



Weekly Booster

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Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

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Questions People Have About Jesus

Any spiritual explorer seeking to understand the Christian message must consider Jesus' message about himself. You can join with him and embrace what he taught; you can reject him and call him a narcissist; you can step to the middle and let go of what seems perplexing; or you can throw up your hands and retreat into an agnostic fog. But it is no mere academic question. Here, we answer questions people ask about Jesus –

“If the Bible is the only book that talks about Jesus, how can you prove he even existed?”

Historical events can't be “proven” in the strict sense of the word. In science, you can conduct experiments that can be repeated. But history happens once, and then it's over. Exploring antiquity is more akin to a courtroom than a laboratory. It requires historical evidence, not tests, and double-blind studies. For example, you can examine written documents contemporaneously with the person or event in question. Sometimes you can discover archaeological artifacts. You can also observe societal changes that shed light on how someone made an impact.

Keep in mind, the Bible isn't just one book — it's many books. There are four very important ones, the Gospels, which record Jesus' life and teachings.

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“Serve locally. Pray globally.”

Reminders

February 22nd-April 6th
Lent Season

March 4th

Men’s Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.

March 5th

Sunday School for All Ages
10:30 a.m.

Youth, Jr/Sr Sunday School
Confirmation – 6:00 p.m.
HS Youth Group – 7:00 p.m.

March 8th

Encountering the New Testament
Study with Pastor David - Noon
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.
Choir – 6:45 p.m.

March 9th

T.O.P.S. – 5:30 p.m.
Creating Momentum Through
Effective Leadership Workshop
6:00 p.m.

****Worship Assistants are needed
for March 19th & 26th**

**** Fellowship Volunteers needed
sign-up in Fellowship Hall**



Questions - Continued from page 1

The other 23 books of the New Testament mention Jesus as well. Most of them were written within a few years or decades of Jesus’ life — before those who knew him had died. Several are, in fact, eyewitness accounts. These are extremely important sources for understanding the Jesus of history, not just the distorted Jesus supposedly made up by Christians. They are the living records of people who heard and spoke to him or interviewed those who were there.

“Aren’t the New Testament writers biased and, therefore, untrustworthy when they write about Jesus?”

To be sure, the New Testament writers sincerely believed what they wrote. But they had nothing to gain by making up stories. Because of persecution, they put their lives at risk (and most, in fact, were killed) by spreading Jesus’ message.

Matthew, who wrote the gospel that bears his name, had been a close follower of Jesus. Mark was the companion of Peter, and he likely used Peter’s recollections for his biography. Luke was the traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, and they met and interviewed many who had known Jesus — a fact Luke makes explicit in the introduction of his book (Luke 1:1 – 3). John, like Matthew, had been a disciple (one of Jesus’ hand-picked followers) and wrote from his first-hand experience.

Then there’s the Apostle Paul. After years of trying to destroy Christianity, he had a dramatic “about face” (read how it happened in Acts 9:1 – 31). All of Paul’s writings are very early (he was martyred in AD 64), and he cites many details about Jesus’ life and impact, including the most amazing of Christian claims — that Jesus rose from the dead. It simply isn’t true that these are “myths” dreamed up decades or even centuries after they supposedly happened.

Jesus’ words, actions, and resurrection convinced these writers to testify about him even if it meant their death. For most of them, it did. You may die for a lie you thought was true, but you won’t die for a lie you made up yourself.

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“Are you living or existing?”

Volunteers Needed



Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High**
 Sunday School 10:15
 Questers (Adults) 10:30

Monday
 9:00-11:00
 12:00-3:00

****Chancel Choir –**
 Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m.
 Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday
 9:00-11:00
 12:00-3:00

Wednesday
CLOSED

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch.

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 in 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 the next business day.



What shall go down on the prophets according to Micah?

- a) Moon
- b) Rain
- c) Wind
- d) Sun

What was the name of Hosea's wife?

- a) Gomer
- b) Tamar
- c) Rehab
- d) Dinah

Who named Moses?

- a) his sister
- b) his mother
- c) Pharaoh's daughter
- d) a servant of the Pharaoh's daughter

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



5th - Loy Beach, Katy DeLong
 8th - Val Grossman, David Skinner
 11th - Marsha Stribling

****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: We are a people who make no plans to injure our neighbors

People: Our neighbors are more secure because they are near to us

L: We are a people that resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves

P: Our neighbors feel loved because they are near to us

L: We are a people who live the gospel

P: We are a people who do no harm.

“People of God Who Do No Harm”

Old Testament Reading:

New Testament Reading:

Gospel Reading: Proverbs 3:29-30

Songs

O For a thousand Tongues to Sing #57

Let There Be Peace on Earth #431

Surely the Presence of the Lord #328

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship - 61

Online Worship – 13

Our Mission:

“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”

Our Vision:

“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”

Answers for Feb 26th are b) Levi b) Jochebed b) Herod

Quiz Hints – Q1) Micha Q2) Hosea Q3) Exodus

Questions - Continued from page 2

“Even if the Bible has reliable information about Jesus, wouldn’t such a notable figure be mentioned elsewhere?”

Other writers do mention Jesus! There are at least 17 early sources outside of the Bible that talk about either Jesus directly or his followers and their beliefs. The Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, the Jewish historian Josephus, as well as other authors like Lucian and Pliny all, refer to him. These sources also corroborate more than 50 details about Jesus, including his death on the cross and the controversial claim of his coming back to life (note: these authors didn’t personally believe Jesus rose from the dead, they just recorded that claim).

We must also consider Jesus’ unmatched impact. Other charismatic leaders rose to prominence in the first and second centuries. What is it about Jesus that his name is still with us, and all the other alleged Messiahs and revolutionaries have been forgotten? Theudas and Judas of Galilee were two such leaders (mentioned in Acts 5:36 – 37). Yet there is no religion called “Theudianity” in our day; the “First Church of Judas the Galilean” doesn’t exist. Two billion Christians, however, claim to follow this obscure first-century Palestinian Jew — Christianity is the single most popular religion of all time. And consider that we use the abbreviations BC, meaning before Christ, and AD, for the Latin Anno Domini, “the year of our Lord” for our dating system. All this is compelling evidence that, at the very least, Jesus existed; but it also confirms the lasting mark he made because of the extraordinary figure he was.

“Many other religious leaders such as Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius, and Lao Tzu were noteworthy teachers. Why put Jesus in a special category?”

Jesus’ teachings are known, followed, and quoted by more people than those of any other human being, living or dead. Many of his sayings — phrases like, a Good Samaritan, turn the other cheek, love your enemies, let your yes be yes, take the plank out of your eye, to walk on water (something Jesus did!) and many others — are so memorable that they have entered into our vernacular. The extent of his influence is unmatched in human history.

At Jesus’ birth, the angels declared he was “Immanuel,” which meant “God with us.” Think of it: a child being named God-in-human-form! Another prophecy had said he would be called, “Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6). When you call a teacher “God,” you’ve definitely moved beyond what sane people typically say about their instructors!

Consider also the significance of what Jesus said about himself. Jesus boldly declared he would preside over the last judgment of all humanity. None of the other major world religious leaders ever made such an outlandish assertion. At one point, a follower knelt before him and cried out “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Jesus didn’t rebuke him but instead offered a commendation — and nobody watching seemed to have had a problem with it!

One last thing that sets Jesus apart is his resurrection from the dead. That story didn't develop over decades in a remote location, far from where the events took place. Nor was it meant figuratively, as if "his teachings were living on" despite his death. His followers immediately made that assertion and did so in the very city where he died.

You can visit the mosque where Muhammad is buried. Buddha was cremated, and his ashes dispersed. But when you go to Jerusalem and visit Jesus' tomb . . . it's empty.

“What's wrong with taking the view that Jesus was a prophet but nothing more?”

Look again at what Peter, a member of Jesus' inner circle said: “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Peter had seen Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, walk on water and teach to spellbound masses. When Peter spoke those words, Jesus heartily agreed with him. Would a prophet — let alone someone claiming less for himself — accept such blasphemy?

Adopting the title “Son of the living God” put Jesus beyond prophetic status. If Jesus was a good moral teacher — instructing others to live with humility — why didn't he take his own advice? Jesus apparently failed to keep his own ego in check, and then praised whoever reinforced his grandiosity!

Unless his claims were true!

“If Jesus actually existed and was a world-renowned teacher but claimed to be something more than a prophet . . . who or what was he?”

In a phrase, Jesus was “the one and only Son” (John 1:18).

Christianity makes many scandalous claims. That God would love and forgive us while we are sinners is scandalous. That we should likewise love and forgive others is scandalous. And that Jesus should be accepted as the Son of God and God the Son — who lives forever — is perhaps the most scandalous claim of all.

Yet that is what Jesus taught, what all first-century Christians believed, and what his life, death, and resurrection confirm.

Consider one final story from Jesus' life. At his trial when everyone was saying contradictory things about him, Jesus was adjured to testify about who he claimed to be. Jesus affirmed he was the Christ, the Son of God, and then went even further. He quoted from the Old Testament (see Daniel 7:13 – 14), applying to himself the title “son of man.”

It may sound innocuous to us, but those in that courtroom knew exactly what Jesus meant. The “son of man” was the human/divine ruler who would judge the entire world at the end of time. So Jesus was

saying, in effect, “I stand before you today in your court, but at the end of time you will stand before me in mine!” The affront was unmistakable, and with that declaration, Jesus’ enemies had exactly what they wanted — unambiguous blasphemy and a “crime” worthy of condemning Jesus to death. The tragic thing was that no one in that courtroom paused to consider that he actually might have been the promised One!

“In brief: who is Jesus?”

- He was a human being.
- He was the world’s greatest teacher.
- He was a miracle worker.
- He was a prophet.
- He is the Messiah (Christ).
- He is the Son of Man.
- He is “Immanuel,” God with us.
- He is and always will be the unique Son of God, Savior and Lord of all.

It matters what you think about Jesus.

Jesus once posed a provocative question to his followers: “Who do you say I am?” They quickly parroted a few of the popular conjectures circulating. Jesus pressed them. “And what about you? What’s your opinion?” After a pause, Peter, one of his most trusted followers, blurted out, “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.”

Jesus was pleased. Peter got it.

Jesus was a person, not a concept, and he desires you to know him as he is.

Adapted from The Journey Bible. NIV Weekly Blog, HarperCollins Christian Publishing. All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, February 22, 2022

Shenandoah is not a dying rural town. Development and growth are coming and are already here. There has been a Methodist presence in Shenandoah for over a century and has experienced ebbs and flows, ups and downs, good times, and challenging times. Each generation has had to figure out how to be an authentic presence of Christ in the community. That same task is handed to us.



How can we reach members of the population who may never walk through the doors of any church, but might be open to a spiritual conversation at a bar? How can we care for and be present with an aging congregation? How can we support children and youth that face fears and anxieties that we never imagined? How can we be a community of love and reconciliation in a world that is violently polarized?

As a church, we need to be organized in such a way so these ministries and more can be resourced and sustained over the years. This is foundational work for us as a church.

You are invited to a workshop entitled *Creating Momentum Through Effective Leadership Structures* on **March 9 at 6 pm**. Here is a description of the workshop that Rev. Dr. Jaye Johnson will facilitate for us:

Creating Momentum Through Effective Leadership Structures – The traditional organizational structure of our churches with an Ad Board, Trustees, SPPRC, Finance committee, and a plethora of other committees can hinder missional alignment, slow down decision-making, and work against creating momentum for change. This alternative structure makes spiritual leaders who disciple others, help a church's mission focus, streamlines decision-making, and free people from committee meetings so that more people can use their time in hands-on ministry. While many conferences use similar models, through a series of trials and some reasonably significant errors, Iowa has adopted the process to make it their own. This session will discuss the theory behind one board, outline the practical steps, and discuss both the positive aspects of the model and the challenge a church might expect if they choose to transition. We will also briefly discuss the difference between a simplified traditional structure and an actual single board. We will discuss the challenges a congregation will likely face and what churches need from conference and district leaders to make a single board effective.

Rev. Dr. Jaye Johnson is the Director of Congregational Excellence and New Communities of Faith for the Iowa Annual Conference. He works with the bishop and district superintendents as a cabinet member and is responsible for preparing churches to multiply. Jaye helps pastors, congregations, and communities live boldly into the future God dreams for them by being a coach, consultant, resource, and encourager for gatherings of all sizes. Jaye also serves as an Affiliate Professor of Church Leadership at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

You are invited if you are a committee member. You are invited if you rotated off of a committee. You are invited if you would like to find a new way of getting involved.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor David.



St. John's Episcopal Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, the First Congregational Church, and the First Presbyterian Church of Shenandoah will host their 7th Soup Cook-off fundraiser for Heifer International. This will take place at the First Presbyterian Church (Clarinda Ave) on March 12th beginning at 5:00 pm. Anyone may bring a crock-pot of soup or chili or go and enjoy the soups. This is a free-will donation and people will be able to vote for your favorite soups. A prize will be awarded for the soup that raises the most money. If you can't attend but still want to support this fundraiser you may write a check and send it to First Presbyterian Church, 200 W. Clarinda Ave, Shenandoah, IA 51601.



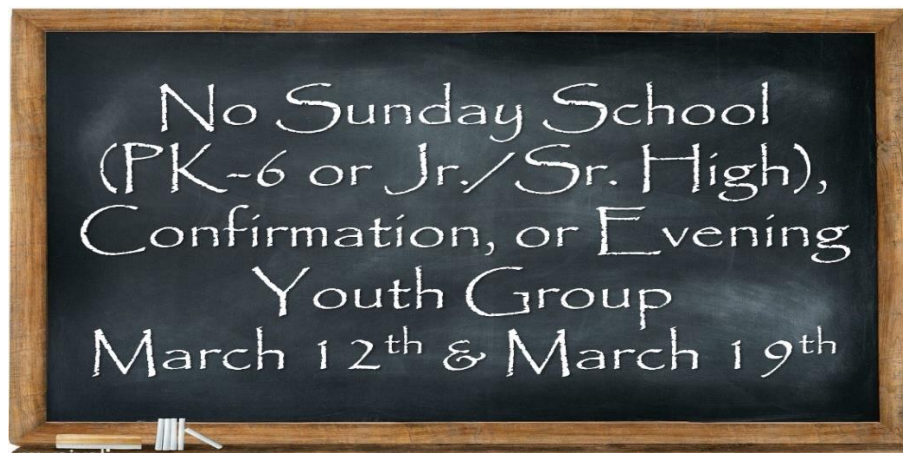
I want to say thank you so much to everyone for your love, support, calls, cards, and prayers during the loss of my sister, Marlyn Perry. It is hard to express how you made me feel during this sad time. My church family means so much to me and your support was overwhelming. God Bless all of you!

Elinor Sharp



Current Community Food Pantry Needs:

Powdered Milk (packets), Pineapple, Mandarin Oranges, Cinnamon Applesauce, Jelly, Cake, Brownie and Muffin Mixes, Rice and Dried Beans, Green Beans, Corn, Salt, Pepper, Ketchup, Mustard
Microwave Popcorn,
Shampoo and Conditioner,
Toilet Paper



METHODIST MINUTE: THE ALDERSGATE EXPERIENCE

In May 1738, John Wesley experienced a pivotal moment that would change the course of his life and the history of Christianity. This event, known as the Aldersgate experience, marked a turning point in Wesley's spiritual journey and helped to shape the theology and practices of the Methodist movement.



At the time of the Aldersgate experience, Wesley was a Church of England clergyman who had been struggling with doubts about his faith and the effectiveness of his ministry. He had been involved in a number of spiritual pursuits, including regular fasting, prayer, and Bible study, but had not found the peace and assurance of salvation that he longed for.

On the evening of May 24, 1738, Wesley attended a meeting at Aldersgate Street in London where someone read aloud from Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. As Wesley listened, he later wrote in his journal, he felt his heart "strangely warmed." He realized that he had been seeking salvation through his own efforts rather than relying on God's grace and mercy. He later described the experience as a moment when "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

The Aldersgate experience was a profound spiritual awakening for Wesley. It gave him a newfound confidence in the power of God's grace to transform lives and led him to develop the theology of justification by faith that would become a cornerstone of the Methodist movement. Wesley believed that salvation was a gift of God's grace that could not be earned through good works or religious observances. Rather, it was a free gift that was received by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Aldersgate experience also had practical implications for Wesley's ministry. He began to preach with greater fervor and passion, emphasizing the need for individuals to experience a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. He also began to organize small groups for mutual support and accountability, which became a key feature of the Methodist movement.

The impact of the Aldersgate experience extended beyond Wesley himself. It helped to catalyze a revival of Christianity in England and the United States, which became known as the Methodist movement. The movement spread rapidly and was characterized by its emphasis on personal piety, social justice, and evangelism.

Grace and peace,
Pastor David B. Clark
308-258-7749