

**WORSHIP TIMES**

8:30 A.M. Traditional Service

10:00 A.M. Contemporary Service

HORIZON OF HOPE

The Difficult Work of Loving Others

Jesus taught them, "But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." — Matthew 5:44

Richard Rohr describes how loving our enemies is a practice of "integrating the negative," accepting what we find unacceptable within ourselves:

Our enemies always carry our own shadow side, the things we don't like about ourselves. We will never face our own shadow until we embrace those who threaten us (as Francis of Assisi embraced the leper in his conversion experience). The people who turn us off usually do so because they carry our own faults in some form.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says in essence, "If you love those who love you, what's so great about that?" (Matthew 5:46). It's simply magnified self-love. Instead, we are called to love the stranger at the gate, the one outside of our comfort zone. Until we can enter into love with them, Jesus is saying we really have not loved at all.

And what's Jesus' motivation for doing this? Some translations say, it's to "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). In my opinion, a more useful and accurate understanding of the word translated as "perfect" is "whole." Jesus and Francis met a God who is One, whole, and all inclusive. Be all inclusive as our God is all inclusive and all merciful. This is the heart of the gospel. Jesus' and Francis' goal was imitation of a loving, forgiving God. [1]

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) modeled how to "integrate the negative" by facing the realities of racism, poverty, and war, while insisting that we follow Jesus' command to love our enemies.

Let us be practical and ask the question, How do we love our enemies?

First, we must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive.... Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship....

Second, we must recognize that the evil deed of the enemy-neighbor, the thing that hurts, never quite expresses all that they are. An element of goodness may be found even in our worst enemy....

There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. When we look beneath the surface, beneath the impulsive evil deed, we see within our enemy-neighbor a measure of goodness and know that the viciousness and evilness of their acts are not quite representative of all that they are. We see them in a new light. We recognize that their hate grows out of fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, but in spite of this, we know God's image is ineffably etched in their being. Then we love our enemies by realizing that they are not totally bad and that they are not beyond the reach of God's redemptive love.

~Richard Rohr

Bible Study
Mondays at 4:00 PM



Come join Pastor Jim as he digs deeper in the Bible. All are welcome!

Women's Evening Bible Study
Thursday, May 1st at 6:00
Marilyn Perry's home

Bible Study at Bailey Pointe
First Thursday of the Month
May 1, 2025—1:00 PM

Prayer Time with Pastor
Tuesdays 10:00-10:30 AM

We welcome all people to worship God by offering our lives in daily witness to the love of Jesus Christ.

Welcome Ministry
 Marilyn and Brynn

Worship Ministry
 Leigh and Bob

Witness Ministry
 Betsy and Roxanne

YOU are always welcome to attend the meeting of our Council. Check with the church office for meeting details!

HOSANNA COUNCIL MEMBERS

2025-2026	
Sheri Lyons—President	402-657-7599
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Brynn Jobman	402-239-0972
Roxanne White roxwhite@cox.net	402-292-6632
Jenni Dasovic - Financial Secretary	402-297-1620
Brenda Shafer Treasurer	

Helping Our Community

- ▶ **Under His Wings Baby Pantry:**
 Located at Under His Wings
 Always needs diapers, Size 3, 4, 5, & 6
 Baby shampoo, lotion and wash.
- ▶ **Under His Wings Thrift Shop:**
 511 Main St.
 Hours: 10-5:00 pm Tues.-Fri
 10-3:00 pm Sat

	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	
General	2315	1340	n/a	n/a	
Benevolence	120	15	n/a	n/a	

Your Financial Gifts...
 Please consider mailing your commitment to the church at
 P.O. Box 301,
 Plattsmouth, NE 68048. Thank You!

Our Church continues to be grateful for all who faithfully support the ongoing life and ministry operating costs of Hosanna. You make a difference!

PRAYER OF THE DAY Mysterious and Divine Presence,

Too often our hearts burn within us because our bodies know before our minds that you are here working in us and through us in this world. Open our eyes, and help us to recognize you in all places and in all people, for the sake of the one whose presence is never far, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Sermon: God is with us - Is it really too hard to believe?

He is Risen – is it really too hard to believe? In our text that is true – what about us??? This story is only in the Gospel of Luke, and it takes place on the first day of the week and people are going about their normal lives living in the nightmare of Good Friday, but the women had just reported an empty tomb.

Luke 24:13-35 (NIV)

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

This is later on resurrection day – these two apparently heading home and were totally engrossed in their conversation when Jesus interrupts them. The nightmare of Good Friday fresh in their minds – trying to make sense of what just happened – the dashed hopes and dreams.

Given that, in all likelihood, these disciples had personally known Jesus, walked with him while he was alive and listened to him teach, it's astounding that "they were kept from recognizing him". Was their 'blindness' due to some divine mandate? Or had their own hardheartedness or lack of faith made it impossible for them to recognize Jesus? Perhaps it was some of both of these two factors. Definitely a teaching moment for Jesus...

They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

Two things going on here – First, they thought of the one they were talking to was a stranger ('only one visiting') and how often we think we know what is going and others, especially outsiders do not. Second, notice how they respond that – 'He (Jesus) was a prophet'.... Prophets don't come back from the dead, right! And many prophets of old were powerful in word and deed before God and people. They didn't come back from the dead. Does this make sense – they were not expecting Jesus 'the prophet' because he was dead. And prophets don't come back from the dead. What questions might you have? – let's talk or ask God for wisdom.

20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

Wow, listen to this – ‘we had hoped’, there is that dream that they had – “to redeem Israel”. The hope (dream) that Jesus is the one to redeem Israel was introduced early in Luke’s gospel as Zechariah praised God for the redemption of Israel (1:68), and as the prophetess Anna proclaims Jesus the one who would cause the redemption of Jerusalem (2:38). Jesus’ followers’ hopes that his coming would finally free Israel from slavery to Rome, and restore it to its rightful place among the nations. At this point on the road, however, these hopes are dead, along with the great prophet who was to make them real.

Hopes and dreams have an amazing power in our lives – without it, there is no sense of future and energy – with it, much can be overcome. They had lost hope and could not see the kind of redemption Jesus did for all. Here’s another probable assumption - Cleopas assumes the women and other disciples who proclaimed that the tomb was empty must be peddling falsehoods because they did not see Jesus.

25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Right, head knowledge is not enough. The Messiah had to suffer.... Then enter his glory!! Jesus is making a point -that suffering and glory are so closely intertwined. Seems contrary to our dreams – suffering is more like a nightmare. Look at all the suffering around and through us. Jesus wants us to learn that dreams can come true in the midst of suffering.

That’s why God wants us to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world – as we work, we see God at work in and with and through us. We also have the Holy Spirit to teach and to guide – remember they do not have the Holy Spirit yet.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

There it is – when Jesus broke the bread – the work of his hands – and then they could see. It is so amazing when we do things that the Lord likes – loving (serving) our neighbor that we feel this connection with something bigger than ourselves.

32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Wow, now the word is getting around. Multiple sightings, reforming their assumptions.

Jesus' question—"What are you discussing?"—pushes us to pause and pay attention to the stories that we are telling and to the fact that what we discuss shapes what we can and cannot see. Do the things we discuss amongst ourselves (and the assumptions we make when we talk) lead us toward Jesus? Toward wholeness? Away from bitterness? Conversely: what are we not discussing? To what and to whom are we not paying attention, and in our neglect or ignorance, devaluing other people on this shared journey of life?

Jesus asks Cleopas and his companion twice what they are talking about, even though he obviously knows. He is the expert because he is the one who experienced it. What they really need to do is listen to him tell the story. Instead, they discuss someone else's suffering, assuming they already understand what was going on. This ironically leads them to miss the truth, the risen Jesus, when he is right there with them.

Luke 24:13-35 invites us to ask: What are we discussing and how are we discussing it? What are we assuming we understand that perhaps we do not? What if other people are the experts on their own experiences? We follow Jesus' Emmaus road example when, instead of claiming mastery, we ask questions and really listen to the people around us. I pray that you would have eyes to see God at work in your life and those around you – He is Risen and active in the world.

So, let's continue to dream of a world filled with love and service to others. Don't be afraid to dream the impossible because nothing is impossible with God.

Let us Pray: Father, we thank you for the gift of your son. We thank you that you make your presence in us. We thank you for your compassion, grace and love. Help us to be followers of Jesus. Lord, through your Spirit give us eyes to see with your compassion and ears to hear your will and a heart willing to follow your will in our lives. Help us be the children you want us to be. Help us to share the Good News. Help us to love you and love others. We can do all this through you Lord, who gives us strength. Praise and blessing to you – in Jesus' name we pray, and all God's children said....
Amen.

BLESSING: Sending message from St. Teresa of Avila

"Christ has no body now, but ours. No hands, no feet on earth, but ours. Ours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Ours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Ours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world." † AMEN.

Verse of the Month

27 Jesus answered, him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43

Morning Prayer

***Good morning heavenly Father,
good morning Lord Jesus,
good morning Holy Spirit.
Heavenly Father, I worship you as
the creator and sustainer of the
universe.***

***Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior
and Lord of the world.
Holy Spirit, I worship you, sanctifier
of the people of God.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.***

***Heavenly Father, I pray that I may
live this day in your presence and
please you more and more.
Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I
may take up my cross and follow
you.***

***Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you
will fill me with yourself and cause
your fruit to ripen in my life: love,
joy, peace, patience, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control.***

***Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,
three persons in one God, have
mercy upon me.
Amen.***

~John Stott

Please pray for:

Janelle Almond
Bertha Black
Mary Braatz
Nadine Burson
Donna Clark
Nancy Conley
Mason Durow
Katie G. and family
Russ Frye
Jan Gehrig
Dave Greer
Barrett Hermann
Logan Hodila
Jason Knott
Bonnie Kral
Hayden Lavin

Rachel Mathew
Randy Ness
Josie Oseka
Rich Peters
Kay Rishel
Juan Rodriguez
Robin Roeder
Emily Ryan
Nick Shafer
Moxin Smith
Les Thornton
Dan & Kathy Todd
Jason, Rowan, Tate,
Dawson, Joel,
Keith

Please let the office know of changes to the prayer lists so that we can keep everything current. Thanks!

Prayer for those serving in the military and law enforcement:

Justin Bartlett, Marines
Jason Black, Law Enforcement
Joshua Black, Law Enforcement
Meshack Casey, Army
Cory Clines, Air Force
Steve Durow, Law Enforcement
Alex Houchin, Navy
Sean Gardner, Law Enforcement
Kyle Hefner, Air Force
Regan Hefner, Air Force
Mason Jensen, Navy
Rachel Mildenhall, Marines
Scott Nelson, Army
Tyler Nielson, Navy
Nick Richards, Law Enforcement
Steven Richards, Army
Travis Roeder, Air Force
Brent Wiese, Army
Craig Wylie, Law Enforcement



Attendance April 2025

April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	
102	64	194	n/a	

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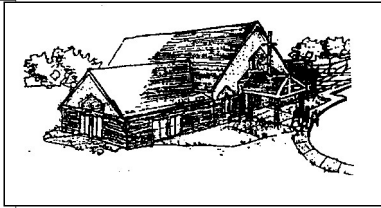
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On the Web:
www.HosannaPlattsmouth.com



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*We welcome all people to worship God by offering our lives
in daily witness to the love of Jesus Christ.*

Men's Fellowship Brunch
Wednesday, May 21st at 10:30 AM

Women's Evening Bible Study
May 1, 2025-6:00 PM at Marilyn Perry's home

Women's Daytime Bible Study
Thursday May 1 at 1:00 PM at Bailey Pointe Assisted Living

Prayer Time
Tuesday mornings from 10:00-10:30

Bible Study
Mondays at 4:00 PM (No Bible Study Memorial Day)

