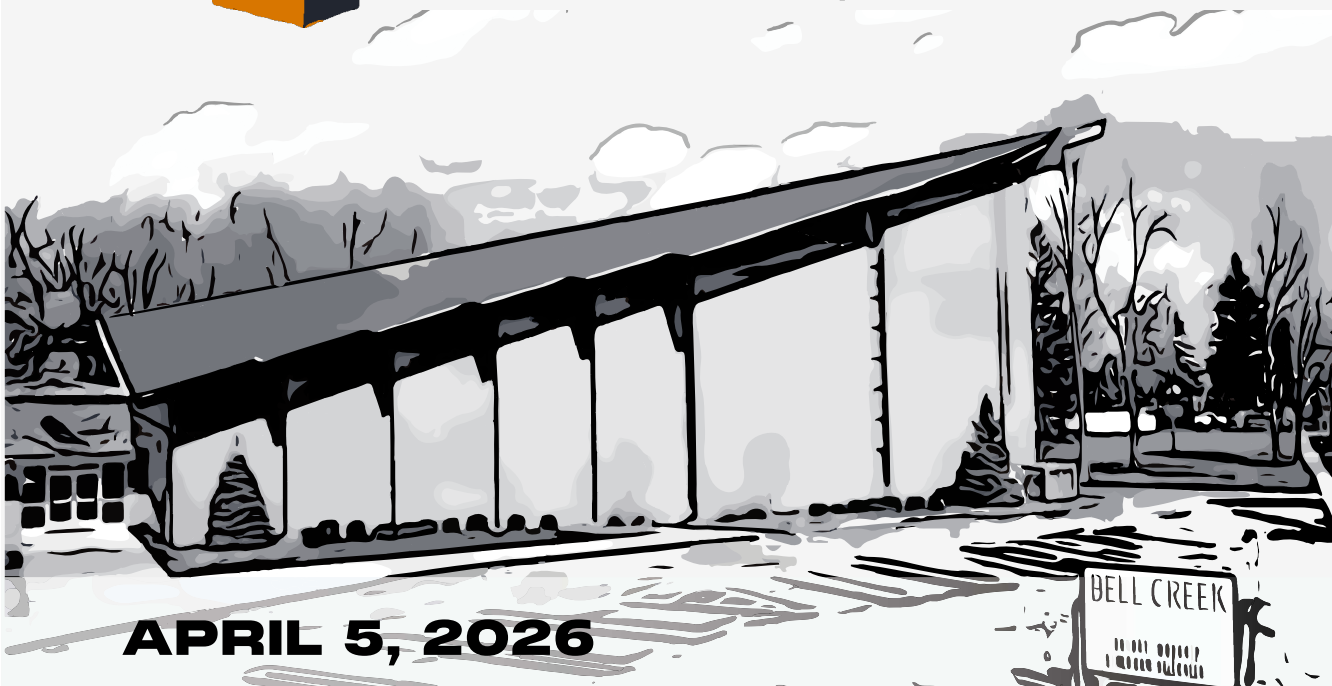


WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



APRIL 5, 2026

THE LIVING CHRIST AND THE DEATH OF DEATH
THE BOOK OF LUKE, CHAPTER 24

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES:
FOLLOW – OUR JOURNEY WITH JESUS

THE LIVING CHRIST AND THE DEATH OF DEATH

THE BOOK OF LUKE, CHAPTER 24

Seeking the Living Among the Dead

He is Not Here but Has Risen

The Living Christ and the Death of Death

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

APRIL 5: JUDGES 16-18

APRIL 6: JUDGES 19-21

APRIL 7: RUTH

APRIL 8: 1 SAMUEL 1-3

APRIL 9: 1 SAMUEL 4-8

APRIL 10: 1 SAMUEL 9-12

APRIL 11: 1 SAMUEL 13-14

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

DAD-CO

A new community just for Dads is starting! DadCo is an opportunity for dads to build real friendships, share honest advice on parenting life, and find encouragement through monthly meetups and events. Whether you are a new dad or your kids are grown, DadCo equips you to thrive as a father, husband, and man-together in community. Join us at our launch on Monday, April 6 at 6:30 PM in the Prayer Room. Moving forward, meetings will be the first Monday of each month. Please contact Alex Quint or email info@bellcreek.org to learn more.

AS THEY GO PRAYER MEETING

Join other parents of adult children to pray together in the Prayer Room from 9:00-10:00 AM on Saturday, April 11.

BETWEEN TWO TREES BOOK STUDY

Our Between Two Trees study will meet Sunday, April 12 at 9:15 AM in the Prayer Room. We will be reading the final installment of the Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle by C. S. Lewis. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org).

MOMCO RUMMAGE SALE

MomCo's semi-annual Rummage Sale will take place on Saturday, April 18 from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. If you would like to donate items, you can do so at the following dates and times:

Sunday, April 12 at 12:30 PM

Monday, April 13 & Tuesday, April 14 by appointment (Email Rachel@bellcreek.org to schedule)

Wednesday, April 15 from 5:30 PM-8:00 PM

Thursday, April 16 from 9:00 AM-2:00 PM and 4:00-8:00 PM

Friday, April 17 from 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

We will also do a presale for Bell Creek Attendees only on Friday, April 17 from 6:00-7:30 PM. If you would like to volunteer or donate food for the volunteers, please reach out to Rachel Nash (rachel@bellcreek.org).

APOLOGETICS CLASS

Join Pastor Dylan on Sunday, April 19 for the beginning of an Apologetics Class at 11:00 AM in the Prayer Room. If you have questions, please email dylan@bellcreek.org.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37-40

He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

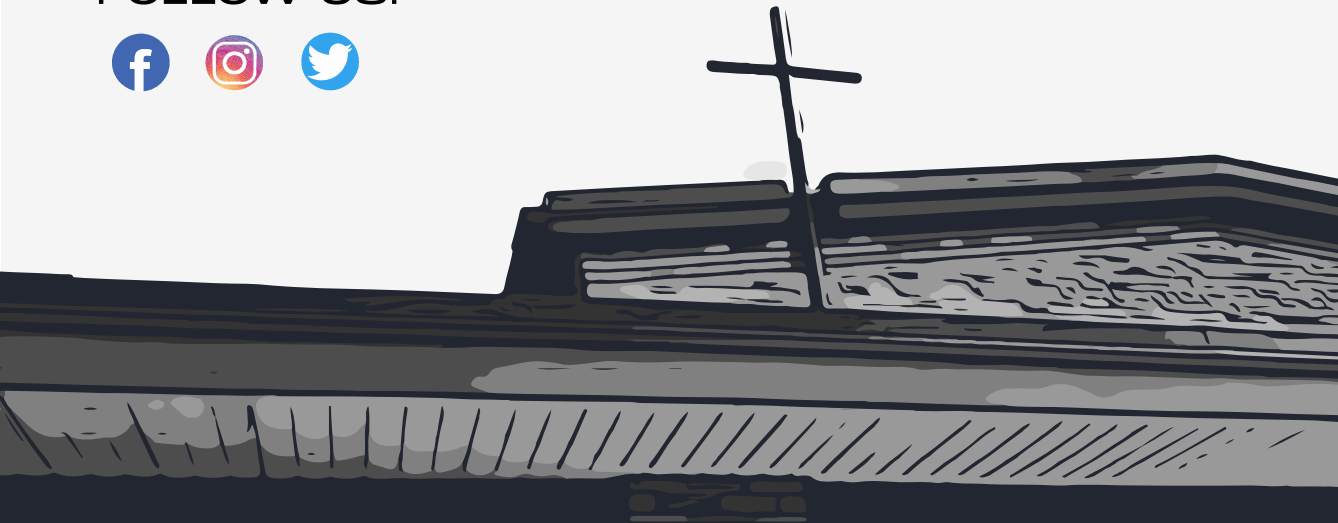
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US

FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

04.05.2026

The Living Christ and the Death of Death

The Book of Luke, Chapter 24

Scripture Reading:

“And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isaiah 53:9–11, ESV)

Seeking the Living Among the Dead

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.” (Luke 24:1, ESV)

Luke uses the general terms ἀρώματα (arōmata, "spices/aromatics") and μύρα (myra, "ointments/perfumed oils"). The specific substances commonly used in Jewish burial anointing in the first century included: Myrrh: a resinous gum with a strong, bittersweet scent; expensive and widely associated with burial (also one of the magi's gifts, which has its own theological resonance). Aloes: not the modern aloe plant but likely lign aloes (eaglewood), a fragrant wood resin; John 19:39 specifically mentions Nicodemus bringing myrrh and aloes. Nard (spikenard): a costly aromatic oil, notably used by Mary of Bethany to anoint Jesus before his death (John 12), which Jesus interpreted as anticipating his burial.

What was the purpose of the spices? The anointing wasn't like Egyptian embalming. Jews didn't mummify bodies. Spices were used to honor the dead. Anointing was an act of dignity and love. It also helped to mask decomposition odors. It fulfilled a crucial cultural and religious duty because leaving a body unanointed was considered dishonorable.

These were not cheap household items! Myrrh and high-quality aromatic oils were expensive imported goods. The fact that the women spent their own resources on them shows how deep their devotion to Jesus was and indicates that they truly believed He was dead. They thought, “Our teacher, our leader, our hope has turned out to be mortal. Yes, He spoke like no other man, claimed to be the Son of God, and performed undeniable miracles, but in the end, He was a man who died like anyone else. He must have been a great prophet of God to do such supernatural works—calming storms, casting out demons, curing horrible sicknesses, and even raising the dead. But now He is gone. He’s gone. It’s time to anoint His battered body with the final rites that will honor it, and after that...what shall we do?”

He is Not Here, but Has Risen

“And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” (Luke 24:2–3, ESV)

“While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:4–5, ESV)

“He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” And they remembered his words,” (Luke 24:6–8, ESV)

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is a remarkable claim, but it is supported by compelling evidence.

1. No credible scholar denies that Jesus existed. Nor do they deny that He died by crucifixion. His death was confirmed by Roman and Jewish sources (Tacitus, Josephus), not just the Gospels. His death was commissioned by Pontius Pilate and carried out by Roman soldiers who were professional executioners.
2. The tomb was empty. His enemies never produced His body, which would have been the simplest way to crush the young Christian movement. The Jewish and Roman leaders did not deny that the tomb was empty! In fact, they claimed it was empty because Jesus' body had been stolen. Ironically, their desperate explanation for what happened confirms what they were trying to deny: the tomb was empty.
3. Post-resurrection appearances: Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 on the resurrection (dated to within 3–5 years of the crucifixion) lists that there are multiple witnesses, including a group of 500 and James, Jesus' previously skeptical brother. The resurrection could be “fact checked” because the eyewitnesses were still alive when he wrote this!
4. The disciples' sincere belief and willingness to die for Jesus argue for the truth of the resurrection. People might die for a lie IF they don't realize it's false. But people don't die for what they KNOW is a lie. All of the apostles (except one, who was exiled) died for their faith. The disciples' remarkable transformation from terrified to filled with joy and boldness is undeniable in history.
5. The explosive growth of the early church cannot be explained without the resurrection of Jesus. The early Christians lacked resources, were outnumbered, disparaged, and often brutally persecuted, yet they turned the pagan Roman empire upside down. How? Why? Because they believed Jesus was alive.

I want to tell you about two journalists, nearly seventy years apart, both opposed to Christianity, both well-trained to follow evidence, and both arrived at the same conclusion: the tomb is empty.

Frank Morison was a British investigative journalist who set out in the 1930s to do what he thought any reasonable, educated man should be able to do: disprove the resurrection. He dug into the Gospel narratives with a journalist's eye, testing the witnesses, probing the timeline, looking for the cracks. He never found them. His book “Who Moved the Stone?” opens with a chapter he called “The Book

That Refused to Be Written" because the book he intended to write collapsed under the weight of the evidence.

Decades later, Lee Strobel, a Yale Law School graduate and the Legal Affairs Editor at the Chicago Tribune, found himself in a similar position. His wife had become a Christian, and he didn't like it. So he did what any good investigative journalist would do: he built a case against the resurrection. He spent nearly two years deposing New Testament scholars, historians, and archaeologists like witnesses in a courtroom. The verdict he reached was not the one he expected, and now he follows Christ.

Two highly-qualified skeptics, two investigations into the empty tomb of Jesus. One conclusion: Jesus rose from the dead.

The Living Christ and the Death of Death

"and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles," (Luke 24:9–10, ESV)

"but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened." (Luke 24:11–12, ESV)

What has Luke told us about Jesus' followers in chapter 24? They were "perplexed," "frightened," "bowed to the ground," "startled," "marveling." These are not people expecting a resurrection! They are shocked, caught off guard. And that raises the question: if you were making this up, why portray the followers of Jesus as confused, fearful, and slow to believe? You wouldn't. It's embarrassing! If you were making this up, you would portray the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection as confident and expectant. Instead, the Gospels say the opposite. Why? Because it's the truth!

Consider the role of the women in the resurrection accounts. All four Gospels agree that women are the first witnesses to the empty tomb. In the first-century world, a woman's testimony was not given the same weight as a man's; it would have been seen as less credible in a public setting. And that raises a question: if you were making this up, why would you place women at the center of the story? If you were a first-century man trying to invent a persuasive account, you would name prominent male disciples as the first witnesses. But the Gospels don't do this! They record what would have been, culturally speaking, another embarrassing detail. Why? Because that is what actually happened.

Consider the seemingly small detail of the grave clothes left behind in the tomb. If someone had stolen the body, why would they take the time to unwrap it and leave the linen behind especially when those cloths themselves were valuable? Grave robbers act quickly; they don't carefully remove wrappings or leave evidence behind.

What do we do with the resurrection of Jesus?

For many of us here in Metro Detroit, Easter has become just a nice spring holiday. We like Easter! It's a time of renewal and new beginnings. Flowers coming up, Ham dinners, Easter baskets, and family gatherings – the Tigers! And there is nothing wrong with any of that. Winter is too long! We all love new beginnings, and Spring ought to be celebrated!

But here is the problem: When Easter becomes just another way to say “winter is over, things feel better, let's celebrate!” we have domesticated something that is shocking...

Jesus was violently executed. He died. He was wrapped in grave clothes and sealed in a cold, dark tomb. And three days later, He walked out of it.

Yes, we welcome Spring every year, but the resurrection doesn't happen every year. It occurred once in history, and it will never be repeated because Jesus will never die again. Easter is about the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection proves that Jesus is who He claimed to be: the Son of man and the Son of God, fully human and fully divine, the one and only Savior, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only One who has died for our sins and the only one who can restore our relationship with God. Why? Because He is both God and Man. We needed a Savior who is God so that He could bear the sins of the world and endure the wrath of God poured out on our sins. We needed a Savior who is a real human being to represent us, because we are humans.

He has turned everything upside down – Listen to this!

He, who was sinless, willingly took our sins upon Himself so that in His body, on the cross, our sins could be condemned and destroyed by the wrath of God, thus securing our forgiveness.

He, who is the King of Kings, willingly suffered brutal wounds, in body and soul, so that we could be healed from all the wounds of our sins.

He, who should have been welcomed and celebrated by all, suffered the rejection of His nation, His own brothers, His followers, and even His closest friends, to secure our place in God's Family so we would never be without a home.

How can it be? The Author of Life gave His life in order to conquer death and rose again, guaranteeing our eternal life through His resurrection. When we believe in Him and trust Him for the forgiveness of our sins, we are forgiven. The Holy Spirit dwells within us, giving life to our souls and assuring us that we, too, will rise from the dead and live forever.

What do we do with the resurrection of Jesus?

We come to Him and ask for forgiveness. Does this sound too easy? It wasn't easy! Look at what it cost Him!! And He doesn't promise us a comfy life if we surrender to Him. He promises something better than an easy life: forgiveness of our sins, a restored relationship with God, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and abundant life now, and everlasting life in His Kingdom.

There's a story in the Bible about a guy who was paralyzed, and his friends were trying to bring him to Jesus. But Jesus was in some guy's house, and they couldn't get through the door because of the crowd. So you know what they did? They cut a hole in the guy's roof, and they lowered their friend down right in

front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he healed the paralytic man, and he got up and he walked away. You see, when true friends see one of their friends in need, they bring them to Jesus! I want to be a true friend to you today. Because I can't save anyone from their sins, but Jesus can. I don't have all the answers or resources, or help that you need, but Jesus does. I want to introduce you to Jesus. How can that happen? Like this! He's here! Will you say this with me? "Lord Jesus, I believe in You! I believe You are the Son of God, the only Savior! Forgive me for my sins! Save me! I trust in Your death on the cross as the payment for my sins. I trust You to save me! I trust You to give me everlasting life because You are the Author of Life! Amen!

"As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.'" (Luke 24:36-39, ESV)

Benediction:

"But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hell." (Revelation 1:17-18, ESV)