

...from the heart

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Spring 2014



From Death to New Life

As I write this, Long Island is just getting over a snow storm. Some parts of Long Island had 14.5 inches of snow (Patchogue had about 12 inches) and the temperature is in the single digits, with a wind-chill that makes it feel well below zero...brrrr. So it's with hope and much joy that I write for the Spring 2014 "... from the heart."

Now, I know we need Winter. There can't be a Spring without a Winter. In the Winter everything dies, in the Spring everything comes back to life again. There can't be new life without there first being a death. By faith we know that Spring WILL come: believe it and rejoice!

It is also with hope and much joy that I write about Easter, or as I prefer, Resurrection Day. It comes late this year, April 20th, the later the better, because to me that means the later the warmer. It is significant that the day we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead comes during Spring-time; life coming forth out of death. There had to be a death in order for there to be a resurrection.

The resurrection is our key to understanding Jesus.

"He was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead."
Romans 1:4 NLT

Two things, (1) Jesus is shown to be the Son of God by the resurrection and (2) God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a God who raises the dead.

This is really good news.

"It's news I'm most proud to proclaim, this extraordinary Message of God's powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts him." Romans 1:16 (from THE MESSAGE)

God rescues everyone who trusts in His Son. Jesus died to give us eternal life, but Jesus also gives life now. Jesus died for sin so we could die to sin, and Jesus was raised from the dead so we could live in newness of life.

"Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives." Romans 6:4 NLT

(continued on back cover)



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- News and events in our church
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- Bible Studies from pastor Nick

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www.patchnaz.net



Patchogue Church of the Nazarene Group

Like Spring setting the earth free from the death of Winter, we are set free from sin (death) in order to live newness of life: Let me make clear that we are not free from the possibility of sin, but from the compulsion to sin. "Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the Cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life — no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection." Romans 6:6-8 (from THE MESSAGE)

When we accept Jesus - His death for our sins and the power of His resurrection - our old, miserable sinful way of living dies with Him on the cross, and we have resurrected life. We put to death old ways, and live God's way.

We die only to those things which are always already passing away, and we are becoming increasingly alive to those spiritual realities which will live on forever. As someone has said, "He is no fool who surrenders what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose!"

Every Spring, God is rewriting the story of death to life. Every Easter we are reminded that Jesus has rewritten the story of death to life. Do you know that Jesus can also rewrite your story – from death to life? Believe it and rejoice!

And that's ...

F.T.H.

Pastor Jerry



Pastor's daily "GOOD MORNING!" message includes updates and announcements on church activities, prayer requests, a devotional, of course some jokes, quotes, trivia, news and some other things of interest. To begin receiving "Good Morning" send an email address to: pastor.jerry@verizon.net and he will add you to the daily distribution.

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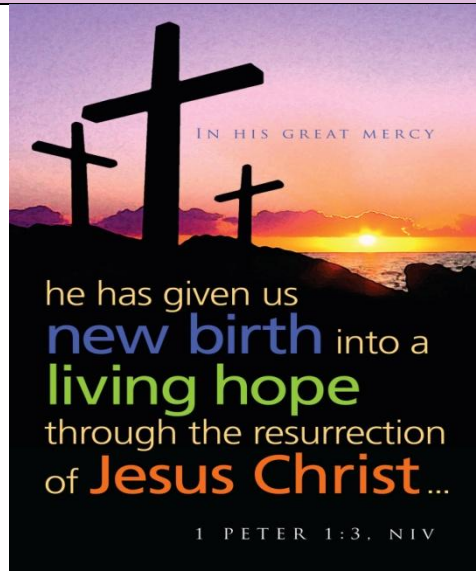
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The Power of Prayer

One of the greatest privileges we have is prayer: Constant access to the great Creator of all things. We may not understand the circumstances He puts us in sometimes, but times of sorrow or crisis bring us to our knees before Him; times of joy and thanksgiving should have the same effect. This is the story of my cousin, now affectionately known as “Miracle Mike.”



On March 2, 2013, my cousin Danielle (Mike’s sister in law) was married. Mike danced all night long with his beautiful wife, Lori, and their three adorable daughters, Emily, Cait, and Julie. This picture was taken that night. Little did they know that their lives would be forever changed the next day. At a celebratory breakfast at a hotel with the family, Mike suddenly collapsed; he hit his head on the marble floor and was knocked completely unconscious. Even amid his family and friends, there was no one there to catch him before he fell. An ambulance rushed Mike, still unconscious several minutes later, and Lori to the hospital, my mother took the girls, and everyone was panicked. It was determined that he had suffered a severe skull fracture. He slipped into a coma, and despite many operations and precautionary measures, he wasn’t improving. Days went by, then a week, and still, no major advances had been made. One moment he would seem to be improving, the next he was declining. I reached out to all of you for your prayers; I knew I could depend on my Forever Family to support us, even if you had never met me or my family. His situation became more dismal by the day, and the doctors started to prepare us all for his passing. Even if he did miraculously wake up, he would be severely brain damaged and would probably never have a normal life again. It was doubtful that he would ever walk or talk again. This man, this devoted father, husband and friend, may never be the same — how could this be happening? The agony and despair was almost unbearable; we all knelt before our Lord in prayer. His doctors and nurses prayed for him. This church, and many other churches, prayed for him.

Almost two weeks after the fall, with our hope waning, his eyes finally opened. His hands moved, gesturing toward Lori. His legs twitched — he was trying to get up. He was responding; against all odds, with no scientific explanation at all, he was alive, he was not paralyzed, and many lives, not just his, were restored. Every day he made incredible strides, and his progress absolutely baffled his doctors. Not only could he talk, he was out of bed and walking within 5 days. Mike, who was never supposed to open his eyes again, was alive and well on his road to recovery. After he awoke, he was projected to be in the hospital for a month — he was in a rehabilitation facility in less than 2 weeks. He should have been in this center for 1-2 months; he was out in another 2 weeks. He not only met all of his goals, he crushed them. He exceeded every expectation and continued to amaze every person that came in contact with him. There was no denying that God had a hand in his recovery. There was, and still is, no other logical explanation.

Now, 1 year later, he is fully recovered, able to return to full duty as a New York City firefighter, and his previously weak vision has returned to 20/20. He retained all of his memories of Danielle’s wedding, and his entire life before that night. He cannot tell you what happened when he was in a coma, or what happened for the next month and a half, but he can tell you everything that has happened to him has been nothing short of a miracle. He is an absolute product of prayer. Have you ever experienced the power of God’s presence as a result of prayer? If you have, and you would like to share your experience, please send me your story at jandsh817@optonline.net. It is so easy to take prayer for granted. Let’s all encourage each other, and remind ourselves of the power of our prayers. With Love, Sue Herrmann

Forever Family Update

Our Sympathy and Prayers

Carl Musumeci



On Our Calendar

Holy Communion Served the first Sunday of the Month

1 8am Men's Breakfast
7pm Good News Bowlers



5 7pm Ash Wednesday Service (beginning of Lent)

7 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights Teen Night

8-9 CLOCKS GO AHEAD BEFORE BED! Daylight Savings Time begins



20 Spring Begins

21 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights Teen Night

22 8:30am – 2pm Women's Day Retreat at the church

29 10am – 5pm Craft Fair in the church parking lot for Teen mission trip (rain date, April 5)



30 10am A farewell to the Caiazzos



4 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights

5 8am Men's Breakfast
7pm Good News Bowlers



13 Palm Sunday

18 7pm Good Friday Service

20 EASTER SUNDAY
8:45am Fellowship Breakfast; 10am Easter Cantata



2 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights

3 8am Men's Breakfast
7pm Good News Bowlers

8-10 District Assembly

11 Mother's Day (gifts for all the ladies)

16 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights Teen Night

26 Memorial Day

30 5pm GODFISH band practice; 6pm Friday Night Lights



Ladies' Sewing Circle



Dorcas (Tabitha) was a loving Christian woman in the Bible who was known for her kind works. She worked sewing coats and clothing for the people. That was her special talent to help provide for others. When she got sick and died, Peter resurrected her. This in turn led many to believe in the Lord. (See Acts 9:36-42)

After a short winter break, the ladies of "Loving Stitches" sewing circle resumed our monthly meeting in January. Currently our group is working on a blanket project with "Warm Up America" and Michael's Crafts Store. Warm Up America distributes warm afghans, caps and other items to tens of thousands of people, thanks to the generosity of knitters and crocheters from around the country. Our ladies are making 7x9 inch blocks that will be joined

together as a patchwork to form full size blankets. It takes 49 blocks to make a full size blanket and we did it! We have created our own full sized blanket, ready for donation!

Our group is open to old and young, experienced and "newbies." You can work on your own stitching projects as well as get involved in some of our outreach projects. We share a few relaxing hours of stitchery, fellowship, and laughs together. We meet every third Thursday of the month in the Youth Center next door to the church. Meeting starts at 7pm and usually runs until 9pm. If you are interested in learning to knit or crochet, contact me at corinnefchurch@verizon.net

No talent is too small or too big. God uses all of us to show others his love.

Corinne Franco

Spring Weekly Schedule

Sunday	10am Worship Service, Children's Program and Teen Bible Study (during Sermon)
Monday	7pm M.E.N. – Men's Bible Study, Fellowship Hall (Every other Monday)
Tuesday	7pm Ladies In-Touch at MaryAnn Malcolm's home, Bellport (286-2435)
Wednesday	7pm East End Home Fellowship at the Mercurio's home, Center Moriches (478-4852) Starting March 12th
Thursday	11am Ministry at McPeak's Assisted Living (1 st & 3 rd Thursday) 7pm Church Board Meeting (2 nd Thursday of the month)
Friday	Spiritual Circle: Open to anyone with any addiction at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, Corner of Neighborhood Dr. & Overlook Dr. Mastic Beach
Saturday	12-1pm Food & clothing distribution, at Terry St., Patchogue Village with Lighthouse Mission 7pm Kairos – Bible Study Fellowship for Young Adults (ages 18 -40), in the Fellowship Hall

Women's Ministry

I know this article is for the spring Newsletter, but right now there is a raging snowstorm going on outside. What a winter this has been, and we are only half-way through it! Sometimes our lives feel like we are stuck in winter - frozen and shut in. Only as we totally surrender our hearts to God's plan and will for our lives are we able to feel His warmth when the coldness sets in. We can't wait until we are standing out in the snow to put on our winter attire. Likewise, we can't wait until we are in the midst of the storms in our life to put on the armor that the Lord provides for us. We must daily learn to trust Him one day at a time knowing that His love and faithfulness will never leave us out in the cold.

During our Tuesday night In-Touch group, we continue to study the book of Job. It has been a real eye-opener to each of us, and we are learning to trust God in the midst of our storms, even when it feels like we have been deserted. He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us and we cling to that wonderful promise. We are able to do this through the accountability and encouragement we glean from one another. All are welcome to attend.

We will be having our first-ever, 1 day Ladies' Retreat right here at our church on March 22. All ladies, young and old, are invited to attend and be blessed by a wonderful guest speaker. Joanna Fruhauf of Gracious Vine Ministries will lead us in worship and meaningful teachings. Our theme is Treasures of the Heart and we pray that you will invite friends and family to join you for a time of renewal and fellowship.

I am excited about the changes we are seeing in our church services. As we open our hearts and invite God's Spirit to enter in, He will continue to lead and guide us into deeper relationships with Him. What more could we ask for or desire!

I am blessed and privileged to serve my sisters in this ministry.

In His Service,

Mary Ann



What is God Doing?

Isaiah 55:9 - *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Spring is on its way, no matter what the weather seems to tell us. We may have snow storms and icy conditions now, but spring is coming. Along with spring comes our greatest story as Christians. Jesus not only died for our sin, but He was raised from the dead, proving He also conquered the grave for us. This is a most glorious time of year for the church.

As we prepare to enter this season, we may make some special provisions. Some decorate the house and front yard; some may try to prepare mentally or spiritually. Some may prepare by praying. This is what I want to address here. Pastors Jerry, John and I have been meeting for many months, maybe over a year now, reading and discussing a chosen book and applying our discussions to our church. We are concerned about you, about the move of God in our services, about our finances, and about our attendance and total numbers. However, the paramount focus has been on the presence of God manifesting in our service times.

When God shows up in our services, things change. When God shows up in our services, people are affected. When God shows up in our services, souls are brought into the kingdom of God by the gift of salvation He freely offers, but that many can't seem to grasp. When God shows up in our services, people will gravitate to that event and desire to experience His presence and power for themselves. We need the presence of God in our lives all the time, but it seems especially when we gather together as a group to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are sensing a break-through in this regard. We believe God is about to unleash a major outpouring of His presence among us as a congregation. We are seeing the start of so many positive things toward His Glory falling upon our church. This may all sound fluffy or weird, but we really believe God is about to do something among us that will transform our church. I hope you sense it too.

So what can we do to help it happen? What can we do to accelerate the process? We all want the power of God to fall upon us, but how can we move this along and into reality? I have no idea! We are praying for God to reveal His plan and how we can lead this type of change. However, we are just as subject to His timing as all of you. We can recognize something's coming; we can feel the time is soon, but we have no idea how He will accomplish this in our church just yet. We need you to be praying for God to reveal what we need to do at the right time and in the right way to accomplish His best for us.

So, just as spring is a time of new beginnings with new plants and flowers and new life, and just as Easter being in the spring is a sign of new life in believers because of Jesus' resurrection, spring is also a time of new life for our church and our lives individually. I am asking you to join us in praying for renewal/revival for our little church and for all of us who attend. For a fresh visitation from the God we worship. We need His Glory to be manifest in our presence every week and in our lives every day. He wants to grace us with His presence. Pray for this to happen as new work in our midst. He is in charge and He knows what He's doing – However, we can't figure God out, because He is so far above us and in control.

Happy Resurrection and happy renewal,

Pastor Nick



HEBREWS 4:16, KJV

The Legend

What is it about Valentine's Day that compels us to order dozens of roses, send boxes of chocolates, seek cards that express the perfect sentiment or pass out little heart shaped candies stamped, "Be Mine!" Silly as all that might sound, imagine what would happen if you failed to deliver one of those traditional expressions of love to that someone special this Valentine's Day. The funny thing is that when most people are asked what they know about Valentine's Day, it generally isn't much. A few will tell about some guy called St. Valentine, but most spout off about Cupid's arrows or some other nonsense. Valentine's Day is not an official holiday, but is probably renowned as much, or more, than every other holiday except Christmas. Yet most people know more about Ground Hog Day than Valentine's Day. Why is that? Perhaps one reason is that there are as many as seven different versions of the story, and seven different men named Valentine. This is the account that is most widely accepted.

*Valentine was a bishop who was imprisoned for his faith by Emperor Claudius II. After a year in prison, the children who greatly missed him began to toss loving notes and flowers between the bars of his cell window. At times, Valentine's jailer's blind daughter, Julia, brought to him notes and flowers from the children. Valentine fell in love with Julia and prayed that she would regain her sight. Before his death, Valentine wrote a farewell note to Julia and signed it **"From Your Valentine"**. His sentence was carried out on February 14th 270 AD.*

Valentine's Day connects the heart to the power of love! There is no magic potion as powerful as true love. There is nothing like falling head over heels in love. The search for and struggle that leads to true love is so compelling to the heart that it's been the premise of thousands of movies, and the groundwork for countless novels. No matter how young or old we are, we are entranced by a story in which true love stands up against the forces that threaten to pull it apart. True love can overcome crucibles of sickness, isolation, money, misunderstandings, exhaustion and jealousy. And yet, in real life we somehow manage to injure the very people we love the most,

because our love is imperfect and we grapple with our own insecurities.

I listened to the cry of a person who was suffering the pain of rejection. *"If people really knew what I was like, they wouldn't like me."* What heart ache. If we could only see ourselves the way God sees us. It's an incredible thing to realize that God thoroughly knew us before we were even conceived, and still loved us. "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart..." (Jeremiah 1:5 NLT)

God lovingly designed a path and plan for our lives; he patiently waits for us to seek his guidance and counsel to discover it. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

The story of true love is the story of sacrifice. Unless there is a price to pay, a battle to be won, or an enemy to defeat, there cannot be true love. The essence of love is giving not taking. *"Love is patient and kind ... not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable... keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."* (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 NLT)

It's true that some of us have a greater capacity for love than others, but all of us have been given the chance to experience true and perfect love. It isn't natural to us, but it is to God. The story of perfect love was written in blood and nailed to a rough splintery cross over 2,000 years ago, when God, our heavenly father, made the ultimate sacrifice for us, giving his only son to die in our place ... undeserved, unmerited, Love of God. It's the greatest love story ever told, but it doesn't end there. Perfect love is a living thing; we can experience it daily, hourly even moment by moment. The more we open our heart to experience His perfect love, the greater our capacity to love and be loved by others. Think of how that kind of love could make your next Valentine's Day the best ever.

Serving Him Together,

John Mercurio

Love

