



[TOP](#)

## Holding Steady With Crosses on Good Friday

APRIL 06TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

### Holding Steady With Crosses on Good Friday

*By Annabeth Miller,  
ShowMeTimes Editor*

It's a bright, sunny morning and Nathan and Linda Hull are standing along a busy Highway 60, a few miles east of Dexter. Cars, trucks and 18-wheelers whiz by, many honking their horns and waving as they pass. The wind keeps things cool as they stand by their van in a little clearing to a farm field.

And the Hulls are holding steady – keeping their white cross in place for traveler's to see – and remember. It's a simple white cross – five feet wide by 10 feet tall. But on Good Friday it makes a simple, yet powerful, statement.

The Hulls are just two of the many volunteers who are a part of a unique Good Friday experience sponsored by Carry the Cross ministry. On this Good Friday the Hulls and other are "crossing" Missouri – with folks holding cross along U.S. Highway 60 from the Illinois line to Oklahoma, and on U.S. 63 from Iowa to Arkansas.

On this Good Friday – the day Christians around the world mark the day Jesus was crucified on a cross – the Carry the Cross volunteers in Missouri are a visible reminder of the significance of this weekend to Believers.

"There are 169 crosses from the Illinois line to Poplar Bluff," Nathan explained as Linda holds their cross. He said another 60 crosses are being held along the highway in Poplar Bluff.

A big rig passes by, creating a strong wake as Linda holds onto the cross. He sounds his horn, and they enthusiastically wave. Nathan explained there are folks holding the simple, white crosses throughout the state – in Jefferson City, Joplin, Willow Springs, Columbia.

"It's our witness on this Good Friday," he said.

Carry the Cross has a mission today - to mobilize thousands of Christians to create the largest cross in the world - 3,000 life size crosses, one every quarter of a mile, along Highways 60 and 63 in the ShowMe State.

"Each cross also encourages you to stand with or carry a cross wherever you are in the world on this day," said organizer David Craig. Carry the Cross is not affiliated with any single denomination, but "is representing a single person – Jesus Christ."

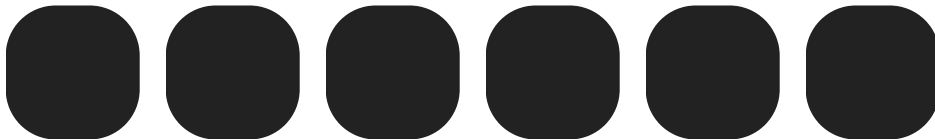
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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

## Trinity Youth Plan Trip to Cardinal Cubs Game

APRIL 03RD 2012 BY STAFF WRITER

### Trinity Youth Plan Trip to Cardinal Cubs Game

BLOOMFIELD- The Youth at Trinity United Methodist Church have taken on a new challenge in hopes of making a trip to watch the Cardinals-Cubs game on May 14th. The game at Tri-Youth is to memorize the Books of the New Testament in the Bible and there has been a frenzy of people getting involved.

The young adults have been working hard to get prepared by using new technologies.

**GoAninmate** is a new website that allows users to put their message into a cartoon illustration. This technology brings a little fun to a typically tough job of memorizing.

The trip is open to any youth that attend and meet the guidelines for the trip. Primarily, the student will need to perfect the memorization of the New Testament Books of the Bible and recite them to an adult leader. It's really not that tough if you break it down.

So if you have a desire to get involved, get in touch with Alan or Tracy Hedrick or Victoria Breece on Facebook. Or you can call the Church office for more information.

**GoAnimate.com:** [Tri-Youth To The Cards Cubbies Game May 14th](#) by [mutigers88](#)

Like it? Create your own at [GoAnimate.com](#). It's free and fun!

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

## Palm Sunday Begins Easter Week

MARCH 31ST 2012 BY UNKNOWN

## Palm Sunday Begins Easter Week

By Annabeth Miller,  
ShowMe Times Editor

Believers throughout the world begin a week-long journey this Sunday toward the high point of the Christian year, Easter, next Sunday, April 8.

This Sunday's observance of Palm Sunday begins the seven days of Holy Week - a week commemorating Jesus' last week on earth. The week begins on a high, marking Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and goes through soul-searching moments of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, the solemnity of Good Friday and finally the triumph of Easter morning.

Sunday's Palm Sunday services observe the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem that was marked by the crowds who were in the ancient city for the Passover. The people with the waving of palm branches and proclaiming him as the messianic king greeted him. The Gospels tell that Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, enacting the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, and in so doing also emphasized the humility that was to characterize the Kingdom he proclaimed. The irony of it all is that in five days the same crowd would cry for Jesus' execution.

"I think Palm Sunday was more about calculated courage than anything else," said the Rev. Fred Leist incoming Southeast District superintendent of the United Methodist Church. "Jesus had to know what would happen to him in Jerusalem, and yet he went into Jerusalem with the pomp and the crowd waving palm branches. He wasn't unaware of what would happen."

Leist said there is a verse that talks of how Jesus's face "was set like a flint toward Jerusalem", meaning that he was determined in his resolve.

"In one week's time he went from the palm branches to palm prints in his hands," Leist added, referring to the marks made in Jesus' hands at the crucifixion.

The Thursday of Holy Week is marked with Maundy Thursday, or Holy Thursday, observances. The day marks a number of events that were clustered together on this last day before Jesus was arrested. These include the last meal he shared with disciples, the betrayal by Judas, Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane while the disciples fell asleep, and his being arrested by Roman soldiers.

On Thursday after the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples came together to share what was the Passover meal, observing the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt when death "passed over" the Hebrew homes as the tenth plague fell upon the Egyptians. It was later that night, after the meal, as Jesus and the disciples were praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Jesus was arrested and taken to the house of Caiaphas the High Priest. On Friday he would die.

These are days in which Christians are present to the great events of the last hours of Jesus' earthly life and they go through them, as he did, step by step, beginning that Last Supper and night of agonized prayer in the Garden.

Thursday is also known as "Maundy Thursday." The term 'maundy' is from the Latin *Mandatum novum do vocis* - It was on this night that that Jesus gave his followers a "new" mandate to follow: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, you also out to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

## 'The Vow': A Real Love Story Of Faith

FEBRUARY 24TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

'The Vow': A Real Love Story Of Faith

*By Kathy L. Gilbert,  
UM News Service*

How seriously do you take the vow, “till death do us part?”

If you look at the statistics — half of all first-time marriages end in divorce — it seems not too many people say “I do” forever.

*The Vow*, a movie based on [Kim and Krickitt Carpenter’s story](#), debuted Feb. 10 and was the top movie of the weekend, making \$41.7 million. However, the romantic movie is not even close to telling the true story of faith and commitment that has kept the Carpenters devoted to each other for 20 years.

Their saga began 10 weeks after their wedding on Sept. 18, 1993. They were in a serious automobile accident that left Krickitt with no memories of her husband or their new marriage. She suffered a severe brain trauma that wiped out 18 months of her life — the entire time she and Kim met, dated and married.

While he was still madly in love with her, he was a stranger she wanted nothing to do with.

The glue that kept them together was their faith in Christ and the promise they had made before God.

The Carpenters attend [First United Methodist Church in Farmington, N.M.](#)

“Both of us know unconditionally we would not have made it through this ordeal without the Lord being in the center of it all,” Kim Carpenter told United Methodist News Service.

Krickitt spent months in a coma and then months more in physical therapy, but she has never regained those 18 months of memory. Her recovery was slow, her personality changed and at times she told Kim she hated him.

“At a low point in my life, I didn’t think this marriage was going to work. I didn’t have the faith that we were going to make it,” Kim said. “At the same time, I wasn’t going to leave her in the state she was in; I was vowing to stay with her.”

#### **Story gets out**

The media first learned of their story when a reporter came to interview Kim about his work as a baseball coach. In the course of the conversation, the story came out.

When the Carpenters renewed their vows and had a second wedding in 1996, it was a media circus. People were amazed and encouraged by their story, so Krickitt asked God to use their story to show others His amazing love and power.

They wrote a book about their story in 2000 and updated the book to coincide with the opening of the movie on Feb. 10.

“We enjoyed the movie but we were a little frustrated by the artistic license they took,” Kim said. “The dramatization in the movie was much greater, but it is hard to put 20 years of challenges into 103 minutes.”

#### **Enduring faith**

Krickitt’s faith never faltered, and she never considered divorce.

“A Scripture I really hold onto is Philippians 4:13: *‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’* I believed I was called according to God’s purpose, and I followed with my whole heart,” she said.

Kim said he has taken offense to some of the media reporting him as “heroic, courageous, manly.”

They insist they are an ordinary couple with two children, Danny and LeeAnn.

“It is amazing we live in a world that there is such a big deal made about a man and woman who simply did what we said we were going to do,” Kim said.

The book and the movie are providing a platform for them to talk about their faith.

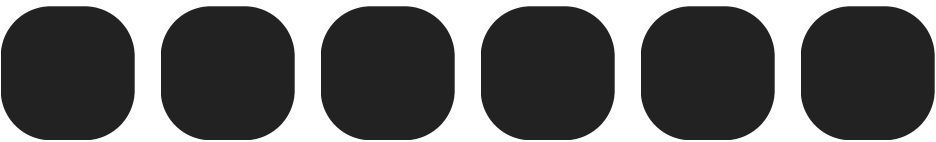
“People all over the world are seeking something higher, some message,” Kim said. “We have been very grateful for the prayers and well wishes we have received. We know the Lord is not going to give us more than we can handle.”

*Gilbert is a multimedia reporter for the young adult content team at United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn.*

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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

# Warren Finds New Purpose: Weight Loss

FEBRUARY 09TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

## Warren Finds New Purpose: Weight Loss

LAKE FOREST, Calif.(RNS) - Megachurch pastor Rick Warren has become an outsized evangelical superstar: best-selling author of "The Purpose Driven Life" series, pastoral mentor and even political referee.

Now Warren is finding a new purpose: tackling his outsized waistline.

Warren, 58, says the revelation came about a year ago, during a marathon baptism session of about 800 people at Saddleback Church.

As he struggled to submerge members of his flock in the baptismal pool one by one, he realized his parishioners were heavy and that he, too, was fat, setting a terrible example.

Warren says his gradual weight gain -- about two to three pounds a year -- has added up over his 30 years as a pastor. To lose the extra pounds and inspire others to do the same, the former football player enlisted the help of three doctors.

Warren recruited a family physician, Dr. Mark Hyman; Dr. Mehmet Oz, New York Times best-selling author and host of NBC's "The Dr. Oz Show"; and Dr. Daniel Amen, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine, and the lone Christian in the mix.

Together they launched "The Daniel Plan: God's Prescription for Your Health," named after a passage in the biblical Book of Daniel where the prophet and fellow Israelites refuse to accept "royal" food and wine from the Babylonian king, opting for water and simple vegetables instead.

The Daniel Plan encourages parishioners to link into Saddleback's vast network of small Bible study groups as support systems to get fit. Congregants exercise together at weekly classes such as "Walk & Worship" and "Pump & Praise." The three doctors offer tips on healthy eating and participants can create a health profile online.

Since the launch of the plan a year ago, more than 15,000 people have signed up and participants have shed a combined total of at least 250,000 pounds, according to the church. The 6-foot-3 Warren, who started the program at 295 pounds, shed 60 pounds in the first year.

Amen, a Saddleback member, said "churches are by and large a place of illness."

"I'm tired of fat football coaches and fat pastors," Amen said.

The advantage of losing weight in a church, he said, is the support of the built-in community. "When you're surrounded by other people who have the same values, and they have the same health habits, you're going to do so much better," he said.

Tammie Allen, 41, a mother of two and a Saddleback parishioner, joined the Daniel Plan with other members of her Monday night Bible study group.



"You can't do it alone, and you can't do it without God's power," said Allen, who started exercising with other Saddleback parishioners and chose more fruits and vegetables. So far, she's dropped 97 pounds.

"My daughter tells me all the time she loves being able to put her arms around me."

Jim and Melanie Black, who just celebrated their 11-year anniversary, joined the program together and have dropped their taste for fast food. They say the motivation behind the change is noteworthy -- it's not for vanity's sake.

"We're doing it so we can serve God at a higher level," said Jim Black.

Chiquita Seals, 45, a single mother of two, is so far the church's biggest loser.

"In the beginning I thought, 'This is just another diet program,'" she said. Seals said she assumed she was "going to be eating rabbit food."

After all, Seals said, she had tried other diet programs like Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers, but this is the only one that stuck. When she began the Daniel Plan she weighed 267 pounds. She now weighs 135.

"All my life I thought that I could never be used by God," Seals confessed in a video posted on the church's website. But after losing the pounds, "I know I can be used by God."

To be sure, the program has attracted scrutiny. The church posted an online response to those who questioned the use of non-Christian doctors to help lead the program, saying that members "will never compromise our belief that Jesus is the only way to heaven or that the Bible is the 100 percent completely infallible and perfect Word of God."

"These doctors are helping us as friends," the statement concludes. "But are in no way advising our church on spiritual matters."

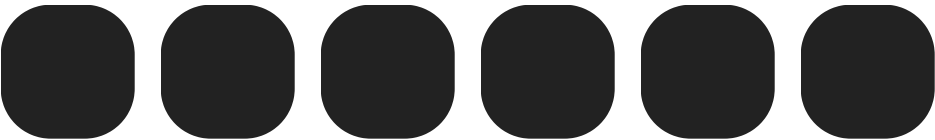
For his part, Warren still hopes to drop another 30 pounds. And, in typical Warren fashion, he's spreading his message to other churches. The bottom line, Amen said, is those looking to lose weight are in luck.

"If for whatever reason your family won't do it with you," he said, "well, you now have the family of Saddleback."

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