



THE FOUNTAIN

CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

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Psalm 98:8

“Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the mountains sing together for joy .”

THE EASTER MYTH

Sam Sears

“Did you know...” These words can lead to the sharing of harmless trivia, or malicious gossip, important truths, or fallacious hearsay. Even if false, what follows can be very convincing, especially when it comes from a respected source.

I can’t remember when I first heard the common mythical belief that Easter has pagan origins, but I vividly recall a very persuasive friend’s powerful attempt to “set the facts straight—that Easter was full of pagan influences.” I still respect this person, as he was genuinely concerned about honoring God properly. His case centered on the belief that though Christians are vaguely aware Jesus was the Passover lamb, they don’t really know or understand history, and have let the Easter celebration morph into a celebration of the Easter bunny rooted in the worship of a pagan fertility goddess. That he was so convinced of his “facts,” and that so many other believers are of a like mind, detracts from the greatest and most sacred day in history, and shows how easy it is to be led astray in our age of so many internet “authorities.”

The main argument for pagan roots is the similarity of Easter to the names of various ancient goddesses— Eostre, Ostara, and Ishtar, for whom ceremonies were supposedly held in the springtime.

There is only a single historical reference to Eostre-- from St. Bede in the 8th century. There is no evidence of any sort of festival for her, and scholars are divided on whether she was a complete fabrication. Jacob Grimm, in the 19th century, found that the German name for Easter, *Ostern*, was *Ostarâ* in Old High German. Though both words simply have the connotation “east,” this famous German storyteller made the assumption *Ostara* was probably the name of a German goddess, despite the fact that before his *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835), there had never been mention of the goddess in any writings.

Unlike Eostre and Ostara, who were most likely made up, Ishtar, originally known as Ianna, was worshipped from ancient times for about 3000 years throughout the Middle East. The goddess of love and war became known as queen of the universe, and you might think I’m supporting my friend’s argument when I tell you that King Nebuchadnezzar II dedicated the main gate of Babylon to her. My friend doesn’t think we should even use the name Easter because of a sup-

posed link to Ishtar.

Because of commercialization and those suspected pagan origins, many churches prefer to call it “Resurrection Sunday,” with the worthy goal of focusing on Christ. I have no problem with that. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *without the resurrection of Christ our faith is futile* ([1 Corinthians 15:17](#)). What is most important is the reason for our celebration, which is that Christ is alive, making it possible for us to have eternal life.

I’m also all for giving more attention to Passover and the history that led up to the events of that fateful day. We can’t fully understand the New Testament without understanding the Old Testament, never forgetting Jesus was a very Jewish Messiah. Though many Old Testament laws never applied to Gentiles, and certainly don’t apply now, the prophecies, culture, expectations, and history all play a role in understanding the New Testament, God’s inspired Scripture that came after Jesus’ time on earth. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:24 *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith*. The Passover itself is full of important symbolism that helps explain why Jesus had to die.

However, there really is no basis for claiming Easter is rooted in Ishtar worship simply because of English word similarity. The word “Easter” almost certainly has European roots—from the German word “ost” meaning east and is most likely a shortening of the old English “Eostremonath” the name for a period in March and April before the adoption of the Gregorian calendar. The German word for Easter, *Ostern*, is less similar, and the word used by the Latin and Greek speaking world is derived from the Aramaic word, “Pascha” which has no similarity at all to the name of any Goddess, but rather is related to the Passover.

It is true that there have been all kinds of pagan springtime celebrations, but the fact that two celebrations share a date certainly doesn’t prove common roots. Michael Jones provides very accessible research regarding Christian holidays on his YouTube channel, *Inspiring Philosophy*, and cleverly points out the faulty thinking involved in using the name of a month or coinciding dates to label something pagan. July is named after Julius Caesar.” However, it’s unlikely American patriots would appreciate being accused of venerating

THE EASTER MYTH

Sam Sears

that Roman emperor when gathering for BBQ and fireworks to give thanks for our freedoms on the 4th of July. The days of the week take their names from mythical Gods, but Sunday worship has nothing to do with the sun god.

My anti-Easter friend had more on his minds than pagan gods, condemning eggs and the bunny as fertility symbols. If the concern is not their origin, but that they can be a distraction, I'm sympathetic. We don't do the Easter Bunny in my house, except for the chocolate kinds! We do candy and we have fun, but we prioritize reminding them of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Some argue that even the candy or allowing an easter egg hunt is somehow introducing kids to pagan worship. I think the confusion arises over what worship is--a word that basically means to give recognition of worth and value to something or someone. Unfortunately, worship in our current civilization seems often directed at things, possessions, idols, or individuals not really deserving any kind of honor. True Christian worship, biblical worship, refers to intentionally focusing on God as the Creator, holy and unique, Lord of all.

Kids enjoy the candy, the Easter games, and the egg hunt in the same way as they would enjoy similar activities at other times of the year. Those are not acts of worship, though according to Britannica, Easter eggs did have special significance when they came into use in the 13th century. The Catholic Church prohibited the eating of eggs during Holy Week, but that didn't stop chickens from laying. Identifying those as "Holy Week" eggs brought about their decoration, and the egg itself became a symbol of the Resurrection--new life emerging from the eggshell. In the Orthodox tradition, eggs are painted red to symbolize the [blood](#) Jesus shed on the [cross](#).

Not only eggs, but all kinds of food have been used in all kinds of worship that would not be glorifying to God. The foolish worship of a golden calf or an offering made to an idol in the shape of a bull calf (Nehemiah 9:18-20) is not going to convince me

to give up steak.

I have heard folks piously say, "You worship God your way, and I'll worship God His way." I understand the desire to worship in "Spirit and Truth," (John 4:24) but we must verify what is true, and be careful not to communicate falsehoods, even with good intent. We also need to remember condemnation is God's job, to avoid the prideful communication that portrays a "holier than thou know it all" attitude, and we should have some humility when discussing topics that are matters of conscience.

The Bible does not mention the observance of Easter, but passages like Colossians 2:16, 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, and Romans 14 indicate that Christians have great freedom in questionable matters, such as observing certain holy days or eating different foods. This year, enjoy your Easter. Have fun with the kids and grandkids. If you happen to run into someone claiming Easter is pagan, you might refer them to Michael Jones' work on the *Inspiring Philosophy* YouTube channel. You might even point out to a believer hesitant to celebrate Easter, that even those focused on secular traditions generally recognize the holiday is related to Christianity. That awareness could be an opening to explain the good news of Jesus' resurrection, the way He changed the world, and the chance for eternal life. God Bless, have a peaceful, Blessed Resurrection Sunday and yes, a happy Easter.



Easter Sunday • April 9th

THE GOOD NEWS



Good Friday Service
Multilingual (W/ELIM)
April 7th @ 7:00



@ The
Fountain



6:30 Sunrise Service
10:30 Church Service
11:45 Kid's Egg Hunt

1023 N. Chinowth, Visalia CA 93291 • thefountaincc.org • (559)-732-6623

PRAYER CONCERNS

April 2023

Pray for the desire and opportunity to effectively share your faith! Our Nation and Leaders. Teachers & Students in Visalia. Our Brothers & Sisters at Elim.

Health: Ana Morales, Bonnie Henson, Donna Eastin, Fred Wilder, Heather Smith, Jason McKaughan, Jean Lamb, JoAnne Jordan, Jordan Lewis, Kevin Guy, Kevin Ray (DHF pastor), Marilee Douglass, Pam Shattuck, Steven Hall, Tim Sears

Cancer: Bill Morland, Clay Jones, David Thomas, David Welch, Joe Grant, Keith Moore, Mike Gunning, Olly Ajluni, Randy Gurule, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni

Other Needs: Nina Suttles (Vision)

Military: Brett Boland – Virginia, Michael Reid – San Diego, CA, Preston Correa – Marine, Tyler Richwine – Marine

Missionaries: some of our missionaries cannot be listed for their safety.

Nationally Based Global Mission Organizations: Adolfo Ibarra, Crosslink Development International, Central Missionary Clearinghouse, Soaring for Christ, Radical Truth, Maven, Gideons International, Our Daily Bread Ministries, Jews for Jesus, Pioneers, Team Expansion

Local Ministries: Care Pregnancy Center, Good News Jail Ministry, Hands in the Community, Love In the Name of Christ, Stephen Ministries, Tulare Kings Right to Life, Turning Point, Visalia Rescue Mission, Visalia Senior Housing

Ukrainian Individuals in danger: Michael, Andrew, Alex, and Angela. (Last names withheld for safety.)

A LOOK INTO OUR LIBRARY

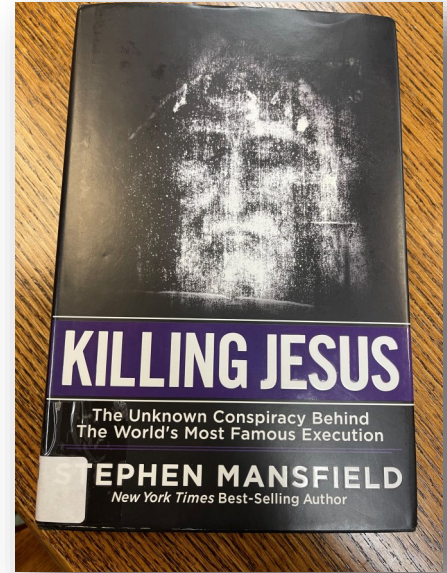
Rona Swanson

Killing Jesus

New York Times bestselling author Stephen Mansfield documents the most famous trial and execution in history in *Killing Jesus*.

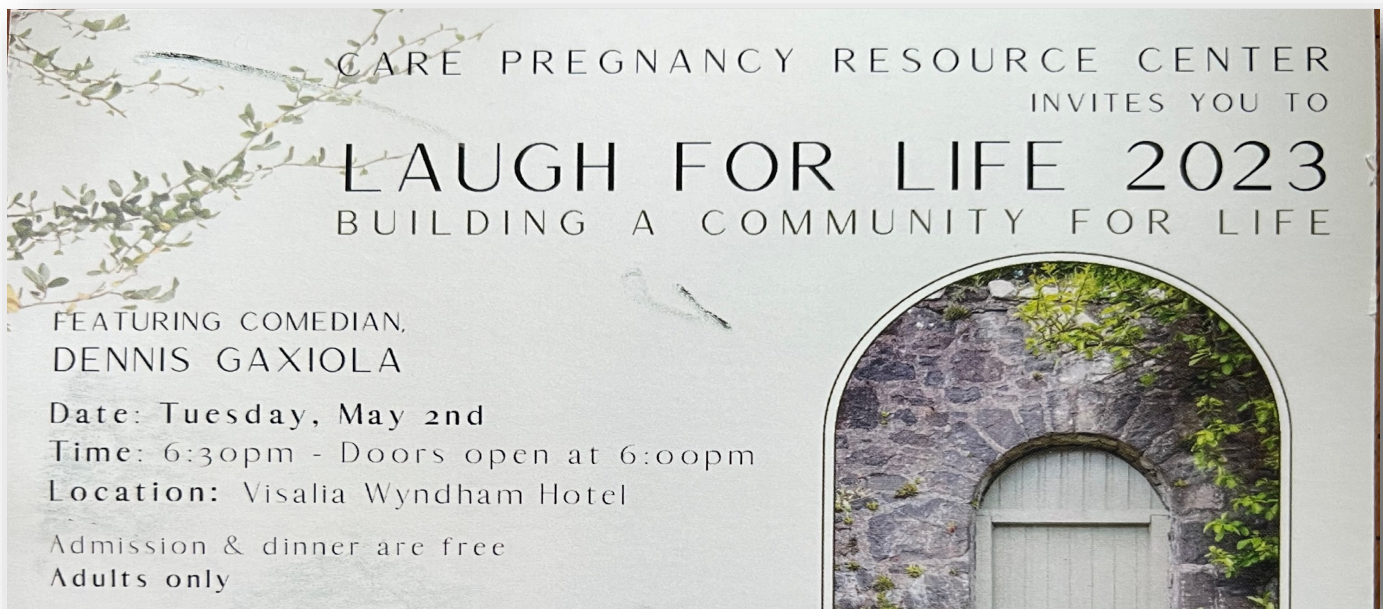
"The execution of Jesus was a crime born in the streets, the barracks, the enclaves of the privileged and the smoke-filled back rooms of religious and political power brokers. Its meaning lives in these places still."

As familiar as the story may be to you of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus may be, this book steps into the historical context and reminds us once again how the just stood in the place of the unjust and took the punishment on Himself – for you and for me.



LAUGH FOR LIFE 2023 BUILDING A COMMUNITY FOR LIFE

BettyLou Pendleton



Last year, May 12th, 15 members of our congregation (Vincent, June, Tim, Carrie, Kevin, Carlos, Yvette, Heather, Sam, Rona, Jeri, Lina, Betty, Ruth, Candice, and I) were joined by two Rancho Santa Barbara neighbors at The Windham for an evening of delicious food and humorous, even silly, comments, proving that it is possible to be entertained without being embarrassed.

We met some of the CPRC Directors and a few of the women who had learned first-hand about CARE PREGNANCY's dedication and devotion to them and their un-

born children. Finally, at the end of the evening, we placed in envelopes whatever our budgets could afford as a thank you for an enjoyable evening, one that provided needed support for some who were then struggling to find the answer to the most critical decision they would ever face.

Please join us for this year's celebration - Tuesday, MAY 2nd - An evening of support for Care Pregnancy Resource Center, one of our church's local missionary activities. If interested, please contact BettyLou Pendleton or the church office.

WEST COAST MENNONITE MEN'S CHORUS 2023

2023 CONCERT SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 6:00PM

Shaghoian Performing Arts Center, 2770 E International Ave, Fresno
(Clovis North High School Campus)

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 6:00PM

Reedley MB Church, 1362 L Street, Reedley

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 6:00PM

Porterville Church of the Nazarene, 2005 W Olive, Porterville

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 6:00PM

Grace Bible Church, 100 Rodeo Dr, Arroyo Grande

A freewill offering will be received for Mennonite Disaster Service

For more information, please visit www.wcmmc.org

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

April 2023

Betty Guzman	8	Gwen Ritter	25
Tom Lewis	8	Ryleigh Morrison.....	27
Kevin Turl	8	Rosalinda Rodriguez.....	28
Susan Leary	9	MaKenzee Stowers	28
Shannan Ajluni	12		
Owen Gunning	15		
Ryan Ritter	16		
Krista Romer	18		
Leliana Sears	19		
Sheila Ronk	20		
Dawltyn Stowers.....	21		

Happy Anniversary!

Kevin & Kay Ray24

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

March 2023

Average In Person Attendance

72

Total Giving

\$ 39,069.62

April 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<div> <div>*Family Night</div> <div> <div>Children's classes</div> <div>Youth Group</div> <div>Men's Bible Study</div> <div>Women's Bible Study</div> </div> </div>						1 10:00 Life Walk –TKRL
2 10:30 Worship	3 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	4 10:00 Staff	5 6:00 Family Night	6 10:00 Berean Watchmen	7 6:30 Men's Group 7:00 Good Friday Service	8
9 EASTER 6:30 Sunrise 7:15 Breakfast 10:30 Worship 11:45 Egg Hunt	10 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	11 10:00 Staff	12 6:00 Family Night	13 10:00 Berean Watchmen	14 6:30 Men's Group	15
16 10:30 Worship	17 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	18 10:00 Staff	19 6:00 Family Night	20 10:00 Berean Watchmen	21 6:30 Men's Group	22
23 10:30 Worship 12:00 Elder Council Meeting	24 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study	25 10:00 Staff	26 6:00 Family Night	27 10:00 Berean Watchmen	28 6:30 Men's Group	29
30 10:30 Worship						



The Fountain
1023 N Chinowth St
Visalia, CA 93291



Coming Events

Worship - Sundays at 10:30 am

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Easter - April 9

Sunrise 6:30am - Breakfast 7:15am -

Worship - 10:30am - Egg Hunt following Worship

Stop by our website for more information on Bible Studies
and coming events at www.thefountaincc.org