

Big Rock Congregational Church Atlanta Michigan

A Community of Grace

CHIPS

Off the Big Rock



March 2024



The Bold Intimacy of Gethsemane

By Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Sometimes I wonder why the Garden of Gethsemane is included in the Gospels. Frankly, it's easy to misunderstand. Jesus is struggling, sweating profusely, so torn up inside, so exposed, so human.

At first glance, Jesus seems weak, actually asking the Father to help him back out of the plan forged in heaven before the beginning of time. Is he afraid to die? Many brave men and women have faced death, even difficult deaths. Is he weaker than they? The answer, I believe, can be discovered in Jesus' own words.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom **for many**."1

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out **for many**."2

"For many." The phrase seems strange until you realize that Jesus is recalling those same words found twice in Isaiah 53, the chapter that prophesies Jesus' death for our sins.

"After the suffering of his soul,

he will see the light of life and be satisfied;

by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify **many**,

and he will bear their iniquities....

He bore the sin **of many**,

and made intercession for the transgressors."3

These sayings teach us that, as Jesus looked forward to his own death, he understood it a ransom, that is, a payment to set others free. He also saw his death as bearing the sins of many -- our sins.

Sin isn't pretty -- or petty. Oh, our world dresses it up as cleverness, as happiness, as fulfillment. But despite its many deceitful faces, sin at its root is about asserting power. It is rebellion against God's authority, an undermining of his Kingdom.

Pastor of BRCC:

Pastor Keith Jones

Moderator:

Gail Fehr

Deacons:

David Bradley

Nancy Mantz

Trustees:

Judy Hoffman

Wayne Isbell

We exist to worship God, to share His love that all might be saved and to become more like Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:8-10

Big Rock Congregational Church 8258 M-32, PO Box 683, Atlanta, MI 49709

989-785-2062, bigrockchurch@gmail.com, <https://www.bigrockchurchatlantamichigan.org/>

Sin is turning up our nose at God and doing what we want in spite of what he says -- and there's nothing pretty about that. Occasionally, when I sin, God gives me eyes to see how desperate, how corrupt, how utterly bankrupt I am in my sin. Like a painted, worn-out prostitute trying to look pretty, but failing miserably.

Jesus' mission, should he chose to accept it, was to bear my ugly sins. And then yours. And then multiply that by billions and billions -- "the sin of many."

But to carry out that mission, he would be forever stained. Have you ever tried to wash the smell out of a plastic garbage pail? Try as you will, the stink still lingers. And for Jesus to bear our stink, our sins, would demand a break with his Holy Father.

From before the beginning, the Son and the Father have enjoyed each other's presence. Have basked in fellowship and unity and love. But the cross utterly shatters that fellowship, because God's holiness cannot cohabit with sin.

I think it's that specter that disturbs Jesus so deeply in Gethsemane -- loss of his Father, even if for a short time. And revulsion at what sin will do to him, he who has never had it stain his life before. He faces our multiplied sins, heaped up upon him to no end.

So Jesus pleads in the Garden, "Father, is there no other way?" He cries out, he searches, he asks in a bold intimacy. And then he surrenders afresh: "Not my will, but yours."⁴ Not my desire to avoid desolation, and sin, and corruption, but your difficult and only way to save the people we both love. Jesus models for us disciples what it means to follow, to obey even when we don't fully understand.

Then Jesus stands and awakens his disciples to face his destiny. "Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"⁵

Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is explained by his lonely cry at Golgotha:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"⁶

recalling the beginning words of Psalm 22, an amazing psalm that prefigures many of the events of the cross.

Jesus' final words from the cross, however, are words of hope. The sixth word is: "It is finished."⁷ We have done it, Father, at huge cost to both you and me. It is finished. The ransom is paid, the stain of sin is borne away from the people we love. It is finished.

His seventh and last word also looks forward in hope, in faith: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."⁸ The Father's hands are strong enough to hold both him and us, even in our most devastating moments, even when we don't feel his presence at all.

Saturday is quiet; it is Sabbath in Jerusalem. But Sunday morning, all heaven breaks loose, and the Son of God steps out of the grave. His body that has born our sin is recognizable by the scars, but the stench of sin and death are gone. He is risen! Hallelujah! And his resurrection is our confidence that God has both accepted his sacrifice for sin, and flooded us with his healing, life-giving power. Hallelujah!

[1] Mark 10:45.

[2] Mark 14:24.

[3] Isaiah 53:11-12.

[4] Mark 14:36.

[5] Mark 14:42.

[6] Mark 15:34.

[7] John 19:30.

[8] Luke 23:46.

Family Movie Night



Family movie night will be on **March 3rd** beginning at 5:30. We will begin serving supper at 5:30 followed by the movie *Parent Trap*. We hope that you will be able to join us for great food, fellowship and the movie *The Parent Trap*.

It stars Hayley Mills (in a dual role) as a pair of teenage twins plotting to reunite their divorced parents by switching places with each other. Maureen O'Hara and Brian Keith play the parents. Although the plot is very close to that of the 1945 film *Twice Blessed*, *The Parent Trap* is based on the 1949 book *Lisa and Lottie*



4 One Quartet

4 One Quartet will be presenting southern gospel music on Palm Sunday, March 24th during our morning service. To help with the quartet's travel expenses we are collecting an offering over and above your regular giving. Please indicate so on the memo line of your check or insert into an envelope marked "4 One" or "Quartet" and place in the regular offering box.

A Word from Jessica and the Twins

Thank you all so much for your generosity toward our twins!

I've been asked to give some ideas for things we still need. At this point, we have most of the basics that we will need more immediately, but could still use a crib mattress and diapers.

We are registered at Walmart and on Amazon under my name.

Walmart Registry: <https://www.walmart.com/registry/BR/72676709-cc14-4b7d-aa86-b62f290427bb>

Amazon Registry: <https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/jessica-dondapati-april-2024-atlanta/1FIV57ENMVH8P>

Good Friday Services



Good and death don't seem to go together, but as Gabriel Radle, assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame explains the "good" in the death of Jesus Christ represents the redemption of humanity, as the celebrations of Easter wouldn't be possible without what happened on Good Friday.

The Montmorency Ministerial Association will be holding Good Friday Services on **March 29, 2024** at **1:00. Big Rock** will be hosting the service this year. We hope that you will plan on attending.

Easter Services at BRCC

Big Rock will be holding two services on **March 31st** for Easter. The Early Service will begin at **8:00** and the Cantata, "Christ Is Risen" will be presented at the **10:30** service.



Easter Brunch



There will be a brunch between the two Easter Services. Please see the sign up sheet on the desert table in the fellowship hall. We are asking that you sign up so we do not get too much of any one item.

CE&D Update



Adult Sunday School: Come join us on **Sunday mornings at 9:15.**

Small Groups: Small Group will be starting a new study with a book by Carol Ruvolo, "God With Us". This is a thirteen-lesson survey of the Gospels that will bring us face to face with the central figure in all of Scripture - Jesus Christ. This study will accent the purpose for each gospel writer's account of Jesus' life. We will be meeting on **March 13th and 27th at 5:30** in the fellowship hall.

Library: The library is in need of some volunteers to help sort books and to get the shelves ready for use. If you can help, please let Juli or Gail know.

Children's Sunday School: With young ones in the church, we have changed to Children's Sunday School at 9:15 and then nursery during the church service. We are using the series **God Loves Me Telling the Story to Twos and Threes** as our curriculum. Thank you Michelle for teaching this Sunday school.

SonShine Kid's Club: Club continues to meet on Tuesdays with a great group of students and leaders. The students have covered many of the stories from Genesis and are now covering the stories of Joshua. If you could provide a snack for these children, please see Marilyn or Gail. There will be no club on March 19th because school will be on spring break. The final day of Kid's Club will be on April 2nd.

VBS 2024: VBS 2024 will be held June 18th, 19th and 20th with the 17th being the set up day. The theme this year will be the life of Daniel. We are pleased that the Full Gospel church will be joining us this year like last year. We are looking forward to seeing many of you join us to help with the plays and running the Bible Time Village Market.

Prayer Breakfast will continue to meet at 9:00 in the fellowship hall on Wednesdays. Join us after for prayer. If you could make breakfast on Wednesday, please sign up on the sheet in the kitchen.

Next Meeting of CE&D will be on **March 21st at 4:30.** If you would like to be part of the planning for VBS 2024, you are welcome to come to this meeting.

Choir News



Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. *Psalm 95:1*

The choir is in rehearsal for the Easter presentation of a work titled "Christ Is Risen". If you would like to be part of this presentation, please join us on Thursday evenings at 5:30. We would love to have you add your voice to the choir.

Women's Fellowship News



The Women's Fellowship will be meeting the first Wednesday of the month and discussing the luncheon for the 4 One Quartet and the Barn Sale.

Ladies are meeting at the Full Gospel for craft day on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 3 to 5 to make items for the Samaritans Purse Shoe Box project.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BARN SALE

May 24 & 25, 2024

Hours: 8:30-4:30

Accepting items beginning mid-April

OK, people...it's that time of year again...that pile of stuff you meant to clear out of your house, garage or barn last year is STILL there, looking at you...speaking to you... saying "get rid of me...PLEASE!"



Here are suggestions for items to bring that have traditionally sold well.

- * antiques, collectibles and curios
- * "Up North" cabin and "man cave" items.
- * Hunting and fishing and firearms related gear -ALWAYS strong sellers.
- * Camping gear - Coleman lanterns, tents, etc.
- * "Practical items" such as kitchen utensils, small appliances, pots and pans, etc.
- * Bedding, quilts, towels, sheets that are CLEAN and serviceable.
- * Small furnishings such as end tables, lamps, book cases, throw rugs.
- * gardening and lawn tools, such as rakes, shovels, brooms
- * power tools (WORKING) and hand tools in usable condition.
- * Automotive related, such as roof racks, trailer hitches, gas cans,
- * portable grills, patio chairs, dog crates
- * children's car seats, toys, furniture
- * New or lightly used clothing.

Please DO NOT drop off the following:

- * Outdated electronics, such as VHS players, cassette players, and cassettes, phones, computers, TV's, etc.
- * ABSOLUTELY NO BOOKS OR MAGAZINES OF ANY KIND!!! We have too many already in the barn.
- * Used shoes, purses, and well worn clothing.
- * ANYTHING that is broken!
- * JUNK, such as tourist trap souvenirs, holiday decorations, schmaltzy girlie-girl gew-gaws, etc.

Nancy Mantz



Spring Creative Day Retreat

Please join me for my Spring Retreat! It will be a day packed with fun and creativity!! I will be hosting my retreat in Atlanta April 20th from 9am -7pm.

I am offering a Early Bird Special for sign up till February 29th! (Save \$10.00) Price is \$60.00 , after that it will \$70.00

The day will consist of your class, at least \$35.00 in product, new Annual Catalog, Pillow gifts, light snacks, Lunch / Dinner and water / coffee. We always have a great time and good food! Hope you will join us at either retreat. Any questions. Please contact me (Kelly) at 1-989-874-6988 or click on the link below to register for this class.

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/z82g837>

Location: Big Rock Congregational Church, 8258 M-32, Atlanta, MI 49709

It should have been me

by Royston © 2023

Lost in the crowd hoping God did not see,
the part that I'd played in Christ's agony.
For I'd cried "Hosanna, " and then "Crucify."
Stood there at His trial and watched Him die.

Saw sadistic soldiers and the fickle crowd
with Pilate standing there pompous and proud.
Watched this gross miscarriage of the law
that was so brutal, so offensive, so raw.

But Jesus stood silent in the midst of it all
the scapegoat upon whom God's wrath would fall
It should have been me. I'm the guilty one
It should have been me. Not God's Only Son.

It should have been me, for mine was the sin
but God took it all and laid it upon Him.
Jesus paid the price, but it should have been me
He made the sacrifice that set me free.





Birthdays and Anniversaries



Terri H. 3/01

Marilee G. 3/01

Robert H. 3/20

Upcoming Event

- March 1st & 2nd:** Church Ministries Conference in Grand Rapids *Charting the Course*
- March 3rd:** Family Movie Night 5:30
- March 17th:** Quarterly Meeting 12:15
- March 24th:** Palm Sunday
4 One Concert Service at 10:30 am
Luncheon after the service
- March 29th:** Good Friday Services 1:00 @ BRCC
- March 31st:** Early Easter Service 8:00
Easter Brunch 9:15
Easter Service and Cantata 10:30
- April 14th:** Family Movie Night
- May 11th:** Pastor Keith's Graduation
4C's Spring Rally
- May 19th:** Quarterly Meeting and Elections
- May 24th & 25th:** Barn Sale
- June 17th:** VBS set up day
- June 18th-20th:** VBS

Prayers, Praises & Blessings - March 2024

Daily:

Pastor Keith, Marilyn, and family
Big Rock Leaders will serve humbly as godly
examples to all.
Big Rock Congregation
The Ministries of Big Rock
Missions of Big Rock
SonShine Kid's Club
Our School District, staff & students
Local, State, Country & World Leaders
CCCC Conference (National & Local)
Persecuted Church
First Responders in the community
Maupo H. & Aleina B. (World Relief Y-
Malawi women)
Sari (Compassion Child)
That the church would have unity amid
diversity
The the church's prayers be infused with
biblical ambition, honesty, and humility.

Military:

Curtis B.
Michael C.
Cabria C.
Rachael L.
Beto V.
Megan R.

Missionaries:

Jeremy, Joy & family
Robert, Terry & family
Kurt, Lisa & family
Harriet S.
Susan S.
Caleb C. and family

Homebound:

Theila H.
Jean S.
Rose Mary K.
Bruce A.
Gaye K.
Elaine & Richard V.

Prayers for Healing:

Pastor Keith
David G.
David B.
Ritch H.
Jan F.
Michelle G.
Jim G.
Joshua K.
Paul K.
Pat and Joanna S.
Asher
Naomi
Don S. (Judy's cousin)
Ricky J.
Allen P.

Prayers

Ritch & Sandy H.
Rivka, and Isaiah D.
Jessica & Prabhu D.
David and Marilee G.
Nancy M. and Family
Sam M.
Owen M.
Jessica M. and children
Amy J. and family
Shelly
Dixie, Tony and Cecilia

Praises & Blessings:

For the many servants that God has provided
in this congregation
For our church family
For our Prayer Warriors
The health of the congregation
That prayers have been answered
God has provided for our needs
The gift of salvation

MARCH 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30	26	27 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50	28 Prayer Breakfast 9:00	29	1	2
3 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30 Family Movie Night 5:30	4	5 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50	6 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Women's Fellowship	7 Board Meeting 4:00 Choir 5:30	8	9
10 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30	11	12 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50	13 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Small Group 5:30	14 Choir 5:30	15	16
17 Sunday School 9:15 Worship Service 10:30 Quarterly Meeting	18	19 NO SonShine Kid's Club	20 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Shepherd's Meeting	21 CE&D Meeting 4:30 Choir 5:30	22	23
24 Sunday School 9:15 Palm Sunday 4 Him Quartet 10:30	25	26 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50	27 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Small Group 5:30	28 Choir 5:30	29 Good Friday Services at BRCC 1:00	30 Choir 10:00
31 Early Service 8:00 Brunch 9:15 Easter Service 10:30	1	2 SonShine Kid's Club 2:50	3 Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Women's Fellowship	4 Board Meeting 4:00 NO Choir	5	6