

The mission of Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church is to invite people to experience Jesus Christ and become his passionate followers.



Volume LX Issue 4

April 2024



In April, we will begin a new sermon series titled *Unafraid*. This series will examine the role of fears in our spiritual life. Pastor Chris shares more on this topic on pages 2-3.

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*The acknowledgment of human vulnerability and dependence may well be the antidote to the fear and anxiety at the root of the modern denial of death. -Earnest Becker*

During the Season of Easter this year, we will be talking about the role of fear in the spiritual life. I don't know how many phobias there are in our world, but I wonder if you've heard of 'Frigga triskaidekaphobia?' 'Frigga' refers to 'Friday,' and that other word means 'an irrational fear of the number 13.' So, people with frigga triskaidekaphobia have extreme superstition that creates fear whenever the number 13 falls on a Friday on the calendar. Apparently, it's a real thing. Our economy loses about \$1 billion in productivity revenue when this happens. People are afraid to conduct business on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>.

What are your fears? Spiders? Snakes? Heights? Or, we can go a little deeper: maybe we fear missing out on good things ('fomo'), or we may fear people who are different than us, or we may fear the judgment of God, or others, or ourselves. Maybe we fear failure, or change, or uncertainty.

The reality is that we all have fears. Fear is meant to be an instinctual gift from God that we utilize to protect ourselves from real danger. Fear is informative. It says, "Be careful. Watch out. You might get hurt." So, fear is good, necessary, and life-preserving. The problem is when we allow fear to get the best of us. It has a small place off to the side, but we give it center stage.

Many of our deepest fears actually go unacknowledged. Some of our fears are not even real. They are imagined. In this way, fear and grief are related. When we were children, someone hurt us at some point, and we didn't know how to process the pain, the grief. Instead, we stored it in our bodies for so many years that whenever our subconscious thinks it might happen again, the old fear is triggered. We wish it weren't there anymore because we know in our conscious awareness that the threat is gone, no longer real, and therefore, it is simply an imagined fear. When we react to our fear triggers, we often say and do things we later regret, thinking to ourselves, "Why did I snap at that person? I really didn't need to react according to my fears."

Henri Nouwen wrote: "Underneath all our emphasis on successful action, many of us suffer from deep-seated, low self-esteem...So our actions become more an expression of fear than of inner freedom...As we keep our eyes directed at

the One who says, “Do not be afraid,” we may slowly let go of our fear. We will learn to live in a world without zealously defended borders. We will be free to see the suffering of other people, free to respond not with defensiveness, but with compassion, with peace, with ourselves.”<sup>1</sup>

The most destructive fear is the fear that goes unacknowledged, the fear that lurks unaware.

In his monumental work, “The Denial of Death,” psychologist Ernest Becker suggests that every fear is ultimately rooted in the fear of death.<sup>2</sup> If this is true, then our Christian story gives an absolute way forward through our fears. It’s why Jesus told us to die before we die. If we can get away from our ultimate fear of death, we find that all our little fears have no power over us, and we can truly live in freedom.

In the upcoming “Unafraid” sermon series, we will explore the most common worries and fears experienced by Americans today. We will consider practical steps for overcoming these fears and reflect upon fear in the light of scripture and a faith that promises again and again that we don’t need to live in fear, but we can instead live with courage and hope.

I hope this series will enrich your journey.

With Hope,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pastor Chris

<sup>1</sup><https://henrinouwen.org/meditations/letting-go-of-fear/>

<sup>2</sup>Becker, Ernest. The Denial of Death. United Kingdom: Souvenir Press, 2020.



### APRIL SERMONS

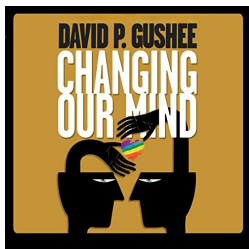
<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>
4/7	<i>Do You Love Me?</i>	John 21:15-19
4/14	Resurrection Narratives	Luke 24:13-16, 28-35

### NEW SERMON SERIES - UNAFRAID

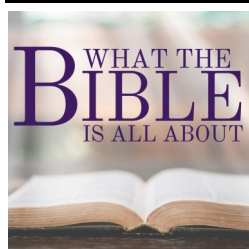
4/21	<i>The Power of Fear</i>	Numbers 13:26-14:9
4/28	<i>Fear of Missing Out</i>	1 Samuel 18:5-9

### ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Two new classes will begin Sunday, April 14, at 9:45 a.m.:



**Changing Our Mind** (Room 501): Brian Babb will lead a three-week study on the book *Changing Our Mind* by author and ethicist David P. Gushee, discussing the Biblical case for full inclusion of LGBTQ+ Christians into the life and ministry of the church. Copies of the book will be available for purchase through MOPC.



**What the Bible is All About: Old Testament Poetry** (Room 502): Join us in exploring the beauty, complexity, and wisdom of the poetry of the Old Testament. We'll spend six weeks looking at the forms and themes of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon and considering their ongoing witness in our walk of faith.



Happy spring, friends. Christ is risen! It's been lovely to get to start enjoying the warm weather and sunshine outside lately. Tons of people have been out on Sunday afternoons at Sugarhouse Park, where Matt and I take our dog for walks. Things are turning green again. There's a hopefulness to this particular season that reflects the Resurrection hope of new life. As we watch things begin to grow, it's good for us to consider the flourishing of the rest of God's creation as well as our own.

Creation care and climate justice are not always bright and sunny topics—especially given the world's current climate crisis. Scientific agencies like the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have made it clear that drastic measures need to be taken in order to avoid the most damaging effects of a rapidly changing climate.<sup>1</sup> It may be “out of sight, out of mind” for us most days, but even we have seen more volatile weather patterns and drought here in Utah in recent years. And it continues to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations worldwide. Whether or not we're conscious of it, we are dependent on creation, which “waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Romans 8:19).

So how do we cultivate an awareness and appreciation for this earth that God has given us and come to see creation as a neighbor whom we must also love like ourselves? There are many major policy decisions that need to be made that we can and should advocate for. But on a smaller scale, perhaps it starts by simply remembering and experiencing the beauty that surrounds us by admiring the mystery and complexity of all of God's gifts.

Barbara Brown Taylor tells the story of a sermon given when she was young where the pastor praised her for taking care of tadpoles in her yard just like God takes care of the rest of his creation. She walked out of that service “into a God-enchanted world, where I could not wait to find further clues to heaven on earth. Every leaf, every ant, every shiny rock called out to me—begging to be watched, to be listened to, to be handled and examined. I became a detective of divinity, collecting evidence of God's genius and admiring the tracks left for me to follow.”<sup>2</sup>

When was the last time you delighted in nature like you did as a child? Or saw some element of God's goodness in the plants and animals surrounding you? May we find time to spend with God's creation in these weeks to come so that we can love and steward it with all the care that Christ has shown to us.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bre

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

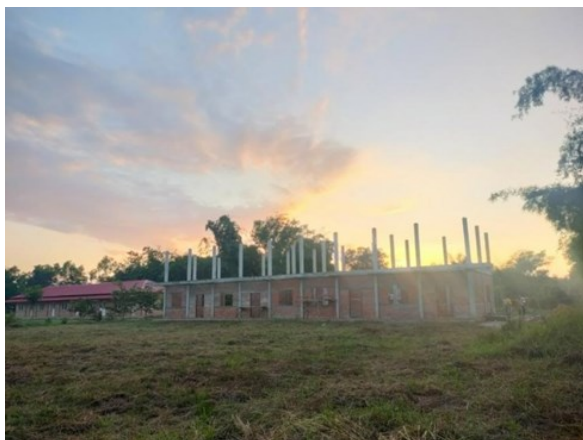
<sup>2</sup>Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life: Living Out Your Vocation* (London: Canterbury Press, 2013), 16.






Near the capital of Myanmar (formerly Burma), Dave and Nancy Biak Kung faithfully minister to orphans and students. Life is tenuous as they never know when a bombing will occur nearby. Recently, teachers were told by the military people in control to stop teaching and, instead to participate in demonstrations. Many teachers refused and education was severely impacted while unrest increased. Amid the upheaval, David had the vision to start a Christian school. His hope is to have an English-based curriculum that would help students enter an American school system for secondary education. By faith, he gathered teachers to begin teaching and then started building a school. The idea filled a great need, and now there are 224 students on the Carmel International School campus. As you can see in the picture below, the building is not complete. David is trusting God for \$5,000 to complete the school. He hopes that student tuition will cover the cost of all students plus those who belong to this mission. As Myanmar continues with political instability, will you pray for David and Nancy and the school? MOPC has supported the orphanage and theological college of this ministry since 2012.

- Debbie Penney, Global Missions Team Leader



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	2 6:30 am Men's Bible 9:30 am PW 7 pm AA	3 2 pm Chronic Conditions	4 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm PAL 7 pm Wm's Bible	5 7 pm Rescue Mission 7 pm AA	6 11 am AA
7 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for all ages	8 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	9 6:30 am Men's Bible 6:30 pm Finance 7 pm Deacons 7 pm AA	10 7 pm Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	11 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 12 pm Adult Lunch 7 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Ministry	12 9 am Sandwiches 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen 7 pm AA	13 10 am Utah Food Bank 11 am AA
14 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for all ages	15 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	16 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Session 7 pm AA	17 2 pm Chronic Conditions 7 pm Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	18 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm PAL 7 pm Wm's Bible	19 7 pm AA	20 11 am AA
21 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for all ages	22 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	23 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Facilities 7 pm AA	24 7 pm Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	25 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 7 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Ministry	26 7 pm AA	27 11 am AA
28 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for all ages	29 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm Personnel 7 pm AA	30 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm AA	 <p>April BIRTHDAYS AND EVENTS</p>			



UTAH  
FOOD  
BANK

Our MOPC Team will meet on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to noon at 3150 S and 900 W for our volunteer time at the Utah Food Bank. It is always an adventure – come join us – children 6 years and older are welcome with a parent. Closed-toe shoes are required. See you there for a fun time together helping others.

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Every second Friday of the month, volunteers from MOPC help serve our community by giving their time to assist St. Vincent de Paul in providing food to those in need. On these Fridays, at 9 a.m., a group gathers in the MOPC kitchen to prepare sandwiches to be delivered. Also, at 4:30 p.m., MOPC volunteers by serving meals at the St. Vincent de Paul soup kitchen. If you want to participate, please sign up in the gathering area or contact the church for more information. The next opportunity to help will be April 12.

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Our April Adult Fellowship Luncheon will be Thursday, April 11, at noon, bring your favorite dish to share for fun, food, fellowship, and a great program to follow! Our very own Brad Hayden will present “Unmanned: The Future of Air Cargo Delivery.” Can you guess how? Come and find out with Brad for a very interesting presentation. (Perhaps even a surprise) We still need one person to help set up at 11 a.m. Call Pauline at 801-278-9566 if you can help.



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)



April showers, flowers will bloom  
Come join Presbyterian Women and chase away the gloom!

Our MOPC Presbyterian Women's monthly meeting will be Tuesday, April 2, at 9:30 a.m. for light refreshments, and at 10 a.m., our guest speaker, Carol Day, will review our Justice and Peace book, "The God Who Sees: Immigration, the Bible and the Journey to Belong" by Karen Gonzalez. This is a very timely subject, and you won't want to miss it! The monthly Justice and Peace calendars can be found at [www.presbyterianwomen.org/justice](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/justice), where you will also find the list of books for 2024. Hostesses for April will be Roberta Bolton and Sher Santaw. Bible Study will be led by Carol Day.

The PW Spring Gathering will be at Community Presbyterian Church, 311 S 100 E, Brigham City, April 19-20, featuring the 2023 USME with Jill Baskett, Emily Lower, and Ellen Smith. Ellen works with mission workers in central and eastern Europe and will speak about militarized borders and refugees in Europe. The fee is \$15 at the door. To register, contact Sarah Yates at [sesyates@gmail.com](mailto:sesyates@gmail.com) by April 15 or your MOPC Moderators, Pauline Forster and Mardi Lessey.

PW groups that cannot attend the Churchwide Gathering August 8-10 in St. Louis, MO, will be able to stream some of it and have watch parties.

-Pauline Forster

## MOPC CHRONIC CONDITIONS SUPPORT GROUP

There are many types of conditions that chronically impact people. If you or a loved one is one of those people, we invite you to check out the support group designed for you. We meet twice a month via Zoom to talk, pray, and encourage one another. Our meetings this month will take place on Wednesdays, April 3 and 17 at 2 p.m. Please text or call Janet Nelson at 801-560-9044 for the Zoom link or more information.





# Mt O Youth

## WEDNESDAY NIGHTS!

If you ever stop by MOPC on a Wednesday night, you'll see over 50 tweens and teens playing, singing, learning about the Bible, asking great questions, praying, talking, offering support to one another, and smiling. MOPC hosts Wednesday night Small Groups for 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. This is typically a high-energy time when kids can grow in their faith and build positive relationships with peers and adults.





# Mt O Kids

Jen and Jared lead this time but could not do so without many wonderful, dedicated volunteers. A huge thank you to our AMAZING Wednesday night small group leaders: Brian Babb, Courtney Babb, Tyler Beck, Eric Brozek, Lenee Fuelling, Ty Johnson, Elyse Jones, Megan Judkins, Alie Leeftang, Marnie Saunders, Dennis Winge, and Cate Ziegler!

- Jen Christensen, Directory of Family Ministry and  
Jared McClure, Director of Youth Ministries



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## Ministry Staff

Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Pastor Emeritus  
Executive Administrator  
Administrative Assistant  
Director of Family Ministry  
Director of Youth Ministry  
Treasurer  
Director of Childcare  
Facilities Manager

Chris Pritchett  
Bre Magill  
Jeff Silliman  
Sheila Barnish  
Sarah Brozek  
Jen Christensen  
Jared McClure  
Jeanne Mehlhoff  
Maddie Woodruff  
Alex Woodruff

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**Visit Us on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/mountolympuspresbyterian](http://www.facebook.com/mountolympuspresbyterian)

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## Elders Serving on Session

### Class of 2024

Brian Babb  
Paige Frame  
Carlee Johnson  
Deb Penney

### Class of 2025

Amy Beckler  
Shauna Huston  
Kaye Meidinger  
Armand Van Hien

### Class of 2026

Carol Day  
Megan Judkins  
Edward Owens  
Mark Templeman

## OUR MINISTRY OF CARE

### Board of Deacons

Class of 2024: Jill Baskett, Marina Collins, Sheridan Metcalf, Sher Santaw,  
Karen Spackman

Class of 2025: Lonnie Baskett, Chuck Graybill, Karen Jackson, Debora Owens, John Terrion,  
Anne Gerrie van Hien

Class of 2026: Sherrie Bertrand, Thea Hayden, Julie Holtrop, Becky Sowards, Jim Sowards  
Nikki Zyp

### Stephen Ministers

Kristina O'Neal\* and Lauri Winge\*  
\* Stephen Ministry Leadership Team