

Pastor Pete Kontra *God's Not Worried*

Peter ran to the empty tomb and looked for himself.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever is going on in your life, big or small to your mind, count on Jesus. Death has lost its sting. There is eternal victory in Christ! There is hope for the hopeless, peace, and forgiveness.

This is no fairy tale. This is not just flowery sweet greeting card stuff. This is reality, Jesus' risen body and His breath in your face reality.

The women went from mourning, to perplexed, to terrified, to awareness, to amazement.

Occupied tomb, to empty tomb.

Grave clothes, to dazzling clothes.

Finally the angel basically tells the women, "What are you worried about? Jesus is alive."

What are you worried about?

Because God knows full well that there are a lot of us worried about something. There's a lot going on in the world and in our lives. Real stuff. Heavy stuff. And God knows that it has been that way since time began.

But guess what. God wasn't worried.

"Remember," the angel said, "how Jesus told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."

Things were under control.

God's love isn't worried about what was, that is, what was your past, what used to define who you are, what used to control your life, what you always thought was possible. Or, for the church, what people have thought about the church until now, or what we always thought our potential was in serving our world.

God isn't worried about what was, because His love and creative power is always making things new, transforming death into life, ordinary into extraordinary, folks like us into messengers of hope.

God said, "I am making all things new."

All things. That includes you and me. That includes our community. That includes those you think have no hope. That includes the darkest deepest places of this world.

John Ortberg says, "People have not gathered for the past 2,000 years to say, 'The stock market has risen. It has risen indeed.' They have not gathered to say, 'The dollar has risen. It has risen indeed.' Or, 'the employment rate has risen.' Or, 'the gross domestic product has risen.' Or 'the value of your 401(k) has risen.' Here's the one hope that has held up human beings across every continent and culture for two millennia of difficult times of poverty, disease, pain, hardship, and death itself: 'Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!'"

God bless you! -Pastor Pete

From Pastor Doug

Trust

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. John 19:30

And with that last act, Jesus fully entrusted himself to the Father's work being accomplished in him. Jesus entrusted his life to His Father during his teaching and work and ministry on earth. And when the call came—when Judas and the guards showed up and arrested him, when they beat him, falsely accused him, when they questioned his very being—Jesus trusted in God's plan. When they made him carry his cross, when they nailed him to it, even when the thief cursed him and called him to rescue himself and those who hung beside him, Jesus trusted in the plan. Forgiving the one repentant thief, Jesus made the statement above and gave up his spirit. And they buried him.

And darkness fell over the land...and the curtain in the temple tore in two.

Friday night passed into Saturday morning. The afternoon came and went. Saturday night came. Nothing happened. The disciples lived in fear, doubt, disbelief. *If this can happen to the Son of God, what can happen to us?* Finally, Sunday comes.

The tomb was empty. The followers, men and women alike, puzzled as to what happened to his body. And when Jesus revealed himself, they believed, they remembered all he taught, all he said while living. And their hearts were set on fire. The gift of the Spirit came. Jesus promises came to pass. And then he entrusted his mission to his disciples, his followers, his apostles as ones sent into the world.

We live in this trust today. As followers of the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we are entrusted to carry out the ministry of reconciliation. God trusts us and moves in and through us: our actions and conversations, our homes and vocations. Can we trust one another? Can we proclaim and pass down our faith to those around us and see how God may use them in Christ Jesus? Jesus trusted God in his plan and in his disciples to carry it out. Do we carry that trust for one another?

Mission Possible

Pastor Kent Rice

Polyester Perfect



Those of us who lived through the 70's well remember the scourge of polyester clothing. This non-breathing, non-existing-in-nature "fabric" somehow became standard issue for those who wanted to look "now," "hip" and/or "groovy." In defense of this ill-conceived fashion trend, it was easy to clean and didn't wrinkle very easily, but *gad* was it awful. Imagine working behind the grill at McDonald's in a 100% polyester suit as I did—you would start sweating even before the buzzers told you it was time to flip the first burger (*does this hamburger taste salty to you?*).

No one wore as much collective polyester as the Brady Bunch, whose show was primetime viewing. By all accounts, life on the set of the show was tumultuous at best but when the cameras were rolling, everyone smiled. They somehow made this hodgepodge family work, knee-deep in shag carpets played by actors who barely—if at all—resembled their television personas.

They were "polyester perfect."

I found out later in life just how much I had been lied to: By my history books; by celebrities I admired who beat their wives or molested children off-camera; and by some Christians who told me how important faith was but whose lives showed nothing of the Christ they claimed to know.

God is not interested in fake smiles and appearances! Jesus referred to the Pharisees as "whitewashed tombs," meaning they were proper on the outside but their hearts were dead. God wants to deal with your *reality*, not your fantasy. Peter Scazzero writes, "There is no greater disaster in the spiritual life than to be immersed in unreality" (*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, p. 135). It's not always an easy thing to be vulnerable or to recognize your situation for what it is, but the good thing is that desperate times call for desperate measures—no one reaches out his hand if he doesn't think he's drowning. Facing a harsh reality is so much better than being polyester perfect. At least it's *real*. The God who lovingly crafted you can see your heart through even the thickest leisure suit! Cry out to Him—he's dying to help. In fact, He already did.

Praying Attention



I have found praying the Word of God to be very powerful in my life. Will you join me in praying Colossians 1: 9 – 12 for someone the Lord may be placing on your heart? I ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. Amen.

HCOB Adult Sunday School

† **THE CHRISTIAN HOMEBUILDERS** classes will meet in the library. We study the International Lesson. We have three or four regular teachers who each teach about one Sunday a month. We have several socials a year with the majority of our class participating. Our offerings are used for special needs within our congregation or community. The contact people are Ruth Johnson and Millie Hoffman.

March 6	Powerful Faith	Teacher: Denny Bushong
March 13	Simple Faith	Teacher: Sue Brubaker
March 20	Struggling Faith	Teacher: Jim Kettering
March 27	Resurrection Faith	Teacher: Del Kautz

† **THE SEEKERS**—Please join us for teaching and discussion that will help us to delve deeper into our Christian faith and life. We meet in the Prayer Room just off the Sanctuary. We are studying the scripture the pastors are preaching on each week. If you would enjoy discussing the sermon scriptures with others please join us. Rich Bushong is the contact person.

March 6	Acts 13:42-52	Teacher: Rich Bushong
March 13	Genesis 4:1-9	Teacher: Del Kautz
March 20	Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19	Teacher: Pete Kontra
March 27	Luke 24:1-12	Teacher: TBD

† **CONVERSATIONS**—Conversations Class meets in the Conversations classroom on the second floor each Sunday during Sunday School hour. All are welcome to come. Conversations Class will be studying Greg Gilbert's, "Why Trust the Bible?". What's the main reason that you trust the bible? Why should others? How you answer those two questions forms the foundation of your faith and the trajectory of your spiritual development. If you can't answer those two questions, then it's difficult to be a practicing Christian and almost impossible to be an effective ambassador for Christ.

In this book, Gilbert addresses five core questions. Can we be confident:

1. In the translation of the Bible?
2. That copyists accurately transmitted the original writing to us?
3. That we're looking at the right set of books?
4. That the original authors were themselves trustworthy?
5. That what they described really took place?

Discovering the answers to these questions would establish a pretty solid foundation for thinking that we can really accept the Bible as historically reliable. And if we can do that, then it follows that we consider the Bible's account of Jesus' resurrection as true. And everything else flows from that belief.

Geoff Davis teaches this class.

Messages in March

March 6



Envy: The Triple Whammy — Acts 13:42-52

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

God has given us life and all we have in it. Are you okay with that? Paul says Love does not envy. Why? Because when we envy someone it's not just that we want what someone has, but we're discontent and resentful that they have it. It hurts others, ourselves, and tells God that we're not really grateful for what He has given us. So what do we do? It begins by living a life of gratitude.

March 13



Envy Flanks—Genesis 4:1-9

Pastor Doug Hinton Preaching

Envy comes in from the side. It's subtle. It's dangerous. But its consequences are direct and can be severe if we are not aware. Looking at the story of Cain and Abel, what can we learn? Is "sin crouching at our door?" Have we let it in? How can we respond in the Spirit of God to this trait in our lives?

March 20



The Triumph of Love—Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19

Pastor Geoff Davis Preaching

The Gospel writers all refer to Jesus' final trip into Jerusalem as "The Triumphal Entry". It's one of the few accounts that appears in all four Gospels. "Triumphal" means celebrating or commemorating a great or important victory; rejoicing over success. But who gave this event this name? What success and important victory did this commemorate? What was triumphal about this entry into Jerusalem? The people who shouted loud "Hosannas," a week later would be shouting "Crucify Him!" One of his apostles would betray him and the other eleven would deny him, after all he had done for them. Maybe Jesus teaches us that we need to redefine our definitions of success and winning. Matthew writes, "But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then." (19:30) John reminds us that "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." (15:13)

March 27



Love Wins—Luke 24:1-12

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

The Enemy will try and try to defeat us, but early one Sunday morning God shouted loud and clear, "Love Wins!" Like the Disciples, it can sound like nonsense when we look around and feel defeated. But let us never forget, the tomb is empty. Jesus is alive!

March Ministry Schedules

March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27

NURSERY

Carol Koser, Ivy Davis, Brooke Davis
Marg Zurin, Diane Garber, Karen Rice
Sue Brubaker, Sallie Hoppert, Kensey Rice
Betty Cox, Sarah Fisher, Carolyn Gingrich



March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27

SOUND TECHNICIANS—8:00

Dick Caldwell
Rich & Jamie Bushong
Dave Schott
Matt Markey

SOUND TECHNICIANS—10:15

Blaine Garber & Rich Bushong
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong
Mitchell Barnes & Rich Bushong
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong



March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27

WORSHIP LEADERS—8:00

One of the pastors
Pete Cope
Ray O'Boyle
Dennis Hughes

WORSHIP LEADERS—10:15

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

SPECIAL MUSIC



March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27

CHOIRS/SPECIAL MUSIC

Sanctuary Choir
TBA
TBA
Sanctuary Choir

VIDEO TECHNICIANS—10:15

Christian Layman
Ben Johnson
Doug Howard
Dave Bendit

March 6
March 13
March 20
March 27

DEACON GREETERS

Paula Connelly
Penny Kettering
Wes Bowers
Lois Killian

JNH GREETERS

Butch Nachbar
Tom & Carolyn Fritz
Roger & Gladys Ulmer
Jerry & Jean Barger



OFFERING TABULATORS

Dave Dum, Rick Schaidle

HCOB Family News

EDUCATIONAL GRANT—The Church, through the Education Team, is offering a GRANT to individuals pursuing a career in Christian Ministry or attending a Christian college or university. Inquiring applicants can send a letter to Donna Reed, secretary of the Education Team, via the church mailbox or rdreed2@verizon.net. Please include a short resume. The deadline for grant applications is May 1, 2016.

POST HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES: If you, or someone you know is graduating from a college, university, or other post high school program, please send the name & contact information to Donna Reed, secretary of the Education Team, (church mailbox or rdreed2@verizon.net) by April 17, 2016 in order to complete a short questionnaire. We would like to celebrate with you as you finish this chapter of your life!

HCOB Kids News



It is hard to believe that we are looking forward to Easter already! What a blessed time to focus on what Christ did for us. The true gift of love!

We have begun having Praise and Worship time with the children during Kids' Church. We use the last 20 minutes of the second and fourth Sundays to celebrate God through song and instrument! Thank you to Jen Hinton for leading the children grades first through fifth and to Laura Meiser who is leading the preschool and Kindergarten gang.

We had a brief meeting on Sunday, February 28th, to discuss VBS for this coming summer. There are lots of slots left open! Please check out the table with the information, or contact Karen Rice if you're interested. The theme is Submerged! It is an incredible experience!!!

Don't forget our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 19th. **ALL AGES WELCOME!** Hoping to have good weather, but we will hold the hunt no matter what! There will be a sign-up sheet on the narthex for those interested in donating candy to the event. It is super fun! Even the adults had a good time with the Extreme Egg Hunt just for them.

Karen Rice
Children's Ministry Coordinator

Outreach @ HCOB

What is happening in Outreach to our community?

Special Report by Deborah Fotí

“Firmly rooted and living deeply in the character of Christ to become a healthier church that powerfully shares Christ with the world.” The vision of Hempfield COB guides everything that we do.



The focus of this article is the “sharing of Christ with the world.” This sharing occurs within and outside of our church family, and it is happening in amazing ways through our **East Petersburg Faith Outreach (EPFO)** ministry. This is one of our church’s major efforts to be the hands and feet of Christ and “build stronger families for a stronger community.”

The EPFO is housed at the East Petersburg Area Civic Center in the Real Life Church of God building in downtown East Petersburg (Lemon and State streets). Have you been there yet?

Did you know that through EPFO, the East Petersburg Area Civic Center offers:

- Great food and coffee at the Geneva Bakery Café.
- ESL – English as a Second Language – classes taught by the Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon.
- Yoga classes for young and old.
- Homework Help, an after school program for East Petersburg Elementary School students provided by caring volunteer tutors.
- Dancing instruction by Studio Jo and Zumba by Melissa. Zumba Kids restarts in March.
- A collection point for plastic grocery bags to give to the Power Packs Project, which distributes nutritious food to needy families so that they can eat on the weekends.
- Taekwon-Do classes for young children through Mike Louie.
- PATH Life skills classes that cover everything from crockpot cooking to financial literacy.

The list of organizations that are using the Civic Center and the programs that are being offered are growing every month. As HCOB’s Outreach and Missions pastor, Kent Rice has been putting a lot of time and effort into partnering with local nonprofit organizations to expand the programs reaching out to serve the local community. It is also uplifting that so many members of HCOB are supporting community outreach by participating in programs offered at the Center and volunteering their services for events and programs.

If you haven’t visited the Civic Center, please take some time to do so. You can use Facebook to follow the events at the center at facebook.com/epcivic or if you are really into social media, you can follow on Twitter - @eastpetecivic. If you can want to volunteer your time or use the Center to host an event, track down Pastor Kent in person and make his day or email him at kent@hempfieldcob.org.

HCOB Leadership Team Retreat Report



“Firmly rooted and living deeply in the character of Christ to become a healthier church that powerfully shares Christ with the world.”

“Making Christ’s purposes our own.”

Good Morning,

2/3/16

This is the fourth consecutive year that the Leadership Team has met for an annual retreat. It took place on Friday, January 8th and Saturday, January 9th. We met in Glenn and Sue Brubaker’s outstanding garage again. I can’t thank them enough for their gracious hospitality each year. It is a wonderful feeling to be so welcomed. I would also like to thank Pastor Geoff who facilitates our retreats and allows us to hit-the-ground running with a pretty highly functioning team even before our first meeting each year. Geoff has the expertise and the heart for helping us identify how our attitude of servant leadership is our responsibility as Christ’s followers. I would also like to thank Carolyn Gingrich and Joel Kettering for filling in for their Ministry Team chairs at the retreat. And lastly, I have to especially thank Janice Haldeman for preparing the Saturday morning casseroles. It is a great way to start the day enjoying breakfast with one another. Also, I would like to thank the Holy Spirit for being present, moving within our discussions, during the retreat.

This year we began the retreat by focusing on the context for Christian leadership. Geoff led us through a reflection of implications for Christian leaders, characteristics of Christ followers, our attitude of participation, and what spiritual leadership means for us as leaders.

We then made two lists; one highlighting things we really care about at Hempfield, and the other identifying our concerns. We made a list of components of why we are a Leadership Team and what’s at stake in the decisions we make. We then identified our team’s guiding principles for meetings.

As in the previous retreats, we made lists of what we achieved in 2015 and where we fell short. We tend to be pretty hard on ourselves regarding the things we didn’t achieve, but it always provides us with challenges to bring a renewed determination to accomplish our goals this year.

Geoff then directed us to consider our team focus. We discussed our understanding of our roles, ways to fulfill our roles and how we get better in our roles. We identified things that are likely to get in the way of fulfilling our roles and possible ways to overcome them. We compiled a list of big questions that need answered and then rated them for priority. We recognized eight areas that we feel need to be addressed in the upcoming year and developed two goals to accommodate them. We understand that we are a communion of believers in transition. The atmosphere in our country is one of fear, dread, and intimidation. We have no control over outside forces that influence those feelings. We also recognize that this body is responsible for the health and welfare of all its members. We, as the Leadership Team, recognize our responsibility to help manage these concerns; listening to each other and God, maintaining focus, establishing better communication, staying involved in conversations, maintaining vision, caring for each other in humility in the spirit of grace.

So, what’s our priority for 2016?

First...Peace.

Become an aggressive voice for Christ's love by creating "pockets of peace" within our community.
Our intention is to provide education & dialog, training for service and policy that engages us in developing better Christian/Muslim relationships in our community. The goal champion is Pete Cope.

Second...Community.

Create intergenerational relationships to foster transitions that help individuals grow spiritually and strengthen the faith.

We intend to provide intentional opportunities for conversations, and fellowship in intergenerational settings and provide strategies to help individuals successfully navigate life transitions. The goal champion is Doug Hinton.

In closing, we look forward to serving your needs this year. Please contact us with concerns, praises, and suggestions. Your input is always welcomed.

Thank you.

Ray O'Boyle, Leadership Team Chair

March 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00 PM Deacons Meeting	2 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 6:30 PM Young Adult Fellowship & Study 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	3 9:00 AM Pastor Doug@ Brethren Village 7:00 PM Prayer Experience	4	5 12:00 PM Baby shower
6 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Young Families Fellowship & Study 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	7 10:00 AM Pastor Doug Seminary Class 7:00 PM Education Team	8 9:00 AM Sewing Circle 12:00 PM Silver Singles 6:30 PM Fellowship & Hospitality Team 7:00 PM Stewards of Property 7:00 PM Worship Team	9 9:00 AM Sewing Circle 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice	10 9:00 AM Pastor Doug@ Brethren Village	11 6:45 PM WORDD Worship	12 6:00 PM Family Movie Night
13 2-Cent-A-Meal Offering 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 11:30 AM Love Feast 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	14	15 6:30 PM Outreach Team	16 HERALD DEADLINE 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 6:30 PM Young Adult Fellowship & Study 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	17 9:00 AM Pastor Doug@ Brethren Village	18	19 10:00 AM Easter Egg Hunt
20 Palm Sunday 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Young Families Fellowship & Study 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	21 10:00 AM Pastor Doug Seminary Class	22 7:00 PM Leadership Team	23 5:00 PM Setup Good Friday Breakfast 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	24 9:00 AM Pastor Doug@ Brethren Village	25 Good Friday--Church Office Closed 6:00 AM Good Friday Breakfast	26
27 Easter Sunday 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship	28	29	30 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	31 9:00 AM Pastor Doug@ Brethren Village		

For more details about upcoming events and up-to-date calendar information, please visit

<http://www.hempfieldcob.org/whatsup.html>

**Toon of
The Month**



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The Month**



RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Hempfield Church of the Brethren
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