

# Easter declares death doesn't get last word

A Michigan minister and friend of mine was once approached by a delegation from a small religious group in his city to see if he would be willing to officiate at funerals of their members. They told him they had no one trained in speaking at funerals and that, if he accepted this arrangement, they would require that he never mention death in his sermons because they didn't believe in it.

My friend decided to accept this offer, including the strange restriction, because he felt it would give him an opportunity to tell grieving families how to have eternal life and that, in spite of their denial of reality, death would speak for itself.

In contrast to the conclusion of this delegation of death deniers,



REV. ROGER CAMPBELL

the Bible faces the problem of death head-on and offers hope to those facing it or devastated by its attacks on family members and friends, the hope found in the resurrection of Christ.

Early in his ministry, Jesus had been challenged by critics who demanded a sign to prove his authority to teach and work miracles.

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," he had replied (John 2:18).

Thinking he was referring to the temple in Jerusalem, his enemies reminded him it had taken forty-six years to build that magnificent structure and that rebuilding after destruction in three days would require a miracle. But he was speaking of the resurrection of his body three days after his coming death on the cross. Talk about drawing a line in the sand!

With one startling statement, Jesus risked everything on his promise of resurrection. His reputation, his claim to deity, his authority; even the future of the church. Later, Paul would write that apart from the resurrection there is no hope. In his words: "If

Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). Then, rescuing us from this fearful precipice, he declared: "But now is Christ risen from the dead," turning all his former negatives into positives. The resurrection guarantees our faith is not vain. For believers, the best is yet to come. But can we be sure of the resurrection?

Some don't think so and feel it their responsibility to undermine the faith of others.

More than a hundred years ago, two skeptical English lawyers decided to destroy Christianity. Their names were Gilbert West and Lord Littleton. They agreed that two Christian teachings must be disproved if they were to succeed: The resur-

rection of Christ and the conversion of Paul.

West assumed the task of investigating the historic accuracy of the resurrection and developing a case to rid the world of this belief. Littleton tackled the conversion of Paul.

These two determined attorneys agreed to research their subjects for one year. At the end of that time they were to meet again and prepare to present their findings to the world. But an interesting thing happened to these skeptics while building their cases for unbelief. When they met, one year after beginning their research, they were both believers; each saying he had come to faith in Christ as the result of his own investigation.

The evidence for the resurrection is compelling. The tomb that had been guarded by Roman soldiers to make sure Jesus could not escape was found empty. The stone at its entrance had been rolled away along with all honest obstacles to faith. That empty tomb became symbolic of the future emptying of all the graves of believers at the resurrection.

Death doesn't get the last word after all.

The Rev. Roger Campbell is an Independence Township resident and author of more than 20 books. His radio program, *Higher Ground*, is heard at 8:55 a.m. Sundays on WUFL-AM (1030 AM). He can also be heard at 6:10 a.m. Monday through Friday on WMPG (1230 on the AM dial).

## Many ethnic traditions enrich Easter celebration

BY KEELY KALESKI WYGONIK  
STAFF WRITER  
kwygonik@homecomm.net

Easter is a blessed holiday in Polish American households. It is a celebration, an end to fasting, and promise of new beginnings. During Lent efforts are made to right wrongs and lead a more spiritual life.

The Polish Easter celebration begins with a procession during mass on Palm Sunday. Holy Thursday and Good Friday are solemn days of prayer, in between there is much cleaning and shopping to do. On Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, Poles take baskets of food to church to be blessed. The food—traditionally ham, kiel-

basa, hard boiled eggs, sweet bread, and butter in the shape of a lamb—will be eaten on Easter Sunday after mass.

There are many Easter traditions. Have you ever wondered how they got started?

### Easter bunny

Germans brought us the Christmas tree, and the Easter bunny. Easter's origins as a Christian holiday date back to 325 A.D. but it was not widely celebrated in the U.S. until after the Civil War.

The Anglo-Saxons were the first to welcome spring. Their pagan festival was called Eostre, and the goddess Eostre, was worshipped through her earth-

ly symbol, the rabbit.

### Easter eggs

Eggs are a symbol of rebirth in many cultures. The exchange of colored eggs during the spring is a centuries old custom first celebrated by Christians.

### Easter lily

Lilies were found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane after Jesus was crucified. According to tradition, the lilies sprang up where drops of Jesus' sweat fell to the ground in his final hours. Churches continue this tradition at Easter time by banking their altars and surrounding their crosses with

masses of Easter Lilies, to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and hope of life everlasting.

### Swedish traditions

In Sweden, as in many other countries, Easter week starts with Palm Sunday, commemorating Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Certain superstitions were attached to Easter. People believed witches were active and their black magic especially powerful during this week. Even in modern times people have believed that women who practice black magic ("Easter hags") were out practicing their craft. On Maundy Thursday they were thought to fly off on

brooms to consort with the devil at some place called "blåkulla," returning the following Saturday.

On Easter morning people hesitated before starting a fire in the fireplace. The one who first got smoke up the chimney was believed to be one of the Easter Hags.

This superstition has evolved into something fun. On Maundy Thursday or Easter Eve Swedish girls and boys dress up as hags and visit neighbors. Some leave an Easter letter hoping for a piece of candy or coin in return.

Easter bonfires are customary in the western provinces of Sweden where villagers vie to see who can make the biggest one.



### TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10101 W. Ann Arbor Road • Plymouth  
(located on the N. E. Corner of Goddard)  
734-459-9550

Join us for special Easter Week Services:  
Palm Sunday - March 24, 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 11:15 a.m.  
"Worship the King", a Palm Sunday Service of Worship and Praise  
Maundy Thursday - March 28, 7:00 p.m.  
Special Communion Service  
Good Friday - March 29, 12:00 noon  
a one hour service with Scripture readings, prayers, drama, music, and message on the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings"  
Easter Sunday - March 31, 8:30, 9:45, 11:15 a.m.  
Special Easter message by Dr. William C. Moore  
"Escape to Freedom"

### Saint John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit

22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield (248) 569-3405  
Father Garabed Kochakian, Pastor  
- HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE -

March 26 - Great & Holy Thursday - Vespers in Remembrance of the - Order of the Burial of Our Lord..... 7:30 p.m.	March 29 - Great & Holy Friday - Vespers in Remembrance of the - Order of the Burial of Our Lord..... 11:30 a.m.
March 28 - Great & Holy Thursday - Divine Liturgy Commemorating - the Last Supper..... 10:30 a.m.	March 30 - Reading of Scriptures..... 4:30 p.m.
March 29 - Great & Holy Friday - Divine Liturgy Commemorating - the Last Supper..... 10:30 a.m.	March 31 - Easter Sunday Morning - Divine Liturgy of the Holy Resurrection of Our Lord..... 9:45 a.m.

# Alleluia



28123 Orchard Lake Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48034  
248-224-1700  
www.orchardgrove.org

Easter Services  
9:30 and 11:15 a.m.  
Special Musical Guest  
Crystal Lewis  
"What's So Special About Jesus?"  
Crystal Lewis



Celebrate with us!! 3 Convenient Services  
8:00-9:00/9:30-10:30/11:00-12:00

Family Worship Center  
45081 Geddes Road (between Sheldon & Canton Center)  
Canton, MI  
734/394-0357  
Children's Ministry and Nursery Provided

### First Baptist Church of Plymouth

Where Family and Faith find greater meaning

Good Friday Service	1:00 p.m.
Easter Sunrise Service & Breakfast	7:30 a.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service	11:00 a.m.

45000 N. TERRITORIAL RD. (2 blocks west of Sheldon Rd.)  
Plymouth, MI 48170 (734) 455-2300



"WERE YOU THERE? A JOURNEY TO THE CROSS"  
Come and experience the life and times of Jesus Christ.  
Watch Him heal the sick and raise the dead.  
This dramatic presentation can be experienced at

Plymouth Church of the Nazarene  
45801 W. Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth, at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, March 29th, and at 6:00 p.m.  
Easter Sunday, March 31st.  
For information call (734) 453-1525.

### First Baptist Church of Rochester

Sonrise Service.....8:00 a.m.  
Choir Cantata  
"Calvary's Story" ..... 9:30 &  
11:00 a.m.  
Evening Service.....6:00 p.m.

6377 Orion Road • Rochester • (248) 652-6151



### FRANKLIN COMMUNITY CHURCH

"United Methodist in Affiliation, Ecumenical in Spirit"  
26425 Wellington in Franklin Village  
between 13 and 14 Mile Roads - West of Franklin Road  
(248) 626-6606

### EASTER SERVICES

9:00 AND 11:00 A.M.

Nursery Available

SERMON: "He is Risen" - Rev. James Greer

Handicap accessible



### Word of Faith

International Christian Center  
20000 W. Nine Mile Road  
Southfield, MI 48075-5597  
PH.: 248.353.3476  
TTY: 248.355.0242

www.woficc.com

Bishop Keith A. Butler, Pastor

Rev. Keith A. Butler II, Co-Pastor

Good Friday Service 7 p.m. with special Music  
Guest Rev. Floyd White Jr.

Resurrection Day Services - Easter Sunday  
8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

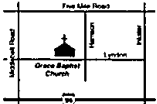
Nursery and Children's Church provided.  
Interpretation in Spanish, Urdu and for the Hearing  
Impaired available at Worship Services.

All Worship services may be viewed on the Internet.  
Join us for Worship.

You're Invited to Attend...the Caring Place!  
**Grace Baptist Church**  
• Bible Based • Christ Centered • Missions Minded •  
Large enough to serve you...Small enough to care!

Worship with us Easter Sunday,  
March 31, during our musical  
presentation "LORD OF ALL"

10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.  
Wed. Youth Clubs 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Daniel J. Perry  
Pastor

734-425-6215

www.gracebaptistchurch.ws

## Celebrate Easter with Us!

**BOW THE KNEE**  
a dramatic Easter presentation  
Featuring the Celebration Choir,  
Orchestra, and Drama Ministry  
Sunday, March 24, at 11:00 a.m.  
Friday, March 29, at 8:00 p.m.  
Admission is free.

### Easter Service

Sunday, March 31, at 10:00 a.m.

Dynamic Music, Insightful Drama,  
Children's Sermon,  
Life-Changing Message!

### Calvary Baptist Church

43065 Joy Road, Canton (between Lilley and Main)  
734-455-0022 www.calvarybaptistcanton.org

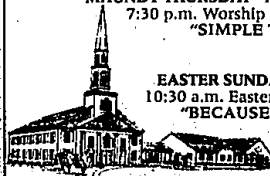
### North Congregational Church

36520 Twelve Mile Road, Farmington Hills  
(between Drake and Halsted)  
(248) 848-1750

Gathered 1866, for the Worship of God and Service to Humanity

MAUNDY THURSDAY - MARCH 28  
7:30 p.m. Worship with Communion  
"SIMPLE THINGS"

EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31  
10:30 a.m. Easter Family Worship  
"BECAUSE OF EASTER"



Rev. Dr. Mark P. Jensen  
Rev. Mary E. Bledron, Ministers  
Steven Kosinski, Director of Music