

A Moment with the Pastor

A couple weeks ago, I saw this article from Pastor James Bell on Facebook, and I had to share it. The article is titled, “The Theology of the Long Middle”, and it is so powerful. The truth he reveals, is what we all need to hear when we are going through a difficult time in our life. This article reinforces the idea of patience, long-suffering, and spiritual growth through trials.

I Peter 1:6 – 7 “In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

“The Theology of the Long Middle” by Pastor James Bell

“For most of my Christian life, I treated movement in my life as evidence that God was blessing my life. If things were going well, improving, opening up, and growing, I felt secure. If the church was growing, my family was healthy, my marriage was strong, opportunities were opening, and life seemed to be working, I called that the hand of God.

But I realized how quickly that theology fell apart when things changed. When I was waiting and there were no answers, when relationships were hard, when growth slowed, when depression went up and down, when things felt uncertain or heavy, I assumed God was putting me through some trial or punishment. I assumed I had entered a kind of strange spiritual season where God’s hand was harder to find. I think a lot of Christians live there. And I think the problem is more cultural than theological.

We know how to interpret blessing because we were raised inside a culture that worships visible success. We know how to recognize a growing church, a healthy family, a clean medical report, a full bank account, a promotion, a platform, a packed calendar, a respected name, and a life that looks like it is working. We are fluent in progress. We are fluent in optics. We are fluent in outcomes. So, we quietly mistake the American dream for the blessing of God.

That feels easy to call blessing, but that is not where most of life is lived. Most of life is lived in places that do not feel like growth. You pray for restoration, and the relationship still feels dead. You ask for direction, and no direction comes. You try to heal, and your body refuses to cooperate. You do the right things, and life does not reward you for it.

You open the Bible, you pray, and heaven feels closed. You plead with God to take the thorn away, and wake up to find that the next day looks just like the day before. This is where a lot of Christians start to come apart. Not always because life is unbearable, but because they do not know how to interpret a God who is present without being visibly productive.

A lot of us have learned to trust God when we can track what He is doing. We feel secure when there is movement. We struggle in the in-between, but Scripture gives us a very different picture of life with God. Abraham waited. Joseph sat in prison. Israel lived in slavery and then in the wilderness. David was anointed and then hunted. Job suffered and never got the explanation we get to read. The disciples watched Jesus die, be buried, and then sat in silence.

That means the life of faith is not mainly lived in obvious progress. It is mostly lived in trust without full understanding. That is what makes waiting so hard. We want proof. We want to know God is near because something changed. But often God is teaching us that He is near before anything changes.

The problem is that many Christians have a theology of escape, while the New Testament gives us a theology of endurance. The word is “hupomonē”. We call it “patience,” but patience doesn’t fully capture it. “Hupo” means “under,” and “menō” means “to stay.” It is the capacity to remain under a crushing weight without abandoning your place. Not because the circumstances changed or the answer came. Most modern Christians want relief. The New Testament also calls for endurance.

Most of us think faith is strongest when we are advancing. Romans 5 says suffering produces endurance — hupomonē. James 1 says the testing of your faith produces endurance. The pattern is not movement, then faith. It is often pressure, then endurance, then maturity.

Another word that matters here is “makrothumia”. It is usually translated “patience,” but it has the sense of long-suffering, of having a long fuse. It is the slow strength to bear with people, seasons, and pain without giving way to rage or despair. In other words, the New Testament does not assume the Christian life will always feel like progress. It assumes there will be long stretches where the real work of God looks more like stalling than succeeding.

That is the long middle. Not the breakthrough. Not the collapse. The long stretch in between, where you pray, obey, worship, and show up, and the outcome is still not what you wanted, expected, or would have chosen.

That is not abstract theology. That is real life. That is the doctor’s appointment that did not go the way you hoped. That is the marriage conversation you have had a thousand times and nothing changes. That is the paycheck that still does not stretch far enough. That is the sin you are still fighting. That is the prayer you have prayed a hundred times with no visible answer.

A lot of us do not need a better theology of visible blessing. We need theology for the long middle. Because if your faith only works when life is visibly moving forward, it will not hold for very long. Most of the Christian life is lived in places where the only thing you can do is trust God without clear evidence of what He is doing. And the New Testament has a word for that. It calls it ‘hupomonē’.

Stewardship Statistics						Total Money And Average Attendance
	3/1/26	3/8/26	3/15/26	3/22/26		
Attendance for in-person services.	49	49	49	49		49
General Fund	\$3146.00	\$1598.00	\$2095.00	\$7355.00		\$14194.00
Weekly Budget	\$2855.00	\$2855.00	\$2855.00	\$2855.00		\$11420.00
+ or— Budget	\$291.00	(\$1257.00)	(\$760.00)	\$4500.00		\$2774.00
Designated Giving						
Birthday Money	\$167.00					\$167.00
Lehman Memorial	\$100.00	\$75.00		\$100.00		\$275.00
Jan Zulch Memorial	\$300.00	\$100.00		\$245.00		\$645.00
Food Pantry		\$517.00		\$46.00		\$563.00
Gala		\$50.00	\$100.00	\$300.00		\$450.00
Total Giving's	\$3713.00	\$2340.00	\$2195.00	\$8046.00		\$16294.00

Prayer list

John and Sara Roberts
Sue Snyder (brain cancer)
Gloria Snyder (cancer in vocal cords)
Jamie Thomas (health issues)
Nora (Jacob's 14yr. old niece/scoliosis)
Jeff Frost (difficult time with chemo)
Jacob's parents (health issues)
Jai Krause
North Baltimore Church of Christ (minister search)
Hannah Euler (recovery from cheerleading accident)
Sherry, friend of Mary Ann (cancer)
Paul Kuzio (dialysis every 2 days)
Julianna's grandmother (aneurism in brain)
Jerry Snyder (biopsy results good)

Prayer list cont.

Kristin Foster (recovering from knee surgery)
Family of Jan Zulch
Pray to God to give world leaders the wisdom to make wise decisions in current situation in Middle East.
Russ Harshberger (gets implant 3/27)
Dave Boswell (bladder cancer)
Tornado Victims
War victims
Joe Bridges (back surgery went well/now 4-6 weeks of rehab)
Richard Saylor (starts chemo again)
Cindy Wichman (biopsy postponed)
Tom Wilson (June's husband/aortic valve replacement 3/25, Toledo Hospital)
Family of Alice Loomis
Nancy Frost (broken arm)

Remember our Shut-ins

Bud Brown - BG Manor

Those in Service:

Darryl & Carol Krause (missionaries)
Lt. Col. Elijah Ward – Carlisle, PA
Ron Burkhart - Stateside
Jon Walker - 180th TFW Active duty
Michelle Metzger - Army Nat'l Guard
Luke Millican - USAF
Walker Polsinelli - Pakistan
McNiel Snyder - USAF/Georgia
Wynter Anderson - Army Nat'l Guard
Hunter Braun - USAF
MSgt Deidra (Anderson) Braun - USAF

Good Friday Service: A Cross-Shaped Love
Set aside time to pause and reflect during our Good Friday worship. Through Scripture, music and prayer, we'll remember the depth of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This solemn service offers a powerful space to prepare your heart for the joy of Easter Sunday.

Easter Sunday
Join us in the fellowship hall for a delicious Easter breakfast. It's a relaxed time to enjoy good food, warm conversation and community. All ages are welcome — invite neighbors, friends and family to celebrate with us. Then gather in the Sanctuary to celebrate the empty tomb, sing together and reflect on the hope Christ brings. The joy of Easter morning is always sweeter when shared.

Holy Week Services

Good Friday, April 3, 6:00pm - Jacob will preach part 4 of his sermon series "The Road to Redemption". We will sing hymns and share communion.

Easter Sunday, April 5

6:00am - Men start cooking (See John to volunteer.)

8:00am - Breakfast is ready. Come to eat and enjoy fellowship.

8:45am - Clean-up kitchen and dining area

9:30am - Worship Celebration in the Sanctuary

(Note: There will be no Pre-school or Jr. Church, allowing families to worship together for Easter.)

Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 7th
at 7:30pm

Food Pantry is Open

April 4th and 18th
10:00am - Noon

Friday Game Night

April 10th and 24th
6:30 - 9:00pm

Small Group Bible Studies at the church
Wednesdays at 7:00pm continuing our
study of the 'Gospel of John'

Ladies Christian Fellowship

April 27th at 7:00pm

Monthly Prayer Meeting

1st Wednesday each month

Wednesday, April 1, 6:00-6:45pm

Pray for anything and anybody.

Everyone is welcome to come whenever they are able during this time frame. *Singing hymns too!*

This takes place before Small Group Bible Study.



- ⇒ Junior/Senior High
- ⇒ Saturday, April 4th and 18th
5:00 - 6:30pm
- ⇒ At the Anderson's
- ⇒ Dinner - Games- Lesson

Evangelism Class

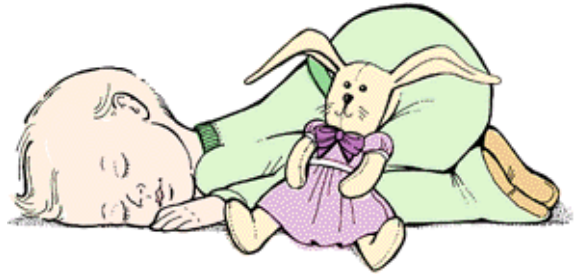
Saturday, April 4th and 18th

9:00 - 9:45am

Jacob will lead a discussion
on evangelism.

Bowling Green Pregnancy Center Annual Fundraising Gala
April 23, 5:30pm door open/6:00pm dinner/Program to follow
Parkway Place, 2592 Parkway Plaza, Maumee, OH 43537

The deadline to sign up is April 5th. We currently have 15 people signed up. We will reserve 2 tables of 8 and register as a church. If additional people sign up, we can reserve a 3rd table. Submit your \$50 per ticket by April 5th to the church designating it for the BGPC gala.



The Joy of the Resurrection



We Christians simply cannot get over the reality of the Resurrection. For us, the fact that God raised Christ from the dead proves that Christ's way alone is God's answer to the sins and horrors of the world. The truths Christ taught when he walked on earth stand solid and irrefutable. The light he brought is the only light that never goes out, for it is the eternal light of God's glory. Christ's life is the clearest example of how God intends for us to live. His way is the way that makes the most sense for our lives on this earth. The saints throughout history have shown that again and again.

The hope Christ offers is the only true and lasting hope. Ultimately, it is our assurance that life can be good and joy-filled for all. Consider the words St. Paul wrote to the church at Rome and apply them to your own life: "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:4-5, NRSV).

If that is not a tremendous cause for abiding joy, then what is?

Yes, I Can!

I cannot end poverty, but I can feed one hungry person. I cannot stop war, but I can offer peace to my neighbor. I cannot prevent death, but I can hold the hand of someone who is dying.

These may seem like small acts, yet they are far harder—and far more meaningful—than any grand plan for social change. Christ reminds us of their worth: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, NIV).

The Romans Sent a Message; God Sent One, Too

The rulers of the Roman Empire wanted everyone under their power to understand clearly that it would be very costly to try to overthrow their government. They conceived the idea of crucifixion as a way of sending an unforgettable message to all people under their control. Death on a cross would be a slow, excruciatingly painful death. The cross would be put in a very public place so as many as possible would get the message: Don't even think of defying Roman rule!

That is why Christ was crucified on Golgotha hill close to a busy road where no passerby could miss the shocking scene. Christ was guilty of nothing. Yet his enemies hated him so much that they told Pilate, Rome's representative in Jerusalem, that Jesus was a danger to Roman rule. Christ's enemies said to Pilate, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (John 19:12). Pilate caved in to the clamor of the crowd and allowed Jesus to be crucified.

But those who saw to it that Jesus suffered death on the cross did not know that God had a message to send as well. God victoriously raised Christ from the dead! God touched the precious body of his Son and infused it with life, glorious, dynamic life, life in all of its fullness.

God turned the cross, the executioner's tool of death, into a dramatic symbol of victory. The empty cross and the empty tomb, along with the resurrected body of Christ, reveal God's victory over the worst deed humans might do — the assassination of the Holy.

That is why we put crosses everywhere: boldly, proudly, joyously, triumphantly. It is why we glory in the cross always. It stands eternally "towering o'er the wrecks of time" (John Bowring).

After the Resurrection, Jesus' friend, Peter, explained God's message to all of Christ's enemies with these bold and certain words: "This Jesus, you crucified and killed ... But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it ... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses Therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:23-24; 32, 36). That is what Easter is all about. All praise to the living Lord!

Addressed to God

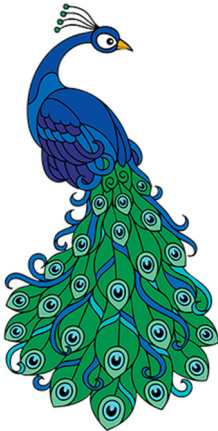
A letter written in a childish scrawl arrived at the post office addressed simply to "God." Unsure what to do, a postal employee opened it and read: "Dear God, my name is Jimmy. I am 6 years old. My father is dead, and my mother is having a hard time raising me and my sister. Would you please send us \$500?"

Moved by the boy's plea, the employee shared the letter with coworkers, and together they collected \$300 to send to the family.

A couple of weeks later, another letter arrived. Jimmy thanked God for the money and added one final request: "Next time would you please deliver the money directly to our home? If you send it through the post office, they deduct \$200."

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Christian Symbol



PEACOCK — The beautiful peacock is likely one of the lesser-known Christian symbols. Based on an ancient myth that its flesh doesn't decay after death, early Christians appropriated the bird as a symbol of immortality. The molting of its tail feathers each year to be replaced with supposedly more beautiful ones led to use of the peacock as a sign of resurrection and glorification.

Additionally, the eye-like pattern in the peacock's tail feathers made it a symbol of conscience and of God, who sees all. However, the peacock also represents arrogance as it struts to show off its plumage. During the Baroque period, the peacock was often part of artwork at the 10th Station of the Cross, depicting Jesus stripped of his clothing— atoning, according to some teachings, specifically for our sin of vanity.

Early Christians believed peacocks shriek when they catch sight of their feet, which they consider ugly. Christians took this as a reminder that we, too, should lament our spiritual imperfections that detract from the beauty of life lived in Christ.

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Celebrating Creation — Earth Day

April offers a beautiful reminder of God's handiwork. Earth Day encourages us to care for creation with gratitude and stewardship. Consider small steps — reducing waste, planting something new or enjoying the beauty of God's world with fresh appreciation.



There's Something Better Coming

The Easter season is a precious time for Christians to celebrate the source of our hope: Christ is risen, and he invites us to rise with him into new life. Easter reminds us that God is still at work, even in the places where we've felt stuck or discouraged.

Easter is an invitation to try again—with his strength—to break habits we thought were unbreakable. There's something better coming.

Easter is a chance to breathe new life into a marriage we feared was beyond saving. There's something better coming.

Easter is an opportunity to slow down, reach out, and reconnect with those we've unintentionally neglected. There's something better coming.

Easter is an invitation to look at our lack of love and seek God for compassion. There's something better coming.

Easter is a chance for all no-hopers to regain their vision of what can be! There's something better coming.

Easter is an opportunity to renew our faith. There's something better coming.

Easter is a chance to "renew our strength and mount up with wings as eagles; to run and not faint." There's something better coming.

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A Hymn Mix-Up With a Message



C. Gray Norsworthy, a pastor in Atlanta, once shared a story about the woman who prepared his worship bulletin. She was faithful in her work but didn't have much background in church hymns. One week, Pastor Norsworthy handed her a draft of the service and hoped she could decipher his handwriting.

When he reviewed the finished bulletin, he noticed the final hymn was titled "Just As I Am, Without a Clue."

Whether it's "without a clue" or "without a plea," the truth remains the same: we all come to Jesus just as we are — and we all need him.

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Bud Roe
Carol Anderson
Russ Harshberger
Addison Strickland
Kay Roe
David Steiner
Carolyn Higley
Peggy Walker
Becky Chamberlin

1 Allan & Gloria Hughes
6 Mike & Bev Murphy
7 Lee & Pat Higley
12 Tyler & Kristin Foster
27 Ray & Vera DeWitt

Following Christ's Example of Humble Service

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus gathered with his friends to celebrate the Passover. During the supper, Jesus rose from the table, poured water into a basin, and went from man to man washing the disciples' feet and drying them with a towel. Peter protested, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Peter relented and asked Christ to wash his hands and head as well (see John 13:1-16).

Afterward, Jesus said to his friends, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15, NKJV).

On Maundy Thursday, let us remember Christ's command and his example of humility, service and love.

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Rain: A Gentle Reminder of God's Care



A rainy day can be many things ...
It can be moisture for the farmer's garden,
Or the picnic that has to be postponed;
It can be the replenishing of a stream,
Or the overflow of a flood;
It can be relief from a hot summer day,
Or the chill of an autumn wind.
The rotating cycle of clouds to Earth
Is part of Nature's plan
For stability throughout the Universe,
As old as the hills,
And dependable as the seasons.
Rain and sunshine are equal partners
In the daily expression of God's love.

— Jeanne D. Birrell



The butterfly reminds us of new life and the Resurrection. After three days, Jesus rose from the dead and brings us the hope of new beginnings. This simple craft helps children celebrate that joyful truth.

What you need:

- Light-colored construction paper
- Card stock
- Glue
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Paper towel or baby wipe



What you do:

- Cut out a butterfly body from the construction paper.
- Glue the butterfly body onto the card stock.
- Use a paintbrush to coat the palm of one hand with paint.
- Press your painted hand beside the butterfly body to create a wing.
- Repeat with your other hand to make the second wing.
- Clean your hands with a paper towel or baby wipe.
- Optional: Add Luke 24:5–6 (NIV) around the butterfly or on its body:

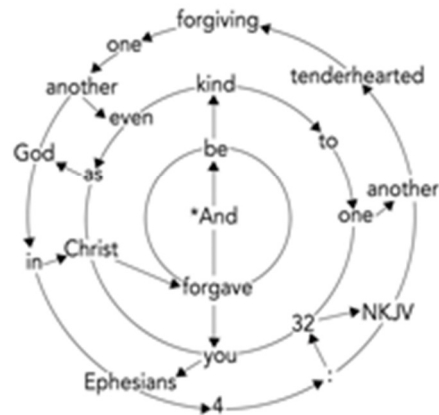
"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Puzzle!

This Bible verse teaches an important lesson about how we should treat others — and why.



Start with the asterisk in the center circle and follow the arrows. Write the words in order on the blanks below.



*And _____

Answer: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32, NKJV

Bible Quiz



According to Matthew's account, something remarkable happened to the earth on the day Jesus was crucified and again on the morning when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the tomb. What occurred on both days?

- A. There was a flood on both days.
- B. There was an earthquake on both days.
- C. There was a huge fire on each day.
- D. There was complete darkness on both days.

Answer: B (Matthew 27:51; Matthew 28:2)

APRIL 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			6:00-6:45pm Prayer Meeting	7:00pm Band Practice	6:00pm Good Friday Service Part 4 of Jacob's ser- mon series "The Road to Redemption"	9:00 - 9:45am Evangelism Class 10am - noon Food Pantry 5-6:30pm Youth Group at the parsonage
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6:00am Men cooking 8:00am Breakfast 9:30 Easter Worship Celebration		7:30pm Board Meeting	7:00pm Small Group Bible Study	7:00pm Band Practice	6:30 - 9:00pm Game Night	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:30am Worship 11:00am Jr./Sr. High S.S. and Adult S.S.			7:00pm Small Group Bible Study	7:00pm Band Practice		9:00 - 9:45am Evangelism Class 10am - noon Food Pantry 5-6:30pm Youth Group at the parsonage
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:30am Worship 11:00am Jr./Sr. High S.S. and Adult S.S.			7:00pm Small Group Bible Study	7:00pm Band Practice	6:30 - 9:00pm Game Night	
26	27	28	29	30		
9:30am Worship 11:00am Jr./Sr. High S.S. and Adult S.S.	7:00pm Ladies Christian Fellowship		7:00pm Small Group Bible Study	7:00pm Band Practice		

Weston Church of Christ
PO Box 344
13355 Center Street
Weston, Ohio 43569



May news articles are due April 21

Sunday Worship Times

9:30am Worship Service

11:00am Sunday School



2026

Weston Witness

Minister: Jacob Anderson, 660-998-9059

Email Jacob: churchofchristweston@gmail.com

Email church: church@westonchurchofchrist.org

Elders: Ed Tolles, 419-409-1622;

John McKenzie, 419-806-5775

Bob Walker, 419-262-8006

Website: www.westonchurchofchrist.org

Check us out on Facebook

April 2026
Pat Higley, Editor
Church Phone:
419-669-3895

**The purpose of the Weston Church of Christ is to glorify God by reaching the lost,
strengthening the saved and serving as one body for Jesus Christ our Lord.**