



Growing up I loved all of the variety shows that were on TV. I loved the sketch shows like Carol Burnett and Friends. My mom usually had Lawrence Welk on the television along with the Captain and Tennille show. While they were not necessarily my favorites, I did secretly enjoy them a bit. My favorites were usually on Saturday nights. Over the years of my childhood, Saturday nights after we had our baths, our nights were filled with Sha-Na-Na, Solid Gold, the Donny and Marie Show, and Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters. My sister and I would even fuss over who got “to be” which Mandrell sister. We could share in music and silly laughter as a family. As I grew into my early teenage years, I would watch American Bandstand, Friday night videos and, of course, I loved watching MTV. (That was when MTV just showed music videos!) Music award shows started to make their appearance on primetime, and thankfully, they could be watched by the whole family. In fact, watching the Grammy’s and seeing Michael Jackson moonwalk across the stage was so fun!

Out of all the years and hours that were spent watching songs and sketches being performed, there is one performance that I remember most. It was a performance by Dolly Parton on the CMA awards in 1989. What struck me about this particular performance was that it combined great singing of an individual and a mass choir, but more importantly it was a song that connected to me at the deepest core of who I am. It was a song about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Dolly sang and the curtains pulled back to hear the mass choir belting out “He’s Alive,” I remember being overwhelmed at the reality that our Savior went to the cross, conquered death and rose again so that I may live!!!!!! How can I not join in with Dolly and the choir in exclaiming, “He’s Alive and I’m forgiven!!!!!”

This Easter Sunday, I pray you belt out the victorious news that “He’s Alive!!!!” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mux_UodRBUA

-Kristie



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- POP UP Event:
Cooking Class on
Thursday, April 15
- POP UP Event:
Party Art on
Saturday, May 1
(registration opens
April 19)

The Week that Changed the World | Donna Evans

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son...” Galatians 4:4

As I write this article, we are in the middle of Holy Week, an annual celebration of the Week that Changed the World. In their excellent book *The Final Days of Jesus*, authors Andreas Kostenberger and Justin Taylor describe the first Holy Week as “the most important week of the most important person who ever lived.” This week is so important to the world that close to one-half of every Gospel account is dedicated to the final week of Jesus’ earthly life. Everything before this in scripture looks toward this week. Everything after this looks back and explains it.

Read the Gospel accounts and you will find that Jesus’ birth, life, and ministry are a constant surprise. Author Richard Hays writes, “God’s manner of revelation is characterized by hiddenness, reversal and surprise.” We come to the final week of Christ and the surprise only crescendos during the week that changed the world.

The appointed time of Jesus’ death has come and He resolutely sets his face toward Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51) Swollen to 5-6 times its normal size, Jerusalem is filled with Jewish pilgrims arriving from all over the world to celebrate the annual Passover feast. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy written over 500 years before. (Zechariah 9:9) The large crowds that followed Jesus from Galilee now throw down their coats and palm branches before Him and shout:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”
(Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:10)

Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem both reveals and conceals like no other. Because he is a king, Jesus deserves a coronation. Because he is a king like no other, Jesus deserves a coronation like no other. And this regal coronation is full of more surprises:

- Jesus doesn’t come with an army, but enters Jerusalem with a mob of peasants
- He isn’t riding a white horse of victory, but riding a donkey and coming in peace
- The crowds are not waving swords, but palm branches
- Jesus doesn’t attack a Roman fortress; He cleanses the temple
- He is not defeating oppressors; He is debating religious leaders
- Instead of conquering, He is crucified
- Instead of crushing, He came to be crushed.

-He doesn't offer a Passover sacrifice; He IS the final Passover sacrifice

-Jesus is not a victim; he is a volunteer

Everything is turned upside down.

Palm Sunday ended with Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. Jesus endorsed the crowd's claims; but He knew their hearts are wrong and He wept. Israel's whole history has been waiting for this moment, yet they do not recognize God coming to them, for them.

What about us? Have we recognized this King who came in ways that reverse the values of the world? Jesus came in weakness and service, not strength and force, to die as a ransom for us. This week as we prepare for Easter Sunday, why not read one of the Gospel accounts of the final days of Jesus and the Week that Changed the World?

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21) And everything was turned upside down.

It was the Week that Changed the World!



A Note From Kristie...

In Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book, *Life Together*, he talks about the privilege of living in close community with fellow believers. In fact, he calls those of us who experience this on a daily basis to, "praise God's grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank God on his knees and declare: It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren." In his book, Bonhoeffer challenges us to consider how many Christians through history and around the globe long for the type of fellowship with other believers that we so easily have access to on a daily basis. He calls us to see it as a gift of grace. As a Briarwood family we have this wonderful opportunity to do life together – I pray we would not easily dismiss it but recognize it as the gift of grace that it is.

In working at the church, I have also had the wonderful opportunity to view my workplace as a unique gift of grace from the Lord where I am surrounded by fellow believers day in and day out during our work times. I recognize that this is not the "norm" for most believers even here in the US. It is a kind gift of grace from the Lord. Part of the kindness of the Lord has been the fellowship and friendship I get to experience with the Women's Ministry Administrative Assistant. I have counted the last two Admins as dear friends: Christian Terrell and Laura Franks. My most recent admin, Katie Russell, has served with me the longest of the admins thus far. She has been an encourager, a partner in ministry, a servant, a confidante in my journey, a dreamer, and a joy and delight. I count her as a dear friend and co-laborer. And, I count her as a gift of grace from the Lord!

As most of you know, the Lord is expanding Katie and Andrews' family as they will soon welcome a new baby boy into their family later this month. With the growth of her family, Katie will be stepping down as the Women's Ministry Administrative Assistant on April 2nd. Please keep her in your prayers over these last few weeks of her pregnancy and join me in thanking her for her service and friendship. She has truly been a gift of grace to the ministry and to all she has served.

I have asked her to say a few words about her exiting her role as Admin.





A note from Katie...

Hi Ladies! As Kristie mentioned in her introduction, I am officially stepping down from my role here as the Women's Ministry administrative assistant this month. As many of you know, my husband and I are expecting our first child mid-April, and God has opened a door for me to be able to work from home. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be home with our son, but will greatly miss the day-in, day-out joys of getting to work alongside Kristie and so many of you!

Briarwood holds such a special place in my heart. My parents joined the church before my sisters and I were born and, aside from my time away at Auburn University, Briarwood has always been my home church. In high school I spent summers working as a counselor for Briarwood Day Camp; during college I interned with the Children's Ministry and the College Ministry during two of my summer breaks; post-grad I had the opportunity to work on staff with the College Ministry under Max Bunn; and, these past two years, the Lord has allowed me to be a part of the Women's Ministry team under Kristie! It has truly been a privilege to be employed here at Briarwood under such wonderful leadership. God has used these positions to teach me in areas where I needed growth and to provide life-on-life discipleship in unique ways. I am so grateful!

One of my favorite aspects of my time in the Women's Ministry has been the opportunities it's given me to meet so many women from all ages and stages. There is such a wealth of wisdom, creativity, and talent among you all! Kristie and I talk all the time about how this past year of being in a pandemic has really brought out aspects of our women we hadn't seen before—we've learned so much more about each of you as we've all had to think outside of the box on ways to connect and try new things! Such a sweet blessing!!

Thank you all for your kindness to me, and for all of the ways you each have uniquely impacted me. And most of all—thank you, Kristie—God has beautifully gifted you for this role. You are wise, fun, supportive, and your heart for the Lord is evident whether you are up in front teaching a group of women or when you are working behind the scenes. Your joy is contagious! Thank you!!!

I look forward to continuing to fellowship with you all and getting to meet more of you as the Women's Ministry continues to grow and (Lord-willing) have more freedom to gather together in person as the pandemic subsides. May you all have a blessed month!

Sincerely,
Katie Russell

pop up



cooking class

Where? Apron Cooking School | 6215 Tattersall Park, Suite 117

When? Thursday, April 15th from 6:30pm to 9:00pm

What? Demonstration Cooking Class

Cost? \$50

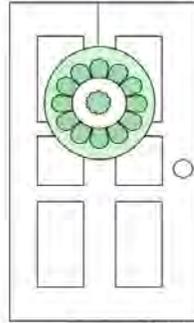
Menu— Creamy Ricotta Citrus Cheesecake
Seasonal Fruit Cobbler with Toasted Spice Whipped Cream
Salted Caramel Macadamia and Dark Chocolate Tart
Carrot Cake

For more information and to register, please go to:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084CACAF23A2F94-popupcooking1>

*After you have reserved your spot on the sign-up genius site, you will receive an email from us on how to pay to finish your registration! There are no refunds. (You may however, give your spot to someone else, in the event you are no longer able to come.)

pop up



party art

Where? Pelham Party Art | 3183 Lee St, Pelham, AL 35124

When? Saturday, May 1 from 10:00am to 12:30pm

What? Painting and Decorating Front Door Hangers

Cost? \$38

Examples:



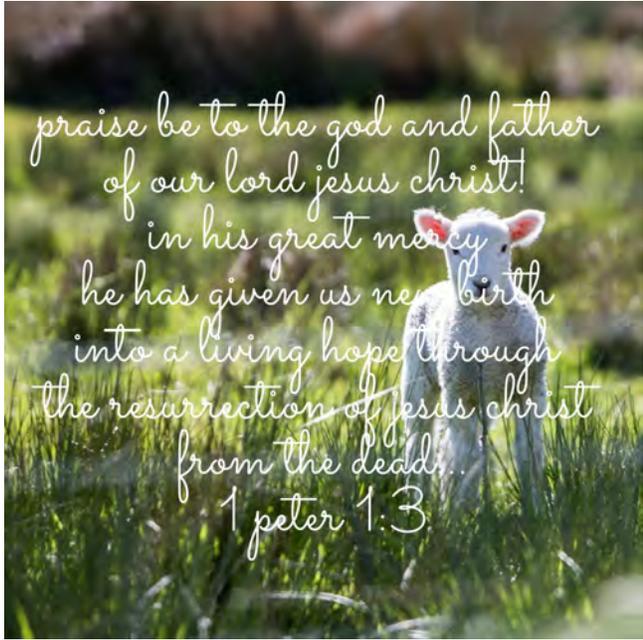
Registration will go live on April 19 on our website

*After you have reserved your spot on the sign-up genius site, you will receive an email from us on how to pay to finish your registration! There are no refunds. (You may however, give your spot to someone else, in the event you are no longer able to come.)

5 Year Reading Plan: April



During the month of April, we will be reading the book of 2 Samuel!

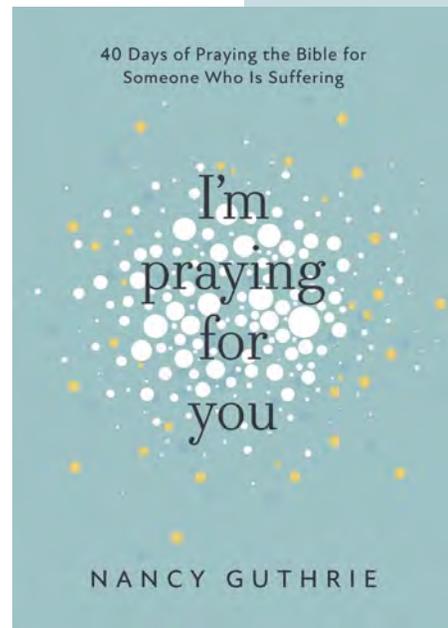


New from Nancy Guthrie

I'm Praying for You

How many times have you told someone you would pray for them, but then didn't know what to pray, or forgot to pray?

When we hear that a friend is struggling, it can be easy to say, 'I'm praying for you', but harder to know *what* to actually pray. The scriptures provide a resource for that, giving us the words to ask God to do the very things he has told us he intends to do in and through the suffering in a believer's life. In this new little book, which releases in April, I work through forty carefully chosen Scripture passages, offering some brief thoughts and then a prayer based on that scripture in which you can insert the name of the person you're praying for. But the best thing about the book may be that each entry includes a QR code so that with a click and



copy on your smartphone, you can send a personal text message to those you're praying for, letting them know not only *that* you are praying, but exactly *what* you are praying.