



T H E M E S S E N G E R

March 2016

RiversEdge United Methodist Church

***** www.riversedgeumc.org *****

***** www.facebook.com/riversedgeumc.org *****

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As Pastor Kristi and I were walking our dog, Kristi lamented about how we celebrate Christmas so well, but we don't seem to give the same oomph to Easter. As we continued to talk, I thought of the Christmas song I loathe the most: "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." The specific verse for my vitriol was "he knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake!"

During the Ash Wednesday service, I did something different. Instead of placing a cross of ash on people's foreheads, I placed it on the palm of their hands. I then asked them to try to clean off the ash on their own. All tried, but no one completely succeeded. All needed the water of grace to wash their hands clean.

We pay lip service to Paul's admonition that all have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23), but we often try to live as if we have never sinned, as if we didn't need grace. There are many reasons for this. Shame is the primary reason. Guilt says "I've done something bad" while Shame says "I am bad." All of us have had someone shame us in our lives, which then makes it tougher to admit when we have fallen short. We don't want to think we "are bad" (shame) so we fail to admit when we've done wrong (guilt).

The song mentioned earlier doesn't help us at all. It is about shame. Be good or be bad. If you are bad, you won't get anything good when Santa comes.

How is this related to Easter? It's simple. It shouldn't be a surprise how Christians have morphed God into Santa. We sing many more Christmas carols than we do Easter hymns. We have had the shame of Santa reinforced over, and over, and over again. Then, when it matters most, when we herald the ultimate good news - Jesus has conquered the grave and forgave us of our sins - we can't accept it. Oh, we can accept it in our brains. It is good head knowledge that we get to go to heaven, but what about our hearts? What about our souls? Do we feel forgiven? We may have felt forgiven when we accepted Christ into our hearts the first time, but what about now? Now, after we've fallen short again, and again, and again? How about now? After having tasted grace, how can God forgive me for falling short again?

It's so much more comfortable with the head knowledge of the gospel. It keeps us from having to deal with our shame that has been painfully tied to our guilt. I put the ash on the palm instead of the forehead to force us to look at what we have done, or failed to do. We have to confront our guilt, especially during this time of Lent. If we don't know our sins, we can't lament them, repent, and turn back to God.

Here's the good news! Christ died for us not because he had to, but because he loves us. It runs so counter to the belief that we have to be good in order to get good things. Easter is the celebration of the reversal of this logic. We have received good things, because God is good. May the second half of Lent be a time of joy for all of us. We have another opportunity to change, to repent, to try again. May we let go of our shame in order to confess our guilt. May we approach again the throne of grace, knowing our God is ready to save and forgive.

Blessings,

Pastor Andy and Pastor Kristi

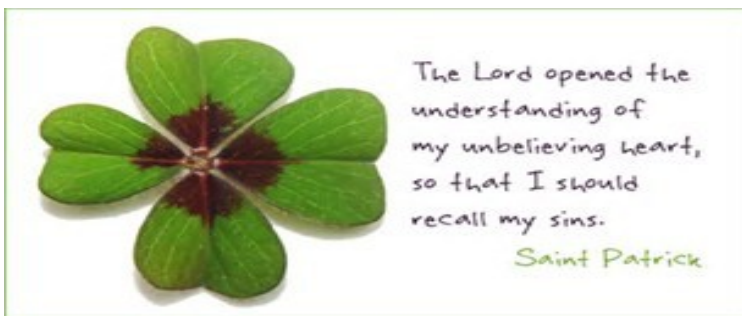


The **DIVORCE SUPPORT** is open for anyone who would like to join. This group is for anyone in midst of divorce or who are living life after divorce. We meet on **March 14 and 28 at 7:00 p.m.** If you are interested in joining us please contact Pastor Kristi Hopp via cell (309-573-3061) or e-mail (kristi_hopp@yahoo.com).



KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE will meet on the third Monday of the month (**March 21**) at 8:30 a.m. at Bob Evans in East Peoria.

Participants will need to bring a copy of the Upper Room devotional magazine and their bibles. The goal is to meet for an hour and a half (8:30-10 a.m.). If you have questions please contact Pastor Andy via e-mail (try2hopp@msn.com) or cell (309-883-1422).



Adult group **DIGGING DEEPER** will be on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. We will be digging deeper into the Bible passage we hear that morning, deeper into what it means to follow Jesus, deeper into how God is at work in our own lives and the world. Please come with questions and a learning spirit. Bring your favorite Bible, or use the ones we have. Let's learn together!

Often, what we believe the Bible teaches has been influenced by art, music and literature. **THE MINING AND BRICK-LAYING** Course is open to all adults who are willing to search for the deep truths of the Bible that have often been overlaid by images created by our churches and our culture. It is my hope that in the process we will come to know Christ more fully, who is our sure foundation. The group will meet **Thursday, March 10** at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Pastor Andy Hopp

OUR PRECIOUS LIFE

This is the monthly group for widows held at the church on the 1st and 3rd Monday's. Participants will need to bring their bibles. This month's meeting will be **March 7 and 21** (7:00-8:30 p.m.). If you have questions please contact Pastor Kristi via e-mail (kristi_hopp@yahoo.com) or cell (309-573-3061).



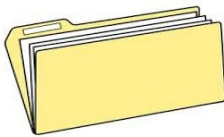
TAKE CARE OF MY CHURCH

If anyone has suggestions for the trustees to improve our church building and grounds or sees a need for items necessary for our comfort, please place your suggestions on a note card or paper and place it in the wooden church sitting on top of the piano in the 'Hospitality Hall'.



FUNERAL DINNERS

If you would like a phone call and/or email notification in order to donate food or help in set-up and clean-up when we are providing a funeral dinner, please let me know by calling me at 822-8770, emailing me at jude187@mchsi.com or contacting me in person. I would like to create a list of volunteers. I want to thank all of you who have provided food and help in the past.



UPDATING RECORDS

If you would like your name added to the birthday list, have had an email address change or would like your email address added to the any of the church email groups (1-receive announcements & newsletter, 2-receive prayer requests, 3-receive Pastor Andy's Thought for the week). See Judy, email at jude187@msn.com or call at 822-8770. Also, check with other family members.

Submitted by: Judy Schaer, Secretary



10:30 a.m. **WORSHIP SERVICE HELPERS** are still needed. There really is joy in serving! If you are interested in ushering, reading scripture, greeting or being an acolyte, please sign up on the Schedule Sheet in the back of the sanctuary.

We need an additional two to three adults who are willing to **TEACH THE JUNIOR HIGH CLASS** who come to Sunday School. This will allow our children to have lessons which are more tailored to their grade level. If you are interested, please contact Gale Allen, April Nauman, or Pastor Andy. Please help us teach the next generation about living our lives in the image of Jesus.

If you are interested in doing **SOMETHING SPECIAL** (music, reading poetry, inspiring pictures, life testimonies or other creative ways to worship God on Sunday, contact Judy (822-8770) or Pastor Andy (883-1422). Thanks to all of you who have assisted in the past.

The **PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM** is looking for singers and musicians. If you have any interest learning more, please contact Jarrod Doty at church, by email at jdoty69@gmail.com or by phone at 309.657.8904.

If you, or anyone you know, want to fill in on the **ORGAN** or **PIANO** occasionally, please text or call Carla Doty at 657-8903 or email at dougdoty@aol.com.

CHOIR—Anyone from 7th grade up to 100 years is invited to join us. If you think that you don't sing well enough and would like to try it anyway, please come. Other members will guide you along.

Also, we welcome special numbers: solos, duets (or any number of individuals), instrumentals and other forms of worship. Music plays a very important role in our worship experience. This is an opportunity to serve. You will feel blessed.

Submitted by: Judy Schaer, Worship Committee Chair



- ◆ Kristina Bencher's mom, Elyse, is finally home & comfortable after two weeks in the hospital with her broken knee cap. Please continue to pray for her recovery.
- ◆ Meagan Osenkarski announces her engagement.
- ◆ Joanne came home from the hospital.
- ◆ Rick Brooks' sister is doing much better and is home from the hospital.
- ◆ Renee Reiter is happy her brother and her nana will be celebrating their birthdays tomorrow.
- ◆ Jeanne Brennen is happy to have had a good and safe trip to Seattle to visit her in-laws.
- ◆ Janie's work friend, Chuck, is pleased the oncologist found nothing in the biopsy.
- ◆ Joanne Helms is doing well in her recovery.
- ◆ Stephen Arnold was accepted to SIUE School of Pharmacy.
- ◆ The Cottons were thankful for the use of the church for the baby shower
- ◆ Jerry Prather received good news from latest CT scan.
- ◆ Bryson came in 6th place in chess tournament.
- ◆ Randy Houston's celebration of life had spectacular weather.
- ◆ The Munsons were able to be in worship after multiple health issues in 2015.
- ◆ Joanne Helms was healed enough to join us.
- ◆ Daniel is home and had a job interview.
- ◆ Marvin Eckoff, Jeanne Brennan's father, is on new medication and it is helping.



Our **NEW WEBSITE** is live. Be sure to check it out at riversedgeumc.org. We intend to add the newsletter, calendar and announcements regularly. If you see pictures that you are in and would like them removed, please let Pastor Andy or Judy Schaer know. The committee wanted pictures to depict the life of our church.

Submitted by: Publicity Committee



John Schaer is still collecting **ALUMINUM CANS** to recycle. If you have any, you may leave them in the entry area of the river side of the church. You may call John at 822-8770 if you would like him to pick them up. Once he gets a truck load, he will take them to the recycle center. Not only will this help the earth, but the money will go to the Youth Group Program.



Our Missions Committee is asking us to collect "**Box Tops for Education**" for the Riverview Grade School. You may bring them any Sunday to church, and leave them in the yellow box. From time to time during the year we will take them to the school. Thank you for your prayers, and the many ways we support our local school!



Every time we have Food Pantry Day, we will have our **King's Closet** upstairs at the Annex. We have clothes, other small items, or produce for local people to take and use, if they need it. Bring items all month. It comes in free and goes out free, no charge. Anything left over will be taken to Good Will or South Side Missions.

CHURCH EQUIPMENT POLICY

Due to potential damage to our church equipment, our kitchen equipment needs to stay in our kitchen. The white tables can't leave the church property, and the white chairs can't leave the church building. We have metal chairs available. If you want to borrow them, please contact the church office.

Have you ever stopped to ponder
At the wonder of His ways?
Prayers unanswered, will so often
Prove His love in later days.
Yet we humans pout and worry,

Selfishly we ask our will ~
Thinking surely God's ignoring

Plans we want Him to fulfill.
As you come into His presence,
Though it seems your prayer's unheard;
Rest upon the Father's goodness,
In His love, and in His Word.
Claim His promises,
Know He's able,
Seek His heart in all you do,

Dream big dreams,
Asking His wisdom ~
You will find God's love is true!

[by: [Connie Hinnen Cook](mailto:cjcook@mynewroads.com) (cjcook@mynewroads.com) -
- from *Connie Hinnen Cook*]

"One Sunday morning a new pastor at a little country church asked an older man to say a prayer. The man started, "Dear Lord, I don't like buttermilk. I ain't real fond o' flour. Salt's difficult to taste when it's alone. Lard leaves a slick, nasty taste in my mouth, and sugar's a bit gritty on m'tongue." The pastor opened one eye and wondered, "Where in the world is he going with this?", but remained silent. The old man continued. "But, Lord, after You mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love them biscuits. Dear Lord, help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You're a-doin', that we need to wait and see what You are a-makin'. After You get through a-mixin' and a-bakin', it'll probably be somethin' even better than them biscuits. Amen and amen, Oh Lord."

(This just goes right along with Romans 8:28, doesn't it?)"

<http://funferall.com/2016/02/02/jokes-stuff-232016/> edited
by *Trudy Ripka*

HE IS RISEN UP

A bruised heel, a pierced side
On cruel cross my Savior died
He did not stay in death's cold grave
But risen up, He vict'ry gave
Though He was slain, and under laid
He rose again, our sin-debt paid
According to the Scriptures true
He giveth life free unto you
He is in Heav'n, our Christ and Lord
He giveth grace to trust His word
Though Satan toils us to accuse
If we trust God, we cannot lose

By: *Micah Betzner*

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



FOR SALE - Single owner tomb. Only used three days, and still has that new tomb smell. Reason for sale... resident was resurrected.



St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.

MARCH 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 4:30 p.m. Publicity 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	3 7 p.m. Ladies of Learning (LOL)	4	5
6	7 7 p.m. Trustees 7 p.m. Our Precious Life	8 7 p.m. Ad Council	9	10 7 p.m. MABL Bible Study	11 9-11 a.m. Food Pantry/ King's Closet	12
13	14 7 p.m. Divorce Support Group	15	16 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	17 7 p.m. Ladies of Learning (LOL)	18	19
20 Palm Sunday	21 8:30 a.m. Keeping the Flame Alive @ Bob Evan's 7 p.m. Our Precious Life	22	23	24 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday (tentative)	25 or Good Friday Service (tentative)	26
27 Easter 7:30 a.m. Service 8:30 a.m. Breakfast 9:15 a.m. School 10:30 a.m. Service	28 7 p.m. Divorce Support Group	29	30			



OUR MOTTO: "The Church That Cares"

OUR MISSION (our purpose): "Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ through our welcome, worship, and witness."

OUR VISION (what we hope to be): "We are a community of caring people striving to meet the spiritual and physical needs of our neighbors."

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Sunday 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

NURSERY:

Sunday 8-11:45 a.m.
(infant-kindergarten)

SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUPS : 9:15-10:15 a.m.

D.O.C.K. (Preschool – 5th grade)
Youth (grades 6 – 12)
Adults

YOUTH GROUPS: (6th – 12th grades)

Sunday Once a Month TBA
11:45 a.m. – Jr. High & Sr. High

CHOIR PRACTICE: (7th grade-Adult)

September through May
7 p.m. Wednesday evenings, as announced

O.U.R.: Outwardly Upwardly Righteously
(first Sunday of month)

LOL: Ladies of Learning

7 p.m. 1st & 3rd Thursdays

OUR PRECIOUS LIFE:

7 p.m. 1st & 3rd Monday

DIVORCE SUPPORT GROUP:

7 p.m. 2nd & 4th Mondays

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE:

8:30 a.m. 3rd Monday

