

The Messenger

March 2021

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT **SERVICE**

Our Lenten service at 7 pm. Wednesday evening services will be held virtually this year. Please stay tuned for more details.

SUNDAY, MARCH 7 **COMMUNION**

We will celebrate Holy Communion during our worship service on March 7. After worship, come on back to the Fellowship Hall for some delicious desserts and a cup of hot coffee or cool tea.

MARCH 14 **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS**

It's time to turn those clocks ahead. So be sure you do and get up bright and early for service!



MARCH 14 **OGHS SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING**

We will gather our offering for One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, March 14. Envelopes can be found where you pick up your bulletins.

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From the Pastor's Desk



WHAT DOES JESUS' DEATH HAVE TO DO WITH EASTER?

Bunny suit—check. Basket of candy—check. Egg hunt—check. Elegant dress or fancy suit—check. Reservations at favorite brunch spot—check.

Sounds like Easter, doesn't it?

But while all these traditions might be fun, do they really tell us what Easter is all about? Is it more than a work holiday or an excuse to gather family for an annual picture? Is it just an outdated religious holiday? Or is there more to it?

Christians believe that Easter is central to their faith. In fact, one of the earliest followers of Jesus declared that without Easter there is no Christianity. So what exactly does Easter celebrate that's so important?

Simply put, Easter is the day when Christians commemorate Jesus' resurrection. Resurrection, as you may know, is the name given to the process by which one who is dead comes back to life. On Easter, Christians remember that Jesus, who they believe died some two thousand years ago, rose from the grave and lived again.

Well, that's fascinating, for sure. Someone dying and coming back to life is certainly noteworthy—even unbelievable. But—and I mean no disrespect—so what?

Other than being a stunning display of magic or even a miracle, what's the big deal about it?

Why is Jesus' resurrection so widely celebrated that it has become a national holiday in many cultures around the world?

Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection are not only important but are central events in all of history. Let's examine why they think this.

If you look around today, it's not difficult to see brokenness in the world. But according to both Jewish and Christian tradition, it wasn't always this way.

When God created the world, it was good. God and humanity dwelt in perfect harmony, enjoying one another's intimate company. However, in giving humanity the freedom to choose his will or their own, God took a great risk.

In the end, we chose our own path, turning away from his in the process.⁵ In doing so, our relationship with God was broken, and we've been reaping the consequences ever since. The world is not as it should be, as evidenced by the strife, disappointment, and discontent in our lives.

OK, so the world's not the way it's supposed to be. What does that have to do with Jesus dying? Well, according to Christian theology, since God is holy, he cannot be in the presence of unholiness; the two cannot mix, much like oil and water. Consequently, humanity's broken relationship with God has caused lasting alienation from him. And the only way to overcome that alienation is for humanity to choose God's perfect way—to live the way we were meant to in the beginning.

Unfortunately, because we're infected with a terminal disease called sin, we're incapable of living in perfection.⁶

So, if we're alienated from God and cannot live the way we're supposed to, how can we overcome this brokenness? Put plainly, we can't.

Because we're infected to the core, no amount of human effort can reconcile our broken relationship. Remember, oil and water—perfection and imperfection—cannot mix. In fact, because of our inability, only God himself—who is able—can overcome our alienation. God must initiate reconciliation because we cannot.

Enter Jesus. The Bible suggests that Jesus was one with God.⁷ And though he was God, he wore human flesh and experienced what we experience. But there was one major exception: Jesus lived a completely holy and sinless life.

Therefore, when Jesus died, he satisfied God's requirement of perfection. By living a holy life and dying on our behalf, Jesus reversed the consequences of death.

In a children's parable written as a metaphor for God's grand plan of restoration, C. S. Lewis suggested, "When a willing victim who had committed no [sin] was killed in [someone's] stead . . . Death itself would start working backwards."

Through this act, Jesus gave humanity a supreme gift. Sent by God, his father, he lived the perfect life that we humans could not live. Then he died on our behalf. In so doing, he gave his perfect life to us, so that we could be reconciled to God and experience life as it was meant to be. That's a lengthy narrative to consider. So, at the risk of oversimplification, here's an abbreviated, logical explanation for Jesus' death:

1. God is holy; humanity is not.
2. Holiness and unholiness cannot coexist.
3. This opposition causes infinite brokenness in humanity's relationship with God.
4. Because we're incapable of holy living as a result of sin, God must satisfy that requirement on our behalf.
5. Jesus—who is one with God—lived a holy, sinless life.
6. Jesus died on our behalf, and by satisfying the requirement of holiness, he reversed the effects of our broken relationship with God, making reconciliation and connection with him possible forever.

This is the beauty of Christianity—humanity does not have to pay the debt for its sin because God himself has done it through Jesus. This is what Christians mean when they say that Jesus paid it all for their sins.

Observance of the Easter holiday is done in recognition and celebration of the fact that God himself—through the person of Christ—loved us enough to enable humanity to experience restored relationship with its creator, now and forever.

Have a beautiful Easter Season, Pastor Lou



Our Condolences



We offer our sincere condolences to Rhonda and James Keller and Family on the passing of her mother Harriet Seward, on

February 3, 2021. We pray that God's love and strength will sustain you in your time of need and sorrow.

CONGRATULATIONS!



We would like to congratulate and shower the following with love and support as they continue in their quest to know who God is and what that means in their lives.

Congratulations to

Nicholas Francis Aita, Robert Charles Duffy III and Cynthia (Cindy) Joyce Meyers as you are confirmed in Christ.

2021 OFFICERS AND CONSISTORY MEMBERS

President Harry "Butch" Peters, Sr.
Vice President Joan Rinehimer
Secretary Joan Rinehimer
Treasurer Chris Dietrich
Trustees..... Bonnie Silvetti & Sue Kaminski

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone for the birthday wishes for our mom, Dorothy Heller on her 93rd birthday while she was in the hospital. We were able to read to her the online wishes as well as the cards received in the mail. Sadly she passed on her birthday and we would like to thank everyone for their expressions of sympathy. We love and miss her dearly.



~Her Children and their Families~

LENTEN SERVICES

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 17. We will gather at 7:00 pm virtually for service.

MISSION OFFERINGS

The envelopes for the annual OGHS offering are on the tables where you retrieve the bulletins. We will collect this offering through **March 14**.

Our Sunday School is also participating in the OGHS offering and the kids will bring their donations and we will put them in the "refugee tent" collection box.

During the year, there will also be envelopes for Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church and the Christmas Fund (for retired pastors and their families on very limited pensions). We also give to Our Churches Wider Mission through our fundraisers. That's 5 UCC missions each year. In addition to those, we can give to VBS Mission, McKinney Clinic, CROP Walk and, in past years, Disaster Relief (which we hope won't be needed this year). All these opportunities to give to these missions are provided because members have a "soft spot"

for one or another, or perhaps all of them. We are encouraged to give to the ones that move our hearts and that we feel strongly about. These offerings are given "above and beyond" our regular envelope and plate offerings that are needed to support our church at Emmanuel and continue our local presence in our own back yards. Your generosity is appreciated here at home and around the wider world. May God bless you as much as you bless others.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS CONSISTORY

The next **Consistory** meeting will be on **Sunday, March 28** following **10:30 worship service/counting**.

KITCHEN COMMITTEE

The next **Kitchen committee** meeting will be on Friday, March 12, at 9:00 am.

UPCOMING DATES

- March 14** Daylight Savings Time
- March 28** Palm Sunday
- April 1** Maundy Thursday
- April 2** Good Friday
- April 4** Easter

EMMANUEL GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

In addition to the Youth Group's Weis and Carone's Card Fundraisers, we have a Gift Card Fundraiser which is a great way to help our church. The Fundraiser Sheets are on the table in the narthex. Just look over the list (and there's a lot to choose from) and mark how many cards you want. As with the Youth Group's fundraiser, this is essentially a "no cost" fundraiser. You are just purchasing gift cards in the amount that you would normally spend at that store or restaurant. The fundraising part is that Emmanuel purchases them at a discount which helps our bottom line. **Please pay Lisa Ceaser for your choices or Orders Can now be placed online. For more info or details see Lisa Ceaser.**

