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Dear friend,

It was 40 days after Easter – the first Easter. The resurrected Christ instructed the disciples to travel to a mountain in Galilee where He would meet them. It was in that majestic and serene place that Jesus gave them words to live by – words for us to live by. You would hardly call it a sermon since it only takes about 15 seconds to read it in the Bible. But it takes a lifetime to live it out. Short, but powerful.

Scholars call it the Great Commission. They are the last words of Matthew’s gospel: Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

I think Max Lucado says it best when he writes about the disciples’ response to the Great Commission: “And send them He did. Ports. Courtyards. Boats. Synagogues. Prisons. Palaces. They went everywhere. Their message of the Nazarene dominoed across the civilized world. They were an infectious fever. They were a moving organism. They refused to be stopped. Uneducated drifters who shook history like a housewife shakes a rug.”

The message of hope that they carried changed the world. Jesus said, “Go,” and go they did. It wasn’t just the disciples that were supposed to go out into the world – it’s us too – it’s all of us. People of faith carrying the message of God’s love and grace out into a world that desperately needs to hear it.

Continued on next page
According to LifeWay Research, in a recent survey, 47 percent of those polled confirmed that they were more open to faith during the holidays. This year Easter falls on March 27th. A window of opportunity is opening up for us – an opportunity to reach out and invite someone we know to join us for worship. I love the fact that not only does Jesus tell us to go, but He also promises to be with us as we go. We are not alone. The King is with us. Jesus chose us to share his incredible message of hope with others, so let us prayerfully go and invite others to hear the greatest story ever told.

Going with you,

Pastor John

Good Friday Service
March 25th  7:00 p.m.
Sanctuary

Childcare & Nursery Available
Musical Worship Celebration
Sunday, March 20
Featuring Kids’ Choirs, Praise Band, Festival Orchestra

EASTER SERVICES
SATURDAY MARCH 26 at 6:30 P.M.
SUNDAY MARCH 27
8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 A.M.
Small Groups Reaching Out

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Small groups continue to reflect the light of Christ as they reach out into their community spreading the light and love of God to those they touch. Judy Porter’s group contacted Karen Bailey at From the Heart Senior Care in Altoona who provided a list of needed items senior citizens in the community could benefit from. Judy’s group then gathered up the items and tucked them into laundry baskets to be delivered to the recipients.

Unbeknownst to their small group, cards arrived at the church from thankful people who wanted to express their gratitude to the Altoona United Methodist Church Friends. One individual wrote, “It was overwhelming to me to receive such a generous gift from strangers. Knowing you are all Christians makes it even more special to me. I am grateful beyond words and will do my best to pay it forward.”

It was also encouraging to hear how this small group is also involved as individuals reaching further into their communities with Caring Hands, elderly visits at Prairie Vista and Edgewater, Kids’ Café, Meals from the Heartland, Backpack Project, Dress for Success and on and on! If every small group produced a list of their participants’ personal outreaches we could fill this page and beyond!

There is an incredible amount of God’s light beaming forth from Altoona United Methodist due to the many grateful hearts of the people—hearts that are thankful for what the Lord has done for them through his amazing and abounding grace.

Shine His Light!
Greetings from the AUMC Youth Family!

March, 2016

Students,

As Family We (will) Go

That may be confusing, but let me explain to you how we are family, first by quoting Rend Collective from their new album As Family We Go. “The Holy Spirit moves in us most when we move out of our comfort zones and go into the world where the need is. The Holy Spirit is most active in us when we are most active in building God’s kingdom here.” The Holy Spirit brings us together, as a family!

Students, I invite you to lean into the students you go to church with and your leaders like you would with a family. A family is designed to meet your needs whether that is in celebration or simply in fellowship. At Altoona United Methodist Church Student Ministry we are family. Your leaders are here for you and love you. Your leaders are here to laugh, cry, and celebrate with you. Your leaders are available for you and love to connect with you on Wednesdays, but are also here for you throughout the week!

The new month of March gives us the perfect symbolism for going forward. We will March together. We will March together into a greater understanding of each other and into more intimate relationships as the body of Christ. We will March together through amazing events, powerful worship, and better friendships. We will March ahead swiftly as we gather on Wednesdays as a large and small group for our next series “How to Be Rich.” Our community of students will grow as a family as we see how rich we are, even if you are 12 years old and only get two dollars a week for allowance! I assure you of this: you won’t want to miss any of the exciting things going on with this student ministry.

As Family We Go is the name of Rend Collective’s new album. On Friday, March 11th, we will be attending their concert in Ames—I can’t wait to see you there! We will go to the Iowa Energy game on March 6th as a family for their Faith, Family, and Fun Night. By the way, did you know every family fights? They do—-you are not alone! The thing about families is, they never stop coming back together in forgiveness and redemption. Like a family, we will have another game night where we compete for fun and prizes while throwing balls at high velocity. If a ball being thrown at high velocity isn’t your cup of tea, there are still can’t-miss prizes for those who win the less scary games that everyone will love.

Let’s draw close like families do this month. Let’s get out of our comfort zones as we grow in the Holy Spirit and as a family—let’s March together this month. In Jesus we are family, and if home is where the heart is... I’ll see you at home every time we get together this month!
MARCH HAPPENINGS

MARCH 6TH-ON THE MOVE BEGINS 3RD SERVICE

Our 3rd-6th graders will be dismissed from service, and will share fellowship including music, games and snacks at the beginning of class. Our youth director, Travis Wentworth, will lead them in a message before ending with music videos and a renewed vision of prayer. This is an exciting addition and one more opportunity for our kids to grow in their faith.

ADVENTURE camp

Entering Grades 4th-7th
July 24-July 27
AUMC covers 50% for members
Info: Altoonaumc.org Children’s Ministries Tab

JUNE 26-30
Kids entering Prek-5th Grade
6pm-8:30pm Nightly
Volunteers Needed
brandonl@altoonaumc.org
For more Children’s Ministries information, visit altoonaumc.org/children

1st ANNUAL SPRING BREAK GAGA BALL TOURNAMENT MARCH 16TH 5:30-7:30PM FLC PIZZA-SNACKS REGISTER AT 5:30 TOURNAMENT STARTS AT 6PM! FREE TO ALL!
EASTER - MORE THAN HAM AND EGGS

If you asked me at age 10 what I remember about Easter, it was waking up to hunt eggs and then getting dressed in an uncomfortable sweater to eat a fancy ham “with all the trimmings” dinner at grandma’s. I knew it had something to do with God, but what I understood most was that I got treats, dinner with family and an afternoon with the cousins. Time with family and enjoying the day is a great way to spend Easter...but how do we make sure those aren’t the only things our kids know about it?

We project the meanings of Christmas and Easter completely differently. Christmas is all about Angels, Mary and Joseph, the Wise Men and a bright star. We talk about the journey, the birth, the visitation to see the wondrous king. It’s explained and acted out in it’s entirely. It’s easy to explain this to kids...all of it is a time for celebration. Easter is another story. The resurrection gives us hope and trust in a mighty God and this is an awesome lesson for our kids. However, part of the story is anger, violence, mocking, sorrow and death. These can be hard for adults to accept, let alone young children. Often we leave these aspects out of our celebration...but when do we address the whole story about the WHY and HOW?

I don’t believe there is a clear cut answer to this question. Each child is different. They have different levels of understanding, maturity and emotions. I know at age 10 I was too immature emotionally to hear every aspect about Easter. I didn’t have the background understanding to ask the hard questions to my parents. However, Sven has already asked why God would let Jesus die and why he went through so much pain and torture on the cross. I believe we allow our child’s curiosity to give us cues to how much we share with them. Obviously you’re not going to have the same discussion with a three year old as you would a 12 year old.

Gauge their interest with “I’ve often wondered about...” statements involving the aspects of Jesus and what he endured. What they say next should give you a good indicator of what they’re thinking and how much of the WHY and HOW to address. If your child is asking questions to you, they’ve been thinking about those questions for awhile most likely. As parents, we all want our children to grow and understand the journey of Jesus. If you asked 100 parents about this, you’d probably get 100 different answers on how to handle it. Talking with other Christian parents and reading the bible will help us answer these questions as well.

Hunting eggs and sharing time at grandma’s dinner table are great ways to celebrate Easter each year. Creating a biblical understanding of Easter as a whole is something that will continue to evolve between you and your child over time. Watching your child begin to understand all aspects of the Easter story and draw closer to God will be more fun than finding an entire basket of chocolate bunnies!

GOD IS GREAT!

Brandon Lindsey
Children’s Ministry Director
“The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A HUGE crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, “Praise God (Hosanna)!”

*Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

*Hail to the King of Israel!”

The first Palm Sunday was absolutely HUGE! The news that Jesus was showing up in Jerusalem was all over the city and traveling fast. It was a parade of gigantic proportions and people were not waiting for it to come to them. They ran down the road to be the first to offer praises. The news of the event far exceeded the impact of current Super Bowl media hype as the huge stir within the city paved the way for the final days in the life of the Son of God. The noise, the excitement, was based on the hope that the future of this city and the lives of every faithful Jew would find new religious freedom and release from oppression. Jesus was finally coming to the city that was the spiritual capitol of the world for every religious Jew. Hope was in the air!

Sunday morning, March 20th we commemorate Palm Sunday by offering our praise to the one who came in the name of the Lord bringing eternal peace, and security to everyone who chooses to believe in his message.

“Hosanna! Hail to the King of Israel!”

**REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE FOR PALM SUNDAY & EASTER**

**Wednesday, March 9:** Rehearsal with Choir, Orchestra, Rhythm, and audio/video personnel

**WEDNESDAY DRESS REHEARSAL,** March 16: Pre-School singers: 5:30 to 5:50 pm
- Children’s Choir: 5:50 – 6:15 pm
- Bell Choir: 6:15 – 6:30 pm
- Adult Choir and Orchestra: 6:30 – 8:15 pm
- Praise Band: 7:30 – 9:00 pm
- Technical Team: 5:15 – 8:30

**PALM SUNDAY, March 20:** 7:00 am (breakfast @ 6:45 am)
*Bell Choir and Children’s Choir 7:45 am

**Wednesday, March 23:** Easter Choir/Orchestra 6:30 – 8:00 pm

**EASTER SATURDAY, March 26:** Easter Choir/Orchestra/Audio & Video 5:30 pm

**EASTER SUNDAY, March 27:** All Easter participants 7:00 am

**Wednesday, March 30:** Choir and Orchestra rehearsals cancelled

Steve McLellan If questions contact me at stevem@altoonaumc.org or 967-2991.
Top Notchers
A ministry for adults 55+

Upcoming Get Togethers

Tuesday, March 9
- Sticks Factory Tour
- Chairperson: Marla Carr
- Carpool from church at 9:15 a.m.
- Cost of tour is $3/person
- Lunch in Valley Junction at 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 12, noon
- A short business meeting will be held at 11:50 a.m.
- Potluck in the Family Life Center
- Chairperson: Joan Nolin
- Host/Hostess: Van De Pols & Laymans
- Program: Gary & Mary Gustafson have been playing guitar and keyboard and singing for a long time. Their easy listening music comes from the 50's, 60's & 70's. Several years ago they entertained the Altoona Lions Club and were very well received. They come from Slater, Iowa and we know you will really enjoy their music!
- A free will offering will be taken for the entertainment.
- Mark your calendars to attend this event and bring a friend. New people are always welcome!
- Bring a donation from the food pantry

Tuesday, May 10
- Potluck in the Family Life Center
- Chairperson: Marilyn Cowell
- Host/Hostess: Janet Reichter & Peggy Henn
- Program: Ralph Moisa of the White Eagle Multicultural Pow Wow in full Indian dress & drum
- A free will offering will be taken for the entertainment.
- Bring a donation from the food pantry
Baptism Class

Join us on Sunday, March 6th at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel with Pastor John. This one-session class is to help understand the significance of baptism and to schedule a date.

United Methodist Women

UMW will meet on Thursday, March 3rd at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel. Program will be Prayer and Self Denial by Marla Carr. Mission Project is bar soap, deodorant, feminine products and shampoo for Bidwell Riverside - bring to UMW meeting or circles.

Abigail Circle will meet at Sheryl Ebert’s home on March 15th at 7:00 p.m.
Martha Circle will meet on March 17th at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel.

Men’s Breakfast
Saturday March 19th
8:00 a.m.
Family Life Center

Pastoral Partners

If you or a family member would like prayer support or a hospital visit, please fill out a Connect card on Sunday morning or call the church office at 967-2991 or 707-7833 after hours.

Consider sending a DVD to a homebound friend or loved one. DVD’s may be purchased for $5 each by filling out a DVD card at the Welcome Center or calling the office.
Please remember the ministries of the church in your prayers.
Contact Steve McLellan at 967-2991 to learn more about becoming involved.
UMW Annual Tater Topper

Sunday, March 13th
Family Life Center
10:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Menu will be baked potato with choice of toppings, sloppy joes, dessert and drink. We will be having a freewill offering for our mission projects: Freedom for Youth, Bidwell Riverside, Children & Family mission, local food pantry, New Directions at Hawthorn Hill, our church camp fund and youth group, Trinity UM church breakfast club and our pledge to national UMW for world wide missions.

Kids’ Connection Preschool

is now accepting enrollments for fall 2016. Forms are available at the Welcome Center or the church office. Contact Denise at kidsconnectionpreschool@altoonaumc.org or 967-2991 if you have any questions.

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Filing FAFSA for your college student?

Tracie Pavon, a member of our church with 25 years of financial aid experience at Simpson College, has volunteered her expertise to help you with any questions that you might have when filling out your FAFSA form. You may contact her at 515-229-1824 and she will be happy to assist you.
Altoona United Methodist Church has two electronic options for giving. You can register to give regularly or make a one-time gift by going to our church website, www.altoonaumc.org. Click on the Give tab.

Once you have clicked on the Give Online button, choose to Register Now on the right side of the E-Giving Login page. Enter your information and create a Username and Password. You are then asked how you would like to make your donation. Your donation can come from your checking, savings, debit card, Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express. You will have the option of making a one-time gift or a recurring donation on a schedule that you set up. Once you have registered, you have the ability to adjust your giving as desired by logging in with your Username and Password.

Another option for electronic giving is through our new church app. In the Worship menu, choose Give Online and then follow the instructions above.

If you have any questions about this secure electronic giving option, please contact Heather Mahoney at 967-2991 or heatherm@altoonaumc.org. She is happy to meet with you to help you set up your account or answer any of your questions.
If you would like to receive our weekly updates via email, please go to the church website, www.altoonaumc.org. Under the Resources tab, choose E-Newsletter Signup, enter your email address, choose the Weekly Newsletters list, and you will begin to receive our weekly newsletters on Thursday afternoons in your email box!

If you would like to be included on our email prayer chain list, please go to the church website, www.altoonaumc.org, choose Prayer Chain Signup under the Resources tab, enter your email address, and choose the Prayer Chain list.