



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2022

Current Leadership

Pastor/Elders

- Jeff Anderson
- Scott Dickerson
- Dan Flanagan
- Brian Hardesty

Deacons

- Chris Butters
- Joe Cassone
- John Collins
- Blake Olin

Announcements/ Upcoming Events

- ◆ Good Friday Service—April 15, 6:30pm
- ◆ Kindred Sisters—April 16, 9:30am
- ◆ Easter Sunday Celebration—April 17, following the service

Current Sermon Series

The Book of Haggai—Starting April 10

Birthdays

- ◆ 4/1 Titus Hardesty 4/18 Rose Smith
- ◆ 4/2 Jade Parkison 4/26 Ryan Pierce
- ◆ 4/12 Kayley Hardesty 4/27 Carol Ovenell
- ◆ 4/14 Jerry Kelly

Anniversary's

- ◆ 4/7 Francis & Peggy Bierl
- ◆ 4/16 Bob & Joanne Olson

Volunteer Opportunities

- ◆ Children's ministry (see Jamie)
- ◆ Building Maintenance & Improvement (see John Collins)

The New City Catechism

Question 7

What does the law of God require?

A. Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.

What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

Matthew 22:37-40

Memory passage for this month

“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen”. -2 Timothy 4:17-18

Pastor's Notes

Just thinking . . . About Easter

Easter Sunday is a great day for the church of Jesus Christ. I know, I know, I am supposed to say "Resurrection Sunday!" Yes and amen, but does it really matter? Why is it that some people refuse to say Easter Sunday when thinking of the day that we have set aside to reflect on and rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

While setting aside the need to say that each and every Lord's Day that the church gathers is a resurrection Sunday, let us try to come to a conclusion about what to call maybe the most important day of the year for the Christian.

Let's start with the day as Americans see it. Have you ever wondered why there is a bunny with eggs on Easter? Since bunnies don't lay eggs, what gives? Have these postmodern bunnies begun to eat bird eggs? Have bunnies evolved to now lay eggs and paint them neutral pastel colors since they are now highly adapted and relevant (for clarity, I am not being serious, macro evolution is just as silly as seeking relevance in life.)? I mean what gives with the bunnies and eggs theme of Easter?

Some will tell you that it all comes from some goddess in the Norse traditions. Some will tell you that it was a Germanic goddess, both having to do with fertility. The problem is that no one has been able to prove any of it.

It is probably true to some extent that 'Easter' at least in name and its weird mascots, have some form of pagan origin, and if we look around today, that is definitely true. Whatever the history is, at the very least, we have a vibrant form of paganistic commercialism pervading this day. Easter eggs, Easter bunnies, Easter candy, weird parental gifts of bunny eggs in a basket with fake grass and plastic eggs containing life giving candy. And don't forget the strange community event of small children gathering together to look for eggs hidden in a park with the parents grouped together drinking their coffee in the rain secretly hoping that their child will find just one more than the other kids and be able to be crowned "Easter Egg Finding Champion for 2022". Okay maybe I'm being a bit facetious, but you undoubtedly get the point.

What are we doing as a society on that day? If people from the Amazon Jungle or the middle of Siberia were to come to small town America on Easter Sunday, what would they think? Bunnies with eggs? Kids spending their Sunday hunting for plastic eggs? Store shelves lined with chocolate bunnies? They would probably say that they don't want to be a "first world" society if this is what it looks like. They would probably think that we are crazy.

So what do we do as Christians? Do we celebrate Easter? I think that I speak for all Christians when I say that I love this day! What do we do?

To answer that let's go to our authority for life. Let's start with Matthew 28:1-7 which is right on the heels of the death and burial of Jesus Christ.

"Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold I have told you."

Pastor's Notes

And what is our message in light of this? What are we to be all about?

1 Corinthians 1:23, “...but we preach Christ and Him crucified...” It’s the key to our message and our lives!

How do we know this? Look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20a,

“Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead...”

The resurrection is an absolute necessity! If we read Romans 6 rightly we come to find out that we too will be raised with Him if we are in Christ. And at the end of Philippians we realize the absolute glory of the resurrected body for the one who is in Christ. So do we celebrate?

You bet we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! It is vital and central to our faith. Do we call it Easter? I would say no. Not to be a stick in the mud, but why don’t we just simply call it a celebration of what it is, let us call it “Resurrection Sunday”! Each Lord’s Day that we meet, it is a Resurrection Celebration, but it is a great tradition to set aside a certain day each year, as we do with Christmas, to celebrate what the Lord has done in conquering sin and death on our behalf! Let us call it what it is! When we gather on that day, let us call it “Resurrection Sunday!” Praise God!

Do we partake in Easter egg hunts, candy eggs, colorful baskets, and chocolate bunnies? That I leave up to each parent and church member to decide for themselves. Our conscience is not bound to my ideas or ideals, nor is it bound to traditions and human authorities, our conscience is bound to the Word of God alone and it gives freedom in matters such as these (Romans 14:5). There is but one thing that we MUST do on this annual day in or near April, and that is to celebrate the resurrection of Christ with fervent and vigorous joy.

So, as April 17th, 2022 approaches, I encourage us all to find ourselves enthralled with and worshipping over the resurrection of Christ from the dead above all else. Let us always remember that this is the key, the linchpin of the Christian faith. If Jesus is still in the grave, then our faith is in vain, Paul says. But since Jesus Christ has come forth and burst out of that tomb, since the stone has been rolled away, since Christ has been raised from the dead, this means that death has no sting for the Christian, and the evil one has no accusation over the people of God. Praise His holy name! Prepare yourself starting today for this wonderful celebration and remembrance in worship!

He is risen brothers and sisters...

In Christ,
Pastor Brian