

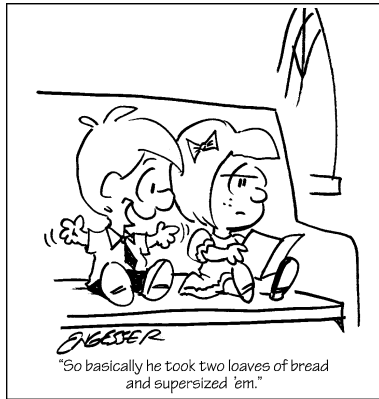


Birthdays In April

Naomi Oatis	April 4
Justin Causey	April 10
Aaron Brown	April 12
Jemma Harley	April 13
Ed Trotman	April 20
Thelma Hottel	April 21
Alice Holt	April 22
Sylvia Moore	April 22
Jeremy Holt	April 23
Briana Causey	April 24
Chad Caudill	April 25
Jenna Smith	April 25
Tommy DeCerbo	April 26



- Shanna and Ramsey James for coordinating the Easter Egg Hunt and all the children who participated.
- Sylvia Newport and the Fellowship Committee, all who brought food and all who attended the Easter Morning breakfast.
- Garry Scutt, the Choir, Amy Benson and Edward Kapusciaz, Jamie Price and Charlie Hartmann for Palm Sunday's "An Easter Reflection".



Anniversaries In April

Ramsey & Shanna James April 14

HILLENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH



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Making a Difference in the Lives of People Through the Power of Jesus Christ

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Dr. David T Hottel, Pastor
Edna Scott, Church Secretary
Garry Scutt, Music Director
David Critchfield, Administrative Assistant

Hillendale Herald



Hello?

What would happen if God instituted voice mail to better route our prayers?
Let's say I had gossiped and wanted to confess, so I got ready to pray, 'er, call:

Immediately, a voice answered, "You have reached the throne room of Heaven, the Prayer Department. All of our representatives are busy right now. Your call is important to us and we want to help you. Please stay on the line and your request will be answered in the order that it was received."

There is music and then I hear another recorded message. "Listen carefully to the following options and press the appropriate numbers: Press 1 for prayer for a loved one. Press 2 for prayer for your church. Press 3 for giving thanks. Press 4 for confessing sins. Press 5 for salvation. Press 6 for a physical need. If you would like this menu repeated, press 9."

Since I had a sin to confess, I pressed 4. Immediately, I heard a voice saying, "We're so glad to help you in your confession of sins. Please select the appropriate option: If you cursed, press 1. If you yelled at your wife or another member of your family, press 2." The voice droned on, giving the various options.

About then I decided to hang up and keep on gossiping. But then I remembered what the Bible says about God and how he attends to our needs.

Instead of a voice mail system, He says, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."



Consider the following story.

George Frideric Handel was a failure. Bankrupted, in great physical pain, and the victim of plots to sabotage his career, the once-great opera composer scheduled a “farewell” appearance in London in April 1741. To the London elite, it looked like this “German nincompoop”, as he was once called, was through. That summer, however, he composed *Messiah*, which not only brought him back into the spotlight but is still deemed by some to be “an epitome of Christian faith.” This week marks the 240th anniversary of Handel’s death and the 257th anniversary of the premiere of that great masterpiece. Discouragement came early. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, not a musician. Even after he was able to take up a prodigious musical career (becoming the composer for England’s Chapel Royal), he preferred the out-of-fashion operas to the more popular music of the day—which often mean playing to empty halls. (Never mind, he joked, an empty venue would mean great acoustics.)

He didn’t joke for long. In 1737 Handel’s opera company went bankrupt, and he suffered what seems to be a mild stroke. But to make matters worse, his latest musical fascination—the oratorio (a composition for orchestra and voices telling a sacred story without costumes, scenery, or dramatic action)—was his most controversial yet. His first oratorio (actually, the first of its kind in English), *Esther*, was met with outrage by the church. A Bible story was being told by “common mummers,” and even worse, the words of God were being spoken in the theater!

In 1739, advertisements for *Israel in Egypt* were torn down by devout Christians, who also disrupted its performances. All of this angered the devoutly Lutheran Handel. As his friend Sir John Hawkins commented, “Throughout his life, [he] manifested a deep sense of religion. In conversation he would frequently declare the pleasure he felt in setting the Scriptures to music, and how contemplating the many sublime passages in the Psalms had contributed to his edification.”

Deeply depressed and now threatened with debtor’s prison, Handel was visited by his Anglican friend Charles Jennens, who had written a libretto about the life of Christ with the text completely taken from the Bible. Would Handel compose the music for it? he asked. Handel answered that he would and estimated its completion in a year.

Handel began composing *Messiah* on August 22, 1741, and worked like a man obsessed. He rarely left his room and rarely touched his meals. But in 24 days he had composed 260 pages—an immense physical feat. When he finished writing what would become known as the Hallelujah Chorus, he said, “I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself.”

Though the performance of the piece again caused controversy (Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver’s Travels* and then the dean of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, was outraged and initially refused to allow his musicians to participate), the premiere, a benefit performance on April 13, 1742, at Dublin’s Fishamble Street Musick Hall, was a sensation.

Still it took nearly a year for *Messiah* to be invited to London. Religious controversy surrounded it there, too, and Handel compromised a bit by dropping the “blasphemous” title from handbills. It was instead called “A New Sacred Oratorio.” But the controversy wasn’t strong enough to keep away the king, who stood instantly at the opening notes of the Hallelujah Chorus (though some historians have suggested it was because he was partially deaf and mistook it for the national anthem), a tradition ever since.

Though it had met rave reviews in Dublin (“the most finished piece of music”), it was not very popular in London after its premiere. By 1745 Handel was again playing to empty houses and nearing poverty. Not until his oratorio *Judas Maccabeus*, which was misunderstood by the English as a veiled nationalistic anthem, did Handel (and with him *Messiah*) reach the pinnacle of his career.

Until his death, Handel conducted 30 performances of *Messiah* (none at Christmastime, for Handel deemed it a Lenten piece), only one of which was in a church, Bristol Cathedral. In that audience sat John Wesley. “I doubt if that congregation was ever so serious at a sermon as they were during this performance,” the founder of Methodism remarked.