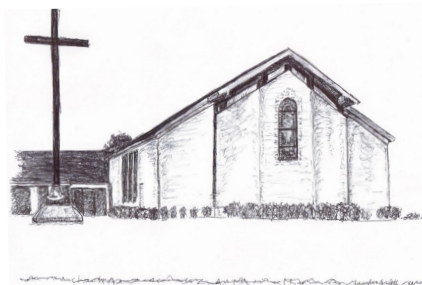


Presby News

APRIL 2023



FROM THE PASTOR . . .

Boy, how time passes quickly! I can remember the spring of the year when Laura was about three years old. I had decided to grow a garden. It was a good opportunity to begin to teach both of my children where we get food instead of Super!! Laura was helping me grow tomatoes. I had been telling her this plant would grow tomatoes. Then, one morning, she came to me with her fist tightly closed around something, I had no idea what. She exclaimed with great disdain. "Daddy! Would you look at what is plant did! Just look. It's supposed to be making tomatoes. And all it made was these flowers!" She had picked every blossom off of that tomato plant and brought them to me. Oh, the great teaching moment I had.

I look the time over the next few days and weeks to show her how God designed tomato plants. The very nature of a tomato plant is to produce tomatoes. It's what God designed it to be. However, early in the process, the plant only produces tiny little flowers. No tomatoes. It is only after time that we begin to see how those early blossoms become fully grown and delicious tomatoes. We have to watch the flower become the tiny fruit. We then watch the tiny green fruit grow. In time, that tiny green fruit becomes what God intended it to become: a beautiful large red tomato. All the while we are watching, we have to protect it from birds, insects, and even storms!

That was so many years ago. But I can still see the spring dress that she wore, and I can still see that now barren tomato plant in the spring sunshine. But, oh, how she has grown and changed in those years!

I think about how much this reminds me of our Christian walk. Sometimes what we become is not clearly seen at the beginning. Like the tomato plant, the first blossom of our Christian walk does not look like the daily journey of a Christian. Sure, it might demonstrate grace and love, but the rest of our lives sure does not resemble Christianity! We still have a lot of rough edges. But as we stay rooted in Christ, we begin to watch those early blossoms of Christianity change. We begin to see recognizable fruit of the Spirit. Naturally, we still have a lot of days that we just don't seem like Christ has changed our lives. But for those who take a closer look, they can see it. And they smile. Then over days, weeks, even months, we begin to watch the tiny signs of the fruit of the spirit grow into larger displays of the spirit in our lives. Then one day, when no one is paying much attention, we see the full fruit.

And, during this process, we all need someone to guard us against the dangers that can rob us of our fruit. Titus 2 encourages the more mature women to teach the younger women the right path. And Paul says in Romans 15:1-2 "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up." We who are more mature in faith are called to be the one's protecting those young in faith to help them to grow. We who are more mature in faith are called to remember that what we see in others is not always the final product of what God is doing in their lives. Sometimes God is growing, maturing, and changing the lives of others much like that tiny flower is not the final delicious tomato. Sometimes what we see in others is just the beginning stages.

In our own lives, we need to remember that what we see in ourselves may just be the blossom of what is yet to come. We may not recognize it yet. But our nature and our character are miraculously still like Christ because that is what he made us to be. We cannot change our spiritual DNA to produce anything less than Christ-likeness any more than that tomato plant can change its physical DNA to produce anything less than a tomato.

May God keep us encouraged to look further down life's road. May we see the perfect fruit of Christ in our lives even from the fragile beginnings of the tiny blossom of grace in us.

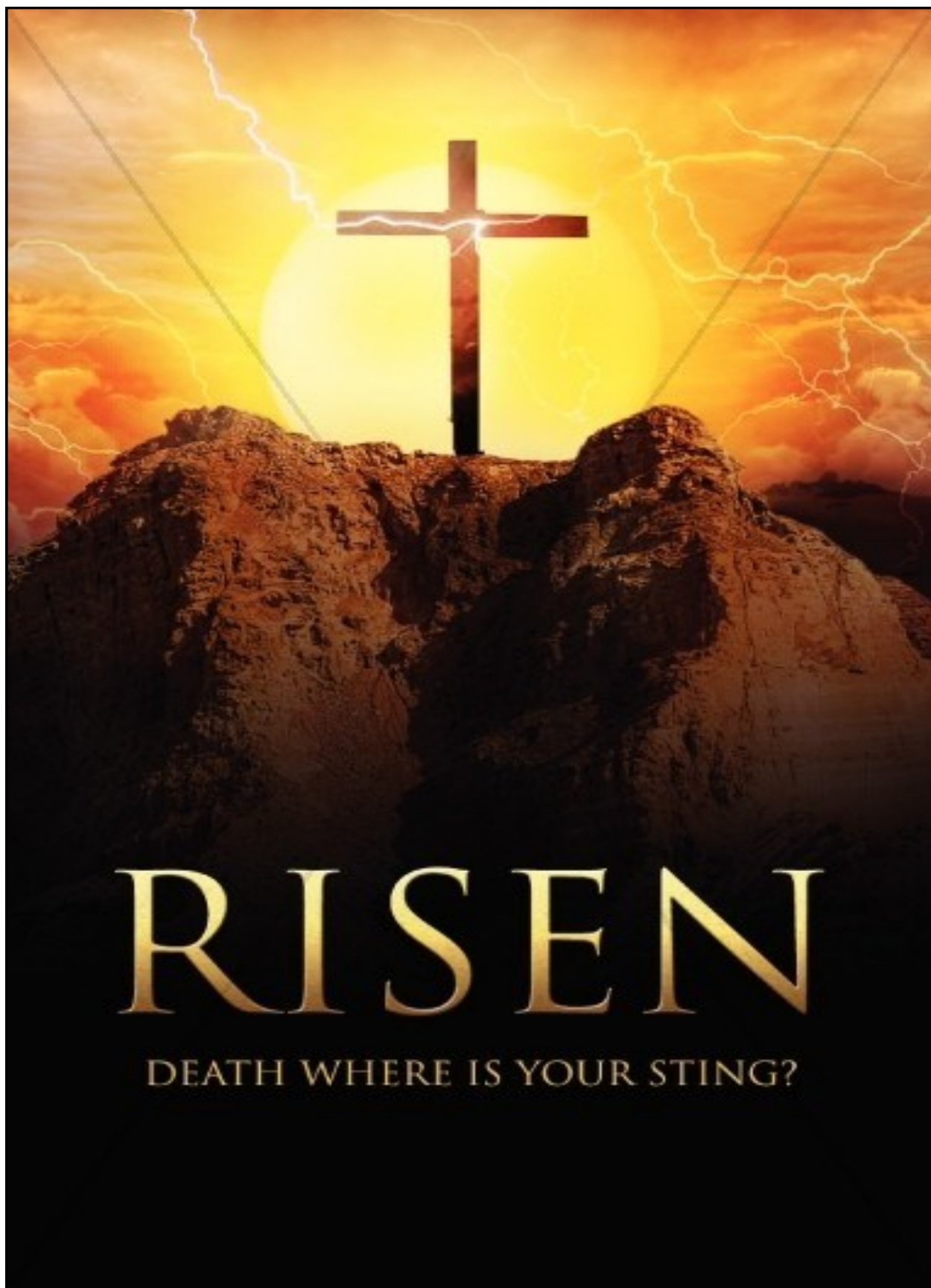
Grace and Peace,
Brother Greg

SPECIAL DATES

April 2	Palm Sunday
April 6	Maundy Thursday
April 7	Good Friday
April 9	Easter Sunday
April 10	Easter Monday (Office Closed)

*Have a blessed
Easter!*

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."
--John 11:25-26



RISEN

DEATH WHERE IS YOUR STING?

April Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Monitor	Communion Servers
April 2	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	Communion Team: Elizabette Kennedy & Bill Higgins
April 9	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	
April 16	Robert Kennedy Elizabette Kennedy	Bill Higgins	
April 23	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	
April 30	Robert Kennedy	Bill Higgins	



Bill & Laverne Willson **4/1**

Dirk & Annelize Benade **4/3**

Dirk Benade **4/4**



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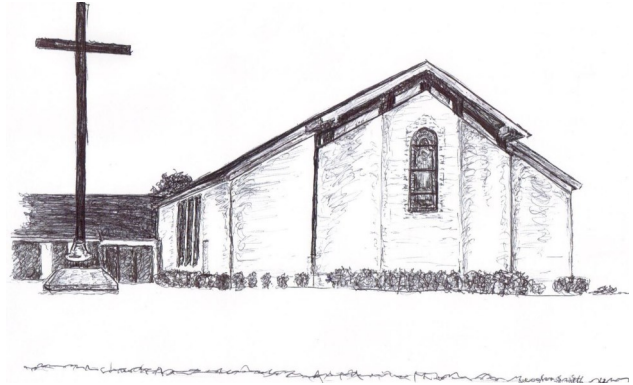
Greg Carroll, *Interim Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Music Director*

David Berrocal, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Administrative Assistant*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.