

THE TOWER

MARCH 2013

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A NOTE FROM THE MINISTER

“Christianity in Three Simple Words: Christ Is Risen”



I own about 2000 theology books. No, I haven't read all of them, but I have probably read at least a chapter in 97% of them. These books represent a very diverse group, from the greatest theological minds to insightful laypersons with no theology degrees. They are books written by Apostolic Fathers from the second century AD to contemporary professors still teaching in seminary. They are books that span the spectrum of the Christian theological landscape, from fundamentalist Protestantism to radical postmodernism. But one thing that they all have in common is that, in some sense, they maintain that Christ is risen.

At the end of this month, we will be observing the holy day that is at the heart of Christianity, Easter. Easter is the celebration that Christ is risen from the dead. It was this experience by Jesus's first followers that gave birth to Christianity. It was this experience by Jesus's first followers that gave birth to the Church. It was this experience by Jesus's first followers that gave birth to the writing of the New Testament. It was this experience by Jesus's first followers that moved the sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, the day on which Christ arose.

For all the joy and fanfare of Easter, for all the complexity and mystery of our spiritual life together as a congregation, for all the millions and millions of words contained in all the theology books that I own, Christianity can be summed up in just three simple words: Christ is risen.

There are 3237 persons mentioned in the Bible. Not one of them is important without these three simple words. There are about 2,000,000,000 Christians in the world today. Not one of us can speak of our Christian faith without these three simple words.

These are the words the excited women carried from the empty tomb back to the male disciples. These are the words passed from one person to the next, from one generation to the next, every day since that original miraculous event in 30 AD, whether in secret, in triumph, in darkness, or in celebration.

These three little words have taken us from scattered, broken people lost in our sinfulness to a community that represents the most popular religion in history and in

the world today. These three little words are proclaimed at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. They are whispered at hospital bedsides and shouted at youth gatherings.

Of course it cannot be proven that Jesus was raised from the dead. Quite a few of the theology books I possess insist that we cannot interpret the resurrection to mean that Jesus biologically died on the cross on Friday afternoon and then sometime in the early hours of Sunday morning started breathing again. Yet even these theologians find it significant to believe that in some real way Christ is risen.

I am not ashamed to say that I believe that Jesus did come back to life in some mysterious physical form. The physical is more than we often assume, which quantum physics suggests. And not only was Jesus resurrected in this inexplicable way, but we are given the promise that his followers will also be raised from the dead by God.

Join us for worship on Easter Sunday, March 31, as we hear a beautiful Cantata sung by our choir members, Youth Group, and Sunday School, and listen to a joyous Easter message. Let us gather to celebrate the core of Christianity in three simple words: Christ is risen!

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Gary



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 2	Arianna Deneault
March 5	Bill Crockett
March 5	Karen Jorgensen
March 12	Malcolm Beauvais

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... COMING SOON! VBS 2013! Watch for more news!



As you know, our Sunday School Valentine Spaghetti Supper scheduled for February 9th was cancelled due to snow. Tickets bought will be honored when the supper is rescheduled AND it will be rescheduled as *LOVE* can be celebrated anytime!! Watch for a new date in a new season . . . SPRING!!

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PARK CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

Our Annual Meeting scheduled for May 19, 2013, is quickly approaching. This is the time of year when our **Nominating Committee, Bruce Wells and Helen Guild**, are busy searching for members who are willing to serve on a board or committee. We realize that some of you have been serving on the same committee for several years and may wish to rotate off, if only for a year, or may wish to serve on a different committee.

Please help our Nominating Committee to do their job. If you would like to serve on a particular board or committee or rotate off of a committee, please tell Bruce or Helen by **April 7** so they can inform the Board of Trustees in preparation for our Annual Meeting.

THANK YOU to those currently serving and who continue to give their time to make Park Church such a wonderful place in which to worship God.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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ON TUESDAY, MARCH 12, AT 7:00PM, WE WILL BE PRESENTING THE DOCUMENTARY *THEOLOGIAN UNDER HITLER*

This documentary will be especially pertinent for our Bible Study participants as it sets the context for the ministry and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, but everyone is invited to attend. This program will be in place of our regular Bible Study that evening. The film is about one hour and we will leave some time for discussion as we normally do for our Lenten Series and Movie Matinee. Even if you are not reading or have not read Bonhoeffer's writings, you will find this documentary very enlightening.

OUR LENTEN SERIES CONTINUES

. . . with episodes from **7TH Heaven**. Following the worship service on the Sundays of March 3, 10, 17, and 24, we will gather in the Lee Room to watch and discuss episodes from this popular TV program that aired for 11 years (1996-2007) about a Protestant minister, his homemaker wife, and their five children. Lunch will be served first for the nominal cost of \$5.50 per person at 11:15am. Sunday School children eat for free. At noon, we will watch the episode (approximately 45 minutes long), and then discuss the spiritual or moral issues addressed in it. If you have not been attending the episodes thus far, but would like to do so, please call the church office or sign your name to the bulletin board sheet outside Davis Chapel. There's plenty of room for more folks!

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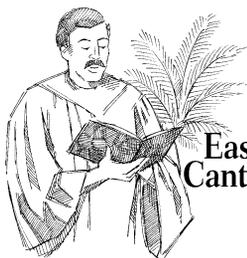
Maundy Thursday

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE ON MARCH 28 AT 7:00PM

Join us for our Maundy Thursday Service which will include the participation of laypersons, the Youth Group, and the Sunday School children. Pastor Gary will deliver a brief message and Holy Communion will be served.

EASTER CANTATA TO BE FEATURED DURING THE EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Our Easter Sunday Service at 10:00am on March 31 will feature a Cantata by the Adult Choir and members of the Youth Group and Sunday School. Pastor Gary will deliver a brief message. Come and join us for the most important holy day on the Christian calendar. For those early risers, a Sunrise Service with area United Methodists will take place at Institute Park at 7:00am followed by an Easter Breakfast.



**Easter
Cantata**

THANK YOU PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

On behalf of the local Heifer volunteers and the people who directly benefit from Heifer, I would like to thank you for your recent donation. Your continued support for Heifer makes a world of difference for people around the globe. Thank you, John Perkins, Area Volunteer Coordinator, Central Massachusetts, Heifer International

The mission of Heifer International is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. Heifer International is a line item in the Missions Budget of Park Congregational Church.

DEAR FOLKS OF PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

We would like to take this time to thank you so very much for your generous donations and support in our fight to end hunger. The generous Mr. Feinstein of Rhode Island is once again sharing his money with agencies that help feed those hungry and in need. All money and each nonperishable food item donated to Carty Cupboard Food Pantry from March 1, 2013, through April 30, 2013, will be counted in the Feinstein Challenge. Mr. Feinstein's \$1,000,000 will be divided proportionately between all the agencies taking part in the challenge. The more food we collect, and the more money we raise, the more we receive from Mr. Feinstein. We ask that you consider donating either food or money during this challenge. Sincerely,

Nancy Spencer, Carty Cupboard Food Pantry Coordinator

If you would like to donate money, please make out the check to "Wesley United Methodist Church" and put on the memo line, "Feinstein Challenge." The address of the church is below:

Carty Cupboard Food Pantry
Wesley United Methodist Church
114 Main St
Worcester MA 01608

If you would like to donate food items, the following are especially needed: hot or cold cereal, peanut butter, grape jelly, dry pasta, pasta sauce, canned chicken or tuna, hearty canned soups, pancake mix and syrup, canned fruit, 100% juices, canned vegetables, rice, and meals in a can, such as stew, hash, or baked beans. Please bring these food items on the Sundays of March 3 and April 7 and leave them in the back of Davis Chapel. We thank Malcolm Beauvais who brings these items to Carty Cupboard of Wesley United Methodist Church. Carty Cupboard appreciates your support.

THE CHILDREN'S TOWER
MARCH 2013



CHRIST^{THE} LORD
IS RISEN TODAY!

Dear Children,

I saw several of you there. Then we all went home. I would guess that within two hours it was gone. Of course it would be gone from sight as you got ready for bed. You probably made SURE that it was gone. All gone. The end. You would not see it again for another year. Gone. Forgotten.

Yes, on the outside it might be "gone" but certainly should NOT be forgotten. How could it be forgotten, as it is a promise from our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ! We cannot wash it away nor do we want to wash it away.

I saw several of you there . . . in the Chapel . . . Ash Wednesday . . . reciting the words, "I (your first name) am dust, and to dust I shall return" and as Pastor Gary put ashes on either your forehead or the back of your hand, hearing his words to you, "Turn away from your sins and believe the good news." The GOOD NEWS! What good news? It is hard to hear good news on the television or radio. Sometimes it is the WORST news! But the news that Jesus Christ gives to you as a young Christian is that of ETERNAL LIFE through His life, death, and resurrection!

This is the season of Lent. It is a time for reflection. It is a time when we try to come as close as possible to Jesus and try to be like Him as He came closer and closer to God during the 40 days of Lent. We open our hearts to His voice and take time for prayer. As we walk with Jesus on His way to the cross, let us remember that we need not have the mark of the ashes on our forehead or hand. The mark of Jesus Christ is upon us as Christians and is forever evident in our willingness to "turn away from our sins and believe the good news!"

As we look forward to Easter morning and celebrating the GOOD NEWS

Your friend . . . Linda



REMEMBER!!

Your Park Church Youth Group is ready and waiting to be called upon to help their Church Family when needed. Any takers?? Give Youth Leaders Miss Holly or Miss Linda a Call.



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