

"He is not here, for He is risen" Matthew 28:6

You are probably reading this after Easter, after you gathered with your church family to worship and declare together that *He is risen!* I'm sure you were blessed to hear an excellent sermon on the resurrection and how it unites us to Christ and to one another.

Your pastor possibly preached a sermon out of Matthew 28:1-10, one of many resurrection passages in scripture.

The interesting thing about this passage is what comes after it. A few verses later, after the resurrection, we have the great commission. *Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

In these verses we see the risen Messiah give His people their marching orders: go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. He reminds them that they are not alone, that He will be with them in this great work.

The Great Commission is truly great and 2000 years later it should seem familiar to us because it's the ordinary work of the church and indeed we are products of the Great Commission.

We have been reached with the gospel and we experience these ordinary blessings weekly as we gather together to worship. Not only that, we are discipled, we get to fellowship, care, bless, and pray for one another. This is normal church life. We are also called to *love our neighbors as ourselves*, which means we get to share the good news with our neighbors, friends, and family, and bring them into the life of the church.

And today our churches still send out missionaries to far off areas of the world where the gospel has not been proclaimed, where people are separated from God and his people, and as they do, Christ's church continues to grow.

Here locally at the Medford Gospel Mission, we strive to reach the lost and gather the reached as well. People that are lost in a cycle of poverty separated from God and his people, we gather them into local churches right here in our community.



As important as our ministry at the Medford Gospel Mission is, we know that we *"have power to accomplish our purpose only as we are rooted in and lead back to a believing community"*⁽¹⁾, our community of local churches.

Our desire is to serve the local church we love by championing the gospel with clarity, compassion, courage, and joy. And in doing so, we encourage the men and women in our discipleship program to find and join a local church where they can build authentic, healthy relationships that will last a lifetime.

We are funded by generous donations from people in our community and we do not accept any federal, state, or local government funds

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This is why relational restoration is key to our program. God has designed relationships to work in a particular way, a healthy way, so we seek to restore relationships back to the way God intends them to be. And we do this by walking alongside our program participants, teaching them the Christian faith, which enables them to find restoration in four key relationships found in the word of God: relationship with God, with self, with others and with creation (the world).

These relationships are on display best in the local church, so when it comes to the church, we teach the men and women in our program that the local church is made up of individuals – with particular gifts and varying graces – and those individuals work together under Christ for common good.

For many of the men and women in our program, being a part of a local church is an entirely new idea, which requires patience and grace as they work through our restoration program and seek a church home.

This is why local allied churches are so important to us. They demonstrate to our participants what a healthy church looks like. And when they are ready, the local church provides pastoral care and discipleship, ensuring that our program participants are part of the life of a local church.

It is such a blessing to be a part of a para-church ministry that This keeps the local church at the center of God's plan, as the place where the gospel of Jesus' kingdom is preached and the people He redeems are gathered in community. Not only that, the local church is the primary place where God is at work reaching the lost and gathering the reached in our community.

*"Christ the LORD IS RISEN TODAY,
SONS OF MEN AND ANGELS SAY,
RAISE YOUR JOYS AND TRIUMPHS HIGH;
SING, YE HEAVENS AND EARTH REPLY"*

~ CHARLES WESLEY

(1) Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 227.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

In honor of our Lord Jesus Christ
Ken & Diane Capp
In honor of my brother Mark Bishop
by Breta Smith
In honor of Marvin Ter Best
by Dean Ter Best

In memory of Earl Best
by Nickolas & Lindsay Boosalis
In memory of Mark Bishop
by Breta Smith
In memory of Jami Anne Burk
by Roberta Hawkins
In memory of Jerry Burns
by Sharon Burns
In memory of John Butow
by Jerre & Barb Hewitt
In memory of Tim Caswell, Sr.
by His Family
In memory of Pamela Cowart
by Jack Cowart
In memory of Colleen Cox
by Cherri Cox
In memory of Betty Dempsey
by Joanie Ganong
In memory of Walter DeWald
by Cheryl Schmidt
In memory of Max Froome
by Alan & Nicolene Buchta
In memory of Rochelle Roby Frymire
by Paul & Janice Roby
In memory of Cookie Gleaves
by Duane & Jan Gleaves

In memory of John Hunter
by Betty Hunter
In memory of Billie Joe & Joan Hunter
by Dusty & Debbie Hoffman
In memory of David Jenkins
by Carol Jenkins
In memory of Theron Karrick
by Vicki Karrick
In memory of Pat Lee
by Robert Phillips
In memory of Tom Lloyd
by Janice Blankenship
In memory of Alice Lucky
by Jonathan Lucky
In memory of Mark Maddox
by Gary & Nancy Payton
In memory of Ray May
by Jeff & Jen McFarland
In memory of Ronelda McCollum
by Kathleen Frazier
In memory of Bill McTaggart
by Lori McTaggart
In memory of John Murphy
by Paul Murphy
In memory of Billie Ray Nering
by Ken & Diane Capp
In memory of Harold & Borgia Pickrel
by Sharon Burns
In memory of Patricia Piter
by Steve Piter
In memory of Kay & Clay Pontius
by Lynn Casad

In memory of Chellis Rogers
by Gary & Nancy Payton
In memory of Jack Sabin
by Ken Casteel
In memory of Nancy Scafani
by David Scafani
In memory of Jerry Scheid
by Jackie Scheid
In memory of Maude Scott
by Joanie Ganong
In memory of Dorothee Shadzad
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by Glenda Riffle
In memory of Duane Shinn
by Dianne Carter
In memory of Marjorie Skeen
by Big Ken Skeen
In memory of Jim Stockton
by Lynn Baker
In memory of Aaron Ter Best
by Dean Ter Best
In memory of George Thomas
by his Family
In memory of Horst & Margaret Wauer
by David & Helene Uhreen
In memory of Griffin & Pat Wilder
by Griff & Kathy Wilder
In memory of Garry Wilson
by Arline Wilson
and by Betty Rule
In memory of Margaret Wilson
by Gary & Nancy Payton

Thank you for equipping us to restore lives in our community!