

REDEEMER CHURCH

A COMMUNITY CHURCH FOR THE CITY
Elbert McGowan, Jr., Senior Pastor

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Rev. Thabiti Anyabwile—March 1, 2026

“Embrace the Nations”

—*Revelation 7:9-17*

Welcome & Announcements

Pastor Elbert McGowan, Jr.

Missions Moment

Mrs. Kiki Adams

Thailand Team Leader, Mission to The World

* Call to Worship

Zechariah 2:10-11

Mr. Jerome Douglas

Director of Neighborhood Outreach & Missions

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession of Sin

Mr. Jerome Douglas

Assurance of Pardon

Colossians 2:13-14

Mr. Jerome Douglas

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

* Song of Preparation

“For All The Saints”

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia, Allelu!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light. Alleluia, Allelu!

O may Thy soldiers faithful, true and bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
and win with them the victor's crown of gold. Alleluia, Allelu!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blessed. Alleluia, Allelu!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way, Alleluia, Allelu!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia, Alleluia!

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus blood and righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
but wholly trust in Jesus name.

Chorus: Christ alone; cornerstone.
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love,
through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.

When Darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.
My anchor holds within the veil. *Chorus*

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
oh, may I then in Him be found;
dressed in His righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne. *Chorus*

Pastoral Prayer

Mr. William Stackler
Ruling Elder

Worship in Giving

Mr. William Stackler

Please find the Connect Pad on your pew at this time to sign in and pass it down the row.

*Visitors: If you would like to be contacted by the church, please include your email address
Thank you to those giving online.*

Children's Church (Ages 4-5) 8:00am only

Parents: After worship in giving, you are welcome to send your child (4-5) to children's church before the end of special music.

Special Music

"How I Got Over"

How I got over (how I got over),
how I got over (how I got over),
you know my soul looks back and wonder how I got over,
how I got over (how I got over),
how I got over (how I got over)
Oh, my soul looks back and wonder how I got over.

Just as soon as I see Jesus (oh yes),
the man who set me free (oh yes),
He was the man who bled and suffered (oh yes),
you know, He died for you and me (oh yes).
I'm gonna thank Him because He brought me (oh yes),
I'm gonna thank Him because He taught me (oh yes),
I'm gonna thank Him because He kept me (oh yes),
thank Him 'cause He never left me (oh yes).

Pre Chorus: I'm gonna sing (Hallelujah)!
I'm gonna sing (Troubles over)!
My soul looks back and wonder how I got over.

Chorus: How I got over, over,
my soul looks back and wonder how I got over.
How I got over, over,
my soul looks back and wonder how I got over.

One day I'm gonna wear a diadem (oh yes),
in the new Jerusalem (oh yes).
I'm gonna walk the streets of gold (oh yes),
in the homeland of the soul (oh yes).
I'm gonna view the Host in white (oh yes),
who travels both day and night (oh yes).

Coming up from every nation (oh yes),
going up to the great coronation (oh yes). *Pre Chorus, Chorus. Repeat.*

Prayer of Illumination

Rev. Thabiti Anyabwile

Sermon Text

Revelation 7:9-17
Pew Bible p. 1223

Sermon Title

"Embrace the Nations"

*** Song of Response**

"I Surrender All"

All to Jesus, I surrender; all to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

Refrain: I surrender all, I surrender all,
all to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender; humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken; take me, Jesus, take me now. *Refrain*

Communion

Pastor Elbert McGowan, Jr. and the Elders

Communion Music

*Adagio Concerto in G minor
for Two Cellos (A. Vivaldi)*

The Cello Boys

*** Benediction**

Pastor Elbert McGowan, Jr.

*** Departing Song**

"I Surrender All"

All to Jesus, I surrender; make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
May Thy Holy Spirit fill me, may I know Thy pow'r divine. *Refrain*

Prayer Intercessor Team

Mr. Scott Marshall & Mrs. Helen Marshall (8:00am)
Mr. William Stackler & Mrs. Amy Stackler (11:00am)

***Please Stand.**

(Redeemer Church, PCA, CCLI #2579870)

SERMON QUESTIONS

1. John sees a great multitude from every nation standing before the throne. What does this vision reveal about God's faithfulness to His promises? What does it show about the kind of people God is gathering for Himself?
2. God is gathering people from every nation and invites His people to participate in that mission. Is there a particular people group, community, or "nation" God has placed in your life right now? Where might He be calling you to move toward others with the hope of the gospel?
3. Revelation 7 reminds us that God will certainly redeem people from every nation. Who are one or two missionaries you know or that Redeemer supports? How does this passage shape the way you pray for them?



Guest Speaker: Rev. Thabiti Anyabwile
Pastor | Anacostia River Church

Thabiti Anyabwile serves as one of the pastors for Anacostia River Church (ARC). He has served as an elder and pastor in churches in North Carolina, D.C. and the Cayman Islands. After a few years as a practicing Muslim, Thabiti was converted under the preaching of the gospel in the Washington D.C. area. He and his wife, Kristie, have three children. Thabiti is the author of several books, including: *Exalting Jesus in Luke*; *The Life of God in the Soul of the Church*; *The Gospel for Muslims*; *What Is a Healthy Church Member?*; *The Decline of African-American Theology*; and *The Faithful Preacher*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday

Connect Pad: Please find the Connect Pad on your pew and sign in. This helps us keep track of Members and Visitors alike.



More Information:

On the QR Code you'll find links to announcements and online giving.

***** PRAYER REQUESTS/UPDATES *****

- Bert Everitt: As he continues recovery from successful shoulder replacement surgery.
- Myah Lane: As she undergoes treatment for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia.
- Thomas Eaves, son of Sterling & Lizzie Eaves: In remission from Leukemia.
- Caroline & Tu Combs: As Caroline undergoes treatment for stage 4 breast cancer.

See QR Code or redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday for updates and Take Them a Meal.

***** CALLED TO CONNECT *****

Church-Wide Prayer Brunch, Mar 1

Join us for our monthly congregation wide brunch during the Sunday School hour on Mar 1! We'll enjoy food and fellowship, then briefly pray together at the end for the spread of the Gospel as we kick off Missions Month. Be sure and pick up your littles from the nursery before coming to brunch, we want everyone, including our diligent nursery workers, to be able to join us!

Talking to Your Kids About Sex: A Biblical Approach, Mar 4

One of the most important—and sometimes daunting—conversations you can have with your child is “the talk.” In this one-hour session, we'll offer practical tools and encouragement to help you approach this conversation with confidence and care, and to continue it as an ongoing, healthy dialogue over time. Join us on Mar 4 at 12:00pm in the Church Office at 644 Wellington Rd. RSVP through the QR code.

Men's Gathering Begins, Mar 23

For 8 weeks this spring, gather with Redeemer men to meditate on and discuss scriptures on Righteousness & Shalom. We meet Mondays, 12-1, in front of the church office. This is a time to connect and pray with other men under the Word, sitting outside as weather permits. RSVP to Brian Gault at bgault@redeemerjackson.com

Ministering to The Poor Luncheon, Mar 28

During Missions Month, join us in the fellowship hall from 10:30am-1:00pm for a thoughtful and practical workshop led by Joshua Tsavatewa as we explore compassionate, holistic ministry to our neighbors in need. Lunch will be provided, sign up through the QR code. *In order to have childcare accommodations, please sign up by Mar 14.*

Good Friday Service, Apr 3

Join us at 6:00pm on Good Friday as we contemplate Jesus as the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep. Good Friday prepares us for Easter and the celebration that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Nursery provided.

Registration Open for Women's Ministry Spring Retreat, Apr 24-25

Register now for our women's ministry retreat at Twin Lakes! This is an opportunity to set aside intentional time to grow in knowing our God deeper through the teaching and study of his Word, and to enjoy connection and rest with others. Portia Collins will be our guest speaker for the weekend, you can learn more about Portia through the QR code. This event is for women ages 18 and up. For more details and to register, see QR code or redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday.

***** SEEKING TO SERVE *****

VITA Tax Preparation Classes This Spring—Volunteers Needed

This spring, Redeemer is serving as a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site. These free events offer tax preparation assistance for individuals and families with a household income of less than \$68,675 per year. Register to attend one of these classes between Feb 28 and Apr 18, held from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the second church office building, 644 Wellington Rd from 9:00am-2:00pm. The classes on Mar 4 and Mar 11 will converge with the Hope Exchange Community Group for a tax preparation class. If you'd like to volunteer, reach out to Lee Morris at nlmorris1988@gmail.com for more information.

Community Garden Workday, Mar 14

Join Hope Exchange as we care for the veggies, vines, and fruit trees in the Art + Soil Community Garden. The garden is a space for community and collaboration, for creation care and soul care, and for learning and networking. Whether you're an experienced gardener or just want to put your hands in the dirt and learn, join us at 9:00am for our next spring workday at the garden, located at the corner of Robinhood and Londonderry. Questions or ideas? Contact Sylvia Leggette at artandsoilgarden@gmail.com

Serve with Families Count, Mar 18—Apr 29

Through Families Count, the church has the opportunity to come alongside families in difficult seasons, walking with them toward restoration and stability. This class will be Wednesdays evenings, March 18- April 29, 5:30-7:30pm. Childcare is provided through the nursery and Upside Down. Please contact Jennifer Remington at jenremington2@gmail.com to get involved, and please be praying for these families!

***** NEWS TO NOTE *****

Now Accepting Applications for Director of Youth Ministry

The application for our Director of Youth Ministry position has been posted and will stay open until Apr 1. Access the application through the QR code, contact Zack Owens at zowens@redeemerjackson.com for more information.

Weekly Programming Pauses—Spring Break, Mar 4 & 11

For spring break Upside Down, Crossroads, Hope Exchange, and The Soul of Shame Book Discussion will not meet. Rooted will not meet on Mar 8.

***** Redeemer Kids *****
K4-5th Grade

Children's Church, Mar 1

Children ages 4-5 join us as we study Covenant Theology this spring. 8:00am service only, for ages 4-5.

Upside Down

Upside down is our weekly offering for our elementary aged students. We play games, eat, sing, and learn about God's word! Come join us on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30pm. See QR code or redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday for more information.

***** Redeemer Youth *****
6th-12th Grade

High School Skate Night, Mar 1

Whether you're a pro on roller skates or just here for a good time, we'd love to see you tonight our High School Silly Skate Night, 5:30-7:00pm, at Spinners in Florence! Attire: Thrift Store Tacky. Bring some money for food if you'd like to eat there).

Crossroads

If you are in 6th-8th grade, come on out to Crossroads! Crossroads is our weekly youth group gathering where we eat dinner, play games, hear a lesson from the Bible and discuss it in small groups. We meet in the Youth room from 6:00-7:30pm on Wednesday nights. We have a blast and would love to see you there! See QR code or redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday for more information.

Rooted

High Schoolers, we hope you will join us on Sunday nights for Rooted! At Rooted we eat dinner, worship, hear a lesson from God's Word and then discuss it in small groups. We meet in the Youth room from 5:30-7:00pm. See you there! See QR code or redeemerjackson.com/this-Sunday for more information.

Spring Adult Sunday School

9:45-10:35am

Spring Adult Sunday School Block 1
began Feb 8 and concludes Mar 29.

Jackson Apologetics: Clear Answers for Complex Questions

Teachers: Jerome Douglas, Karen Ellis, Esther Abraham

Location: Room 109

Want to grow in defending the faith? Join us as we engage the beliefs shaping our city and everyday conversations. We will explore sexuality, Christian nationalism, Islam, Jehovah's Witness, Hebrew Israelism, and deconstruction - drawing from Eric Mason's Urban Apologetics. Come grow in clarity and confidence as we learn to give Gospel answers with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

The Song of Songs

Teacher: Miles Van Pelt

Location: Sanctuary

The Song of Songs is perhaps the most neglected and misunderstood book in the Christian Bible, but we need to hear its message more than ever in our current cultural moment. The Song upholds the beauty of the marriage covenant as instituted by God in Genesis 2, while helping us to navigate the hardships, temptations, and brokenness of the post-fall Genesis 3 world we now inhabit. In this class, we will consider the topic of marriage and marital intimacy from the larger context of the Bible through the lens of Solomon's most famous song, the Song of Songs.

Christian Growth: the Fruit of the Spirit

Teachers: Zack Owens, Bentley Crawford, Andy Sauerwein

Location: Fellowship Hall

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). In scripture, a healthy life with God is often described in biological terms - whether as physical growth or botanical growth (a living faith is not truly living if it doesn't exhibit the characteristics of life: movement, breathing, and growth.)

In this class, we will explore each of the Fruit of the Spirit as a window into a biblical understanding of how and why we grow as Christians, exploring not only personal sanctification but also Intimacy (giving and receiving love), Identity (Connecting to others even through conflict), Imperfection (Dealing with sin and failure in ourselves and others), and Impulse Control (Holy Spirit empowered ability to feel and think instead of react).

Spring Adult Sunday School

9:45-10:35am

Spring Children & Youth Sunday School
began Feb 8 and concludes May 31.

Youth (6th-12th): Truths That You Can Trust

High School Teachers: Chael Williams, Stephanie Greer, Rob Vickery,
Mary Katherine Evans, Cadden Christie

Middle School Teachers: Chael Williams, Stephanie Greer,
Josh Anderson, Mary Katherine Evans, Lane Morgan

Location: Youth Room

In a world that is constantly shifting and information that is always changing, it is important that we “build our houses on the rock.” This spring Redeemer Youth will be studying truths you can trust to remind us of the unchanging truth of God’s Word. Using Paul David Tripp’s *12 Truths Every Teen can Trust* as a resource, we will be learning together about core doctrines of the Christian faith serve as a firm foundation for living the Christian Life.

Children’s (K4-5th): Investigating God’s Word

This spring, RedeemerKids is continuing through "Investigating God's Word."

K4: Room 208

Teachers:

Rachel Harbarger, Amanda McGuffey

2nd: Room 207

Teachers:

Gene Everrit, KK Harrington

K5: Room 209

Teachers:

Beth Clarke, Sarah Love Crawford

3rd: Room 206

Teachers:

Christa Williams, Page Callen,
Andrea Burks

1st: Room 210

Teachers:

Krisan Parish, Claire Graves, Emmaline Smith

4th: Room 202

Teachers:

Angela Simpkins, Samuel Bolen

5th: Room 204

Teachers:

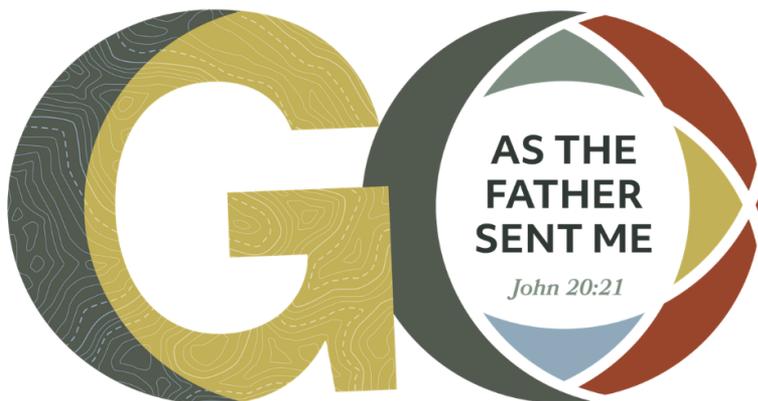
Haley Arndt, Tyler Espinoza,
Jake Garner

Nursery (2-3):

Exploring God’s Word Through the New Testament

This spring , our Nursery Sunday School classes will be looking at God's Son. Our focus will be on exploring the New Testament as we study the birth and early years of Jesus. Each lesson is designed to help children discover and understand these foundational stories from Scripture. In every lesson, the children are continually directed to Jesus and encouraged to recognize their need for Him.

MISSIONS MONTH 2026



A month focused on living on mission in our neighborhoods, our city, and among the nations

KEY EVENTS & DATES

FEB 28

Reaching Our
Neighborhood Luncheon

MARCH
1-29

Mission Moments
(Sundays)

MARCH
22

Mission Month Dinner

MARCH
28

Ministering to the
Poor Luncheon

GUEST SPEAKERS:



Rev. Thabiti Anyabwile

Dr. Karen Ellis



Rev. Joshua Tsavatewa

All events and meals are free!

Childcare available
for Mar 28
(register *two weeks* prior for childcare)

Register early and join us during Missions Month!





MISSIONS MOMENTS



February 22
Rev. Wright Busching
Church Planter/Pastor



March 1
Trey and Kiki Adams
MTW Thailand Team Leader,
Mission to the World



March 8
Willis Bridges
Director of Ministry & Mission,
Mission First



March 15
Rev. Hernando Saenz
Hispanic Ministries Director,
Mission to North America (PCA)



March 22
Marcus Nobles
Campus Associate, RUF
Alabama A&M



March 29
Kelle Menogan
Head of School,
The Redeemer's School

MISSIONS MONTH

Devotions

Introduction

Mission is not first something the church does. It is something God has always been doing. The Father sent the Son into the world in to save His people, and through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, God continues His work of redemption. Mission flows from who God is and from belonging to Christ, not from pressure or performance.

Throughout this month, these devotions invite us to slow down and reorient our hearts. We will see how God meets His people in fear and doubt, speaks peace, gives His Spirit, and sends them with a clear message and a steady promise: "I am with you always." Mission is lived out through ordinary faithfulness shaped by trust in the risen Christ.

How to Use This Devotional

These devotions are designed for **Monday through Friday**, with weekends left open for rest or catching up. Each day is meant to be read carefully rather than rushed. Begin by reading slowly, then move through the reflection and prayer, allowing space for honest self examination. They can be used individually, with family, or in small groups.

Each devotion should take **10 to 15 minutes** to complete, depending on how much time you spend in discussion, reflection, or prayer. If you miss a day, that's ok - keep going. Simply return where you left off. The goal is formation as we learn to live as a sent people under the gracious care of God.

May God bless you in the reading and reflection of His Word.



DAY 1 — SENT BY A SENDING GOD

Most of us think of mission as something the church does. A program. A trip. A special emphasis on the calendar. But before mission becomes an activity, it is first a reality about who God is. Mission does not begin with us going. It begins with God sending.

God is a sending God, and those who belong to Him are shaped by that same sending love.

“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” (John 20:21)

These words are spoken by the risen Jesus to fearful disciples. The cross is behind Him. The tomb is empty. Victory has been secured. And now, Jesus speaks not first about strategy or success, but about identity. He roots the mission of the disciples in the mission of God Himself. Just as the Father sent the Son into the world, so the Son now sends His people.

The word “as” matters. Jesus is not simply giving a command. He is drawing a line of continuity. The way God relates to the world through Jesus now becomes the pattern for how Jesus relates to the world through His church. Mission flows from God’s own heart.

Our instinct may be to detach mission from everyday life. We could treat it as optional, specialized, or reserved for others who feel more gifted or more confident. At a deeper level, this often reveals a subtle fear. If God sends us, then He may send us into places that feel uncomfortable, inconvenient, or costly.

So some may shrink mission down until it feels manageable.

But a reduced view of mission often reveals a reduced view of God. Think about how children learn what matters in a household. They rarely learn it through lectures. They learn it by watching what their parents consistently do. What they prioritize. Where they go. What they give themselves to.

In the same way, Jesus does not simply tell us that God cares about the world. He shows us. The incarnation itself is God’s living illustration. God did not shout salvation from heaven. He stepped into human history, walked our roads, entered our suffering, and bore our sin. Mission is not an interruption to God’s work. It is God’s work.

Walking Forward in Faith

Today, resist the urge to immediately ask, “What should I do?” Instead, sit with a quieter question: What kind of God do I belong to?

If God is a sending God, then being sent is not a burden to carry but a life to receive. This week, ask the Lord to reshape how you see your ordinary spaces. Your home. Your job. Your routines. These are not obstacles to mission. They are often the very places God has already sent you. Begin simply by noticing.

Prayer: Father, You are not distant or disengaged from your world. You sent Your Son in love, and through Him you have drawn near to us. Forgive us for shrinking your mission to what feels safe or convenient. Shape our hearts to reflect Yours. Teach us to see where You have already sent us, and give us grace to trust You there. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the One who was sent for us. Amen.



DAY 2 — DISCIPLES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Before Jesus speaks about mission, He speaks about authority. He does not rush His disciples into action. He anchors them first in who He is and what has been given to Him. Mission does not begin with confidence in ourselves, but with confidence in Christ.

Mission flows from living under the authority of the risen Jesus.

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'" (Matthew 28:18)

These words are spoken after the resurrection. Jesus stands before His disciples not as a teacher offering advice, but as the risen King declaring reality. All authority belongs to Him. Not some. Not partial. All authority in heaven and on earth.

This matters because authority determines direction. If Jesus truly reigns, then our lives are no longer self-directed. Discipleship begins with submission, not activity. Before Jesus tells His followers where to go or what to do, He tells them who He is. Mission rests on His reign, not on our readiness.

Living under Christ's authority is not restrictive. It is freeing. It means we no longer have to carry the burden of determining our own worth, purpose, or success. Those things are received, not achieved.

Many of us feel tension when we hear about authority. We associate it with control, pressure, or loss of freedom. But Jesus's authority is unlike any other. He does not dominate or exploit. He lays down His life. The One who claims all authority is the same One who bears scars for His people.

Still, we often resist living fully under His rule. We compartmentalize our faith. We trust Jesus with salvation, but hesitate to trust Him with our schedules, relationships, priorities, or plans. When authority feels threatening, we quietly keep parts of our lives under our own control. Mission becomes exhausting when we try to serve Christ without submitting to Him. We end up striving instead of following.

Walking Forward in Faith

Today, consider where Jesus's authority may be inviting deeper trust. Not forced obedience, but willing surrender. Where are you holding back control, assuming you know better or safer than He does?

Discipleship begins with listening. With receiving direction. With trusting that the risen King leads His people wisely and well. As you grow under His authority, mission will take shape naturally. You will begin to live and speak in ways that reflect His reign.

Begin today by naming one area of your life you want to place more fully under Jesus's authority. Then entrust it to Him in prayer.

Prayer: Father in heaven, we come to You through Your Son, our risen King who has all authority. Forgive us for resisting His rule and clinging to control. By Your Spirit, teach us to trust and rest under His reign. Make us faithful disciples who reflect Christ's authority with humility and grace. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



DAY 3 — WHEN FEAR SHAPES OUR WITNESS

Fear has a way of shrinking our world. It narrows our vision, limits our imagination, and convinces us that safety is wiser than faithfulness. Scripture does not ignore fear. Instead, it shows us how God meets His people right in the middle of it.

Jesus meets fearful disciples with His presence and peace so that fear does not have the final word over our witness.

"The disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear... Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" (John 20:19)

On the evening of the resurrection, the disciples are not celebrating. They are hiding. The doors are locked, not because they doubt the resurrection has happened, but because they fear what might happen next. They are afraid of the same forces that crucified Jesus. Fear has turned them inward, closed them off, and pressed them into silence.

Yet Jesus does not wait for fear to subside before He comes near. He steps into the room without rebuke or disappointment. His first words are not correction, but peace. The risen Christ meets His people exactly where they are, and His presence redefines the moment. Fear no longer controls the room. Jesus does.

This is the pattern of grace. God does not ask His people to overcome fear before He sends them. He sends them by first giving Himself.

Fear often shapes our witness more than we realize. We fear rejection, misunderstanding, awkward conversations, or saying the wrong thing. Sometimes we fear losing comfort, status, or control. So we keep our faith quiet, private, and carefully contained.

What makes fear especially powerful is that it often feels reasonable. Locked doors can look like wisdom. Silence can feel like discernment. But fear, when left unchecked, slowly trains us to live as though Jesus is not alive and present with His people.

The disciples loved Jesus. They believed in Him. And still, fear kept them hidden. That should make us gentle with ourselves, but it should also make us honest.

Walking Forward in Faith

Notice what Jesus does not do. He does not shame His disciples for their fear. He does not dismiss them or replace them. Instead, He speaks peace and shows them His wounds. He reminds them that the cross has already absorbed the worst of what world can do.

Today, consider where fear may be shaping your witness. Not to condemn yourself, but to bring it into the light. Ask the Lord to meet you there. Mission does not require fearlessness. It requires trust in the presence of the risen Christ.

Begin with prayer. Open the door just a little. Let peace, not fear, guide your next step.

Prayer: Father in heaven, we come to You through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You see our fears more clearly than we do and know how easily we retreat, hide, and grow silent. Thank You that You meet us in Christ with peace rather than judgment. By Your Spirit, help us trust that You are present even when we feel afraid. Give us courage that flows from Christ's nearness, and lead us forward in faith. In Jesus' name, amen.



DAY 4 — WHEN WE SET THE TERMS FOR BELIEF

There is a kind of doubt that grows from pain or confusion. And then there is a kind of doubt that grows from control. Scripture does not blur the difference. In John 20, we are invited to look honestly at a moment when doubt is not merely felt, but chosen.

When we insist on believing only on our own terms, Jesus calls us to trust His Word rather than our conditions.

“Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’” (John 20:24-25)

Thomas is not doubting because he lacks access to truth. He is doubting in the face of testimony. The witnesses speaking to him are not outsiders or strangers. They are the apostles, the very ones Jesus chose, taught, and sent. God has already spoken, but Thomas refuses to receive the Word as it comes to him.

His response is decisive. “Unless I see... I will never believe.” Thomas does not ask for help. He issues terms. Faith, in his mind, must pass through his own conditions before it is acceptable. In that moment, doubt becomes less about uncertainty and more about authority. Thomas places himself in the position of judge over what God must do in order to be trusted.

Eight days later, Jesus appears again. He does not ignore Thomas’s words. He addresses them directly. He invites Thomas to see and touch, but He also names the issue clearly: “Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Jesus meets Thomas with mercy, but He does not affirm Thomas’s posture. He calls him out of unbelief and into trust.

We often recognize doubt more easily than unbelief. Doubt feels honest. Unbelief often hides behind reason. Like Thomas, we can say, “If God would just show me this... then I would trust Him.” But beneath that condition is often a desire to remain in control. This posture quietly shapes our witness. When we hold God at arm’s length, we hesitate to speak with clarity. We struggle to invite others to trust a Word we ourselves are unwilling to receive fully. Mission falters when faith becomes conditional.

Thomas reminds us that proximity to Jesus does not automatically produce trust. Even disciples can resist belief when faith threatens their sense of control.

Walking Forward in Faith

Today, ask the Lord to reveal where you may be setting the terms for belief. Not honest questions, but quiet ultimatums. Where have you said, “Unless...”? The good news is that Jesus does not abandon Thomas. He comes near. He speaks peace. And He calls him forward. That same mercy meets us today. Faith begins when we release our conditions and receive Christ’s Word as sufficient.

Choose to trust the gospel today, resting in it without reservation. Let belief begin there.

Prayer: Father in heaven, we come to You through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You know how easily we try to control what faith should look like. Forgive us for placing conditions on trust and holding Your Word at a distance. Thank You that You meet us in Christ with mercy and truth. By Your Spirit, call us out of unbelief and into deeper trust, that our lives and our witness may reflect confidence in Him. In Jesus’ name, amen.



DAY 5 — BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN

Faith is often imagined as certainty without struggle. But Scripture presents faith more honestly. It shows us believers who trust God while still carrying weakness, questions, and limits. Jesus does not reserve His blessing for the strongest believers only. He speaks hope to those who must trust Him without seeing everything clearly.

Jesus blesses those who trust His Word, even when faith feels fragile and incomplete.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” (John 20:29)

Jesus’s words come after Thomas’s confession of faith. Thomas has seen and believed. But Jesus gently widens the moment beyond him. He turns toward future disciples, those who will never touch His wounds or stand in the room where He appeared. He pronounces a blessing over ordinary believers who will trust the testimony handed down to them.

This is not a lesser faith. It is the normal way God has chosen to grow His church. Faith, from the beginning, has been formed through hearing. Through witness. Through receiving God’s Word as it comes to us. Jesus does not say these believers are brave or impressive. He says they are blessed.

The foundation of Christian faith is not sight, but trust in a faithful God who speaks.

Many believers struggle not with defiant unbelief, but with weariness. They want to trust God, but they feel the limits of their understanding. They believe, yet they wish their faith felt steadier, stronger, or more confident.

In moments like this, doubt can feel discouraging. We compare ourselves to others who seem certain and fearless. We wonder if our faith is enough. But Jesus’s words remind us that faith is not measured by intensity or emotional clarity. It is measured by direction. Are we leaning toward Him, even when our grip feels weak?

Mission often feels intimidating for this very reason. We assume we must feel fully confident before we speak or serve. But Jesus blesses those who trust Him without seeing the whole picture.

Walking Forward in Faith

Today, receive Jesus’s blessing personally. His words are not abstract. They are spoken for you. If you are trusting Him today, even imperfectly, you are not behind. You are blessed.

Rather than waiting for perfect confidence, take a small step of faith. Speak the truth you know. Share the hope you have. Rest in the promise that God works through ordinary believers who trust His Word.

Faith does not grow by waiting until doubt disappears. It grows as we continue to trust Jesus in the midst of it.

Prayer: Father in heaven, we draw near to You through Your Son, the risen Lord Jesus. Thank You for blessing those who believe without seeing. You know the limits of our understanding and the weakness of our faith. By Your Spirit, teach us to trust You not because we see clearly, but because You are faithful and true. Strengthen our hearts and lead us forward as Your people, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Deacon on Call Week of Mar 1

Ellis Tucker, 769.230.4962

Sunday, Mar 1

Missions Month Begins

Communion Sunday

8:00am Worship Service

8:00am Livestream Available

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship Service

5:30pm High School Skate Night

Monday, Mar 2

6:00pm GriefShare

Tuesday, Mar 3

7:00am Women's Bible Study

7:00pm Choir Practice

7:30pm Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, Mar 4

9:00am Mom's Bible Study

12:00pm Talking to Your Kids
About Sex

6:00pm Session & Diaconate Meetings

6:00pm Faith & Finances via
Hope Exchange

Thursday, Mar 5

12:00pm Women's Bible Study

Friday, Mar 6

Saturday, Mar 7

8:30am Men's Basketball

Sunday, Mar 8

8:00am Worship Service

8:00am Livestream Available

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship Service

STAFF

Elbert McGowan, Jr., Senior Pastor

Brian Gault, Asst Pastor of Shepherding & Discipleship

Zack Owens, Asst Pastor of Congregational Care

Jerome Douglas, Dir Neighborhood Outreach & Missions

Jajuan McNeil, Director of Children's Ministry

Joya McNeil, Children's Ministry Assistant

Chael Williams, Interim Youth Director

Stephanie Greer, Assistant Youth Director

Katie Drake, Director of Women's Ministry

Velma Warner, Nursery Coordinator

Corrie Keplinger, Coordinator of Communications

& Operations, Assistant to the Senior Pastor

Tina Collier, Administrative Assistant

Brandon Slay, Director of AV Ministries

Andre Warner, Audio/Visual Assistant

Josh Anderson, Intern

Joshua Coleman, Intern

Markese Lee, Intern

Interim Music Ministry Team:

Joyce Hamme, Arthur Phillips, Meg Mills, Akida Mosby

RULING ELDERS

Karl Arndt

Grant Callen

Tu Combs

Gene Dent

Baskin Jones

Scott Marshall

Barry McCay*

Kelle Menogan, Sr.

Marculis Mosby

CL Pearce

Herb Sanders

Andy Sauerwein

William Stackler

Rob Vickery

Trey Watkins

DEACONS

Grafton Bragg

Philip Carter

Preston Denley

Davidson Forester

Jon Fults

David Garner

Jake Garner

Clayton Gressett

Reid Haygood

John Hooker*

Detrick Johnson

Blaise King

Cody McCain

Lane Morgan

Greg Ross

Jaimar Scott

Seth Shannon

Jonathan Shull

Jeremy Smith

Ellis Tucker

Johnston Walker

Tamarco White

*Sabbatical

COMING UP:

Mar 14: Community Garden Workday

Mar 22: Sunday Dinner: Developing a Heart for
God's Mission

Mar 25: Community Garden Workday

Mar 28: Ministering to The Poor Luncheon

Mar 28: Middle School Spring Day Getaway

Apr 3: Good Friday Service

Apr 6: Church Office Closed

Apr 6: Session & Diaconate Meetings



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