



March 2021

Reflections from the Pastor

St. John's United Methodist Church
The Messenger

CREATING COSMOS FROM CHAOS

Recently I read an article in the “*Good News*” magazine by Jessica LaGrone who serves as the Dean of Chapel at Asbury Theological Seminary. As I read the article, my mind reverted to the opening verses of Genesis 1:1-2 which reads, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*”

The universe described in these two verses is one of chaos and confusion. But the very next verse of Genesis one reads, “And God said, “*Let there be light, and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*” As one continues through the verses of Genesis one, we see God transforming the chaos of verse two into cosmos.

Both chaos and cosmos are Greek terms. In its origin, cosmos meant order or orderliness. Chaos literally meant a deep abyss which has come to mean a state of utter confusion and disorder. This is the exact opposite of cosmos.

In today’s world of science, cosmos has become synonymous with our universe made up of planets, stars, constellations and incredible galaxies.

What is of interest is that the Greek philosophers also connected these two terms with their understanding of the origin of the universe. They described the creation of the universe in terms of a primeval emptiness before things came into being.

[Ovid](#), the Roman poet, saw Chaos as the original disordered and formless mass, from which the maker of the Cosmos produced the ordered universe. They saw the Prime Mover of our universe moving upon the chaos and creating a perfect world of orderliness.

My ruminations on these two terms brought me to this conclusion: Maybe this is one of the best ways to describe God’s omnipotence and wisdom by His genius of bringing cosmos out of the chaos in our universe and in our lives.

Americans have been experiencing plenty of chaos these days as we try to negotiate our lives around the Coronavirus Pandemic, especially as we try to figure out where, when, and how we can get vaccinated for this virus.

As United Methodists we also sense a lot of chaos as we wait for General Conference to convene and to see if our denomination will divide between the progressive-liberals and the evangelical conservatives.

As I write this article for this Newsletter, I confess that I am apprehensive in both of the above theaters of chaos.

Let us take new courage from the fact that God specializes in creating cosmos out of chaos. He did not leave the chaos in the

abyss of confusion and disorder. He spoke into existence the universe by the sheer Word of His power. We can be confident that He will not leave us to struggle endlessly in this chaos either.

written by Rev. Ivan L. Schwenn,
March 2021

WHY FELLOWSHIP IS SO IMPORTANT

For most of us, and maybe for all of us, the past year has not been easy. The social separation that has been forced upon us has been exceedingly difficult.

Why do we so strongly desire to be together?

It is because God has created us for fellowship.

Thinking more deeply on this, why did God create us? Before God created humankind, the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—enjoyed perfect love and fellowship with each other. Why did God mess that up by creating humankind?



It is because God in his gracious love desired to share both himself and his friendship with another. So we were made in His “likeness”(Gen.1:26 NIV). We were made for friendship like God is made for friendship.

Through our friendship with each other we also taste our friendship with God. Remember Jesus’ words to his beloved followers: “*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love*” (Jn 15:9). “*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you... You are my friends if you do what I command*” (Jn 15:12-14).

God loves me and God loves you. I love God and I love you. You love God and you love me. Now, do we get it? Now can we see why we

are made to desire each other so strongly? We help each other enjoy God!

Hopefully, this social separation will soon end. Until then we want you to know you have not been forgotten. Your friendship, your friendship experienced by your very presence, is strongly desired. My God allow us to experience it soon. Until then do be encouraged by knowing that you are being missed.

This article was written by Rev. DeVern E. Schwenn, brother of Rev Ivan L. Schwenn. DeVern has been active in Pastoral Ministries for over 50 years, largely in the Dakota Conference of the UM Church. This was a letter written to the Seasoned Citizens Executive Committee of Grant County in South Dakota.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” [Philippians 4:6-6 (NIV)].

Every person is affected by worry at one time or another. Worry occurs when we allow a small issue to become a mountain in our minds. Someone wrote, “*Worry is an old man with a bent head, carrying a load of feathers he thinks is lead.*”



Worry is often the anticipation of troubles that never occur. When we allow these unrealistic anxieties to dominate our minds, worry is the result. These are “borrowed troubles”.

Just before Jesus left His disciples he

promised, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* [John 14:27]. One needs to replace worry with the peace that Jesus gives.

Paul saw prayer as the way to deal with anxiety. Give your anxiety to God with prayer and thanksgiving. The result is that God will replace your anxiety with His peace. And the peace of God will act as a military watch to guard your mind and heart.

Paul is declaring that the power of prayer is our best protection to keep our minds safe and sane from worry and anxiety.



EASTER WEEK SERVICES

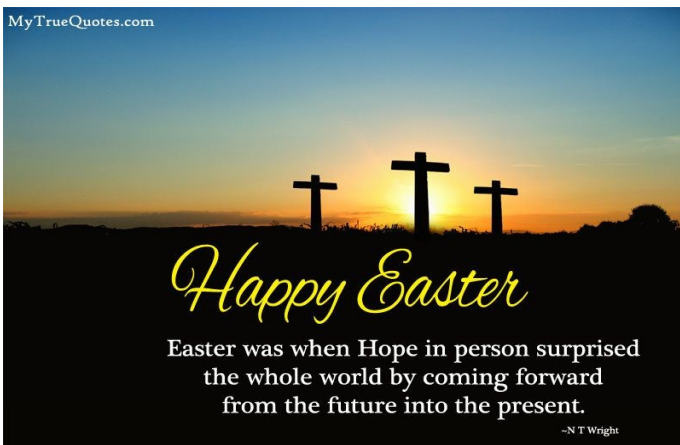
Sunday, March 28th - Palm Sunday

9:30 am

Friday, April 2nd - Good Friday - 6:00 pm

Sunday, April 4th - Easter Service

8:30 am



WHY DOES EASTER FALL ON A DIFFERENT DATE EACH YEAR?

Easter and the many church holidays related to it—such as Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday—are called *“moveable feasts,”* because they do not fall on a fixed date on the Gregorian calendar, which follows the cycle of the Sun and the seasons. Instead, these days follow a *lunisolar* calendar, similar to Jewish holidays.

HOW IS THE DATE OF EASTER DETERMINED?

According to a Fourth Century ruling, the date of Easter is set for the first Sunday following the first [full Moon](#) of Spring, occurring on or shortly after the [Spring Equinox](#).

The March equinox is the date when the sun crosses from the southern hemisphere of the sky to the northern hemisphere marking the beginning of spring.

The reason for this is that Easter must occur after the Biblical festival of Passover, on the full moon, when [Jesus](#) was crucified,” said Professor Sacha Stern, head of the Hebrew and Jewish Studies department at University College London.

March 22 is the earliest Easter can occur in any given year, and April 25 is the latest. If that first spring [full Moon](#) occurs on a Sunday, then Easter will be observed on the *following* Sunday“

In 2022, [the equinox will take place on its usual date of March 20th](#) (which is a Sunday). The next full moon will occur on March 28th - the Sunday exactly a week before Easter.

The decision on how and when Easter should fall each year was made by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, the first major church council.



NON-EGG EGG HUNTS

If you decide not to make real colored eggs this year, there are still ways to have an Easter “Egg” hunt.

Sock Hunts – Hide new pairs of Easter-themed socks (rolled into an egg shape) around the house. “You find them, you keep them!”

Paper “Eggs” – Before Easter, have the kids decorate eggs made out of construction paper and then have an adult hide them. On Easter morning, whoever finds the most eggs wins a prize. You can even include messages or scripture verses on the back of each egg!

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S UMC – PART I

In recent months, the granddaughter of Rev. Clarence Holland, Lisa Polzein, came to Tucson to see the church her grandfather built in 1930. Lisa had been given some photo albums and other files which created an interest sufficient to make that trip to Tucson from California.

Rev. Clarence Holland was married in November 1921. Both he and his wife, Faye, had terminal Tuberculosis and moved to Prescott where the cool, dry climate helped Faye improve quickly. Rev. Clarence Holland did not improve so they

moved to Tucson where the Veterans Administration had built a hospital with specialization in respiratory diseases. Respiratory disease was rampant among soldiers who had fought in World War I.

Rev. Holland was hospitalized for a period after which he became an active chaplain to the VA hospital. Most of the housing in the vicinity of the VA complex was occupied by families of the veterans having need of the hospital’s services. Rev. Holland began ministering to these families by holding Bible studies and worship services in a rectangular building they acquired. These worshipers eventually organized a Community Church.

In 1929 they became affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church and Rev. Holland was assigned to build a sanctuary. This project was completed in July 1931 as the St. John’s Methodist Episcopal Church.

At the time St. John’s Methodist Church was dedicated, it was the only Protestant congregation in the area. The city of Tucson was about 3 ½ miles to the north and was so small that a person could easily walk around it in a few hours.

In the photos Lisa sent to St.

John’s, we see the completed church as it was dedicated in 1931. The lower photo is looking from the front of the church towards the VA complex one block east.



**Bible Word Search:
CROSS, TOMB, & RESURRECTION**

Z	C	W	B	D	M	L	O	K	S	S	Y	Y	H	X
U	D	R	E	E	R	V	E	A	Q	P	Z	Q	E	G
I	H	E	A	V	E	N	S	V	V	S	D	D	H	L
Q	T	F	R	S	D	R	P	V	A	O	U	W	E	O
V	C	O	O	O	E	G	E	L	D	Y	E	S	N	E
O	C	R	M	Q	M	X	V	I	E	C	J	W	E	F
P	A	G	U	B	P	A	S	S	O	R	C	K	L	J
S	F	I	H	C	T	C	N	N	X	K	S	I	A	I
O	Z	V	Q	I	I	R	I	S	N	W	W	Z	D	S
A	R	E	O	P	O	F	S	K	K	M	Y	K	G	Q
L	E	N	L	H	N	O	I	S	N	E	C	S	A	E
H	T	E	T	J	K	D	I	X	V	K	B	A	M	R
L	S	S	U	M	E	D	O	C	I	N	P	R	Y	C
N	A	S	K	M	Q	Q	C	N	G	O	Y	B	L	O
R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N	E	I	X

Words can be found across, up and down, diagonal and backwards

AROSE

ASCENSION

CROSS

CRUCIFIXION

DISCIPLES

EASTER

FORGIVENESS

HEAVEN

JESUS

MAGDALENE

NICODEMUS

REDEMPTION

RESURRECTION

ROMANS

SALVATION

SINS

THORNS

TOMB

March 2021 Birthdays



March Birthdays

March 2nd	Elsa Cocoa's Birthday
March 3rd	Don Harder's Birthday
March 9th	Josie Coronel's Birthday
March 19th	Terry Emerick's Birthday
March 21st	Dori Paustian's Birthday
March 22nd	Sioux Espinoza's Birthday
March 24th	Tom Ernst's Birthday
March 26th	Dan DeMattie's Birthday
March 28th	Don Heimke's Birthday

Usual Sunday Morning Worship—9:30 am

EASTER WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Sunday, March 28th - Palm Sunday - 9:30 am

Friday, April 2nd - Good Friday - 6:00 pm

Sunday, April 4th - Easter Service - 8:30 am

**Office Hours—8:00 am to 4:00 pm
(Monday, Tuesday, and Friday)**



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