

### Easter Hymn stories

#### 'Were you there?'

The first publication of this stirring spiritual appeared in 1899 in William E. Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, a commentary on spirituals. Barton states in his book that he first heard this spiritual sung "in the South" however, Barton does note that the song likely originated in the African American slave community.

Further research on the spiritual's origin confirms that its roots are impossible to trace, as the song wasn't written by an individual songwriter but arose out of the collective slave experience of oppression and suffering.

In the lyrics Barton provided, the first stanza recalls the Lord's Crucifixion by metaphorically asking the listener:

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

The subsequent three stanzas likewise recall Jesus's being nailed to the Cross, being pierced in the side, and the later refusal of the sun to shine after the Crucifixion. Variations of this spiritual add a fifth and sixth stanza about the laying of the Lord in the tomb and the raising of the Lord from the tomb. These series of questions about Jesus's Passion obviously aren't meant to be taken literally. Instead, the singer is asking the listener to embrace the gravity and purpose of the Crucifixion and, through doing so, be transformed in the here and now.

The spiritual has become one of the most prominent spirituals with African American roots, and is often sung on Good Friday during Lent.

### Encouraging scriptures for Easter

Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers four articles of faith which were of 'first importance' in 1 Corinthians 15 v 3-7.

1. 'that Christ died for our sins'
2. 'that He was buried'
3. 'that He was raised'
4. 'that He appeared in resurrection to many people'

Each year we mark not just the crucifixion of Jesus, but His resurrection as we celebrate His victory over death on the first Easter Day. While some Jewish scholars, including the Pharisees, believed in some kind of life after death, the Sadducees denied it completely and the Greeks feared it, but believed in the immortality of the soul!

The resurrection of Jesus broke all the taboos and misinformation about life after death and Paul clearly lays out the truth. The teaching Paul gives in 1 Cor 15 is radically different from anything the early converts had believed before they knew the Lord. For this great chapter is all about the resurrection of the body— Christ's body and our bodies. This is the Christian hope! Robert Lowry's hymn sums it all up!

*Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.  
He arose the victor from the dark  
domain and He lives forever with His  
saints to reign,  
He arose, He arose  
Hallelujah Christ arose!*

# Whitchurch Baptist Church

## Sunday March 13th 2022



**Jesus said 'It's only the sick who need a doctor!'**

**No 5 in series on Mark.**

***'Who needs a doctor & who needs the Sabbath?'***

**Speaker: John Hadley**

**Mark 2 v 14-17 & 23-28**

*Welcome*

Minister: Rev Jack Walker.

Secretary: June McCaughren

Treasurer: Laura Ivey

Leadership Team: Adam Stacey. John McCaughren. John Hadley.

## **What's on this week:-**

**Monday 10.30am Ladies Group**

**Wednesday 7.30pm Churches Together**

**Lent series 'Paintings & Easter' No 1**

**Jack Walker.** [No mid week meeting]

**Saturday March 19th**

**'WBC Work Day'** Sign up for your voluntary work slot!

**Sunday March 20th. No 6 in St Mark**

**'What gets Jesus angry?'** Jack speaking

## **Future Dates:**

*[clocks go forward Sun 27th]*

**Sunday March 27th. No 7 in St Mark**

**'All Age Service'** Mothering Sunday.

**'Sowing, reaping, keeping'**

**Wed 30th** Lent series No 2 in Art 7.30

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## **Egypt appoints a Christian to top judges position**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has appointed a Christian, Judge Boulos Fahmy Eskandar, as president of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC).

Judge Boulos, 65, is the first ever Christian to be appointed to the position, which effectively makes him Egypt's highest judge.

The appointment of a Christian to such a high position of authority is rare in a Muslim-majority country, and demonstrates the courage of President al-Sisi's support for religious equality and freedom. next column

## **Easter is coming!**

Today is the last day to order your 'Real Easter Eggs' as highlighted in the past three News Sheets!

You can order your Easter Eggs which is the only one that tells the Easter Story by selecting which Eggs you'd like from the lists on the past Newsheets or see the poster on the Notice Board by the kitchen.

Let Gordon know, give him the money and your Egg will be with you in time for Easter!

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**.Egypt appoints etc.....**

In Islamic contexts it is not expected that Christians will rise to such positions of political or legal authority.

The SCC is Egypt's highest court, and is independent of both the Egyptian president and parliament. The court has the role of interpreting Egypt's laws and regulations and deciding whether they are constitutional.

Judges appointed to the SCC serve until their mandatory retirement age of 70.

Christians, who make up 10% of the population of Egypt, say that their situation in the Muslim-majority country is now better than it has been in living memory.

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## **My Bible—My Story**

'I've always liked Ecclesiastes 1.2:

“‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Teacher” – even though it's melancholy and depressing, which I am not. 'The book talks about how ordinary things are “smoke in the wind”. At the end the writer says you have to obey God; I interpret that as trust God. If God is at the centre, all those daily things are looked after. It's a transient life, but we trust God to guide us through it.

'Chapter 3 talks about a time to embrace and a time to refrain, which is where I am in my life – it's a time to refrain from embracing.

'My husband is clinically extremely vulnerable – about three months ago he had a kidney transplant. It was very tough but I felt held in God's hands. I knew I had an immense amount of prayer support, and I felt a sense of peace about the situation. That's been very true over the last two years – God has been in the good stuff and the bad. It's been a time to be looked after.

'Over the last two years we had nine months watching him deteriorate; then there were 12 months of dialysis that nearly killed him, then his sister donated a kidney. Three months on, he's getting some energy back and looking to go back to work.

'He is diabetic now, a side effect of the transplant. That's a daily stress for me, as I've got to worry about food – we can't just grab a takeaway. We have three children aged 14, 12 and 4. They've been amazing, though they would have liked more freedom.

'The little one was fine, until one day she burst into tears – my brother came to visit with his five-year-old and she cried when they left and said, “Nobody comes to our house with small people.” But we're a stronger family unit. 'I am quite matter-of-fact, but there are crisis points and I do have some anxiety issues now. At times I'm very emotional. There are times of despair, or elation, but I've definitely been sustained by my faith through all this. 'Life is like smoke in the wind and I just want to grab it, and love it and then it's gone, and that's fine.'



## **News updates to stimulate your Prayers!**

Remember in your prayers this week for Sandra Jackman having had successful surgery. She now has to rest for two weeks. Jean Hopkins is still progressing well with the therapy and hoping for news of a possible date for coming home. Continue to uphold Carol in these days and pray for Hazel Culley as they investigate the cause of recent problems, and of course pray earnestly for Ukraine. It's difficult to know what to pray – but God knows when we don't!