

THE TALE

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Imagine a young boy and his father driving down a country road on a beautiful spring afternoon.

Suddenly out of nowhere a bumblebee flies through the open car window. Since the boy is deathly allergic to bee stings, he becomes petrified.

Seeing his son's panicked reaction the father quickly reaches out, grabs the bee, squeezes it in his hand, and then releases it. But as soon as he lets it go, the young son becomes frantic again as it buzzes by him.

The father, seeing his son's panic-stricken face, extends his hand. Pointing to his hand, he shows his son that there, still stuck in his skin, is the stinger of the bee.

"Do you see this?" he asks. "You don't need to be afraid anymore. There's no more sting in that bee!"

This is the message of Easter. The worst that can happen to us has been taken away. We don't have to fear death any longer. Through Jesus Christ there is "no more sting in that bee." God has taken the pain for us.

As we await and approach Easter this year I invite you to look within yourselves and try to understand what Easter means to you. If Jesus had not died and been resurrected how would your life be different? Would it be different at all? What does Jesus' sacrifice and God's glorious act of resurrection really mean to us?

Last year many of you came to the church on the night before Easter and awaited Jesus' resurrection in our sanctuary. I invite you to participate in this event again. Our Easter Vigil will begin at 6:00 PM on Saturday April 11th and will conclude on Sunday morning at 6:00 AM (in time for you to get to the Easter sunrise service). You can read more about the Easter Vigil elsewhere in this newsletter.

As is our custom, our Easter Sunrise Service will be held at the Jackson home, 81 Slough Rd (weather permitting, if not it will be held in our sanctuary). This service will begin at 6:30 AM.

We will hold two services on Easter Sunday at 8:30 and 10 AM.

I look forward to celebrating this glorious day with you.

Peace,

Greg





OUTREACH

Walk for Hunger/Loaves and Fishes

Come join the Walk on April 10! The non-denominational walk leaves from our church and makes a scenic 5-mile loop. Register any time from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and walk as far as would like, as long as you finish before 4 p.m. Registration sheets are available on the office door.

The Good Friday Walk is the biggest annual fundraiser for Loaves & Fishes and its success is essential to helping those in need in the towns of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley. Last year, \$27,254.23 was raised, money important to meeting the needs of the 500 families served each month. About 40% of the pantry's client population is under the age of 18. Loaves & Fishes will continue to meet the needs of all clients with our help! It takes all of us pitching in to make a difference.

How can you be involved? Help is needed in the kitchen and in providing sandwich fillings, fruit and baked goods. If you need more information you can contact Ruth Broughton at 978-486-8557 or Laurie Heron at 978-621-6545. To sign up to help contact the church office 978-456-8789.

Can't Walk in the Walk for Hunger?

Make a donation to the Pantry

Items that are most needed right now:

- Tuna
- Coffee
- Sugar
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Crackers
- Paper Towels
- "Helpers" (Hamburger, chicken etc)
- Canned pastas
- Cereal
- Condiments (ketchup, mayonnaise, etc)
- Personal Care items (Soaps, shampoos, etc.)



Donations can be left in the collection basket outside the church office.



OUTREACH (continued)

May Baskets

We will be delivering sweet sunshine in the form of May baskets this year. Small baskets created from greeting cards will be filled with cookies and candies and delivered as a reminder of the love and caring of this church community. How can you be involved?

- Donate non-Christmas greeting cards to be cut up for the baskets. Bring them to the church office or give them to Phyllis Clawson as soon as possible.
- Bake cookies (not huge), the prettier the better, or buy a bag of individually wrapped candies and bring them to the church kitchen April 26-29 or before 10:00 on April 30 labeled "May baskets."
- Fill, wrap, and label the baskets April 30 beginning 10:00 at the church. We will work until we finish.
- Deliver some baskets. They will be available after assembling on April 30 until Sunday May 3. Please sign up for this task so we can plan routes.

If you have questions, please call Phyllis Clawson 456-3304 or Mary Garcia 368-1391.



Holy Week Schedule

- April 9, 7:30 pm: **Maundy Thursday Service**— We celebrate Palm Sunday and Easter, but rarely take time to mark the events in between. This Thursday evening service recalls Jesus' celebration of Passover with his disciples. The sharing of this last supper is our model for communion. It was here that Jesus' gave the great commandment, "love one another."
- April 10, The church hosts the **Good Friday** Walk for Hunger to benefit Loaves and Fishes. Please note that through the hustle and bustle of the walk, the church is open for anyone wanting to spend some quiet time in the Sanctuary.
- April 11-12, **Easter Vigil:** Starting at 6 pm on Saturday and lasting until 6 am on Sunday. In preparation for our celebration of Jesus' resurrection our sanctuary will be open throughout the night for people to come and pray or simply sit quietly as we await the glory of Easter. Our hope is to have at least one person in our sanctuary throughout the evening. Anyone is welcome to come at any time during the night, but we are looking for one volunteer (it can be a couple or a family) to commit to being present for at least a half hour period of time. There is nothing to say, you will simply be keeping quiet for that time. There will be devotional books for you to read should you choose. A sign up sheet is located at the office or you may call the office to sign-up. Won't you give a half hour of your night to give thanks to God?
- April 12, **Easter Sunday**—Celebrate Jesus' resurrection from death and our resurrection into new lives, new community and new hope through Christ.
We offer 3 services:
6 am The Sunrise Service (81 Slough Road, sanctuary if the weather is bad)
8:30 am & 10 am

DEACONS

What is a Deacon? *By Keith Conant*

I am currently the chair of the Deacons and I'm writing to let you know the many jobs done by your deacons.

You see a Deacon at the top of the stairs as you enter the sanctuary every Sunday. We are often the ushers who greet you and hand you a bulletin. Later in the service we do the heavy lifting and pass the brass plates to collect the offering.

Deacons do other things as well, behind the scenes, to help with each service. We put up the hymn numbers on the boards at the front of the Church showing you the hymns we will sing during the service. It is such a simple old fashioned system of black cardboard squares with white numbers that slide between two painted rails, one of the few remaining things that has not gone digital yet. Did you ever wonder where the numbers are kept? Probably not, but in case you were wondering I'll reveal a Deacon secret: the numbers are stored under the pulpit in long trays with hundreds of slots that the numbers slide into. Fascinating!?

Did you know we record every service? In a storage room downstairs is a recording device that we queue up at the start of the service. After the service, we label the disc and store it away. Susan Buck and Greg can make copies of the service for those who want one. If you've missed a service or want to hear it again, it's always available on CD. Just contact the church office.

Your Deacons also take attendance. Well, not literally. We count how many people attend service and record that number on a clipboard. The attendance goes into our Annual Report.

We also prepare and serve Communion. On the first Sunday of every month we come to church about an hour early to set up. We cut the bread into bite-sized pieces and fill the tiny glasses with juice using a device that can best be described as a controlled funnel. It is a special feeling to serve you all Communion. I literally get to give you something sacred. I also feel good about helping out in a way that brings us all together and strengthens us as a community.

Deacons meet about ten times a year, on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 pm. We fill out our calendar for the next month, signing up to cover the duties for upcoming Sundays. Occasionally, Deacons are needed to help with wedding and funeral services, and to assist Greg with Baptisms.

And lastly, Deacons provide support Greg and are available to you if you have questions about the service or about any of the other goings-on in the church.

If you want to learn more about Deacons, or would like to become one, please feel free to talk with me or any of the current Deacons: Nancy Graham, Judy Cavanaugh, Sue Colwell, Lloyd Alderson, Dave Marteney, Caleb Frost and Hallie Conant. Joanne Williamson and Pat Jennings will be joining the group in April. We would welcome additional new members!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

For the 40 days of Lent we have been preparing for the most important festival of our church year—Easter. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the celebration of God’s love and goodness overcoming the powers of sin, evil, and death. Jesus’ resurrection is not simply the return to life of a good man who suffered innocently and died an undeserved death. It is rather the presence in this broken world of God’s ultimate purpose for all; fullness of life in communion with God. And in response, we sing and shout “Alleluia!” which means “Praise God.” The penitential purple of Lent is swept away by the white and gold of Easter. The austerity of the sanctuary is transformed by a joyous profusion of flowers. We celebrate God’s new creation and the never-ending light of eternal life.

But Easter is not just one day. The Season of Easter continues for 50 days, through some times of doubt and confusion to the joyous culmination in the celebration of Pentecost. The Spirit comes to the disciples as their promised “helper” and the Christian Church is born. We too celebrate God’s Spirit in our midst and the gifts of the Spirit that we have each been given. (from *Whole People of God curriculum 2009*)

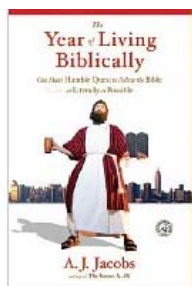
Movie Discussion:

The next gathering will be Monday, April 6, 7:30 pm, in room 3. Please watch *There Will Be Blood*. Synopsis: The story chronicles the life and times of Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis), who transforms himself from a down-and-out silver miner raising a son on his own into a self-made oil tycoon. When Plainview gets a mysterious tip-off that there’s a little town out West where an ocean of oil is oozing out of the ground, he heads with his son to take their chances in dust-worn Little Boston. In this hardscrabble town, where the main excitement centers around the holy roller church of charismatic preacher Eli Sunday, Plainview and H.W. make their lucky strike. But even as the well raises all of their fortunes, nothing will remain the same as conflicts escalate and every human value – love, hope, community, belief, ambition and even the bond between father and son – is imperiled by corruption, deception and the flow of oil. Please watch the movie before the discussion.



Book Group

The group will meet in room 3, on April 20, at noon and again at 7:30 pm to discuss *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* (A.J. Jacobs). This book is an insightful and hilarious journey for readers of all faiths. Though no fatted calves were harmed in the making of this book, Jacobs chronicles 12 months living a remarkably strict Biblical life.

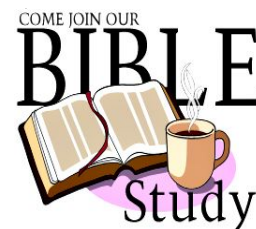


Bible Study

The Bible Study group meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am. You are invited to join in the discussion any time you are able.

Readings for April (from the lectionary)

April 1: Lam 3:55-66	John 12:49-59	Rom 10:14-21
April 8: Isa 50:4-9a	John 13:21-30	Heb 12:1-3
April 15: Mic7:7-15	Matt 28:1-16	Acts 3:1-10
April 22: Dan 2:17-30	John 21:20-25	Col 1:24-2:7
April 29: Dan 4:28-37	Mark 9:38-50	2 Tim 2:14-26



Wednesdays
9:30—11 :00

CHURCH AUCTION & DINNER

May Is For Play

May 30

Exact time and menu to be announced

A successful auction depends on generous donations. We are asking for your help in making this year's auction a success! The theme is "play". Play can mean many things. People play games and music. They "play" by reading, singing, dancing, any leisure time activity. Ideas are limitless—let your creative side out!

Suggestions:

Tickets to a play/show

Tickets to a sporting event

Concert tickets

Vacation homes

Themed collections (a basket for "readers), CD's, DVDs

If you have any questions or want to help out, please speak with Lucy Wallace.

PRAYER LIST



Our prayers are with:

Eric, Betsy, Beck and the Peterson family on the death of Jessie Peterson.

Pam Marston and the Marston/Rich family on the death of Bonnie Rich.

Betsy Peterson as she continues to recover

Jim Wallace

George Mayo

Nancy Schmalz

Edward Culverhouse

Sue Hildreth

Claire & Bob L'Heureaux

Clayton Guyett

Gary Newman

We celebrate the birth of Caleb Perry, great grandson of Harriet and Rollin Perry

We also celebrate the birth of John Wallace, grandson of Lucy and Jim Wallace.

We celebrate the baptism of Charlotte Collins, daughter of Sara and Daniel Collins.

Please pray for all those serving in the armed forces and their families

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*No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

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