

April  
2024

Billings  
Walk  
To  
Emmaus

# W2E Times

## Important Dates!

SUMMER GATHERING

June 22, 2024

3:00 pm at FUMC

FALL "KICK-OFF"

September 22, 2024

5:00 pm at FUMC

CHRISTMAS SING

December 12, 2024

TEAM RETREAT

January 11, 2025

9:00 am

MEN's W2E, #84

January 16-19, 2025

WOMEN's W2E, #85

January 23-26, 2025

POTLUCK

February 1, 2025

5:00 pm

## Contact us...

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## Christ is risen!

## Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!



The phrase that keeps re-emerging from Easter weekend for me is this: "The worst thing is not the last thing." No fancy words, certainly not poetry, and yet, it's been getting me through a season of life when I seem to slide back into feelings of exhaustion, feelings that my reserves are depleted. I'm trying to turn those whiny thoughts into reminders that "We're not in this by ourselves!" and—bottom line—"Return to God! Ask for help!" Somehow, I have to remind myself of those core truths every single day. I'm a slow learner.

Back to my current mantra: "The worst thing is not the last thing." As a preacher, I have the privilege of letting passages of scripture "soak in my heart" leading up to Sunday. This Easter, I chose Mark's version, Mark 16:1-8, which involves a lot of fretting and confusion, fear and amazement, and ends practically in the middle of a sentence: "So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." This might be the least inspiring of the gospels to read on Easter, but I love it because it's just so real. This earliest version has such a ring of truth. The way Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome spent the days after Jesus' crucifixion sounds so familiar: trying to figure out what to do next, feeling overwhelmed by sadness, despair, and exhaustion, trying to tone down hopes and readjust expectations, only to find that even those efforts couldn't prepare them/us for what happens next. What the Marys and Salome discovered at the empty tomb was not Jesus' dead body (they knew what to do with that) but the news that, "He is not here. He is going ahead of you."

The worst thing is not the last thing. Jesus has gone ahead of us into God's future and will welcome us into it! If you find yourself in a moment when you're not sure you can keep going, stop for a second and hold on for whatever amazing, unexpected thing God is going to do next, something beyond anything we can imagine.

De Colores!

*Meg Hatch*

## **“Fresh Songs of Hope”**

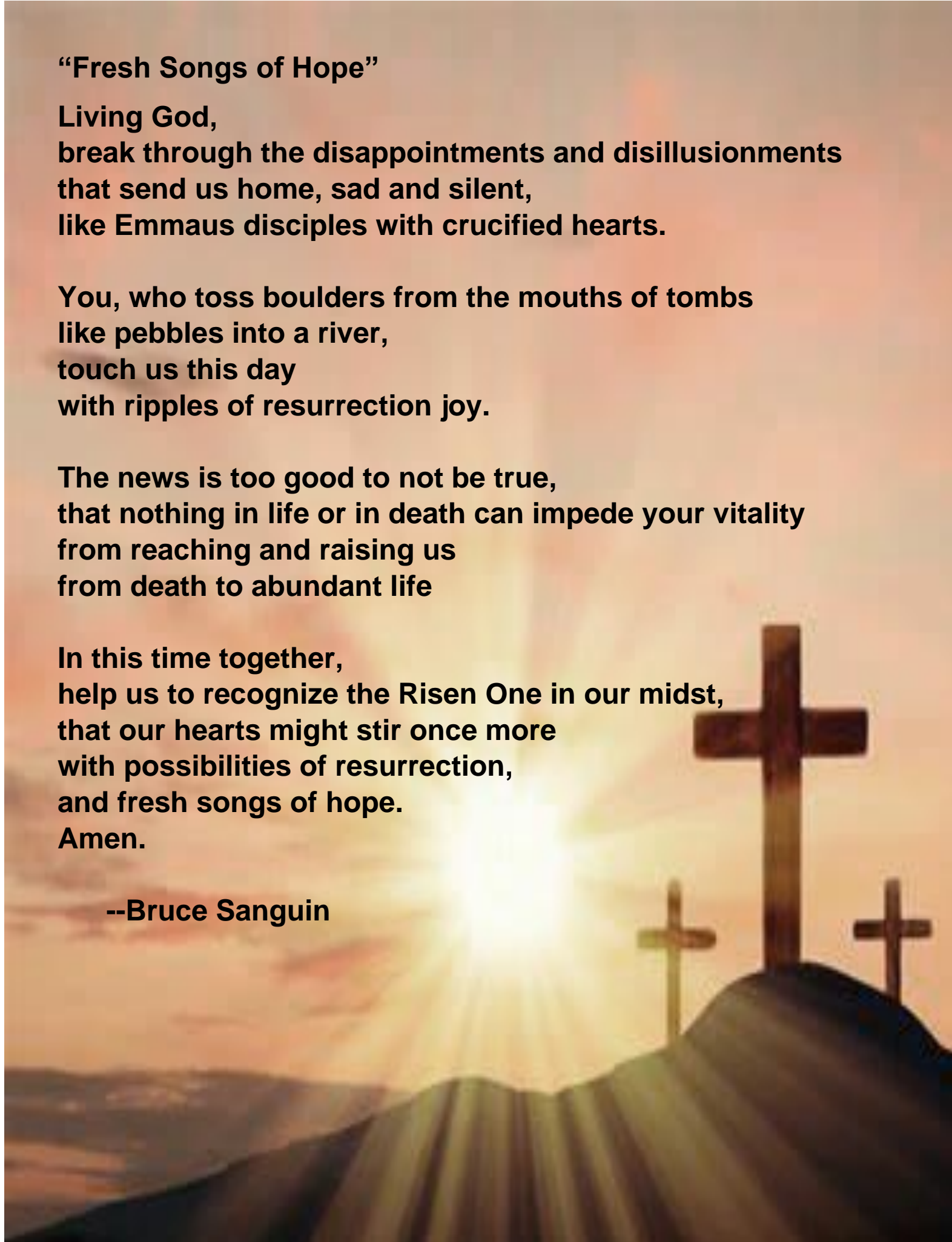
**Living God,  
break through the disappointments and disillusionments  
that send us home, sad and silent,  
like Emmaus disciples with crucified hearts.**

**You, who toss boulders from the mouths of tombs  
like pebbles into a river,  
touch us this day  
with ripples of resurrection joy.**

**The news is too good to not be true,  
that nothing in life or in death can impede your vitality  
from reaching and raising us  
from death to abundant life**

**In this time together,  
help us to recognize the Risen One in our midst,  
that our hearts might stir once more  
with possibilities of resurrection,  
and fresh songs of hope.  
Amen.**

**--Bruce Sanguin**



Dear Walk to Emmaus Community,

On April 21st, my dad, Ardel Ronning, turns 90! That weekend my family will be celebrating his birthday, my mom, Ila Ronning's extraordinary life, and my parents' 64 years of marriage. My sister, Nita Breshears, and I invite you to join us at 2:00 pm on Saturday, April 20th in Brother Van Hall at First United Methodist Church in Billings, MT in celebration of our parents and their love for one another, our family, and their community. Please join us in celebrating my dad's birthday, my mom's life, and our family's endless love for all of you!

Sincerely, Penny Ronning



CELEBRATION OF LOVE AND LIFE

*Ardel and Ila Ronning*

2:00 PM SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
BROTHER VAN HALL  
2800 4TH AVE N, BILLINGS, MT 59101

## ***SING AT THE WOMEN'S PRISON***

**HOMEWARD BOUND** is a prison ministry that conducts a weekend much like the Walk to Emmaus. This blessed weekend will take place at the Women's Prison, April 26, 27 & 28. Please gather with your 4<sup>th</sup> day friends at the fence on the south side of the prison on South 27<sup>th</sup> Street (near the Post Office) **Saturday, April 27th at 5:30 pm** where we will sing to the candidates. It is a very touching experience for the pilgrims as well as the singers.

## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

Forgiveness is not about keeping score. It's about losing count.

God is in the process of *changing* what we desire far more than He is in the process of *giving* what we desire.

Children may close their ears to advice, but they keep their eyes open to examples.

God has an "after this" for you.

When you judge others, you do not define them, you define yourself.

God can mend a broken heart, but you must give Him all the pieces.

If God had a refrigerator your picture would be on it.



### FLYING A KITE

Whenever anyone asks me how I can be so certain what God is like, I am reminded of the story of the little boy who was out flying a kite. It was a fine day for kite flying, the wind was brisk and large billowy clouds were blowing across the sky. The kite went up and up until it was entirely hidden by the clouds. "What are you doing?" a man asked the little boy. "I'm flying a kite," he replied. "Flying a kite, are you?" the man said, "How can you be sure? You can't see your kite." "No," said the boy, "I can't see it, but every little while I feel a tug, so I know for sure that it's there!"

Don't take anyone else's word for God. Find Him for yourself, and then you too will know by the wonderful, warm tug on your heartstrings that He is there *for sure*.



### GRANDPA'S FACE

A little girl was sitting next to her grandfather as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up and touch his wrinkled cheek. She touched her own cheek after she touched his. After a little while of thinking she asked, "Grandpa, did God make you.? He looked at her and said, "Yes, sweetheart, God make me a long time ago." She paused for a few seconds and then asked, "Grandpa, did God make me too?" He replied, "Yes, indeed pumpkin, God made you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she whispered to him, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"