

HOPEWELL

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

'A Place to Find Hope and Be Well'

20220 Hopewell Road

Mount Vernon, OH 43050

*Our mission is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ
and minister to the needs of others in His name.*

April - May 2024

America Needs to Bring Back God – by Kylie Ora Lobell*; shared by Pastor Lee

Families breaking down. High rates of loneliness and anxiety. Skyrocketing drug addiction and violent crime. The United States is facing a number of serious issues that are eroding it to the core and breaking Americans' spirits. More than ever, you hear people saying we live in "crazy times" and they are hopeless about the future.

What happened?

There's a lot of evidence to suggest a simple explanation: We turned our backs on one of the greatest sources of human happiness: God.

According to Gallup, belief in God among Americans dipped to 81 percent in 2022, which was a new low. This trend is especially prevalent among young people; 18 percent of Gen Zers identify as either atheist or agnostic, compared to only 9 percent of baby boomers and 4 percent of the silent generation [generally defined as born between 1928 and 1945]. Young people are also less likely to join a religion, with 34 percent saying they are unaffiliated, compared to 18 percent of baby boomers and 9 percent of the silent generation.



Clearly, as time goes on, we are becoming a less God-focused, religious nation.

But that doesn't mean we are living without worship. Human nature dictates that we need something to worship, of course. Our new false gods are social media, money, pop culture, politics ... and ourselves.

Are we any happier with our new idols?

It doesn't look that way. The same year that belief in God hit a new low, so did happiness among Americans.

You know who still consistently reports high levels of happiness? Religious people, who also tend to be more civically engaged, drink and smoke less, and live longer.

While some may argue that religious practice isn't a necessary component of belief in God, it's my belief that you need both belief and practice to find fulfillment.

How do I know?

Americans are turning to junk food and TikTok or going to the club and bingeing TV to try to make themselves happy. While these things may be fun in the moment, they don't result in true happiness. They are an attempt to fill the hole an absence of religious practice has left in their lives.

The crumbling of America is directly correlated with the crumbling of our belief in God—and in ourselves.

We don't have to accept that. It's not too late to turn this ship around.

Religious leaders should take a proactive approach, speaking to people in a thoughtful, non-judgmental way about the benefits of religion, encouraging them to partake in religious activities. Here's the approach: Show people how belief can help them with their everyday problems. People are anxious, lonely, and isolated. Religion can help with all of that.

If they are anxious about a new job, they can turn to God and hand their stress over to Him. If they need someone to talk to because they're lonely, they can call a religious leader and know that someone cares. If they want to make friends, they can go to events, and if they want to feel good, they can give back to their community through volunteering.

It's up to us, those who believe in God and practice religion to show those who do not the benefits of our lifestyle. We have a community to turn to in times of need. We have friends who are on the same page. We believe in marriage, in building families, which brings us the ultimate joy in life. And when things go wrong, we know that God is good and we can rely on Him. He is there for us; we just have to call out to Him. We must strengthen our relationship with Him and our faith.

Bringing back God to America won't solve all of our problems, but it will give people hope—something that we are sorely lacking right now. It will provide them with a set of morals, with community, with comfort. And that's what we need right now, more than ever.

I pray that Americans embrace God once again, and find all the beauty that belief has to offer.

**Kylie Ora Lobell is president of KOL Digital Marketing, a marketing, PR, and ghostwriting firm for business owners, non-profit organizations, and high-profile influencers. She can be found on X: @kylieoralobell. Published in Newsweek magazine, 3/18/2024.*

Billboard Signs from God – shared by Julie Britton

Need directions?
 You think it's hot here?!?
 Tell the kids I love them!
 Loved the wedding—invite me to the marriage
 My way IS the high way
 The 'love thy neighbor thing'—I meant it
 Will the road you're on get you to my place?
 Follow me!
 Have you read my #1 best seller?
 There will be a test
 Keep using my name in vain – I'll make rush hour longer
 I love you & you & you
 Come on over – bring the kids
 Do you have any idea where you're going?
 Let's meet at my house Sunday, B4 the game



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Hopewell Birthdays

April

2 Adam Lawhon
 15 Tammy Gourley

May

7 Josh Laymon
 7 Bitsi Gourley
 12 Phyllis Gourley
 12 Emma Laymon
 19 John Wolfe
 19 Amanda Wells

Easter Hymn Story: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" by Charles Wesley -- source: Joe Iovino at UMC.org

Many churches of all denominations begin worship on Easter Sunday by singing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today." Charles Wesley's lyrics wonderfully celebrate how Jesus' resurrection is God's victory over death and call us to tell the world.

A little history

Charles and John Wesley, two of the historic founders of The United Methodist Church, published the beloved hymn in their first hymnal, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1739. A section toward the back of the hymnal includes songs for special days where "Hymn for Christmas-Day," which we know as "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," is just a few pages away from "Hymn for Easter-Day" that we sing as "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

Entering the story

1 Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Wesley writes about the Resurrection in the present tense, inviting us into the biblical narrative. As we sing, we easily picture ourselves standing among the witnesses of the empty tomb on that first Easter morning.

Participating in this moment, we are also aware of the magnitude of the Resurrection. In this opening verse, Wesley introduces a theme that runs through the hymn. The Resurrection is celebrated both on earth and in heaven.

Our *United Methodist Hymnal* includes an edit to the second line. "Earth and heaven in chorus say" replaces "Sons of men and angels say." According to United Methodist Discipleship Ministries, this change updates Wesley's language to be gender inclusive and emphasizes the Resurrection's impact throughout the world and beyond.

"The entire universe sings the triumphant chorus," writes United Methodist scholar the Rev. Paul Chilcote in *The Song Forever New: Lent and Easter with Charles Wesley*, "with earth and heaven shouting their praise back and forth in ecstatic joy."

Life in the midst of death

Earth and heaven sing because in the Resurrection we know death is not the final word. Wesley writes, ->

2 Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!

3 Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!

In a podcast interview for UMC.org's *Get Your Spirit in Shape*, Chilcote says, "Death seems to be a final word in the life of every human being. *Seems to be*, I say, a final word, because it isn't," he continues. "The final word is life, not death. The final word is resurrection. The final word is eternal life with God who loves us."

Wesley calls us to live into eternal life every day:

4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Life still to come

In the final three of Wesley's 11 verses, the hymn's focus shifts to our hope of a day of resurrection yet to come. Wesley returns to the theme of earth and heaven singing praise on that day:

5 Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

Jesus is the resurrection who brings new life to all of creation and will bring it to completion.

We receive new life in Christ by God's grace and are to share God's love with the world. We do this by joining the song with our voices and lives.

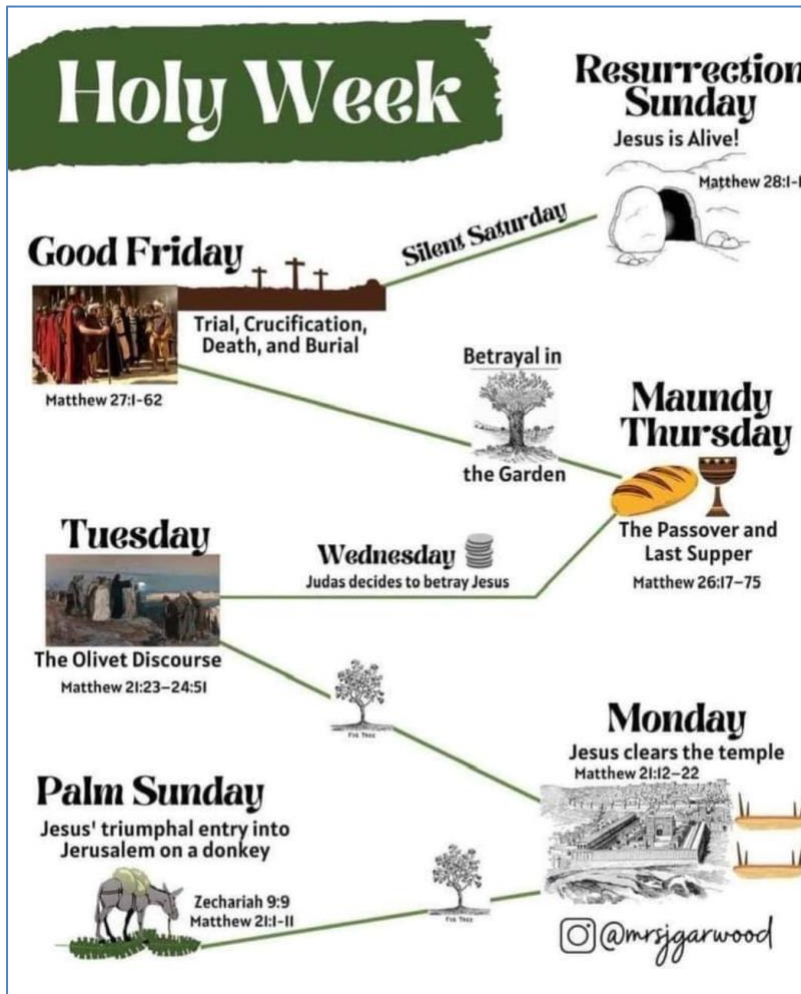
Living Easter every day

6 King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

“We experience so many little deaths, don’t we, in our lives?” Chilcote asks in the podcast interview. Some are literal deaths like the loss of a loved one, but we also experience other griefs. Relationships end. Jobs are lost. “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” proclaims that Jesus has conquered all those deaths.

“The central message of our faith,” Chilcote concludes, “is the Cross and the Resurrection. Its earliest proclamation of a God who is in the business of raising us from the dead. Oh, if that isn’t good news, I don’t know what good news is.”

When we gather for worship on Easter Sunday and sing “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, God’s good news that life conquers death. As his disciples in the world today, we must raise our joys and triumphs high to invite others to join us in this new way of living.



Women’s Bible Study – Bitsy Gourley

We have finished our women’s bible study “Church of the Small Things” by Melanie Shankle.

Marsha Clayborne made these wreaths and surprised us with them on our last meeting.

We plan to watch the series “The Chosen” at the church in April, and all are welcome to join us.

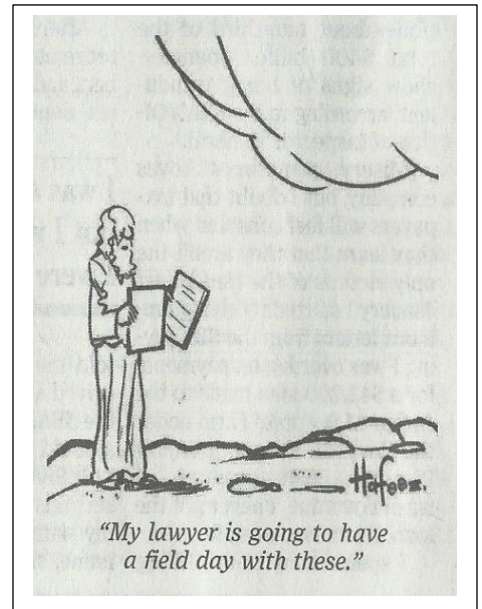
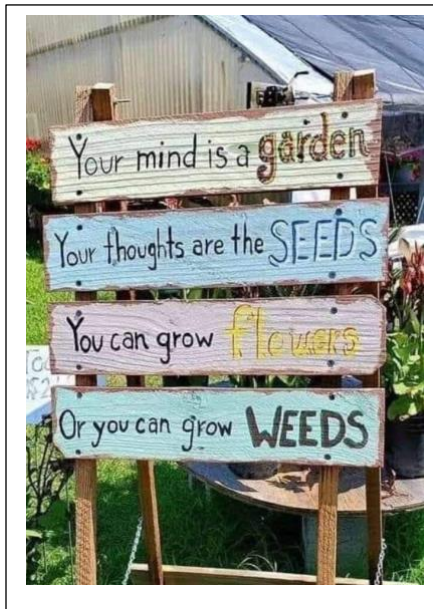


Left to right: Bitsy Gourley, Phyllis Gourley, Donna Spinks, Marsha Clayborne, Beverly Lahmon, Stephanie Scott, Barb Spitzer, and Julie Britton.

Hopewell members serve!



Sam and Josh Laymon at the fire station. (Photo from Jade Laymon’s Facebook page on Sam’s March 11 birthday.)



We are called to be teachers
...of love as found in Jesus Christ.
--Pastor Lee Cubie, in a sermon that
was not too long on 1/28/2024.

April 2024

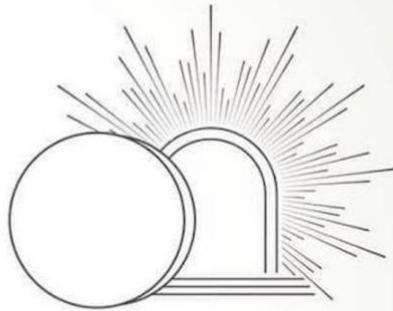
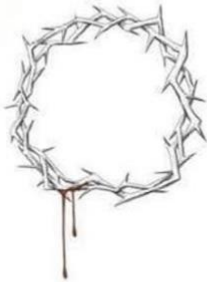
◀ Mar. 2024

May 2024 ▶

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 April Fools Day	2 -Nat'l Reconciliation Day B'day: Adam Lawhon	3 -World Party Day	4 -Read a Road Map Day	5 -Walk to Work Day	6 -Sorry Charlie Day
7 -Nat'l No Housework Day 9:30 Worship/Holy Communion	8 Solar Eclipse	9 -Be Kind to Lawyers Day	10 -Siblings Day	11 -Barbershop Quartet Day	12 -Grilled Cheese Day	13 -Scrabble Day
14 -Reach as High as You Can Day 9:30 Worship/Refreshments	15 Tax Day (Taxes Due) B'day: Tammy Gourley	16 -Wear Pajamas to Work Day	17 -Haiku Poetry Day	18 -Nat'l Columnists Day	19 -Nat'l Banana Day	20 -Look Alike Day
21 -Nat'l Kindergarten Day	22 Earth Day -Jelly Bean Day-	23 -Take a Chance Day	24 Administrative Professionals Day	25 -Take Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day	26 Arbor Day -Richter Scale Day	27 -Morse Code Day
28 -World Pinhole Photography Day	29 -Zipper Day	30 -Honesty Day	National Autism Awareness Month Int'l Guitar Month Nat'l Humor Month Summer Tire Changeover Month			

May 2024						Jun 2024 ▶	
◀ Apr 2024	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Correct Your Posture Month Int'l Drum Month	Nat'l Bike Month Nat'l Egg Month	Nat'l Water Safety Month	1 -Law Day	2 -Nat'l Truffle Day	3 -Space Day	4 -Herb Day	
5 Cinco De Mayo 9:30 Worship/Holy Communion	6 -Beverage Day	7 -Nat'l Tourism Day B'day: Josh Laymon B'day: Bitisi Gourley	8 -Nat'l School Nurse Day	9 -Lost Sock Memorial Day	10 -Clean Up Your Room Day	11 -Twilight Zone Day	
12 Mother's Day -Limerick Day 9:30 Worship/ Refreshments B'day: Phyllis Gourley B'day: Emma Laymon	13 -Frog Jumping Day	14 -Dance Like a Chicken Day	15 -Chocolate Chip Day	16 -Nat'l Love a Tree Day	17 -Pizza Party Day	18 Armed Forces Day	
19 -Nat'l Pizza Party Day	20 -Be a Millionaire Day	21 -Talk Like Yoda Day	22 -Buy a Musical Instrument Day	23 -World Turtle Day	24 -Scavenger Hunt Day	25 -Towel Day	
B'day: John Wolfe B'day: Amanda Wels	26 -World Lindy Hop Day	27 Memorial Day -Sun Screen Day	28 -Hamburger Day	29 -Put a Pillow on Your Fridge Day	30 -My Bucket's Got a Hole Day	31 -Macaroon Day	

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A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN SEVEN DAYS