
From the Pastor

For these articles, we have been looking at what I consider to be different forms of evangelism. So far, we have looked at direct, apologetics, relationship (or friendship), and service evangelism. For this column, I want to consider empathy evangelism.

Gotquestions.org says “empathy is the capacity to feel another person’s feelings, thoughts, or attitudes vicariously.” In other words, when we see people hurting, we strive to “have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, and a humble mind” (1 Peter 3:8) towards those that are hurting. Romans 12:15 puts it best “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

Now, what do I mean by the gift of empathy evangelism? It’s bringing the Gospel to a non-Christian that is hurting. Now, it’s important to differentiate from those who are more empathetic towards people and those who are empathetic, but also able to bring the Gospel into a conversation. I will go over some ways to do this, but I have found that people who are gifted at this type of evangelism come by it naturally. They know how to bring the Gospel in difficult situations in a wise, caring manner.

The first occurrence where empathy evangelism might occur is when a non-Christian is hurting from something due to no fault of their own. Maybe it’s the loss of a job, death of a loved one, or a terminal sickness. In this case, it’s important to remember how important Jesus is to you when you go through tragedy. Verses like Isaiah 43:2 (“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”) and 1 Peter 5:7 (where we told we should be “casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”) should become very important to us personally, so that when we tell others how caring Jesus is towards those who are hurting, it will be a natural flow of the conversation rather than something that is forced. Someone who is gifted in empathy evangelism will also find ways to gear the conversations towards eternal life with Christ, who prepares dwelling

places for those who are His own (John 14:2).

There is another way that we can share the Gospel through empathy, and that is when non-Christians are experiencing hardships due to their own sin. This can open the door up for Gospel conversations. However, sometimes people are not open to hearing the truth that they are a sinner, and they need Jesus, and honestly, sometimes this is due to the attitude of the one presenting the Gospel as they do so in a smug manner. So how are we to present the Gospel to a non-Christian that is experiencing consequences due to their own sin? I think the solution is to remember who we were before we became a Christian. Ephesians 2:1-5 reminds us of who we once were and how God’s grace changed our lives. “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” If we truly take these verses to heart, then we will be effective in our approach to the wayward non-Christian who is experiencing difficulties from their sin. We will be reminded that before we came to Jesus, we were just as dead in our sins as the person that we are witnessing to. As a result, we will just be one beggar humbly saying to another, “I know where bread is.”

In both of these instances, empathetic evangelism is not easy, but it is a valuable tool of evangelism that God might bring those that are hurting to himself.

Pastor Brandt



Deacons

Your continued prayers for the Deacons are much appreciated as we begin 2024. Wendy Caccamise is the new member on the Deacon Board this year. Wendy has previously served as a Deacon, and the congregation already knows Wendy as part of the Worship Team, which she chairs.

Wendy started attending youth group here in the mid '70's. Did you know that Wendy is the daughter of Joan Dermody? Wendy is a mom and grandmother. Her daughter Sara and family live in Florida; son Stephen and family live in Wisconsin; daughter Emily and her fiancé, Colin, are both members of the class of 2024 in the PA program at Daemen College in Buffalo.

Did you know that Wendy is a teacher and coach? She's a 7th grade History teacher at Perry Central. She has been coaching Varsity golf for 16 years.

Wendy lives in Batavia with her husband, Chad.

**Please join us for a
Concert Series
celebrating restoration of our
1907 Viner & Son pipe organ!**

Sunday, March 10, 2024 6pm:

Roberts Wesleyan Brass Quintet

Sunday, April 14, 2024 6pm:

Jaclyn Breeze, flute

Saturday, April 27, 2024 6pm:

Special Door of Hope event featuring

George Collichio, guitar

Sunday, May 5, 2024 6pm:

Organ recital featuring students from the

Eastman School of Music

Easter Flower Order Form 2024

We will begin taking orders for Easter plants with which to beautify the sanctuary for Easter. There will be forms inserted into your weekly bulletins, or you can use this form. **ORDER DEADLINE is March 17!**

Please fill out the form and give, along with your payment for the plant(s) of your choice, to the administrative assistant (or place in her mailbox outside of the office). If paying by check, please make it out to BEPC and put "FLOWERS" in the memo line.

NAME:

FLOWER CHOICE:

_____ Easter Lily @ \$8 each = \$_____ due

_____ Daffodil @ \$5 each = \$_____ due

_____ Tulip @ \$5 each = \$_____ due

Total Due \$_____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____



Tri County Food Pantry

The Tri-County Food Pantry has moved and been set up in the United Methodist Church at 27 S. Lake Ave. Food distribution dates have currently been set to be the second Thursday of each month from 5-8 pm and the last Saturday of each month from 9-12 noon. In March, that means the food pantry will be open on March 14th from 5-8 pm and March 30 from 9-12 noon. Please help spread the word!

TAG ~ Teens After God

Light Your Lamp...And Display it for all the World to See!

TAG teens are growing and maturing in their faith and understanding of God’s plan for their lives in each youth group. We are continuing our trek through the book of Luke during our time of bible reading and reflection each week. We read and discussed Luke Chapter 8 verses 16-18 at our most recent meeting. In these verses Jesus talks about lighting a lamp and placing it on a stand for all to see. Each week I challenge the teens to come up with an application of the scripture read, which is relevant to them in their own life. What the teens took away from our evening reflection on February 18th is that our faith, as Christians, should be like a lamp on a stand...clearly displayed for all to see! One of the teens described it in this way, “Our lamp is like a giant candle of God that all Christians carry around. We should be using our candle to spark other candles to life.”

Our TAG youth group will be meeting on the following Sundays from 6:00-8:00PM: March 3rd and March 17th. Please keep all the teens of our group, and in Bergen, in your prayers. Continue to pray for God’s protection and guidance in their lives!



TAG Teens (and Special Guest)

~ Feb 18, 2024

Christmas Eve Offering Helps B-B Students

The Annual Christmas Eve offering is generally designated to a local mission. This year, the Evangelism & Mission committee suggested the Byron-Bergen School backpack program that provides food on the weekends for families in need.

The total raised was \$667.98. Below is a thank-you note received from Pamela Kenward of Byron, who coordinates the program:

Dear Congregation...Thank you for your continued support of the Byron-Bergen Backpack Program with your recent check for \$667.98. Your generosity is much appreciated.

We are currently supporting 30 children in our district, helping them and their families with food insecurity. Recently, we have added two new families--one which has found themselves homeless and with the children unexpectedly staying with relatives, and the other family facing a medical crisis and currently down from two incomes to one because of the medical issues.

Thank you for continuing to support this program and our children!

Presbyterian Church)

Open Door Mission

Prayer Requests the Month of February:

1. Pray for the salvation and restoration of all those we serve with emergency shelter, food, clothes, addiction recovery, supportive housing, life skills and job readiness programs.
2. Pray for peace and health to all of our staff and their families.
3. Pray for the families that just came into the Coldwater House and for those who recently moved out into their own permanent housing.
4. Pray for continued success for the men who recently graduated from our addiction recovery program and for those just entering the program.
5. Pray for the Mission's permanent supportive housing apartment residents.
6. Pray for the necessary resources to maintain our daily expenses.

Fellowship Report

Many, many thanks to our wonderful church family cookie bakers!! So many of you brought so many cookies for the organ rededication concert reception, that we were able to serve them again for the lunch the next week AND freeze some for the next Open Door Mission bagged lunches.

We are asking for cookies for the next couple of concerts (March 10th and April 14th), but we will only need 5 people to make 3 dozen cookies each for each of those next 2 concerts. Please let Sandy Partridge or the office know which concert you would like to make cookies for. Thank you in advance!



And thank you's to those that brought toppings and gave donations for the loaded potato lunch on February 18th. We are so appreciative of all who fellowship after church and bring food to share.

The fellowship team spent a few hours in February cleaning and reorganizing the 'coffee room' (off the kitchen). Please help us keep it clean and organized. We will continue cleaning in the main kitchen in the coming months.

We are looking forward to organizing a Ladies Tea in early April, as well as hosting a luncheon with E&M in April when Teen Challenge visits with us.

Again, if you have any ideas for lunch menus or fellowship events, or would like to help, please contact any of us.

The Fellowship Team

Sewing With a Purpose

Pants were hemmed, sweaters repaired

January and February proved to keep our Sewing With A Purpose Team of menders busy. Repairs were made to coats, pants were hemmed, sweaters repaired, buttons were moved or reattached, seams were mended and curtain hems were reinforced. This service extended the use of these articles.



The team is in the process of creating flannel hearts for the NICU. See Shirley von Bergen if you can help with any of these steps:

Steps needed to be done:

Step 1

- * wash flannel
- * iron flannel
- *fold with right sides together
- *trace heart template onto flannel

Step 2

- *cut flannel (top and bottom together)

Step 3

- *sew heart leaving 1 inch opening

Step 4

- *clip point, turn right-side out and hand-sew opening shut
- *Iron when done



PRAYER SHAWLS NEEDED. We have two small bags of yarn on the Sewing With A Purpose table. Crocheted prayer shawls should be around 18 inches by 55 inches. See Shirley von Bergen if you have any questions.

Job Fair at Houghton University

Pastor Brandt Hammack, Judy Bailey and Debbie McAllister attended Houghton University's Job Fair on Feb 22 recruiting for a Children's/Youth Minister. We spoke with junior and senior students and several freshmen who majored in music industry, philosophy, education, theology and criminal justice. We handed out the job descriptions and updated church informational brochure. The new church banner looked very professional and the looped slide show presentation was effective in showing prospective candidates the youth activities of our church including Parkfest parade, VBS, Community Harvest Festival, the Christmas Pageant, Christmas Caroling, and Kids Quest.

Click the link to view: [Children Ministry Slides](#)



Thank you Rob Willhott for putting this presentation together and for creating professional business cards for Pastor Brandt.

The booth was staffed at all times by 2 people, while we took turns having the third person go around to other vendors and share job descriptions and church informational trifold when appropriate. Some of the vendors were:

Rochester Charter Schools --- (teacher recruiter)

Campus Crusade of Buffalo

Ligonier Camp in Pa (affiliated with EPC Pittsburgh)

Ameri Corps -- Northeastern Director who offered a contact person in the Rochester area

The search committee found these interactions at the Job Fair as valuable networking opportunities.

Please pray that God will send the right person.... a candidate called to be a Children's /Youth Minister.

Tithe from Organ Renovation Fund Benefits Two Local Pregnancy Centers

The tradition of the Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church is for us to tithe to a mission or community service organization when we raise and spend money on ourselves. The renovation of our historic organ falls into this category. So, we designated \$3,786.69 to be used for others.

Since the Parsons company did such quality work on our instrument, it was recommended that we ask them to suggest a recipient of the tithe. They suggested to Care Net, a nonprofit organization that empowers women and men considering abortion to choose life for their unborn children and find abundant life in Christ. Care Net is closely aligned with the Christian values that we support. The Evangelism and Missions Committee approved sending \$2,000 to Care Net of Greater Orleans County, since it is the closest Care Net location to our church.

E&M recommended sending the balance of the tithe, \$1,786.69 to All Babies Cherished in Batavia. Though not part of the Care Net system, it is a pregnancy-assistance center that offers much the same services as a Care Net site, but without the medical component. We budget annual support to All Babies Cherished, but are especially pleased to provide this additional money since they are opening transitional housing for mothers and children very soon.

Thanks from All Babies Cherished

Our church has already received a thank-you note from All Babies Cherished:

We cannot thank your congregation enough! We are getting so close to opening the home, now we have to handle the staffing issues. We fully know that God is good and all things are in His timing.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness to us!

Many blessings,

Sue Sherman
Executive Director

Mission of the Month Arber (Berti) and Adelina Berhami CRU Missionaries in Albania

Our church has been sponsoring Berti and Adelina for more than two decades. They are affiliated with CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) and work primarily with college age students and young adults. Berti is now responsible for Albania and Kosovo as Cru director. Adelina is associate national director for Cru Albania.

Cru began in Albania in 1991. Now this ministry has expanded across the country serving youth, students, young professionals and planting new churches. Their ministry puts a lot of effort into reaching out to this audience with the gospel through summer camp projects. They collaborate with ministry partners to offer a variety of activities such as English and German language camps, sports, arts, professional development seminars, sightseeing and fun games at the beach.

They have developed The Lighthouse Center into a great facility capable of hosting many groups during the summer and now also all year round. This past summer, many lives were impacted through Bible teachings and authentic community at this center.

Berti and Adelina will join our worship service on March 10 to bring a live update about their ministry.

For more information and an update on their family, see their most recent newsletter on the missions bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall.

Don Carson's New Easter Poem: 'Dismissed by God's Laugh'

The powers of darkness descended in hate,
Maliciously, leeringly trying to bait
Their Victim, Creator, this self-emptied Man,
Committed to wrecking their Maker's bold plan.

Seducing Iscariot, whipping the crowd
To lynch-mob ferocity (fear rages proud),
Self-righteousness hoodwinked to murder the Lord—
The angel of light is the lion that roared.

Disowned and alone, by close friendship betrayed,
Contemptuously punched while in purple arrayed,
Raw meat for the lash, bleeding target of hate,
The Crucified One seemed the plaything of fate.

But princes of darkness could not comprehend
The still acquiescence no suff'ring could bend—
No victim of fate or of plans that had strayed—
Such stillness was born in a Son who obeyed.

What seemed his destruction to rebels whose glee
Erupted too soon in perverse ecstasy
Would prove but a sentence of unrelieved doom,
Sealed up by the witness of one empty tomb

Repulsively shocked, the defeated archfiend
Discovered his loss in the death that had seemed
Another's destruction, heav'n's own Ichabod—
Deep wisdom mislabeled the folly of God.

No demon foresaw that the God-man himself
Would triumph by weakness, not power or stealth.
The plan of hell's cohorts, too clever by half,
Was crushed by Christ's cross and dismissed by God's laugh.



Calendar Online calendar: tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr

Weekly/Monthly

- First Sunday of the month - Communion
- First Sunday of the month – Salvation Army Food Collection
- Sundays, 9:15 am - Sunday School for All Ages
- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – Morning Worship
- Sunday following worship (unless there is a committee luncheon) is “Fattening the Flock” coffee & snack time.
- Mondays, 1 pm - Tech Class
- Tue & Thurs - Homeschooling Co-op
- Alternating Tues @ 2:00 pm - Women’s Bible Study (Mar 5th is the last scheduled day for this study)
- Wednesdays, 6:00 pm – Prayer
- 1st & 3rd Wednesdays @ 5 pm - Preaching Class
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers
- Thursdays, 6:30 pm - Cub Scouts
- Saturdays, 11 am – Kid’s Quest
- Newsletter Deadline on the 25th of each month
- Last Saturday of the month – Door of Hope Coffee House @ 6 pm (March 30 this month)

Other Events in March

- March 3 - 12:15 pm - Fellowship Committee meeting
- March 3 - 6 pm - TAG
- March 9 - SPRING AHEAD one hour at bedtime
- March 10 - Daylight Saving Time Begins!
- March 10 - 12:15 pm - VBS meeting for anyone interested in helping
- March 10 - 6 pm - Roberts Wesleyan Brass Quintet
- March 13 - 7 pm - Session
- March 15 - 7 pm - Younglife Wyldlife Club
- March 17 - 6 pm - TAG
- March 21 - 6:30 pm - Cub Scout rehearsal for their Blue & Gold Dinner in the Fellowship Hall
- March 22 - 6:30 pm - Cub Scout Blue & Gold Dinner in the Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
- March 26 - 7 pm - Deacons meeting

Anniversaries & Birthdays

March Birthdays

- 4 - Nancy Charcholla
- 4 - Judy Bailey
- 4 - Debbie McAllister
- 8 - Susan Brownell
- 10 - Stu Freeman
- 18 - Kay Harmon
- 21 - Faith Willhoft
- 24 - Sue Kobel
- 26 - Jacob Buckland-Seward
- 26 - Matthew Foeller
- 29 - Paul Lattimer
- 29 - Al Ruge

March Anniversaries

- 29 - David & Chris Wright (16 years)

April Birthdays

- 12 - June Hahn
- 14 - Mason Buckland
- 14 - David Snell
- 15 - Jebidiah Buckland-Seward
- 18 - Alden Snell
- 21 - Christine Martz
- 22 - Sean McNear
- 23 - Julie Foeller
- 28 - Bev Rogers

April Anniversaries

- 4 - Ruth & Harvey Morse (54 years)
- 7 - Michael & Paula Welch (23 years)
- 12 - Garry & Wendy Hutchurson (55 years)
- 16 - Dale & Diane White (36 years)
- 23 - Bob & Kathy Cosgrove (58 years)



Time to
Spring Ahead

**Daylight
Savings begins
on March 10th**



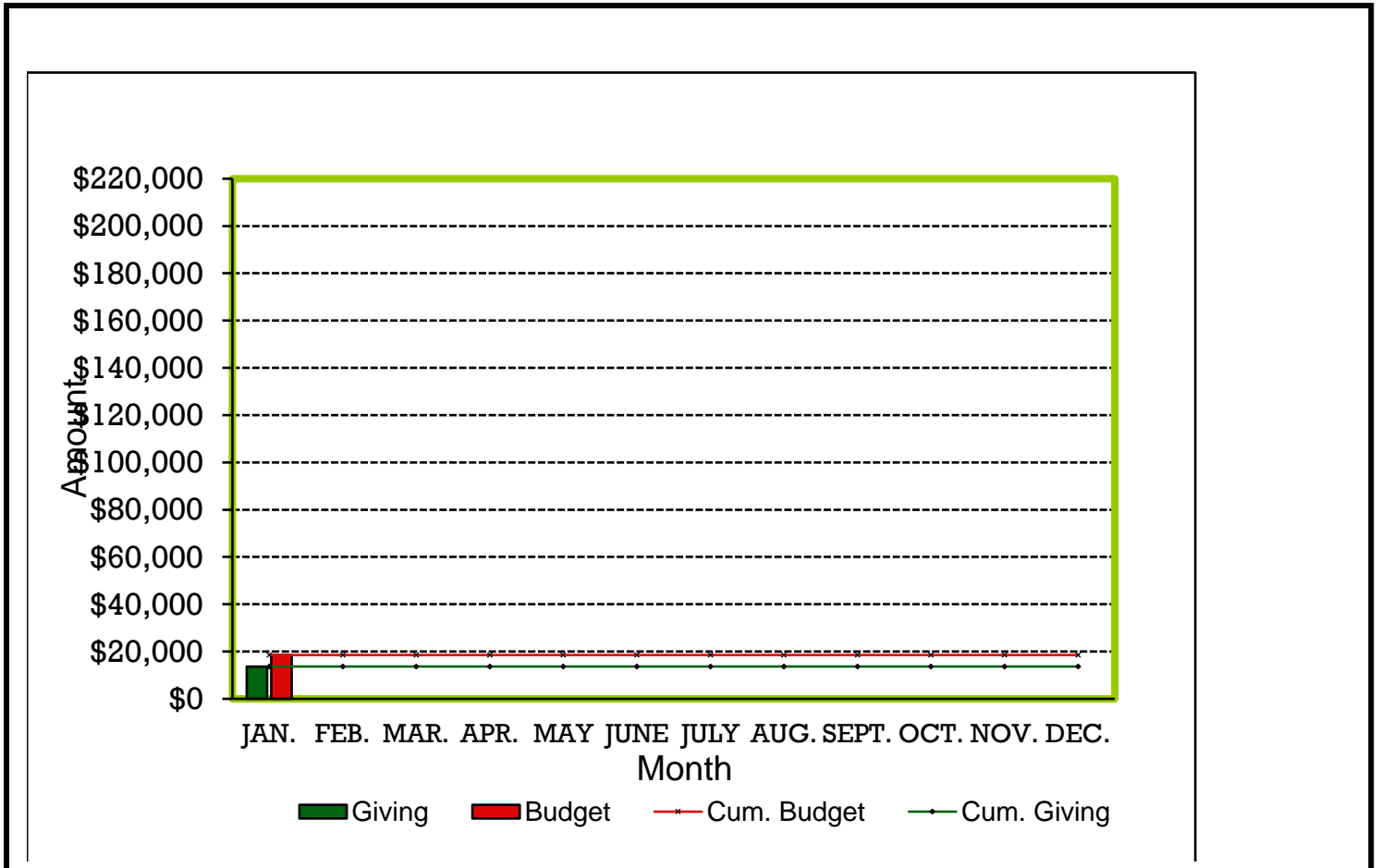
Church Finances

January 2024

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

Malachi 3:10

January's giving was \$13,667 for the monthly financial support of the annual budget. Based on the approved 2024 annual budget, the monthly support needed is \$18,521 per month. This is about \$4,854 less than what is needed. Expenses were relatively low as is expected for every January; nevertheless, no funds from the AIF were needed to pay the bills.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – JANUARY 2024

OPERATING FUND

Income

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Sunday offering: | \$11,101.60 |
| Net Online Offering: | \$565.62 |
| <i>*note – online offering reflects \$14.19 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i> | |
| Amortized one time gifts: | \$2,750.00 |

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| <i>Total New Receipts</i> | \$14,417.22 |
| <i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i> | \$3,196.33 |
| Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts) | \$17,613.55 |

Expenses

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Gross Expenditures for the month | \$14,212.91 |
| Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses | |
| • None | \$ |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Net Expenditures for the Month | \$14,212.91 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|---|------------|
| Accumulated Income Fund Transfer Needed to cover Expenditures | \$0.00 |
| Extra Monthly Amortized Gift Overdrawn from the AIF | \$0.00 |
| Monthly Amortized Gift Left in Accumulated Income Fund | \$2,750.00 |

OPERATING FUND BALANCE **\$650.64**

DESIGNATED FUND

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Opening Balance (from previous month) | \$11,472.77 |
| New Designated Receipts | \$540.00 |
| Total Designated Expenditures | \$1,292.96 |

DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE **\$10,719.81**

TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund) **\$11370.45**

OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

Accumulated Income Fund

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • January Deposit | \$33,000.00 |
| Current Balance (1/31/2024) | \$30,250.00 |



Puzzle!

After completing this Easter crossword, unscramble the circled letters to discover a special word:

- 1. What Jesus was wrapped in
- 2. The site of Jesus' crucifixion
- 3. One of the rulers who questioned Jesus
- 4. He washed his hands of Jesus
- 5. Followers of Jesus
- 6. He denied Christ
- 7. A large hill
- 8. The feast celebrating escape from Egypt
- 9. Jesus' mother
- 10. A Jewish teacher
- 11. The doubting disciple
- 12. Jesus was mistaken for this
- 13. One of Peter's other names

Answers: 1. cloth, 2. Golgotha, 3. Herod, 4. Pilate, 5. disciples, 6. Peter, 7. mountain, 8. Passover, 9. Mary, 10. rabbi, 11. Thomas, 12. gardener, 13. Simon; resurrection