

March 2022

Celebration Magazine

A publication celebrating what Jesus is doing at Clear Creek



"These group times provided a glimpse into a future in which students in CCYM truly care for each other, lead one another, and grow toward Jesus together."
from *Get Real!*

Are You Ready for Easter?

Easter is almost here. The day we celebrate Jesus' victory over Satan, sin, and death.

Here's the question: Are you ready for Easter?

We get ready for most occasions. We wear our nicest clothes to weddings, and we take colorfully wrapped gifts to kids' birthday parties. But how do you get ready for Easter?

Here are 5 ways to prepare for Easter 2022:

Reset your atmosphere. Turn off the negative noise of talk radio and listen to uplifting music playlists that focus your heart on our hero, Jesus. His victory is yours.

Recenter your perspective with a daily joy journal. Don't write a novel. Just take 3 minutes to jot down one thing that brought you joy. Then thank God for it.

Re-read the Easter story. From Palm Sunday to Jesus' crucifixion, soak up the moments that brought you freedom. If you have kids, let them help read and discuss each part of the story.

The Last Supper: Matthew 26:17-30

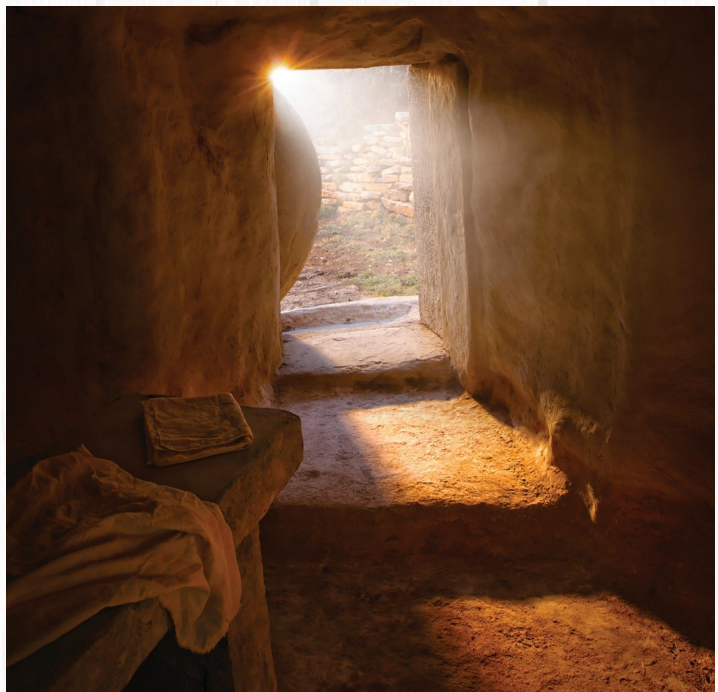
Judas' Betrayal: John 18:1-13

The Crucifixion: John 19:1-30

Jesus' resurrection: John 20

Repent of sin. "Repentance" is a dirty word in our culture. But for believers, it is how we open ourselves to more of God's grace and Jesus' presence. Take this season to reflect and repent, so that you may receive His grace.

Reach someone else. Invite that friend you've been praying for to join you for Easter worship. The greatest gift God gave you is your salvation. So, the greatest gift you can give someone else is an invitation to meet your Savior, Jesus.



We are only a few days away from the day when Jesus' shook the universe and saved our souls. Let's prepare to celebrate him as the victorious King that He is.

Growing by Serving

All of us are on our own spiritual journey with Christ. Whether we are in 2nd grade, high school, young adult or retired, as followers of Jesus, we should be continuously aspiring to become more like Him.

There are several ways to ascertain whether or not we're moving forward on the path to being a fully devoted disciple. Are we devoted to prayer? Do we meditate on scripture regularly and apply it to our lives? Do we give generously to the work of the Church? Are we sharing the Good News of salvation with others? Are we serving in the Church? Most of these questions should be answered by the individual alone, but serving in the church is one which can be seen by others.

It is so inspiring to observe youngsters like Emma Diggs, Taylor D'Amico and Tre` Phillips serving alongside their parents as greeters one Sunday a month. When the youth group was asked to sign up for serving opportunities, many of them like Ty Mathis, Caleb Kelley, Connor Beard and Walker Turnbow decided it's time to give back by serving in a regular rotation with adults. All these students are demonstrating the fact

that they are taking their next steps in discipleship.

Not to be outdone by the younger ones, many of our older adults realize that they have not "arrived" spiritually speaking and must continue to move forward on their own spiritual journey as well. Katherine Harris is a young adult who moved here during the pandemic, connected with us online and plugged in physically as soon as she felt comfortable. Because of her vivacious personality, she found her place to serve in the Greeter Ministry because she understands how important it is to make newcomers and regulars alike feel welcome so they can encounter God each week. Another adult with a few more trips around the sun under her belt, Rowena Hanson, has also not been content to merely sit and absorb but has stepped up to fill needs in the Café and also in keeping communion prepared each week. While many others could be mentioned, the lesson remains – in order to grow as a disciple, one thing we need to do is to serve others in the Body, which helps the Body grow and helps these disciples grow as well.



Saying “YES”

A few months ago, as our Middle School Winterfest retreat was approaching, the question was raised by several of our 8th grade girls who the chaperones would be. When it was revealed that one of their own Sunday morning small group leaders, Abby Morehead, would be attending, there was an immediate chorus of: “You HAVE to put her in OUR room!”

The beauty of such a simple request – demand, really! – is that it speaks volumes to the relational impact that has been made by Abby on these girls during her time as a volunteer in the youth ministry. Abby doesn’t only “show up” when required. She shows up regularly, randomly, and relationally.

Being a young adult professional, there are undoubtedly plenty of other things she could find to occupy her free time, but when asked if she’d like to go above and beyond and chaperone at a retreat, participate in a Christmas gift exchange, or be present for any variety of other ministry opportunities, she is always quick to say yes. The fact that “YES” comes so easily and so frequently to her is part of the reason the girls at Winterfest were eager to have her near them.

It’s not just a “yes” to showing up, it’s a “yes” to connecting and building relationships. It’s saying “yes” to having the conversations that lead to careful consideration of one’s life and choices. It’s saying “yes” to working with young people to show them Jesus and help them become disciples. For years now, Abby Morehead has said “yes” to partnering with God for kingdom work. May others follow her example and taste the blessings the Lord offers his servants.





Right Under Our Noses

S.E.A.R.C.H. is thriving thanks to our volunteers, the church, and Jesus who leads us deeply into discipleship. Last month, we began noticing that discipleship was naturally occurring right under our noses. Each morning, our lead volunteer, Beverly Mullins, stops and picks up clients who regularly come to the drop-in center. These clients have taken on roles as helpers and guides for other clients who have not visited before, or as much as they do. We had the idea to print them out certificates of discipleship after one of our clients said, "I am just doing for them what has been done for me."

When presented with their certificates, each client cried in gratitude at someone having noticed their growth. They take their positions very seriously and model exemplary behavior when serving. One of our disciples, Angela, recently brought a new girl to S.E.A.R.C.H. We will call her Faith. Faith was nervous at first but soon settled in after being comforted by volunteers. When she found out that we did transition to detox, rehab, and long term programs, she immediately lit up. She wanted so badly to get clean and get her son back from state custody.

The next day Beverly and her husband Johnny took her to rehab. A few weeks after that I received a call that she graduated and was ready to move on to the next phase. We transported her to an eighteen month program where she now has a job, pays her bills, and can report to the courts that she is sober and working hard toward sustainability. Faith is a shining example of true change. She lights up every room she walks into.

We are so grateful for discipleship. From Jesus, to Beverly, to Angela, to Faith. We pray it continues unto many more.

HE Showed Up

Part of what those of us in our missional community want to do is be able to go out to local places and meet new people and organically reach-out to those if there is a chance. This is a story of how God surprised me when he showed up and used us.

A couple of weeks ago, a few of us went downtown to a local venue where they were having a trivia night. This place was filled with college-aged people and people in their twenty-somethings.

When trivia night had just wrapped up, John Clevenger had asked the guy in charge something and he came over to our table and talked to us for what turned into a faith conversation for about 45 minutes. He asked us “So how do you guys know each other?” And we all said we go to church together! Without any hesitation, he told us about this boy he knew that had just been hit by a car and he asked if we could keep him in our prayers. John took the opportunity and said a prayer for the boy while we all sat together around the table.

The man told us that his faith background comes from the Restoration Movement as well and he knew exactly where our church meets. His called his wife over and she told us that she had been praying for young Christians to fill their space to be a light and she felt like our presence there that night was an answered prayer. As we were wrapping up, the man asked again, “So what time does your church meet again? I’m going to try to come over there sometime soon and check it out!”

None of us went to this place planning to say a prayer with a stranger or tell how we’re all connected, but we credit God for working in a way that we couldn’t have imagined on our own. Whether Phil decides to come to our church after all or not isn’t what really matters and that isn’t what makes this story a “win”. God gave us an opportunity to reach out our arms for His glory and we did. We acted for the sake of Jesus and that’s what makes this story a “win”. With that being said, if you meet a new face named Phil, please make him feel welcome!



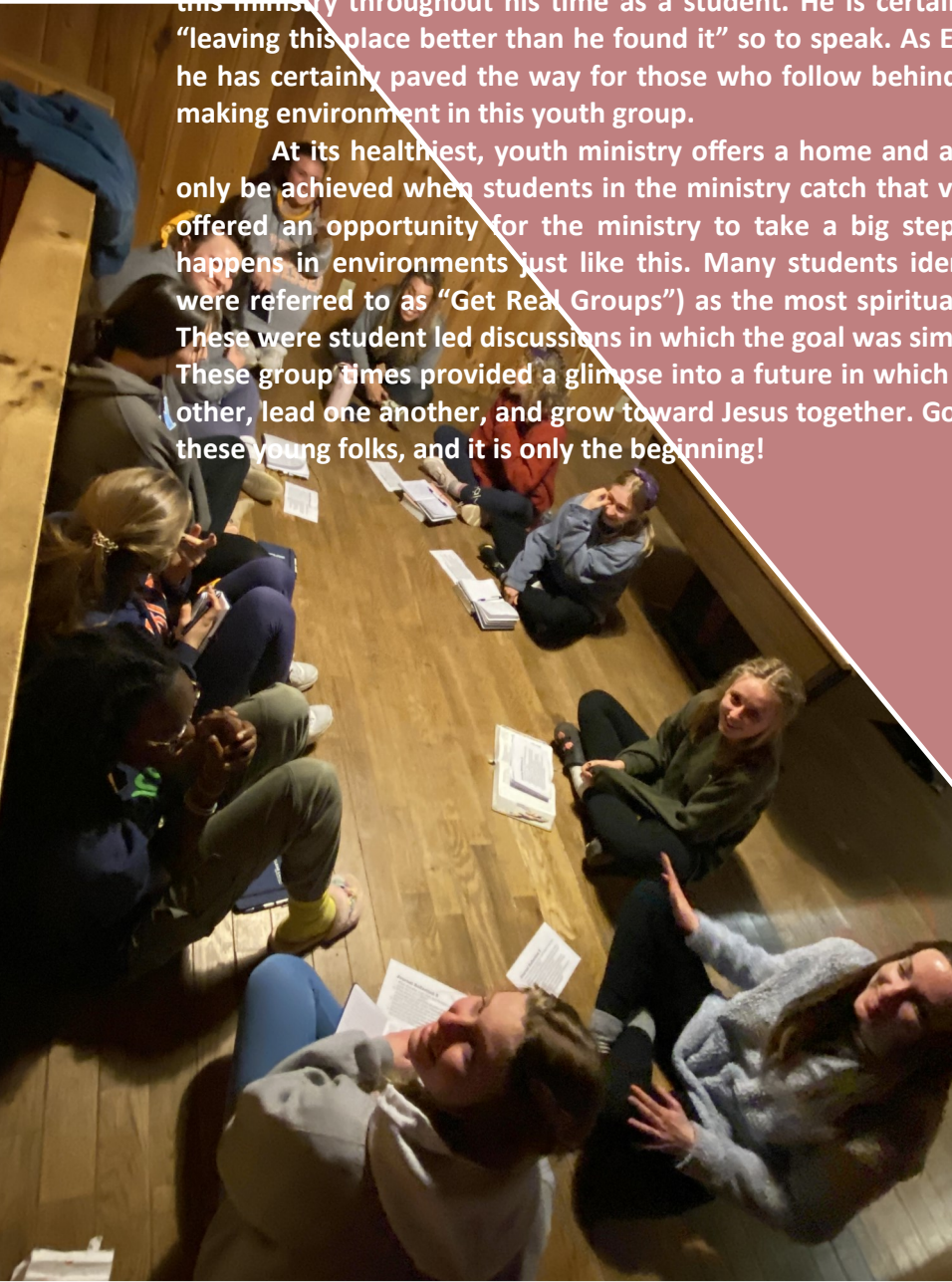
Get Real!

The HS Spring Retreat this year gave plenty of reasons to celebrate. Students had formative conversations, opened up about their challenges to one another, and built new relationships. The theme of the retreat - "Real" - lent itself to many unfiltered conversations about the good, the bad, and the ugly that the students are facing.

One of the primary focuses of the retreat was student leadership. During the weekend we handed over leadership to students, which resulted in a more energized and authentic experience. There were multiple roles to be filled, ranging from simply leading prayers to serving as one of our keynote speakers. Even the t-shirt design was done by one of our students, Ty Mathis (9th grade).

Among the leaders who rose to the occasion was Evan Pirtle (12th grade). He served as a captain for our team games, led groups as a discussion leader, and served as the keynote speaker for our final session. Evan has continually jumped at opportunities to serve this ministry throughout his time as a student. He is certainly an example of a student who is "leaving this place better than he found it" so to speak. As Evan finishes his time in this ministry, he has certainly paved the way for those who follow behind him to continue creating a disciple-making environment in this youth group.

At its healthiest, youth ministry offers a home and a community to all students. This can only be achieved when students in the ministry catch that vision and see it through. This retreat offered an opportunity for the ministry to take a big step in that direction. True discipleship happens in environments just like this. Many students identified our group discussions (which were referred to as "Get Real Groups") as the most spiritually formative element of the retreat. These were student led discussions in which the goal was simply, as the name states, to "get real". These group times provided a glimpse into a future in which students in CCYM truly care for each other, lead one another, and grow toward Jesus together. God is working mightily in the hearts of these young folks, and it is only the beginning!



Church on Mission

As Paul writes to the Romans . . . How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Throughout 2021, our Children's Ministry has studied the life of Jesus and the mission he invites us to join. Children learned the truth of who Jesus is, the gift of life God has given us through Jesus, and the hope we have to share with others because of Jesus. We repeatedly share the gospel reminding each other that's the Good News we get to share with others!

At the start of 2022, our study of the Church on Mission became the focus of our learning. Children were introduced to the book of Acts. We learned about the Holy Spirit, heard about the disciples of the early church in Acts, grappled with how we can be faithful in hard times, witnessed how meeting and trusting in Jesus can change our lives like Paul, and how we are called to share the truth of Jesus with others.

There have been more questions from our upper elementary students exploring their faith. One second grader shared her heart for a school classmate she said doesn't know Jesus, so teachers encouraged her. One third grader and two fourth graders decided to take their next step to follow Jesus by being baptized, and we also celebrated the baptism of a fourth grader's dad.

Our 3rd-5th graders also had the opportunity to spend time with some senior members of our church, which we call Young At Heart. A time of worship was prepared by our group, and we were able to share a meal together. The teachers explained to the kids this older generation has the experience of being faithful in hard times, especially the last two years, so we emphasized how we can encourage our older members simply by being kind and reminding them of Jesus' love. The boys and girls welcomed all with smiles, read scripture, sang songs, and prayed. One dad/son shared together a lesson of faithful endurance. Lastly, one 5th grade boy soaked up time sharing a table with two couples. Much laughter and life was shared as he chose to spend time in longer conversation with them more than cleaning up and playing with his friends. It was a blessing to be a part of these faith building interactions.

