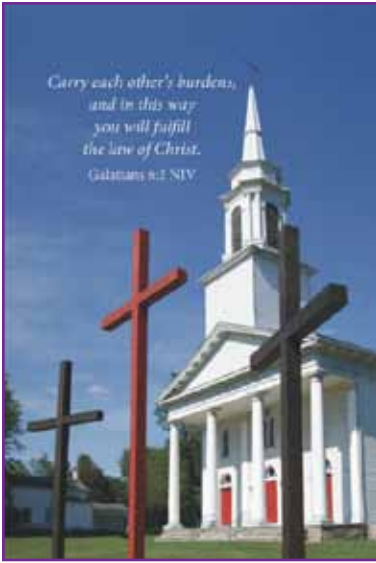
### In short, set the hook.

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Submitted by Carole Missel







## EPCConnection

EPCConnection is the news and information service of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a denomination of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations. To the glory of God, the EPC family aspires to be a global movement of congregations engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership, embodying Jesus' love to our neighbors near and far.



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## Everyone is Welcome!

### Sunday morning Worship

9:15 - 9:30 Prayer and Share  
9:40 - 10:20 Berean Sunday School

**No Berean Class on Easter Sunday**  
10:30 - Traditional worship  
(Hymnals/piano)

**Communion Palm Sunday (4/13)**  
Dish-to-Pass Luncheon  
2nd Sunday of the  
month after church



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## The Steeple Newsletter

is published monthly by the Leicester Evangelical Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and that He is moving among his people here. Our intent is to keep the readers informed of church and local events, and provide information to stimulate and edify its readers.

For those who would like a printed version of the church newsletters, we keep the last 2 months' issues in the brochure rack, on the wall to your right, as you exit the sanctuary to Fellowship Hall.

**Submission Deadline:**  
**The 3rd Sunday of the month.**

### Contact:

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**Staying Connected:** If anyone does not receive the Steeple Newsletter, participate in Prayer Chain Activations, receive church updates by e-mail, or has a change for the "Birthdays and Anniversaries" and wants to be included, please contact Leo Richardson.

## Our Mission

The EPC exists to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus as a denomination of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations.

## Our Vision

To the glory of God, the EPC family aspires to embody and proclaim Jesus' love as a global movement of congregations engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership.