



The Beacon

University Baptist Church

April 2008

SO YOU WANT PROOF?

“After the passion, Jesus was seen alive by the apostles through many proofs ...” (Acts 1.3)



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Deadline for the May issue is
Sunday, April 20.

Langdon Gilkey, a theology professor of mine at Divinity School in the 1980's, asked us what would happen to our faith if we got a phone call that archeologists had discovered the decomposed body of Jesus. Of course, now we might ask what DNA evidence there could be to prove that it was his body. And several of us then questioned what sort of material evidence counted in a story that had such sweeping spiritual significance.

But I've been thinking this Easter season that Dr. Gilkey's question is, as far as the gospels go, turned-around. The early Christian writings spend no time trying to disprove that Jesus died – the crucifixion story makes that clear. Instead, their interest was to provide evidence that he was – and is – alive. Sure, that may be obvious but it brings a very different nuance to the question. Those resurrection stories are not trying to prove that Jesus *did not die* but that *he was alive now*. And so we have this text in Acts, “Jesus was seen alive by the apostles through many proofs.”

In other words, the Easter question is simply: What evidence would prove to you that Jesus is alive?

There are some things to note before we go looking. There is the element of surprise: the evidence that is offered makes clear that the risen Jesus doesn't look like his disciples expected. They don't recognize him. Mary mistakes him for a gardener. Jesus shows up unexpectedly in circumstances that consistently provoke fear. And then there is the element of his physicality: one might make the easiest claim and simply offer evidence that Jesus was now a phantom spirit that is with us inside our own heads. But the evidence the gospels present as proof that Jesus is alive include Jesus eating, touching, even barbecuing breakfast on the beach. For these disciples, proof that Jesus is alive will have to have some physical reality to it.

And what might we be looking for as proof? The stories suggest looking for things like the offer of peace (John 20); simple gifts – like shared bread -- broken open in hope (Luke 24); abundant life and the promise of a place (John 14); and, of course, the actions and discipline of love.

And then, where to look? The stories are clear that the resurrection was entrusted to the community. And don't be surprised if Jesus looks like an ordinary gardener or a stranger or a fishmonger. Don't let fear that he might appear in some guise you don't understand keep you from looking. And, most of all, keep looking in those places where he said he would be: among the hungry, the naked, the strangers.

Help us this Easter season as we go looking for proof that Jesus is alive. When you find him, he is likely to be offering blessing and peace and healing. I would love to meet him – and you – there!

Blessings ... Tim



HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAY:

4/1 Rich Kemp; 4/2 Cass Newell
4/5 Carli MacColl; 4/9 Beverley
Katterman; 4/12 Walt Foster;
4/13 Mary Schaff (Paynton); 4/14 Sheri
Amundson, Enid Griswold; 4/16 Megumi
Kobayashi; 4/19 Bob Taylor; 4/20
Michael Vaughan; 4/21 David Bloom;
4/23 David Gordon; George Chaloner
4/25 Marilyn Pulliam; 4/26 Sadie
Robertson; 4/28 David Mahowald

**If you don't find your birthday here,
please call the office so we can add it to
our list.**

OUR APRIL SPECIAL OFFERING:

Young Adult Shelter (formerly Teen Shelter) now under direction of Roots at U Temple. There are on average about 20 teens each night who find a warm, safe place to sleep and a meal thanks to the work of the shelter. The shelter program also refers youth to services which help them move their lives beyond the streets. Please give generously to this important sanctuary work in the U-District.

AMONG OURSELVES...

We received Easter greetings from one of the refugee families we supported, **Nsoki Kumese and family** now living in Taylor, MI ... In celebration of the life of **Jamie Mock-Robbins**, our beloved co-pastor who died of cancer at 33 in 1988, we sent flowers to First Baptist Church in Dearborn, MI where Jamie was ordained and where his family were members ... **David Bloom** continues his work on behalf of homeless folks and their encampments in the city – see the invitation following for a gathering on April 19 ... **Elizabeth Patrick** asks us to keep our sister church Lakeshore Avenue (Oakland, CA) in our prayers as they plan to provide space for Burmese Baptists in their building ... Remember also **Mona Han** and her work in Thailand with students there – we hope to see Mona in May ... Several members of **Joanne Wright's family** will be joining her – and Tim & Patrick – to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our sister Lake Street Church in Evanston, IL in April – it's the church that ordained Joanne's father and put forward Tim's ordination to be recognized by the American Baptist Churches ... **Hilarie Pittenger** celebrates that her grandfather's health has improved and that she has been accepted to graduate school at the UW ... We celebrate the safe return of **Audrey Smith** from her trip to Ireland with her high school dance and drum group – they won first place! And **Joy & Ashley Smith** had a chance to spend some time together at Disney World in Orlando in March ... Thanks to **Ago Pedalizo & Violy Reyes** for making the opportunity for us to host young people at a peace conference in March ... **Paul Wilkerson** celebrated his 50th birthday this March ... **Virginia Nielsen** enjoyed a trip to the coast with her granddaughter and grandson-in-law ... **Priscilla Chong-Jue** was on a cruise in March with family leaving from San Diego and

traveling to the Hawaiian Islands ... **Carol Guthrie** has become a great-grandmother for the second time ... We remember **Charles & Alethea Putnam** as Charles continues his treatment and Alethea recovers from pneumonia ... **Carli MacColl** reports that her treatment is going well but we continue to keep her in our hearts – and celebrate with her the opportunity to see daughter **Zandi** in an upcoming performance of *12th Night* in Oklahoma City; son **Ethan** plans to make it there as well ... We keep the **Paynton family** in our prayers as they have experienced several losses – four funerals – in a very short time ... And we celebrate that **Jim Paynton** has won a teaching award this year – congrats Jim!



We have an *active Congregational Care Team* at UBC. If you or someone you know at church is sick, needs pastoral care or has prayer concerns, please contact Jackie Lamont, our Congregational Care Team Coordinator, at 206-985-7927 or jblamont@mindspring.com **NOTE: this is a new address for Jackie**
If you could help by making a meal, visiting or writing a card please contact Jackie.

A POEM FOR THE EASTER SEASON

Lucille Clifton is an award-winning African-American poet who was raised in New York. She was a student at Howard University and a graduate of the State University of New York. She was also Poet Laureate of the state of Maryland from 1979-1985. Her poetry celebrates her African-American heritage and feminist themes, especially as they relate to the female body. This poem was included in "Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality," edited by Marilyn Sewell.

spring song

the green of Jesus
is breaking the ground
and the sweet
smell of delicious Jesus
is opening the house and
the dance of Jesus music
has hold of the air and
the world is turning
in the body of Jesus and
the future is possible

VISIT WWW.UBCSEATTLE.ORG

The UBC website is up and running thanks to the work of David Spears. If you have not checked out the website yet take a look. The website is a great opportunity for us to share UBC with others. People visiting UBC for the first time have said that the website was very helpful in finding out about UBC. A visitor at UBC recently said that the website helped show her that being community is obviously very important for folks at UBC. Some of the many reasons to use the website:

- **Sermons** - There are samples of sermons that people can download and listen to. There is currently work being done to improve the quality of the recordings and make more sermons available.
- **Beacon Newsletter Archive** - All of the Beacon newsletters since June 2007 are available for download and they are in color!
- **This week at UBC** - A weekly schedule of what's happening at UBC. It's a great way for folks who are new to UBC to see just how much is going on.

Underwrite a Room at Camp Burton

Our call to help us underwrite the \$2500 furnishing costs of a room at the new Retreat Center at Camp Burton by the beginning of June has been met with great generosity:

- An **anonymous donor will match your gift of \$25 or more** (up to \$500) for a room in honor of UBC;
- We have raised \$1,035 towards the UBC sponsored room so far so we are almost half way there!
- A memorial gift in honor of **Bill Nielsen** has been given to underwrite another room; and
- A memorial gift celebrating the life of **Mohan** has been given by Rosie and his family and friends to underwrite another.

A total of three rooms are being underwritten by our community supporting this new opportunity for ministry at our American Baptist Camp on Vashon Island. Please make your gift today! And plan to join us for the Fall 2008 Retreat in September as we try out those new rooms.



From the Moderator

Easter, the day, has come and gone for 2008. Now, we are in Easter, the season—the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost. As Christians today, we know the Easter season as a happy time, a time of Springy newness bookended by two of our most holy and joyous days—Easter (Christ’s resurrection) and Pentecost (the coming of the Holy Spirit). But what must that first Easter season have been like for Jesus’ followers?

The first Easter was, well, confusing. Bodies were missing. Women were running, yelling that the gardener looked like Jesus. Men weren’t believing what they were hearing and seeing. What was going on? No one knew. I can’t believe that the days after the first Easter were much different.

During our Lent and Holy Week services, we have used several poems from *Stages on the Way*, a resource book from the Iona Community (iona.org.uk). We did not read the poem for the Saturday of Holy Week, but I would like to share it with you here because I think that it captures some of what Jesus’ followers must have felt during the first Easter season.

Men shiver in an upstairs room, warm though the day is.
Women weep in an uncharmed circle. Memory is forced on memory.
The mind's eye tries to trace the profile and the face,
the smile, the gentle twitching of the nose...
and fails.
And a panic sets in
because it seems he can't be remembered.
Was he ever known?
It was on a Saturday
that he was not there.

After Easter, Jesus’ followers knew that something (something miraculous) had happened, and surely that gave them some comfort. But still, Jesus would not be among them in the same ways that he had been. Jesus, their friend, was gone. Jesus’ followers also knew that a “power from on high” was coming to comfort and guide them. But still, it would not be Jesus and they would no longer be “followers.” Jesus, their rabbi, was gone.

My brother’s family went to visit my parents on Palm Sunday weekend. On Saturday night, my Mom (a.k.a. Grandmama) tucked my two nephews into bed. “Stay with us!” they begged her. “OK, I’ll stay for a little while.” Noah, the almost-three-year-old who likes to take things a step farther, said, “Get in bed!” Grandmama wisely declined. (The boys were in bunk beds that have an intricate system of safety railings—even on Noah’s bottom bunk; these railings make it impossible for grown-ups to get in and get out without advanced training in acrobatics.) Instead, Grandmama offered to hold Noah’s hand until he fell asleep. This was acceptable. She reached her hand over the railing. Noah grabbed her index finger with one hand and held on tightly. The minutes passed. Noah was quiet; he didn’t talk. He squirmed—fighting the sleep that he desperately needed—but he never loosened his grip on Grandmama’s finger. Finally, Noah said, “Fingers hurt.” He had been holding her finger with such focus and determination that his little fingers were tired and sore. Grandmama said, “It’s OK, Noah. You don’t have to hold on to Grandmama. Grandmama will hold on to you.” And he let go. And Grandmama took his little hand in hers.

That’s what I think the first Easter season must have been like. It was a time of Change. Jesus’ followers had to let go of the Jesus that they thought they knew. The one that they had seen, heard, touched. The one that they had defined. They were being asked to take it a step farther.

Let this Easter season be likewise for us. A time to let go our grasp on what we know. A time to let ourselves rest in the Promise of something bigger. (And I’m not talking about the building, folks.)

Eric Brown

APRIL DATES

PEACE CHORUS APRIL 4 & 6

My Dear UBC Brothers and Sisters,

As many of you are aware, I am an active member of the **Seattle Peace Chorus (SPC)**, which has been waging Peace Through Song for the past 25 years. I am particularly excited this spring because the SPC will be presenting in concert a major new work it commissioned by local musician and composer, Kent Stevenson, to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 40th anniversary of his death. This wonderful concert will include well-known soloists Pat Wright and Debbie Cavitt. The SPC will also be performing director Fred West's musical setting of Langston Hughes' famous poem, "Let America Be America Again." The performances are on Friday, April 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church (admission free) and on Sunday, April 6 at 3:00 at Plymouth Congregational Church on Sunday, April 6. Tickets for the Sunday afternoon performance at Plymouth can be purchased through me (call 253-945-7074) or Paula Eisenrich or on line at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/29556. Advance ticket prices are \$15 for adults/\$13 for seniors and students. Please plan to join us for this special event.

God's Peace to You

Don Bell, Seattle Peace Chorus Member

6TH ANNUAL UBC CHILI FIESTA

Friday, April 11, 6:00-8:30pm

Special music by *the Youth and Young Adults of UBC*

Dinner served all evening with a dessert auction at 7:00.

- ❖ Listen to great music
- ❖ enjoy festive food
- ❖ help support three missions at UBC:
 - Saturday Kitchen, Transitional Housing, and Children's Center

Suggested Donation: \$8 Adult, \$5 Child, Under 6 free



A CONVERSATION ABOUT HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH APRIL 19

Seattle's Mental Health Chaplain, Craig Rennebohm, has written a new book, *Souls in the Hands of a Tender God*, that offers stories and insights about people who are homeless and mentally ill. Craig's book will be made available to folks at UBC at the beginning of April and we encourage those who are interested to read it in preparation for a conversation on **Saturday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to noon**. For more information, contact David Bloom at (206) 941-8068 or ecurev@earthlink.net. Also available is a two-page statement unanimously adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches in June of 1992 on mental illness. It calls for all American Baptist congregations to "examine our hearts, our theology, and our actions to see that there is no judgment of or avoidance of persons who suffer from the effects of mental illness."

UBC QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING APRIL 20

Following worship on **Sunday, April 20**, please join us for our congregational quarterly business meeting. In addition to reports from our working teams, we will hear a report on the progress of the sale of our property. All members and friends are encouraged to attend.

Many Voices, One Song

Friday, April 18, 2008, 7:00 pm

A Musical Celebration of Diversity to benefit Multifaith Works
Seattle ~ Case Taverns ~ Transformational Housing ~ Peer Recovery Network



A Production of:



Featured Performers

The Esoterics

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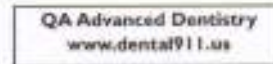
Seattle First Baptist Church

1111 Harvard Avenue (Harvard & Seneca) First Hill, Seattle

Tickets \$15 in advance ~ \$20 at the door

Order online www.multifaith.org

or call (206) 324-1520 X 221



WORSHIP IN MARCH

“After the passion, Jesus was seen alive by the apostles through many proofs ...” (Acts 1.3)

Every Sunday 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearses in the Sanctuary 9:30 a.m. Bible Study in the McAfee Parlor 10:30 a.m. Worship and Children’s Program

- Sunday, April 6** *In the breaking of the bread* (Luke 24.13-35)
Worship & Communion led by Tim Phillips.
- Sunday, April 13** *In the promise of abundant life* (John 10.1-10)
Good Shepherd Sunday led by Tim Phillips.
- Sunday, April 20** *In preparing a place for you* (John 14.1-14)
Worship led by Tim Phillips. Quarterly Business Meeting follows worship.
- Sunday, April 27** *In the discipline of love* (John 14.15-21)
Guest preaching.