



A NOTE FROM PASTOR ERIC

Many American churches are resurrecting an old Easter custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity-"Holy Humor Sunday" celebrations of Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday after Easter.

For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, including "Bright Sunday" (the Sunday after Easter), was observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced.

The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "*Risus paschalis* - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it.

I look forward to sharing this fun experience with Harper Chapel again on April 12. Let us come and proclaim the joy that we have through the Easter resurrection!

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 2026 - 6:30PM

Harper Chapel



Important Events & Changes

- Easter Sunday Service with Choir—10AM
- No Faith & Discussion Group on April 5, 12 and 19.
- Bible Study will resume at 10:30AM on April 8.
- Holy Humor Sunday—April 12 at 10AM
Choir
Laughter, Fun, Goofiness & Surprises
Sermon and Songs written by AI (Artificial Intelligence)!
Wear your brightest clothes and your funniest hat!



10AM



Faith & Discussion
Room 203 - 11:10 AM

2nd Sunday of Each Month
2PM



Y
Bible Study

Bible study will resume its regular
schedule, on Wednesday, April 8 from
10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

PRAYERS & CONCERNS

Pastor Eric tells us each Sunday we are a people of prayer. Did you know we have a prayer team that is here for you anytime you need us? The Harper Prayer Team has been in place for about a year.

How do you request prayer?

1. Fill out a prayer card in the pew and place it on the alter during communion or give it to Pastor Eric.
2. Call or text Pastor Eric or Sue Fletcher (573-480-2788)
3. Call the church office.

Unless you specify otherwise, your prayer request will remain confidential to the prayer team only. You can also ask that your request remain only with Pastor Eric. If you want church-wide prayer, you can ask that your request be placed in the newsletter. Typically either Pastor Eric or Sue Fletcher will be in touch with you regarding your request. I hope you will consider reaching out for prayer. It is not even necessary to state the details of your needs. God knows and we will pray for his comforting arms to hold you.

Harper Prayer Team

Sue Pierce, Carol Weatherford, Carolyn Moore

Linda Craig, Beth Hargrave, Chris Poland

Robyn Roehl, Jannette Smith, Helen Schmidt

Eric Schmidt, Sue Fletcher

2 Corinthians 1

“He is the one who comforts us in all our trouble so we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble”.



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

Brad and Trish Hall

Jim and Cheryl Fanning

We are excited to have them as part of Harper Chapel and look forward to the great gifts they bring to our congregation and greater community.

If you are not a member of Harper Chapel and are interested in finding out more about being a member, please reach out to Pastor Eric Schmidt.

Sharing Harper Chapel with our Community

In an effort to strengthen community connections and expand membership, our Leadership team has launched a series of new outreach initiatives designed to engage both current and prospective members.

One key strategy of outreach has been sending a postcard to new residents. The postcards go out twice a month, highlight our groups and activities, and invite recipients to join us.

In addition to the postcards, a flyer about God's Closet is being handed out at *Osage Hill's* monthly *Missouri Food Bank* distribution event; this flyer provides details about the program's mission to support individuals and families in need through clothing and essential items. We hope more people will become aware of and benefit from our services.

The team is also sharing a Harper Chapel brochure at the local YMCA to promote service programs and upcoming events, such as Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday services. Our goal is to foster a greater sense of community involvement and build connections with the surrounding community.

At the Leadership Team meeting on March 24, 2026, the team voted to update our current website. If you would like to help or be on the website team, please contact Teri Caldwell at 217-320-1584.

We Want to Hear from You

Do you have ideas on how Harper Chapel can grow or improve? We welcome your suggestions! Whether it's new outreach strategies, program ideas, or ways to better serve our community, your input is invaluable. Please share your thoughts with our team—we're always looking for ways to grow together.

our Rearview Mirror?



When I was in high school, probably one of my most hated subjects was history. World, U.S., any kind. I know. It was totally boring to me, and all I was concerned about was the future. When I told a school superintendent that confession, he exclaimed that history was his favorite and that all we know about the future is based on our past. Our history. Our beginnings. I've since learned no truer words.

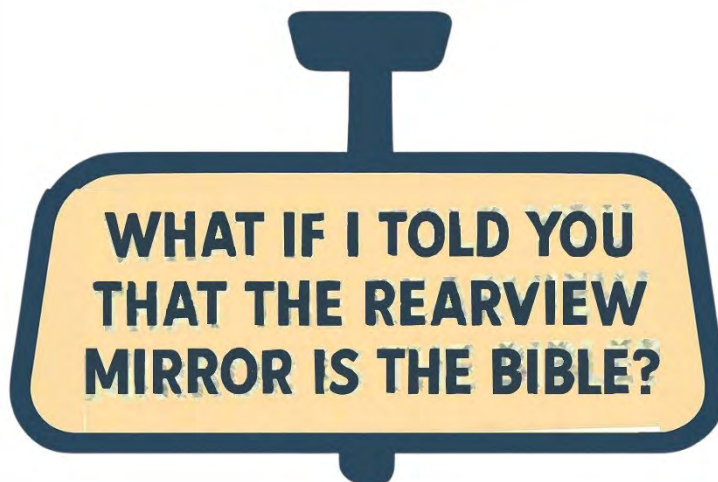
I'd like to make the analogy that this is like driving a car. Your windshield is your future. It's "what's ahead"! It's coming soon! The rearview mirror is your past (or you just passed by) There is a saying; long story-short. Well, I've been told I carry out a story longer than it should so my saying is: short story-long. With that, I want to share these driving thoughts over the next few months so as not to drive you away.

Think about how large your windshield is. It spans from side to side and not so much up and less down. But compare that to the size of your rearview mirror. Small, yet important. My rearview mirror fell off once. The glue failed under the summer heat. I finally said "what's behind me, I don't care!"

What if I told you that the rearview mirror is the Bible? Pretty important, yes? What if you had, at your fingertips, the past that can help drive you into the future? Rev 1:8 - I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

We were dropped in the middle of this journey. Or were we?

Next month, we'll drive further down the road of life.



Steve Grass
UMM

Harper Ladies



You are invited to an afternoon tea party!

Come and enjoy tea, coffee, treats, devotional and wonderful company@

Thursday, April 9 at 2PM
Thompson Hall

Our Guest Speaker:
Teresa Faber,
Executive Director
Pregnancy Help Center

All are Welcome!

In your generosity, please bring an item to donate, such as diapers, baby wipes, sleepers or other other items needed by infants. **No Gift Wrap.**

Harper Chapel



April 20
11:30AM



LUNCH

Li'l Rizzo's
2146 Horseshoe Bend Pkwy.
Lake Ozark, MO 65049



God's Closet will be open on April 10 & 11
11AM-2PM.

Friday, March 13—30 Visitors

Facebook—5
Food Pantry—15
Word-of-Mouth—4
Repeat—10

Saturday, March 14—19 Visitors

Facebook—5
Food Pantry—2
Word-of-Mouth—4
Repeat—9
Other—Sign by the Road

Donations were great from repeat customers
and community members.

Join us for a day trip to remember!

Charming Castle in Fordland, MO

Wednesday, April 22.

1 Hour Tour at 10:30AM

\$10/per person

Lunch to Marshfield, MO

1700 Martins
Branch Road
Fordland, MO
See Article on
the Next Page

RSVP - Billye Bennett
by April 13.



I Want to Build You a Castle

A fairytale born of love and open to all.

STORY Paul Cecchini



It started as a sketch and a simple statement from engineer and inventor Robert Palmer to his wife, Bonnie: "I want to build you a castle."

Before long, Chateau Charmant ("Charming Castle" in French), was constructed deep in the woods of Fordland. Over the past two decades, it has been a popular wedding destination, educational facility, and theater, as well as a home for the Palmers. The family enjoys a private wing of the castle all to themselves, separate from the event spaces. Robert explains that living in the castle makes him feel at ease. "You feel safe—impervious to the weather," he says.

As soon as visitors walk through the castle's massive wooden front doors that came from an Italian church, they are transported into an authentic-looking medieval world. The ceiling beams are modeled after the ones in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace in England. They are dovetailed and pegged, meaning they have no nails, and are constructed as they would have been in the Middle Ages. Soft clouds are painted on the ceiling. Acid-washed concrete gives the floor a marble-like appearance. Spiral staircases lead visitors to the top of a four-story turret where angels look down through arched Gothic-style windows. Paintings inspired by medieval and Biblical times line the walls—some donated, but most done by Bonnie herself, a self-taught artist.

For anyone who has dreamed of a fairytale wedding, Chateau Charmant is a dream come true. Private rooms for the bride and groom are lavishly decorated with designs reminiscent of Buckingham Palace. Ceremonies take place inside the Great Hall or outside the castle, both of which provide gorgeous backdrops.

Chateau Charmant also holds monthly events, including stage plays, tea parties, dinner theaters, and school tours. Students who visit the castle can pull random slips of paper out of a box listing their medieval



occupations, from soap maker to king to gong farmer (a person who was hired to shovel out pits filled with human waste).

Over the next year, the castle will host a Mystery Masquerade Ball in October, a daddy-daughter Cinderella Ball in November, and a free Christmas Eve event in December. In 2020, the Palmers started Castleshire, a nonprofit focusing on historical education. One event under that umbrella is the Lost Spanish Treasure Hunt, a renaissance festival based around the pirate Amaro Pargo, where visitors search for a fabulous treasure. The next renaissance festival is taking place April 2026.

The castle attracts visitors from coast to coast, eager to experience castle life without having to cross the ocean. "You can go to a castle if you want to spend the money to go to Europe," says Bonnie. "It'll cost you a lot more. Come here and see a castle designed after a real castle and learn some history."

Though she had to be convinced at first, Bonnie is glad that her husband built her a castle that has since become so much more. "We don't take a profit on this," she says, stating that all funds go toward castle upkeep and charity. "We didn't build this for us. We built it to share with the community, bring joy and happiness to people, and make fun events that make lives easier."

CharmingCastle.com
1700 Martins Branch Road, Fordland



From top, the castle has five separate wedding ceremony options, three outdoors and two indoors. Multiple events are held at the castle throughout the year that are open to the public. The Great Hall is climate controlled and a great option for summer or winter events. Visitors wear period-specific attire during the castle's renaissance festival.

Community Garden



Planting Season will be here soon, so why not grow your own this year?!

Harper Chapel UMC
invites the Community to take
a Plot and Start Growing Something!

Berries • Flowers • Herbs • Squash • Veggies

Contact
Deb Larson
for more info.
573-280-5203



THE MIRACLE OF REBIRTH



1 Peter 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Birth is an exhilarating experience. Walking into a hospital room shortly after a child has been born, you can almost touch the emotion and power of the moment. Rebirth is like that, too. Sitting in a powerful religious ceremony, standing alone atop a high hill, or walking in the footsteps of an ancient civilization, we can feel our hearts being changed as our spirit is given new birth, and we emerge from our experience reborn. Sometimes it goes the other way, too. In a single moment, all that we know can be stripped away—the death of a loved one, a divorce, the loss of a job – and suddenly we’re left standing at the mercy of the universe. And once again, we rise from the ashes, reborn.

Amidst headlines of terrorists, news of global darkness, a world dominated by the apparent wonders of science and technology, and our culture’s emphasis on materialism, a quiet miracle is once again taking place. While blizzards batter the northwest, spring comes to the midwest—that magical moment when buds break open with shoots that become flowers, and color and fragrance return to a world made grey by winter. We can sense the pulse of the earth, and cannot help but feel the joy of life reawakening.

In our Christian story the moment of rebirth comes as we celebrate Easter and the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, when in the miracle of the empty tomb Mary mistakes the risen Christ for a gardener, until He says those poignant words, “Woman why weepest Thou?”

Like the joy in the springtime, this transformation and opportunity for rebirth is always a miracle. Opportunities for rebirth are always present, just as God is always present. It is in the moment when God unveils Himself and whispers or at times shouts to us. Sometimes, like for Mary, rebirth becomes visible in our moments of grief, when tears fall and our hearts ache.

God invites us into a lifestyle of resurrection and rebirth every day. As we go throughout our day, know that we have the choice to live our lives differently. A newness of life and rebirth is available to us every single day through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us as a believer.

Peace and Grace,
Billye Bennett, RN
Parish Nurse.

Harper Chapel Income

February 2026

Tithes & Offerings	\$ 26,798.59
God's Closet	50.00
Memorial Fund	50.00
Youth Donations	94.00
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$ 26,992.59</u>
EXPENSES	\$ 24,324.24
NET INCOME	<u>\$ 2,668.35</u>

At the February 24th Leadership Team meeting, members voted to begin making monthly apportionment payments.

Complete financials are available for your review. A copy is on Leadership Team Bulletin Board.

If you have questions, please contact Leadership Chrm. Sue Pierce at 573-216-6021

Next Leadership Committee Meeting—Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 6:30PM



April

2026

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

			1 Bible Study 10:00AM	2 Maundy Thursday Service at 6:30PM	3 Good Friday	4
5 Easter Sunday Faith & Discussion Cancelled	6 Easter Monday	7	8 Bible Study 10:30AM	9 Harper Ladies Thompson Hall 2PM	10 God's Closet 11AM-2PM	11 Men's Breakfast Pancake House 8AM
12 Holy Humor Sunday 10AM Faith & Discussion Cancelled	13	14 Brainstorming with the Pastor 9AM	15 Bible Study 10:30AM	16	17	18
19 Faith & Discussion Cancelled	20 JOY Group L'il Rizzos Horseshoe Bend 11:30AM	21	22 JOY Group The Charming Castle Fordland, MO 10:30AM Bible Study 10:30AM	23 UMM Methodist Men 6:30PM	24	25
26	27 Leadership Committee Meeting 6:30PM	28 Brainstorming with the Pastor 9AM	29 Bible Study 10:30AM	30		

He is not here; he has risen! - Luke 24:6



Wishing You an Awesome April Birthday

- Pat Beffa - 5th
- Carol Grass - 9th
- Soren Schmidt - 16th
- Joan Williams - 28th
- Karen Frazier - 29th
- Judy Smits - 29th
- Kelvin Land - 29th
- Jillian Solomon - 29th



If you are using ReliOn Prime Test Strips, please reach out to JoAnn Fry. She made an error with her purchase. You can contact her at 573-216-1883.



FOR SALE

**Nest Learning Thermostat
Model A0013
White
See Pastor Eric**

