

## The Hope of Renewal

By Ansu Anna John

Recently, I've been caring for an indoor plant that suffered from a cold draft. Unlike the outdoor trees in winter, this plant was meant to thrive indoors. However, its leaves began to wither, and by the time I received it, only the stem remained.

By giving it proper care—ensuring the right amount of sunlight and water and keeping it in a warm environment—this plant began to revive. Though at first it looked completely hopeless, I'm grateful to see four new buds emerging this week!

We read in the Scriptures: "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant." (Job 14:7–9)

This tree endured far worse than the indoor plant. It was cut down, its roots grew old, and its stump lay lifeless in the ground. Yet the Bible declares that at the scent of water, it will bud again—renewed and restored.

At times, the circumstances we endure may leave us feeling cut down, worn out, or running out of time. Our surroundings may even seem barren. Yet as children of God, we hold firmly to the hope of renewal.

In the Scriptures, water is often associated with the presence of the Lord. Worshiping God, reading and meditating on His Word, and spending time in prayer are ways to access and remain in His presence, and His presence always makes new beginnings possible. The Easter season especially reminds us of this living hope.



As our Lord Jesus Christ overcame, so shall we. His resurrection power assures us of renewal, as it is written: "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." (Acts 2:24)

May the divine presence and power of God help us sprout again, send forth new branches, and blossom—bringing glory and honor to His holy name. May God bless you and Happy Resurrection Day!

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*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3*

## Perisseia

Our women's growth group will begin a six-week spring series on April 9, 7:00-8:30, in the Chapel House. We will be looking at some of the many occasions where Jesus said or did the unexpected: "But Jesus" moments. All women are welcome; no commitment or preparation is required or expected. For more information, please contact Cindy Bills (cynthialbills@gmail.com; 609-275-8557).

### Financial Update

(Through February 28, 2026)

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$17,250.66	\$29,500
Expense	\$39,693.55	\$29,500

*"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"*

Philippians 4:19  
Praise God!



### Happy Birthday!

Blessings to all who celebrate a birthday this month. May you feel the love, joy and presence of the Lord as we all celebrate your special day with prayers and warmest wishes.

Jennifer Quiroga	April 2
Gert Ferst	April 7
Catherine MacQueen	April 10
Eva Bernheisel	April 14
Sarah Caroline MacQueen	April 15
James Richard MacQueen	April 19
John Hagestad	April 24



## H O L Y W E E K

*Reflect on Jesus' cross and celebrate His resurrection this Easter season with your family and friends:*

### Good Friday Service (April 3, 7:00 pm)

*Our Good Friday service will feature reflective music, congregational singing and Scripture readings which will focus our hearts and minds on the Cross.*

### Easter Sunday Worship (April 5, 9:30 am)

*Don't miss this special service of celebration, combining special music and biblical reflection, on our only true foundation - Christ's resurrection! Invite your friends and family to experience the hope of our life in Christ.*



## Elders' Corner

By Tom Taylor

*"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8) Okay, that sounds serious.

*"Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ."* (Colossians 2:8) Yes, Paul is right there with Peter.

*"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7) Must be on to something. James is right there, too.

*"Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak."* (Matthew 26:41) And of course Jesus.

Brothers and Sisters, let us remind ourselves that we are in a spiritual battle, though, for sure Christ has already overcome and won the war.

He had publicly defeated the enemy on the cross; death could not hold him. He sits at the right hand of God the Father. His resurrection is the proof!

However, He has placed us here on earth for such a time as this to represent him. As the Scripture says: *"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, come back to God!"* (2 Corinthians 5:20)

O may the Lord help us stay alert and not be lulled to sleeping comfortably (by the white noise and for that matter the black noise that seems so loud and real at times). The battle for our families, our friends, our neighbors, and, yes, even for those who hate us, is on. Though the battle belongs to the Lord, we still have to do our part and engage in spiritual battles.

Prayer is our weapon in this spiritual battle. Now is the time to be bold, and aggressive, in going after the enemy, in order to see the promises of God fulfilled.

Echoing what Joshua said, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Even when not all of my houses are following, I still must go on and fight for them in prayer for their redemption. I must stand in the gap against the lies of the enemy that was used on them into rebellion. I must continue to pray that their eyes, and ears, and heart will be opened to God's grace.

Yes, He will remove the scales and call them out to Himself and will pour out His love. Thus, they will be loosed from that which the enemy has wrapped them up with.

Seeking the Lord for our neighbors and all those whom God has placed in our lives is our responsibility. Praying for open the doors of opportunities to share the gospel.

Look how the Apostle Paul asked for prayer: *"Pray for us too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should."* (Colossians 4:3,4) Well, we know how God heard his prayer, and as a result how much of the New Testament was written with his hand.

Our Heavenly Father loves those prayers! I want to be like the Lord Jesus, and here is a part of His prayer He taught His disciples: *"thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10).

He not only taught it but lived it. Jesus said, *"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."* (Luke 19:10) So, let us also follow His example in doing the same:

Stay alert.

Don't get captured.

Resist the devil.

Continue to watch and pray.

May God be glorified, and His Church continue to be fruitful!

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*"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." – Proverbs 29:2*

## Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in  
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

### He Is Risen—INDEED!

As we welcome April, we are drawn to return to the story of Christ's passion and resurrection. Our annual commemoration is an important reminder, but the repetition can blunt the impact of the most pivotal event in human history. It is essential for us to fix our heart, minds, and spirits on what our Savior has done on our behalf. But beyond that, Good Friday and Easter give us an opportunity to consider that these events are the most reliable in ancient history. They really happened! And since they really happened, the consequences are of eternal consequences.

We live in a world where personal, independent power and performance are a high priority and vague spirituality is glorified. History, especially ancient history is irrelevant. Life is fast-paced and distracting. It is easy even for believers to let Good Friday and Easter come and go with limited focus and spiritual impact. But Scripture calls us to remember, to remember, to remember what the Lord has done for us....

I find it helpful to consider how much the reality of Good Friday and Easter highlights the foundational truths found in God's Word: Mankind is sinful. From the fall in the Garden of Eden, the influence of Satan and sin has corrupted the entirety of creation. Men and women continue the legacy of Adam and Eve with our "do it myself" and the lack of love in our relationships. We cannot save ourselves from ourselves! We need a Savior.

And then since God is the God of both righteousness and justice, there must be some accounting for our sin. Our sin debt is beyond our reckoning, and we have no way to pay that debt. Only God Himself can pay it, and that is precisely why Christ died on the cross. The ugliness of our sin is highlighted by the brutality of the crucifixion,

but it also stands in sharp contrast to the beauty and depth of our Lord's love for us.

Of course, the cross is only a portion of the story. The resurrection reminds us that it was God Incarnate who died on the cross, but since Christ was fully God as well as fully man, He is eternal; death itself cannot contain Him. He was, and is, and is to come.... And the resurrection is the first fruits of the eternal life now offered to us by faith.

Finally, since Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has covered our sin debt, we now have a restored and abiding relationship with the Triune Godhead. By faith, we have the Holy Spirit—God Himself! — living within us. As life on this side of the kingdom confronts us with our shortcomings, weaknesses, and failures, we can depend upon the faithful work of our Lord who has promised to complete the work He has begun in us. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us!

Truly, the death and resurrection of Christ is beyond our human comprehension. It is a more spectacular reality than anything Christ created. But it is also incredibly personal. The Godhead wants you and me to know Him more truly and more deeply as time on earth passes. He calls us to repent of the sins that continue to cause us to stumble and to walk in faith before Him, embracing the resurrection power within us to become who He has created us to be and to fulfill His purposes for us.

*Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.... If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*

I Corinthians 15:12-14, 19-20

If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:

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