



FOCUS

NEWSLETTER

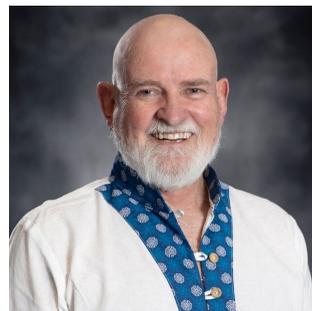
March 2024

FROM THE PASTOR

March Madness

This is the month of *March Madness* – which means NCAA Division I men's and women's basketball championship tournaments. This expression is, however, older than basketball.

"Mad as a March hare" originated in mid-1500s and uses the unpredictable aggression of hares during the March breeding season to describe the unpredictable nature of the March weather – something we have all experienced in the past few weeks!



The other moment of “madness” in March is the story of our Christian faith. The actions of Jesus make absolutely no sense to any rational person: Jesus leads a crowd to confront the leadership of Jerusalem on the way they oppressed the poor and the marginalized, and then did not overthrow the leadership but taught new values in the temple. He refused to explain his actions in a way that would save himself from execution by the Roman Governor, and instead used the opportunity to teach Pilate about truth. While he was dying, he prayed forgiveness for his accusers, and



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in this “moment of madness” announces the love of God for all of humanity.

Let us pause and take note: Jesus modeled a love that refused to call down retribution from heaven, but instead blessed those who despised the one who was dying an unjust death. In the light of this a Godly leader is not one who promises revenge, and who hurls insults at his critics, and who curses anyone who dares to offer a different view on life. Let us follow the forgiving “March madness” of Jesus – because this is the only way to plant the Kingdom heaven here on earth.

May the Grace of God be with us all.

Pastor Pete

A Fun Bowling Day Unites Church Families at The Lanes

On a bright and cheerful Sunday, families from our church congregated at The Lanes for a day filled with laughter, strikes, and spares. The atmosphere was buzzing with excitement as parents, children, and friends gathered for a delightful bowling day on February 25.

The event wasn't just about strikes and spares; it was about building connections and strengthening the sense of community within the church. As families enjoyed the friendly competition, they also shared stories, experiences, and laughter, creating memories that will undoubtedly linger in their hearts.



Missions

Last year (2022) Brookings First sent a match of \$10,000 to **Give Ye Them to Eat (GYTTE)**, a community-based agriculture and health program in Mexico, run by our covenant missionary, Nan McCurdy. We also covenanted with Nan through our continuing commitment to help missionaries in the field. GYTTE focuses their mission work on teaching skills to community members that will improve their health, livelihood, economy and overall well-being.

When you fill your **Lenten Box**, the funds will be used for seminars on maternal health care, building fuel efficient mud stoves, educating community members on good agricultural practices and much, much more. Please follow the Brookings First UMC mission facebook page (Missions at Brookings FUMC) or check out the GYTTE webpage (www.gytte.org).



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
25	26	27	
3	4	5	6
8:40am - Music for PreK- 9am - Sunday School @ 10am - Sunday Morning	10am - Communion at 10am - Healthy 5:15pm - Monday evening 5:30pm - SPR Meeting @ 7pm - Worship	5:30pm - Al-Anon @ 7pm - Trustees Meeting	South Africa 8am - TOPS @ 4pm - Chimiri 5pm - Manna 6pm - Manna 7pm - 1st On
10	11	12	
South Africa Mission Trip			
17	18	19	20
8:40am - Music for PreK- 9am - Sunday School @ 10am - Sunday Morning	10am - Healthy	1:30pm - PEO Group @ 5:30pm - Al-Anon @	8am - TOPS @ 4pm - Chimiri 5pm - Manna 6pm - Manna 7pm - 1st On
South Africa Mission Trip			
24	25	26	27
8:40am - Music for PreK- 9am - Sunday School @ 10am - Sunday Morning 1pm - Girl Scouts @ Ed.	10am - Healthy 10am - ULC Communion 5:15pm - Monday evening 5:30pm - Finance	1:30pm - CARE Group 3:30pm - UWF Board Mtg. 5:30pm - Al-Anon @	8am - TOPS @ 4pm - Chimiri 5pm - Manna 6pm - Manna 7pm - 1st On 7pm - 6th Gra
31	1	2	
9am - Easter Potluck 9am - No Sunday School 10am - Sunday Morning			

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	1 6:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Healthy	2
6	7	8	9
Mission Trip			
@ Church tag Children in the in the Campus @		6:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Healthy	
13	14	15	16
@ Church tag Children in the in the Campus @	5:30pm - Missions	6:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Healthy	9am - Piecemakers @
20	21	22	23
@ Church tag Children in the in the Campus @ ade Class @	10am - Edgewood Vista 10:30am - Stoneybrook 6pm - UMM (United	6:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Healthy	
27	28	29	30
@ Church tag Children in the in the Campus @ ade Class @	1pm - Tie Quilters @	6:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Healthy	9am - Decorating for
3	4	5	6

Susan's Saga

Lent: A season for contemplation of the mystery of the culmination of the Incarnation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The period in the church calendar which is known as Lent is the time leading up to Holy Week. It is typically a subdued time of somber reflection, a season to scale back and think more about spiritual matters.

As we draw closer to Holy Week, it is fitting to delve into the deep meaning of what transpired.

The physical torment, rejection, psychological abuse, suffering, and execution which Jesus underwent are unbearable to contemplate. The betrayal, arrest, mock trial, sentencing, and flogging culminating in the crucifixion represent gross injustice and flagrant travesty of what is right and good. The whole sequence of events is outrageous and causes indignation. What happened is unpleasant, ugly, unfair, and utterly distasteful. It would seem tempting to sugarcoat it, to try to explain it away, or to block it out rather than to face the uncomfortable scenes of Good Friday.

However, a deeper look is in order. The whole reason for the crucifixion is atonement for sin. In order to understand the awfulness of sin, it is necessary to first look at the absolute holiness of God. God is totally good and perfect, preeminent Truth and Wisdom, the Sovereign Creator, and the rightful Lord of the universe.

We are created in God's image, to be good and truthful. None-the-less, humankind deviated from God's perfect and righteous plan, thinking that somehow we can do better than God. Selfishness, resistance to God, self-absorption, pride, hypocrisy, deception, war, greed, and outright rebellion are only a few of the ways in which we violate God's perfect standard. If we doubt our sinfulness, all we need to do is look at the news and see evidence of all the violence, anguish, and grief that assail us daily. Both history and current events confront us with the enormity of how far short we fall of the beautiful purpose God intends for us. Our shortcomings seen against God's perfect goodness are outrageous, offensive, ugly, awful, repugnant, and utterly distasteful. These adjectives are the same description of what happened to Jesus.

In light of our gross failings, individually and collectively, what can be done? A figure of an abysmal chasm separating us from God's lofty presence may help us understand. No amount of good deeds, noble intentions, or merit that we shovel in can possibly fill the profundity of that gap. We can't build a ladder long enough or strong enough or high enough to attain to God's perfect goodness.

However, God loves us so much that provision was made—through the cross of Calvary. The sacrificial death of Jesus was necessary for the sake of justice. The outrageous ugliness of our sin, individual and collective, is matched and exceeded by

the outrageously awful truth of Jesus' sacrificial offering for us. There is a parallel between the staggering horror of our offenses against God, and the divine solution of the terrible consequences of our sin which Jesus bore on the cross. "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."

A divine transaction took place with another dramatic parallel. When Jesus died, "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." As a result, "....we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place."

In a very real sense, Holy Week is all year, not just a few weeks in the church calendar. Every day, we need to live with the awareness of the standard of God's absolute goodness, how far short we fall of that standard, and our daily need for repentance and forgiveness. The shed blood of Jesus is absolutely necessary to accomplish what we cannot do on our own.

These marvelous truths of God's amazing provision for our shortcomings need to be proclaimed in every language through Bible translation.

Susan Huggins

Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, Matthew 27: 51 and the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10: 19, 20.

Worship Committee

Once again the plans have come together for a thoughtful and beautiful Easter season. We are excited for you to participate and enjoy this holy time of the year. But, we are also thinking ahead, and have an opportunity that might speak to you.

Our Music Coordinator Bunny has a number of talented musicians ready in the wings to provide some excellent music for us, but these performers need some accompanists. If you would be interested in helping these musicians as an accompanist, please contact Bunny Christy at this email:

music@brookingsmethodist.org. She would be happy to coordinate. What a lovely way to use your talents to help create a chance for our musicians to share their talents and for the congregation to enjoy them.

Harriet Svec, Worship Committee Chair

Mission Trip

Please pray for this team: *Rylee Honomichl, Joanie Holm, Rick and Brenda Hieb, Ope and Beth Niemeyer, John and Kim Prohaska, Becca Hermann, Madison Pantzke, Nancy Bohlen, Lynn Darnall, Diane Culver, Sheila Helms, Pete and Jenny Grassow.* We will be working at a Methodist Children’s home, refurbishing one of the residences and moving a storeroom. There will also be a bit of tourist stuff at the beginning and end of the trip! Here is our itinerary:

Day	Date	Activity
Day 1	Wed Mar 6	Leave US
Day 2	Thu Mar 7	Arrive SA (afternoon/evening)
Day 3	Fri Mar 8	Orientation to Cape Town and recovering from trip.
Day 4	Sat Mar 9	A trip up the West Coast
Day 5	Sun Mar 10	Morning service at Rusthof Methodist Church. Evening service with the children of Marsh Memorial Home.
Monday 3/11 - Friday 3/15		Working at Marsh Memorial Homes
Day 11	Sat Mar 16	Table Mountain – Cape Town Carnival
Day 12	Sun Mar 17	Lead Church at Marsh Childrens Home 5.30pm
Day 13	Mon Mar 18	Leave SA
Day 14	Tue Mar 19	Arrive USA



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**Marsh
 Memorial
 Homes**

THRIVING CHURCHES

- Are guided by the Way of Jesus, over partisan politics or popular ideology
- Pursue who they are and what they can do, rather than stress over who they aren't and what they can't do
- Develop contingency funds, but are not paralyzed by financial anxiety, turning bank accounts into untouchable idols
- Align decision-making with the mission and core values, rather than giving out-sized influence to squeaky wheels

Mark Tidsworth, Pinnlead.com

#BeUMC

Finance

The 2023 Giving Statements have been mailed out. If you didn't receive one and were expecting one, or if you have any questions, please contact Linda Kay in the Finance office. You may also contact her at 605-692-4345 or finance@brookingsmethodist.org.

Thank you for your continued generosity and commitment!

Sheryl Pappas, Finance Chair



Hy-Vee Receipts

We would like to express our gratitude to this congregation for their consistent efforts in submitting those Hy-Vee receipts throughout the previous year. Additionally, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to Peg Page for diligently organizing the receipts, considering the increased time and effort required due to Hy-Vee's revised receipt submission process.



Lost & Found—Are you missing anything?

These articles have been collected at the office and need to want to find their way back to their owners.

- 2 pairs of gloves
- Hat
- Water bottle
- Dog treats (yes, that is correct!)

If you recognize any of these items—please contact the church office.



Souper Bowl of Caring!

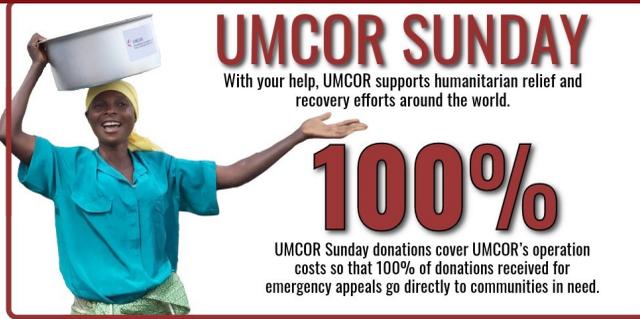
Souper Bowl of Caring – Results

Thanks to the amazing generosity of Brookings 1st United Methodist, the High School Youth group is able to make a significant donation of food and cash to support the needs of The Harvest Table.

As of Wednesday, 268 jars of peanut butter and \$1,710.70 were donated to The Harvest Table. Like last year, creamy peanut butter was your favorite with 185 jars donated along with 76 jars of crunchy. Plus 17% were family sized jars of over 40 ounces.

Thank you again for helping our High School Youth “Tackle Hunger” in the Brookings community!





UMCOR Sunday, March 10

Inquiring minds will want to know that the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was formed in 1940 during WWII in an effort to relieve suffering around the world from the devastation of that war.

Methodists heeded the call sending funds and some personnel to places in need of help. From this fledgling start, we now have an organization recognized around the globe for working with partners in areas of crisis wherever and whenever needed.

UMCOR itself is run under the General Board of Global Ministries with a few key personnel and lots and lots of volunteers, trained and activated during disasters, both natural and man made. There are both a U.S. branch and international branch.

On **UMCOR Sunday, March 10, 2024**, we can donate to UMCOR. The monies will undergird the work of the unit so that for every dollar given to disasters around the globe, 100% of that donation goes to helping where most needed.

I was fortunate to be able to work hand in hand with UMCOR for many years and can vouch for its work and careful use of your monies in times of crisis. Please check out posts on the church mission Facebook page in the next weeks to see where UMCOR has been working as your hands and feet in the world.

These gifts ensure UMCOR can respond swiftly to disasters around the world and as a source of hope and healing for those left most vulnerable.

Please give generously on UMCOR Sunday. (This will also be the March #onething if you wish to give online.) thank you!

Lorna Jost, Missions

Staff Parish Relations

The SPR committee has offered Maria Schlueter the position of Worship coordinator and she has accepted. This is a part time position. Brenda Hieb was previously doing both music/worship coordinator. We split those duties but needed to wait until after this years budget was approved to fill this position. Maria will work closely with Bunny and Pastor Pete to make sure everything is in place for worship.

Mark Stratton, Chair

Do you know how AMAZING you are?

In 2023 Harvest Table served 4,138 meals and gave away 47,140 diapers. We had about 10 FUMC volunteers each week and 5 different FUMC groups serve a meal on 6 different weeks with about 20 volunteers in each group.



Harvest Table wishes to say “THANK YOU” for the generous donations from the Souper Bowl event. We have a shelf stocked with peanut butter and monetary donations to buy more as needed. The donations will be greatly appreciated by those needing some assistance. Again, thank you!

Harvest Table would also like to thank everyone that makes monetary donations to Harvest Table. It is much appreciated, and it helps us purchase items that we need, sometimes at discount prices.

Vonda Kirkham, Harvest Table Director

No Sunday School on Easter

As we approach the joyous occasion of Easter, we wanted to inform you that there will be no Sunday school on Easter, March 31 for children, youth, or adults.

Summer Church Camp!

Get ready for an unforgettable summer adventure! We are excited to announce that registration for our summer church camp is now open. Don't miss the chance to join in on the fun and fellowship as we embark on a journey of faith, friendship, and excitement. Visit www.dakcamps.org to secure your spot for an incredible experience. Whether you're a child, youth, or adult, there's a camp tailored just for you.

If you have a specific camp in mind, be sure to register soon. Spaces are limited, and we want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend their preferred camp. We are delighted to share that the church is offering a 75% scholarship for campers again this year! To take advantage of this fantastic opportunity, simply enter the code "brookingscampers" during the registration process.

We understand that financial considerations may be a factor, and we want to make camp accessible to all. In addition to the church scholarship, there are further opportunities for financial assistance at both local and conference levels. For more information and assistance, please reach out to Gretchen at education@brookingsmethodist.org.

Summer church camp is a time to create lasting memories, deepen your faith, and forge new friendships. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity!

Discovering Communion

We are thrilled to announce a unique opportunity for our young ones to deepen their understanding of communion in the Methodist tradition. While our communion table is always open to all, we understand that the concept of communion can be a challenging one to explain to children. In light of this, we are excited to introduce a special Communion Class tailored for children from PreK to 5th grade (though older



children are more than welcome to join)! Please bring your children to the Community Life Center. The class is from 3-4:00 on Sunday, March 24. Pastor Pete will guide the children through a meaningful lesson about the significance of communion. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of this sacred practice.

As part of the class, the children will actively participate in making the communion bread to be served. This hands-on experience will not only be educational but also a memorable and fun way for them to connect with the tradition.

Following the class, the children will have the chance to put their newfound knowledge into practice. On Easter Sunday, March 31, the children will have the opportunity and honor of serving the communion bread during our worship service.

Older youth are invited to assist with the event. If your older child would like to contribute, please let us know. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions or if your older youth would like to volunteer, please feel free to reach out to Gretchen at education@brookingsmethodist.org.

Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday (March 24 Sanctuary) - Sunday Morning Worship (10:00am).

Maundy Thursday (March 28 CLC) – Women of the Passover (7:00pm)

Good Friday (March 29 Sanctuary) - Worship Service (7:00pm).

Easter Sunday (March 31 Sanctuary) - Sunday Morning Worship and Holy Communion (10:00am).

Other events to note:

Camp Sunday: April 7th CLC (10am)

Last Manna in the Middle Worship Service: April 24th

Last Sunday of Sunday School: May 5th.

Senior Sunday: May 5th.

Vacation Bible School: May 28-30.

Also:

General Conference of the UMC: April 23 – May 3, 2024, at Charlotte Convention Center NC. This is the body that sets official policy and speaks for the denomination.

The Dakotas Annual Conference will be held June 6-8, 2024, in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Church Staff

Pastoral Staff

Pete Grassow.....pastorpete@brookingsmethodist.org

Education Director

Gretchen Knutson..... education@brookingsmethodist.org

Community Life Center Director

Vonda Kirkham.....communitylife@brookingsmethodist.org

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Paul Schmidt.....tech@brookingsmethodist.org

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Music Coordinator

Bunny Christie.....music@brookingsmethodist.org

Choir Director, Organist, Worship Team Accompanist

Shawn Stemsrud.....music@brookingsmethodist.org

Campus Ministry Coordinator

Congregation Caring Coordinator

Joanie Holm.....jholm229@gmail.com

Organists:

Joan Riessen
MK Huggihns

Manna Cook: Katie Knutson

Choir Accompanist: Thomas Tvedt

Connect with us!

Church Office Hours:

Mon-Fri: 8:30am-12:00 pm

Need prayer? Email
prayer@brookingsmethodist.org
and Pastor Pete will pray with
you!



/FUMCBrookings



@brookingsfumc



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Church Office Hours

Please note that the church
office will be closed on the
following days:

- Good Friday (March 29th)
- Easter Monday (April 1st)

Give Online to Brookings First United Methodist Church!

Without your gifts, none of our community ministries would be possible. We have easy ways to give online or scan the QR code for more information:

1) VANCO MOBILE APP: Download the Vanco Mobile app from the App Store or Google Play. Once installed, search “Brookings”, select FUMC, and follow directions.

2) TEXT: Send a text message to [605-250-0807](tel:605-250-0807) with the dollar amount of the gift and follow directions.



Radio Broadcast Sponsorships

Now is the time to sign up for a radio broadcast sponsorship in 2024. If you would like to sponsor a broadcast at \$60 in memory, honor, or celebration of a loved one or anniversary, you may:



- Visit brookingsmethodist.org and click on **RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORS**
- Contact the office at 605-692-4345
- Email office@brookingsmethodist.org

Or on SignUp Genius: <https://bit.ly/3ZObUkh>

Winter Weekly Worship Schedule

Sundays:	9:00am	Sunday School (Pre-K to Adult)	
	9:30am	Radio Broadcast (on KBRK 1430AM)	
	10:00am	Sunday Morning Worship (in-person and online)	
Wednesdays:	5:00pm	Cost-Free Manna in the Middle Meal	
	6:00pm	Manna in the Middle Worship Service	
	7:00pm	Confirmation, Bible Studies, First on Campus, Wednesday School, Manna Study	

Watch Online at Any Time!

YouTube Live



Facebook Live



for
♥
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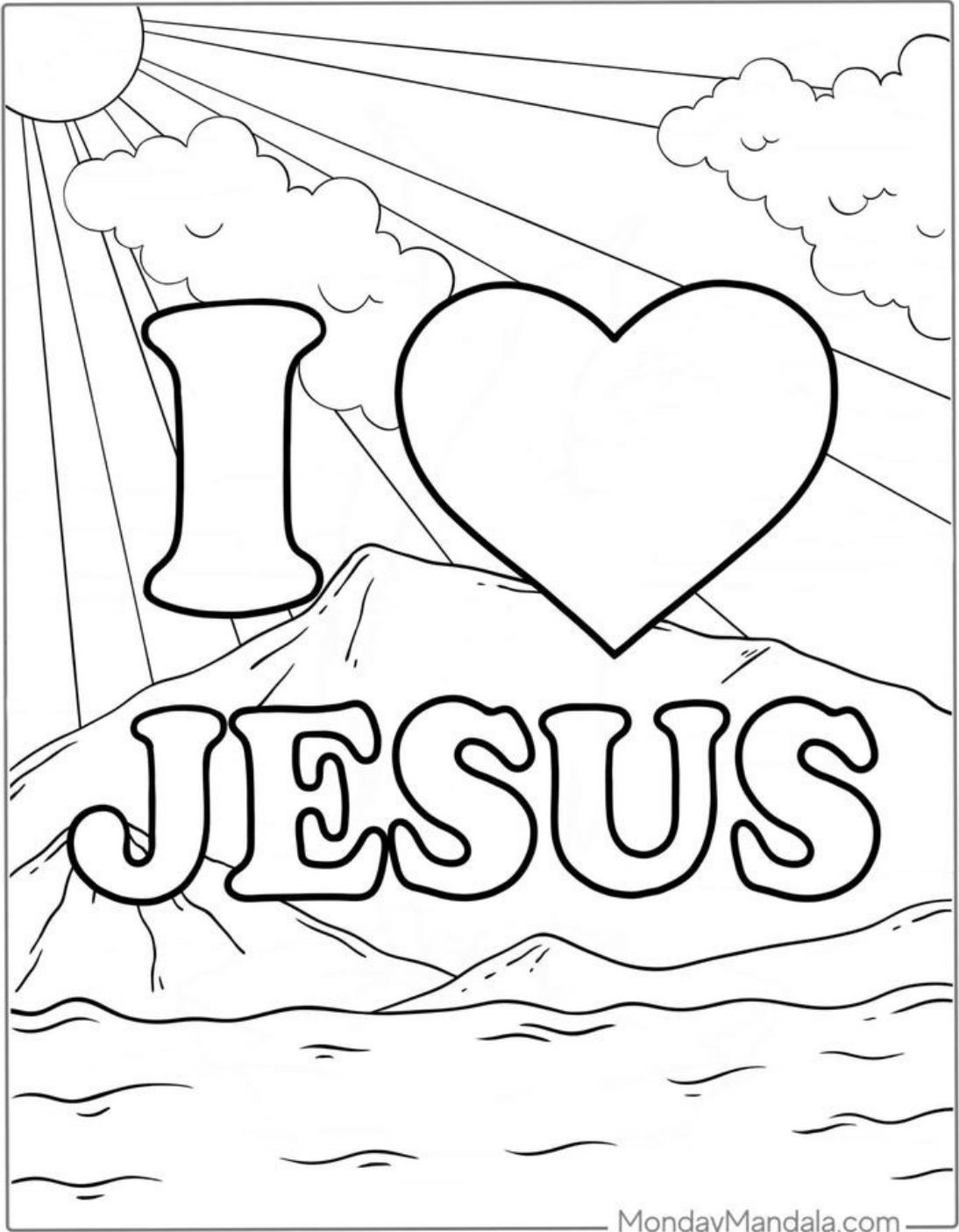
LOVED

THE

WORLD



— JOHN 3:16



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