



Weekly Booster

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Jeff Hiser

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Alan Hutchison

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Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

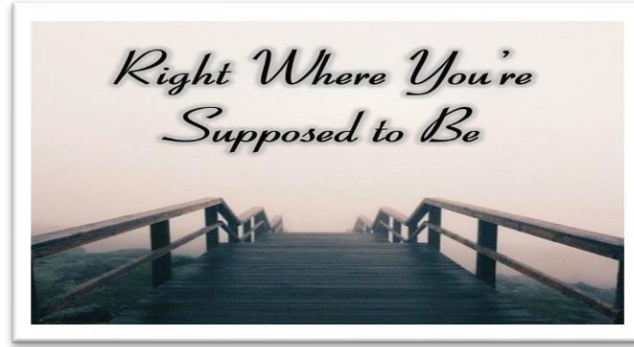
Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Pastor David

*Our Vision: **Growing** as disciples of Jesus while **connecting** with others and **servicing** our community.*



Right Where You're Supposed to Be

If Martin Luther, the famous German Reformer, had had his way, you probably never would have heard of Esther. Martin Luther was one of a number of biblical scholars who weren't quite sure what to make of Esther, the exiled Jewish teenage girl who became the queen of Persia. They've suggested that her story, perhaps, doesn't even belong in the Bible. Why? Because it's messy.

Esther's book poses some troubling questions, such as:

- Why are Esther and her people still living in the Persian capital, Susa, decades after God had opened the doors for them to return to Israel?
- Why is God's name never mentioned—not even one time—in the whole book? Is that some kind of indication of how disconnected these Assyrian-dwelling Israelites are from God?

To help you keep the timeline straight: Esther's story took place about forty years *after* Daniel's ended. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah had all led groups back to their homeland according to Jeremiah's prophecy (see Jeremiah 25:11–12) and God's command (see Ezra 1:1–4). They'd experienced God's miraculous provision in doing so.

Continued on page 2

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but it habit.” Aristotle

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” Arthur Ashe

Reminders

April 12th

Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
PK-6 S.S. during the message
Jr/Sr High S.S. – 10:30 a.m.

April 14th

Mat Making (Loom Room) 1:00 p.m.

April 15th

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.
Praise Team – 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.

April 16th

T.O.P.S.

Meals-On-Wheels Deliveries
Sign up at the Welcome Counter

**** Fellowship Volunteers and treats needed, sign up in Fellowship Hall**

Right Where... - continued from page 1.

God moved on King Cyrus to pay for a lot of this, and he supernaturally protected Nehemiah during the reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls. Back in the land of Judea there had been revivals in which faithful Hebrews read Scripture over the old temple mound twenty-four hours a day for several days straight.

Esther was part of a group that stayed in Persia, however. And we don't quite know why. Jews back in Judea at the time accused this group of being soft traitors, of getting too comfortable in captivity and forgetting where they were truly from. And, honestly, it's hard to say they were wrong. God had told them the exile was over and it was time to go home. Some may have felt compelled to stay for practical reasons, but it's still hard to understand why so many didn't go home. God had reopened the door to the promised land!

Then, through a series of interesting, if not disturbing, events, Esther found herself as the new queen of this pagan empire. I won't fully go into it, but King Xerxes, head of the Persian empire (the empire that took over for the Babylonians), hosted a fifth-century-BC version of *The Bachelor*, and Esther won. If you think I'm exaggerating here, go read it! It's one of the craziest stories in the Bible.

This raises questions about whether Esther should have been in this contest. It was an inherently immoral contest, and Esther had to *conceal* her Jewish identity to enter it. Of course, Esther likely had little choice in the matter, as Jewish refugee girls in the fifth century BC didn't have much agency. Then again, Joseph, a slave in Potiphar's house in Egypt, didn't have much choice when Potiphar's wife commanded him to sleep with her, and Joseph went to prison for his refusal (see Genesis 39). Should Esther have done the same? Tough questions.

The Rest of the Story

Long story short, after Esther won the contest, her story took an interesting turn. She found out about a plot by Xerxes' chief of staff, Haman, otherwise known as the Dwight Schrute of Persia, to kill all the Jews there. Mordecai, Esther's older cousin and confidant, told her that she needed to do something to stop it.

Continued on page 6

Second Sunday of Easter

April 12, 2026

1 Peter 1:17-23



Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church
**Please wear your
name tag on
Sunday mornings**



Church Ad Board Members

- Bob Lynn - Chair*
- Mary Peterson - Secretary*
- Darlene Howard – At-Large*
- Roger Jones - Trustee*
- Dave Christensen - SPRC*
- Dan Weiss – Finance/Stewardship*
- Dave Lashier - Treasurer*
- Craig Harris - Lay Member to Annual Conference*
- Connie Anderson - Memorials*
- Linda Haldane - Membership*
- David Clark - Pastor*

Church Office Hours

** Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School – PK-6 during service Jr/Sr High 10:30 a.m.	Monday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00
Wednesday Praise Team – 4:00 p.m. Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.	Tuesday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00 Wednesday Office Closed Bible Study 11:00 Thursday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00 Friday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need to enter the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine, please leave your name, number, and a brief message, and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned on the next business day.

The front door to the church will be locked during office hours. Please ring the doorbell to be let into the church.



- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| According to the book of Daniel, what is the Lord able to do to those who walk in pride? | What was Israel's original name? | Whose son was Jonah? |
| a) attack | a) Isaac | a) Hilkiah |
| b) counsel | b) Ishmael | b) Eliab |
| c) humble | c) Jacob | c) Amittai |
| d) compensate | d) Joseph | d) Eleazar |

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



- 12th – Reagan Baker, Cindy Manrose
- 14th – Michelle Blank
- 18th – Mary Thompson

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added? Please call the office or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: God hears our voice, our pleas for mercy

People: God has leaned down to listen when we were in trouble.

L: As long as we have breath.

P: We will call on God.

L: We have come, eager to offer a sacrifice of gratitude.

P: And fulfill the promises we have made to God.

“Living in a Strange Land”

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-23

Songs

Christ is Alive #318

Oceans (screens)

Open Our Eyes #2086

People Need the Lord #2244

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 119

Online Worship – 12

Our Vision:

“Growing as disciples of Jesus while connecting with others and serving our community.”

**Answers for April 5th are c) they were great & tall b) Simon d) self-control
Quiz hints – Q1) Daniel Q) Genesis Q3) Jonah**



Food Pantry Needs

April 2026

Cake, Brownie, and Muffin Mixes, Cereal, Mandarin Oranges, Pineapple, Pasta (any variety), Macaroni & Cheese, Soda or Snack Crackers, Cinnamon Applesauce, Evaporated Milk, Shampoo, and Bar Soap

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals home with their food items. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Community Food Pantry. We exist totally on donations; we couldn't assist those in need without your help!

If you or anyone who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please have them contact Jeannine K. Liljedahl at 712-215-2488.



*Church
Scholarships*

*Collected each Sunday after
the children's message*

Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday, a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from your pockets or purse. The money donated in April will go to the **Church Scholarships**.

Right Where... - continued from page 2.

Esther said, “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives” (Esther 4:11).

Mordecai’s response: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13-14).

Let me cut to the chase: Esther risked her life to save her fellow Jews, and ultimately she prevailed. Not only did she save the lives of thousands of Jews, but many Persians—including King Xerxes himself—recognized the hand of God in it all and gave honor to him.

In this instance, I’m glad Martin Luther didn’t have his way, because Mordecai’s words to Esther have provided a challenge to exiles in every generation, and they are especially poignant in ours: *Perhaps you’re here for just such a time as this?*

God has us here for a purpose. Maybe the path getting us here hasn’t been pretty. We might be tempted to analyze whose fault it is that we are here. But the primary question for us to ask is this: *What does God want from us now?*

For what purpose has God brought us into *this* Babylonian kingdom at just such a time as this?

A Theology of Place?

Heather Holleman, a committed Christian and literature professor at Penn State, says that Christians today need to recover a “theology of place.” A theology of place, she says, is an awareness that, wherever you are, God placed you there for an Acts 1:8 purpose.

Paul referred to this theology of place, Holleman says, in Acts 17, when he said to a bunch of Greeks living in Athens: “From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us” (Acts 17:26-27).

In other words, God sovereignly arranges the borders of *nations* so that people in those nations will have the chance to seek him. If God does that with whole nations, Holleman says, then surely we can be confident he is doing that with our own personal “borders,” too. God has appointed our *personal* dwelling places so that others around us can hear about God *through* us and seek him because of us.

That's how it worked with Daniel, after all. Nebuchadnezzar thought he'd merely conquered Judah. Unwittingly, he turned Babylon into a huge mission field.

You are in that profession, or living in that neighborhood, or residing in that particular hall, or sitting next to that particular person, for a reason. Your successes *and* failures put you into contact with particular people whom God is seeking. Holleman challenges Christians working in secular places to ask the question "What do you see?"

Who is there?

What needs do you see?

What questions are they asking?

What crises are they in?

Where might God be at work?

Wherever you are, God has determined *your* place—the borders of where you live and who you know. He has sovereignly directed the choices, successes, and failures that brought you here. He did that because he's at work with the people around you, putting questions and problems in their lives so that they might seek him. And he brought them up next to you.

Open your eyes and join him.

Adapted from author J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. NIV Weekly Blog. All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, April 6, 2026.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday

to Deliver Meals

Sign-Up Sheet is on the

Welcome Center Counter



You Gotta Be Dead!

Overheard in Sunday school:

Teacher: “If I sell my house and my car, have a big garage sale, and give all my money to the church, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “If I clean the church building every day, mow the yard, and keep everything neat and tidy, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “Well, then, if I treat animals kindly, give treats to all the children, and love my wife, will that get me into heaven?”

Children: “No!”

Teacher: “Well, then how can I get into heaven?”

One brave five-year-old boy: “You gotta be dead!”

This little boy gave a theologically profound answer, and he didn’t even know it. He spoke the truth, though he didn’t fully understand it. It is true that doing good deeds will not get us into heaven (Eph. 2:8-9). It is also true that if we desire to spend eternity in the presence of God, we must be dead—we must die to self so that we might live for Christ!

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

In Mark 8:34-36, Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” Commenting on this passage in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”

The long answer to the teacher’s question: One must die to self in order to live exclusively for Christ. The short answer: You gotta be dead!

Adapted from author Bart Warren, S. Green St. Church of Christ, Glasgow, KY. Bulletin Digest, March 2014, Vol. 33, No.3. All Rights Reserved, PO Box 831, Judsonia, Arkansas, 72081, United States.

Adam Swanson (former member of Shenandoah 1st Methodist Church) will be performing at the Shenandoah High school Auditorium 7:00 p.m. Friday, April 24th. If you buy a season ticket for the '26-27 Shenandoah Music Association concert series, you can attend Adam's concert for free! You may buy a season ticket at the door of the concert, or on our website, www.shenandoahmusicassoc.org



As our Chancel and Bell Choirs prepare for a well-deserved summer intermission, the stage is open and waiting for **you!**

We are looking for talented individuals or groups to fill our sanctuary with "Special Music" during the summer months. Whether you are a soloist, part of an ensemble, or play an instrument, this is your moment to share your gift with our community.

If you're ready to share your talent or have a recommendation, please **contact the office**. We are currently developing our summer schedule and would love to include you in our lineup.



Message

FROM OUR PASTOR

We've made it past Easter Sunday; hopefully, having a good dinner and a good nap. But in the Church calendar, we are still in the Easter season. We call this coming Sunday simply the Second Sunday of Easter. Easter is a full season that we can continue to feast and to celebrate the living Christ. Celebrate and take pleasure in the gifts of God. The writer of Ecclesiastes says, "I know that there is nothing better for [us] than to be happy and enjoy [ourselves] as long as we live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil" (Eccl 3:12-13).

On Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, it is announced, "I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word."

Perhaps it would be appropriate to mirror that by saying in this Easter season, "I invite you to observe a holy Easter: by enjoying the simple pleasures of life; by prayer, food, and gathering with others; and by listening to how the risen Christ is speaking to you through the created world and through others."

Grace and peace,

Pastor David Clark
308-258-7749 (cell)

