



March 10, 2024
Sunday School: Kathy Willetts
Worship: Kristi Greene & Katie Reeves

March 17, 2024
Sunday School: Sandra Grogan
Worship: Stefanie Effler & Lindy Stines

March 24, 2024
Sunday School: Cathy Walsh
Worship: Judy Hyatt & Lizzie Sayegh

March 31, 2024—EASTER
Sunday School: Cathy Allen
Worship: Billie & Jeff Conard

April 7, 2024
Sunday School: Kristi Greene
Worship: Khloie Robertson & Bryson Davis



March 10, 2024
Susan Davis

March 17, 2024
Susan Davis

March 24, 2024
Easter Musical: No CC

March 31, 2024
Kristi Greene

April 7, 2024
Robbie McLeod



American Red Cross

MONDAY, March 11

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Canton First Baptist

Fellowship Hall

BLOOD DRIVE

Walk-Ins are welcomed OR **save time** by scheduling an appointment:
Redcrossblood.org—put in 28716 zip code and click on **MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT**



208 Academy Street • Canton, NC 29817

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Volume 67, Edition 2, March (Easter), 2024

Through New Old Eyes: Easter Like I've Never Seen It Before

What many may not know, is that on our side of church life, Easter and Christmas are very similar. Make no mistake, they are different holidays that celebrate different events that are meaningful in their own distinct ways. On our side of the A/V desks, pulpits, phones, computers, pianos, microphones and other implements of getting church done, though, church staff and clergy experience the same business and deadline pressures that most associate with Christmas when Easter rolls around. For that reason, it is easy to start to see it as a church event - a thing on the calendar that we do - and lose focus of its deep and world-changing impact. This year, as I have been working on the Wednesday night Bible study, I have had a chance to do something that I have not done in a long time. It has been refreshing, to say the least, and has empowered me to avoid the natural temptation mentioned above. This year, as I look at the characters and events of Holy Week, I am able to imagine being there, and Easter looks less like a church event, and more like the monumental change to the course of human history that it actually was. So, consider this your invitation to join me, and see Easter and the events leading up to it through new, old, eyes.

Peter:

It was not always easy following Jesus. Sometimes I was excited, but sometimes I was terrified. Sometimes I was right and received the praise I wanted so badly from a teacher I pledged to devote my life to following, but other times, I was wrong. The one thing that was constant was that I never really knew what to do. Once, probably more than at any other time, I felt all of those things simultaneously. We went to a Garden, and Jesus actually looked unsure. We did not know what to do for him. We could see that he was exhausted and suffering, but we were exhausted too. With no clear instructions other than to pray, we did just that... at least that is what we did until we were just too tired. We fell asleep. Actually, we fell asleep twice. We disappointed him, and at that point we were sort of getting used to letting him down, but like every other time, he put up with it. With us. Just after we realized our failure, an opportunity arose. I did not know what Jesus was so upset about, or why he wanted us awake, but when authorities showed up to arrest him, I knew I had a chance for redemption. For once, it seemed, I had a clear path forward to earn the praise from Jesus I so craved. I did what I often do. I jumped into action! I drew a sword, went on the attack, placed myself between Jesus and those who wanted to harm him, and struck! As much as I hate to admit it, I miscalculated yet again. Jesus was not proud of me. In fact, the love I hoped to earn in that moment went to the man I attacked instead of me. Who heals someone who took up with a gang of people to hurt him? There is just so much I still don't understand.

Judas:

I was just as Jesus-obsessed as the rest of them. I wanted what everyone wanted, a savior. I was tired of living under occupation. I saw a chance to change that, and so, like the rest, I followed him. Hate of Romans may not be the best reason to follow a messiah, so I suppose I should mention that there were times when I really was able to see more than just another rebellion shaping up around Jesus. He had an amazing way of caring for others that you just don't see elsewhere. He saw a big picture where God's reign negated the Romans or any other oppressive power. He took others in and built a movement, and I fell in love with that just like the others. When we entered Jerusalem, though, I saw what everyone else saw. I saw Jesus ride through the East gate, where conquering heroes enter. I saw him on a horse, which is what generals do. I saw a crowd waving branches, and heard their shouts of "Hosanna!" It doesn't mean "pray for us," or "heal us," it means "save us." We all knew what was going on, because we have heard it since we were children! In that moment, I forgot all about this big-picture-Jesus I spoke of before. Seeing that reminded me just how much I wanted to rise up against Rome. Seeing the crowd, I knew that if

You are invited to the next
S.O.S. Women's Group meeting

Thursday, March 21st

6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

In the Mann Classroom

Everyone is invited
Thursday, March 28, 2024
6:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service and Communion

MAUNDY THURSDAY



WOMEN on a Mission

Jean Teague Ladies WMU Circle

April 2nd @ 10:00 am

Susan Shumolis 828.400.1593

Contact Andi Whitt @ 828-246-2822 or Kristi Greene @ 704-472-2138

THE JOY CLUB Invites YOU


Joyful Hearts at Crestview Baptist has invited us:

What: After-Easter Luncheon
When: Tuesday, April 2nd
Time: 11:30 am
Where: Crestview Baptist Ch.
RSVP: Lowell/Sandra 734-6310

The Community Kitchen

THURSDAY—April 4th

On the first Thursdays of each month we prepare and serve the meals at the Community Kitchen. If you're interested in volunteering let Cathy Walsh know or come ready to work at 4:00 pm @ the Community Kitchen.



Bring fresh cut flowers for the cross!
11 am Easter Worship
Canton First Baptist Church
Take Family Photos after Worship



The WITNESS Volume 67, Edition 2, March (Easter), 2024


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Canton First Baptist Church
828.648.2367 www.canton-fbc.org
208 Academy Street
Canton NC 28716

Canton First

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, March 24th
@ 6:00 pm
in the Mann Classroom



USPS 906-880
Periodical Postage
Paid at
Canton, NC 28716

EASTER Covered Dish BREAKFAST

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024 @ 9:30 am

Invite family, friends & neighbors!



Jesus would just take the first step, they would follow. If he would draw a sword, they would grab their clubs, daggers, and whatever else they could find, and stand with him to overturn the corruption in our city so that we could kick the powers that be out of it. If he would make a move... but that is the problem. He made no such move. He did not demand justice. He did not call for a revolt. He did not lead the war for freedom I longed to see. So, with the adoring crowds in mind, I decided to give him no choice. If I used the corruption in our system against him, he would be trapped. When someone is trapped, they must fight or flee, and with no way to escape, he would fight. When he fought, the crowds that were waving palms would join him. When they did, he would lead us to freedom!

Well, that is what I thought, anyway. As it turned out, I was wrong. He did not fight. He repeated, "it is as you say," and took their abuse. I vaguely remembered him mentioning "turning the other cheek" a while back, and so I should not have been surprised. In the end, it was not he that disappointed me. It was myself. I betrayed him, because I forgot who he was in the fog of who I wanted him to be.

The Sanhedrin:

We are not the bad guys here. We understand that it was a bad deal all the way around. We revel in celebrating our freedom, year in and year out. We celebrate God setting us free, passing over us, and plaguing our ancient overlords so harshly that they begged us to walk into a new world wherein we controlled our destiny, not them. Thinking about that unifies us, and unity is good, but that was then.

Yes it is easy to judge us, but remember what we have been through. Every time someone starts talking about freedom, autonomy, and ridding our land of Romans, people die. We hear the cries for independence, and if we are being honest, we share them... but what good are we to our people if we let thousands — hundreds of thousands of them — die because the next in a line of well spoken, charismatic figures led them to take up arms against an unbeatable foe? We stand in the gap. We temper their enthusiasm and might have to scapegoat a few people, here and there, because it is what is good for them. They cannot enjoy the freedom they want to fight for if they are dead.

Jesus, as far as we knew, was no different from the others. One of them even shared his name. We thought, as we saw the buzz around him leap to ridiculous heights when he entered Jerusalem, that he was going to do like all the others. He would amass an army, they would go hide out in the desert until their numbers were big enough, and then they would attack. The retribution would be swift. The blood would flow. The temple could even be destroyed, and lives would be shattered for generations. He was not going away on his own, and so, we had to stop him the only way we knew how. We thought we were protecting our people. History, it seems, begs to differ.

Mary, the mother of Jesus:

I suppose I was warned. When we took him to the temple to be dedicated, no one pulled any punches. "He will be great," they said, "but pain will pierce you." Prophets come and go, and with them, their prophecies. It is one thing to be warned, but it is another thing to live it. No one wants to see anyone hurt, at least I hope not, but my son? Seeing him tried and beaten was anguish. On one hand, I did not want to stay and watch it. Who would? On the other hand, though, I could not leave. What is a mother to do?

I can imagine what some would think: "what a waste?" They hear that I altered my entire life to bring a child to the world, only to see him die, and they make assumptions. It is true, I was as confused as anyone at times. I foresaw how things might go, and a few times, I tried to stop him. I wanted to talk some sense into him. I am his mom, it is what we do, because I wanted what was best for him and this was not it. I was not disappointed in him, but I was horrified for him. Honestly, I was a little horrified for me. No mother should see their child tortured and killed, but too many of them have recently. So I stood there, and I watched, and I wanted to leave but could not, while somehow also wanting to be there for him, something I also felt I could not do at the time. I thought I would faint, because it was just too much to endure. Then something happened.

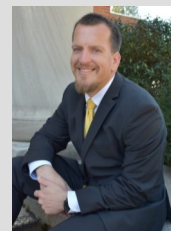
I heard his voice, and in his words, I heard my baby boy. The boy who cared for me as I cared for him spoke through the pain. "Woman, here is your son." He wanted to ensure that I was cared for, and protected. He wanted me to know that in his absence, I still had family. He wanted me to know I was not alone. God, why take him from me? Why take him from the world, sure, but why take the little boy who you asked me to raise into a great man from my life? Why not let me go first? Why?

So what:

There are so many characters that we could go on for days, because Easter and the events that led to it are that deep and far reaching. When we see the events through the eyes of those who witnessed them, or at least give it our best shot, the story takes shape in a new way. It captivates us again. It shows us that, no, Easter is not just some holiday on the calendar. It is a testimony of sacrificial love, selflessness, human confusion, pain, and eventually joy. It offers a taste of the entire human experience. It reminds us of what God can do with regular people like us, and in spite of our flaws, offers us hope that God still wants to redeem the world through our presence in it. This year, I hope you will take a fresh look at Easter. It is a bit more than bunnies and chocolates, but you can still grab a Reece's and enjoy those too.

Be blessed,

Pastor Court Greene



Experience God with Canton First

Sunday: March 10, 2024: Annie Armstrong Offering

9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Youth & Children - 3rd Floor
11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL

Monday 10-3 Blood Mobile—Fellowship Hall

Tuesday 3:30 Staff Meeting

Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study—Fellowship Hall
7:00 Adult Choir Practice

Thursday 12:00 Community Lenten Service @ First Canton UMC
12:30 Community Lunch after Lenten Service (\$5/person)

Sunday: March 17, 2024

9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Youth & Children - 3rd Floor
11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL

2 -3:30 Stines Baby Shower—Fellowship Hall

Tuesday 3:30 Staff Meeting

Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study—Fellowship Hall

6:00 S.O.S. Young Women's Group—Mann Classroom

7:00 Adult Choir Practice

Thursday 12:00 Community Lenten Service @ First Canton UMC
12:30 Community Lunch after Lenten Service (\$5/person)

Saturday 11 to 1 Canton First Baptist Easter Egg Hunt & Hot Dogs

Sunday: March 24, 2024: Palm Sunday/Youth & Children Easter Prog.

9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Youth & Children - 3rd Floor
11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL

6:00 Finance Committee Meeting—Mann Classroom

Tuesday 3:30 Staff Meeting

Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study—Fellowship Hall

7:00 Adult Choir Practice

Thursday 12:00 Com. Lent Srvc. @ First Canton UMC (Court speaking)
12:30 Community Lunch after Lenten Service (\$5/person)

6:00 Maundy Thursday Service/Communion in the Sanctuary

Sunday: March 31, 2024: Happy Easter!

9:30 EASTER Covered Dish BREAKFAST in the Fellowship Hall

11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL

Monday Church Office Closed & Staff Holiday

Tuesday 10:00 Jean Teague WMU—Fellowship Hall

11:30 JOY Club luncheon @ Crestview

3:30 Staff Meeting

Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study—Fellowship Hall

7:00 Adult Choir Practice

Thursday 10 to 3 Blue Ridge Quilters—Fellowship Hall
4 to 6 Community Kitchen—See Cathy Walsh

Sunday, April 7, 2024

9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Youth & Children - 3rd Floor

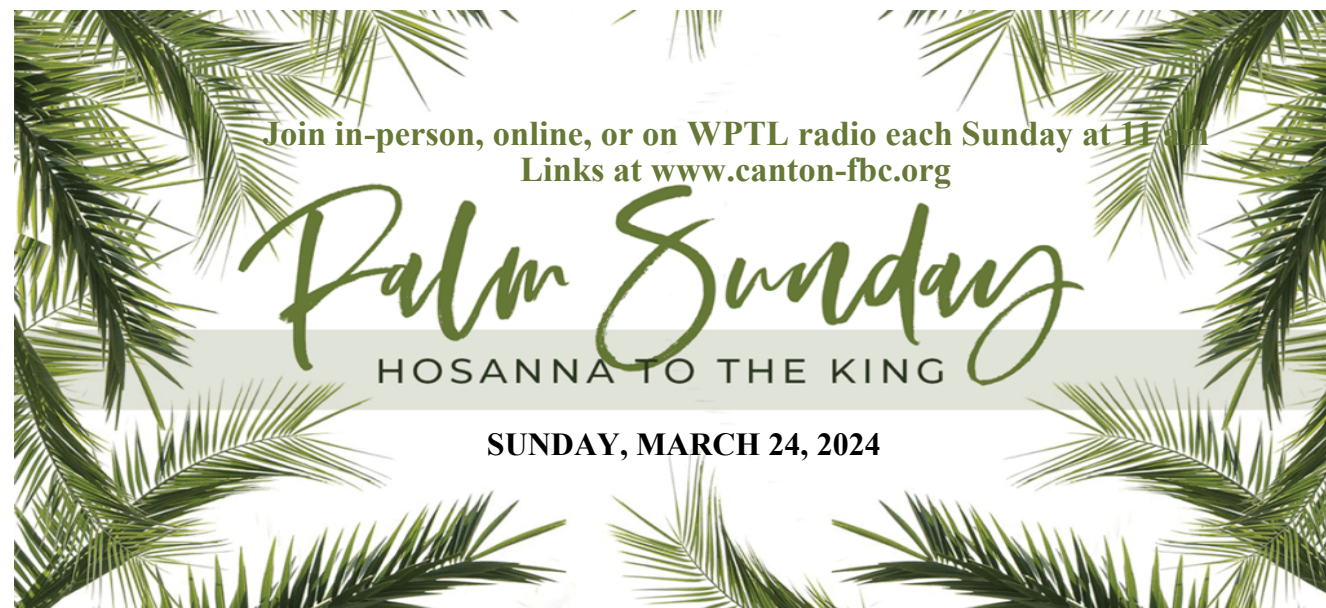
11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL

3:30 Staff Meeting

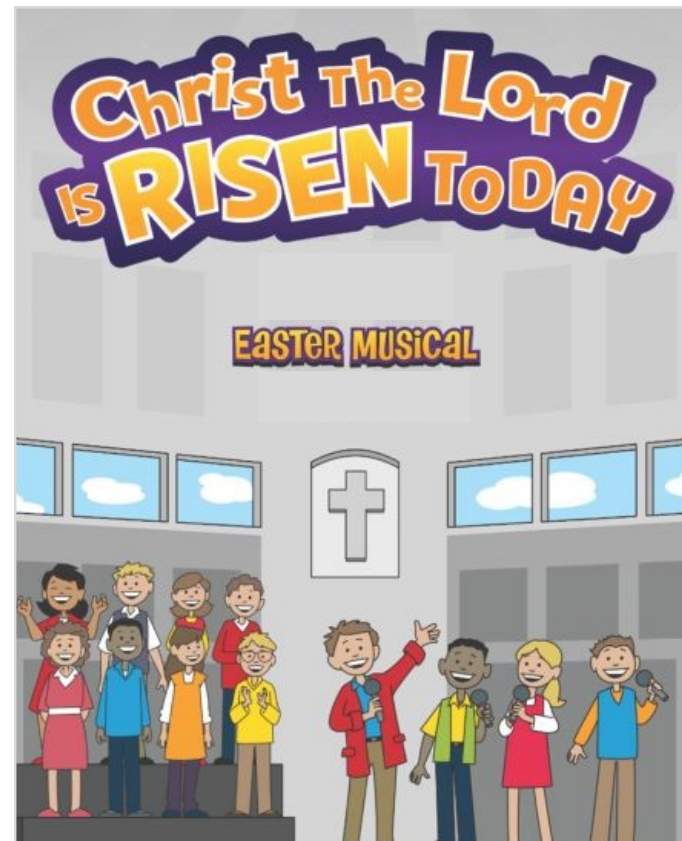
Wednesday COURT'S BIRTHDAY

6:00 Adult Bible Study—Fellowship Hall

7:00 Adult Choir Practice



YOUTH & CHILDREN WILL PRESENT AN EASTER MUSICAL ON PALM SUNDAY MARCH 24, 2024



Tenebrae—Renee Mullinax

The church was not completely dark, so the dimmed chandeliers overhead provided enough light for those coming in to see where to sit. That was important for those having (in their own opinion) their designated seats. Never mind that no one had bought the pew for them.

Candles flicked bravely—in the windowsills, on the altar table, in the choir loft. In less than an hour, the sanctuary would be completely dark—and silent—a most unusual moment for a Baptist church.

The choir entered—a community choir, so the robes were different, according to what each choir wore. The effect was subtly interesting, as was the whole atmosphere. No one knew exactly what to expect, but there had been enough information to provide a sense of intrigue, so there was a level of static electricity in the air.

The service began: scripture reading, music, prayers; the music was somber, beautiful arrangements of familiar hymns: “Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone,” “O Sacred Head Now Wounded,” “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” “Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed,” “Jesus Paid It All”—familiar tunes in simple, yet strong choral settings.

After each increment, the lights in the room dimmed. Increasing darkness added a layer of quiet, somberness, the feeling of levity, an eerie slowly growing heaviness of a price that had been paid for the opportunity to save ourselves from ourselves—and to fill the vacuum in our lives with the one presence that could fill it. Indeed, to protect ourselves from becoming rental space for shallow waters.

The final darkness that came as the chandeliers were darkened and the final candles were extinguished—that darkness brought to me, and to others, a realization of the darkness that our Christ endured in a long-ago time—a darkness that has given us centuries of belief that His darkness provided us with redemption from our worst selves; a hope that endures because of a love that will not let us go; a song that does not end.

It is an unfathomable mystery to me that such a bloody, dying man hanging on a wooden cross offers forgiveness to me. I just don't get it.

Then I realize that I don't have to *get it*. It is for me to accept it, to let Him live through me, and, in so doing, let others see Him in me.

It is not my job to take sides. In fact, I resent being labeled.

Except when I am on his side. Then feel free to label me, for I will not be ashamed or afraid.

Tenebrae—service of the shadows.

“Others, Lord, yes others; let this my motto be/Lord help me live for others that I may live like You.”

I have enjoyed working on VBS the last few years. I am hoping this year is as successful. Last year we averaged 35 attendees, one of whom faithfully attends our church after having only come to know us through the VBS program. I'm super excited for this year's theme, “Food Truck Party!!!” Its mission statement is “Give us this day our daily bread,” (Matthew 6:11). We even have a few exciting things lined up including a few Food trucks to serve dinner. We hope to have a truck every night, so if you know anyone who has food truck connections, please get in touch with Andi or Susan. This year, we are planning for 48 children to attend. In order to accommodate them, we need 20 volunteers to help with games, science, crafts, bible story time, music, skits, group leaders and session leaders and there are many other ways to help. If you are interested in any of these please let us know.

Thanks for your time, prayer, and consideration.

Have a blessed day,
Andi Whitt



How Can “Good Friday” possibly be good...

When I was a child and a brand-new Christian, I could not fathom why Good Friday was called good. How could a day marked by the torture and bloody death of my Jesus be called good? Wasn't that the exact opposite of good? Shouldn't the Friday before Easter be called “Bad Friday” or “Horrible Friday” or perhaps not even named at all like the way Job wanted to erase the day of his birth?

Now that I have been walking with my Savior for over 40 years since I first met Him in Vacation Bible School, I am starting to understand why the church proclaims that Friday to be good. My Lord took on MY punishment-my lashes, my crucifixion, my death-so that I might be spared. He took on YOUR punishment-your lashes, your crucifixion, your death-so that YOU might be spared. The one perfect sinless Human, the only one worthy of being called GOOD, voluntarily laid down His life so that we might be saved. He took our sins on His body on that Good Friday, and now I can live with Him forever in heaven. Now that's GOOD news of the best kind-an eternity in fellowship with my Lord and my Christian brothers and sisters. This Good Friday, let's contemplate how huge a sacrifice Christ made. He deserves all praise, all worship, and all our gratitude. He alone truly is GOOD.

Faith Woods



ONE OF MY FAVORITE RESURRECTION STORIES

Luke tells the story of two disciples returning home to Emmaus which is about 7 miles from Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection. He tells the name of one of the disciples which happens to be Cleopas. Now, John tells us that the sister of Jesus' mother who was the wife of Cleopas was at the cross so we might assume that the second disciple was the wife of Cleopas, and they were simply returning to their home in Emmaus.

They were discussing the fact that some of the women had gone to the tomb and found it empty so they were very perplexed about the goings on early that morning. About that time Jesus fell in step with them as they traveled but they did not recognize Him and He began to explain that all these things were explained in the Old Testament. They were supposed to happen just the way they had.

About that time they arrived at their home and Jesus acted as if He would go on further but they invited Him in for a meal and He came in and ate with them. Then He explained some more about the scriptures and then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Jesus left their presence at that moment. Remember this is His earthly Aunt and Uncle!

Rev. Keith Clark

The weekends are always looked forward to in our culture. They offered us time to refresh our bodies and enjoy activities after a long week, a time to refresh our spirit while worshipping with others communing with God. Easter weekend is looked forward to as a holiday from the "ordinary weekends" of our lives, a time to escape for a vacation. School is out, families gather, and food and laughter is shared as we enjoy the innocence of children hunting for eggs. Easter weekend is full of joy as we celebrate the incredible gift of mercy, grace, forgiveness and love that Jesus Christ made possible that weekend, but sometimes I think we forget how horrendous that first Easter weekend was. Dr. Jeff Schreve wrote "That weekend is special to us. It is special to all of humanity. It was the weekend of brutality and bloodshed as the righteous died for the unrighteous. It was a weekend that began in terrible agony, but ended in tremendous victory. It was the weekend when Jesus Christ gave himself up for sinful man. It was the weekend when Jesus Christ conquered sin, death, hell and the grave. It was the weekend that changed the world for all history and eternity." That first Easter was not a time of good food, friends, innocence and laughter. There is nothing wrong with celebrating the victory, freedom and love that just one death on that first Easter weekend brought to us. Enjoy your Easter weekend. Revel in the full measure of love that Jesus Christ bestowed on you from just that one death. I know I will, and I pray that each of us remember the pain experienced that weekend, and treasure our grace a little more. He is risen!

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

To me these are excruciating words from the mouth of Jesus during his crucifixion. Why did he say them? What was he thinking and feeling to cry these words. After all he was God in human flesh. Everything Jesus said and did was directly from God. Jesus was never without God; NEVER. Or was he?

This also brings another thought; why did the sky turn dark as night at the sixth hour or Noon when the sun is at its highest point in the sky; the brightest time of day? Was it then that God was in such pain watching His one and only son die that the sun couldn't shine! Could God have stopped the pain and agony that Jesus suffered? Absolutely! Picture this- the Bible even says it-while Jesus was being beaten, mocked, spat upon, and tortured, God had 12 legions of angels standing by watching from heaven. Don't you think God could have released those angels to spare Jesus? Absolutely! I believe every loving mother and father can picture this vision.

Back to my original writing about the words “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani” have you ever been shopping or at a theme park with your kids and one minute they are with you, but then, in a split second they are not? What went through your mind? Did your heart drop to your stomach? Maybe you were terrified that you might not ever find them, or that someone had snatched them? Maybe you felt agony and fear? That is the best way I can explain what Jesus might have felt when all our sins-mine and yours-were transferred to him. At this moment Jesus was banished from the presence of God. In my bible study last week I studied more about this and found that because sin cannot exist in God's presence, Jesus endured separation from God. You and I deserve that separation; Jesus does not. After all he lived a perfect sinless life. “For Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you (and me) to God” (1 Peter 3:18). How long was Jesus separated? Was it a split second and then he was back with God? The Bible says that it was dark from the sixth hour to the ninth hour. Maybe scholars, like my dad, Keith Clark, and/or Pastor Court would know this and I should ask them. “Was it dark for 3 hours, while Jesus was dying, because it took that long for all of the sins of the world to be transferred to him? Or was it to “prove” that Jesus truly was the Messiah? When the people at Jesus's trial were sucked into peer pressure and the height of emotion shouting, “crucify him, crucify him” and letting a true criminal go; had 3 hours given them time to realize just what they had done? I think I will ask both of them, but for now, maybe I am leaving you with something to think about; to resonate in your mind over the next several weeks leading up to Easter. Why did Jesus say, “My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?”

Susan Davis,
Youth & Children's Director

