

**The First Presbyterian Church**

**P.O. Box 6 15 Main Street**

**Arkport, NY 14807**

**[ArkportPresbyterianChurch@gmail.com](mailto:ArkportPresbyterianChurch@gmail.com)**

**[www.arkpres.org](http://www.arkpres.org)**

**PRESBYTERIAN POST**

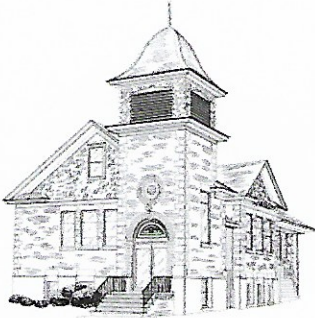


**APRIL 2020**

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ... 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 8:31-32, 34-35, 37-39**

## From the Desk of the Pastor



*For the Word of the Lord is right and true;  
He is faithful in all He does.*

~ Psalm 33:4 ~



### **God's Resurrection Power Continues to Flow Today**

This is an unusual monthly newsletter article, but then again, we are living in unusual times. In this article, I would like to guide you through a few YouTube videos. When I watched these videos, I was exhilarated. Even now, my spirit continues in praises to our Lord. My desire is to share this experience with you in way that you too might be led into worshipful awe of our Lord. I think this is a perfect way to prepare for Passion Week and Easter.

This article will guide you through videos of three speakers: Dr. Gary Habermas, Dr. Craig Keener, and Lee Strobel. If you really dislike watching videos, I would recommend skipping the Dr. Keener videos (part 1 and part 2). If you are reading this in pdf format, the links to the videos will not work, so please use the links that are in the email that Darla sent out.

#### **PART 1.**

The first lecture is by Dr. Gary Habermas. Dr. Habermas has written one of my favorite books, The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ. [This book is available for borrowing. For one of my books, it is relatively free of mark-ups and notes. It is, also, one of the very few books I have read more than twice.] Dr. Habermas is currently a Distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Philosophy and chairman of the department of philosophy and theology at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. In his lecture, Dr. Habermas reveals how the debate over the existence of Jesus and the origins of the New Testament has greatly changed over the last 30 years. While I was aware that *minimalists* had been ceding significant ground to historical, evangelical

beliefs, I was frankly stunned and really encouraged by Dr. Habermas' characterization of the current debate landscape. The punchline is that there is a general acceptance that the Christian church developed core creedal beliefs within a couple of years of the crucifixion, and the crucifixion itself seems to no longer be broadly doubted within the academic community.

While I love to read apologetics (the reasoned defense of faith), I also find it profitable to read the works of atheist apologists. As Sun Tzu says, *Know your enemy!* It has been my experience when I read a book by an atheist apologist, I come away encouraged in my faith. Invariably, I find their arguments weak on the basis of facts and/or on the basis of logic. In his lecture, Dr. Habermas makes multiple references to Dr. Bart Ehrman. Dr. Ehrman is an important modern, atheist voice for two reasons: 1) he is very popular in the blogosphere, and 2) he is a legitimate academic working in his field<sup>1</sup>. One of Dr. Ehrman's books, Misquoting Jesus, I found to be particularly encouraging. In this book Dr. Ehrman made the strongest arguments he could that the Bible was unreliable in its provenance (i.e., he argues that the Bible was written later than we suppose and edited by the religious establishment to advance their agenda). At the end of the day, after making the strongest arguments he could make, Dr. Ehrman offered no reason to question any of the fundamental tenets of Christianity<sup>2</sup>. I mention Dr. Ehrman because when he concedes a point, he does it from a position of a principled academic understanding and not acting out an agenda (for or against Christian faith). The points conceded by Dr. Ehrman are of great interest as we look to the cross, the empty tomb, and the risen Christ.

The Dr. Habermas video is so uplifting and informative, I encourage you to watch it at:

---

<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Dr. Richard Dawkins, author of the best seller The God Delusion, is an evolutionary biologist by training. This book, like so much of his body of work, is best characterized as a screed. It is not well reasoned. Dr Dawkins demonstrates a lack an understanding of Christian values and belief structures. I am certain he would fail students in his class, if their work in their field of study was as mis-reasoned and illogical as he arguments are when he assaults Christian beliefs. Dr. Dawkins is enormously popular, especially in England, perhaps because he has an angry, combative persona. He seems to be magnet for the angry atheist crowd.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ehrman does argue persuasively that there are some late edits to the Bible, obscuring the exact wording of the autograph (i.e., the original text). Still, most of the cited likely late additions and edits were theologically uninteresting. Those that were theologically interesting did not stand on the their own, as if the late edit was made to make the text read more like their parallel passages (e.g., make a gospel account read more like an the other gospel accounts. Dr. Ehrman's expressed intention in writing the book was discourage Christians and get them to walk away from the faith. For me, the book had exactly the opposite result.

[https://youtu.be/ay\\_Db4RwZ\\_M.3](https://youtu.be/ay_Db4RwZ_M.3) Dr. Gary Habermas lecture  
[The last 20 minutes of this video is a Q&A session that can be skipped without missing anything.]

## **PART 2.**

In Dr. Habermas' video lecture, he also mentions the work of Dr. Craig Keener. Dr. Keener is a professor of biblical studies at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has authored 28 books, six of which have won book awards in *Christianity Today*. In 2001, Dr. Keener published a two volume work, Miracles : The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts. In this wide-ranging and meticulously researched work, Dr. Keener creates an anthology of modern miracles for which there is an abundance of evidence. He takes on the arguments of the sceptic, philosopher David Hume, proving that the *impossible* happens on a regular basis, and very often there is a clear spiritual link. Dr. Keener documents cases where the miracles were witnessed by subject matter expert non-Believers, who have no alternative explanation.

<https://youtu.be/q9ksgLrPCkq> Part 1 of Dr. Keener's lecture at Biola University

<https://youtu.be/YUGKJz8luw0> Part 2 of Dr. Keener's lecture at Biola University

## **PART 3.**

Dr. Keener's book and lectures discuss the case of Barbara Snyder. It was this case that led me to this last video that I introduce to you. It is a lecture by Lee Strobel as he talks about Barbara's recovery in his book The Case for Miracles. Barbara's recovery was so shocking, that when her doctor saw her walking around, he assumed he was seeing her ghost.

Lee Strobel is one of my favorite authors; I find his writing style to be conversational and very easy to read. Just so that you know, Lee Strobel came to Christ through a path of rigorous skepticism. Lee had been a legal editor of

---

<sup>3</sup> The lecture can also be found by going to YouTube and searching for "The Resurrection Argument That Changed a Generation of Scholars - Gary Habermas at UCSB"

the *Chicago Tribune* and he was a committed atheist. One day, his wife became a Christ-follower. In Lee's heart, his wife's faith in Christ was intolerable. Lee Strobel set out to discover all the weak points of Christianity and to then convince his wife that faith in Christ was a complete sham. He was resolved to either convince her to abandon Christianity or he would divorce her. As Lee Strobel interviewed expert after expert in the disciplines of history, psychology and the hard sciences, the supposed weaknesses of Christianity were dispelled one by one. Eventually, confronted with the evidence he gathered to address each and every challenge he had, Lee commits his life to Christ. He writes about all of this in his Gold Medallion winning book, The Case for Christ. [I have a brand new clean copy available for borrowing.]

In his book, Lee Strobel also includes the case of Barbara Snyder. The video lecture that is linked below contains a very powerful video interview with Barbara. Her story is easily found on line. It is awesome. As I watched the video, my spirit yells out Hallelujah! It is my hope that yours will too.

<https://youtu.be/y3VSIWHZtOI> Lee Strobel, A Case for Miracles

### **CLOSING.**

I pray that you are blessed by these videos, encouraged, emboldened and filled with praise for a very present, powerful, loving and most-high God. Amen and Amen.

# THE PRESBYTERIAN POST

APRIL 2020



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 4	Ed Karns
APRIL 6	Dick Smith (Swain)
APRIL 11	Sarah Rucinski
APRIL 12	Tom Hager
APRIL 16	Jennifer Owens
APRIL 21	Dick Kennell
APRIL 24	Lisa Stover

## EARLY MAY BIRTHDAYS

MAY 2	Pastor Bruce
MAY 3	Bill Karns
MAY 5	Julie Owens Korbeck

## SHUT INS

Our shut ins need to hear from us now more than ever during the isolation of the Covid 19 pandemic. Although an in person visit is not possible at this time, a phone call or card would go a long way in helping ease their loneliness. For a complete list of our shut ins, please contact Lois Owens.



## APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

APRIL 15	Tim and Julie Timmerman
APRIL 26	Josh and Emily Stauring



## ELEVATOR SCHEDULE

TO BE DETERMINED WHEN THE QUARANTINE IS LIFTED.

## CALENDAR OMITTED THIS ISSUE

Due to the quarantine being in effect at least until April 30<sup>th</sup>, there is no calendar printed for this issue of the Newsletter.

# NEWS AND NOTES

## PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS

Some have asked about how to make pledges and offerings. Thank you for your inquiry. Of course, the expenses continue on schedule even if we are not meeting in person to worship together. In a service of worship, collection of offerings is rightly taken up after the sermon as a faith response to the hearing of the Word. But, these are disrupted and disruptive times. For those who are able to do so, it would be appreciated if you would mail in your pledges and offerings to Loretta Crossett, our Financial Secretary. You may mail them to the church at Arkport Presbyterian Church, ATTN Loretta Crossett, PO Box 6, Arkport, NY 14807 or you may mail them to Loretta's home at Loretta Crossett, 715 Crossett Road, Arkport, NY 14807. Thank you for your understanding and support.

## DAILY PASTORAL POSTS

Pastor Bruce has started to create daily video posts for the Arkport Presbyterian Church Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/arkpres.org/>. These daily posts start with a greeting followed by a Scripture verse on which he makes a few comments. He then tells the history behind a popular hymn. The last thing in the video post is a little Bible quiz that will not normally be too challenging. He not only posts the daily videos on our church Facebook page, but also posts these videos on the Pastor Bruce Incze YouTube channel. From the homepage of the Pastor Bruce Incze YouTube channel, you can select the latest videos to view or you can go to the play lists menu at the top to access daily posts, sermons, or music videos.

## PHONE TREE CARE GROUPS

We will be forming Phone Tree Care Groups with a handful of folks in each group. The idea is that each member would talk over the phone with each and every other member of the group once a week. It is also anticipated that you would hold each other up in your prayer time. Each group would have a Session member or Deacon in it. In addition to being an active group member, the Elder or Deacon would be sensitive to needs that warrant Deacon or Pastor care, so that we might be able to respond. Some in our care groups may not be able to answer the phone and we are making other provisions to help them feel connected and loved in this time of increased isolation and anxiety.

Very important...if you do not want to be part of a Phone Tree Care Group please let Pastor Bruce know and your name will be removed. We anticipate that calls will start next week. That gives you a few days to opt out. You can always opt out after you start receiving calls. But, we ask that you would not opt out so that each of you would be part of specific prayer team. In this way,

each member of our church family will be specifically lifted up into the Throne of God by many voices.

Next week we shall talk about folks who have not received a call, but who would like to be in a Phone Tree Care Group. We think we have everyone covered, but if we're missing someone, please let Pastor Bruce know.

### **LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST**

A very big thank you to Pastor Bruce for all that he has been doing to see to the spiritual needs of our church family during this crisis, for coming up with alternate ways to hold meetings, bible studies, connecting with our youth, preparing daily messages and weekly sermons, to name just a few. Many would think with the church "closed" during this time of quarantine, he would have countless hours of free time on his hands. Quite the opposite is true. We all need to take a minute to thank God that we have Pastor Bruce at the helm during this storm and to pray that he stays healthy and does not over extend himself during this crisis. If one needs to see a silver lining during all this, it is the blessing of having Pastor Bruce to see us through to the other side. Thank you, Pastor Bruce. You are truly appreciated.