



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church Newsletter
446 Camden Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057
856-235-0450, www.meetwithGod.com

Rev. Tom Korkuch, Pastor
Kathy Clawges, Director of Youth
Donna Banes, Co-Music Leader
Doug Hamilton, Maintenance Coordinator

Rev. HeyYoung Horton, Associate Pastor
Karen Murray, Director of Christian Education
Norm Dorrell, Co-Music Leader
Devika Gill, Director of First Light Learning Center

Join us for Worship - Saturday 5:30 pm, Sunday 8:30 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am
Web: www.meetwithGod.com -or- Social media: @fumcmoorestown

APRIL 2019



Holy Week & Easter Schedule



Holy Week Events

Palm Sunday, April 14th:

8:30 a.m. Early Worship - in the Chapel

9:30 a.m. Contemporary Praise and Worship -

Celebrating our Lord's triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week.

11:00 a.m. Palm Sunday Worship - With processions of praise and the great hymns of the season we remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and the greeting that he received from those who placed palms in his path.

7:00 p.m. Live Passion - Presented by the Youth and the Adult Choir. *See pg. 6 for more information*

Holy Thursday, April 18th:

7:00 p.m. We will celebrate the Last Supper of our Lord in remembrance of Him who broke the bread and shared the cup of communion with His disciples in the Upper Room. Service takes place in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday, April 19th:

11 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross in the Sanctuary (*See pg. 2 for more information*)

Noon A 3 hour service on the words of Jesus on the cross, with clergy from area churches. Trinity Episcopal, corner of Church & Main St., Moorestown.

7:00 p.m. A Tenebrae (meaning "shadow") Service that uses the lighting and extinguishing of candles, music, scripture and dance to dramatize the fading Light of the World with the death of Christ on the Cross.

Easter Vigil, April 20th:

5:30 p.m. Worship Service - This service of waiting and hope will be a Taize' style service, in preparation for Easter morning.



Easter Morning, April 21st:

6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service - Start the Day of Resurrection by gathering in the courtyard in a sunrise service, anticipating the joy of the resurrection.

We will adjourn afterward to

Fellowship Hall for a continental breakfast. All are welcome.

8:15 a.m. Early Praise and Worship - Come to the Sanctuary, 15 minutes earlier than usual, to celebrate Easter. Begin with praise songs and end with the Hallelujah Chorus led by our Adult Choir.

9:30 a.m. Easter Praise and Worship - The walls will resound in this service of contemporary praise in celebration of Easter. We meet as usual in the Sanctuary.

11:00 a.m. Easter Worship - enriched with the music of a brass choir, the music of our Adult Choir, and the joyful singing of the timeless hymns of Easter. Also meets in the Sanctuary.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INVITATION

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday and ends with the Easter "Triduum" - the three days that begin on the evening of Maundy Thursday, extend through Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and conclude with the glorious day of resurrection on Easter Sunday. These days tell the story of the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ - and not only are they important for those of us who are already followers of Jesus, but they also provide a powerful opportunity for invitation to those who may be seeking more in their lives.

What might happen if you invited someone to worship during this time?



FROM
PASTOR TOM

“Easter...”

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. - Luke 24:1-5

There's a new trend that I've noticed over the past several years regarding Easter - some of the larger, more successful churches avoid it like the plague. Actually, that's misleading. The churches I'm referring to don't avoid the day itself - they celebrate it in all its glory just like the rest of us - but instead what they avoid is the name, “Easter.” In its place, they usually substitute the name “Resurrection Sunday” or “Day of Resurrection.”

What's so bad about the name “Easter,” you may be asking? It seems that some of these churches have become concerned about the name's alleged pagan roots. They claim that “Easter” has been co-opted from the names of the early gods and goddesses of fertility, sometimes referred to “Ashtarte,” “Ostare,” “Eostre,” and many others. It's just as likely, however, that the name “Easter” could have come from the German translation of an old Frankish word for “white” and “sunrise.” That German word, “Ostern,” for instance, is still used today.

The truth is that while we're not entirely sure of the etymology of the word “Easter,” we do know that Christianity from its earliest beginnings has always borrowed names, dates, and places from the surrounding culture and made them our own. The date selected for Christmas, for instance, was an important date in the Roman calendar and was thought to coincide with the festivals celebrating the winter solstice. But is that what's of lasting importance when it comes to the significance of any of the Christian holy days?

Easter is no longer about fertility gods or German translations of old Frankish words. It's about life - the new life that God offers to each one of us through Jesus Christ, regardless of the name or the date attached to the

day itself. Easter is about taking the “dead places” in our lives and breathing resurrection into them. Easter is the invitation to live again the life we were created to live.

So, whether it's “Easter” or “Resurrection Day,” may we all discover this life for ourselves through the spirit of the risen Christ!

Easter Blessings!
Pastor Tom



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**Friday, April 19th
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Come to the Sanctuary and spend some time at each station meditating on the pathway of Jesus' suffering and sacrifice. It is by walking this way with Him that we may come to share in the glorious victory of His resurrection.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Apr. 1st Rummage Sale - 6:00-9:00pm
- Apr. 2nd Rummage Sale - 9:30am-2pm, 6-8:30pm
- Apr. 7th Kings Road Revival concert - 3:00pm
- Apr. 12th My Abba's Hands - 7:00-9:00pm
- Apr. 13th My Abba's Hands - 9:00am-3:00pm
- Apr. 13th Adult Fellowship - Noon
- Apr. 14th Palm Sunday
- Apr. 14th Men's Breakfast - 7:30am
- Apr. 14th Light Harbor at Avista - 2:30pm
- Apr. 14th Live Passion - 7:00pm
- Apr. 18th Holy Thursday service - 7:00pm
- Apr. 19th Stations of the Cross - 11:00am - 5:00pm
- Apr. 19th Community Good Fri.svc.@Trinity-noon
- Apr. 19th Good Friday Tenebrae service - 7:00pm
- Apr. 20th Eyes of our Hearts breakfast - 7:00am
- Apr. 20th Easter Vigil service - 5:30pm
- Apr. 21st Easter services-6:00, 8:15, 9:30, 11:00am
- Apr. 22nd Church office closed
- Apr. 28th Parents DIGG - 10:45am
- Apr. 30th Crafts for Good - 7:00-8:30pm



**FROM THE DIRECTOR
OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

This Lenten season several of our small groups have been studying “Made for a Miracle” by Mike Slaughter. This study reminds us that there are two components to every miracle: divine action and human responsibility. “Each of us has been given specific talents and abilities. For a real miracle to take place, God expects us to apply these talents and abilities-acting with God to perform divine work”. As we continue our journey through Lent, consider how God might be using you to be the miracle maker to someone in your life. It's not too late to join a group. If you are interested, please contact me (Karen Murray) at 856-266-0083.

*“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture the flock under his care.” Psalm 95:6 NIV*

As I reflect on the above passage from Psalm 95 especially during Lent, I am reminded that we are the “flock” that is cared for by God. The same God that created the universe, the same God that lay the foundation of earth, the same God that “created my inmost being” and the same God that sent Jesus, to die on the cross for the salvation of all believers. Since we are part of God's flock we have the awesome privilege of worshiping God.

I absolutely believe that worship is a privilege that should not be taken lightly and should be done by all believers. I believe worship is the opportunity for us to express how much we adore God, to give thanks and praise.

How worship is done varies, just look at the differences in our own worship services. There is no set formula on how to worship God only that we should. We should want to give praise, show adoration, give thanks, honor and glorify God. We should WANT to worship!

I looked up the definition of “Worship” from google dictionary. The definition listed is 1. (Noun) The feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. “the worship of God”. 1. (Verb) show reverence and adoration for (a deity); honor with religious rites. Do you have that feeling? Do you have the desire to adore and show reverence?

My prayer for you, as we journey through this Lenten season together, is that you would have a true desire to worship God at all times. Bowing is good, kneeling is good, singing and shouting is good, praying is good. Worship is good! Amen.

Grace & Peace,
Karen Murray, DCE

Special Events:

VBS Registration has begun. Our theme this year is “To MARS and Beyond”. Forms can be found on the Welcome Center or downloaded from the website, www.meetwithGod.com. (VBS Week is Aug. 19th - 23rd, 9am - 12noon).

Volunteers are NEEDED to staff our 2019-2020 Sunday School Year as well as our VBS week. If you are interested please contact Karen Murray @ 856-222-1120.



**A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LORD'S PRAYER
Sermon Series Continues Through Palm Sunday**

When Jesus invites us to pray, he says “pray like this” or “pray in this way.” What follows are six lines of prayer petitions that become the foundation for our prayer life. You're invited to continue our journey through each line of the Lord's Prayer this Lenten season at First UMC as we are reminded of age-old truths and encouraged to discover fresh meanings in these special words that Jesus has left with us as a blueprint for how we talk to God.

**TRAVELING THE KING'S ROAD:
A HISTORICAL TIMELINE of
KINGS ROAD REVIVAL Part 1**

Hey Friends! Can you believe our own Kings Road Revival worship band turns 25 this year! Yes, it's hard to believe the Praise Team, as it was originally named, began its weekly ministry at FUMC in 1994 on Easter Sunday. Most of the original members from the group are still helping to lead worship and praising the Lord every Sunday at 9:30 and rarely miss a week! So how did KRR come together? How did it all begin? Glad you asked! It actually began back in the summer of 1982 with a phone call to a 16 year old boy living in Alloway NJ. I know this as fact because, yes you guessed it, I was that boy. When I answered the phone a familiar voice said, "It has begun." I knew exactly who it was and exactly what had begun. The voice on the other end of the phone belonged to 26 year old Stephen Donat. Steve was my neighbor and Pastor of Alloway UMC. For months he and I had been talking about starting a contemporary Christian music group with myself on drums and vocals, Steve on Vocals, Guitar and sax, his wife Dianna on piano and vocals and a fellow church member named Reggie Henderson on bass and vocals. Steve had called to tell me that he had sold his first motorcycle (that is another story in itself) and used the money to buy a small PA system so that we could start the band. That, my friends, was the beginning of the Damascus Road Band. If you never heard, or heard of DRB, don't feel bad, we were only together as DRB for about 4 years and rarely played shows outside of NJ. We would load our meager pile of music equipment into a red VW bus dubbed La Grossa Rosa and travel around the New Jersey Bible Belt as I called it playing at various churches and festivals. The band's repertoire was made up of original Christian songs written by Steve, and a few early contemporary Christian songs by artists like Amy Grant, Tim Sheppard, and Michael Card. The musical styles covered by DRB varied. We played, Rock, Jazz, Blues, Latin, Fusion, classical, nothing was off the table. The lyrics in the songs took on hard topics that were on people's minds in society back then and several of the band's shows were at events helped to raise awareness about those topics. Within DRB a strong desire was felt by all 4 members to use our spiritual gifts of music to share the love of God as much as we could with any audience that would listen. Sometimes finding those

audiences was difficult as most people in that area were not quite ready for that kind of music in 1982. But strong friendship bonds were formed as well as deep mutual respect for each other's musicianship. It is also fair to say we had a lot of fun praising God with this music.

After 4 short years of faithful ministry at Alloway UMC the Donats moved to Swedesboro and began their 11 year ministry in Bethesda United Methodist Church located on Kings Highway. DRB continued for another 2 years there, but as families grew and jobs changed it became too difficult to keep DRB together. But, the story doesn't end there. And this story will be continued in part 2. *Editor's note - look for part 2 in an upcoming issue of "The Messenger"!*

Norm Dorrell
Co-Music Leader



SAVE THE DATE!

SUNDAY APRIL 7, 2019 at 3:00 PM

**KINGS ROAD REVIVAL
25th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**

**Please come join us as we celebrate 25 years of
praising and worshipping our Lord through music!
A reception will be held in the Music Lobby during
intermission.**

**A free will offering will be taken to help support
the Fire Safety Fund at FUMC.**

ALL ARE WELCOME!





MUSIC NOTES

Have you ever found that you cannot silence the insistent memory of certain fragments of music you've recently sung or heard? It's as if an internal tape recorder is with you throughout the day, sometimes half-forgotten and sometimes playing full volume. For me it's usually the middle of the night!! Instead of resisting this inner music, I find that it is often something I can meditate upon.

That fragment of melody can become a focus for contemplative prayer or centering prayer where we just focus on God's presence. I try to quiet the continual buzz of my own thoughts and focus on God and calm my soul. Of course, that is more easily said than done!

When I have a song, hymn or anthem running through my head I discover that the music becomes a kind of mantra. This can help me to focus my attention toward God. I compare this to the chant of the Taize community in France. While I have never been, we sing several of those beautiful chants, they calm the soul, they focus my attention on the voice of God. I find that the phrases of hymns, songs or anthems have the same quality.

As we finish out Lent and move on towards Easter, I find that there are many things that will run through my mind. Right now, it's a choir anthem in part, "On the third day, on the third day, on the third day Christ arose!!" What ever comes to mind for you, may it be a mantra or form of prayer that allows you to take time to focus on the voice of God!

Donna Banes
Co-Music Leader

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ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION

If you would like to use your mobile device to make an electronic donation to FUMC Moorestown, just scan this QR code and you'll be connected to our mobile giving page!



LIGHT HARBOR MINISTRY

April's service will be on Palm Sunday, April 14th, come join us at Avista Healthcare in Cherry Hill as we plan to celebrate Jesus' entry into the city of Jerusalem with scripture, singing, and palms at 2:30 PM. If you would like some information on our ministry contact Linda Wanagas at 856-273-1298.

During this Easter Season, we ask that you keep our senior citizens who are housebound or in nursing homes, assisted living, health and rehab facilities, and hospitals in your prayers. Many have no family or friends to visit them. If you have an aunt, uncle, grandparent, or friend living alone or at one of these facilities please take the time to visit, call, or write. You have no idea how much joy and happiness you will bring.

THE EASTER BASKET IN THE NARTHEX has names of residents from Avista Healthcare who have little or no family to share the holiday with this Easter. If you are interested in purchasing an Easter bag/box for one of the residents please **select an egg** from the basket, **write your name and phone number** in the space with your egg's name and number so that we may contact you if you forget to **return the bag/box by Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019** and enjoy shopping for your resident. Please remember to **mark your bag/box with the name and number listed on the egg.**

Suggested items that may be purchased for the bag/box are shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, baby powder, body lotion, hand lotion, bar of soap, hair brush, comb, hair bands etc., socks, scarves, stuffed animals, and playing cards. If you feel the need to purchase candy make it sugar free. If you have any questions please call Linda Wanagas at 856-273-1298.

All of us at Light Harbor Ministry wish to thank you for supporting our ministry and pray that you have a safe and Hopping Easter!



Live Passion

*Palm Sunday Evening
April 14th at 7PM*

*Presented by
Methodist Youth Fellowship
and
Adult Choir*



*Join us in the Sanctuary as the scenes of Holy Week unfold and are brought to life
by our youth, with anthems by the Adult Choir
and congregational singing.*

Reception to follow in the Susan D. Rodgers Music Lobby

*First United Methodist Church
446 Camden Avenue
Moorestown, NJ 08057*



**First United Methodist Church
Invites you to Shop at our
SEMI-ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE
April 1st & 2nd**

****Note change of days - now Monday & Tuesday!****

Location:

First United Methodist Church
(Fellowship Hall wing)

**Shopping
Hours:**

Monday 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Tuesday 9:30 am to 2:00 pm and
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
(\$3.00 Bag Night)

**Soup & Sandwich lunch for sale from
11:30 am to 2:00 pm on **Tuesday**

Donations Accepted:

Saturday, Mar. 30th, 8:00 am - 7:00 pm
Sunday Mar. 31st, 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm

(Sorry, we may need to close doors early for donations
if we are full.)

Please, NO magazines, encyclopedias, large furniture,
large exercise equipment, tube TVs, PC Monitors or
anything requiring two people to carry.

Sponsored by Adult Fellowship and
the Education & Youth Departments

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*First United Methodist Church is a community of faith
committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ with a
hurting world through words and actions.*

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE...
to make a pledge for our
Fire Safety Fundraising Campaign!**

Pledges can be made through Palm Sunday, with the
option to complete your pledge over the next
2 years. Pledge cards will be in the weekend bulletins.
Please join in prayerfully supporting this necessary and
important initiative.



**20th Annual Holman Tender
Charity Golf Classic**

Friday, May 10th at Ramblewood Country Club
in Mt. Laurel
Lunch at noon, shotgun start at 2PM

Platinum Sponsors!



Silver Sponsors!



O&S Research

Dinner Sponsor!



Camperlerno Property Management, LLC

Lunch Sponsor!



Refreshment Cart Sponsor!



Hole Sponsors!



The Brining Family



Join us to help The Tender
maintain our Alzheimer's/
dementia center. The
\$150 fee will include golf,
lunch, dinner, open bar,
on-course refreshments
and beer! Call
856-234-5999,
TenderADC@gmail.com or
TheTender.org for tickets.
Dinner only \$75



**FROM THE
MISSIONS COMMISSION**

Back about 10 years ago when my family and I were driving to Florida for a nice spring vacation I accidentally made a wrong turn somewhere in South Carolina. After realizing my mistake and momentarily thinking I was lost, I decided to turn around in a church parking lot. It was there where my family and I read what was written under the church's sign that made such a thought provoking statement and added to our family's discussion for the remaining part of our trip. Normally one might expect a scripture verse near a church sign but this was not the case. The statement read: "If you are looking for the perfect church, don't come here". At first we all chuckled, wondering what's with that church? Was there something wrong with this church that the members did not want anyone coming there with high expectations? We were all taken back because the statement gave the impression not to worship here as there could be division and strife. But after more thought we realized this was not the case. In contrast this church was declaring that their congregation is not perfect and in essence are sinners (like everyone else in the world).

Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 that we are to be perfect just as our heavenly Father is perfect. To me this means we must always strive to be perfect with the help of the Holy Spirit indwelling in every believer. However, this of course does not mean we never fall and sin against God. Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Fortunately Jesus tells us to confess our sins and repent and He will forgive us of our trespasses. One of the things that can destroy the welfare of the church is for its members to have a "holier than thou attitude" thinking they are perfect and / or better than some other person or group of people. By acting this way this leads to judging others while down playing their own sins. Jesus warns us about judging others in Matthew chapter 7 where he says in verse 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Everyone knows that a hospital is where the sick, lame and dying go to get better. The church is like a hospital where some attend because they are spiritually or emotionally sick while all are imperfect. The church is also where the Lord resides and through Him, healing can take place. But unlike a patient in a real hospital

who knows that he or she is sick, sometimes a person who comes to church may be unaware they are spiritually sick or lost because they have never trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior. There can also be people in the church who at one time accepted Christ but due to the hardships of this world have grown out of fellowship with our Lord and need to reconnect with Him.

As long as the church continues to preach and do the word of God and show the unconditional love of our savior it needs to also be a "no judgment zone" where all sinners are welcomed regardless of their sin. Perhaps one of the main reasons much of our community does not attend church is because they feel they will be judged by the people there. This should never be the case but instead the people of the church need to show everyone God's grace and unconditional love.

Being in a no judgment zone does not mean we are free to live and be like the world. We were bought with a price and called to be in the world but not of the world. As believers in Christ we are to not buy into the world's falsehood but rather submit to the truth as found in God through the scriptures.

This month the Missions Committee recognizes the congregation of our church. Specifically everyone who welcomes a stranger in church (or outside of church) in the name of our Lord by showing God's grace and unconditional love while making them feel they are not in a judgment zone. We also recognize your passion to carry out our church's mission statement by being a community of faith committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ with a hurting world through words and actions. Thank you for being our local missionary for our church and community and making all people feel welcomed.

Allan Estrin
Missions Committee Member

Missions Update

Missions Weekend (Feb 15,16 2019)

We celebrated wonderful fellowship with a full slate of events:

On Saturday,

- The “older” folks finally beat the youth at volleyball (after three unsuccessful tries)
- Allan Hanlon led us in a sing-along that had folks of all ages belting it out!
- We all enjoyed a dinner of pizza and salad
- Judi Angelow gave a heart-felt message during our 5:30 church service
- We were able to collect over 600 pieces of underwear for distribution to homeless and needy persons in Camden at our Eyes of Our Heart breakfasts

On Sunday,

- At the 8:30 and 9:30 services, Alex Simpson gave a thought provoking message and updated us on the Crusade for Christ (now “CRU”) efforts to raise up student leaders for evangelizing numerous New Jersey college campuses
- At the Men's breakfast and the 11:00 service, Rev. Dave Bailey, Sr. told us how Ranch Hope in Alloway, NJ has been helping troubled youth get their lives back together since the ministry's founding in 1960.

We were tremendously blessed to understand how God is using these missionaries to make a difference to the youth in our community. We are honored to support them!

My Faith Promise pledges for 2019

Thank you for your tremendous response to the My Faith Promise request. While the number of responses were down about 20% from last year, the total promised was \$45,300 - above the \$43,000 promised last year! What a blessing to see the dedicated folks of our church promising extra to support our mission efforts in 2019.

Missionary Support in 2019

While the My Faith Promise giving has increased to \$45,300 in 2019, FUMC was unable to continue its longstanding support (\$43,000 in 2018 budget) into 2019. So, our direct missionary support will drop by about 50% this coming year. The Missions Committee has prayerfully evaluated every missionary and program we supported in 2018. Support of many mission programs has been reduced by about 50% in the 2019 budget and funding to seven missionaries has been completely eliminated.

Looking forward into 2019...

The Missions Committee will attempt to restore some 2019 funding via non-conventional methods, with special emphasis on restoring financial support for our “Home Grown” missionaries. Please watch for a number of new initiatives that will include:

- An eBay selling service where we can support Missions while clearing out the attic or basement
- A community yard sale

Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Your continued prayer support is appreciated even more!



April MYF News

First United Methodist Church
Jr. & Sr. High Newsletter
kclawges@gmail.com
856-912-1148



LENTEN BIBLE STUDY - WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

March 6 - April 17, 6PM - 8PM
LOCATION: Sr. High Youth Room

We will continue with our Lenten study on the book, "Made for a Miracle". All Jr. & Sr. High youth are invited to join us. Our Study will end with Prayer Stations on April 17th, 6-8pm. The youth will purposefully pray at each station for our world, their families, communities, their identity in Christ, blessings, forgiveness, and rest in this world.



"LIVE PASSION"

April 14, 7PM
LOCATION: Church Sanctuary

This year will be our 4th year performing the "Live Passion" and it is growing! Our youth will perform live Stations of the Cross with narrators & music. It will take place in the Sanctuary on Palm Sunday night, April 14th at 7:00pm. What a great way to begin Holy week! Come and be Blessed!

Sharing the Gospel with Teens this Easter

When it comes to teenagers, it's interesting that many adults have a challenging time with this stage of life. Many of us are confused by how to parent them, teach them, relate to them, and even talk to them. They're not kids anymore, but they have yet to go through some experiences that help them fully become adults. And when it comes to talking about Easter or sharing the Gospel with teens...well, where do you start?

I have to admit, before the Lord called me to youth ministry, I was intimidated by teenagers and at times avoided them on Friday nights at the movie theaters. The first day I stepped into youth group as a youth leader, flashbacks of the first day as a high-school freshman came rushing to my mind along with all the memories of feeling like I didn't belong. But the interesting thing was that in the sea of 13-to-18 year olds that filled the room, that's how they felt too.

These days, high schools are filled with teens who have never heard the story of Easter, and even those who have grown up in Christian homes have not always known how to respond to it. A larger number of students are growing up in broken homes or highly troubled homes. In a season where entertainment and popularity and outward appearances take priority in their life, it takes looking deeper to understand how to really connect with teens. We tend to look at teens as second-class citizens at times and think, "they're not ready for this" when it comes to serious subjects like the Gospel.

The teen years can be a really challenging period of transition. Think about it: you're not a kid anymore, so people expect you to act mature, but you're not an adult yet, so society doesn't take you seriously yet. But the reality is that teenagers just long to belong. Like the rest of us, they long to be known and accepted. They long to be part of community and to know that they are loved despite all their insecurities and shortcomings. They're trying to figure out what they will do with the rest of their lives and what their purpose is to give them a sense of value. So this is where an open door lies to speak to their hearts and share the beauty of the Cross. When a teenager realizes that the connection and relationship they are seeking with their parents or their friends or their interests or their hobbies will never satisfy, but can only fully be fulfilled at the Cross of Jesus, their eyes are opened to the truth.

Teens are longing for things that are real and authentic and when we feed them anything less than the straight up truth about the cross and who Jesus is, they don't see its value. Students want something to give their life to, and we often see them give it to music and entertainment or to pursuing romantic relationships or even to be engaging in every extracurricular activity. This desire for connection can be fulfilled by giving teens the chance to discover the Bible. Connecting with teenagers through Scripture can be a life-changing experience for you both. When we truly lead them to encounter the power of Jesus in their lives, however, they can direct those passions toward Him and giving their lives fully to Him. As they seek meaningful connections and they realize that Jesus came to connect with them and break every barrier that would get in the way of that connection, it speaks to their core. In a generation that has grown up among split parents and broken relationships, the story of Easter and how Jesus came to restore the broken relationship with the Heavenly Father and overcome death is the answer to the cry in their hearts. Take the opportunity to reach into the hearts of teens around you and let God use you to connect them to Jesus at the Cross this Easter.