

THE PUCC PERSPECTIVE
Presbyterian United Church of Christ
Aurora, Nebraska

APRIL 2025



Line Drawing by Dan Gilson

PASTOR PENNY'S 2 CENTS

I had the opportunity to see The Chosen season 5 - episodes 1 and 2 in the theaters last night. It was a very moving and intense opening to this 5th season.

It centers on "holy week", that last week leading up to Good Friday. It Started with Palm Sunday; the electricity of the crowd as they were chanting Hosanna, (Lord Save us). The Jewish Nation had been praying for and anticipating the Messiah, the one prophesied to come and save them. Even though they were looking at Jesus chanting the title on him "The Messiah Son of David", they still didn't get it. They were looking for a solution to their immediate problem, freedom from Rome. Not a spiritual freedom from sin.

Jesus spoke many times to the crowds figuratively and plainly why he came and that he must die and be an atonement for sin. Yet they didn't hear past what they thought should happened. Even his own disciples struggled with this.

There is a scene where Peter, still confused of what his new role will look like, wanted to speak to the crowds. Nervous and worried about his first time, he courageously steps up and delivers his first sermon and preaches "The Gospel of Christ". Peter is so relatable. He tries, he doesn't usually get it, and flounders, but his heart is in the right place. After his teaching, he spends the next moments nervously rehashing all the things he felt he failed at. Stories from Jesus that he could tell in his sleep. now words. had just left him.

Andrew his brother stood on the side prompting words where Peter's had escaped. As Peter was still ruminating on all that he had done wrong, Andrew told him that he had never been more proud of him. He had the courage and boldness to get up there and be the spokesman for the Gospel. And this was just the beginning of what would be a life long venture. Even in all of Peter's boldness and courage, he still does something he vowed he would never do..... deny he even knew Jesus, not once, but three times.

The parallels. Peter did not feel worthy, good enough, smart enough, an eloquent speaker, but he had those supporting him while he stepped out in faith.

Reminds me of another man, Moses. Who felt all of those very same things when God called him, yet God put his brother Aaron on his side prompting and supporting him as well. See God does not Choose those who are perfect for the job, he chooses those who are willing to be molded and perfected for the job.

For most of us if we go to church on Palm Sunday then we celebrate the wonderful triumphant entry, but was it so celebratory for everyone? I am sure that Jesus with his face set on Jerusalem, knew exactly what awaited him. Staring at the "Sheep Gate", the one that all the sacrificial lambs went through had to have pierced his soul. Once he was inside the walls nothing would be the same, there would be no turning back.

Again, most of us do not give much more thought to it until Easter Sunday when we show up for the big celebration that He has Risen from the Grave! And while that is true, if we do not go through that week with Him, we miss the biggest week of Christ's ministry.

Jesus taught the multitudes, filled with righteous anger he burned for the house of the Lord and drove out those who had turned it into a den of thieves by overcharging those exchanging currency, and high-priced sacrificial livestock all on God's temple mount. Instead of worship it was commerce at a high price.

He continued to teach and ruffled feathers of the religious sect all week and on Thursday as he celebrated Pasche, (Passover) with his closest 12 he continued the discussion of what must take place even though they did not want to hear it. Even in the midst of his own group there were some who still had in their mind what Jesus was "supposed" to do, not what he came to do. Hence Judas' actions.

I am sure you can relate that there have been times when things did not go the way you thought they should or in the time frame that you wanted, that you stepped in and "helped steer" the issue one way. Judas felt Jesus was running out of time, and for fear of losing the momentum of the crowd in Jerusalem he could force Jesus' hand and maybe persuade him and the religious leaders into pushing this Military Messiah agenda. If you have read your scriptures, you know how that turned out. There is so much to cover through that last week.

And since this is supposed to be 2 cents and not a \$1.50, I will plead with you to come to Sunday worship this month, Come to Mundy Thursday at the FCC and Good Friday service at the PUCC. Come to our Chosen Bible Study on Wednesdays at 6:30 and you can always watch all of the episodes for free on The Chosen App for phones and tablets or The Chosen TV app for computers or TVs. If you get a chance go and watch Season 5. 1 & 2 is in theaters this week, 3,4,5 starting next Thursday and 6,7,8 Starting the following Thursday.

The disciples were not so different from us. They had times of no or misunderstanding; they had times of fear, uncertainty, anxiety, unworthiness, but joy and thanksgiving. Jesus came to be that final atonement for sin for ALL, Jew and Gentile. That is why we are Easter People because we serve a Risen Savior who has freed us from sin and death. Every year we draw closer to Christ's return, we are never guaranteed a tomorrow so I challenge you to make the most out of this Easter Season--- you just never know it could be your last!

Shalom, Shalom

Pastor Penny



God, we come to you today to offer prayers for our family and friends. We ask that you look after them today and keep them safe. As you take time for prayer each day, please include:

Don "Sonny" Hofmeister, Zandee Nelson, Janet Grosshans, Shirley Barnell, Jim Ptacnik, John Schulz, Tanna Skarniak, Georgie Sinner, Doug Kliwer, Martha Salmon, Pastor Penny, and Pat Pickering's mother, Eunice Kehler.

We also pray for all those in our congregation and beyond who may be suffering from an illness or the stress of a family situation.

***We also pray for those who for whatever reason suffer in silence.
May they feel our prayers.***

If you want to add someone to our prayer list, we don't need to have a last name or know their situation. They do not have to be a member of our congregation – we pray for all people. All requests are by permission only. Please contact: Linda Ptacnik (lindap@hamilton.net or 402-631-9422 or fcc@hamilton.net) She will see that your requests are shared – as well as updates as they are received.

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS &
ANNIVERSARIES**

Apr 3 Mary Holling
Apr 15 Glenda Allen
Apr 17 Roger Holling
Apr 21 Pastor Penny Schulz
Apr 26 Vonnie Whiting
Apr 30 Zandee Nelson

Apr 6 Ray & Shelly Maul

Please contact Linda with any updates at either
lindap@hamilton.net or 402-631-9422

**Pianist/Musician/Liturgist
To Be Announced.**

**THE CHOSEN—SEASON 4
BIBLE STUDY**

Wednesday Evenings—6:30 PM

PUCC Sanctuary

EVERYONE IS WELCOME



Pastor Penny Schulz

Phone 402-440-4605

Email: pastorpennys2cents@gmail.com

Website: puccaurora.org

YouTube: Presbyterian United Church of Christ of Aurora NE

Facebook: Presbyterian United Church of Christ of Aurora NE

Youth Group meets after early school dismissals on Wednesday in Friendship Hall at FCC. If there is no school, we will not meet. We now have a text-mail group set up and will send out notifications as necessary.

VOLUNTEERS are needed for helping with Youth Group. If you can help, please get in touch with Pastor Penny or Kristin.

****No experience required. Will train****

PROCLAMATION REHERSALS will be held on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm.

Proclamation will close out this season with a final performance on April 6th.

They will be performing a classic handbell piece, Gazioso. This piece was composed by Arnold Sherman as a commissioned piece for a funeral for a beloved handbell ringer. It is an excellent piece for Easter as it reflects the passion of the Resurrection and foretells our future in heaven.

APRIL EVENTS TO REMEMBER (AND ATTEND)



April 13 - Palm Sunday

♦ Southern Dinner & Fish Fry—sponsored by the United Methodist Church in Aurora. Lots of menu items (see poster at church) - Serving 5:15—6:30 pm—Freewill Offering to go towards their Mission—Hurricane Helene Relief & Recovery. Musical entertainment will begin at 5:00 pm.

April 17—Maundy Thursday

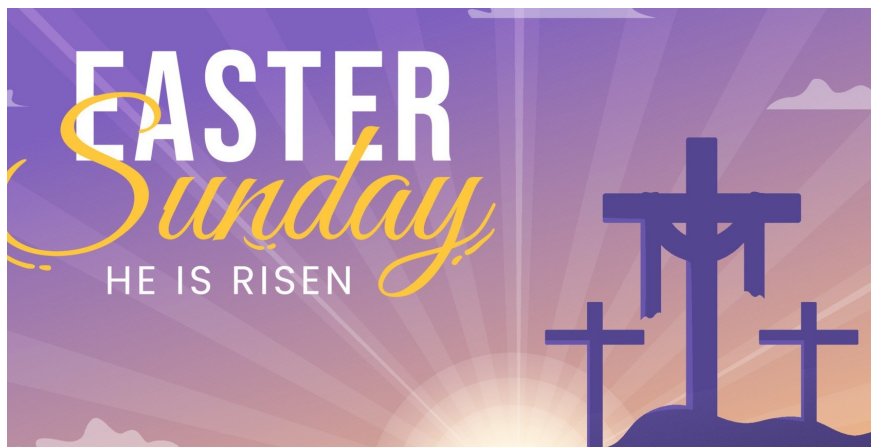
- ♦ Combined Service at First Christian Church—6:30 pm—a very special service has been prepared for this year. Pat Phillips will direct a production of “Have You Seen My Son” with several members of the congregation participating. Following the performance, we will conclude with a Candlelight Communion Service.

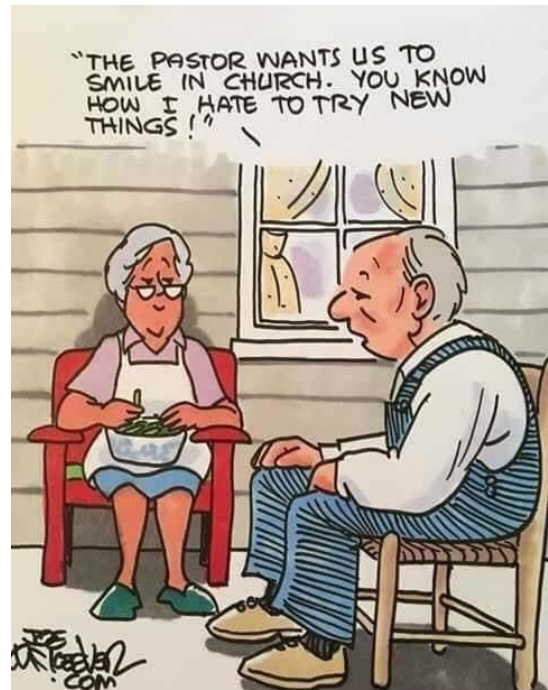


April 18—Good Friday

Combined Service at PUCC. 6:30 PM

April 20—EASTER SERVICE—HE IS RISEN!!!





OUR YOUTH

The weather has continued to disrupt our normal youth group schedule, but we made the most of the times we had together. We tackled some tough topics with our youth this month, including the range of emotions that Jesus felt and that we all feel. Realizing that Jesus truly felt so much of what we experience, and that many of them have as well, helped them to grow a little closer to each other, and deepen their faith just a little more. As always, we are grateful we are able to offer this safe space for our youth, and to be able to reflect God's light to help guide the next generation to the truth in Christ.