



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
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The Rev. Gregory W. Frey, Pastor

APRIL, 2022

THREE LITTLE WORDS

I suppose people could be forgiven their flippant cynicism. After two years of pandemic, the disruption of lives, cancelled events, chronic uncertainty, inflation, the dire climate reports, and now the human catastrophe unfolding in Ukraine we are reaching our limit. People have stopped expecting things to improve long term. Is it better not to get your hopes up so as not to be disappointed?

"Life's a bitch" has been a popular phrase eliciting the response *"...and then you die."* (Perhaps this phrase has been replaced by *WTF!*). A little too crass for me but I suppose this is the liturgy of our culture.

It is liturgical, isn't it? It is like a church call and response... someone says, *"Life's a bitch!"* and everyone knows the right response is *"and then you die."* I know it is meant to be funny and dismissive of misfortune but for some this has become the credo of their quiet desperation. This phrase suggests there is nothing to be done about misfortune, uncertainty, and sorrow. It is the way of this world. It subtly gives permission to be callous, pessimistic...numb.

This could have become the funeral liturgy of the Christian church. Consider for a moment if the last experience of Jesus by the disciples had been his betrayal, his unjust arrest, abuse, and execution. If there had been no Easter, I can easily imagine this phrase being the final call and response of the short-lived Jesus movement. Peter, while he and the other disciples packed up their stuff to go back to their dreary lives, turned and said, *"Life's a bitch"* to which the other disciples responded with a good-bye wave *"and then you die!"*

But this was not the fate of the Jesus movement; we have three other words to say to each other and those three words make all the difference. When we say, *"He is risen...he is risen indeed!"* we are saying the exact opposite of *"Life's a bitch...and then you die."* The indifferent destructiveness of death does not have the last word. Injustice and cruelty do not carry the day. The *every man for himself* attitude of a life without hope is rejected. God has acted decisively in favor of people who did not deserve it because God loves us despite ourselves.

The Easter liturgy begins with the words *"He is risen...He is risen indeed"* as a very intentional declaration that these are the words which will define our lives as Christians. But simply saying these words is not enough. If we are to be Easter people we must live out our credo of hope contained within our Easter dialog and reject *"Life's a bitch..."* futility. Our actions as individuals and a community of faith must embody the expectation that God will bring blessings through us and that our individual lives should carry those blessing out into the world. Because Christ is raised, hope can never be extinguished and if it has become obscured, we must shine a light on it.

In a world where people dare not hope lest they face disappointment, those who follow Jesus have something to say, *"He is risen!"*, the grave was not his end, the worst the world had to offer could not cancel God's love in Jesus Christ, that love is victorious.

The phrase *"Life's a bitch"* simply isn't funny anymore. Honestly, I don't think it ever was. What our exhausted communities, divided nation and fractured world need more than ever is the transformational power of three other little words *"He is risen!"* and it needs to hear these words in the lived witness of an Easter people. Only then might our weary friends and neighbors dare to hope and respond, *"He is risen indeed!"*

Pastor Frey

Celebrate the Risen Christ

Join us for Easter Breakfast
9:15 A.M. on Easter Sunday

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 10--8:00 & 10:30 – Palm Sunday--Holy Communion
 April 11,12,13 7:00 P.M. – Service of Word & Prayer
 April 14--7:00 P.M. – Maundy Thursday--Holy Communion
 April 15--7:00 P.M. – Good Friday Community Service at St. Paul’s UCC, Amityville
 April 16--8:00 P.M. – Easter Vigil—Holy Communion
 April 17--8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Easter--Holy Communion

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Baptisms: March 20 – **Eli James Royer**, son of Stephen & Mia (Sacchetti) Royer
 March 27- **Magnolia Ruth Bushman**, daughter of Brett & Courtney (Hughes-Brown) Bushman

Wedding: Adrienne Heisey & Steven Faulkner

Contributions to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Henry “Hank” Rhoads** given by:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Richard & Janet Knauer | Mary Graefe |
| Dan & Margaret Kennedy | Frank & Kathy Jablonski |
| Sandra Hoffman | Pat Levensgood |
| John & Linda Leffel | Ann Mengel |
| Roger & Phyllis Bauman | Carol Pearson |
| John & Elaine Ezbiansky | John & Jeane Serrian |
| Greg & Norma Godon | June Baer |
| Doug & Sue Rhoads | Miriam & Dan Fletcher |
| Judy Reeser & family | Morris & Cheryl Haas |
| Kylene Laity | George & Barbara Thompson |

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| Charles & Fern Brown | Rob & Sandi Levensgood |
| Guy & Marianne Graefe | Ralph & Robin Rohrbach |
| Francia Marshall | Helen Strain |
| Randy & Elyse Miller | Fred & Mary Hoffert |
| Doug & Nancy Yocom | Tom & Beth Brizek |
| Andy & Kelly Brizek | Mike & Paige Opdyke |
| Nancy Rhoads | |
| Ann Riegel, April Bohn, Kyrsten Bohn, John, Cathy & Caroline Riegel | |

Contribution to the **Agape Fund** in memory of **Henry “Hank” Rhoads** given by Anna Brown

--YTD Giving thru February, 2022--					
	<u>Jan.--Feb. 2021</u>	<u>Jan.-- Feb. 2022</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>	
Offerings	\$ 53,860	\$ 57,361	3,500	6.50	
Vision 2020 Contr.	7,394	7,316	- 78	- 1.05	
Total Giving	\$ 61,254	\$ 64,677	3,423	5.29	

THOUGHTS...by Joy Gerhart

I have been mulling over the words to the hymn “Build A Longer Table” ever since we sang it on Sunday, Feb. 20 in church. The words are new but written to fit the tune of Noel Nouvelet which we know as the Hymn “Now the Green Blade Rises.” The hymn is a new hymn for us in the new ELCA hymnal “All Creation Sings.” I was impressed that the words were written by someone born in 1984.

*Build a longer table, not a higher wall.
 Feeding those who hunger, making room for all.
 Feasting together, strangers turn to friend.
 Christ breaks walls to pieces, false divisions end.*

Jesus and the prophets talk to us about righteousness and salvation. Amos 5:22-24 says, “Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of

your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.” Micah 6:8 says, “Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Jesus says, in Matthew 25:35-40” I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

So what is righteousness and what is justice? It has to do with a right relationship with God and a right relationship with God’s people, all people. How do we act this out? I think we are to build a longer table, make strangers into friends, feed the hungry, help the weak, shelter the homeless.

*Build a safer refuge, not a larger jail.
When the weak find shelter, mercy will not fail.
For any place where justice is denied
Christ will breach the jail wall freeing all inside.*

The word “jail” makes me feel a little uncomfortable, but maybe that’s what I need this Lent is things to think about that make me uncomfortable. There are MANY who are not free, who are metaphorically in jail. All oppression is a kind of jail.

*Build a broader doorway, not a longer fence.
Love protects all people, sparing no expense.
When we embrace compassion more than fear,
Christ tears down our fences, we are welcome here.*

“Broader doorway,” “sparing no expense,” and “embrace compassion more than fear” are the phrases that jump out at me. How often do we narrow the doorway to others in many subtle ways, refuse to sacrifice or spare no expense, or cave to fear when we need compassion?

*When we lived as exiles, refugees abroad,
Christ became our doorway to the reign of God.
So must our tables welcome those who roam.
None can be excluded; all must find a home.*

We are hearing about refugees every day. The early Hebrews were refugees and exiles. We may not personally know what it really means to be a refugee, but we are going to be needed more and more to support refugees. What does it mean to us that Christ became our doorway to the Kingdom of God, God’s reign? I believe God’s kingdom comes when God’s will is done. And what is God’s will? “To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.” It’s not easy. We will probably fail more than we will succeed. But we must try. I must try. I think this song helps me see this call a little more concretely. I will keep thinking about these words and try to live them. There are some beautiful recordings of this music with videos on line. The nicest is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrstV-4iGw8> (A friend from our ministerium shared this with me.) Please take some time to think about this yourself.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION HAPPENINGS.....

Adult Sunday Studies and Weekday Bible Studies

The Sunday Adult Study continues on topic of “How Lutherans Interpret the Bible” including DVD lectures by Dr. Mark Allan Powell. Classes meet Sunday mornings at 9:15 am. The Zoom ID number is 827 2209 0356 and the Passcode is 598177. The classes in April will be: April 3—Session 6-The Many Meanings of the Bible and April 24—Session 7—Devotional Readings of the Bible. There will be no classes on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday. You are invited to join the in-person “Follow the Cross” even on Palm Sunday with the kids.

The Monday Bible Study continues online at 10:00 am looking at the Old Testament lesson for the upcoming Sunday. The Passcode is 873 0089 2165 and the passcode is 067059. We will not have a class on April 18. During the season of Easter, which is from Easter to Pentecost, June 5, the first readings come from the Acts of the Apostles so those upcoming lessons will be studied.

Wednesday Bible Studies are in person and on-line: 219 384 065 with the password st.pauls. Pastor Frey will continue to lead us through the Gospel of John. Friday Bible Studies are all on -line and will cover the upcoming Gospel lesson for Sunday. The meeting ID and pass code are the same as for Wednesday. There will be no Bible Study on Good Friday.

Sunday School

Masks

The Christian Ed. Committee decided to announce that consistent with congregational mask guidelines, wearing masks in Sunday school class is recommended.

“Follow the Cross” Palm Sunday Event April 10

We will be holding a “Follow the Cross” event for all children, youth and adults in the congregation on April 10, Palm Sunday at 9:15 am. We plan to meet in the church sanctuary and will follow the cross to different parts of the church building to recall events in JESUS’ life in his last week and pray. The event will culminate in a service project assembling health care/hygiene kits to send to Church World Service (CWS) which assists refugees. Items we will be collecting include hand towels, wash cloths, tooth brushes in original package, (NO toothpaste because it expires), band aids, bar soap in original package, nail clippers, and wide toothed combs. They can be brought to a box in the Narthex.



Vacation Bible School News

Mark your calendars! Our dates for 2022 are **June 12-16!** This is the week before Father’s Day. Our theme will be Rainforest Explorers! Last year we were on an island, this year we will be in a tropical rainforest. We will have lots of fun

stories including Noah’s Ark as well as music, crafts, science, games, and everything. Plan to join us and invite your friends.

YOUTH NEWS

Congratulations to members of the Smith family!

Henry Smith – made Berks Senior County Orchestra and Region V Chorus

Mark Smith– made Berks Senior County Orchestra

Jess Smith– made Berks Junior County Band, Chorus and Orchestra, and made Junior High Inter-County Band.

We are blessed to have such talent in our congregation and talent which they share with us!

EASTER EGG HUNT ON APRIL 17

On Easter Sunday we will have an Easter egg hunt for children. Stay tuned for more details about egg-zact time and place in or outside of the church.



THERE’S STILL TIME TO ORDER EASTER CANDY.....

We are again partnering with Trinity, Bechtelsville, to sell homemade Easter candy. Proceeds will go to the Mission Trip Fund.



\$6 for 1/2 lb.; \$12 per lb. We will be selling both milk and dark chocolate this year, including peanut butter, coconut creme and butter creme.

The deadline for orders is Sunday, April 3, and orders will begin to be available for pick up between April 3-16. Order sheets will be in church, or orders may be made by calling Ann Myers at 610-960-2378.

PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING THIS MONTH.....

If you see your name here it is not because we think you have a specific need for prayer, but to let you know you are in our prayers whatever your need may be. Please include in your prayers this month: Colson Tsakonas, Kitty Varady, Heather Varady, Christopher Venn, Kaitlyn Venn, Stephanie Vernon, Nathan Vernon, Cooper Vernon, Kyle Vonderlinden, Erna Vroman, Helene Wallauer, Lee Walley, Susanne Walley. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: Bruce Basch, Sandra Berger, Sue Blevins, Gail Clifford, Stuart Crichton, Diane Davis, Eve, Heath Fegely, Bob Fisher, Sara Hartline, Jackie Hurchalla, Kasper, Daniel, Kim Koury, Priscilla Leh, Susanne Leier, Lisa Lerch, William Mohler, Craig Nichols, Carol Pearson, MJ Talbott, Sue Trout, Rick Weiler, family & friends of Elizabeth Roy, Henry Rhoads, and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Makayla Becker, Avery Boorse, Michael Burd, Jake Campbell, Darrell, Barbara DePrefontaine, Ethan, Ron Glaser, Jevin Heller, Connie Hunter, Terry Johnson, Joanne Marnell, Ron Mutter, Richard Randolph, Lauren Ridge, Gene Schaeffer, Audrey Serrian, John Shaner, Ellen Sheeler, Vernet Spence-Brown, Jason Stalnecker, Joan Wendel, Craig Williams, Jane Williams; Sandi Zelinski, homebound -- Charles Brown, Fern Brown, Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Betty High, Arlene Hildebeitel, Dale Szajek.



AMITY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE BUS TRIP

TO

HUNTERDON PLAYHOUSE

"I Left My Dignity in My Other Purse"

Starring Joyce DeWitt, who played Janet, on ABC's Three's Company

Thursday, June 2, 2022

\$85, payable to Amity Friendship Circle

Leave church parking lot at **9:30 A.M. sharp**

Reservation deadline—**May 23, 2022**

Call Pat Roland 484-557-4885 for additional information. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

AMITY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NOVEMBER BUS TRIP

TO

AMERICAN MUSIC THEATER

Christmas Show

Thursday, November 10, 2022

\$85 payable to Amity Friendship Circle

Call Jan Schell at 610-779-7409 or sign up in the narthex.

This is an early "Heads up" to let everyone know that the Amity Friendship Circle will be sponsoring a bus trip to the American Music Theater in Lancaster on November 10, 2022 to see their Christmas show. We will also have a buffet lunch at Yoder's Restaurant and be transported by a New Rhoads bus. Price for the trip is \$85 per person. S

This is not to be confused with our June bus trip to Hunterdon Hills Dinner Theater. Just wanted to get the word out because many people make their own reservations to see this popular show and this would give you a choice to see the show, have a nice lunch, and not have to drive! Please join us!

HELP NEEDED FOR FAMILIES WITH FOOD INSECURITY THIS EASTER.....



We are currently collecting gift cards from Redner's and Boyer's Market in Birdsboro to be given to five families in the Daniel Boone School District plus one of our own church family to help

with their Easter dinner. Because of your generosity, each family received \$230.00 in gift cards at Christmas time. Thank you for supporting our efforts to make a small difference in their lives.



4/1	Fred Hoffert	4/15	Bryce Johnson
	Jason Ware		Larry Kiefer
4/2	Jason Parduski		Ann Myers
	Margaret Reitmeyer		Carol Pearson
	Joan Wendel		Janet Suglia
4/3	Diane DiSandro	4/16	Mindy Haring
	Vicci Eidell	4/17	Elizabeth Dollhopf
	Madison Kochert		Anne Weiser
4/4	Charlotte Moser	4/18	Penelope Gaskins
	Megan Poux		Daulton Shaffer
4/5	Ryan Parduski	4/19	Jackson Leck
	Olivia Raber		Helen Strain
	Willow Zepp	4/20	Adam DiSandro
4/6	Brett Berger	4/21	Wendy Frey
4/8	Robert Eagle	4/22	Chester Springel
	Avery Main	4/23	Amy Bartra
4/10	Grayson Cloutier		Avery Hampton
	Gabriel Schulze	4/24	Sean Berger
4/11	Jackson Albright		Graysyn Emery
	Kaylin Berry		Guy Graefe
	Katrina Fusco	4/26	Vicki Hiser
4/12	David Childs		Ashleigh Hoover
	Mason Yoder		Stephanie Vernon
4/13	Patrick Dollhopf	4/27	Carey Coyle
	Karen Glaser		Skylar Stewart
	Barry Gross		Lindsey Yoder
	Sue Kucharik	4/28	Aimee DiSandro
4/14	Tyler Fusco	4/29	Angie Kutz
	Vincent Fusco		

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO—

Kevin Fisher & Rob Edinger	4/11	7 yrs.
Barry & Sieglinde Fretz	4/14	19 yrs.
Carl & Carlene Yerger	4/14	49 yrs.
David & Diane Stauffer	4/15	50 yrs.
Richard & Debra Geiger	4/14	12 yrs.
John & Susan Murray	4/19	9 yrs.
Calvin & Ellen Sheeler	4/20	70 yrs.
Joe & Kim Koury	4/30	28 yrs.

THANKS TO OUR THRIVENT MEMBERS...who directed their Choice Dollars® to St. Paul’s. The deadline to direct your Choice Dollars® is March 31, 2022. Thanks to those who have already donated \$1,510.

LAST CALL FOR EASTER FLOWERS TO DECORATE THE SANCTUARY

Final deadline to order is Sunday, April 3.

Your payment may be included in your regular offering envelope marked for flowers.

EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

Yes, I/We would like to order the following:

_____ Lilies (4 blooms+)	@ \$8.75	_____
_____ Daffodils (6" pot)	@ 8.00	_____
_____ Tulips (5 & 6 bloom)	@ 8.50	_____
_____ Azaleas	@ 15.00	_____
_____ Mums (7" pot)	@ 8.50	_____
	Total	\$_____

Information for announcements: Given to the Glory of God—

_____ In honor of _____ by _____

_____ In Memory of _____ by _____

_____ As a gift by _____

Name _____

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	2 6 PM—Holy Comm
3 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	4 10 AM—Bible Study(Zoom) 7 PM—Christian Ed.	5 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	6 10—Bible Study 6:15—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service	7 Noon—Amity Fr. Circle 6 PM—T3	8 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	9 6 PM—Holy Comm
10 <i>Palm Sun.</i> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	11 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 6:30—CDC 7 PM—Word & Prayer	12 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM—TOPS 7 PM—Word &	13 10—Bible Study (in-person) 7 PM—Word & Prayer	14 <i>Maundy Thu.</i> 7 PM—Holy Comm	15 <i>Good Friday</i> 7 PM—Community Service at St. Paul's UCC, Amityville	16 <i>Holy Sat.</i> Blood Drive 8 PM—Easter Vigil
17 <i>Easter</i> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	18	19 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	20 10—Bible Study (in-person) 7 PM—Council	21 9:30 AM—Social Min. 7 PM—Choir	22 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	23 6 PM—Holy Comm
24 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	25 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	26 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM--TOPS	27 10—Bible Study (in-person)	28 7 PM—Choir	29 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	30 6 PM—Holy Comm