

# SPOKANENWORD

*April*

*Fourth Month*

**2019**



**Spokane Friends**

**1612 W Dalke**

**Spokane, WA 99205**

**(509) 327-7852**

**[www.spokanefriends.com](http://www.spokanefriends.com)**



**Sunday Schedule:**

**Doors Open at 9:00 a.m.**

**Worship begins in stillness  
when first person sits down.  
Worship continues with song  
and messages 10:00 am  
Fellowship 11:00 am**

**Third Sunday of the Month:**

**Monthly Meeting for  
Business begins at rise of  
worship.**

## Through the Lens of Resurrection

(Reflections on the resurrection narrative of the gospels)

by Gary Jewell

Human beings have been gifted by God with this wonderful instrument that rests above our two eyes: the brain. Specifically we have this large region called the cerebral cortex, the part of our brain that thinks, analyzes, and imagines. It is the place where stories are formed. This gift of the imaginative storytelling is both a blessing and a curse....depending upon what stories we choose to cultivate. We either create stories that give life, or we gravitate to stories that lead to death. In fact, my thesis this morning suggests that we live and die by the stories we tell ourselves.

Theologians call these stories "metanarratives". Big stories. Archetypal stories. Stories that shape and inform how we view the world. These archetypal stories map out how we imagine the world and in return guide how we behave and act in this world.

All religious traditions have metanarratives around which they organize. The central metanarrative around which the Christian faith is formed is the narrative of the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The term resurrection from a Christian perspective is the idea that Jesus, after being tried, convicted, crucified, and laid to rest in a tomb, was, after three days dead, raised to a new life and appeared physically to his disciples and others before being taken up to heaven. The story of the resurrection is told in all four gospels ... Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (And when a story is repeated in all four gospel versions, it says this story requires our attention. Something extraordinary occurred. And the fact that all four gospels tell the story in basically the same way, yet with recollection of differing details is further evidence of the stories' authenticity).

Mark, the oldest of the gospels, in the earliest intact manuscripts (Mark 16:1-8) ends abruptly: the women who discovered the empty tomb "were afraid, and told no one." I like this earliest version because it leaves the story open ended, as if to say, "Now you (the listener) take ownership of the story and run with it. Continue it on into your world."

Matthew gives us the post-resurrection marching orders where Jesus' last words on this earth are, "go out into the world and make disciples throughout the world, teaching them all I have commanded you."

Luke tells of how the resurrected Jesus opened the minds of his disciples in the breaking of the bread while on the road to Emmaus. Jesus is seen and known in the coming together of conversation and the breaking of the bread.

John seems to want us to know that the resurrection was physical. The disciple Thomas, upon hearing that Jesus is alive must first touch the wounds before he can believe. Later Jesus appears on the lakeshore and sits down to eat fish with his friends as if to say to us, "mere ghosts or spiritual concepts do not eat fish and break bread."

Every Easter Sunday, when I preach on this central resurrection narrative of the Christian tradition, I recognize that my audience consists of a broad spectrum of beliefs regarding this story. To some the story is purely metaphorical. To others, including the apostle Paul, it makes no sense unless it historically and literally happened. In saying this I am recognize the fact that people come out in different places in how they relate to the Jesus story. But whether one believes in Resurrection as metaphor, or as historical reality that points to metaphor, the issue still is always one of meaning. The Big Cosmic...So What! Regardless of where one falls on the question of literal historicity, one is still required ask the question of "So what? What does it mean? How does Jesus rising from death make a difference to me?"

Many of us have aches and pains and challenges we suffer with. And some have had close brushes with death through circumstances of illness and accident. When I too experienced one of those near death stories, I had the opportunity to consider in a new way the story of Christ's resurrection. At Sacred Heart, a Catholic hospital in Spokane, every room has an icon of Jesus transcendentally resurrected upon the cross. (Not crucified... but resurrected). As a Christian I've always valued this image – the ultimate victory of life over death. To me the message is clear .... God is not mocked and life is not defeated by any cruelty we humans may inflict upon others.

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But none of this translated to me as I lay in the hospital. The central symbol of my faith did not speak to me when you might think it would speak the loudest. And everything else was pretty flat and speechless too. I had little to no interest in food. People brought me books to read or would read to me, but I had no interest. Everything on TV was absurd — every other channel was some story involving a gun, or explosion, or fear, tension and conflict. Or there would be channels dedicated to some silly “reality” show with people constantly competing or squabbling, or some family of hillbillies who sell duck calls discussing the best way to blow up a beaver dam. All of this seemed so empty and pointless.

But when I couldn't conceive of the resurrection or be comforted by it as a theological/metanarrative image, it **did** come to me. It came to me in the care and love of my family who were there in the most profound ways. It came in the form of prayers and gestures and mindfulness of many, many friends. Through good thoughts and prayers, God was there in profound and mysterious ways. Resurrection came in the nurses, doctors, aids, technicians, chaplains, and other caring folks who focused their best skills and energy on keeping this one privileged, middle-aged white guy on this planet for a few more decades (at best).

We don't have to be in a medical or existential crisis to realize that the story of resurrection is a powerful narrative. This narrative declares to the world that very force of the cosmos is within, is before, is around, and is much bigger than us. Yet it is also part of us. Resurrection calls us out and calls us back again. Resurrection never lets death and suffering have the last word. Jesus lived it, Jesus taught it, and Jesus proved it. Resurrection is a powerful thing, and that is why Jesus didn't stay on the cross. That is why the tomb was empty. That is why the angel says, “Go and find him. He has risen.”

Most summers I work with Mennonite youth at our Northwest Mennonite camps. At one of the junior high campfire talks I shared how a number of years past, Roger, the camp manager, had a good quality telescope. He was able to zero in on two separate spiraling galaxies visible in the same field of view, galaxies containing billions of stars and planets. I reminded the kids that the nearest spiraling galaxy (the Andromeda Galaxy) is over 3 million light years away. Furthermore, there are reported to be billions of these galaxies within the known universe. Furthermore some even think there are multiple dimensions of realities we cannot perceive. And it is said that only four percent of the matter in the universe can be seen, leaving ninety-six percent of something called “dark matter,” which cannot be directly perceived. In light of these and other observations of science it would seem that the resurrection of Christ might not be so hard to consider.

My point in considering the vast and mysterious universe we live in is to get us to believe and celebrate and find courage in the reality that we are part of a very, very, large and mysterious God-ruled, God-centered, story. The story (metanarrative) of the Christian tradition is one of mystery and the victorious power of love and life. It is one of life over death. It is one of hope and the embrace of a God who cannot be defeated and will not let go....ever.

And how, you may ask, can one judge whether one's own story/narrative is one of resurrection? You may consider this..... Resurrection stories are always about hope and never about fear. Resurrection stories are about thriving and not just surviving. They are about sharing as opposed to accumulating and consuming. Resurrection stories are always about creativity and risk taking. When you hear stories about cooperation, unity, compassion and tolerance, you are hearing stories that point to resurrection. Resurrection always defies the world's tired old dysfunctional stories of win/lose; dog-eat-dog; us vs. them; and everyone for themselves. When you read the Gospels through the lens of resurrection, you begin to see the world through the lens that God sees through.

Someone I know and respect recently told to me a story from her work in a year-long volunteer program. She asked her “employer” for a little flex time for one afternoon a week in order to do some more “hands on” work related to her vocational pursuits. Her boss, who already had displayed little respect or appreciation in her management style, said in response to this modest request, “That's not how things work in the real world.”

To that banal reply I say, as one who believes in the truth of the resurrection....baloney! Much of what we call “the real world” is a construct of our own making. Resurrection says other worlds are possible. Other ways of relating to this world are possible. Stories about the devil often resign us to believe that “That's just not the way it works in the real world!”

As one who identifies as a pastor, a husband, a father, and most fundamentally as a human being who has the privilege of taking up space on this planet for this momentary period of time, I'll tell you about the real world I live in..... I live in a world of inconsistency, context, nuance, paradox, mystery, and yes, hypocrisy and sin. And with none of these conditions should we rest easy -- especially the sin and hypocrisy. Nevertheless, this is the real world I live in, and the only effective and honest and humble way I can move through it is by trusting in the victory, power, and grace of the resurrection story. There is no room for fear and pettiness in this story. In God's story, (the only one that ultimately counts), resurrection rules!

A friend of mine was facing a long engagement with cancer. I'm sure many of you have had similar engagements. And you may have been given this poem (I apologize if you have and it now seems a bit boring). But to me it was powerful and it relates to my message. Instead of using the word “cancer” I will insert the word *crucifixion*.

*Crucifixion is so limited.... It cannot cripple love, It cannot shatter hope, It cannot corrode faith, It cannot destroy peace, It cannot kill friendship, It cannot suppress memories, It cannot invade the soul, It cannot steal eternal life, It cannot conquer the Spirit. Crucifixion is so limited.*

If there is any message to be taken away when we consider this story of the resurrection, may it be a message that informs us that death, be it spiritual death, or literal death, is never the last word. Life is!

**Gary Jewell** is a pastor in the Mennonite Church USA denomination. He has pastored a number of churches in the Spokane area over the past 25 years. He is also “district pastor” for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. He gave this message on March 10, 2019. It has been edited slightly to fit into the current space.

## MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES 17 March 2019



The meeting was opened by Jonas Cox and twelve people were in attendance.

February's Minutes were revised to reference Jonas' AFSC Meeting would be held in Philadelphia instead of New York. Minutes were approved with the noted changes.

Stewardship/Trustee's Report : Adam's Carpet has provided flooring samples for the foyer and library (carpet squares and linoleum). They are located in the back of the sanctuary. The Committee will be contacting Caritas about adding casters to the reception desks to save new floors. It will take about 4 to 6 weeks to install. The Ad Hoc Building Improvement Committee will be making the final carpet/linoleum and paint selection. There was consensus that the Ad Hoc Committee finalize the decision and move forward with purchase and installation.

Joyce Nelson's family will be using the church once a month (2nd Saturday of every month) to do craft projects. The Nelson family will clean up after themselves. The Church use was approved.

A new sink has been installed in the upstairs bathroom.

Treasurer's Report : We reviewed our maintenance expenses. There were some questions on the Quickbook reports. Wade will research how to correct account balances.

Elder's Report : The Elder's have arranged speakers and guest speakers through April 28th. (See Elders Report). There is a new schedule for the Alternative to Violence Workshop (5/3 - 5/5).

Tinarose Morrison has been hired as part time secretary.

Since Johan and Judy Maurer are no longer working as missionaries in Russia, the Elders thought the money should be given to AFSC (approximately \$250 annually) and The Fig Tree. Jonas suggested we evaluate whether we wanted to support AFSC before we recommend donating money to the organization. It will be discussed again at our next monthly meeting, giving people a chance to follow-up on these organizations.

The Elders want to minute a "special thanks" to the Ad Hoc Building Improvement Committee for their work done on the Library and Music room.

The Elders brought a question to the Meeting about having certain speakers on a regular basis providing more structure to our worship. Several names were mentioned with preferences given. The Elders will follow up with the suggestions made.

New Business: There was a discussion about our Meeting's affiliation direction. We have been exploring: North Pacific Yearly Meeting; Sierra Cascade; Friends United Meeting; or stay independent (similar to Reedwood). There was consensus to not explore North Pacific at this time. There was support for the three remaining choices. We are encouraged to investigate and prayerfully consider the choices individually. (We need to research Faith and Practice and Quarterly Meeting structure). There was concern about not making a decision in a timely manner about our future affiliation.

The meeting was closed in prayer.

Respectively submitted,  
LaVerne Biel, Acting Recording Clerk

## Easter Breakfast with Friends

*Let's eat breakfast together*



*. . .on Easter Sunday morning*

*8:30 am*

*Sign up sheet in hospitality area for what you might like to contribute.*

## Sunday Leadership Schedule



Mar 31	Don Hyslop
Apr 7	Lenten Queries
Apr 14	Dan Berg
Apr 21	Paul Blankenship
Apr 28	Jonas Cox

## News from Caritas

The statistics for the months of March and April will be published in the May Newsletter.



## Quotes about Easter

*Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.*  
Pope John Paul II

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" - John 11:25-26*

*I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. - C.S. Lewis*

*Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf of springtime.*  
Martin Luther

*Two thousand years ago, in the Middle East, an event occurred that permanently changed the world. Because of that event, history was split. Every time you write a date, you're using the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the focal point.*  
Rick Warren

## Checking in with Becky

March 6, 2019

[just after the March newsletter went out]

Dear Friends,

Want to thank you for prayers for my Mom. Her femur is healing slowly, but she is making progress in P.T. and is looking forward to getting arid of her walker! She is not able to drive yet because of the diagnosis of myasthenia Gravis. We are still waiting to get into U.C. Davis Neurology Clinic. Please pray for an appointment soon and healing of eye and fracture. Otherwise she is as active as ever!

Pray for you and our ministry in Spokane that Jesus will be proclaimed.

Because of God's Grace, Becky



## It's back . . . May 5-7



## Alternatives to Violence Basic Workshop

The 18-hour intensive Workshop will be presented on the weekend of May 3-5 as follows: Friday 6-9 pm; Saturday 8-6 pm; and Sunday 12:30-6:30 pm. At Spokane Friends Church. The cost of the Workshop is \$30 and will include lunch on Saturday.

AVP workshops seek to assist people in personal growth and change. We join together, participants and facilitators both, to explore our own corners of violence and seek more satisfying ways to respond. To learn more about AVP, please visit their website [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org). Workshop space will be limited to the first 20 people who register. Participants should plan to attend all sessions. To learn more about AVP please visit their website [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org).

**REGISTER for the AVP Workshop at [spokanefriends@gmail.com](mailto:spokanefriends@gmail.com), or at 327-7852. The Registration Fee may be paid at the first session of the Workshop.**

## Update from Amber

March 29, 2019

Howard is cleared for knee revision surgery on April 2nd here in Scottsdale. Hopefully that will be the "end" of this adventure. We will head home after the surgeon thinks we're OK to travel. Also, we learned last week that Howie's myeloma has not progressed during the three months he has not had chemo.

Amber



## Want to help a Quaker?

The new principal of St George's School is a Quaker, and she wants to find a rental house in Spokane before she actually arrives in July. She's looking for something in the range of \$1400 to \$1800 a month. A big fenced backyard would be much appreciated by her three cats and two Labradors. will be a very good tenant. I have three cats and two Labradors. If you know of such a rental property coming onto the market, please call the church office.