

## Jesus' Table

Pastor Pete Kontra

As we just experienced our Love Feast and Easter, I was reminded of when I was young and we would go to my Grandma's house for a meal. My Grandma's table went from five feet to something like twelve feet long as we stretched it from the dining room all the way into the living room to accommodate everyone. And looking back, I realize how funny and odd a bunch we were. But we all were welcome around the table.

There are a lot of different tables in this world, some that we are welcome at and some we know we are not. Some are large, some small. There are dining room tables, kitchen tables, coffee tables, tables that are simply the floor beneath your feet. There are tables for meeting, eating, working, maybe even for hiding underneath as a child.

What table do you sit at? Where do you belong?

In Luke 22:14-30 it tells us, "*Jesus took His place at the table and the apostles with Him.*" Yes, it was time for the Passover Meal, and of course it was with Jesus' closest friends, His disciples, that He shared this meal. Truly a new beginning. Peter, James, John, Judas, Luke, Matthew, and the others. Fishermen, a physician, tax collector. Assembled together from different walks of life, different hopes and dreams, fears and hurts. Now part of something far greater. Brothers in Christ and His friends.

What's your place? Where do you belong at the table? What about the person sitting next to you, or over there on the other side of the room? What about the person, well, you know, "that person" out there? You know, the one we talk about all the time who's done that terrible thing, or lives that particular lifestyle, or said something awful to you this week?

You know, in my heart I say to him, "If you're welcome... If *you're* welcome, then what does all this mean?" We are a fragmented society—broken, divided, isolated, winners, losers, best, worst. We allow this to influence our walk with Christ, in that we can get into competition as to who is the better Christian, the one with more truth, the one whose sins are less than my brother's over there. We get out the yardstick for grace.

It can be like musical chairs at God's table. You know, the organ plays "Amazing Grace" while we all walk around the table, waiting for the music to stop and spotlight who is going to be out a chair today. "Sorry buddy! No room for you this time!"

But there is a different table. "*Jesus took His place at the table, and the apostles with Him.*" What is the "table?" This table, Jesus' table, is where His love and grace sit down with you and me. It is our common need as human beings for relationship, acceptance, love. Jesus came into this world to save it. God with us. To heal and free us from all our sin and brokenness. And He also came to build His kingdom, His Body, a community bound together by His love. Yes, the church, but far beyond these walls in which we sit.

Who's welcome at the table? Everyone. Jesus' table is not fixed in one room somewhere. It is not a table you need a ticket to sit down at. There's no competition or special knowledge you need. At His table all barriers and brokenness are removed. At His table you and I are the same child of God, where, by the power of His Spirit, we can bond and build up one another in peace. It's where we can share our stories, see the lines and expressions on faces, look into my sister's eyes and discover that they are just as vast and full of life's experiences as are mine, as are yours. The table is where we realize that we are all the same at the core—in need of the same love, acceptance, forgiveness, relationship.

When I come to the table I know I must "come clean" and give myself over to God that I may be healed of all that in my life. It's time to see ourselves as we truly are, and then to be transformed by what this table truly is. By His grace may we live this out together. -Pastor Pete

# United in Our Suffering

Pastor Doug Hinton

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“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly.* Do not be wise in your own estimation.” **Romans 12:14-16**

“After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, *because you have not spoken the truth about me,* as my servant Job has.” **Job 42:7**

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” **John 1:14**

It seems the factions of the Christian church are fighting for the absolute truth claims about Christ here in the U.S. *Is the Bible to be read figuratively or literally? Can it be read both/and and where? If all sin is equal in the eyes of God, why do we exclude certain people from the church? Is the church to be holy and set apart, or completely open, accepting, & affirming? Was Jesus God? Why do different parts of the church highlight some sins, but not others? How can we be in the world but not of it?* It is good to wrestle with these questions and *Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.* (Rom. 12:9b) But in doing this, head knowledge is not enough. We must put into practice what we learn to follow Christ. Knowledge without presence or practice is worthless. Knowledge practiced is faith. Faith that what Christ taught remains true. Faith that no matter what we see or know, when we seek His Way, His Life, His Truth, all things work to the good for those who love him. Faith that no matter how much I may disagree with someone—even on deep doctrines of faith—Christ died for them just as He died for me and I must seek to see them through His eyes. Faith without knowledge goes against the greatest commandment to *love God with all your mind.* Faith without practice goes against the greatest commandment to *love God with all your strength.* Faith without growth goes against the greatest commandment to *love God with all your heart.* One way we can put this into practice is to *weep with those who weep,* but how?

When Job suffered, his friends came and sat with him, in silence, for a week. Seeing Job covered in boils from a distance, his friends tore their clothes and covered themselves in dust to empathize with their friend. However, then they started blaming Job for his tragedies, even speaking truths about God. But these truths were misused and caused Job more grief. It may well have been better for them to just sit there in silence than to bring judgment upon themselves as they misapplied these truths. Don't misunderstand me – they spoke truth and meant well. They also caused more grief for their friend instead of *weeping with those who weep.* Being wise in their own estimation led them to sacrificing to God *and* having Job pray over them for forgiveness. What can we take from this?

The Word of God took on flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, though He existed in the form of God, entered into our world. To live, suffer, weep, breathe, sleep, experience loss and death, betrayal and abandonment, joy and celebration. He associated with the lowly—the outcasts of society. Those hated and rejected. He entered into their world: eating with them, walking with them, celebrating with them. Ultimately, suffering and dying for them. In and through his life, He lived the truth He preached because he indeed was the Truth. And His followers could relate to Him because He lived in their world.

Do we listen to those who are suffering? Do we weep and rejoice with them? Do we enter into their world to the best of our strength and understanding? Or do we condemn them with the truths of God, never seeking to understand them nor empathize with their pain? Take some time in the next week or two and read over Job. Then read Romans 12. Then ask yourself, “How can I come alongside of one who suffers? How can Christ use me in and through this process?” I pray as we do this, we can all grow in the character and Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

# HCOB Kids News

Karen Rice



Greetings! What a wonderful time of year. So many amazing colors and the warm air. The amazing rebirth of our outdoor surroundings...and our insides too! Seems the perfect time for us to consider Christ's amazing gift to us.

Our church family celebrated Christ's death and return in so many wonderful ways - Palm Sunday, Love Feast, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. There were emotions running through each of the services. What a blessing to share in all of it with our church family.

One of the highlights of my Easter season, was Love Feast. Now, the reality is that I was not raised in the Brethren tradition and Love Feast has always been a little bit out of my comfort zone, but it is a beautiful part of our church's tradition. This year I was able to walk alongside one of the children of our congregation and experience Love Feast with him. It gave me a chance to really think through each part of the service. I got to help him wash his Mother's feet. What a blessing!

I realize a lot of the newer members of our church also come from different traditions. Perhaps foot washing is out of your comfort zone as well. I get that. However, I encourage you to give it a try. There is no judgement if you don't know all the ins and outs. Things are explained and all is done in love. Consider it for the next Love Feast. It could become a part of your family's tradition.

## 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.

May 7	God's Sustaining Love	Teacher: Denny Bushong
May 14	God's Love Preserved Jonah	Teacher: Butch Nachbar
May 21	God's Love for Nineveh	Teacher: Jim Kettering
May 28	God's Pervasive Love	Teacher: Galen Brumbaugh

† **THE OTHER ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES WILL BE STUDYING THE E100 CURRICULUM.** The readings for the upcoming week will be in the bulletin every week. Then they can be discussed in the various Sunday Schools and small groups. If you have any questions about the E100, please contact Pastor Doug.

# Messages in May

May 7



## **One In Your Burdens—*Ruth 1:14-18; Galatians 6:1-5***

***Pastor Doug Hinton Preaching***

The book of Ruth starts out with Ruth, her sister-in-law, and mother-in-law all losing their husbands. Now Naomi without husband and sons tells her daughters-in-law to return to their own lands, their own people. It seems Naomi wants left alone, but Ruth refuses to leave her side. As we look into this story and the depth of love Ruth carried for her mother-in-law, we'll discuss what it means to both share and carry our own burdens. What does it mean to be One in our Burdens?

May 14



## **Lay Your Burdens Down—*Matthew 11:25-30***

***Pastor Geoff Davis Preaching***

In Greek, a *burden* is a load of any kind; a severe task; a difficult duty; psychological and spiritual anxiety; the troubles of this life. Sound familiar? We all live lives where anxiety, worry, troubles, and concerns often raise their threatening heads. Who's putting these burdens on our lives? Why are we carrying them? And what can we do to lay our burdens down?

May 21



## **8:00 Service--One Heart—*Romans 15:1-6***

***Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching***

The body is an amazing creation. All its parts and systems work together in beautiful unity to give us life. Even when something goes wrong or becomes weak, other parts step up and compensate. And the heart steadily beats to support them all. So too, we are to function as the Body of Christ. Today I am strong. Tomorrow I am weak—from trials or sin. And as Paul says, with one heart we are to glorify God. We are united in our burdens, one heart for Christ to strengthen each other in this journey.

## **10:15 Service—Celebration Sunday—The Reason We Sing**

***Psalms 86***

Join us for a musical service of worship and celebration of God's grace! We will enjoy anthems by our Sanctuary Choir, congregational singing led by our praise band, special music by HCOB kids and more! Orchestra?

May 28



## **As If—*Hebrews 13:1-3***

***Pastor Peter Kontra Preaching***

When we are burdened, the weight of it can slow us down. Sometimes it can cause us to come to a stop in life. But life keeps on moving, and so those who are burdened can be left behind. But Hebrews reminds us that we are to remember those in prison, and those who are mistreated. Remember them—do not leave them behind. And remember them “as if” you yourself are suffering. Not just think a kind thought, but as Christ came and entered into our suffering, so too we are to carry each other's burdens as if they are our own.

# May Ministry Schedules

May 7  
May 14  
May 21  
May 28

## NURSERY

Carol Koser, Peg Layman  
Marg Zurin, Carolyn Gingrich, Karen Rice  
Sue Brubaker, Sallie Hoppert, Kensey Rice  
Betty Cox, Sarah Fisher, Jake Rannels



May 7  
May 14  
May 21  
May 28

## WORSHIP LEADERS—8:00

Pastor TBD  
Ray O'Boyle  
Joel Kettering  
Ray O'Boyle

## WORSHIP LEADERS—10:15

Lowell Landis  
TBD  
Laura Meiser  
Lowell Landis

SPECIAL MUSIC



May 7  
May 14  
May 21  
May 28

## CHOIRS/SPECIAL MUSIC

Sanctuary Choir  
Jen Hinton  
Sanctuary Choir  
Diane Garber

## VIDEO TECHNICIANS—10:15

Doug Howard  
Dave Bendit  
Ben Johnson  
Dave Bendit



May 7  
May 14  
May 21  
May 28

## SOUND TECHNICIANS—8:00

Dick Caldwell & Rich Bushong  
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



May 7  
May 14  
May 21  
May 28

## DEACON GREETERS

Betty Cox  
Joel Kettering  
Wes Bowers  
Penny Kettering

## JNH GREETERS

Faye Rohrer  
Carol & Lisa Polonchak  
Jerry & Jean Barger  
Butch Nachbar

## OFFERING TABULATORS

Glenn Brubaker, Allen Hurst

# HCOB Family News

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**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES:** If you, or a family member is graduating this year from High School, please submit the name and contact information to Donna Reed by April 30, 2017 (church mailbox, via Breeze, or [rdreed2@verizon.net](mailto:rdreed2@verizon.net)). Then you will receive a short questionnaire that is due May 7, 2017, so that we may recognize your achievements on Graduation Sunday, June 4, 2017

**FURNITURE NEEDED FOR CHAPEL HALL** - The hospitality team is looking for a buffet server or side board with storage for the coffee area in chapel hall. If you have a piece you would like to donate please contact Mary Lou Ruth at [gmlruth@gmail.com](mailto:gmlruth@gmail.com) or [717-682-6488](tel:717-682-6488).

**DONATIONS REQUESTED FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE MISSIONS**—Dave and Deb Bendit and Pastor Pete and Shelley will be attending Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan from June 28-July 2, 2017, and would appreciate your prayers as they serve as delegates and/or representatives from Hempfield COB. There is an opportunity to donate to local service missions in Grand Rapids, and since both couples will be driving they can take a number of items to donate from our congregation. **Bethany Christian Services, Refugee Program** ([www.bethany.org/grand-rapids](http://www.bethany.org/grand-rapids)) is asking for twin and full sheet sets, pens and pencils, notebooks, Scotch tape and envelopes. The **Refugee Education Center** ([www.refugeeeducationcenter.org](http://www.refugeeeducationcenter.org)) is asking for back packs, peanut-free granola bars, small bags of crackers (Cheeze-its, Goldfish, Wheat Thins, etc.), small bags of pretzels or popcorn, and small bags of dried fruit. Please give the donations directly to the Bendits or Kontras, or drop off in the church office with a note. Items will be accepted through Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. Thank you in advance for helping to bless the city who is hosting Annual Conference!

## Praying Attention

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If you could ask God for one miracle in your life, knowing that He would grant your request, would you ask Him to:

- Put your marriage back together?
- Change something about your job?
- Bring home a straying son or daughter?
- Heal your body?
- Straighten out your finances?
- Bring a loved one to Christ?

Whatever your request might be, do you regularly and diligently, every single day bring it to God in prayer, trusting that He will intervene in your situation? If not, why not?

From the book *“Too Busy Not to Pray”* by Bill Hybels

# May 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> 3:00 PM Pastor Doug at class 7:30 PM Education Team	<b>2</b> 12:30 PM Pastor Doug at class 7:00 PM Deacons Meeting	<b>3</b> 6:00 AM Ladies Prayer Breakfast 8:00 AM Quilting Group 6:00 PM E 100 Study 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>4</b> National Day of Prayer 9:00 AM Ladies Bible Study	<b>5</b> 6:45 PM WORDD Worship	<b>6</b> 6:00 PM June Lantz practicing organ
<b>7</b> 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	<b>8</b> 3:00 PM Pastor Doug at class	<b>9</b> 8:00 AM Sewing Circle 11:00 AM Silver Singles 12:30 PM Pastor Doug at class 6:30 PM Fellowship & Hospitality Team 7:00 PM Worship Team	<b>10</b> 6:00 AM Ladies Prayer Breakfast 8:00 AM Sewing Circle 6:00 PM E 100 Study 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Stewards of Property	<b>11</b> 5:00 PM Mulching at the Church	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:00 PM June Lantz practicing organ
<b>14</b> Mother's Day 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	<b>15</b> Setup WORDD Social 6:30 PM Outreach Team	<b>16</b> 12:30 PM Pastor Doug at class 6:00 PM WORDD Spring Social	<b>17</b> HERALD DEADLINE 6:00 AM Ladies Prayer Breakfast 8:00 AM Quilting Group 6:00 PM E 100 Study 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>18</b> 9:00 AM Ladies Bible Study	<b>19</b> 4:00 PM Sarah Barger & Ryan Cummings wedding rehearsal	<b>20</b> Sarah Barger & Ryan Cummings wedding & reception
<b>21</b> 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Membership Class 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Celebration Sunday! 11:30 AM Barger Lunch 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 12:30 PM Pastor Doug at class 7:00 PM Leadership Team	<b>24</b> 6:00 AM Ladies Prayer Breakfast 8:00 AM Quilting Group 6:00 PM E 100 Study 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 4:00 PM Jordan Hess & Heather Sunderlin Wedding Rehearsal	<b>27</b> 4:00 PM Jordan Hess & Heather Sunderlin Wedding
<b>28</b> 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 9:00 AM Membership Class 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	<b>29</b> Memorial Day Office Closed	<b>30</b> 12:30 PM Pastor Doug at class	<b>31</b> 6:00 AM Ladies Prayer Breakfast 8:00 AM Quilting Group 6:00 PM E 100 Study 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal			

*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  
P.O. Box 246  
East Petersburg, PA 17520