



PASTOR'S

POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker

Pastor

Less than two weeks to go. We are in the homestretch...the final stage...the last leg of the journey. The season of Lent prepares us for Resurrection Sunday (aka Easter), and it is almost over. Spiritually, anticipation builds. Emotionally, we ready our voices to shout a loud and joy-filled "Christ is risen! Hallelujah!" The time and energy we pour into the Easter celebration is worth it – because, **"if Christ has not been raised from the dead, your faith is empty. Futile. Useless. Worthless. In vain."** Those stark, blunt words are from the Apostle Paul (I Corinthians 15: 17) not me.

But, thanks be to God, Paul goes on: **"but now (that is an emphatic NOW! Precisely NOW! Exactly NOW! A 'this-matter-is-not-open-for-debate NOW!') Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (i.e., died.)"**

To be painfully blunt – if the resurrection we celebrate on Easter did not happen. we may as well spend our Sunday mornings at Starbucks, sipping coffee and reading the newspaper. Or chugging beer and watching Sports Center. We may as well remodel our church buildings into concert halls, museums or homeless shelters. Without the resurrection, I would not have a job.

I will let you in on a secret: nearly every pastor, priest, preacher in the world feels extra stress on Resurrection Sunday. We are thinking, *"We have to get this right! We have to preach the sermon of a lifetime! The people must be convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt that **"Jesus Christ was crucified,***

APRIL



Sunday Worship Schedule

11:00 A.M. Sunday, April 9.

Palms will wave, the Praise Ensemble will lead us in making a joyful noise, and the events of the first Palm Sunday parade will be remembered. We will listen to an interesting encounter within the family that gave up their donkey so Jesus would have something to ride into Jerusalem.

7:00 P.M. Thursday, April 13

Jesus was born, raised, and died a Jew. The Christian church is an offshoot of Judaism. The misunderstanding, rancor, and blood-letting that has occurred between Jews and Christians is one of Satan's greatest victories. In our own humble way, we will attempt to cross that divide on evening of Maundy

Thursday. The worship service will be patterned after the Seder meal our Jewish brothers and sisters share on Passover. We will conclude with a celebration of Holy Communion. This service will take place in groupings gathered around tables in the Gathering Place.

7:00 P.M. Friday, April 14

On the evening of Good Friday, you are urged to become part of the somber and meaningful time of worship when we will walk through the darkest hours in the lives of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The service is muted, the lights are low, the singing is reflective. We will honor and praise the God who loves us so much that he sacrificed himself for us.

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News from the Edge is the monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood. If you have information you would like to include in the next issue, email Judy Mysels at office@fpcedgewood.org by the 15th of the prior month. Sponsorship is available for \$40 per month.

Point of View (cont'd.)

died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day HE ROSE AGAIN!" Resurrection Sunday is at the very heart of the Christian preaching and the resurrection sermon must ignite the awesome joy of that miracle in every heart. (I had a friend who used to remind me every year, "Rucker, Easter is your Super Bowl Sunday!")

However, over these past few years, I've changed. I've begun to relax my way into Easter. The story of the women approaching the tomb, the soldiers terrified into paralysis, the rolling stone, the glowing angels and their reassuring words, the cries of disbelief, the shouts of inexpressible joy – the story tells itself. The Easter story is crazy nonsense! Incredible! An other-worldly fantasy! Yet we revisit the tomb every Easter morning. The resurrection of Jesus changed the world, dramatically and unalterably. It is a story worth repeating every year.

Resurrection does not mean that evil has been banished from our lives. Resurrection does not diminish or turn a blind eye to the turbulence, violence, and injustice in the world. Resurrection does not mean that the Christian church is pure and just. Resurrection does not mean that Christians hold the patent on all truth.

The resurrection does mean that God has endured the worst the world could do to Him and survived. The resurrection does mean that evil will not have the final say. The resurrection of Jesus does mean that God's heart still pounds with love for each one of us - and for the whole world, even those people we call "our enemies."

Trust the resurrection of Jesus, brothers and sisters. God is for us! Which means that nothing, *nothing*, not one thing! will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Isn't that worth a few rowdy "Hallelujah's!" on Easter morning?



11:00 A.M. Sunday, April 16

Easter Sunday. The morning it all began. Lift up your voices – sing and rejoice with us! Life overcomes death. Hope overcomes despair. The future is brighter than bright. Worship with us.

11:00 A.M. Sunday, April 23

How appropriate is this? The Sunday after the resurrection we will celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. We will remember that each one of us is sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. Join the MacGregor family, long-time residents in the area, as they baptize their youngest family member.

11:00 A.M. Sunday, April 30

The road to the village of Emmaus. The road to revelation. A journey beginning in sadness and confusion leads to burning hearts and a faith reignited. Death is not the final answer. The Risen One is walking beside us on every road we travel.



Wednesday Night Lenten Gatherings

As disciples of Jesus, we are works in progress.

**Gatherings continue meet on Wednesday evenings,
April 5, 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge**

Lent is a time for discipleship. In the earliest days of the church, the season of Lent marked the time for new Christians to be trained in the way of Christ.

JOIN US—for an evening devoted to enriching our lives as disciples. This year we will use the resource: *Forgiveness* by Marjorie Thompson. This is a six week journey helping us understand *and apply* the virtue of forgiveness to the relationships in our lives. Last year the class enjoyed the book *Soulfeast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* by the same author.

Allow this evening to shape your spiritual experience this Lent.

Heidelberg University Choir Comes to Edgewood - May 15th

The Concert Choir and Chamber Singers from Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio will present “Up,” a free concert on Monday, May 15, 2017 at 7:00PM in the FPCE Sanctuary. A free-will offering will be accepted at the concert, and merchandise from the choir will also be available for purchase in the entrance.

Through its repertoire, the choir will explore the many diverse meanings of “up” – a small and unassuming word that is rich in nuance.

The first half of the concert will depict a journey of the soul that begins with hope and longing and progresses through fulfillment, adoration, prayer for deliverance and praise. The texts for the second half trace a voyage of the spirit from cries of victory and anguish to acceptance in the face of loss.



Building Renovation Fundraising Update

The Fundraising Committee is pleased to announce that we have raised \$89,900 for the building renovation project to date. This includes the \$25,000 bequest; \$64,700 in pledge cards; and \$200 from fundraising events, i.e., Sunday School Candy Sale. I did not include the additional \$1,000 referenced in the bulletin as this represents pledges on anticipated fundraising.

Thus, we are close to meeting our goal, but we still have work to do. We would like to raise an additional \$35,000 so that we meet the \$100,000 goal *without* the bequest. We are planning a progressive dinner and several smaller events to take place in May and hope you can join us. Additionally, we will be closing the pledge drive, and if you have not submitted your pledge card, you will be hearing from us. Our goal is to have all members submit their cards and pledge something, *no matter how small*.

Lastly, if you have any interest in conducting or helping with a fundraising event, please contact anyone on the committee. We thank you for your help and patience during our Fundraising Drive. We are planning on ending this phase of the fundraising in June 2017!

Rhonda Apossos



Easter Egg Fundraiser

The Church School will have a box of Easter eggs at the side vestibule after services on April 2, 9 and 16. For \$1, you can choose an egg for a chance to win lottery tickets, fast food coupons, cash or candy. Proceeds go to the building renovation fund.

Online Devotionals for Lent

www.pts.edu/devotional is the website of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

www.luthersem.edu/lent is offering a series called "Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land" written by former seminarians. Also available in **Large Print!!**

www.bible.com/reading-plans/83-lent-for-everyone is a devotional written by one of Pastor Michael's favorites, N. T. (Tom) Wright.

www.umc.org/what-we-believe/archives-lent-and-easter-devotional offers several intriguing Lenten exercises, including: finding your own spiritual path, suggestions for writing a prayerful note for each of the 40 days of Lent, or illustrating each day with a photograph.



Just for Fun...

Marquee Madness

Creative church signs:

"Whoever stole our AC units, Keep one. It is hot where you're going."

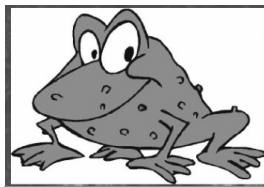
"Adam and Eve: the first people to not read the Apple terms and conditions."

"A long time ago in a Galilee far, far away..."

"Maury is not the only place to find your father."

"Wal-Mart isn't the only saving place."

"Blah Blah Blah Just go to church."



F.R.O.G.S. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF)

The FROGS After-School Program is in its last months of April and May. We met 8 days in February and March and plan to meet 8 days in April.

Mary Ann Hartman visited us on Feb. 27 to teach the FROGS about dental hygiene and provided them with a kit of toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, etc. They all learned a lot and will hopefully continue good dental habits taught by Mary Ann. We also made pudding pies on March 14 (Pie Day), which the FROGS ate for dessert. Yum!

We wanted to thank everyone for their donations of snacks. Thank you all!

Judy Mysels, FROGS Director



The Book Corner

The Tuesday morning book club has just started reading **The Red Tent** by Anita Diamant. Read this fine novel on your own, or join the group at 10 a.m. at the home of Rhonda Apossos.

Here's what two reviewers wrote about the book:

"Paints a vivid picture of what women's society might have resembled during biblical times. Although it is a novel, it is also an extended *midrash* or exegesis—fillings in gaps left by the biblical text."

Jewish Times

"It is tempting to say that *The Red Tent* is what the Bible would be like if it had been written by women..."

The Boston Globe



Sending Out an S.O.S.

Our summer camp for middle school students, Camp SOS (Summer of Service), returns for a second year this June at FPCE. We had a very successful first camp last summer with 10 energized campers who learned about the people and places in our community who serve others. We partnered with the Edgewood Library, Police, and Fire Departments, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, and Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf last year, learning what each group does to support those with needs – from literacy, to safety, to food and shelter, to education. We wrapped up by creating puppet shows demonstrating the various acts of service learned about throughout the week.

We're hoping to double our enrollment and continue the fun of working and learning together about how to help others in our community. This year we plan to focus on DOING the work, putting together several service projects, day trips, and sharing the importance of service to the community. Our hope is to also do some acting together and create several short public service announcement commercial-type videos that we can share with the community, demonstrating what we've learned together.

If you have or know of a child who you think would benefit from this type of camp and enjoy helping others, we want you to join us! And if you know of a high school or college student that may want to volunteer as a counselor along with our church volunteers, we also want to hear from you! Camp SOS is open to students who will enter grades 5 through 8 in the fall. Join us Monday-Friday, June 19-23, 2017 from 9AM-2PM at the church. To register, visit www.fpcedgewood.org or call the church office at 412-241-4613.

The Master's Chisel

I know I'm not done yet, Lord.
I see the smooth planes and rough edges
Of the block of marble that is me,
And I await the next touch of
The Master's chisel.

Before I knew you, you named me.
Hidden in the stone is your design,
Conceived by the same master
Who breathed life into all the wonders of our world.
In your own image you create me.

I no longer remember those first strokes
As chisel hit marble.
There have been gentle strokes and
Welcome strokes as form was liberated
From imprisoning stone.
And there were strokes where the chisel bit deep,
Taking blocks I would have held,
Leaving new, raw surfaces.

But the heart in the marble beats on,
Awaiting the next touch of the Master's chisel,
Assured of the design,
And lifted up by the knowledge
That with the last stroke of the chisel,
I will step out over the piles of dust
And into the Master's arms.

Heather Wilson



APRIL



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Deacon Mtg. 7:00 AA	"Forgiveness" – a Lenten discipline 7:00 p.m. (L) with Pastor Michael	3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
PALM SUNDAY 9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Men's Group	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Session Mtg. 7:00 AA	"Forgiveness" – a Lenten discipline 7:00 p.m. (L) with Pastor Michael	MAUNDY THURSDAY NO FROGS 7:00 Service	GOOD FRIDAY 7:00 Service (L) 8:00 AA	8:30 AA
EASTER 16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship		10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Men's Group 7:00 Joy Circle	10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA		1:00 Daytime Circle 3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
30						
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship						



First Presbyterian Church of
EDGEWOOD
The Community Church

120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218

EASTER FLOWERS

We seek your help in making our sanctuary a place of graceful beauty and meaning on Easter morning. Through your donation, we can accomplish this:

I wish to contribute an Easter plant. Lily ___ Tulip ___ Daffodil ___ Hyacinth ___

The wording for the bulletin is:

___ In honor of _____

___ In memory of _____

Order placed by _____

Please check: ___ I would like to take the plant.

___ I would like it to be planted in the Prayer Garden

The cost of each plant is \$8.00 Please attach your check (payable to the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood) to this order form and return it to the Church Office. Deadline is April 3, 2017.