

SKYWRITER



Were You There?

by Rev. John Freeland

Have you ever thought of those last few days before Jesus's crucifixion from the disciples' point of view? What must that have been like? Jesus had been saying some strange things, but they probably thought it was just a phase He was going through - after all the Chief Priests had been breathing murderous threats, and the Scribes and Pharisees had not been playing nice either.

On the first day of the week, Palm Sunday, came the Triumphant Entry which fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." I wonder what the disciples thought as the crowd waved palm branches, and shouted praises. Their hearts must have leapt within them as the crowd shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" I can hear Peter, James, and John now, "Wow! We have finally arrived! This is just like Elvis and the Memphis Mafia!" Little did they know that Jesus was not *that* kind of king.

The second day of the week, Monday, the disciples continued to float in the exhilaration of the previous day. During their journey to the Temple, they must have been dreaming of the wonderful reception that awaited them. Palm Sunday had been such a glorious day, how would the people top it? How curious it must have seemed to them when they entered the Gentile court of the Temple and Jesus' righteous indignation flared at the money changers. How disappointed the disciples must have been when Jesus turned over money tables and drove the sellers from the Temple. What a spectacle He made of Himself. The clattering of coins hitting the pavement, the fluttering and cooing of freed doves, the baa of startled sheep, their hooves clippity clopping on the pavement, and the shouts of angry profiteers, demanded everyone's attention and isolated the source of the commotion. To top it all off, Jesus started healing people right there in the Temple; and the Chief Priests hated it when He did that. Couldn't He be politically correct even for one day? Now, the Scribes and Chief Priests were really upset with Him.

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PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION FOR THE MAY SKYWRITER BY SUNDAY, APRIL 17

Everyone is invited to come worship in the freedom and joy of the Holy Spirit at our next Friday Night Fire service on Friday, April 1 at 7:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. A light supper will be served at 6:15pm in the dining area.



Continued from front page

When verbally attacked because the children were shouting praise to Him, the disciples must have cringed as Jesus responded to their rebuke with “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself’?”

On the third day, Tuesday, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus talked in riddles. Again, the disciples must have been near panic when Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple and His own return. “What was all that talk about the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory?” How crazy it must have seemed to them.

Of the fourth day, Wednesday, the Gospels record nothing. Perhaps Jesus spent this day alone with the disciples. If this is so, they must have asked Him a thousand questions trying to understand the significance of this particular week. Why was He acting so different this week, Passover week? Why was He talking of nations warring with one another, of earthquakes, plagues, and famines? Why was He talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the “return” of the Messiah?

The fifth day, Thursday, was the day of the Passover meal. The disciples knew very well the liturgy of the Passover Seder. They each had heard it every year of their lives. So, when Jesus changed the words and used the cup of redemption to testify of His own life and death, He got their attention. What an eerie feeling must have come over them as He talked about His death and sent Judas out, knowing that he would betray Him. Peter must have thought it impossible when Jesus told Him that he would also betray Him by denying Him three times. Perhaps the disciples had prayed with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before. No doubt the disciples felt that the air was thicker that night. The weight of dread must have fallen heavy upon them.

As they struggled to stay awake, Jesus agonized in prayer just a few feet away. That too must have been strange to them. Never before had they seen Him travail so.

Their whole world seemed to spin out of control when they heard the sound of soldiers’ feet and the angry noise of the Chief Priests. The sight of the betrayer, who had lived among them the past three years, trotting beside the Chief Priests appeared surreal. The clang of swords being rattled in their sheaths rattled their nerves and pushed Peter into action. What was he thinking? Did he think he could take them all on? Was he more afraid of what would happen to Jesus, or more afraid of what would happen to him without Jesus?

The sixth day was Friday. We call it Good Friday, Great Friday, and even Black Friday. The betrayal, arrest, and trial was the speediest they had ever seen. It only highlighted the Chief Priests’ fear of Jesus. How the world crumbled before them as the One who had been stronger than demons, stronger than any disease, even stronger than death hung beaten and bloodied almost beyond recognition on a cruel cross. Hope sank. Faith dwindled. Courage fled. Fear reigned! Would they be next? The Chief Priests knew their faces for they had seen them with Jesus for the past three years. The people all knew who they were. How could they hide? Where would they hide? The skies darkened, but not as much as their souls. The thunder raged, but not as much as their fear. Even the dead seemed to cry out in agony. How could the living be expected to do less!? The only bit of grace and kindness came from Joseph. But it wasn’t just kindness, it was courage. The disciples must have felt foolish. They had nothing to offer Jesus now. Only an influential rich man had something to give - a tomb.

Continued on back of calendar

Weekly Attendance

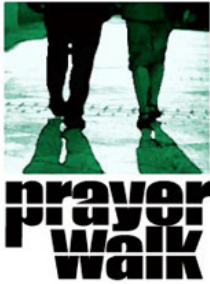
| Date | Small Groups | 10:00 Service | 11:00 Service |
|------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2/20 | 77 | 42 | 70 |
| 2/27 | 71 | 46 | 78 |
| 3/6 | 85 | 52 | 79 |
| 3/13 | 68 | 44 | 73 |

Offerings

| Date | Mile of Pennies | General Funds | Designated Funds |
|------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| 2/20 | 7.80 | 1,986.25 | 75.00 |
| 2/27 | 16.00 | 4,631.68 | 1,475.00 |
| 3/6 | 8.00 | 11,467.21 | 1,193.06 |
| 3/13 | 5.50 | 4,981.00 | 45.00 |

Designated Funds

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| John Stroud Memorial | 145.00 |
| Stage Renovation | 1,531.00 |
| Property Maintenance | 3.70 |
| Flowers | 25.00 |
| Good Samaritan Fund | 544.01 |
| Sarah Olds | 5.00 |
| Children's Ministry | 200.00 |
| Postage | 5.00 |
| Youth | 20.00 |
| Mission House Utilities | 289.35 |
| Library | 20.00 |



Everyone is invited to come walk with us on **April 5** at 6:00pm as we pray and intercede for our neighbors. Please meet in front of the chapel rain or shine.

Children's & Youth News

- ◆ King's Kids are going to the Yellow River Game Ranch on **Monday, April 4**. We will meet in the church parking lot at 9:15am and return at 1:00pm.
- ◆ On **April 10** the youth will leave right after church and head to Sweetwater Creek State Park for some hiking and picnicking! We will pack a lunch at church and return at 5:00pm. Please wear loose fitting, athletic clothing and closed toed shoes. If interested in attending, please talk to Andy Hammer.

Young Adults B-B-Q

All young adults are invited to a cookout on **April 16** at **6:00pm** hosted by Andy Hammer. Watch your bulletin and email for details.

Passover Seder Meal

Join us on **Palm Sunday, April 17**, as Derek Leman explains the wonderful tradition of the Seder meal. Learn its history and how Christ is the fulfillment of this holiday. Then join us on **April 20 at 6:00pm** in the Fellowship Hall as we take part in this Holy celebration. Call the church office by April 18 for reservations.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Walter Murphy Class will be held on **Saturday, April 23 at 2:00pm** for children ages 3 - 6th grade. If you would like to donate individually wrapped Easter Eggs, please bring them to the outer church office by April 22. **No Chocolate Please!**

BLESSINGS YARD SALE
SATURDAY, APRIL 9

8AM - 1PM

SET-UP BEGINS AT 6:30AM

UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat

The North GA Conference **UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat** will be held on **April 29-30** at Simpsonwood. For more info, call Mary Foster at (770) 621-9459.

Skyland United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 191427
Atlanta, GA 31119-1427

Address Service Requested

**Making Disciples
of All Nations**

CHURCH STAFF

John Freeland, Pastor

Andy Hammer, Director of Children & Youth

Janet Walsh, Minister of Music

Jose Garcia, Pianist

Kimberly Thomas, Church Secretary

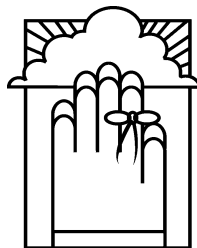
Eleanor Flanagan, Comptroller

Ini Emmah, Fellowship Dinner Chef

Melissa Freeman, Nursery Attendant

**Birthdays &
Anniversaries**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4/1 Madison Sanders | 4/10 Chris Morgan |
| 4/2 Helen Pirkle | 4/18 Barbara Snipes |
| John & Mary Lou Dennisson | Cesar & Victoria Castillo |
| 4/3 Maude O'Donald | 4/22 Brian & Amy Medford |
| Philip Wages | 4/24 Matt Moore |
| 4/7 Brenda Borg | 4/25 Fred Stover |
| 4/9 William O'Donald | |



**PLEASE REMEMBER
THESE FRIENDS IN
PRAYER**

Carolyn Mull, Helen Buffington, Dave & Evelyn Smith, Margaret Barnwell, Velma Jackson, Pam Johnston, Jinnifer Hoyla, Shirley Bryant, Jan Boehn, Jenece O'Donald, John & Mary Turner, Edna Williams, Jack Cooke, Maude O'Donald, Diane Smith, Doris Hester, Joan Iddins, Steve Bryson, Mitchell & Barbara Snipes, George Bennett, Harold Burrell, Kay Hastings, Jo Mull, Janet Walsh, Jimmy Johnson, Sarah Olds