

SMALL GROUPS | A DROP FROM THE ALTAR | SENIOR ADULTS | EVENTS

# *the messenger*

LIVE OAK CHURCH MAGAZINE / APRIL 2025

FROM  
THE  
PASTOR'S  
DESK

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A HOLY WEEK  
DEVOTIONAL

---

EGGS,  
EASTER, &  
EVANGELISM

---

SUMMER  
BOREDOM

---



RESURRECTION  
ONLY COMES  
AFTER DEATH

---

WHY THE  
RESURRECTION OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

# Child Evangelism CLASS

During this class, you'll gain insight into recognizing when a student is ready to commit their life to Christ and how to guide them through that decision with confidence.

**SUNDAY**  
**April**  
**27<sup>th</sup>**



**3:30pm**



**In the Chapel**

**\* Registration  
Required**

Don't miss this chance to  
be equipped and inspired  
for children's ministry!

**Sign up today!**



**SUNDAYS - 6PM - IN THE FLC**



# YOUNG ADULTS

**TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH**  
**A STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS**

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**Irrefutable Proof:**  
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## A time and a place for everyone

For more information about groups and events visit [www.liveoak.church](http://www.liveoak.church) or call (225) 664-4801.

### WEEKLY CALENDAR

#### SUNDAY

**8:00 AM** Worship Service

**8:45 AM** Children & Pre-Teen Sunday School  
Sherri Gardner: 1st-4th Grade - Room #214  
Jodi Rushing: 5th-6th - Room #213

**8:45 AM** Students 7th-12th Grade:  
Dawn Lott - Upstairs in FLC

**8:45 AM** Adult Small Groups:  
See Page 5 for Full List

**9:30 AM** Children's Ministry - 1st-4th Grade - FLC

**9:30 AM** Preteen - Chapel

**9:30 AM** Worship Service

**11:00 AM** Children's Ministry - 1st-4th Grade - FLC

**11:00 AM** Preteen - 5th-6th Grade - Chapel

**11:00 AM** Worship Service

**6:00 PM** Young Adults Worship Service (1st Sundays)

#### WEDNESDAY

**8:00 AM** Quilters Ministry - FLC

**9:30 AM** Worship Wednesday - Online

**6:30 - 7:20** | Preschool | Pre-K3 to Kindergarten

**6:00 - 7:15** | Kingdom Kidz | 1st-4th Grade

**6:00 - 7:30** | Preteen | 5th-6th Grade

**6:00 - 7:30** | Student Ministry | 7th-12th Grade

**6:30 - 7:20** | Worship & Study | Adults

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Family Easter Event - Apr. 6 @ 4 pm
- Young Adult Worship Service - Apr. 6 @ 6 pm
- Good Friday Service - Apr. 18 at 12 pm
- Graduate Recognition - Apr. 27 at 9:30 am & 11 am
- Child Evangelism Class - Apr. 27 @ 3:30 pm
- Men's Steak Dinner - Apr. 29 @ 6 pm

Download the App



Church Map



# APRIL

# ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

small group | large group

## Sunday 8:45 AM

Young Adults & Couples Class // **The Apostles' Creed** // Krist & Katie Norsworthy - Sanctuary Upstairs

Young & Median Adult Class // **How to Read and Study Your Bible for Yourself** // David Orges - FLC Upstairs

Median Adult Class // **Book of Revelation** // Dickie Davis - Room #202

Senior Adult Class // **All Signs Point to Jesus** // Layne Hutchinson - Room #212

Pastor's Class // **Gospel of Luke** // Dr. Mark Crosby - Choir Room

New Member Class // Bro. Sam LoBello - Room #201

## Sunday 9:30 AM

Co-ed Class // **Topical** // Robert Poole - Room #211

Couples Class // **Gospel of John** // Todd & Sealy Pettavino - Room #202

## Sunday Evenings

4:00 PM // **Doctrinal Study** // Layne Hutchinson & Jon Williams - Room #202

5:00 PM (4th Sunday of the Month) // **Ministry 101** // Nathan Lott - Chapel

6:00 PM (4th Sunday of the Month) // **Young Parents** // Jon & Tracy Williams - FLC

6:00 PM // Young Adults // **Book of Acts** // Krist Norsworthy - FLC

## Monday

6:00 PM // Men's Discipleship Group // **Topical** // Robert Poole's Home

6:30 PM // Deeper Life Men // **1 & 2 Peter** // David Tate - Room #201

6:30 PM // Deeper Life Women // **Heaven: When Faith Becomes Sight** // Jan Tate - Chapel

## Tuesday

6:30 PM // **Discovering Daniel** (1st & 3rd Tuesday) // Stephen Hebert - Chapel

6:30 PM // **Grief Support Group** (2nd & 4th Tuesday) // Stephen Hebert - Chapel

## Wednesday 6:30 PM

Co-ed Home Group // **Book of Acts** // Jim & Janet Setoudeh's Home

Worship & Study // **Focusing on The Resurrection** // Pastor Mark // Sanctuary

## Thursday

6:00 PM // **Men's Play & Pray Basketball** // Jim Otken - FLC

7:00 PM // **REFUGE Addiction Recovery** // Sam LoBello - Room #201

7:00 PM (1st & 3rd Thursdays) // **Lifeline: Parents of Addicted Youth & Adults** // Summer Babin - Counseling Hall

## Friday

5:30 AM // Men's Group // **Book of Acts** // Jim Otken - Room #202

6:00 PM // Co-ed // **Book of Acts** // Robert Poole - Room #202

## Second Saturday of Each Month

7:30 AM // Men's Prayer Breakfast & Study // **What Happen's Next?** // Sam LoBello - Room #202



# CONSIDERING BECOMING A MEMBER OF LIVE OAK CHURCH?

It begins right here!

## CONNECT CARD

IF YOU ARE HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME WE WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU! BE SURE TO FILL OUT THIS CARD AND BRING IT TO THE CONNECTION CENTER. WE WANT TO THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

TODAY'S DATE:

NAME:  BIRTHDATE:

STREET ADDRESS:  CITY:

EMAIL:

PRIMARY PHONE:  ☐ HOME ☐ MOBILE  
☐ WORK ☐ OTHER

☐ FIRST TIME GUEST ☐ RETURNING GUEST

☐ MEMBER OF LIVE OAK CHURCH

### FAMILY INFORMATION

SPOUSE (IF APPLICABLE):  BIRTHDATE:

CHILDREN (IF APPLICABLE):  BIRTHDATE:

CHILDREN (IF APPLICABLE):  BIRTHDATE:

CHILDREN (IF APPLICABLE):  BIRTHDATE:

- ☐ I HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST
- ☐ I WANT TO JOIN LIVE OAK
- ☐ I AM INTERESTED IN BAPTISM
- ☐ UPDATE MY INFORMATION
- ☐ I AM INTERESTED IN COMMUNITY GROUPS

☐ TODAY I ACCEPTED JESUS AS MY SAVIOR

# LIVE OAK

Located at the Information Desk

## GET CONNECTED TODAY!



## from the PASTOR'S DESK



It is the season of Resurrection!! We are always excited during this time of year whereby we remind the world that death is defeated and Messiah Jesus lives.

The sad reality is that so few people truly understand what this means.

It means that the prophecy of Messiah conquering death has been fulfilled.

It means that what Jesus says is the final authority because He defeated death.

It means that what He did on the cross for the payment of our sins is enough.

It means when He says to trust in Him for eternal life, and we do, we are born again and have life in His name.

It means that heaven awaits us and that we too will rise from our grave.

This is the power and purpose of the resurrection. This is the good news of great joy. This is why we as followers of Jesus are so joyful every Christmas and Easter because our Lord and King is victorious over our worst enemy, which is death.

So I hope you will join us this month of April as we look at Messiah, the death destroyer, as we unpack His work of raising the dead, promising us a resurrection, and raising himself from the dead so all can have life in His name.

This is truly a wonderful time of the year. We hope you will join us! For He has risen and risen indeed!

Hope to see you Sunday!!



Dr. Mark Crosby  
Senior Pastor

*THIS IS THE  
POWER AND  
PURPOSE OF THE  
RESURRECTION.  
THIS IS THE  
GOOD NEWS OF  
GREAT JOY.*

# FROM PALM SUNDAY TO THE EMPTY TOMB

## A HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

by Trent Barnett, *Worship Pastor*

This month, we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior Jesus! The week leading up to Easter is known in the Christian Church as “Holy Week.” The events of this week follow Jesus’ ministry in the days leading up to the cross, and ultimately, to His victory over sin, death, and the grave. Each of these days are significant to our faith, and to our understanding of God’s great love for us. As we draw closer to Easter, we are invited to reflect on Jesus’ life, sacrifice, and love. I pray this devotional helps you draw closer in relationship with Christ and take steps to deepen your faith.

### **Palm Sunday: The King’s Arrival (Matthew 21:1-11)**

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey while the crowds praised Him. The shouts of “Hosanna!” rang out as people welcomed Jesus as their Messiah. They laid palm branches and their cloaks before Him as a royal welcome. Yet, Jesus did not arrive as the type of king they expected. The Israelites hoped for a political revolutionary to overthrow their Roman rulers. Instead, Jesus came as a humble Savior, offering peace and salvation to all who believe. Just a few days later, many of these same voices would cry out, “Crucify Him!”

How often do we expect God to act a certain way, only to be surprised by His true purpose? Jesus’ triumphal entry challenges us: do we follow Jesus only in times of celebration, or will we walk with Him through suffering as well?

#### **Reflect & Pray**

- Imagine yourself in the crowd. Would you have recognized Jesus as your King? How can you welcome Him as King of your life every day?
- Are there areas in your life where you expect Jesus to work one way, but He’s leading differently?
- Pray for a heart that’s open and welcoming to Jesus’ guidance in every season.

### **Monday: Cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12-17)**

Jesus entered the temple, finding it filled with merchants exploiting worshippers. In an act of righteous indignation, He overturned their tables, declaring, “My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers” (v. 13). Jesus’ cleansing of the temple was not out of frustration or mere anger. Instead, this shows Jesus’ passion for sincere worship and honest practices. Jesus desires purity in

our lives and in the way we worship, not allowing distractions or sinful desires to pull our attention away from Him.

#### **Reflect & Pray**

- What tables does Jesus need to overturn in your heart?
- Ask God to reveal any distractions or attitudes hindering true worship in your life.
- What steps can you take to make more space for prayer and time with God this week?

### **Tuesday: Teaching in the Temple (Matthew 22:34-40)**

As Jesus taught in the temple, some of the religious leaders asked, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The mission of God throughout history can be summarized by these two commands. God’s desire for His people to be in relationship with Him, and to share His love with those around us, is our highest calling.

As opposition grew against Jesus’ ministry, He remained focused on loving God and loving others. When we love God fully, our love for others naturally follows. Jesus’ words call us to examine our priorities - are we truly loving as He commanded?

#### **Reflect & Pray**

- Are there areas where your devotion is divided? Consider how you can love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Ask God to put someone on your heart who needs to experience Christ’s love through you. Pray for the strength to love them sacrificially like Jesus did.

### **Wednesday: Betrayal of a Friend (Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16)**

Judas made his infamous deal - to betray Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. Outwardly, Judas looked like all the other disciples; yet inwardly, his heart was divided. Betrayal doesn’t always happen in dramatic scenes. Duplicity is often found in the small compromises and slow drift away from the things of God. We need to guard our lives against the divided loyalties that seek to pull us away from living for Christ.

### Reflect & Pray

- Are there areas you struggle with divided devotion?
- What steps can you take to guard your heart and stay faithful? Ask God for a heart fully surrendered to Him.

### Thursday: The Servant King (John 13:1-20)

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus did something shocking - He washed His disciples' feet. Through this humble act, Jesus demonstrated that true leadership is found through serving others. Jesus then said, "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done for you." While many people seek positions of power and social status, Jesus calls us to follow His example of humility, love, and sacrificial service.

### Reflect & Pray

- Are there areas in your life where pride prevents you from serving others?
- How can you share Jesus' example of humility and service through your actions today?
- Pray for God to help you develop a servant's heart, willing to love and serve as Christ has shown.

### Friday: Redemption through the Cross (Luke 23:32-47)

As Jesus hung on the cross, He spoke these words: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." In His suffering, Jesus extended grace - even to those crucifying Him. Jesus' final words, "It is finished" (recorded in John 19:30) were not a cry of defeat, but a declaration of victory! The debt of humanity's sin was paid in full! Because of the finished work on the cross, those who trust in Christ are forgiven, redeemed, and restored. His sacrifice demands our lives be surrendered in gratitude and in worship.

### Reflect & Pray

- Spend time reflecting on the depth of Jesus' sacrifice. Take some time to pray, thanking God for the sacrifice of His Son Jesus for all the sins of the world.
- How does Christ's example inspire you to forgive others in your own life? Ask God to show you people in your life that you need to forgive, as Jesus forgave.



### Saturday: Stunned Silence (Matthew 27:57-66)

Saturday was a day of silence. Jesus was in the tomb. His followers were heartbroken, confused, and filled with grief. The disciples wrestled with the reality that the person they'd followed the past few years had been killed. Yet, even in the waiting, God was at work. The story wasn't over. God had something incredible in store - the resurrection!

### Reflect & Pray

- When have you struggled to see God's bigger plan in a difficult situation? Ask God for the hope to believe in His promises.
- How can you learn to rest in God's presence even when He seems quiet? Pray for a heart of patience to trust His timing, even in the waiting.

### Resurrection Sunday: The Empty Tomb (Matthew 28:1-10)

Early in the morning, the women went to Jesus' tomb and found it empty! The angel declared, "He is not here; for He has been raised, just as He said." The resurrection changes everything!

Jesus' victory over death means we, too, have victory. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, 57, "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?...Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

No matter our past, our struggles, or our failures, we have access to the gift of new life in Him. The tomb was empty - Jesus is risen! His victory over death provides new life and unshakable hope. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow with confidence, hope, and eternal assurance!

### Reflect & Pray

- How does Christ's resurrection impact your faith and daily life?
- Rejoice in the truth that, because He lives, all Christ-followers have the promise of hope and victory!
- Ask God to renew your boldness to share His Good News with others.

As we journey through the events of Holy Week, let us draw closer in relationship to our Savior Jesus Christ. May our devotion and time with the Lord this week draw us closer to His heart for us, and transform our lives. I pray each of us will accept Jesus' invitation to walk with Him - not just to the cross, but into resurrection life. 🌿

# COUNSELING CENTER

at Live Oak Church

Book a session by calling 225-664-4801,  
on the Live Oak App, or on our website [liveoak.church](https://liveoak.church)



**Anna Wilkins**  
MA, MS, PLPC



**Danielle Hatch**  
PLPC, CGP, NCC



**Summer Renee Babin**  
Counseling Intern



**Jason Cooper**  
Counseling Intern



**Melissa Benton-Hebert**  
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**Alyssa Lott Osborne**  
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**Destiny Sadler**  
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# SAY GOODBYE TO SUMMER BOREDOM!

by Faith Storck, *Director of Children's Ministry*



Summer's coming in hot, and so is our jam-packed, non-stop, can't-miss lineup for Live Oak Kids! We've got enough fun planned to keep your kids busy, engaged, and growing in their faith—all while dodging the dreaded "I'm bored" complaints. Seriously, if your kids say they have nothing to do, they clearly missed the memo.

## WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR?

First up, Connect Camp is happening June 2-6, and it's going to be the ultimate summer kickoff. This high-energy, Jesus-filled week is packed with worship, games, and non-stop fun. Kids will make friendships that last way longer than their summer tans and experience God in an exciting, meaningful way. If you're looking for something that combines faith, fun, and a little bit of exhaustion (the good kind), this is it.

Then there's Centrikid from July 7-11, where kids get to go away to camp (cue the parents' happy dance). It's an overnight experience filled with next-level fun—team challenges, crazy games, late-night giggles, and, most importantly, powerful moments of spiritual growth. There's something special about stepping away from everyday distractions and diving deeper into faith, surrounded by friends and leaders who want to see them thrive. Plus, let's be honest—campfire snacks and ridiculous team chants make everything better.

We're also bringing back Themed Nights, and trust me, these are the nights your kids do *not* want to miss. Picture wild games, messy fun, and more fun than should be legally allowed on a weeknight. Every theme is a surprise, and every night is a chance for kids to be silly, creative, and totally themselves.

Of course, we can't forget Promotion Sunday—the big move-up day when kids step into their next age group or grade level. It's always a special time as we celebrate their growth (and maybe wipe away a few parent tears because how are they getting so big?!). It's also a great way to introduce new kids to their leaders, help them feel at home, and get them excited for the next chapter in Kids Min.

And because faith isn't just something we talk about—it's something we *do*—we're bringing back Serve Nights to give kids hands-on ways to love and serve others. Whether it's packing meals, writing encouraging notes, or working on a special service project, these nights are all about showing kids that making a difference can be fun. There's nothing better than seeing kids realize that they *can* be the hands and feet of Jesus, even at a young age.

So yeah, summer is stacked. There's no reason for boredom when there are this many ways to have fun, make friends, and grow closer to Jesus. For more details about these events, make sure you're reading your weekly emails from your Children's Ministry leaders! You won't want to miss any of the updates, reminders, and sign-ups coming your way.

Mark your calendars, sign up for everything, and get ready for the best summer ever. 🌿



# IRREFUTABLE PROOF

## WHY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST CHANGES EVERYTHING

by David Orges, *Executive Pastor*

Few claims in human history are as bold or as consequential as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If true, it validates everything Jesus said and did, proving Him to be the Son of God. If false, Christianity crumbles and fails completely. The Apostle Paul acknowledged this reality: “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17, ESV).

Skeptics have long sought to dismiss the resurrection deriding those who believe, but the evidence remains overwhelming. As Dr. Gary Habermas, one of the foremost scholars on the resurrection, has demonstrated, even the most critical historians acknowledge certain historical facts surrounding the event. These facts, known as the “minimal facts” approach, provide a compelling case for belief. When weighed honestly, the resurrection stands as an irrefutable truth that changes everything—our faith, our future, and our very purpose in life.

### THE HISTORICAL CASE FOR THE RESURRECTION

Any serious historical criticism must grapple with several key facts that even non-Christian scholars widely accept:

- 1. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under Pontius Pilate.**  
Roman crucifixion was a brutal and public execution, meticulously designed to ensure death. The notion that Jesus merely “swooned” and later revived has been debunked by medical and historical research. Jesus’s death by crucifixion is historically certain.
- 2. Jesus’ tomb was found empty.**  
If Jesus’ body had remained in the tomb, Christianity would have been instantly discredited. Yet, even the Jewish authorities never produced a body to disprove the resurrection claim. Instead, they claimed the disciples stole it—a claim that, although absurd, admits the tomb where Jesus was laid was indeed empty.

- 3. Eyewitnesses testified to seeing the risen Christ.**

Paul records that Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). These were not hallucinations—hallucinations do not happen to groups of people simultaneously. Moreover, Jesus appeared to many other eyewitnesses, all who were willing to suffer and die rather than recant their testimony.

- 4. The radical transformation of the disciples.**

Before the resurrection, the disciples were fearful and in hiding. Afterward, these same men boldly proclaimed the gospel, even under threat of death. Peter, who denied Jesus three times to save himself from sharing Jesus’s fate, later stood before the same authorities who crucified Christ and declared His resurrection (Acts 4:10-12). What changed? Their unwavering conviction that they had seen the physically risen Lord.

### ALTERNATIVE THEORIES AND THEIR FLAWS

Some argue that the disciples fabricated the resurrection story. However, fabrications collapse under persecution—people don’t willingly die for something they know to be false. Others suggest the appearances of Jesus were mere visions. Yet, visions do not account for the empty tomb, nor do they explain physical interactions like Thomas touching Jesus’ wounds (John 20:27) or Jesus consuming food (Luke 24:42-43 & John 21:1-14).

Modern apologists Tim Barnett of Stand to Reason and Wesley Huff both argue that the best explanation for all the historical evidence is the simplest one: Jesus truly rose from the dead. The weight of historical, logical, and theological reasoning makes this conclusion inescapable.

## WHY THE RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING

### 1. It Proves Jesus Is Who He Claimed to Be

Jesus repeatedly predicted His resurrection (Matt. 16:21, John 2:19-22). If He remained in the grave, He would have been a liar or a lunatic. But because He rose, we must take His words seriously—including His claim to be the Son of God (Mark 14:60-62).

### 2. It Guarantees Our Own Resurrection

Paul connects Christ's resurrection with our future hope: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Because Jesus conquered death, those who trust in Him will be raised to eternal life through Him and with Him.

### 3. It Demands a Response

If Jesus rose from the dead, neutrality is not an option. Craig Groeschel once said, "If a man predicts his death and resurrection and pulls it off, I'm going with whatever that guy says" (*The Christian Atheist*, 2010). The resurrection is not just an academic debate—it is the central claim of Christianity that demands our faith and allegiance.

### 4. It Confirms That Everything Jesus Said Is True

The resurrection does not just prove that Jesus is divine—it validates every claim He ever made. If Jesus can defeat death, then His words carry the weight of ultimate authority. When He says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35), we can trust Him completely.

- **His Teachings Are Trustworthy** – Jesus' moral teachings, His instructions on love, forgiveness, and righteousness, are not just wise sayings; they are di-

vine truth. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) is not merely good advice—it is the blueprint for kingdom living, backed by the authority of the risen Christ.

- **His Promises Are Secure** – Jesus promised rest for the weary (Matt. 11:28), peace beyond understanding (John 14:27), and eternal life for those who believe in Him (John 10:28). The resurrection guarantees that these promises are not empty words but realities secured by His victory over death.
- **His Warnings Must Be Taken Seriously** – If Jesus rose from the dead, then His warnings about sin, judgment, and eternity cannot be ignored. He spoke of the consequences of rejecting Him (John 3:18, Matt. 25:46). The resurrection affirms that our response to Jesus has eternal significance.

In short, because Jesus rose, we can fully trust every word He spoke. His resurrection validates His identity, His message, and His mission, giving us complete confidence in all that He has revealed.

## THE UNSHAKABLE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

The renowned pastor and theologian John Piper reminds us, "If Christ is not raised, our faith is futile. But if He is raised, then everything changes" (*Desiring God*, 2011). The resurrection is not merely a doctrine to be believed; it is the defining truth that transforms lives, empowers the Church, and secures our eternal hope.

The evidence is clear. The only question that remains is this: What will you do with it? 🌿

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# A DROP FROM THE ALTAR by Sam LoBello

One of my seminary professors used to say to his class while teaching, "This is a drop from the altar." He was communicating to his students that what he was about to say was important and may well appear on the next test. As a result, it would be wise for us to remember it.

As I have journeyed through life God has given me "Drops from the Altar" from time to time. I have tried to remember them and apply them to my life. I will share one with you each month. I hope you find them to be helpful in your journey, as well.

***"Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve."***

Wesley Huff

## COMING IN APRIL!

36 hours could change your life

**DISCOVERY**  
WEEKENDS

**MEN'S DISCOVERY WEEKENDS: 4/25-27, 7/20-22, 8/8-10**

**WOMEN'S DISCOVERY WEEKEND: 10/17-19**

QUESTIONS ABOUT DISCOVERY WEEKENDS?  
CONTACT TODD PETTAVINO AT 225-229-3963



# RESURRECTION ONLY COMES AFTER DEATH

by Krist Norsworthy, *Young Adults Pastor*

Remember the pandemic that started in 2019? Whether or not every restriction was helpful, fair, or perfectly applied, a common appeal was made: *do what's best for the vulnerable, even if it costs you something*. That idea—that we can put ourselves second for the good of someone else—cut against the typical individualistic mindset we have in our culture. Similarly, the cross calls us to a different way of life—hidden faithfulness, humility, and a willingness to die to our personal desires. Even outside of Christianity, there's a shared human instinct that sacrificing for others is right. That's not accidental. It's part of the image of God in us. We were made to love in a way that costs us something. The message of Easter doesn't deny that impulse—it fulfills it. In Christ, we're given the clearest vision of sacrificial love, and we're invited to live it out.

The resurrection of Jesus is the *foundation* of Christian faith, the moment history shifted, and death was defeated. But resurrection only comes after death. Before the joy of Easter morning was the agony of the cross. And that pattern—death leading to life—is not just Jesus' story. It's the pattern

He calls every believer to follow.

When Jesus said, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me"* (Luke 9:23), He wasn't offering a metaphor for difficult days or minor sacrifices. He was issuing a call to **die**—to lay down one's entire self in surrender. For those of us trying to make sense of identity, purpose, and calling, this is not a comfortable invitation. But it is a clear one.

## The Cross as a Call to Surrender

In an age of self-expression, self-optimization, and personal branding, the idea of self-denial feels foreign, even offensive. We are told to find ourselves, fulfill ourselves, and promote ourselves. But Jesus calls us to deny ourselves. He calls us to surrender not just our bad habits or wrong beliefs but our entire lives—our ambitions, our relationships, our sense of control.

The cross, in Jesus' day, was not symbolic. It was a literal instrument of death. When He said "take up your cross," His disciples understood He was talking about execution. Today, we must hear that call with the same

seriousness. To follow Christ is to lay everything at His feet—not as a one-time gesture of emotional devotion, but as a daily act of submission. Jesus didn't die to make our lives more comfortable. He died to make us new.

## Gethsemane: The Model of Surrender

Easter weekend begins in the garden, not the tomb. In Gethsemane, Jesus models the essence of surrender: *"Not my will, but yours be done."* He was not indifferent to suffering. He felt the weight of what was coming. He asked for another way. But He submitted to the Father's will, trusting that obedience was better than ease. That moment was not weakness—it was strength rooted in faith.

You live in a world of options, where autonomy is often treated as the highest good. But the Christian life calls us to submit—not out of fear or obligation, but because we trust the character of the one we're submitting to. Gethsemane teaches us that surrender is not passive. It is an active choice to trust God's wisdom above our own.

## Dying to Self: A Daily Reality

Jesus' command includes the word *daily* for a reason. Dying to self is not a decision made once at a retreat or in a moment of emotional clarity. It is a continual posture of the heart. Each day, we are faced with decisions that ask: Will I live for myself, or for Christ?

This might mean sacrificing comfort for integrity, choosing forgiveness over bitterness, walking away from habits that feed the flesh, or staying faithful in places where obedience feels costly. Sometimes, it means letting go of good things—relationships, opportunities, dreams—because

they are not what God is asking of us. This kind of surrender is not always dramatic. Often, it's quiet, internal, and unnoticed. But it is real, and it is transformative.

## Resurrection is the Result, Not the Starting Point

The promise of Easter is not that surrender leads to emptiness but that death leads to resurrection. Jesus didn't stay in the tomb—and neither do those who follow Him. The way of the cross is painful, but it is not the end. The author C.S. Lewis puts it this way, "Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. ... Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead." Christ calls us to die to ourselves because only then can we truly live.

This is not abstract spirituality. It's the concrete reality of Christian discipleship. The life Jesus offers is abundant and eternal—but it requires everything. If we want the life of Christ, we must embrace the way of Christ. And that way always begins with surrender.

## Conclusion

The message of Easter is more than a celebration of an event. It's a call to a way of life—a way marked by the cross. For those who are discerning who they are and what they're living for, Easter offers both a challenge and a promise. The challenge: to take up your cross, daily. The promise: that in dying to self, you will find true joy in life—not on your terms, but in Christ.

In a culture chasing self-made identity, the cross stands as an alternative. It calls us to lay everything down—and in doing so, receive everything that matters. 🌿

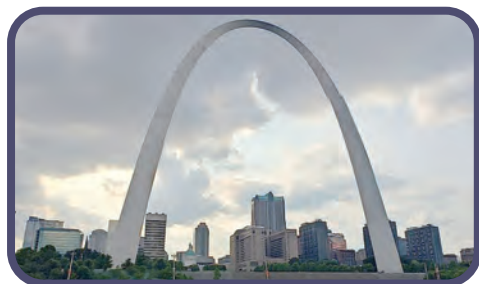




# SENIOR ADULTS

By Landra Reed

*"For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations" Isaiah 61:11*



I love spring! Everything that was in slumber is reawakening with buds of flowers and sunshine. The birds are singing, and everything seems to be fresh again. It's no wonder that we celebrate our Lord and Savior being alive in the spring. I am reminded that even when life gets hard, there's always a new day that can be filled with hope, faith, and joy. Happy Easter, church family!

We will start in April with a fun trip to St. Louis, Missouri. The dates are April 2nd through the 7th. For those of you going, we will meet at the church at 5:30 a.m. Make sure to bring a comfy pillow and blanket to take naps along the way. We will stop every 2 to 3 hours for breaks. I am so looking forward to going on this trip with you!

On May 9th we will celebrate our annual Mother's Day Tea at the Lake House on Old Hammond at 11:00. Tea hats will be provided. Please make sure to sign up at the Welcome Center. Sixty seats are available for this event.

## LIVE OAK CHURCH QUILTING MINISTRY

WEDNESDAYS AT 8 AM IN THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER



YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS MINISTRY BY WRITING QUILTERS IN THE "OTHER SECTION" OF YOUR OFFERING ENVELOPE. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOU SUPPORTING US AS WE REPLENISH OUR INVENTORY AFTER SENDING 220 QUILTS TO NORTH CAROLINA WITH OUR DISASTER RELIEF!



## Newsletter & Updates

# MEN'S MINISTRY

Men Helping Men Be Men

## STEAK DINNER FELLOWSHIP

**Tuesday, April 29, 6:30 PM.**

In the Chapel — Cost: \$15

*Testimony by Todd Pettavino*



## CRAWFISH BOIL

**Saturday, May 10, 1 PM.**

In the FLC — Cost: FREE

*A time to relax and fellowship together!*

## GRIDIRON MEN'S CONFERENCE

**June 13-14, Huntsville, AL.**

Transportation by Dixieland Tours

Sign up at Information Desk.

**Cost \$175.**



Brad Whitt



Jim Kelly



Herb Reavis



Phil Waldrep



Jeff Foxworthy



Benny Tate

# Madison Cody

## Team Highlight

I'm Madison Cody, and I've been in ministry for over 10 years, with a passion for leading kids to faith, equipping parents to disciple their children, and helping volunteers catch the vision of children's ministry. I recently joined the team back in November of 2024 at Live Oak Church, where I get to do what I love—help kids grow in their relationship with Jesus while creating meaningful experiences for families. My

husband, Ken, and I have been married since 2014, and we have a fun-loving, energetic 4-year-old daughter, Ella Kate, who keeps us on our toes! We're currently building our dream home, which has been an adventure in itself. Outside of ministry, I love good Southern food (especially anything Ken cooks), planning events, and making memories with my family.



## Q&A

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be?**

Teleportation—because I hate to drive and just appearing wherever I need to be would be great!

**What's the most random talent you have?**

Elite-Level Gravity Tester – I have an unmatched ability to trip over absolutely nothing. Flat ground? Uneven surfaces? Doesn't matter—I'll find a way to stumble like I'm dodging invisible obstacles in an action movie (Just ask Ken).

**If you could instantly become an expert at something, what would it be?**

Parenting—well because it's tough out here some days.

**What's the strangest thing you've ever eaten?**

Probably alligator. It really does taste like chicken.

**If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be?**

That's tough! Maybe Praise—it never gets old and currently it is my favorite song to blast in the car.

**Do you have any pets?**

Yes, we have a barn cat named Buddy who can only see out of one eye and a new puppy named Daisy that loves to run and play with Ella Kate.

**If you were stuck on a deserted island, what three things would you bring?**

1. Ken (because he's basically my human Swiss Army knife—he can cook, build things, and probably figure out how to get us rescued).
2. A never-ending roll of duct tape (because you can fix literally anything with it—shelter, shoes, a boat, my sanity...).
3. A fully stocked Kindle with unlimited battery life (because if I'm stuck, I might as well finally read all those books I keep saying I don't have time for).

# JOURNEYING Through GRIEF

AT LIVE OAK CHURCH

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

2nd & 4th Tuesday of the Month

6:30 pm in the Chapel

For More Information Contact:

Pastor Stephen | [Stephen@liveoak.church](mailto:Stephen@liveoak.church)



## JONI AND FRIENDS FAMILY RETREAT

June 9-13, 2025

Volunteers arrive one day earlier for training.

The Wesley Center  
Woodworth, LA

### About Family Retreat

Join us as we reach, care, and connect families living with disability. Our retreat provides inclusive worship, biblical teaching, fun, age-appropriate activities, and meaningful connections with families who understand the unique joys and challenges of life with disability.

## 2025 JONI & FRIENDS FAMILY RETREAT



CONTACT MADISON GODY  
FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[MADISON@LIVEOAK.CHURCH](mailto:MADISON@LIVEOAK.CHURCH)

### Serving Opportunities

#### Buddy

Support and friendship for individuals with disabilities, siblings, or young children of volunteers.

#### Program Support

Oversee and facilitate organized activities for various groups.

#### Work Crew

Help the team navigate the behind-the-scenes details of camp. (set-up, load up, and more).

#### Sponsor

Financially support a family or volunteer to attend camp.



# Eggs, Easter, & Evangelism

by Madison Cody, *Childrens Minister*

## How Kids Can Share Jesus with Their Friends

Easter is a time of joy, celebration, and—most importantly—reflection on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As parents, we want our children to understand the meaning behind Easter beyond just egg hunts and chocolate bunnies. But what if Easter egg hunts could actually be a tool to share the Gospel?

Kids are naturally enthusiastic about sharing things they love—whether it's their favorite toy, a fun game, or an exciting story. This Easter, let's equip them to share the greatest story of all: the Good News of Jesus! Here are some fun, hands-on activities to help your child share their faith with friends in a way that's simple, engaging, and impactful.

### 1. THE "YOU'VE BEEN EGGED" GOSPEL HUNT

Most kids love an Easter egg hunt—so why not turn it into an opportunity to share Jesus? This activity is a fun way for kids to reach out to their friends or neighbors!

#### How It Works

##### Supplies Needed:

- 12 plastic eggs per friend
- Candy or small prizes
- A note that says: "You've Been Egged! One egg is empty because Jesus' tomb was empty. He is risen!"

##### Instructions:

1. Help your child fill 11 eggs with candy or small prizes. Leave the 12th egg empty to represent the empty tomb.
2. Go to a friend's house, scatter the eggs in their yard, and leave the note on their doorstep.
3. Ring the doorbell and run away (or stay to explain if you'd like)!
4. Encourage your child to tell their friend what the empty egg means—Jesus is alive!

**Faith in Action:** This is a great way to spark curiosity and start a conversation about Jesus in a natural, exciting way, and a way to invite their friends to church for Easter.

### 2. EASTER STORY BRACELETS

Kids love making and wearing bracelets, and this simple craft is a wonderful way to help them share the Gospel using colors.

#### How to Make an Easter Story Bracelet

##### Supplies Needed:

- Colored beads:
  - \* Black (Sin) – We all have sinned (Romans 3:23)
  - \* Red (Jesus' Blood) – Jesus died for our sins (Romans 5:8)
  - \* White (Forgiveness) – Jesus washes us clean (1 John 1:9)
  - \* Blue (Baptism) – A new life in Christ (Acts 2:38)
  - \* Green (Growing in Faith) – We grow in Jesus (2 Peter 3:18)
  - \* Gold (Heaven) – The promise of eternal life (John 3:16)
- Elastic string

##### Instructions:

1. Have your child string the beads in the order above, explaining what each color means.
2. Encourage them to make extra bracelets and give them to friends while explaining the meaning behind the colors.
3. When someone asks about the bracelet, they can share the Easter story!

**Faith in Action:** This activity helps kids confidently share their faith in a fun and creative way!

### 3. GOSPEL EGG TOSS

This is a simple outdoor game that helps kids remember key parts of the Easter story while having fun with their friends.

##### Supplies Needed:

- Plastic eggs (1 per child)
- Small slips of paper with Bible verses about Jesus' death and resurrection
- A basket or bucket

##### How to Play:

1. Write short Bible verses about Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection on small slips of paper (or use simple phrases like "Jesus died for us" and "Jesus is alive!").
2. Place one slip inside each plastic egg and close it.
3. Have kids stand in a line and take turns tossing their eggs into a basket.
4. When they make a shot, they open their egg, read the message inside, and explain what it means.

**Faith in Action:** This game reinforces key Easter truths while keeping kids engaged and excited about sharing Jesus!

### Final Thoughts

Helping kids share their faith doesn't have to be intimidating—it can be as simple as an egg hunt, a bracelet, or a fun game. By providing them with creative tools and hands-on activities, we empower them to talk about Jesus with confidence.

As parents, let's encourage our children to share the true meaning of Easter with their friends. Whether through a surprise egg hunt, a colorful bracelet, or an egg toss, these small moments of faith-sharing can plant seeds that last a lifetime. This Easter, let's not just celebrate Jesus—we can share Him too! 🌱



**Thursdays at 7 PM**

**STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION?  
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.  
WE MEET IN ROOM #201.  
COME JOIN US!**

**"Taste and see the LORD is good; blessed is  
the one who takes refuge in Him."**

*Psalm 34:8*

**Support. Instruction. Accountability.**



**FRIDAY**

**MAY 9**

**6:30 PM**

**REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED**



**DINNER  
PROVIDED**

**\$5/PP**

**JOIN US!**

**PRIZES  
& FELLOWSHIP**

# meet our team



Dr. Mark Crosby  
Senior Pastor



Rev. David Orges  
Executive Pastor



Trish Graves  
Business  
Administrator



Rev. Trent Barnett  
Worship Pastor



Rev. Sam LoBello  
Director of Adult  
Ministries



Rev. Stephen Hebert  
Minister of  
Pastoral Care



Rev. Nathan Lott  
Young Adults &  
Student Pastor



Faith Storck  
Director of  
Children's Ministry



Madison Cody  
Children's  
Minister



Rev. Krist Norsworthy  
Young Adults Pastor  
& Communications



Linda Holdman  
Administrative  
Assistant



Kim Pamplin  
Counseling Office  
Manager



Jim Otken  
Treasurer



Liz White  
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Mark Herbst  
Facilities  
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A REMARKABLE DAY CAMP EXPERIENCE



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ALL WEEK LONG!**

**June 2-6**

GET READY FOR THE BEST WEEK  
OF YOUR SUMMER!

LIVE OAK CHURCH

a day camp for K-8th graders

**REGISTER NOW**

[connectcamps.com/denhamsprings](https://connectcamps.com/denhamsprings)

## DEEPER LIFE FOR MEN

**1 & 2 Peter**  
*Instructions for  
Godly Living*

**Mondays at 6:30  
In Room #202**

**Led by David Tate**

## DEEPER LIFE FOR WOMEN

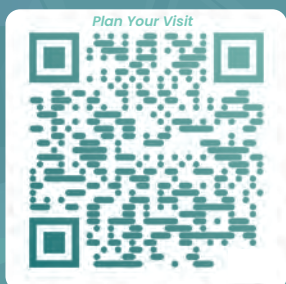
**He Speaks  
to Me**

**Starting May 5 at 6:30  
In the Chapel**

**Led by Jan Tate**

# He is RISEN

***Find an Easter Service That's Right for You!***



**Friday, April 18th**  
Good Friday Service: 12:00pm

**Sunday, April 20th**  
Sunrise Service: 6:30am

Regular Service Times:  
8:00, 9:30, & 11:00am

*You're  
Invited*