

10 Creative Ways to Explore a Bible Passage by Jeremy Steele (www.umcom.org) (Note: This is a helpful and interesting article. Since space is limited, this will be a two or three part article, spread out in two or three newsletters.)

The last two months (**February & March 2017 Methodist Dimension**), we covered 1) Decode the story 2) Decipher the argument 3) Design a comic strip 4) Create a meme 5) Become a Bible translator 6) Explore the text, co-text and intertext, as ways to explore the Bible. Here are the last 4 suggestions of out-of-the-box ways to explore, study and better communicate the Bible's message.

7. Get it down to a sentence (or two) - It is difficult to imagine how many billions of other words the Bible has inspired. Most of the time, our posture toward Scripture is to multiply the words; however, Jesus does the opposite. When asked for the greatest commandments, Jesus gives two sentences that he says summarize all of the law and the prophets. Two sentences! Sometimes the best thing we can do is get super simple. For this method, you boil down an entire passage to a single sentence. This can be fun to do with chapters or entire books. When taking a larger chunk, it is easiest to start by tackling several sentences or paragraphs first, then boiling down those summaries to a single sentence. The entire Noah story might boil down simply to "Noah obeyed God." The 23rd Psalm begins with its own summary, "The Lord is my Shepherd." And you might find a summary of the sheep and the goats account in Matthew 25 in Matthew 22:37b-39 (NRSV), "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

8. Experience it with all five senses - Far too often, we only engage our eyes when exploring the Bible. Next time you open the Bible, try to experience the passage before you with all five senses. What might you hear? Are there birds or waves or the crackle of a fire close enough to hear? Is it cold or hot? Is there sand between your toes or wind blowing through your hair? Are you close enough to the sea to taste the air, or are you getting ready to taste a meal? What do you smell? Do you smell livestock or flowers? Is the disturbing smell of sickness or death in the air? Once you build the scene through your senses, new pieces of the narrative come to life or are given deeper meaning, and the whole passage becomes very real.

9. Practice Lectio Divina (divine reading) - The practice of "divine reading", moves through four phases with an underlying confidence that God speaks to us whenever we read the Bible. 1) read the passage over and over, savoring each word and waiting for one to rise above the rest. 2) Once a single word or phrase sticks in your mind, you begin to explore the word. What feelings, emotions or memories does it evoke? After a time of experiencing the word move to, 3) ask and listen to God for the answer to what this word is meant to say to you. Why this word? What is God saying? 4) Finally, use the word as a focus point to let go of every distracting thought so that you can rest in the presence of God.

10. Scrapbook it - For the crafty people, it's time to pull out your curvy scissors and glue sticks and get to work. Take a passage or verse and use all the tools at your disposal to illustrate it. You might decide to make the key word the center of your page or use pictures from your own life to convey the emotions behind the passage. The goal is to create a visual expression of the truth in the passage using as much crafty creativity as you can.

Whether you use scissors or the classical story structure, breaking out of the box of your normal method for exploring the Bible can bring a new perspective to the Scripture, new life to your study time and new clarity to your teaching. Not it's time to close your browser and use one of these methods to explore the Bible.

HAPPY EASTER

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Easter Message

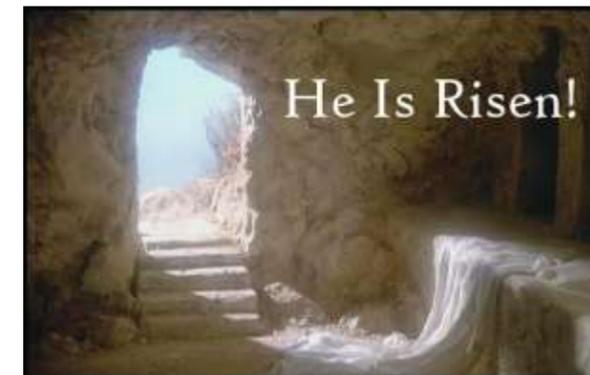
The Empty Tomb

Rev. David Madden

There are many alternative explanations to what the Gospels record. Perhaps Jesus didn't die on the cross, and was resuscitated. Perhaps the tomb was robbed, and resurrection stories are simply a myth. But, the early church boldly claimed the tomb was empty, and that they saw and spoke with the resurrected Christ. There is no doubt the disciples believed in what they saw. They were so convinced of the bodily resurrection of Jesus that they spent the remainder of their lives preaching the life, death, and resurrection of their Lord and Savior.

The resurrection is not simply about Jesus being restored to life. The resurrection is God's acceptance of the life and teachings of Jesus, and the rejection of the Roman domination system that enslaved the Jewish people. In the resurrection, God said yes to love and no to oppression. The resurrection is God's announcing victory over the evil powers that rule our world. And the resurrection is Jesus's triumph over death so that all that believe in him will have eternal life.

During this Easter season, let us all spend time with God reflecting on what the resurrection means to us. For me, the resurrection is proof that death is only the beginning of an eternity with God.



Cultural Traditions
Enhance Easter
By
Tafadzwa
Mudambanuki

Zimbabwe - Tafadzwa Mudambanuki

It is 3 a.m. on Easter Sunday 1980, and my mother, Mavis Mudambanuki, awakens me by knocking on the door of my room. Leaving my brothers asleep, I get dressed and meet her at the gate outside our home in Chipfatsura village, in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. In the dark, we trudge to Chegore village, seven miles away. As we approach, my mother breaks into a familiar Eastser song: "Christ is risen! Christ is risen! Hallelujah!" She knocks at the door of a home as she sings, and three women and a man join us with rattles and tambourines to augment the music. We go on to the next house, and as we move through the village, the procession grows.

Our party is making a joyful ruckus as we fill the road in Chegore village and head back to Chipfatsura United Methodist Church for a sunrise Easter service. Similar processions and vigils occur in other villages around the country.

The Philippines - Gladys Mangiduyos

In the "Rice Bowl of the Philippines", Nueva Ecija, about 60 miles north of Manila, Christians celebrate Easter before sunrise. Traditionally, around 4:30 a.m., local churches form clusters to celebrate Easter jointly. The people gather at the river, by the hill, by

(Continued on inside - column 3)

LENT 2017

A TIME OF REPENTANCE, GRACE
AND RENEWAL

Here is what will be happening at RUMC during the remainder of the Lent Season:

Sunday, April 2 - Worship/Holy Communion - 11:00 a.m. Sermon by Rev. Madden.

During Lent the Chancel Choir has been presenting anthems from, "Seven Last Words", written and directed by Stan Bruns and accompanied by Judy Graham Barnes. This will continue for April 2nd: "I Thirst"; on April 16th they will do a piece called, "Hallelujah, He Is Risen".

Sunday, April 9 - Palm Sunday - Procession of the Palms and presentation of "The Living Bible", written by Bobby Shaw, directed by Judy Barnes & Joanne Clark, with special music from the Chancel Choir.

The Passion, which begins with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and ends with his death on the cross, is incredibly dramatic and powerful.

The characters from the Passion narrative come to life literally off the pages of an 8' Bible to present their perspectives.

Members of our congregation will portray a number of characters, including the centurion at the cross; Mary, the mother of James and John; and the shepherd who was at the scene of Jesus' birth announcement. Using some literary license in the drama, the shepherd is still trying to convince people about what he saw on that night so many years before.

He's been trying to tell his story for 33 years and nobody will believe him

As for the mother of James and John, she injects a little levity in the drama by telling how she tried to persuade Jesus what good boys she has.

Some of it is very humorous. The Passion is so dramatic and so emotional, you have to have some comic relief in it.

Thurs., April 13 - Holy Thursday - Presentation of "The Living Bible", 7:00 p.m. Holy Communion will be served.

This is open to the community. Help spread the word by telling and inviting people with whom you come in contact.

Fri., April 14 - Good Friday - Stations of the Cross, 10:00 a.m. To 3:00 p.m.

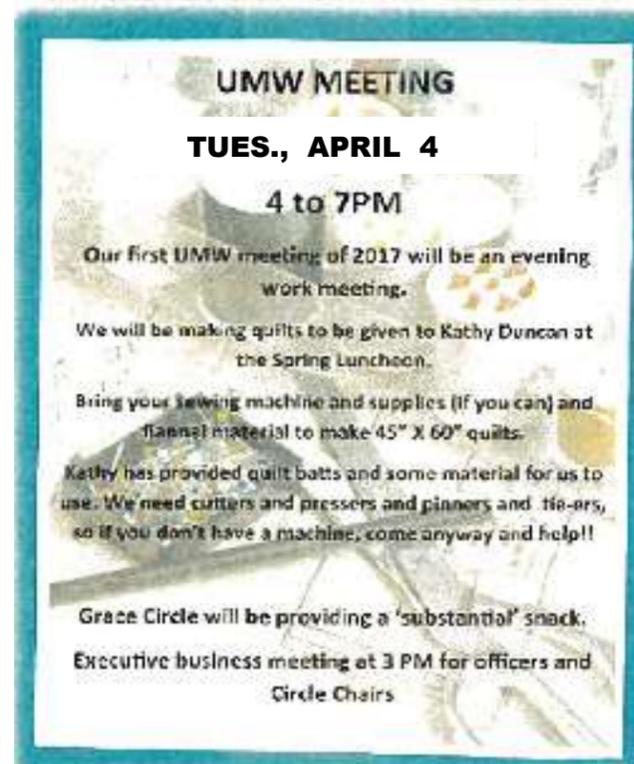
Peggy Gulbranson will have the Stations of the Cross set up and will be available to facilitate your visit. This is a time to reflect and meditate.

Sun., April 16 - Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service - Sunrise Service 7:00 a.m. Paul Cemetery Chapel.

Worship Service - Easter sermon and Holy Communion with Rev. Madden, 11:00 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt - Noon - during Hospitality Time



This UMW Mission work meeting was first scheduled on Feb. 7th, however as you may recall we were experiencing some rather harsh winter weather and it was canceled. This meeting is now rescheduled for Tues., April 4. If you don't have a portable sewing machine to bring, come anyway as there will be plenty to keep you busy. The quilts made will be presented to Kathy Duncan at the Spring Luncheon for a mission project.



Thank you for opening your doors for our community health screening in your community. It is because of your generosity that Life Line Screening continues to be able to bring these

Health screenings into your area and for that, we are very appreciative. We look forward to working together again! We appreciate all your help and support with hosting this community outreach event. Sincerely, Megan Schirtzing.

From the Camp Team: Thank you to everyone who brought food and helped with the Camp Appreciation Lunch. Also thanks to all who brought items for the auction and to those who bid on them. \$2,949 was raised to help youth go to Summer Camp through our Campership Program. Thank you to auctioneer, Carl Van Tassell, for once again making this annual auction so entertaining and fun. All Camp forms can be accessed through the office, or on the church website: www.rupentidumc.org.



Needed: Donations of candy & plastic eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt, Sun. the 16th during Hospitality. Wrapped candy only & needs to be small enough to fit in a plastic egg. These items need to be at the church by Palm Sun. Thank you for your support.

(Easter Cultural Traditions - continued from page 1)

the rice field, in front of mountains or in the garden. Most walk to an appointed Easter celebration location. "It gives a lot of significance and meaning when Easter is celebrated outside the church building," said the Rev. Remedios dela Cruz. "It gives a lot of meaning to our faith and fellowship.

Germany - Cornelia Trick

In Neuenhain, near Frankfurt, an empty wire mesh cross is placed in the sanctuary before the beginning of the Easter service. The wire mesh symbolizes coldness and aloofness, and the wire represents the pain Jesus Christ endured on the cross. Church members bring flowers. In the early part of the service, the Easter celebrants place their flowers on the empty wire mesh cross and gradually fill it with flowers. Suddenly, the "cold" cross becomes alive with flowers full of life and conveying a message of hope. In the German tradition, the Easter cross reminds people of two truths in their culture. First, people are as diverse as flowers. Second, people should imagine the cross of Jesus. No one flower makes the cross unique; a plethora of flowers together makes Jesus visible.

Hungary - Kristóf Sztupkai

In the Obuda United Methodist tradition, we have an evening worship on Good Friday and share the Lord's Supper. At sunrise on Easter, 20 to 30 congregants walk up to an ancient stone cross on a hill rock depicting Calvary's stations. We worship, read liturgy, stand in a circle, read Bible verses and pray together. Together, we enjoy a prepared breakfast at the church. Easter services follow in the afternoon.

Poland - Wojtek Ostrowski

Traditional Easter celebrations are old and elaborate and involve many preparations that are not unique to The United Methodist Church. The Holy Week observance kicks off with Palm Sunday activities where participants wave branches and twigs to commemorate Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The community tolls church bells from Palm Sunday until Maundy Thursday in observance of Holy Communion. The participants then switch to rattles and clappers as instruments for their music. They light fires at crossroads so wayfarers and poor people can warm themselves during cold weather. They also place hot meals at the crossroads so beggars can nourish themselves.

Good Friday marks the start of the vigil at symbolic tombs of Christ. The people cover all their mirrors because Good Friday is a special day of mourning.

Cakes are important ingredients of Easter breakfast. Gigantic "baby" cakes are made in different flavors - plain vanilla, saffron, almond, chocolate and lemon. "Mazurek" is a flat cake, usually on a pastry or a wafer, covered with a paste of nuts, almonds and cheese, colorfully iced and decorated with jam, nuts and raisins.

Malawi - Daniel Kabunduli

Easter Celebrations are not identical in all local churches. Each congregation celebrates in a unique way based on its thematic plans for that year but without losing the real picture and flavor of Easter as presented by the United Methodist doctrine and the Bible.

Easter revivals are common activities during the Easter weekend. Celebrations include choir performances, hymns and choruses all reflecting Easter. Dramas or skits from the youth groups portray the passion of Christ. A guest preacher or local pastor preaches during the Easter revivals.

Celebrations begin on Palm Sunday. All congregations in our distinctive Methodist local churches march in a celebratory procession about five times in a Jericho fashion around the church, singing and dancing. Congregations without church buildings march carrying palm branches around the villages toward their worship place, either under a tree or in a classroom.

Holy Communion is a central part of the Easter celebration. Usually, the service will last three to four hours. After, a meal is prepared for all.

(Tafadzwa Mudambanuki coordinates central conference content for United Methodist Communications. This article was first published on April 16, 2014 (Interpreter OnLine/UMNS).

Open Hearts WITH AN OPEN HEART Food Pantry

On February 23, Idaho Food Bank paid Open Hearts Food Pantry a visit for the purpose of an annual inspection. These people are serious! We were having a blizzard that day and they still came. Not to worry, we received a rating of "excellent", thanks to Cheryl Juntunen and Regina Ball with some help from Leanna Bruns and Grace Circle. Cheryl and Regina really put a lot of work into making sure the pantry was up to standard. Did you know that all the canned goods on the shelves need to be at least 2" from the wall? (they do, they were, and that was one thing not checked by IFB).

Thank you to all that provided donations of product and/or money to the food pantry in March, especially the toilet paper.



Thank you also to all who helped in the pantry and the truck unloading in the month of March. We appreciate all the help. Peggy Hess, thank you for putting our list of people served in alphabetical order after each Monday and Wednesday. That is such a great help.

Right now the pantry could use the following:

- ✓ Pasta sauce
- ✓ Canned pinto, black, red, etc. beans