"And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." Luke 24: 5 – 7

The angels in this scripture share some of the most beautiful words ever recorded, they ask "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." It is a perfectly logical question, but to the women, Jesus’ words were repressed deep in their memory. It seemed like so long ago that Jesus told them He would be crucified and rise on the third day. They were sad and discouraged, for all they had witnessed on the cross looked like defeat. It looked as if the Son of God, their Teacher and the one they thought was the Redeemer of Israel, had been defeated and crucified. It looked as if the enemy had won.

But on the third day, He conquered death and arose from the grave! The enemy did not win, but he was defeated, laying wasted on the ground. Can you imagine the look on the enemy’s face? On that day, Our Redeemer proved His power and might. Not even death could hold Him down.

Far too often, we feel sadness just like Mary Magdalene and Joanna did on that day. We focus on what is in front of us. We only see the hardship; we feel the discouragement. The angels could have said anything to encourage them, but they reminded them specifically of the words of Jesus. We know God’s Word, but we forget it. We easily become focused on the sadness and worry we face in our daily lives. Don’t forget His Word and the many promises that He wants to speak into your life. Remember His words and dwell on them above all else.

Promise in the Emptiness

Christmas has the tree, the star and the stable. These are all physical things we could touch and understand. In many ways, Easter is different. It’s about celebrating emptiness: a missing person, unoccupied burial clothes, and a vacant tomb. All because our Savior arose from the grave just as He said He would! The empty tomb is really a beautiful thing! When you think about it, celebrating the emptiness is very different when compared to celebrating Christmas with the overflowing gifts and abundance. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of our Savior. At Easter, we celebrate His resurrection.

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"
- Luke 24:5-6

As the earth wakes from its winter slumber and Easter’s hope approaches, remind your family that Jesus was awakened as well. Together, focus on that promise in the emptiness – the promise of new life! Focus on the promise we have in Jesus for eternal life because He awakened from the dead and conquered the grave! Focus on his blood stained burial clothes in the tomb and how we have healing through the power of His blood. There are many wonderful things to celebrate! During this time, let your hearts focus on all these things that were once seen as empty, but they truly bring us new life and peace.

Prayer of Salvation

As a parent, leading your child to the Lord is a wonderful experience, but many don’t know how to do this or don’t always feel comfortable. The prayer below is simple for a child to understand and repeat after you. Explain to them that repeating words doesn’t mean you are saved unless you truly mean it in your heart.

**SAY:** "We know that God looks at our hearts and when we truly mean this prayer with our heart, He forgives us. You can repeat the words after me or you can make up your own words." If they want to pray silently, still guide them in this prayer out loud:

Dear God, I thank You for who You are and all that You do. I know that I am a sinner, please forgive me.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for my sins. I believe that He arose from the dead and is coming back one day.

Please forgive me of my sin, come into my life and change me. Help me to live for You. Jesus, You are perfect and good, and I love You. Thank you for forgiving me and loving me.

Thank you for making me Your child and saving me from my sin.

In Jesus name,

Amen.
Easter Traditions

Typical Easter traditions include dyed and hidden eggs, sparkly new outfits, and baskets stuffed with candy. You can add something even more important than baskets, bunnies, and bonnets to your family’s celebrations, though. Here are easy ideas to create new Easter traditions with deep meaning. Choose an idea that works for your family and add it to your festivities. Your kids will be delighted—and so will you!

Egg Candles—These take a little work, but they’re memorable centerpiece pieces for your family devotions, mealtimes, and faith conversations.

You’ll need:
- Raw, washed eggs
- An egg-dye kit
- Double boiler
- Votive candles
- Wire-core candle wicks (available at craft stores)
- Funnel

Break off the top portion of the eggs and clean out the shell. Dye the eggs following the directions on the package. In a double boiler melt the votive candles.

Cut the wicks to four inches, flatten one end into the bottom of the egg, and fasten it to the bottom with a drop of wax. Use the funnel to pour the wax into the eggs. Let the wax harden for two hours, and trim the wick to ¼-inch. Enjoy your candles!

Empty—Gift-wrap an empty box. Then gather as a family and talk about the importance of Easter, and why it’s a cause for celebration. Sing a couple of Easter songs, such as “Christ the Lord is Risen Today,” and then open the empty box. Pray together, thanking God for the gift of an empty tomb and Jesus’ Resurrection.

Easter Egg Account—Number 12 plastic eggs from 1 to 12. Inside the first 11 eggs, place a slip of paper with Scriptures from Luke 24: 1-12 relating to Jesus’ crucifixion. Leave the last egg empty to represent the empty tomb.

- Have family members take turns reading and discussing the Scriptures, saving the empty egg for last.
- Or, open one egg every day leading up to Easter—like an Easter Advent calendar.

Family Tablecloth—Place a new, white tablecloth on the table for Easter dinner. When the meal is over, have each person choose a permanent marker and sign or draw on the tablecloth. Write the year near the signatures each year, sign again in a new spot—adding the year each time. You could have kids draw pictures near their names. Years later you’ll have a wonderful memory—maybe one you’ll have the grandkids sign, too.
**MEDIA MADNESS**

**MOVIES**

**Title:** Heaven is for Real  
**Genre:** Drama  
**Rating:** PG (for thematic elements)  
**Cast:** Greg Kinnear, Kelly Reilly, Thomas Haden Church

**Synopsis:** When a 4-year-old boy has a near-death experience, he wakes up with vivid accounts of heaven—and knowledge about things he’s never been told. His family grappling with how to handle this information. The movie is based on the real-life experience of Colton Burpo.

**Our Take:** Whatever your take on Colton’s experience, this film will create great opportunities to discuss heaven and our place in it.

**BOOK**

**Title:** Battle Bunny  
**Synopsis:** In this picture book by Jon Scieszka and Mac Barnett, a young boy’s Gran Gran gives him a sweet little bunny picture book for his birthday. He proceeds to draw all over the book—adding his own art, changing the story, and making it just the sort of book a boy would want to read.

**Our Take:** This little book is ridiculously clever. It’s original, slightly subversive, and laugh-out-loud funny. It does skew toward boys, but that doesn’t mean girls won’t enjoy it, too. You could use this book to talk about how God has given everyone creativity, and how we can exercise it—in nondestructive ways.

**Games, Sites & Apps**

**Teslagrad**  
This 2D platformer uses magnetism and other electromagnetic powers to solve puzzles and advance the story, which is told with no text or dialogue—only through beautiful, hand-drawn visuals.  
**Rating:** Pending; Nintendo Wii U

**mowillems.com**  
This site is a launching-off point for all the author’s creations, including Pigeon and Gerald & Piggie. The site is full of games, book summaries, and parent guides you can download and use with the books.

**Chatterpix Kids app**  
This free app lets kids take pictures of animals, people, or whatever strikes their fancy. Kids can add a mouth to the object, record a message, and their picture will speak. It’s cute and lets kids be creative. Plus, there are no in-app purchases! Available in the App Store.

---

The Jelly Bean Prayer

Red is for the blood He gave.  
Green is for the grass He made.  
Yellow is for the sun so bright.  
Orange is for the edge of night.  
Blue is for the sins we made.  
White is for the grace He gave.  
Purple is for His hour of sorrow.  
Pink is for our new tomorrow.  
A bag full of jelly beans colorful and sweet,  
Is a prayer, is a promise, is a special treat.
Vacation Bible School
June 23 – 27, 9 – 12:30

VBS Registration has CLOSED

We are able to accept registrations only for those volunteering during the week of VBS.

We now have a waiting list and hope to call families very soon to accept more registrations.

We are looking for volunteers to serve as:
- Preschool Co-leaders
- Elementary Crew leaders
- Craft leaders and helpers
- Kitchen Snack helpers
- Chaperones and Drivers for Middle School VBS

Confirmation Spring Retreat

WOW!!! What an INCREDIBLE weekend away with God! Our sixth graders experienced Awanita Christian Retreat Camp with all the Hummer Rides, Horses, Zip Line, and Mud Pit…and, more importantly the FIRE and very Presence of God as we worshipped, studied and played together!

God orchestrated the wonderful leadership team of youth leaders, parents, teachers, and missionaries…and, the guys and gals came with their hearts ready for whatever God wanted to share with them through all of the experiences!

The weekend was built around the GIFT each Confirmand is to their parents and the world, the GIFTS God has given them to share, and the GIFT of ETERNAL LIFE that God offers each of us!

A GREAT BIG shout out to the youth and adult counselors that made this a wonderful weekend!

Palm Sunday Deep

Our Deep Worship with children and families is taking another excursion with Vinnie on Palm Sunday, April 13th! We will process into the 9:40 worship in the sanctuary waving palm branches and celebrating Jesus coming to town! Then, we will enjoy a “taste” of the Deep during a very special Children’s Time before going to our Sunday School small groups to find out all about Palm Sunday and Holy Week!!

Hope you will join us! Come ready to smile, wave palms, and welcome Jesus into worship with us! See you at 9:20 a.m. in the hall by the main office!

Holy Week Services

April 13 – Palm Sunday 8:20, 9:40, 11:00
April 17 – Maundy Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
April 18 – Good Friday, 7:00 p.m.
April 20 – Easter Sunday,
   6:30 (Sunrise)
   8:20 (Traditional)
   9:40 (Contemporary)
   11:00 (Traditional)
   12:30 (CentroCristiano Hosanna)