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 **Lent and Easter are times when we look closer at our lives and the life of Jesus. If we do this deeply enough, we can get a whole new perspective on our lives. When we realize that Jesus died and came back to life for us to live our lives in much better ways than the world provides, then we can live our lives to the fullest.**

 **This world at times seems to offer fun and excitement, and other times it seems to offer many scary situations. When we realize that the world is full of temptations and fears that are brought to us by the devil, then we can also realize that Christ is with us to give us the strength and courage to resist those temptations and fear. This world offers us many opportunities that are acceptable to God, we just need to live our lives as Christ would.**

 **The Bill Gaither song “Because He Lives” gives us the reassurance that we can face anything in this world through Christ in our lives. He has given us the Holy Spirit to be in us to give us the strength to face every tomorrow. We can deal with anything if we have Christ in our lives. We can fight any battle if we trust God to take care of us. I love the messages in this song that reassure of so many truths that God has already given us in His Word.**

**Take these words and say them to yourself as you understand the message. “He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon. An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.” Because He lives, we are able to live eternally with God, if we truly believe and follow Him.**

**Our lives are all worth living regardless of our circumstances, because we have nothing to fear if we know and believe that He holds our futures! Live your life to the fullest in Christ!**

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**Blessings,**

 **Pastor Ruthie Trigg**

Be joyful in hope,

Patient in affliction,

Faithful in prayer

 Romans 12:12

Good Friday is good

because it shows how

far God will go to save us.

**Thank God for Our Food**

~By Rob Blezard

****God said [to Adam and Eve], ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. -Genesis 1:29

There’s an old joke about the first-grade teacher who asks her class, “Where do apples come from?” Little Ian speaks up: “From the supermarket!”

We laugh, but the sad truth is that many of us are so far removed from farms that we forget that our food – every bite – comes from life, life that God alone created. Yes, farmers sow seeds and care for the plants and trees, but it’s God’s miracle of life that makes them grow.

As stewards and disciples, we desire to cultivate in ourselves and our communities a deep appreciation for all God provides us, particularly what we need to live. With every mouthful at every meal, we thank God for our daily bread, and for the soil, air and water that sustains life.

Easter and springtime are perfect occasions to celebrate God’s miracle of life that gives us fruit, vegetables, grains, meat, fish and dairy foods. Here are some ideas:

· Mealtime grace, thank God not only for food, but also for the cycles of seedtime, growth and harvest; for life-nourishing soil, water and air.

· While eating, discuss the origins of the variety of food on your plate. How and where are the plants grown? How do they get to your kitchen?

· As a church or family, celebrate Earth Day (Saturday, April 22) by learning about food production and how climate change, pollution and economics impact our food.

· Celebrate Earth Day by planting a garden in your yard or community garden on church grounds.

· Learn about nutrition -- what foods are the best and worst for us, and why. Promote healthy eating.

· Learn about food waste in our culture and take steps to reduce it in your home.

· At church, reserve a Sunday for a service highlighting creation and food. Maybe “Blessing of the Seeds,” or the ancient “Rogation Sunday” ritual.

We live in a culture where food is all around us all the time. As steward-disciples, we want to be sure not to take even a mouthful for granted.

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This past month we had Akron Zoo visit with the children on the 16th, we began our “Mystery Reader” program, and we spent the month talking to the children about the death and resurrection of Jesus. The children were like sponges, soaking in everything we were teaching them. There were several children that were already very familiar with the Bible stories, and they were able to answer most of the questions that Mrs. Tyler asked.

As we look forward to April, we will be on Spring Break the week of April 3rd, Soil and Conservation will be out on April 20th, and we will begin to wrap up the school year. When the children return on the 11th, there will be 5 weeks left of the school year.

We are currently accepting enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year. All paperwork can be found online, including the handbook. A HUGE thank you to Larissa for doing such a wonderful job on updating everything on the website for us!!



**“Christ Shares A Meal”**

**Our February Food Pantry/Community Dinner went really well. We had 25 families (1 new family), 64 people, and 26 sets of food and 1 special set given out.**

**Food Pantry this month had an extra special food dish – cabbage rolls made by our new friend, Denny V. Denny and his wife, Carol, have been attending church. Denny asked if he could make cabbage rolls for this month’s pantry. Denny made 50 rolls with helpers Robin R, Dana D, Dee F, Sharon C, Lori U, and Sheila S. Other food items were donated as always to compete a great meal.**

**We are so grateful for all who provide food, and those who come and do all that is needed.  It is a difficult for a few to do it all. The next Food Pantry/Dinner is Wednesday, Apr. 19th from 4:00-5:30pm for serving and food pantry pick-up. Clean-up lasts for as long as we have work to do. However, currently the majority of our helpers are members of our choir & praise band, so they have to leave no later than 6:00 to practice, so we need others to stay if the clean-up isn’t finished. The more helpers we have, the less time is taken to do the work! We have a great time of fellowship & food through this time of service, too!**

**“The man with two tunics should share**

**with him who has none, and the one who has**

**food should do the same.”**

 **Luke 3:11**

**Trustee’s Corner**



Items since last month:

* Andy confirmed AED battery is okay, ordered new sticky pads.
* Church mower in Que for maintenance by Sterling Farm Equip.
* Changed (5) ballasts in Social Hall lights that weren’t working.
* Rear 55” TV in sanctuary quit, Turnbow replaced it with 75” unit.
* Installed lock in lower kitchen drawer for kitchen worker security items.

If you feel “dog tired” at night,

maybe it’s because you “growled”

all day.

“If it be possible, as much as

lieth in you, live peaceably with

all men.”

**Romans 12:18**

 

***Fireside Chat***

 Fireside Chat with the Finance Chair

Dear friends,

 I've been getting lots of mail these days asking me for money. I even get letters for Ken asking for money and he has been in heaven for almost 9 years now. (I have been ever so tempted to mark them “return to sender" with the comment "Forwarding address 'Heaven' for the last 9 years.") And at this time of year Uncle Sam asks for an accounting of what he thinks we should give, and if he thinks I make too much from my retirement he takes back some of my Social Security and increases my tax bracket. And if you are still working, Uncle wants you to work longer before you retire and collect Social Security.

 So how am I attacking this? First, I tithe to the church as a minimum. Next, I pay all my bills that are due and set aside money for things that are paid only once or twice a year such as property taxes so that I have the money when they come. (My budget is a now frills deal.) Then I give to other causes that I feel are worthy and that allow me to give tax exempt gifts if I have extra money. (This includes four missionary families, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Samaritan's Purse to name a few I currently like to give to.) My goal is to give smartly so that I don't have to render unto Caesar, I mean Uncle Sam, any more than I have to because it all belongs to God and I am just the steward of what He has given me. Yes, it means I have to keep records of what I have, where I spend it, and how I spend it and fill out a longer tax form, but it keeps me grounded and I hope a member in good standing as a steward of God's gifts to me.

 I invite you to join me in The Good Steward's Club for the rest of the year and pray about how you can be a good steward of what God has given you.

 Blessings,

 Martha Baillis, Finance Chair

**Mary’s Meanderings**

## **An Excerpt from**Morning and Evening**by C.H. Spurgeon**

God with us in our nature,

In our sorrow,

In our lifework,

In our punishment,

In our grace,

And now with us,

Or rather with Him,

In resurrection,

Ascension,

Triumph,

And Second Advent splendor.

**PIETA - L’Engle, Madeleine**. **The Ordering of Love**

The other Marys radiated joy.
The disciples found the truth hard to believe.
There had to be breaking bread, eating fish,
before they, too, even Thomas, were lit with joyfulness. Not much was said about me.
I said good-bye to the son I carried within me for nine months, nursed, fed, taught to walk. On Friday when they took him down from the cross,
I held the son I knew,
recognizing him in my arms,
and never saw him again,
not my body’s child. How could I laugh, weep tears
of joy? Like the others, I failed to recognize him; the Christ who rose was not Bethlehem’s babe…
And it was right. For this was meant to be.
Here in my head I would not have had it otherwise.
But empty arms still longed for familiar flesh.
My joy, a sword that pierced through my heart.
I understood, more, perhaps, than the others
when he said that he could not stay with us— that it was better if he went away,
was one again with God, his Father. And when the Spirit came I once again could love my son and know my Lord. If Easter came later for me than for the others, its brilliance was as poignant and bright.



**Bible Studies**

**A group of women meet on Thursdays at 6:30pm, and are led by Betty Winchell and Sara Ullman. Another group of women meet at 10:00am led by Pastor Ruthie, also on Thursdays.**

**There is always room for more to attend!**

**Titles of current & upcoming studies:**

**Our study on Numbers: Learning Contentment in a Culture  has begun. Let Betty or Pastor Ruthie know if you need a book for this study. We are going to take 2 weeks to cover each chapter of this study, watching and discussing the video one week and then going over the study book chapter the next week. So the next study,**

**What Love Is: Letters of 1,2,3 John  will be later in the spring.**

**Men’s Bible Study, led by Pastor Don, meets Thursdays @ 6:30pm**

**They are studying the Book of Acts.**

 **April**

3rd – Heather Richards 5th – Andy Baillis

6th – Brooke Britton 11th – Joanna Shankland

19th – Don Trigg 20th – Ruthanne Lindenmuth

23rd – Zachary Richards 24th – Emily Cook

27th – Mickey Shankland Chad Gasser

 Lucinda Yoss Sheila Stoll

29th – Bryan Yoss

 **April**

 5th – Dale & Nancy Booth

 Chad & Sandy Gasser

 **Joys**

Eric, Nicole Winkler’s brother – out of the hospital, & doing rehab at parents’ home

Annibale & Mohr families, Mary Lynn – improving and healing

Lydia Stahl continues improving

Anita Vohar continues improving

Brooke Britton – safe travels in and from Mexico

Safe travel for many!

**Concerns**

Becky King – Summa Rehab Hospital, recovery from broken wrist & pelvis after a fall

Laiken (Sheila Stoll’s great-granddaughter) – diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes

Ken Zollinger – health Connie Baillis’ grandma - heart

Dave Smith’s mother, Mary – recovery from cancer surgery

Tia Imhoff McGee’s family – recovery of her children after brain surgery

Brianne Savage – shoulder injury Chase Savage– recovery from surgery

Lydia Stahl – continued recovery Prayers for Megan

Denny Vadini (Carol & family) – cancer Chris B.’s father – Hospice care

 Margaret Moedt’s great- nephew – surgery recovery

Anita (& Don) Vohar – health, continued recovery

Sandy (Richards’ friend – health Dick Baker –dialysis treatments

Harry & Nancy Britton - health Nancy (& Butch) McMillan - health

Richard Isaac (former crossing guard) - health

Sheila Stoll’s friends Gary & Cindy – facing serious illness

Pastor Don’s step-dad in care center (Due to come home Mar.3rd) & mom - health

Paula Burkhart - health Ana McClain’s Grandpa Tim Rae & Duane Smith

Pam Hartman – dialysis treatments Those with RSV, Flu, & Covid

Leigh Litman’s sister, Loretta – recurrence of cancer

Pat Meglich & Robin Kirkhart - health Judy King (Becky’s mom)

Dorothy & Dick Gillman John Lunter Pat Seiler

Lovell, Bruce Lindenmuth’s sister – cancer Josie Denham – heart problems

Debbie Baker (& her husband, Rev. David Baker) – stroke recovery & cancer

Pastor Joyce Williams (& Jack) – cancer

 Disaster & Violence victims Traveling mercies

Ukraine/Russia War Our country & area communities

**Our sympathy to family & friends of:**

The father & sister of Jeff Kelly (Winchells’ friend)

Pamela Killinger (mother-in law of Tiffany [Yoss] Killinger)

Betty Gift

**Those in Care Centers**

*Apostolic Christian Home -* Anne Salyer, & Ruth Schumacher

*Autumnwood Care Center -* Marcy Taylor

*Liberty Residence II -* Pauline Rastorfer

*Windsor House @ Doylestown -* Paula Burkhart

*Wooster* *Brookdale Senior Living* - Marilyn Hofacre

**For You**

From “**Higher Heights with God**”

By Lynn Alexander Kelsey

Do you see My arms outstretched?

The reddened blood running down My back?

I gave Myself to tormentors

They just laughed and laughed and laughed

I creid out to My Father

In agony and pain

I knew He was listening

He saw my throbbing pain

My heart was full and heavy

Your sin had weighed it down

Deepest despair and depression

Had run My soul aground

I looked down at your faces

Some had turned down in disgust

Some had tears of sadness

While others held cruel hate

I breathed air into My lungs

Couldn’t exhale it out

I lifted My body to breathe

Excruciating pain was all I felt

Near to My dying moments

The thief appealed to Me

I ensured him of a Paradise

That he would be soon to see

My heart compressed as it struggled

Pumping heavy, thick, sluggish blood

Dehydrated and weak I cried out

Searing pain covered over Me like a flood

Wine vinegar was what the soldiers offered Me

Sneering and mocking before the Cross

I knew that I’d be soon with My Father

Hisloving arms around Me, I treasured the cost

Chills of death crept over Me

Satan thought he had his way

Demonic forces were celebrating their victory

They thought they had won the day

Into His hands I committed My Spirit

I then breathed out my last breath…

Entering again the Highest Kingdom of My Father

Abba, I am home, I have completed the task.

“Well don, My Son,” My Father said to Me.

“Separation from You was great anguish indeed.

My love for You is unbelievable.

Your Triumphant Victory – all that You did,

I am well pleased!



**Our Savior, Light of the World**

Rejoicing, we tell the Nativity story,

when the Light of the World came in brilliance and glory.

But still we remember there is more to be told –

His great sacrifice that was yet to unfold.

For His mission as Savior could not be complete

until heavy nails pierced His hands & His feet.

So may we recall both the gift of His birth

and the gift of salvation He gave to all on earth.

-Lisa O. Engelhardt

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**Announcements/**

**Keep Watch**

**HOLY WEEK**

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**April 6th – Maundy Thursday @ Sterling UMC**

**5:30pm Soup Supper & 6:30pm Worship Service**

**April 7th @ 7:30pm – Good Friday Tenebrae Service**

**April 9th – Easter Sunday**

**7:00am Sunrise Service @ RUMC**

**8:00am Breakfast in our Social Hall**

**9:00am Sunday School classes & 10:00am Easter Worship Service**

**Easter Egg Hunt**: **April 8th** @**10am**

If you would like to help “hide” eggs, please come at **9am** on the 8th!

 Come help **fill eggs** with candy **April 5th** @**6pm**

We will be having a **R E V I V A L** **May 7-9**! Ron Heasley will be leading us. Bring your friends!!!

This takes place **Sunday (7th)** @**10am & 7pm**, **Monday (8th)** @**7pm**, and **Tuesday (9th)** @**7pm**!

**October 21st**: Fall **Women Rekindled Day-treat** with speaker Robyn Dykstra



In the end,

it’s not the years

in your life that count.



It’s the life

in your years.

**Abraham Lincoln**