

THE PARK BENCH

Pastor's Page

Greetings in the name of the Lord.

Sharing our Faith at Easter

The recent death of Billy Graham has left me contemplating a few things this week. I have never been to a Billy Graham crusade, but whatever one thinks of Billy Graham, his name is practically synonymous with a verbal presentation of the gospel message.

Most of us have likely heard the saying, *“preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.”* While it is a seemingly well-intentioned phrase, it is a bit misleading. We have not preached the gospel if all we have done is show kindness to others. Certainly, kindness attends the gospel of Christ and shows that the One whom we serve is conforming us to His image and likeness. This is *witnessing*. But *evangelism* happens only when we proclaim the message of Jesus and call people to put their faith in Him. **And this requires words.**

The Great Commission is a general charge to the church at large. But it is also a particular charge to every individual believer. It is a call on each member of the body of Christ to take the good news of the gospel message into a fallen world and declare that the consequences of sin, which is spiritual death, has been paid for in full by Christ through His death on the cross and resurrection to new life. This is the Easter message that we are marching toward. Presenting the gospel verbally can prove to be both a privilege and hardship. It is a privilege to minister to the lost; the brokenhearted, the downtrodden, and the discouraged. But it is a hardship to share the gospel with the arrogant, proud and boastful. But Scripture makes it clear that *“we all used to walk in these ways, in the life we once lived.* But the good news is that true believers know both sides of that coin because the Holy Spirit provides us with true understanding.

As *ambassadors* of Christ in the present age, we are duty bound to give to others that which God Himself stooped to freely give us. And what Has He given us? HIMSELF! In the person of Jesus Christ. We should give no less to others. We give Him to others through ourselves by sharing the gospel message with a lost world. How is this accomplished? Paul does not shrink from giving us the answer in straight terms. It requires opening our mouths. *“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”* **Romans 10:14**

It has perhaps become more challenging in the west than ever before to reach people right where they are, but this is the charge from our Lord to His Church. The apostle Paul also understood our cultural hardship some twenty centuries ago. *“I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”* **1Corinthians 9:22b-23** Nothing has changed but the date.

For those of us that find it difficult to share the gospel, there is good news. God is not only able to save us from eternal death; He is even able and willing to redeem our fears of sharing the gospel.

It's always a good time to share the hope of Jesus with a lost and hurting world, but the Easter season can present some especially good opportunities.

Here are just a few things to think about when sharing our faith.

1. **“Have an answer ready.”** Most of us are more than ready to discuss the Steelers' game on Monday morning. Why? Because we love the Steelers. They are meaningful to many of us. We don't hide our affections for our team. We wear them on our sleeve and on our bumper. As a believer, you love Jesus and He loves you. Have

confidence in this. There's no need to deny or hide anything. If you're asked about church, or your beliefs, or how you feel about something happening in the news, be straight with people...where the conversation goes from there is unknown, and that's OK. Maybe even Good. You may learn something about yourself in the conversation—perhaps where you are strong in the faith or perhaps areas where you may be lacking theological or biblical literacy. And you may learn that others share some of the same fears and misunderstandings about the gospel that you once held. And YOU are the perfect one to share with them precisely *because you understand where they are*. It may also become a great opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of *what* you believe and *why* you believe it.

2. “Be discerning of timing and atmosphere.” A casual chat in the kitchenette at work while grabbing coffee is a great time to bring up that you went to church over the weekend, or that you're heading to Bible study in the evening. Even during a casual night out, you might ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sensitivity of someone's needing to hear about the Christian faith, for you to offer advice or when to simply speak truth. Awareness is key here-- you don't want to start a conversation like this off on the wrong foot, so be conscious of how things are going and let the Holy Spirit direct you with sensitivity and discernment.

3. “Living in love. Working in excellence.” We've often heard it said that our actions speak louder than our words, and it's true that the way we live is a testimony to what we believe and who we follow. One of our best testimonies at work or out with friends is easy and effective: Love others, love God, work hard, and people tend to take note. There won't always be times to share your faith in direct conversation, which is exactly why our actions DO matter. This is especially true in challenging or competitive circumstances-- are we showing respect for others, integrity in our work, care for our neighbors, compassion for our coworkers, and love and grace through our behavior? That will speak volumes about our identity, and will reflect Christ to those around us, whether we are sharing your faith vocally or not.

Sharing our faith doesn't need to be a daunting endeavor-- it really can be as simple as acting thoughtfully and intentionally; and being open and available to when the Holy Spirit prompts you to speak.

As **1Peter 3:15** says, “*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that lies within you with gentleness and respect*”

May this be your mission, and may the Lord richly bless you as you step out in faith.

With much love,

Pastor George



The Mission Team will be collecting non perishable food items through the month of March for the Mt. Nebo Food Pantry. They are a local food pantry serving the needs of our community members. Please place items in the blue bin located at the back of the Sanctuary.

The last day of collection will be Sunday March 25th !

Thank you so much for supporting this collection !

Special dates

- World Day of Prayer, *March 2, 2018*
- Third Sunday in Lent, *March 4, 2018*
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 11, 2018*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 11, 2018*
- Fifth Sunday in Lent, *March 18, 2018*
- First day of spring, *March 20, 2018*
- Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 25, 2018*
- Holy Week, *March 25-31, 2018*
- Maundy Thursday, *March 29, 2018*
- Good Friday, *March 30, 2018*



Worship Service Greeters:

March 4 – Richard Frankenstein

March 11 – Rick and Linda Raraigh

March 18 – Ralph and Jill Whipple

March 25 – Christian, Amanda and

Benjamin Carver

EASTER FLOWER ORDERS

Orders are due on Palm Sunday (March 25th) to Laurie Dauer. If you would like your flower to be In Honor Of or In Memory Of A Loved One please note that when you order.

Lilies - \$8.50

Hyacinths - \$8.00 (blue only)

Tulips - \$8.00 (various colors)

Flowers will be from Soergels)

Ladies of FPBC

Just a reminder that FPBC will be hosting a

Ladies Spring Brunch on Saturday March 24th at 10:00 AM.

Be prepared for sumptuous offerings, live worship, as well as keynote speaker and author, Stacy Reaoch.

Stacy is a pastor's wife and mother of four. She and her husband, Ben, serve Three Rivers Grace Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is author of Wilderness Wanderings: Finding Contentment in the Desert Times of Life.

FYI Ladies : After Easter Amanda Palombo will be leading a Women's Bible Study "God Is Closer Than You Think".



10:30 a.m. Worship Service
“One Voice” here at 7:00 p.m.



Here at Franklin Park 7:00 p.m.



Good Friday Service at
Little Hill Church 7:00 p.m.



7:00 a.m. Service followed by
coffee hour and breakfast in the social room.



EASTER **Worship Celebration Service**
9:00 a.m.
with Children’s Resurrection Story and Egg Hunt

Our adult Sunday School Class is using the book **“Down By The Riverside”** which is the history and beliefs of the American Baptist Church. It is not too late to join this study. Just come to the Upper Room on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.



Attention children and parents – Get your baskets ready for our Easter Egg Hunt and Resurrection Story to be held on Easter Sunday morning during the Children’s Time in our Worship Service.

Easter Sausage orders are being taken now through March 18th. Forms are on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Sausage will be packed and ready for pick up on Thursday, March 22 after 6:30 p.m. Please be sure to mark on the form how many from your family will be attending the Easter Sunrise Breakfast. (\$3.75 per pound)

Little Hill United Methodist Church
has invited us to their
St. Patrick’s Day Corn Beef and Cabbage Dinner
2350 Magee Road Extension, Franklin Park
Saturday, March 17 from 4 – 7 p.m.
“Take Outs” Welcome
Adults - \$10.00 Children 5 – 12 \$5.00
Age 4 and under – FREE

Puzzle!

Search for these words that are all associated with the Lenten journey.

crown donkey hosanna penance Pilate sins
colt crucifixion forsaken kiss prayer suffer
confess death Gethsemane lots repent thorns
cross denial Golgotha palms silver vigil

E N A M E S H T E G R L W Y
C L E U X B M T H B U C W B
N R I K Y P A T E T I Y X Y
A V J G A L B R E Y A R P B
N G N L I S N L A I N E D X
E W M P R V R D H B N R D F
P S O G O L G O T H A B S C
D L N R O C O N F E S S I K
O T H T C P E K W U O U N D
M N S H N P W E D R H F S K
U N F O E T K Y C S G F O E
H E C R E V L I S W Q E C M
H V H N C X S O C C J R L O
F Q E S U D S H C A A Y M C
C R U C I F I X I O N S R V

- ^ **Bill Mooney** is at home and will be having no further treatment. He is resting comfortably and is in good spirits.
- ^ **Richard Frankenstein** asks for prayer for a friend who will be having knee replacement surgery in March.
- ^ Rich and Leslie Worst ask for prayer for **Luke Sciulli**, neighbor and friend of their son Justin. While serving in Afghanistan Luke suffered a spinal injury and is in the process of being transferred to a rehab center in Florida to recover from surgery.
- ^ **Doug Wolford**, brother in law of Hank and Angie Cochran, will be undergoing surgery on March 19 for an aneurysm.
- ^ **Ron Reibie**, brother of Nancy Hurley and a Franklin Park Fireman, is dealing with the last stages of mesothelioma.
- ^ **John Nichols**, Clay Nichol's dad, fell and tore his quadriceps tendon (thigh) and had it repaired on February 2. Please keep John, his wife Debbie and family in your prayers for successful and complete recovery.

- ^ **Prayer for all** the policeman and first responders who are in danger as they are out there doing their job. Especially Shawn McNaughton who is a member of this church family and works in Cecil Township.

- ❖ **Those Who Have Lost Loved Ones :** **The Merriman family** mourns the loss of Violet Wagner, 91 on February 3, 2018. She was the aunt of Paul and Ron Merriman, Patty Frankenstein and sister of Al Merriman.
- ❖ **Continued Concern For:** Jeremy Styron, Jean Willoughby, Bill Mooney, John Cress, Lauren Slick, Jen Ott, Cindy Foight's father Bill, Mary Glassburn, Katie Jones, Tim McCrory, Edith Yockel, Christians around the world who are being persecuted.
- ❖ **Those With Cancer:** Bill Smith, Kaitlyn Frances, , Matt O'Leary, Robert Stinebiser, Mary Ann Yoder.
- ❖ **Missionaries :** **Becky and Larry Stanton** (Hungary); **Peter and Sarah McCurdy** (Dominican Republic / Cuba); **Carol Sydnor** (Nepal); **Nora and Pieter Kalkman** (Prague, Czech Republic), **Brian and Lynette Smith & their boys** (Haiti). **Valerie and Aaron Osterbrock** (East Malaysia), **Ted Parks** (Kazakhstan).
- ❖ **In Service of Our Country :** **Major Doug Bauer**, his wife Hope and children, Walker & Mackenzie in North Dakota; **William G. Palombo** (Marines) and his wife **Sam** (Navy) are serving in D.C.

	<p>Dorothy McKinney Creek Meadows Personal Care 1630 Ellwood City Road Zelienople, PA. 16063</p>	<p>Albert (Buck) Bucklew Chicora Medical Center 160 Medical Center Road Chicora. PA. 16025-2612</p>	<p>Peggy Bucklew Chicora Medical Center 160 Medical Center Road Chicora, PA. 16025-2612</p>	
<p>Janet Tehois Broadmore Senior Living 3275 Washington Pike Apt. 221 Bridgeville, PA. 15017 412-559-2813</p>		<p>George Green Cranberry Place 5 St. Francis Way Room 122 Cranberry Township, PA. 16066</p>	<p>Mrs. Shirley Wright Passavant Retirement Community Trillium House Room 215 Zelienople, PA. 16063 Telephone 724-452-5400</p>	

Homebound -

Jane Nagel & Dale, Jr.
4015 Wick Place
Wexford, PA. 15090

Gloria Meinert
2915 Salisbury Court
Wexford, PA. 15090

Jean Downing

Bill and Eleanor Mooney
221 Chickasaw Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA. 15237

"One Voice" Christian Vocal Ensemble is returning to Franklin Park Baptist Church. The "One Voice" Christian Vocal Ensemble, directed by David F. Pressau, will be returning to present a concert for Lent at

***Franklin Park Baptist Church
on Sunday, March 25 at 7:00 P.M.***

The concert features the "One Voice" signature combination of Christian music and the Holy Word of God. "One Voice" is an inter-denominational Christian Vocal Ensemble located in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. The Ensemble was founded in September 1991 by its director, David F. Pressau, who is the Minister of Music at Grace Anglican Church, Mount Washington, Pennsylvania. The group's mission is to spread the word of God's love through a ministry of music.



Spoiler alert

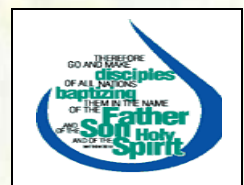
In these days of DVRs and streaming programming, it's common courtesy to warn people before discussing a show's plot or ending. How frustrating to inadvertently hear how a much-anticipated drama concludes!

Knowing how everything ends is a blessing for Christians, however. Jesus' victory over death gives us hope and confidence for this life – and for the life to come.

"The church does not pretend ... that it does not know what will happen with the crucified Jesus," writes Thomas Hopko in *The Orthodox Faith*. "It does not sorrow and mourn over the Lord as if the church itself were not the very creation which has been produced from his wounded side and from the depths of his tomb. All through [Holy Week] services, the victory of Christ is contemplated and the resurrection is proclaimed."

Indeed, Jesus' followers know how his story – and therefore our story – ends:
in Easter life!

Easter is just around the corner and is one of the times set aside for anyone who is considering being baptized to come forth and do so. If this is something on your heart please talk to Pastor George and he will be happy to help you make this outward profession of your faith.





- 5 Amanda Palombo
- 7 Cora Kearns (her 7th!)
- 8 Lois Gobrecht
- 9 Emilie Gildernew
- 11 JOHN & DEBBIE MOELLER
- 16 Bethany Kearns
- 24 Matthew McKenna (his 20th !)
- 24 MELISSA & STEVE MAXWELL
- 25 Christy Nichols
- 27 Marcy Hofstetter
- 27 Shawn McNaughton
- 27 Benjamin Cochran (his 16th !)
- 29 Shirley Wright
- 29 Luke Maxwell (his 7th !)



**MARCH 10 Turn your
Clocks ahead 1 hour**

**APRIL 14th is the date for the
upcoming Flea Market
and Bake Sale.**

**Get your treasurers and donations ready
for the big day and put them in the first
room on the right downstairs as you
come in under the big awning. For larger
items please contact Ralph for pick
arrangements. (412-719-9307) More
information will be coming out soon.**

**The Guiding Lights will be sorting and
preparing cards at their March meeting
to be sent to and used to benefit
Abused Children. New and Used
Christmas and Greeting cards are
needed. A basket in the church library
is provided for your contributions. No
envelopes are necessary.**

^^ ^^ Please be advised that dish cloths will
no longer be available for sale in the upstairs
kitchen. Thank you for your support over the
past years. ^^ ^^