

...from the Heart

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Spring 2018

He Is Risen Indeed

Luke 24:1-12 (ESV) – But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.



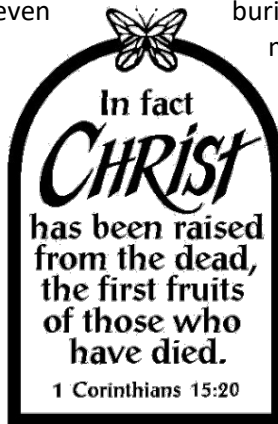
In John's Gospel it says that John and Peter ran to the tomb. When John entered the tomb and saw the grave cloths and the scene, he believed. Don't you find this strange? They walked and talked with Jesus daily for over three years. He told them many times what was in store for him and them. Why didn't they get it? It took a miracle for them to truly believe.

We often think that if we lived back then and walked with Jesus, we would have faith to move mountains. But the fact is that they couldn't understand what was going on right under their noses. It wasn't until after Jesus was raised from the dead that they began to put the pieces together. They knew Him, and they started to accept Him as Messiah, but they really didn't believe fully yet.

Continued from Front Cover

Then things started to happen just as He said it would. He was arrested, beaten, sentenced to crucifixion, died on the cross, and was buried in Joseph's tomb. They must have been totally confused. After all, they thought He was the one to save Israel from Roman oppression. How could He die and leave them alone to fend for themselves?

The resurrection is the lynch-pin of our faith. Anyone could have come, preached, even do signs, and then die. Anyone could have died a horrible death for the cause. However, who else could then be raised from the dead and overcome the grave? Only Jesus! Why do we believe what we believe? Why do we trust in His promises? Why do we expect to receive salvation, eternal life with God? It is because He rose from the dead. This is the single most important event in our Savior's life



and reign. Yes – He came, He died, He was buried, but He rose from the dead. It is the most significant event in Christian history. He overcame death, just like he said. He is risen, just like He said. He is alive, at the right hand of God, just like He said. He sent His Holy Spirit to bear witness of these things, just like He said. He makes intercession for His people before God, just like He said. Everything He said has come to pass. It was written before any of it came to pass. He is faithful – He is true – He is God! He is risen indeed!

As we near Easter – or Resurrection Day – consider this. You can trust Him and what He promised to you. You can have a relationship with our great God because of Him. He obeyed His Father to the point of death on a cross, and He rose from the dead to be the first fruits of the resurrection, to show us what we have to look forward to. This life is not the end. We will live eternally with God if we trust and obey.

I wish you all a Happy Resurrection Day now and going forward.

And that's ...

*From my heart!
Pastor Nick :)*

...from the Heart

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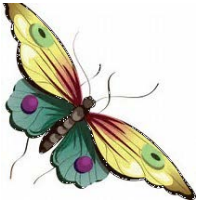
Phone & Fax 631-289-3483

Sunday Service at 10am

Pastor: Nick Franco

Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net for
Sermons, Church activities and other events

Flying Solo, Together



For the past 18 months we encouraged Betty* along as she worked towards completing a particular 2-year traineeship program; one of the toughest in the State. A trainee cannot advance at will. There are various levels in the progression and they must all be completed in sequence. No loopholes and no room for errors. Lessons had to be approved by the office manager and then by the State reviewer. If Betty didn't pass the requirements by the deadline she was out. No appeal. No re-application. No second chance.

Betty submitted her last lesson to the State reviewer ten days before the deadline. Finally, the long-awaited email message arrived: "Congratulations. You have met the requirements..."

I was walking past her desk when she called me over. "Look, look!" she said. She spoke in a kind of loud whisper, as if she couldn't quite believe what she was reading and needed another set of eyes to confirm it. The news began to spread. Betty made it! She passed the course! Twenty-four months of hard work had all come down to this moment and she did it.

As we all spoke to each other, we rehashed the prior weeks and months of supporting Betty. We reaffirmed that we always knew she would pass. Betty thanked us repeatedly for being her constant support and for "putting up" with all her worries and anxieties. Our faith and belief in her bolstered her faith and belief in herself. While we couldn't do Betty's work for her, we could be her biggest cheering section and her faithful companions along the way.

This true story illustrates much of what the family of faith is and does for each other as we walk our own road of life. There are times when we just don't think we can take another step. *Thank God* for believers to turn to when we're exhausted. There are times when we wonder why we even started, and quitting seems like the best and easiest option. *Thank God* for those He places in our sphere who will sense our hopelessness and step in quickly. There are times when fear, anger, and frustration threaten to undo weeks, months, or even years of progress. *Thank God* for brothers and sisters who are willing to rush in and keep us on course. They are life's de-fusers. Thank God for them!

See Page 7

Always but especially in the hard times of testing, when we are being pressed and molded into greater maturity and responsibility, we need each other to make it through every day. We don't get a stunt double. No one can walk our road for us. That is something we must do on our own but not alone! We have a wonderful support system in our Christian family to help us. We only need to ask.



Are we perfect? No. Do we do everything right every time? No. Do we sometimes say, do, or be something that isn't helpful on occasion? Yes. We are a wonderful mix of the perfectly imperfect, but I would rather be a part of this great faith family called Patchnaz than be apart from it. (Not only did I find my home here, I *made* my home here. 29 years later, this is still my home and these are still my people.)

There is no place in Scripture where we are told that it's okay to be isolated from other believers as a way of life. There's no valid excuse for it either, though Satan loves it when we think there is. Jesus needed His friends, and we need each other. We don't need to see your voting record, education level, or financial statement. The ground, they say, is level at the cross. When we gather together to glorify God, to celebrate the victories He has won for us, and to support and encourage each other through all the learning and tests life brings our way, we strengthen the foundation of faith and the house that is built upon it will stand, come what may.

*Name changed for privacy.

Suzanne Cerruto





Thank you to all who supported the 2017 Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Drive. This year 19 families were given a Turkey and all the trimmings to make a complete meal.

At this time the Pantry shelves are stocked with a wonderful assortment of groceries. If you know of anyone in need of food, tell them about our church's food pantry. Pantry hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 am till 2pm. Invite them to come worship with us on Sunday. REACHOUT.

MaryAnn Mavridis

*"...for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a Stranger and you welcomed me..."
Matthew 25:35 (ESV)*



TEEN MINISTRY NEWS

We're excited to report that the youth group has been meeting bi weekly on Fridays since October and it's been a real blessing. We are doing a series called "prime". It's the basics such as, Who is God? What does God mean to you?, etc. We have prayer time, lesson time, and the teens love to have time to play pool, ping pong, and man hunt (when it's warmer).

Meanwhile in Sunday school we've gotten a bit deeper and are currently studying the book of Revelation. This series is teaching all of us so much. It's amazing to see the minds of these teens at work. To be learning along with them is such a joy.

Coming up March 9th to 11th is Word of Life Snow Camp. We have three teens coming with us. This is the first Word of Life experience for Michael and me. We cannot wait to make new memories with the group we have.

All in all this past quarter has been great. We've been working together on bake sales to support our trip and ministry, learning together, praying together and playing together. Our youth group is growing.

Thank you for your prayers and support always.
Many Blessings
The Messina's



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

It is so nice to be able to look out the window at 5:30 P.M. and still be able to see some light. Plants and flowers are starting to bud as well. That tells me that spring is, indeed, on its' way and that makes me very happy!

In March, we will begin collecting items for Operation Christmas Child. Even though giving was down last year, we were able to pack more boxes than ever before. It is such a simple way to be a blessing to a child who may never have received a gift before and a great opportunity for them to hear about Jesus.

Our ladies study groups have missed a few meetings due to winter weather issues but we are moving along in our study "Giving God Your All". It has been a good reminder to all of us that God asks us to surrender all and allow Him to have His way in our lives.

On April 14, we will have another brunch in the church fellowship hall. If you missed the one in February, this is an opportunity to come and gather with your sisters for some food, fun and fellowship and an encouraging devotion.

I recently read the following in a Lenten devotional and thought it was worth sharing. "The place is the Mount of Olives where Jesus goes to pray with His disciples, who still do not understand what is going on. (Some call them the "duh-sciples") His purpose is to keep connected to his Father through prayer and to keep the disciples connected as well. But they do not understand. Later on, the Lord finds them sleeping instead of praying. Someone recently quipped that in today's culture, Jesus would have said, "Why are you texting and not praying?" Our purpose is to keep connected to the Lord. He is not the One who has disconnected from us. Prayer, worship, meditation and reflection are all ways to keep connected as people of the resurrection." Rich Bimler

As we are in the midst of Lent, I pray that we are not "duh-sciples". They walked with Jesus but didn't understand all that He was telling them. We are privileged to have the Bible which is God's love letter to us. We can only grow and stay strong in our faith if we take quality time to spend in the Word and with our Lord...not just during Lent but all year through!

May your hearts be filled with love for all that Jesus has done for us. Let us rejoice together as we celebrate His death, resurrection and our redemption.

In His Service,
Mary Ann



Weekly Schedule

Subject to Change

Sunday

10am - Service - Nursery available
10:45am - Children's Sunday School - Fellowship Hall
10:45am - Teen Bible Study - HPYC Building
First Sunday of the Month - Holy Communion

Monday

7pm - 1st & 3rd Monday of the month - September through April - M.E.N.
(Men's Encouragement Network) - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday

7pm - Every Tuesday - Ladies-In-Touch at Mary Ann Malcolm's Home

Wednesday

7pm - Bible Study - Fellowship Hall

Thursday

10am - Every Thursday - Ladies Prayer & Bible Study Group - HPYC Building
7pm - 3rd Thursday each month - September through June - Ladies Sewing Circle - HPYC Building

Friday

6:30pm - 8:30pm - 2nd & 4th Friday of the month - Teen's Youth Group - HPYC Building

Saturday

8am - 1st Saturday of the month - September through April - Men's Breakfast - Fellowship Hall





March 11	Daylight Savings Time Begins
March 20	Spring Begins
March 25	Palm Sunday
March 30	Good Friday
April 1	Easter Sunday
May 13	Mother's Day



For other Church services, meetings or events during March, April and May, please refer to the Sunday Bulletin and the Monday Morning Memo sent every week via email.



HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Spring is on the way... Yea! It officially begins with the Spring Equinox on Tuesday, March 20, at 12:15 EDT. This is the astronomical, first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. All over the world, days and nights are approximately equal. The name equinox comes from Latin words which mean, “equal night” – *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night).

Nature begins to stir, as if waking up from a long winter’s nap. The first full moon in March is called the Full Worm Moon, because worms begin to emerge from the earth. The Sun’s trajectory across the sky shifts northward, causing birds to migrate in that direction following the Sun’s path. The increased sunlight in turn triggers birds to sing. How cool is that? We humans bask in the knowledge that earlier dawns and later sunsets are true indicators of the changes we’ve been longing for. Our light deprived, vitamin d, deficient spirits sore at the thought that these changes are actually happening.

Ecclesiastes is a Greek word that is usually translated “the preacher.” The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes divides life into seasons, time and purpose. *To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven...* Eccl 3:1 (NKJV) Yet life experiences may cause us to challenge the preacher’s notion. We wonder what purpose the deep hollows of life serve. We’ve tasted the bitterness associated with losing a mother, a child, a spouse or a close friend before their time. Though we manage to survive these kinds of crushing moments, the indelible marks they leave stay with us forever. “What useful purpose, can life’s devastating experiences provide,” we ask? “In what season or place can such a thing possibly fit?”

In Psalm 139, David contemplates the ever present nearness of God. *I can never escape from your Spirit! ... never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you’re there; down to the grave, you are there. ... I could ask the darkness to hide me ... but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. ... Darkness and light are the same to you.* (NLT) It’s an amazing realization to understand there’s no place we can go, no incident we can encounter, or sorrow too deep where God’s Spirit isn’t present. No dark winter of the soul can hide us from Him. In every situation and season of life God’s presence eternally exists. Eugene Peterson writes: *Ecclesiastes is an expose’ and rejection of every arrogant and ignorant expectation that we can live our lives by ourselves on our own terms.*

A photograph of a blue jay perched on a dark branch. The bird has a blue crest, back, and tail, with white underparts and a black collar around its neck. It is surrounded by green foliage and small white flowers.

Serving Him Together, Pastor John Mercurio

9

Making It Personal

Someone has said, “Knowing Christ died—that’s history. Believing He died for me—that’s salvation.” A personal relationship with Christ begins at the moment of our salvation. Only when we are born spiritually into God’s family do we become members of His spiritual kingdom. While we may not know exactly when this new life begins, we can understand the steps we need to take to begin this relationship.

wonderful
merciful
savior

1 Admit our lost condition.

All of us are born to the parents of a fallen humanity. We come into this world separated from the life of God and absorbed with an interest in finding satisfaction and significance on our own terms. We don’t show a natural desire for God who made us for Himself (ROMANS 3:11-12).

The Bible says we all come into this physical world physically alive but spiritually dead. The apostle Paul wrote, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (ROMANS 3:23), “There is no one righteous, no not one” (ROMANS 3:10), and “the wages of sin is death” (ROMANS 6:23).

2 Acknowledge what God has done for us.

The word *gospel* means “good news.” The gospel of Christ is that God Himself loved us enough to send His own Son into this world to rescue us from our sin (JOHN 1:1-4; 3:16). The good news is that Jesus lived the quality of life that God intended for us to live. He loved His heavenly Father with all of His heart, soul, and mind and showed us what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Then, to solve the problem of our lost relationship with His Father, Jesus died in our place, offering Himself as a perfect sacrifice to pay the price of sin. Because He was not only man but God our Creator as well (JOHN 1:1-14), His death was of infinite value. When He rose from the dead, He proved that He had died in our place to pay the price of all sin—past, present, and future.

3 Personally believe and receive God’s gift.

While we all have earned the wages of spiritual death and separation from God (ROMANS 6:23), no one can earn a relationship with God. It is a gift of His love and mercy. No one is saved by trying to be good. We are saved by trusting in Christ: “For it is by grace [undeserved favor] you have been saved, through faith—and this is not of yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (EPHESIANS 2:8-9, SEE ALSO ROMANS 4:5; TITUS 3:5).

This may sound too simple. But it takes a miracle of God’s grace to break our pride and self-sufficiency. It takes God’s Spirit to draw us into this kind of personal relationship. The actual words we say to God to receive this gift may vary (LUKE 18:13; 23:42-43). What is important is that we believe God enough to be able to say, “Father, I know I have sinned against You. I believe that Jesus is Your Son, that He died for my sins, and that He rose from the dead to prove it. Now I accept Your offer of eternal life. I accept Jesus as Your gift for my salvation.”

If this is the honest expression of your heart, welcome to God’s family! By simple, childlike faith you have entered into a personal relationship with the One who made you and saved you for Himself.

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