

Food for the Flock



“The “Fake News” and “Alternative Facts” of Easter”

“So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.”

-Matthew 28:15

There was a day when “fake news” described the stories written for *The National Inquirer* and *Weekly World News*. Oh, for the good old days! Sadly, no one can be 100% convinced that anything they read or hear on the news is the kind of news we can trust. Added to that is the recent revelation that there are such things as “alternative facts.” I always thought that “alternative facts” were, well, lies!

While our newly found attention to “fake news” and “alternative facts” might seem surprising, they are actually the bitter fruit of a philosophy called Postmodernism. If you are my age or older, you were raised in the philosophy called Modernism. Modernism was the prevailing philosophy for several centuries, and gave us the scientific method. Some of the chief building blocks of Modernism include: facts are observable, truth exists, there is structure and design in nature, and there is objective reality. Modernism had its shortcomings. For many, it left little room for the supernatural, miracles, and ultimately God. Postmodern thought sought to remedy some of Modernism’s shortcomings. I’ve heard Postmodernism described as “having a certain respect for spiritual things and science, but being very suspicious of both.” Postmodern thinkers argue that truth is relative: what is true for you, may not be true for me; facts are changeable; there are many stories, not just one overarching story that explains everything.

That was a tough paragraph to read (not to mention, to write!). Read it again if you need to. Do you see how “fake news” and “alternative facts” fit perfectly into Postmodern thinking? “Truth is relative” = alternative facts! “There are many stories” = fake news! What we see playing out on our computer monitors, television screens, and newspapers is the “forbidden fruit” of Postmodernism. People my age (and younger) who have been taught Postmodern thought are now the journalists, broadcasters, and politicians of today!

Of course today’s proprietors of “fake news” and “alternative facts” are not the first people to play fast and loose with the facts. Consider the soldiers who guarded Jesus’ tomb and the leading priests to whom they reported. The soldiers knew the truth. Jesus had been buried on Friday. Saturday passed without much to report, but Sunday morning was different. The guards felt the earthquake. They saw the angel of the Lord come and roll the stone away. They shook with fear, and fainted. Battle-hardened soldiers had to report that they witnessed the resurrection, and fainted from fear in the aftermath.

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Even the religious leaders knew the truth! They knew that the soldiers would do nothing but report the truth. They concocted some “fake news” and “alternative facts.” They told the soldiers to report that they had simply fallen asleep, and while they were resting Jesus’ disciples came and stole the body! The religious leaders bribed the soldiers to share this “fake news” and Matthew tells us, the story is still being told today.

Most “fake news” is just that, “fake news.” The story of Jesus’ resurrection is anything but false. Consider, what explains the change in the disciples, from scared rabbits to bold witnesses for Christ? The Resurrection! What explains the birth of the Church and its world-wide expansion in a few hundred years? The Resurrection! How could over 500 witnesses to the Resurrection be wrong (1 Corinthians 15:6)? How do we explain the empty tomb if there was no Resurrection? How could the disciples keep such a grand conspiracy together if they had simply stolen Jesus’ body? Chuck Colson used to say that the six most powerful men in Washington, D.C. could not keep the Watergate Conspiracy a secret for six weeks. Do you think the weak-willed disciples could have kept the “fake news” together for over 2,000 years?

By all means, be a discerning consumer when it comes to the news. Check your sources. Make sure you are hearing the various sides of the stories. Then draw your conclusions. Do the same when it comes to the evidence concerning the Resurrection of Jesus. I sincerely believe you will come to the conclusion that He was and is the Son of God, He did die for the sins of the whole world, and that He rose again from the dead, and someday, He is returning.

Now that’s some real news!

Pastor Jim Schwenk

Good Friday

On Good Friday, we will gather for worship at 7:00 pm to remember the great, loving sacrifice Jesus made for us. All are welcome to sing praises to "the Lamb that was slain."

Easter Sunrise Service

At 7:00 am on Easter Sunday, we will gather to celebrate the resurrection of our King Jesus! Join us as we celebrate, and then, at 8:00, plan on staying for our annual Easter breakfast. Sunday School and morning worship will follow at their regular times.

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Brethren Housing Association Bike Tour 2017

On Saturday April 29, the Brethren Housing Association Bike Tour will be passing by Gingrichs. Once again, we've been asked to provide a hospitality rest stop for the riders who will be coming through. We will need at least four volunteers from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon to hand out snacks and drinks to the riders. We will also have the church open for the use of the rest rooms and a cool (or warm!) place to rest. Please call or email Ashlea in the church office if you can volunteer to help.

And while you're at it, mark your calendars for Saturday August 5. Hershey Medical Center's Chocolate Tour bike event will be passing by Gingrichs once again. We will be serving as a rest stop for the third straight year. This is another great way to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we serve others, and literally, give cups of cold water to those who need it. Make plans to spend all or part of the day with us!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Nursery Schedule</u>
April 2	Jean Weaver & Heather Schwenk
April 9	Diane Hoover & _____
April 16	Diane Garrett & Lois Diem
April 23	Diane Hoover & _____
April 30	Elaine Freed & Heather Schwenk

Bunny Burrow Celebrates Easter

Our April Bunny Burrow will be held on Saturday April 15 at 10:00 a.m. at the church. It's the day before Easter so you can be sure that there will be Easter stories, songs, and some Easter surprises! Children from pre-school age through the third grade, along with their care-givers, are welcome to attend. Make plans to include the Bunny Burrow as part of your Easter celebration.

Save the Dates for Our Second Annual "All Creatures Great and Small Weekend"

Yes, it's still seven months away, but you know it will be here before you know it! Our second annual "All Creatures Great and Small Weekend" will be held Saturday and Sunday October 14 and 15, 2017. The weekend will kick off with our 5k race and 1 mile fun run/walk on Saturday, along with a day full of animal-friendly events. On Sunday, we will have our animal-friendly worship service with even more animal friends in attendance. Remember . . . all God's creatures have a place in the choir! Invite your friends, and come join our worship menagerie!

Rabbit Room Reads *The Zookeeper's Wife*

The April meeting of the Rabbit Room will be held on Monday April 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lebanon Valley Council on the Arts, 770 Cumberland Street, Lebanon. During April we are reading *The Zookeeper's Wife* by Diane Ackerman. Roman Catholic zookeepers in Warsaw, Poland try to keep as many animals alive as possible during the Nazi occupation. But soon, their "collection" includes more humans than animals, as they start housing and caring for Jewish refugees from the Warsaw Ghetto. It's a powerful story of caring for those in need even at the risk of one's own life. Plus, it's soon to be a major motion picture. People will be talking about it; why not read it and start the conversation with us? The Rabbit Room: Good books. Good conversation. Good tea!