



Luke 24:13-35 is a powerful story. Unbeknownst to the two grieving disciples who were traveling on the road to Emmaus, a stranger who joined them along their way was none other than their crucified Master, Jesus Christ. As they walked along, the stranger interpreted the scriptures in such a way that the two mournful disciples could see the crucified Jesus in the Law and the Prophets. The stranger interpreted the Scriptures to reveal a loving, sacrificing Messiah whose biblical deeds served and affirmed others. In the Law of Moses, the crucified Christ could be seen in loving God and neighbors. In the words of the prophets, the crucified Christ could be seen in doing justice, loving kindness, and humbly walking with God. The stranger showed the two disciples that the Law and the Prophets are fulfilled in Christ's self-denial so that all others might be affirmed.

Indeed, the stranger's words had so vividly opened the Scriptures to the two travelling disciples that they began to encounter their crucified Master as though the Scriptures and their Messiah were inseparable. Inspired by the Scriptures' witness to love, service, and affirmation for others, the two disciples, upon arriving in Emmaus, welcomed the stranger to their table and invited him to break bread with them. And once the stranger took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the welcoming disciples, "their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31).

There is another story in Luke's gospel which also involves the Scriptures, resurrection, and a table: the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Accordingly, Lazarus languishes in his hunger just outside the gates of a rich man who sumptuously feasted at his table. To the rich man, Lazarus remained a stranger; the poor man and his hunger remained unwelcomed just outside the household gate. Sadly, upon their respective deaths, the rich man suffered in the torment of Hades, separated by an unbridgeable chasm from Lazarus and all that is holy and blessed. One is forced to ponder how the story's outcome might have been different if the rich man had welcomed the stranger to his table. What might have happened if the rich man had invited Lazarus to break bread with him, just as the two disciples had welcomed the stranger from the road? Might the eyes of the rich man have been opened to see Jesus Christ in the face of the stranger who might have supped at his table?

My Christian friends, we too might see the risen Christ in the Scriptures whenever we read it with an eye toward love, compassion, and sacrifice for others. Of course, this is precisely how Jesus Christ fulfills the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are fulfilled in the crucifixion of our Messiah. Christ's crucifixion is the love, the compassion, the service, the sacrifice, the self-denial that he renders so that all others may be loved, served, and affirmed. The Scriptures' witness to loving service for others is fulfilled in the ultimate loving service of Christ's crucifixion. Indeed, Christ's crucifixion is what codifies Scriptures' witness to loving sacrifice in service to others.

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Rhonda Ortttenburger	2026
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Donna Cox	2027
Denise Crump	2027
Marti Exline	2028
Sarah Gump	2028
Amanda Tipton	2028

**The Fellowship Hall/Narthex
Elevator has been
REPAIRED!!!**

It is available for service!



(It should be noted that “self-denial” does not mean the self is not important. On the contrary, it means that others become the recipient of the love that one might otherwise hoard for one’s self. When we help others, it is not because we hope to profit from our service. Rather, it is for no other reason than the person whom we are helping simply needs help. That’s love; that’s compassion; that’s sacrifice; that’s self-denial; that’s taking up the cross and following Jesus Christ.) I find it interesting that the two disciples in Emmaus did not react when the stranger at their table vanished from their sight. Rather, their reaction was one of amazement when their crucified Christ appeared, not when he disappeared. For, they had beheld their risen Lord.

Perhaps today, we don’t react to Jesus’ vanishing because we have grown accustomed to his disappearance. Our compassionate self-sacrificing Lord has been steadily vanishing from our lives for many years. He has been disappearing right before our eyes. Religious movements, such as Christian Nationalism, have gradually been erasing the image of Christ from our churches, from pastors’ sermons, from the witness of Scripture, and from our spiritual lives for decades now. Such movements have veiled the vision of the self-denying love of Jesus in favor of a vision of the self-affirming power of the State.

I submit to you, my Christian friends, that Jesus Christ, the crucified one, has risen. He has risen indeed! And if we want to see him in all his risen glory, then I entreat you, do not look for him in the might of the State, in the power of politicians, or in the swords of armies. In fact, don’t even look for him in that one hour a week in worship. Rather look for him in every other hour of the week in the face of the stranger in need. Help your sister or brother, love your neighbor, make peace with your enemy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, tend the sick, visit the imprisoned, speak up for the marginalized, welcome the stranger. Help others in need, for no other reason than they need help. When we love others as Christ has loved us, then my Christian friends, we will see Jesus.



News Brief from Session

- Session wishes Dana Miller, office manager, a big THANK YOU for her 28 years of service to our church and a happy, healthy and blessed retirement.
- Mark your calendars! Sunday, July 11, 2027 we will have a special celebratory Service and luncheon for the 200th Anniversary of our church.
- The narthex elevator is being tested and hopefully permitted for use soon.
- The kitchen has a new refrigerator and the exhaust fan motor has been replaced.
- Congratulations to Jennifer Brubaker for being picked for a "Top 25 Madison Co. Leadership Award"!
- The Community Garden has sprouts beginning to pop up thanks to our children. Check it out!
- **A Called Congregational meeting** is set for after church on **Sunday, May 24** to vote on elders to replace vacancies on the session.

SAVE THE DATE!!

**First Presbyterian's
200th Anniversary
Celebration!**

Sunday, July 11, 2027!!



- 1 Piper Lawrenz
- 10 Alison Underwood
- 15 Wayne Bowlin
- 18 Joyce Wolf
- 22 Sandee Bonar
- 23 Olivia Florell
- 24 Thomas Crump
- 29 Jeanie Logue



- 1 Marjorie Noffsinger
- Lucas Brinegar
- 2 Amanda Adams
- 3 Jeri Allison
- 4 Paul Adams
- 7 Morgan Wolf
- 8 Courtney Lawrenz
- Ellen Mitchell
- 9 Jason Smart
- Delta Trinh
- 11 Delores Harder
- Davy Shew
- 12 Judy Young
- Mason Crump
- 13 Nancy Johnson
- 17 Nancy Daniel
- 18 John Tucker Lamb
- 19 Levi Toutant
- 28 Ben Walker
- Marcia Florell
- 29 Lane Orttenger
- Isabelle White
- 30 Eric Calkin

Youth Sunday



Service at First Presbyterian
Richmond

May
10th

11 AM

Parts are available for any youth who wish to participate. We will have a rehearsal service on Sunday 5/3 following Dana's retirement reception after worship. Lunch will be provided.

Hope to see you there!



Evening Women's Circle

Tuesday May 12 at 6:30pm
Masala Fine Indian Cuisine
1000 Center Drive, Richmond

Rebecca Esther Circle

Tuesday, May 19
10:30 a.m.

This is the last meeting for the season. Karen May will lead the discussion for lesson 9. Also, we will take up the Birthday Offering. After the meeting, we will have a light lunch of finger food and birthday cake.

Dear Friends,

Mere words are not adequate to express how much it has meant to me over the past few weeks to receive so many cards, notes and other expressions of sympathy and love following Pierce's passing. While you have been out of sight for almost ten years now, you have never been out of mind. We have enjoyed being able to continue to receive the newsletter from Dana and so enjoyed knowing that First Pres in Richmond was still doing such good work in Christ's name in the community. Pierce and I loved being retired and able to participate in the life of our church as often and as much as we could. You touched our hearts then and you have touched mine again.

*Thank you,
Nancy Johnson*



May 31st



The Lord's Table



DAY TRIPPERS!!



**Cat Café
April 9**



The best week of summer is coming up! We currently have 5 youth and 2 adult chaperones signed up to go with us to the Montreat Youth Conference this year. Please keep this group in prayer as they prepare for what will surely be an amazing week of spiritual growth, fellowship and fun!





CAT CAFÉ! - DAY TRIPPERS!



Teaching With Soul With Joel

In my personal devotional life, I've been going through a program that gives you several verses of scripture and invites you to read and re-read a particular chapter once each day for the week. The idea being that the more you read and engage with that particular scripture the more depth of understanding and insight you'll develop. It's working from what I can tell. Each time I engage with the text, some particular detail of the story or word that I hadn't noticed before will stand out to me. It's actually kind of exciting when that happens. It feels a little bit like God is speaking to you directly through the text and emphasizing the parts that you might need to focus on. I'd recommend giving it a try, if it sounds like something that interests you.

Anyway, I mention all of this because the chapters I've been engaging with for the past two weeks have been the creation story in Genesis. I've spent a lot of time on these chapters of late and because of that I think I'm ready to share some of the fruits of that labor with you in a series of articles over the next couple of months with the following click-bait title: **The Top Five Things You Probably Didn't Know about the Creation Story.**

1. There are actually two distinct creation stories.

Ok, so this wasn't so much an insight I came up with on my own by pouring over the text so much as it was something I had learned in Seminary that was reinforced through the repeated reading of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 over the past couple of weeks. Biblical scholars have been pretty much in agreement that the account of creation in Genesis 1 (the story of God creating different things on different days) and the account of creation in Genesis 2 (Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) were gathered from different sources and pieced together in the Bible from someone many years after they were first written. As such, Genesis 2 is not so much a continuation of the story given to us in Genesis 1 so much as it is its own account of creation. There are hints to this in the timeline of the two stories as well as the language used by the two different accounts, if you know your Hebrew. The Genesis 1 account refers to God strictly as Yahweh (an older name for God) while the Genesis 2 account refers to God as Elohim (historically, a more recent name for God). But the thing that struck me on my repeated readings of these two accounts is how differently God is characterized in the two versions of creation and I think that this difference can give us some insight into the truth that these stories point towards.

The God portrayed in the Genesis 1 account comes across as being cosmic, powerful and distant while the God portrayed in the Genesis 2 account takes on more human qualities. The newer depiction of God interacts with creation beyond the act of creation itself. For example, God talks to Adam and walks through the Garden of Eden in the Genesis 2 account. God shows he cares for Adam by directing him towards food and creating a companion for him. God seeks Adam and Eve out when he notices they are missing, gets upset at being disobeyed and offers punishment, like a parent would, after Adam and Eve give in to temptation. In the older account, God comes across as being more powerful. In the newer account, God comes across as being more personable. I think these two contrasting descriptions about who God is speak to humankind's strong desire to know and be close to God and point forward to the ultimate fulfillment of that desire which is Jesus Christ. In the time of Yahweh, God was distant from us. In the time of Elohim, God was walking amongst us. In the time of Christ, God was one with us. It's a natural progression that reflects the chief desire of mankind to be closer and closer with God.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<i>1</i> <i>Dana's last day</i> <i>in the office!</i> 	<i>2</i>
<i>3</i> 10 Cents Per Meal Offering	<i>4</i> Bible Study 10:30	<i>5</i> Tuesday Crew 9-11 Mission mtg. 6:00	<i>6</i> Bible Study 6:30	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
10 Youth Sunday Worship Committee mtg. noon Deacon mtg. noon	<i>11</i> Bible Study 10:30	<i>12</i> Tuesday Crew 9-11 Evening Circle 6:30	<i>13</i> Bible Study 6:30	<i>14</i> Needle Arts Fellowship 11:30	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>17</i> Christian Ed mtg. noon	<i>18</i> Bible Study 10:30	<i>19</i> Tuesday Crew 9-11 Presbyterian Women 10:30	<i>20</i> Bible Study 6:30	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>24</i> Congregational Meeting noon	<i>25</i> Bible Study cancelled Memorial Day Office Closed	<i>26</i> Tuesday Crew 9-11 Session mtg. 6:00	<i>27</i> Bible Study 6:30	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>31</i>  The Lord's Table Sunday Supper 6:00						