



Olive Leaves



March 2024

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From Pastor Walt: "Christ is Risen"

Pastor Walt Harper
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Last month, my newsletter article was about "The Pericopal System," all those readings appointed for each week of the year. In pointing out that some Sundays have an easily defined focus, I wrote: "On Easter Sunday, you read the Gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. On Christmas Eve you read passages promising the Savior, and then passages about His birth. On Pentecost you read Acts 2."

And so it is. This year Easter is March 31st. Guess what we'll be reading in Church? Mark 16:1-8.

As I also pointed out last month, there are readings for every week; and they happen in a three-year cycle. Year A focuses on the Gospel of Matthew; Year B focuses on the Gospel of Mark; and Year C focuses on the Gospel of Luke. (The Gospel of John is dispersed throughout all three years.) This year is Year B, so that puts us in the Gospel of Mark.

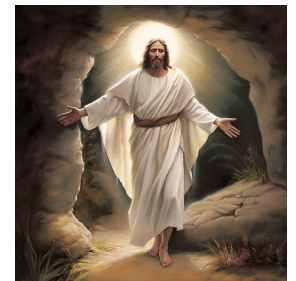
Here's something you can't miss: All four Gospels say that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. He was crucified, died, was observed to be dead by both His followers and the Roman soldiers. He was placed in a tomb on Friday afternoon. Saturday was a "day of silence." Then on Sunday morning He was alive from the grave, literally and historically.

The soldiers saw the angels and fainted. The women met the angels. The women then met the risen Jesus. The other disciples met the risen Jesus. Hundreds of disciples met the risen Jesus over the next 40 days. There is not a single place that the Bible ever says anything other than: Jesus is alive from the dead.

In the Book of Acts, it is preached in every sermon. Jesus was the Messiah; He was betrayed into the hands of evil men who killed Him; He rose from the dead, and we have seen this with our own eyes.

The Epistles continue to talk about it. They explain "What does this mean?" They apply it to our own faith walk.

Paul met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, and he says so without any bit of doubt or wavering.



It's as clear as it can be. Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, and alive from His grave. Paul goes even farther in I Corinthians 15. He says that "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." Of course he quickly adds, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

It is the constant and consistent witness of the Early Church. They preached it, wrote about it, and went to their own deaths confessing it.

"Christ is risen!"

"He is risen indeed!"



From our President

James Crosland, President



It is hard to believe March is here! Jason Dennis has formed our Nominating Committee and will be reaching out to the congregation for volunteers. Our boards and committees do such great work, and it is all because of the members that serve. If you feel called to serve and want to offer your time and talents, please reach out to Jason and

**Needed:
Members
to Serve**

let him know. I really don't think you will be disappointed!

Natalie and I would like to thank you for all the birthday wishes last month. We have such a loving congregation!







Safety Tip: It's Tax Season... please watch out for those scammers. If it's too good to be true, it usually is!




March 2024 Lectionary

Date	Festival	Old Testament	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
March 3	Lent 3	Exodus 20:1-17	Psalm 19	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	John 2:13-22
March 10	Lent 4	Numbers 21:4-9	Psalm 107:1-9	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
March 17	Lent 5	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Psalm 119:9-16	Hebrews 5:1-10	Mark 10: 35-45
March 24	Palm Sunday	Zechariah 9:9-12	Psalm 118:19- 24	Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 11-1-11
March 28	Maundy Thursday	Exodus 24:3-11	Psalm 116:12- 19	1 Corinthians 10:16-17	Mark 14:12-26
March 30	Holy Saturday	First Lesson Genesis 1:1-2:3	Second Lesson Genesis 7:1-8; 9:8-13	Third Lesson Exodus 14:1-31	John 20:11-18
March 31	Easter Sunday	Isaiah 25:6-9	Psalm 16	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Mark 16:1-8

**2024 LENT, HOLY WEEK, and EASTER
SCHEDULE of WORSHIP and EVENTS**

Wednesdays in Lent March 6th, 13th, 20th	12:00 Noon	Midweek Lenten Worship Light Lunch after the Noon Service	
	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Worship	
Saturday March 23	5:00 PM	Celebrating Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship & The Lord's Supper	
Sunday March 24 	8:00 AM & 10:30 AM	Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship & The Lord's Supper	
	9:15 AM	Sunday School & Bible Classes	
Thursday March 28	7:00 PM		Maundy Thursday Worship Service and The Lord's Supper
Friday March 29th	Noon & 7:00 PM	Good Friday Tenebrae	
Holy Saturday March 30th	5:00 PM		The Easter Vigil with The Lord's Supper
 Sunday March 31 st 	8:00 AM	The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday	
	9:15 AM	Breakfast (No Sunday School) Traditional fare served by the Church Council: scrambled eggs, meat, grits, & assorted breads Continental breakfast: a variety of home prepared breads & sweets Coffee & juices are provided.	
	9:30 AM	Resurrection Celebration, Activities, & Easter Egg Hunt Families will begin in the downstairs "Big Room." The egg hunt will continue outside for children through 4 th grade.	
	10:30 AM	The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday	

Pastoral Acts

	<p align="center">Charles Fletcher</p> December 23, 1935 – February 11, 2024 Memorial Service: February 17, 2024
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Board of Stewardship

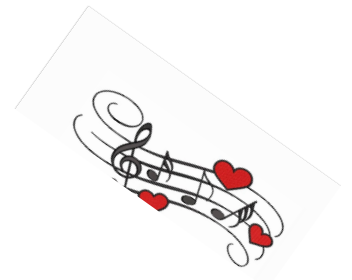
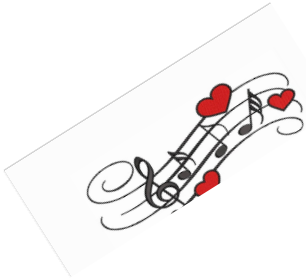
Naven Olson, Chairperson

(All Scripture verses are from NASB)

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death." 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

This brings to mind the last two verses of my favorite Easter hymn "He's risen, He's risen, Christ Jesus the Lord", words and music by C. F. W. Walther, translation from LW 138.

"Oh where is your sting, death?
We fear you no more,
Christ rose, and now open is fair Eden's door.
For all our transgressions his blood does atone;
Redeemed and forgiven, we now are his own.
Then sing your hosannas and raise your loud voice;
Proclaim the blest tidings that all may rejoice.
Laud, honor and praise to the Lamb that was slain,
In glory he reigns, yes, and ever shall reign."



Since Christ has atoned for the sin of Adam and for all the subsequent sins of all of humanity by His death and resurrection, let us make this saving message known to our relatives, neighbors, friends, and coworkers by word and deed. And, continue to support the ministry of this church with your time, talents, resources, and presence so that as many as possible may know Jesus and escape the wrath to come and enjoy a blissful eternity with the Triune God in heaven.



The Board of Fellowship:

Jill Brabham, Chairperson

It's a good thing the groundhog didn't see his shadow because an early spring makes an early Easter so much better! This month we are continuing to enjoy fellowship and food at our Lenten Lunches following the noon Wednesday services. Please be sure to join us if you can. **If you are interested in providing food for one of the lunches there is a sign up sheet in the Narthex.**



Easter Sunday breakfast will be held beginning at 9:15 AM in the Fellowship Hall. We will provide scrambled eggs, sausage, locally smoked ham, grits, fresh fruit, yogurt, coffee, tea, and lemonade. We are asking each family to bring something to add to the menu such as fresh fruit, sweet rolls, pastries etc. Please bring your dishes to church on Easter morning and drop them off in the kitchen.

The Board of Evangelism: "Treasure Time"

Aresa Boykin, Board Member

**"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where moths and vermin do not destroy,
and where thieves do not break in and steal." Matthew 6:20**

It is interesting how many of the verbs that apply to money also apply to time. You can *spend* time. You can *waste* time. You can *lose* time. You can *save* time. In many ways, time and money are similar.

But they are different in one important way. If you end up wasting money or losing some money, you can always get more of it. That is not true of time, however.

Time is the stuff that, once you spend it, you never get it back. Time is the most valuable thing you have. Are you intentional with how you use it?

The biggest miracle in the Bible is how Jesus used His time. He invested His entire life—every moment of it—for you. He spent it all being perfect so He could earn God's favor and give it to you as a gift. Then He gave His final moments suffering a sinner's death so He could take that punishment away from you.

Be aware of how God loved you, be intentional with your time today. Invest some time in things that matter most. Invest some time with God. Invest some time in your health and rest. Invest some time in other people.

The biggest impact God made in your life was based on the way He used His time. Consider the impact you can make with yours.

From Pastor Matt Ewart - Time of Grace



Mount Olive Preschool

Anna Brent, Preschool Director

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The Preschool is looking forward to all things "spring" and will begin learning about spring growth/changes and continue working our way through the alphabet with the help of our Zoophonics animal friends. We will also begin learning about Easter and celebrate our Risen Savior!

Registration for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year has gone well! We currently have a few openings in 2's class for next year. We are excited to begin planning for another school year and look forward to seeing how the Lord is going to work in and through the preschool during the upcoming year! So, if you know anyone who has a child that will turn 2 by September 1st, 2024 and is looking for a Christian preschool, please have them contact me.

The Board of Education

Liezl Baden, Board Member

The Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser was a phenomenal success. The Youth Group raised \$1004 this year...around 40% more compared to the past two years. Thank you to the congregation for your generous giving for Sharing God's Love (SGL). The youth group will also continue to collect canned goods for SGL through mid-March. As a service activity for March, they will bring these to SGL and stock the shelves as well.

Camp Linn Haven is a Christian "Overnight" Summer Camp affiliated with the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. This summer, we are considering sending a group of children and youth volunteers to Camp Linn Haven for the first time in many years. Please be on the lookout for an interest form.



SCUBA, "Diving into friendship with God" is the theme for Vacation Bible School this summer. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, June 12th – Friday, June 14th from 6-8 pm. Registration will open soon and please be on the lookout for VBS volunteer signups.

Circle of Friends is a Sunday School intended for the Special Needs children of our congregation. We still have a need for a Sunday School teacher since Katie Tyczynski moved back to her hometown in NY. If you would like to bring Jesus to the Special Needs Children or know of someone interested in filling this position, please let us know.



Join a Bible Class

Winter 2024 Sunday School & Bible Classes – 9:15 AM			
Infants – age 2	Nursery	Parents may stay with their infants & toddlers in the nursery. Please listen to the worship service through the speaker. Please sanitize the toys with which your child has played.	
Circle of Friends	Preschool Area	Faithful Group of Volunteers	Bringing Jesus to Special Needs Children
PK3 – 4th Grade	Upstairs Classroom	Jessica Dennis, Megan Weed, Brandy Maye, & Amanda Dalton	The Birth of Jesus Learning Christmas Carols
Confirmation Class	Preschool Area	Pr. Colin Ford	A two-year study of Luther's Small Catechism and the Bible
Middle School Youth	Wagner House	Rick Baden	Bible Study
High School Youth	Wagner House	Joel & April Fancey	Bible Study
Adults	Fellowship Hall	Pr. Walt Harper	The Eight Pillars of Faith
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			

The Board of Public Relations: Passover and Easter

Sue Strouse, Chairperson

We know that the Old Testament points to Jesus. The parallel between the Passover and Easter really shows how God knew humanity needed a perfect lamb to save us from sin. Here are a few examples of how the Old Testament book of Exodus points to Jesus:

- The lamb had to be without blemish, without cuts, bruises, or deformities. Jesus was without blemish. He was sinless.
- The lamb had to be one year old, in the prime of his life. Jesus was in the prime of His life when He was sacrificed as a young man, 33 years old.
- The lamb had to be a male. Jesus came to earth as a man.
- The Israelites weren't allowed to break the bones of the Lamb during the cooking of and not even during the eating. Jesus' bones didn't get broken during the torture and the mockery He endured or the crucifixion.
- The lamb died in place of the first-born of the Israelites. Jesus died in our place. He was the "firstborn of many brethren". He died on the cross in order to reconcile us with God.
- The Israelites had to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, top of the door frame and on the threshold that formed a cross, so the hand of death would Passover them. Jesus' blood saved us from death so we can have eternal life.
- The lamb opened a way to freedom for the Jews from years of slavery in Egypt. Jesus' sacrifice sets us free us from the bondage of sin.

As you can see, the Old Testament really does point to Jesus!



Read the Bible in Three Years –March 2024

March 2024							
Mar 1	Job 37	Mar 9	John 3	Mar 17	John 11	Mar 25	John 19
Mar 2	Job 38	Mar 10	John 4	Mar 18	John 12	Mar 26	John 20
Mar 3	Job 39	Mar 11	John 5	Mar 19	John 13	Mar 27	John 21
Mar 4	Job 40	Mar 12	John 6	Mar 20	John 14	Mar 28	Exodus 1
Mar 5	Job 41	Mar 13	John 7	Mar 21	John 15	Mar 29	Exodus 2
Mar 6	Job 42	Mar 14	John 8	Mar 22	John 16	Mar 30	Exodus 3
Mar 7	John 1	Mar 15	John 9	Mar 23	John 17	Mar 31	Exodus 4
Mar 8	John 2	Mar 16	John 10	Mar 24	John 18		

On March 7th, we begin reading the Gospel of John. The purpose of this gospel, as stated by John himself, is to show that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ, the Son of God, and that believers in Him might have eternal life. We end the month in the Old Testament book of Exodus as we journey with Moses and the Israelites out of Egypt to The Promised Land.

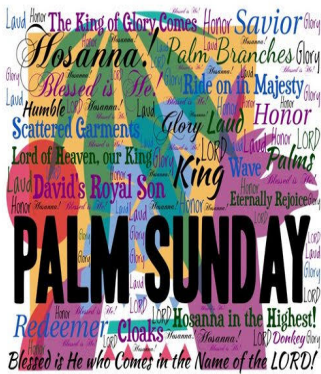
March 2024 Anniversaries

3/5	Hannah & Chris Hennighan	3/17	David & Paula Meetze
3/7	James & Abigail Sharpe	3/18	Todd & Shari Selke
3/15	Stuart & Pam Dalton	3/20	Laura & Brian Laprise
3/16	Al & Annette Holladay, Jr.		

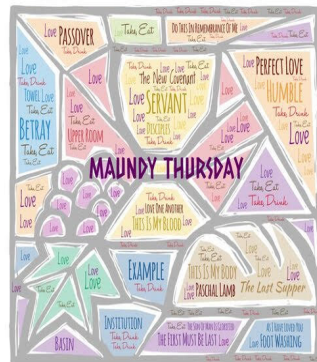
March 2024 Birthdays

3/4	Angela Eustice	3/12	Owen Dennis	3/21	Liz Rosinski
3/6	Gerry Fletcher	3/13	Pam Stuck	3/21	Ryan Voyles
3/6	Stacey Robinson	3/14	Charles Stuck, II	3/22	Jimmy Crosland
3/6	Myrna Rush	3/14	John Tedder	3/23	Donna Sons
3/6	Mandy Schultz	3/15	Rebecca Curry	3/24	Karen Meetze
3/7	Sandy Stepanovic	3/17	Caitlin Voyles	3/24	Nelson Thompson
3/8	Sandra Stocker	3/19	Sara Jones	3/29	Eddie Magic
		3/21	Norma Hessary		

Signs at the Church Entrance



Palm Sunday commemorates the day Jesus entered Jerusalem and was greeted by people waving palm branches. This event serves as a reminder for Christians to welcome Jesus into their hearts and be ready to follow Him.



Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, where the first institution of the Lord's Supper or communion was given by Jesus to His disciples in the upper room.



Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus. It's a significant holiday because it reminds followers that Jesus died for the sins of humanity so that we may be perfect in the sight of God.



Easter, also called Resurrection Sunday, commemorates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He was crucified by the Romans in 30 AD. After being buried for 3 days, He conquered sin, death, and the devil so we may have eternal life.

Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

"This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Psalm 118:24

Prayers for our Homebound (and for everyone) for Easter:

Dear Lord, thank you that Easter is coming! May I realize afresh today what Your death and resurrection mean for me: forgiveness, freedom, and the ability to walk with You through this fallen world into eternity. May I always find my satisfaction in You and Your willingness to offer Yourself to me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Remember our homebound as we make Holy Week and Easter preparations. Many of these precious people were once very active in their churches. They helped with events such as Easter children’s activities, breakfast preparation, choir/music, and more. Please call or send cards to remind them that they continue to be a vital part of our church family.

Don Angen	Cleta Dunaway	Anita Meetze	Eva Mae Monts	Mandy Schultz
Nadia R. BouFawaz	Betty Hunter	Laura Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Linda Schmidt
Phil Carter	Harold/Sarah Jones	Laurie Meetze	Polly Roland	Shirlean Sons
Shirley Curry	Carolyn McCartha	Margaret Meetze	Twila Sandt	Henry Weed
		Thelma Miller		

From Pastor Colin: “Christ in the Desert,” by Ivan Kramskoi, 1887
Pr. Colin Ford, colin.ford@mtolivesc.org

**“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”
 Matthew 4:1**

During a time when Paris was the center of the art world, Ivan Kramskoi, a Russian painter created "Christ in the Desert." Different from the impressionists of the time, he focused on capturing people's faces. We are left with few records as to his thoughts on this painting. So, before I take a moment to delve into some of the symbolism, I would like you all to take a moment and really dive into the work. Think about what you see. What jumps out at you? And remember, this is in the context of Matthew 4, Jesus’ temptation.



Several things stand out to me. First, Jesus has been fasting for 40 days. I think sometimes His hunger gets glossed over. I don't know about you, but I tried to fast for a week. I only made it 5 days and I was ready to eat my arm! So I stopped early and binged. I was ravenous. So here we see the state of Jesus 40 days into that fast: his eyes sunken, his skin clinging to his bones, his gauntness, his sitting, and tiredness. Looking closer, his face looks sunburned, as he has been in the elements 40 days. Here we see Jesus at his human limit; he still is all God, but his body is at the human limit.

Next, we continue to look at Jesus's hands, clasped in prayer tightly. He reminds us that in times of fasting, we turn to our father in heaven when we struggle or when times are tough.

If we follow Jesus's gaze, where does it lead? Look closely. He is staring at something. A single stone meets Jesus' gaze. Has it been placed on its side? It is irregular so as to catch our eye. Why? If you look at all the other stones, they look like rocks, but here, its uprightness and Jesus's gaze lead us to ask, what is special about this stone? Then we hear the words of Satan, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." The temptation. You, too, feel the pull of the stone, to heed the devil's whispers and eat, to end the suffering. And while you don't see the devil directly, his presence is in the art.

Look to the darkness on the page; beyond Jesus, there is an encroaching sunset that seems to be swallowing up the desert. In addition, Jesus, the light of the world, is cloaked in darkness. But you might see the light as a sunrise that gives you hope that the darkness is passing away. Jesus is there in the midst it. I am reminded of **John 1: “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”**

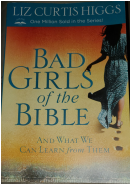
I could go on, as the longer I look at this painting, I find more. How some of the rock formations look like faces or how this temptation feels like an anti-garden of Eden. But I do want you to explore for yourself. Go in the peace of the Lord.

Announcements



Mid-Week Lenten Services Continue until March 20.

Wednesday mid-week services will continue through March 20, service times are 12 Noon and 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Lunch will be served after the noon service.



Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club is reading, *Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs. We meet on the first and third Tuesdays each month at 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall. On March 5th, we will be discussing chapter 8 and on March 19th chapter 9. ALL women of the congregation are welcome to join in the class.

April Newsletter Deadline –March 26, 2024

Your next deadline for submitting articles for the April 2024 issue of the Olive Leaves is **March 26, 2024**. Please send your **1/2 page**, nonpolitical articles to Sue Strouse at slstrouse@gmail.com.

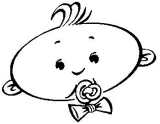


Secure E Giving: A New Look Coming March 7th

For those of you who are contributing by e giving, you will notice that the site will have a new look beginning March 7th. According to VANCO, your account, password, and recurring payments will remain the same. You will see pictures of Mt. Olive above the giving labels.

If you would like to set up a new account, the link is on the home page of our church website, mtolivesc.org. You may give through your checking account or by credit card. Our e giving is powered by VANCO, a secure company that follows strict guidelines and policies. Even though the e giving page looks like our website, Mt. Olive will have no record of your account, your card number, or your personal information. If you need help setting up your account, contact Aresa Boykin.

Nursery "Cry Room" Reminder



Mt. Olive's beautiful nursery is located downstairs, just behind the sanctuary. Parents are welcome to stay with their children during any worship service. There is a speaker so you will be able to hear the pastors. Parents, as you are leaving, please tidy up and sanitize the toys with which your child has played.



Kids' Korner: Puzzle

Connect the dots to find two symbols of Easter. Then write the words in the correct blanks to complete an Easter poem.

17 • holy 18 • righteous 19 • He 20 • died 21 • to 22 • 23 • one 24 • save 25 • again 26 • rose 27 • us 28 • all 29 • from 30 • sin 31 • 32 • 33 • 34 • 35 • 36 • 37 • 38 • 39 • 40 • 41 • 42 • 43 • 44 • 45 • 46 • 47 • 48 • 49 • 50 • 51 • 52 • 53 • 54 • 55 • 56 • 57 • 58 • 59 • 60 • 61 • 62 • 63 • 64 • 65 • 66 • 67 • 68 • 69 • 70 • 71 • 72 • 73 • 74 • 75 • 76 • 77 • 78 • 79 • 80 • 81 • 82 • 83 • 84 • 85 • 86 • 87 • 88 • 89 • 90 • 91 • 92 • 93 • 94 • 95 • 96 • 97 • 98 • 99 • 100 •

17 • the 18 • holy 19 • loving 20 • 21 • 22 • 23 • He 24 • died 25 • to 26 • 27 • 28 • 29 • 30 • 31 • 32 • 33 • 34 • 35 • 36 • 37 • 38 • 39 • 40 • 41 • 42 • 43 • 44 • 45 • 46 • 47 • 48 • 49 • 50 • 51 • 52 • 53 • 54 • 55 • 56 • 57 • 58 • 59 • 60 • 61 • 62 • 63 • 64 • 65 • 66 • 67 • 68 • 69 • 70 • 71 • 72 • 73 • 74 • 75 • 76 • 77 • 78 • 79 • 80 • 81 • 82 • 83 • 84 • 85 • 86 • 87 • 88 • 89 • 90 • 91 • 92 • 93 • 94 • 95 • 96 • 97 • 98 • 99 • 100 •

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2	4	6	8	10	12	14
16	18	20	22	24		
26	28	30	33	35	37	38
40	41	42	43	44	45	46

Answer: God gave us Jesus Christ, his Son, the holy, loving, righteous one; He died to save us all from sin, and on Easter day he rose again.