

Heartbeat



Hope In Christ Church
710 East Sunset
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-733-6177

The Mystery of the Trinity drives worship.

Recently, I have been thinking about the Trinity and having celebrated St. Patrick's day during the month of March, it seemed like a good time to share some thoughts on the Trinity. The specific question that I have been contemplating is, "To what extent can and should the Trinity guide and form our actions towards one another?"

At first one might wonder why this question is even being asked. God is God and people are not. And that is a true enough statement, but the Triune God is relational. The Father, the Son and the Spirit are in a mutual relationship with one another, each fully divine, each is a distinct person and yet they are not divisible. They are equal in glory and majesty. This is how the Athanasian Creed describes this mystery. And because God is relational, there are many theologians who appeal to the Trinity in order to propose various social orderings and projects.

Social Trinitarianism, for instance, appeals to the way that God relates internally, between Father, Son and Spirit, as a pattern for how people ought to relate to one another. The argument normally goes something like this – The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father, The Spirit loves the Son and vice versa so people out to love one another and seek the best interests of others instead of their own since that is how the persons of the Trinity relate. While this sounds very enlightened on the surface, there is a problem. The Father, Son and Spirit are perfectly holy, unstained by sin, righteous in all their ways and people are not. Human sin stands in the way of loving. Indeed, all of the Scripture has been summarized by Jesus in two commands – Love God and Love others – but humanity is unable to keep this law in our own power. To declare that society should be modeled on love and seeking another's best is to call men, women and children to be obedient to the Law. And we know that since the garden,

Inside this issue

Spring Clean up.....	3
Easter.....	4-5
Big Tech	6-9
Deacons Report	10
Birthday's.....	11
Calendar.....	12



The Father calls
(John 6:44),

Jesus saves
(Acts 4:14)

The Spirit sanctifies
(1 Cor 6:11,
Rom 15:16)

people have been unable to keep the Law of God. At best, social trinitarianism is a picture of the heaven we await but it is unattainable en masse among unredeemed people. Maybe the Church can see glimpses of such an ordering of her members, but, as Paul reminds us, we still do what don't want to do and we don't do what we want to do. Sin still hinders such a perfect relating of people, one with another.

Recently, however there is another way of appealing to the trinity in order to pattern society. Instead of appealing to the internal relationships within the Trinity, these theologians appeal to the way that God relates to people. The argument goes like this: God is gracious to humanity and relates by giving freely to those beneath him. Therefore, although people are not God, they can borrow the principles of God and enact those in society. Those with power can ensure that those without power are freely given all they need. Again, this sounds nice and progressive. But there are two problems. First, like social trinitarians, sin abounds in humanity. The same critique, outlined above, applies here. Second, the activity of God towards humanity is selectively chosen in order to fit the program that one desires and those actions of God that are not desirable are ignored. For instance, where is the wrath and judgment of God in this social vision? It is ignored. What about the extreme difference in resources at the disposal of God? Can people draw upon the same unending resources? Such questions are ignored or assumed that all people have access to God without any call to repentance and conversion. Where is the call to obedience in order to continue to live under blessing? It is ignored. God becomes an example in all of these ways instead of one to be worshipped.

All this is leading me to think and believe that the Trinity cannot be used as a guide upon which to model a social program. Quite the contrary, the action and activity of the Trinity towards humanity is a unique reality that sinful humanity will never be able to repeat. In the Trinity internally, we see a picture of love and submission, sacrifice and honor which we yearn for but can't match. Furthermore, as the Trinity relates to humanity, we see how a God of perfection can relate to those who are imperfect and this causes us to stand in awe, be amazed and sing God's praise.

As we approach Holy Week, may the mystery of the Trinity drive you to worship.



You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

Psalms 119:114



**Easter is a time of rebirth
And a time of sacrifice.
Remember the resurrection,
As we come together to celebrate this special day.
Fill your hearts with His love and grace.
He's shown us the truth.
Christ, the Savior, lives again!
Let's gather around the table to sit and pray.**

Taken from: <https://scrapbooking.lovetoknow.com/>

Spring Clean Up

Save the date!

Buildings and Grounds is having a combined work party with Legacy Church at church on the morning of April 17th. Tasks include adding more bark to the playground area, raking leaves and weeds out of flower beds and general spruce up of the property. More info will be provided at a later date



Serving God will always be a privilege.



Greeters Schedule - April 2021



- 04 Jerry & Faye
- 11 Lanny & Christine
- 18 David & Ida
- 25 Len & Terry

We are currently in need of Greeters to warmly welcome those who enter our doors. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry or have questions, please contact the church office.





Holy Week

Holy Week is important as it reminds Christians of God's sacrifice of his son, and also God's love for his people. Christians can learn about Jesus through the last **week** of his life. It celebrates God raising his son Jesus from the dead as well as the destruction of the power of sin and death forever. Reflect on these events...

PALM SUNDAY

Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem
Spends the night in Bethany
Matt 21:1-11 Mark 11:1-10 Mark 11:11

MONDAY

Curses the fig tree on the way into the city
Weeps over Jerusalem
Cleanses the temple for the second time
Jesus returns to Bethany
Matt 21:18-19 Mark 11:19 Luke 19:41-48 Luke 19:45-48

TUESDAY

Disciples see the fig tree withered
Jesus teaches parables
Woe unto Pharisees
Prophetic words regarding the return of Christ
Matt 21:19-22 Matt 21:23 Matt 23:1-39 Matt 24:1-51 Mark 13:1-37 Luke 20:45-7 Luke 21:5-36

WEDNESDAY

Judas agrees to betray Jesus
Matt 26:14-16 Mark 14:10-11 Luke 22:3-6

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Peter and John prepare for Passover
Passover meal
Jesus washes the disciple's feet
Jesus identifies his betrayer
Lord's Supper instituted
Matt 26:20 Matt 26:21-5 Matt 26:26-9 Mark 14:12-16 Mark 14:22-5 Luke 22:7-13 Luke 22:14-6 Luke 22:21-3 Luke 22:15-20 John 13-16:1 John 13:2-17 John 13:18-30

GOOD FRIDAY

12 AM Garden of Gethsemane

Jesus prays in Gethsemane
Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss
Matt 26:36-46 Matt 26:47-56 Mark 14:32-42 Mark 14:43-52 Luke 22:39-46 Luke 22:47-53 John 17-18:1 John 18:2-12

3 AM Jesus taken to the Annas

Jesus taken to the High Priest Caiaphas
Peter denies Jesus
Sanhedrin condemn Jesus

Judas commits suicide

Matt 27:1 Matt 27:3-10 Mark 14:54-72

Mark 15:1 Luke 22:54-62 John 18:13-4 John 18:24 Luke 22:66-71

6 AM Jesus before Pilate

Jesus before Herod

Jesus before Pilate again

Jesus is whipped

Jesus mocked

Jesus is given his crucifixion

Jesus issued a crown of thorns

Matt 27:2-14 Matt 27:15-23 Matt 27:27-31 Matt 27:22-6 Mark 15:17 Mark 15:1-5 Mark 15:6-14

Mark 15:16-9 Mark 15:12-5 Luke 23:8-12 Luke 23:13-22 Luke 23:20-5 John 18:39-4 John 19:1-3

John 19:4-16

9 AM

Jesus is crucified

Matt 27:35-44 Mark 15:24-32 Luke 23:33-43 John 19:18-24

12 PM

Darkness falls over the land

Mark 15:33

3 PM

Jesus dies for the sins of all humankind

Jesus commits his Spirit into God's hands and dies

Temple veil torn by God

Jesus' side is pierced

Jesus is buried before sundown

Matt 27:50 Matt 27:51 Matt 27:57-61 Mark 15:37 Mark 15:38 Mark 15:42-47

John 19:30 John 19:34 John 19:38-42

SATURDAY

The Pharisees ask for a guard at Jesus' tomb

The Savior's body lies in the grave

Matt 27:62-66 Matt 27:59-28:1 Mark 15:46

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

The tomb is found empty for Jesus has risen!

Jesus appears to his disciples

Matt 28:6 Matt 28:8-10 Mark 16:6 Luke 24:13-53 John 20:1-10 John 20:11-25

We have the assurance that God's promises are true. Without Jesus's death and resurrection we would be lost. Because he lives we have hope. We have joy. We have purpose. We can face anything.

As you celebrate Easter, reflect on Jesus life, death and resurrection and the assurances we have... because He lives.

Because He Lives

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because
He Lives!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

Christ
is
Risen!



Who Is in Control? The Need to Rein in Big Tech

By Allum Bokhari

The following is adapted from a speech delivered at Hillsdale College on November 8, 2020, during a Center for Constructive Alternatives conference on Big Tech.

In January, when every major Silicon Valley tech company permanently banned the President of the United States from its platform, there was a backlash around the world. One after another, government and party leaders—many of them ideologically opposed to the policies of President Trump—raised their voices against the power and arrogance of the American tech giants. These included the President of Mexico, the Chancellor of Germany, the government of Poland, ministers in the French and Australian governments, the neoliberal center-right bloc in the European Parliament, the national populist bloc in the European Parliament, the leader of the Russian opposition (who recently survived an assassination attempt), and the Russian government (which may well have been behind that attempt).

Common threats create strange bedfellows. Socialists, conservatives, nationalists, neoliberals, autocrats, and anti-autocrats may not agree on much, but they all recognize that the tech giants have accumulated far too much power. None like the idea that a pack of American hipsters in Silicon Valley can, at any moment, cut off their digital lines of communication.

I published a book on this topic prior to the November election, and many who called me alarmist then are not so sure of that now. I built the book on interviews with Silicon Valley insiders and five years of reporting as a Breitbart News tech correspondent. Breitbart created a dedicated tech reporting team in 2015—a time when few recognized the danger that the rising tide of left-wing hostility to free speech would pose to the vision of the World Wide Web as a free and open platform for all viewpoints.

This inversion of that early libertarian ideal—the movement from the freedom of information to the control of information on the Web—has been the story of the past five years.

When the Web was created in the 1990s, the goal was that everyone who wanted a voice could have one. All a person had to do to access the global marketplace of ideas was to go online and set up a website. Once created, the website belonged to that person. Especially if the person owned his own server, no one could deplatform him. That was by design, because the Web, when it was invented, was competing with other types of online services that were not so free and open.

It is important to remember that the Web, as we know it today—a network of websites accessed through browsers—was not the first online service ever created. In the 1990s, Sir Timothy Berners-Lee invented the technology that underpins websites and web browsers, creating the Web as we know it today. But there were other online services, some of which predated Berners-Lee's invention. Corporations like CompuServe and Prodigy ran their own online networks in the 1990s—networks that were separate from the Web and had access points that were different from web browsers. These privately-owned networks were open to the public, but CompuServe and Prodigy owned every bit of information on them and could kick people off their networks for any reason.

In these ways the Web was different. No one owned it, owned the information on it, or could kick anyone off. That was the idea, at least, before the Web was captured by a handful of corporations.

We all know their names: Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Amazon. Like Prodigy and CompuServe back in the '90s, they own everything on their platforms, and they have the police power over what can be said and who can participate. But it matters a lot more today than it did in the '90s. Back then, very few people used online services. Today everyone uses them—it is practically impossible not to use them. Businesses depend on them. News publishers depend on them. Politicians and political activists depend on them. And crucially, citizens depend on them for information.

Today, Big Tech doesn't just mean control over online information. It means control over commerce. It means control over politics. And how are the corporate tech giants using their control? Judging by the three biggest moves



they have made since I wrote my book—the censoring of the *New York Post* in October when it published its blockbuster stories on Biden family corruption, the censorship and eventual banning from the Web of President Trump, and the coordinated takedown of the upstart social media site Parler—it is obvious that Big Tech’s priority today is to support the political Left and the Washington establishment.

Big Tech has become the most powerful election-influencing machine in American history. It is not an exaggeration to say that if the technologies of Silicon Valley are allowed to develop to their fullest extent, without any oversight or checks and balances, then we will never have another free and fair election. But the power of Big Tech goes beyond the manipulation of political behavior. As one of my Facebook sources told me in an interview for my book: “We have thousands of people on the platform who have gone from far right to center in the past year, so we can build a model from those people and try to make everyone else on the right follow the same path.” Let that sink in. They don’t just want to control information or even voting behavior—they want to manipulate people’s worldview.

Is it too much to say that Big Tech has prioritized this kind of manipulation? Consider that Twitter is currently facing a lawsuit from a victim of child sexual abuse who says that the company repeatedly failed to take down a video depicting his assault, and that it eventually agreed to do so only after the intervention of an agent from the Department of Homeland Security. So Twitter will take it upon itself to ban the President of the United States, but is alleged to have taken down child pornography *only after* being prodded by federal law enforcement.

How does Big Tech go about manipulating our thoughts and behavior? It begins with the fact that these tech companies strive to know everything about us—our likes and dislikes, the issues we’re interested in, the websites we visit, the videos we watch, who we voted for, and our party affiliation. If you search for a Hannukah recipe, they’ll know you’re likely Jewish. If you’re running down the Yankees, they’ll figure out if you’re a Red Sox fan. Even if your smart phone is turned off, they’ll track your location. They know who you work for, who your friends are, when you’re walking your dog, whether you go to church, when you’re standing in line to vote, and on and on.

As I already mentioned, Big Tech also monitors how our beliefs and behaviors change over time. They identify the types of content that can change our beliefs and behavior, and they put that knowledge to use. They’ve done this openly for a long time to manipulate consumer behavior—to get us to click on certain ads or buy certain products. Anyone who has used these platforms for an extended period of time has no doubt encountered the creepy phenomenon where you’re searching for information about a product or a service—say, a microwave—and then minutes later advertisements for microwaves start appearing on your screen. These same techniques can be used to manipulate political opinions.

I mentioned that Big Tech has recently demonstrated ideological bias. But it is equally true that these companies have huge economic interests at stake in politics. The party that holds power will determine whether they are going to get government contracts, whether they’re going to get tax breaks, and whether and how their industry will be regulated. Clearly, they have a commercial interest in political control—and currently no one is preventing them from exerting it.

To understand how effective Big Tech’s manipulation could become, consider the feedback loop.

As Big Tech constantly collects data about us, they run tests to see what information has an impact on us. Let’s say they put a negative news story about someone or something in front of us, and we don’t click on it or read it. They keep at it until they find content that has the desired effect. The feedback loop constantly improves, and it does so in a way that’s undetectable.

What determines what appears at the top of a person’s Facebook feed, Twitter feed, or Google search results? Does it appear there because it’s popular or because it’s gone viral? Is it there because it’s what you’re interested in? Or is there another reason Big Tech wants it to be there? Is it there because Big Tech has gathered data that suggests it’s likely to nudge your thinking or your behavior in a certain direction? How can we know?

What we *do* know is that Big Tech openly manipulates the content people see. We know, for example, that Google reduced the visibility of Breitbart News links in search results by 99 percent in 2020 compared to the same period in 2016. We know that after Google introduced an update last summer, clicks on Breitbart News stories from Google searches for “Joe Biden” went to zero and stayed at



zero through the election. This didn't happen gradually, but in one fell swoop—as if Google flipped a switch. And this was discoverable through the use of Google's own traffic analysis tools, so it isn't as if Google cared that we knew about it.

Speaking of flipping switches, I have noted that President Trump was collectively banned by Twitter, Facebook, Twitch, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and every other social media platform you can think of. But even before that, there was manipulation going on. Twitter, for instance, reduced engagement on the President's tweets by over eighty percent. Facebook deleted posts by the President for spreading so-called disinformation.

But even more troubling, I think, are the invisible things these companies do. Consider “quality ratings.” Every Big Tech platform has some version of this, though some of them use different names. The quality rating is what determines what appears at the top of your search results, or your Twitter or Facebook feed, etc. It's a numerical value based on what Big Tech's algorithms determine in terms of “quality.” In the past, this score was determined by criteria that were somewhat objective: if a website or post contained viruses, malware, spam, or copyrighted material, that would negatively impact its quality score. If a video or post was gaining in popularity, the quality score would increase. Fair enough.

Over the past several years, however—and one can trace the beginning of the change to Donald Trump's victory in 2016—Big Tech has introduced all sorts of new criteria into the mix that determines quality scores. Today, the algorithms on Google and Facebook have been trained to detect “hate speech,” “misinformation,” and “authoritative” (as opposed to “non-authoritative”) sources. Algorithms analyze a user's network, so that whatever users follow on social media—e.g., “non-authoritative” news outlets—affects the user's quality score. Algorithms also detect the use of language frowned on by Big Tech—e.g., “illegal immigrant” (bad) in place of “undocumented immigrant” (good)—and adjust quality scores accordingly. And so on.

This is not to say that you are informed of this or that you can look up your quality score. All of this happens invisibly. It is Silicon Valley's version of the social credit system overseen by the Chinese Communist Party. As in China, if you defy the values of the ruling elite or challenge narratives that the elite labels “authoritative,” your score will be reduced and your voice suppressed. And it will happen silently, without your knowledge.

This technology is even scarier when combined with Big Tech's ability to detect and monitor entire networks of people. A field of computer science called “network analysis” is dedicated to identifying groups of people with shared interests, who read similar websites, who talk about similar things, who have similar habits, who follow similar people on social media, and who share similar political viewpoints. Big Tech companies are able to detect when particular information is flowing through a particular network—if there's a news story or a post or a video, for instance, that's going viral among conservatives or among voters as a whole. This gives them the ability to shut down a story they don't like before it gets out of hand. And these systems are growing more sophisticated all the time.

If Big Tech's capabilities are allowed to develop unchecked and unregulated, these companies will eventually have the power not only to suppress existing political movements, but to anticipate and prevent the emergence of new ones. This would mean the end of democracy as we know it, because it would place us forever under the thumb of an unaccountable oligarchy.

The good news is, there is a way to rein in the tyrannical tech giants. And the way is simple: take away their power to filter information and filter data on our behalf.

All of Big Tech's power comes from their content filters—the filters on “hate speech,” the filters on “misinformation,” the filters that distinguish “authoritative” from “non-authoritative” sources, etc. Right now these filters are switched on by default. We as individuals can't turn them off. But it doesn't have to be that way.

The most important demand we can make of lawmakers and regulators is that Big Tech be forbidden from activating these filters without our knowledge and consent. They should be prohibited from doing this—and even from nudging us to turn on a filter—under penalty of losing their Section 230 immunity as publishers of third party content. This policy should be strictly enforced, and it should extend even to seemingly non-political filters like relevance and popularity. Anything less opens the door to manipulation.

Our ultimate goal should be a marketplace in which third party companies would be free to design filters that could be plugged into services like Twitter, Facebook, Google, and YouTube. In other words, we would have two separate categories of companies: those that host content and those that create filters to sort through that content. In a marketplace like that, users would have the maximum level of choice in determining their online experiences. At the same time, Big Tech would lose its power to manipulate our thoughts and behavior and to ban legal content—which is just a more extreme form of filtering—from the Web.

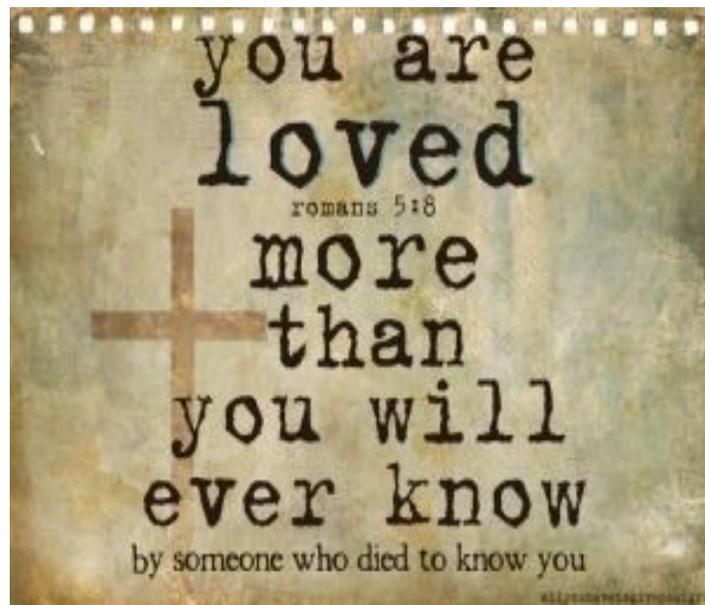
This should be the standard we demand, and it should be industry-wide. The alternative is a kind of digital serfdom. We don't allow old-fashioned serfdom anymore—individuals and businesses have due process and can't be evicted because their landlord doesn't like their politics. Why shouldn't we also have these rights if our business or livelihood depends on a Facebook page or a Twitter or YouTube account?

This is an issue that goes beyond partisanship. What the tech giants are doing is so transparently unjust that all Americans should start caring about it—because under the current arrangement, we are all at their mercy. The World Wide Web was meant to liberate us. It is now doing the opposite. Big Tech is increasingly in control. The most pressing question today is: how are we going to take control back?

Printed with permission from Imprimis. <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/control-need-rein-big-tech/>.



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. - Romans 5:8



Deacons Digest

By Elaine Snapper

The deacons met via Zoom on March 3, 2021 for our March Zoom meeting. We discussed deacon candidates for the upcoming year.

Love, Inc. rent abatement was discussed. Their new program is called the Jesus Taxi. They need volunteer drivers for the program and hope to begin by the end of Feb. or March. There is a volunteer form at <https://youtu.be//d-WdtFV10>. There is also a volunteer form at: <https://www.whatcomloveinc.org/jesustaxi>. Basically, they would like people to volunteer for four-hour shifts to take people to appointments for doctors, etc. You would work with a team of two or three people. Otherwise contact one of the deacons.

We discussed Classis meetings. Mike Brummel and Aaron De Boer were examined on Feb. 8. Aaron recently preached at our church several times. Mike Sloftstra was examined on February 25. All three were accepted into the CRC as pastors.

We discussed the various projects, building a ramp for George Miller, etc. We discussed the offerings that were received for the month.

We talked about the T.R.I.P. program (tuition program) for Lynden Christian. Funds will be distributed between four families who attend our church. A new T.R.I.P. program is being set up at Evergreen Christian School in Bellingham. Contact Barb Zylstra if you are interested in buying any cards.

We talked about the CRC human sexuality report, which we will discuss at the March council meeting.

We discussed the deacon districts and offered prayers for those in our districts. We talked about people who had physical problems, like Ali Laninga, John Van Hemert, Helen Bowman, and other people who had relatives with different issues.

We spent time praying and sharing concerns.

Deacons



reach out to those in need



My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:12



Giving in February 2021

	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$2,147	\$8,442
General Fund Offerings:	\$24,498	\$72,349
Rent/Utilities Income	\$3,938	\$8,034
Interest income - Undesignated	<u>\$16</u>	<u>\$46</u>
Total undesignated Income	\$28,452	\$107,141
General Fund Expenses	<u>(\$22,417)</u>	<u>(\$54,041)</u>
Income Over (Under) Expenses	<u>\$6,035</u>	<u>\$53,100</u>

Total 2021 budget, including ministry quotas	\$281,796
Year-to Date Budget for 12 months	\$70,449
Total Undesignated Income	<u>\$107,141</u>
Income Over (Under) budget	<u>\$36,692</u>

Loan Balances:	
Classis:	\$10,000



Reflect on...

On Easter, we remember the love Christ showed mankind when he gave the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. He is risen from the dead, so we truly have reason to celebrate!

While this special day offers a valuable reminder and reason to celebrate, it should by no means be the only day on which we show our gratitude. After all, this holiday regularly changes dates in our modern calendar, reminding us that the essence of Easter is not exclusive to one single day.



*You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.* Psalm 65:11



*May the light of
Jesus shine
through you on
your birthday.*



April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 7 pm Good Friday Service 	3
4 EASTER  9:30 am Worship Service/ Communion	5	6	7 11:30 am Elders Mtg 7pm Deacons Mtg	8	9	10
11 9:30 am Worship Service 11am Adult Study Hour	12	13	14 7pm Council Mtg	15	16	17 Spring Clean Up
18 9:30 am Worship Service 11am Adult Study Hour 7pm Prayer Service on Zoom	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 9:30 am Worship Service 11am Adult Study Hour	26	27	28	29	30 	