New Covenant Connection

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

What Does the Bible Say About Sabbaticals?

Dear friends,

A biblical sabbatical is an extended period of rest and cessation from labor, rooted in the Old Testament principle of the "Sabbath Year" as found in Leviticus 25. The actual term ***sabbatical*** is derived from the biblical word ***Sabbath*** which refers to a day of rest observed every seventh day.

The Origin and Evolution of Sabbaticals

Historically, the ***Sabbatical Year*** in ancient agricultural societies was a period of rest, rejuvenation, and restoration for the land, allowing it to replenish its fertility. Similarly, a professional sabbatical serves as a restorative pause, enabling individuals to rejuvenate mentally, emotionally, and creatively.

Occurring every seven years, agricultural land was to lie fallow, allowing for agricultural rest, economic relief through debt forgiveness, and spiritual renewal. Today, in recognition that pastors don't really have the advantage of weekend breaks every week + vacation time, churches (through guidance from presbytery) often grants sabbaticals to pastors and Christian educators in order that they might have time apart from work to rest, refocus spiritually, and prevent burnout.

~continued~

2026

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR ..1

CALENDAR 3

(EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES)

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A Note From Our Pastor (Cont'd)

Key aspects of a biblical sabbatical include:

- **The Sabbatical Year (*Shmita*):** Occurring every seventh year, the land was not to be cultivated, and crops were allowed to grow on their own, ensuring rest for both the land and the people.
- **Release of Debts:** In Deuteronomy 15, the seventh year is designated for the remission of debts, providing economic relief for the poor.
- **Year of Jubilee:** After seven cycles of sabbatical years (49 years), the 50th year was celebrated as a Year of Jubilee, featuring liberation and property returning to its original owners.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose is for spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational renewal, as well as reconnecting with God.
- **Modern Application:** While not mandated for Christians today, it is used by clergy and organizations as an extended leave with pay (often after 5–7 years) for study, rest, and reflection to combat fatigue. In addition, a biblical sabbatical is distinct from a regular vacation as it has a focused purposeful aim for spiritual rejuvenation.

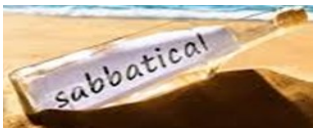
Like most presbyteries, New Castle Presbytery has a policy on sabbaticals, and upon investigation, I discovered that I am eligible to take one since I will have served at NCPC for 7 years as of the coming June 1st. So, I talked with our Lead Presbyter/ Stated Clerk, Cindy Kohlmann and she put me in touch with the Commission on Ministers and Congregations (COMC) to work towards a plan.

New Castle Presbytery's policy suggests a paid 3-month time away with possible grants being available. I asked the Personnel Committee for 1 month of paid sabbatical time and I am in the process of asking for a grant from New Castle Presbytery to cover pulpit supply while I am gone, as well as a bit of money for my personal expenses.

My plan is to spend time with my brother as we travel through Florida in January of 2027. He has been visiting almost all of the national parks over the past few years,

and trying his best to discover the wealth of resources that our country has to offer. And you all know how much I love warm weather (especially in the winter) and beaches. My goal is to have time away to renew myself, enjoy the blessing of time with my sibling as I come to appreciate him more, and the beauty of nature in Florida. The Session has approved this plan, and I will do my best to line up any substitutes to fill in for me before I leave town.

This will be my one-and-only sabbatical in my career, and New Covenant is the 7th church which I have served. There were at least 2 other pastorates during which I would have qualified for a sabbatical, but I never fully investigated the possibility, and they weren't a regular required benefit for pastors at that point in time. But please know that I would never leave you hanging (without the needed help), and I will do my best to care for you and myself in the coming year. To God be the glory and may we all give thanks for the blessings we share together –



Your partner in ministry,

Carol

MAY 2025

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Our Daily Bread	2
3 Communion & Offering for ODB	4 Deacons' Mtg @10 am	5	6	7	8	9
10 Trustee Mtg @ 11:30 am	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Session Mtg. CANCELED	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

EVERY SUNDAY—CHRISTIAN EDUCATION @ 8:30 AM; WORSHIP AT 10 AM FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP;
EVERY TUESDAY – CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM @ 10:30 AM
BELL CHOIR—CHECK WITH JENNY FOR DATES/TIMES

5/1 Tom Bennett Birthday
First Friday @ Our Daily Bread
5/3 5th Sunday of Easter; Communion
ODB Special Offering
5/3 Deacons' Meeting @ 1pm
5/7 National Day of Prayer
5/10 6th Sunday of Easter
Trustees' Meeting @ 11:30 am
Mother's Day
5/14 Ascension of the Lord
Jenny Hugh's Birthday
5/17 7th Sunday of Easter
5/18 Harry Kidd's Birthday
5/20 Pam & Harry Kidd's Anniversary
5/21 MAY SESSION MTG. CANCELED
5/22 Bill & Cheryl Shields' Anniversary
5/24 DAY OF PENTECOST
5/25 Gina Cerniglia's Birthday
Memorial Day
5/26 Al & Janet Grimminger's Anniversary
5/27 Tom & Barbara Bennett's Anniversary
5/31 Trinity Sunday

Clerk's Report

The Session met on April 22, 2026

Approved the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of March 18, 2026

- The Stated Session meeting for May has been cancelled due to vacations.
- Next Stated Session meeting will be June 24, 2026
- New Castle Presbytery Meetings

May 16th (Sat) Hybrid Mtg	Barbara Montazella & Carol
Sep 10th (Sat) Hybrid Mtg	Barbara Bookhart & Carol
Dec 1st (Tues) Zoom only	Jane Adams & Carol

- **Financial Statements:**

At the end of March, our YTD Income/Revenue = $51,117.02 and our YTD Expenses=$28,487.30. The revenue over expenses =$22,639.72. So as of the end of March we are in the black by $22,629.72. As the year progresses this may change as some submit their entire annual pledge at the beginning of the year. Also looking at the month of March, we took in more revenue than we spent that month.

- The Session voted to approve Carol's request for sabbatical leave which the Presbytery recommends as she has been our pastor for 7 years. The Session approved at least 1 month of time. We will work with NC Presbytery on coverage for the pulpit and some financial support.
- **Membership 42**

We have seen a few new people at Sunday Worship in the past few weeks. A reminder to all to introduce yourselves if you see someone new.

Email Addresses:

Clerk:	*clerk.ncpc24@gmail.com*
Office:	newcov.office2@gmail.com
Treasurer:	treasurernewcov@gmail.com
Pastor:	pastornewcov@gmail.com

Yours in Christ,

Pat Wright, Clerk

Worship

Some important dates to remember during May:

May 7th — **National Day of Prayer**
Give thanks for the gift of prayer;
don't take it for granted

May 10th — **Mother's Day**
Remember to show all those who have
"mothered" you your love and appreciation

May 14th — **Ascension Day**
The Feast of the Ascension of
Jesus Christ commemorates the
Christian belief of the bodily ascension
of Jesus into heaven.

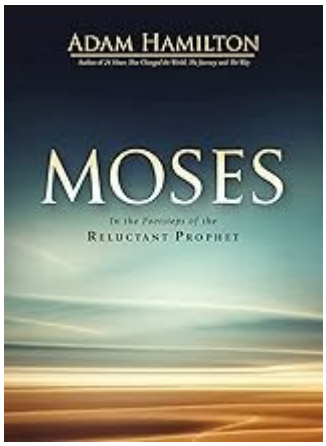
May 24th — **Presbyterian Heritage Day**
The Sunday closest of May 22nd which
was the opening date of the 1st General
Assembly of the PCUSA in 1789.

May 25th — **Memorial Day**
Memorial Day is a U.S. federal
holiday for honoring and mourning
the U.S. military personnel who died while serving
in the U.S. Armed Forces.

EASTER AT NEW COVENANT

Christian Education & Misc. Report

Weekly Christian Education Classes



Adult Christian Education continues on Sunday mornings at 8:30 in the Pastor's study and on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 as well of the option of zooming in. We completed our study of Adam Hamilton's book, *Making Sense of the Bible* after taking our time and spending 6 months on this valuable study. The things we learned in it will enable us to get more out of future studies. We have begun a study of Hamilton's book, *Moses, In the Footsteps of a Reluctant Prophet.* We will finish this study before taking a break for the summer.

Jane Adams,
Christian Education Elder

HELP NEEDED!

We are in need of 1 more volunteer to help keep our church clean. We have a team of several people who get together to clean the sanctuary, bathrooms, and kitchen once ever 3 week. Need another helper to pitch in. Please let us know if you could help out. Thanks!

Mission Report

Our Daily Bread: We served 160 meals on First Friday in April which was Good Friday. The holicay may account for the slightly lower numbers this month. If anyone is interested and able, ODB has a Saturday Sandwich program which has groups and/or individuals who have an hour or two on a Saturday morning, to come to the dining room in Middletown to prepare sandwiches to place in the community refrigerator for the weekend. This can help ensure that there are easy meals available in the refrigerator even when ODB is closed for the weekend. If you are interested, contact Pat Wright at church or contact ODB directly at ourdailybread.2016@gmail.com

The Neighborhood House: We continue to collect non-perishable food items for the food pantry at Neighborhood House. They provide food items for people in the community who have urgent need. They need a wide range of non-perish-able items such as pasta, particularly spaghetti, and pasta sauces. In addition, there is always a need for simple items like peanut butter and Jelly. Thank you all for your continued support.

Special Offerings: We concluded our special offering of the *One Great Hour of Sharing* (OGHS) on Easter Sunday morning. We collected $280.00 which will be sent to PC(USA) to be used for Disaster Relief, Hunger Relief, empowment of people.

Our next special offering will begin in the fall (Labor Day) and conclude on World Communion Sunday (October 4th).

Operation Christmas Child: Stay tuned and watch for announcements for a "Christmas in July" event again this year. Start looking for sales and bargains on items for the shoeboxes: School supplies, small toys, stuffed animals or dolls, t-shirts, combs, brushes, hair bows & clips, coloring books, etc.

Food Truck Ministry: We have started out with ***Food Truck Tuesdays***! It happens on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Thanks to everyone who came out in the chilly weather to enjoy some pizza from our April Food Truck of the month. We enjoyed Tramonte's Wood-fired ***Pizza*** and it was delicious, as well as the cannolis being great. This truck is in our parking lot several evenings a week so you can enjoy them without having to wait for Food Truck Tuesday.

Our truck for ***May*** (19th) is one of our favorites…***Out of the Ordinary with Robert Yalley***. He donated the tray of Jamaican jerk chicken for Kathy Henry's funeral luncheon, so let's all show up and show our appreciation.

Future Dates: June 16th, July 21st, August 18th, and September 15th. We start at 5 pm and go until 7 pm. Invite your neighbors and friends. The weather will be nicer so we can sit at our picnic tables and enjoy each other's company.

Pat Wright,
Mission Chairperson

Trustee Report

The Trustee Meetings are open to all and they are normally scheduled each month on the 2nd Sunday after worship a bit of fellowship. Our next Trustee Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 10 May 2026.

We are still looking at what we may want to do to increase the security around our property with all the construction going on around us.

Still need some landscaping in the main electrical connection in the middle of the grass area around the church. The bricks have been installed and all is good as far as it goes, but we need some low maintenance plants. We hope to get to this project soon.

We are working on a church directional sign to allow people to understand how to get into our church for the South on Jamison Corner Road. This is a work in progress since there are some issues with New Castle County. At the present time David Carter, our New Castle Council Representative, is working with the "Land Use Department" to see if things can be considered to allow Blenheim Builders to put this sign on their property, also to call this sign a "Directional" sign and not an "Advertising" sign. More to come.

Blenheim Builders made a small, recommended change to our proposed Church Sign, which we brought up to our own Church Sign Committee, to see if they approved or disapproved of the recommend change, they all agreed with the recommended change.

We received a request for the use of our parking lot for another Food Truck: "Shay's Seafood & Soul". They want a TRIAL set up for a few hours after Sunday service so members and families can grab food, fellowship, and spend more time together without having to leave to find lunch. Our Korean Church family has also been informed of this venture and they do not have a problem with this happening. Contact has also been made, via e-mail, to a few of our church members who are the ones that take care of us during our Fellowship period, to let them know that they could receive "time off" from making sure we have something to eat and clean up after our Fellowship period, which is greatly appreciated by all of us. Looking at sometime during Spring so we can socialize outside. More to come on this issue.

We repaired a small hole in the shed holding seasonal decorations and we got the new lock installed on the conference/storage room. Thanks guys!

If there are any questions or comments you would like to make, please let us know. You can use my e-mail address: al.grimminger@icloud.com.

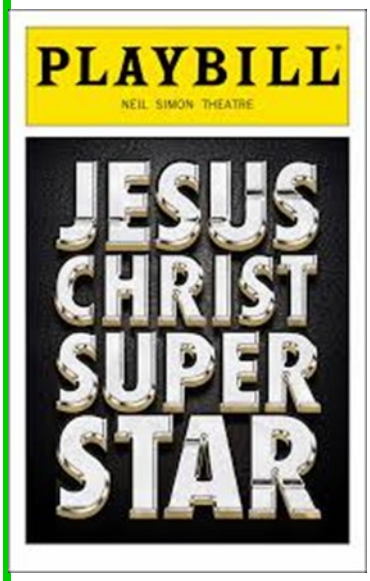
Your Friendly Trustees,
Al Grimminger, Bill Shields, and Bob Megonigal

Deacon Ministry & Fellowship

The deacons strive to care for our congregation through our Shepherding Ministry. Every person in the congregation is cared for my an elder and deacon who partner to be their shepherds. The shepherds assist the pastor in ensuring that all know they are loved and will receive the care they need.

We also enjoy times of fellowship together. In April, here is what we did:

- We enjoyed a delicious Continental Breakfast on Easter Sunday morning. Also in April, some attended *Radium Girls* and *The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood* at the Gibby.



In May, we plan on enjoying dinner at Pat's and then attend *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Everett. Please sign up so we can plan appropriately. Several of our own people are involved in this play and it should be really fun to attend.

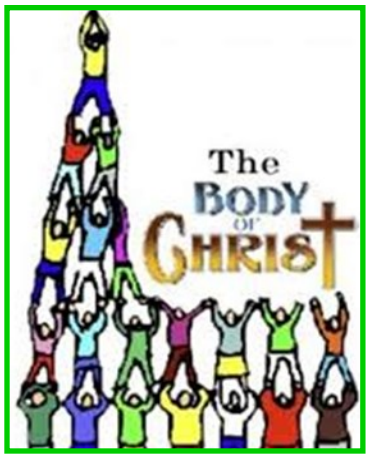
And don't forget about our weekly fellowship times following worship. It really allows us to get to know one another better so that we can be helpful and supportive to each other.

Skip Leeson and Cheryl Shields,
Your deacon leaders

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

- Taken from *Parish Publishing*

Are you doing your part?



So much more can be achieved when everyone pulls together towards a goal. If everyone contributes something, then the total achievement will increase substantially with less effort from each person.

Alabama pastor, Thomas Lane Bush, tells a humorous story from his teen years, which carries a great lesson. Tom was helping his uncle harvest logs for a saw mill. One day, after it had rained, they started down a dirt road in a truck loaded with logs. Suddenly, the truck slipped off the road and became stuck in the muddy ditch. They knew that they needed help to get it back on the road.

Tom's uncle went to a farmhouse nearby and asked the farmer if he could help them. The farmer said he had a mule which he thought could do the job. A deal was made and the farmer was soon hitching a mule, which he called Ol' Blue, to the truck. When all was ready, the farmer yelled, *"Pull, Blue!"* Blue pulled, but the truck did not move at all. The farmer yelled again, *"Pull Blue! Pull Mack! Pull Maude!"* Ol' Blue dug his hooves into the road, strained forward mightily, and the truck was soon out of the ditch and back on the road.

Tom and his uncle were relieved, but both were confused. "Why," the uncle asked the farmer, "did you call out the names of two other mules besides Ol' Blue?" Smiling, the farmer said, "Well, Ol' Blue is blind and when he thought he was pulling alone he couldn't do the job. But when he thought Mack and Maude were pulling with him, he was encouraged to pull all the more. So now your truck is out of the ditch."

Do you see the message in this story that has to do with stewardship? It is that no one of us can meet all of the needs of our church.

…when we know we are pulling together with others, we can accomplish whatever needs to be done.

Barbara Bookhart
Finance & Stewardship Elder

Frog Corner

F.R.O.G. CORNER: *Forever Rely on God*

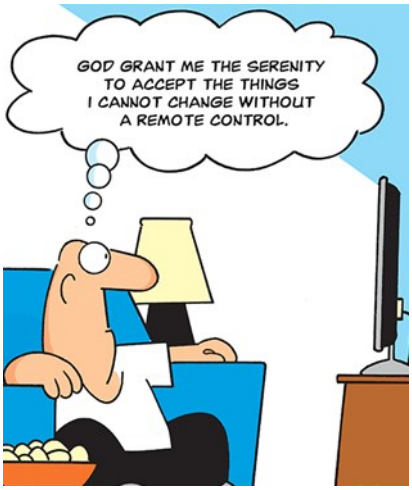
Don't forget the meaning behind the acronym **R I B B I T :**
Revere, ***I***nvite, ***B***less, ***I***nspire, and ***T***rust in the Lord.

Q: What is a physics teacher's favorite Bible verse?
A: Romans 8:39: "Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Q: Aside from Adam and Eve, who in the Bible had no parents?
A: The son of Nun.

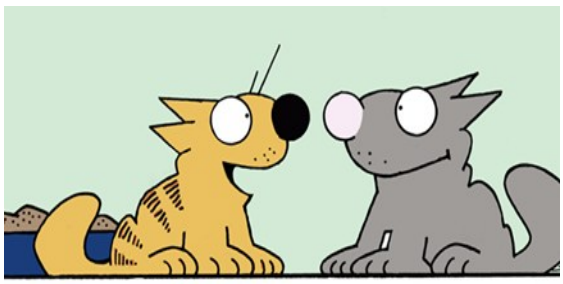
Q: What did Moses say when he came down the mountain and saw the Israelites worshiping a golden calf?
A: Holy Cow!

"This would make a great reality show for the religion channel."



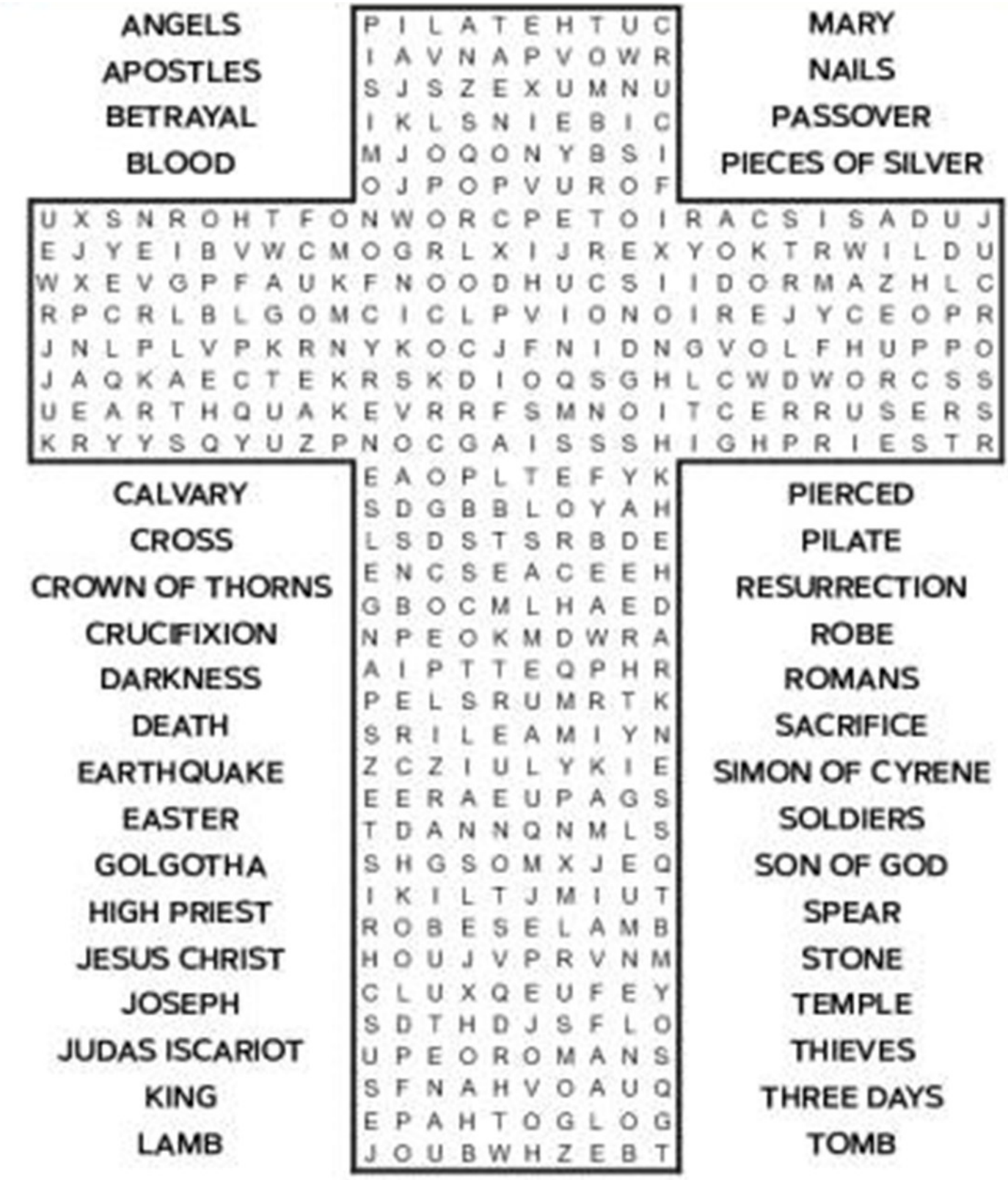
"This week's sermon is about how we all need to simplify our lives. Unfortunately, I lost the whole thing when my computer crashed."

"Please don't pray for healing. If it works, your insurance won't know who to reimburse and it messes up our accounting system."



"Thou shalt not flush the dog's head down the toilet while he's getting a drink. The Bible never said that!"

'If I send my prayer as a text message, will I get a faster reply?"

WORD SEARCH FOR FUN

Here is an Easter-related puzzle for you. Try to find and circle all the associated words.