



Pastor's message

We are deep into Lent as you read this, preparing our hearts and our minds for the remembrance of Jesus' atoning death on the cross, and his victory over death in the resurrection. The high holy days are approaching—marked by the *Triduum*, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil. Three days of worship which culminate in Easter itself. In these days, we turn to God, aware of our need for forgiveness, and we are redeemed by the cross of Christ and made new through the power of the resurrection.

Meanwhile, outside the walls of Messiah, the world recognizes the resurrection as the coming of spring—the rebirth of flowers, the greening of lawns, the warm breezes and sunshine's return. The fecundity of nature is celebrated using the symbols of rabbits and eggs. Survival of another winter is marked with the outward signs of wearing new clothes and feasting on ham and chocolates. The extravagance of these practices announcing to all that the cold has been banished and the time of enforced scarcity and deprivation is over, No mention of an empty tomb, or a cross for that matter.

But I don't want to belittle the world's interpretation of Easter. It isn't Christian, or even religious for that matter, but it's not supposed to be. Instead, it's cross-cultural, non-religious, universal. Sure it's driven by consumerism, but you can't deny the fact that the message is being put out there successfully. And in a day and age in which more children could identify the meaning of the Golden Arches (McDonald's) than could identify the meaning of the cross (Jesus), perhaps we should be taking a moment to ask, "Why?"

Surely the church's interpretation of the Easter event is more life-changing and edifying and comforting than a box of Peeps and a chocolate bunny! So, why is Jesus' story of love, acceptance and grace secondary to the secular story of creating a need and supplying it for consumption?

Word of mouth.

Peter Cottontail didn't get where he is by keeping his cause and mission a secret. He exists to "personify" the Celebration of Spring that is the world's Easter. And his publicity machine is well-oiled and powerful. Everybody knows that the Easter Bunny delivers candy and colored eggs to children on a special day. Ask a random sampling of people to sing the opening lines to *Peter Cottontail* and you'll likely get the whole verse. Ask the same group to sing *Christ the Lord is Risen Today* and that title plus an Alleluia or two is what you'll get. People know the world's Easter story because the world has defined their need for it and told them how to get what they want. The world makes it easy to access through word of mouth.

Word of mouth is the primary vehicle for making the love of God both available *and desirable* for all. Jesus' ministry involved much more conversation than it did miracles. His story initially spread by oral tradition—people sharing what they had heard or seen. Luther called the church "the mouth house," where it was essential that God's word be read and examined and proclaimed.

In Our Prayers...

Al DeMello, Barbara Wilson (B. Wurst's Mom), **Janey Stokes** (rel of the Wurst's), **Perham Family, Ed Burgess** (friend of B. Wurst), **Melissa Salisbury** (rel. of the Salisbury's), **Terry Klecker** (rel. of the Costa's), **Sarah, Pat Sapienza** (Friend's of the Costa's), **Walter Schur** (Dave's Dad), **Pastor Tom, Mike** (friend of R. Bonfiglio), **Andy Wylie, Jim & Gen Retelle** (T. Retelle's parents), **Marie Brundage** (R. Brundage's Mom), **Margie Rowe, Sue Strock** (R. Ball's sister), **Frank Genna** (friend of the Ensinger's), **Judy Johnson, Becky Herlihy** (friend of the Davison's), **Barbara Bonfiglio** (Bob's Mom), **Our military personnel, Peter Chuchul, Winn Goulet** (friend of L. Teichmann), **Annemarie Chuchul, Taylor Cordts, Richard Ball, Wendy Gordon, Alan Robinson** (friend of D. Jahns), **Art Palmer, Bill Wurst, Rebecca Peterson, Janell** (Doreen Schneller's sister).

Upcoming at worship

Wednesday nights (3/30, 4/6, 13) – Lenten Soup Supper and Worship. Supper begins at 6 pm and goes to 6:50. Worship begins at 7. *By Faith* is the topic for the series.

Palm Sunday – Procession with palms directly before 10:30 am worship.

Maundy Thursday – Morning worship 11 am, Evening worship 7 pm.

Good Friday – Worship at 12 noon and 7 pm.

Saturday in Holy Week – The Easter Vigil at 7 pm.

Easter Morning –

10:30 am Festival Worship. An all out celebration of the resurrection and the new life it brings to us. A brass quartet accompanies our singing as we give praise to the God of grace and love!

Ministers, All of the people at Messiah

*Pastoral Care, Reverend Tom Teichmann
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Congregation President, Deanna Cordts

Music Director, Linnea Micciulla

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*Communications Team,
All of the people of God at Messiah*

Editor, Lisa Teichmann

Wanted: A coordinator is needed to get the Easter Brunch organized. This involves making announcements, doing a sign-up sheet, supervising set up and cleanup, providing for the purchase of needed foods and paper goods. There will be plenty of helpers—we just need someone who will figure out what needs doing and who will do it. Is that you, or you and your spouse or friend? See Pastor or Deanna Cordts.

Easter Brunch - Be sure to sign up for this annual feast, indicating the number in your party, how you can help, and what you will bring to share.

Easter Flowers – A selection of plants can be bought from our neighbor, Amherst Garden Center. You can order them by indicating your choices on the ordering poster. Payment can be made by dropping a check for the total in the offering basket (indicate that it is for Easter flowers). See Marge for other details.



Today, however, our word of mouth is almost non-existent. This is not from shyness, or due to staying within one's societal bounds. It's because we have become ill-equipped to define Jesus in modern parlance, to clearly state God's intentions, and to answer compellingly why people should "buy" into our interpretation of the resurrection. We must create (or more accurately "re-create") the need, the desire, the availability of our own story as believers. The questions we need to ask ourselves are at once basic and advanced...

- What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what?
- Who is Jesus?
- How does the crucifixion reconcile us with God?
- What does Jesus' resurrection mean for us?
- Why should anyone be interested in this?

If you were thinking I was going to attempt to discuss all those in this one newsletter article, I'm sorry. This essay is meant to stir things up question-wise, rather than answer everything and deliver it to you neatly wrapped. I will, however, make a start on one of them.

The resurrection. Is it true—did it happen? Why did it happen? What possible connection or correlation does it have to life in the 21st century—your life, or that of someone in the world? Here the worldly and churchly run very close together. We've already heard that the world views the resurrection through the lens of the cycle of nature. Thus resurrection is the reawakening and reanimation of the natural order after the deathly slumber of near annihilation in winter's icy embrace.

Quite similarly, for us, resurrection identifies the maker of all things as the one of second chances—renewal and rebirth cascading through our lives in a never ending waterfall of possibility and opportunity. It also identifies *us* as worthy of such Godly compassion by means of the relationship God has with Jesus, a human being. More than just a man who died and came back to life, the resurrection is a sign of the future, a foretaste of the feast to come, the seal on the promise of something beyond death, *and* even more importantly, it is an operational metaphor for the newness of life experienced by those who have been gathered into the extended family of God. Even for those who don't believe in its literal truth, the resurrection can still be an encouraging story of faith and hope in a future world marked by selflessness and love for each other.

With the resurrection God begins the re-creation of his world. We have been tapped as co-creators. So, step aside Peter Cottontail, we have more to proclaim than egg salad for lunch the next three weeks. We proclaim a new and better way to live. We proclaim a future with God that outlasts even death. And we proclaim the love of God that includes you and all people—believers and unbelievers. As Jesus lives to God, so are we made alive in Christ.

Happy Resurrection!

Pastor

Spring Clean-up!

After a long hard winter, there's plenty to clean up outside the church this spring. Jean has got a list and she's checking it twice, and there's sure to be a job on it for you! The plan is to work outside on the 9th of April beginning at about 8 am. Plans may change though, so check with Jean about date, time, tools needed.



Anne Marie House & SHARE Happenings

ANNE MARIE HOUSE NEWS:

As we come off of our week of hosting with the Congregational Church of Amherst I always have to pause and thank God for our volunteers and how dedicated you all remain. Thank you again! This ministry means a lot to many people, especially the families who call AMH "home for now." We welcomed a new family into the house on Monday, a mom and her 2 year old daughter.

At AMH the staff and volunteers do more than just create a 'normal' life for families experiencing homelessness. At AMH families get a brand new start in life because they live in a safe and secure home where they get wholesome meals and with individual guidance to make a plan to overcome the barriers they face. These individual plans may include education, purchasing a car, taking care of debt, legal entanglements and health issues. We are able to do this through a network of more than 1000 trained volunteers!

Some interesting STATISTICS: In 2010, 13 families came through (18 adults, 23 children). This may not sound like much, but for these 13 families it meant the world. 86% of those leaving attained housing independence. 7,808 bed nights of shelter provided; 23,772 meals provided; 19,059 volunteer hours provided; and 46% of AMH population is racially and culturally diverse.

SHARE NEWS:

For the month of April, Messiah members are asked to contribute juice, jelly, and canned fruit. They are doing a rotational between churches and other organizations.

During the month of February there were 143 household appointments. This amounted to 425 individuals. There were 9 new households, 21 emergency appointments, which included 54 individuals.

There will be a volunteer refresher course given by June St Lawrence sometime in May. It will be on a Sunday directly after worship service. We all need to be refreshed at some point in time.

Also, every 4th Tuesday from 7-8:30 there is a training for anyone interested in volunteering. This is at the Congregational Church in Amherst. There is training at Grace Lutheran in Nashua, on Spit Brook Rd (not too far) the 1st Wed of the month, same time. No reservation required-just show up. Thank you! Marge

Messiah Lutheran Church

Income and Expense Summary (through February 2011)

	Actual	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Total Income	\$ 31,908	35,623	-3,715
Total Expense	\$ 32,671	33,603	-932
Net Income	\$ -763	2,020	-2,783

Note - Full details of each Monthly Treasurer's Report can be found on the hallway bulletin board next to the kitchen entrance.

Blood Drive April 16th

9am—2pm at Messiah
Please come and donate if you are able. You can make an appointment to donate at <https://www.givelife.org> (sponsor code 7545) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. However, appointments are not necessary, you can just show up, but be sure to have a photo ID. Please also see sign-up sheet on narthex table for volunteers, chili makers, and cookie bakers. Thanks!

Senior High Youth News

Spring is here and the flamingos are flying. Donate flamingos to decorate your friend's lawns. Cost is \$1 per flamingo and the youth group will go and placed them silently in the night at the house of your choice. Imagine the joy when your friends wake up to a flock of flamingos. Pink order forms are in the bulletin each week. Place your order soon before they fly away back home. Proceeds go toward our trip to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in July 2012.

Easter weekend, April 22-24 is a big youth event consisting of a Lock In and service projects. Come to Good Friday service, then stay overnight at the church. We'll plan the Saturday Vigil service, have devotions, stuff Easter eggs, and have a lot of fun. On Saturday, we will perform service projects, such as cleaning up the highway and doing yard work. The service projects will finish around 3:00, when we can go home, get some rest, and clean up. Return to church on Saturday evening for the Easter Vigil service. Many of us choose to fast beginning Friday night (this is optional however and some food will be provided for those who need / want to eat). After the Easter Vigil service we'll head out to dinner to break the fast.

On Friday, April 29 (the Friday after Easter) we have another Lock In. This one is at Hampshire Hills fitness club in Milford. It runs from 8:00 Friday night to 7:00 Saturday morning. Captive Free, featuring our own Ryan Bonfiglio, will be providing music. After the concert, we are able to use the facilities at Hampshire Hills for the rest of the night. Cost is \$35. Please see Kenneth Duesing for registration forms.

Don't forget Box City

For 6th-12th graders to be held April 9th-10th. It will begin at 8:30 pm and end 7:30 am. This is both enlightening and fun for the youth. All who have been through it have truly enjoyed the experience. The place: Temple Beth Abraham, Raymond St, Nashua. Get your sponsor sheet from Ken Duesing or Pastor Tom and begin getting sponsors.

Marge Ball will personally sponsor anyone who participates for \$10 each.

Gearing up for Messiah's 25th Anniversary Celebration!

Remember life before digital photo's? Well, **have you started your spring cleaning?** Have you come across any **Messiah photo's** that you would like to add to our digital frame located at the secretary's window? Please take a look around and bring them in as it is fun reminiscing about our 25 years as Messiah Lutheran Church!! If they are in an envelope with your name on it they will be returned to you as soon as they are scanned in. So start looking! Thanks Joanne

Spring Finally Sprung!

Well it finally looks like spring is here. The snow piles are shrinking, robins are hopping about, and the first daffodil can't be too far behind.

It's hard to believe we had all that snow and ice this year, and had to cancel church once, and many of us missed worship a couple of times due to bad weather.

Of course we still had to pay for the heat. So please do your best to catch up with your offerings so that we can keep current with our obligations. Thanks.

CROP Walk 2011 Update and Details

Spring is coming, and that means the annual Souhegan Valley Interfaith CROP Walk is just around the corner; mark your calendars for Sunday, May 15th. Last year's CROP Walk raised over \$39,000, with 374 Walkers, from age 5-86 participating. The Chair of the upcoming 22nd CROP Walk is Fr. Don Keegan, Pastor of St. Patrick Church in Milford. The goal of 400 Walkers for this year has been set by the CROP Walk Organizing Committee and you can be part of it!

Look for the CROP Walk volunteer for sign-up details for individuals and families after worship services this month. Take a Sponsor Form and ask your relatives, friends and neighbors to sponsor you or join you in walking. You can also create your own on-line pledge page at www.cropwalk.org to invite your out-of-town friends to support you via the internet. The "full Walk" is 10 km in length (about 6.2 miles); a shorter loop of about 1.8 miles is also provided for those of us who cannot do the full Walk. Water Stops are along the way and refreshments await at St. Patrick when you return. All ages, as well as strollers and dogs, are welcome. There are prizes for Walkers raising the most in sponsor donations: in various age groups for youth, for adults, and for families raising donations together, as well as prizes for the youngest and oldest Walker, the largest family, best sign carried on the Walk, and the best banner at the Start. Prizes are awarded at the "Celebration Party" Thursday evening, May 19th.

CROP, an acronym for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty, is the community appeals program of Church World Service (CWS). Last year, 1,599 CROP Walks were held across the U.S. and abroad. The money raised goes for emergency relief and basic development in over 80 countries through CWS, or one of its USAID partner agencies. These agencies, such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), American Jewish JDC, Habitat International, CARE and many others, represent major faith-based and secular organizations doing life-saving and life-enhancing work. Twenty-five percent of money raised is set aside for local community programs, in our case, to support SHARE in Milford and Open Cupboard Pantry in Wilton.

Registration on Walk Day, May 15th, starts at 1:15 at St. Patrick's Church in Milford, and the Walk steps out, following opening exercises, at 2 PM. To save time at Registration, people are encouraged to Pre-Register by going to the website www.svnhcropwalk.org. There you will also find information for Walkers, links to donate directly to our Walk, and a "Contact Us" spot for questions.

In a time when human suffering around the world and at home is ever more present to us, we can walk in support of those who struggle and those who *must* walk. We can know that when we walk together, we demonstrate concern and action. And by asking friends, family, and co-workers to be sponsors, we can generate resources to help build a better world and make a difference!

A Note from the Council President:

Council talked about getting the Congregational Care committee up and going again. This would include working on a new call chain for all members.

The property committee has an ongoing list of projects/needs. If anyone is interested in helping out Jean Pituck is the person to contact!

Council will be completing a member roster review. This will help with quorum issues at congregational meetings and will help to make sure that we are staying in contact with members.

The Council will continue to review visioning materials with the intent on meeting with members to update our congregations vision documents. This was last done about 5 years ago.

Plans for our 25th anniversary celebration and activities is underway. More to follow from this committee in the next newsletter including plans for a float in the Amherst 4th of July parade!

There are plans for a council retreat during the month of May as well.

Many opportunities for fellowship, service and worship will be coming up. I encourage everyone to get involved with **our church community!** This is an exciting year... a continued celebration of our faith life together as a church but also as an active group in our community. MLC gives us the opportunity to grow as individuals, and collectively as a faith family! Let's get to know each other better through our work in Christ!

Blessings! - Deanna



Lent and Our Service to LSS

At our annual meeting in January, the treasurer's report verified that, in spite of the financial challenges of recent years, our church has continued to be quite generous in benevolence thanks to various campaigns of creative giving. Hurray for Messiah for consistently keeping the needs of others a priority, even in the face of other challenges we have lived. This is what God calls us to do, and our church puts it into action.

That said, we recently received an e-mail appeal from Lutheran Social Services about their Services for New Americans program. LSS offers refugees, immigrants, and asylees a range of support services to help new arrivals get on their feet and become contributing members of the community. The extreme limitations of federal funding severely reduce what LSS can provide after the first three months of service to these new Americans. LSS has outlined several ways in which we can provide support, and we at Messiah have chosen one of them as our Lenten service project: Material support.

Beginning the 1st of March and continuing through to Easter, we will be gathering basic household goods for the New Americans program. By "basic" we mean we will be gathering items, aside from furniture, that are needed in a new household. More specifically, at this time **we would like to gather bed linens (any size), towels, dishware, cookware, and kitchen utensils.** These are items that LSS has an ongoing need for and require little storage space before distribution. Many of us have extras of these items thanks to college students and aging parents. Why not find a new home for them and provide a much-needed service at the same time?

So, you will find the ever-present box in the narthex, this time labeled "LSS New Americans", for our gathering of goods to aid those in need. Please filter through what you have at home and consider donating any of the above-mentioned items, cleaned and gently used. As the box fills up, we will arrange drop-off or pick-up with LSS. Shall we see how many times we are able to fill it before Easter?

Please consider this alternative means of giving during this Lenten season. If you would like more information about the "New Americans" program, LSS has provided us with brochures describing the program. They are on the table in front of the office window in the church narthex. If you have other questions, please call Trudi Costa at 672-8719 or see Pastor Tom. Thank you and God bless you.

Service Committee,
Trudi Costa, Donna Erhardt,
Aria Neukam, and Stephanie Vore-Apple

Coming to Adult Forum in May

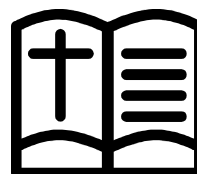
God's Own People: A Study in 1 Peter

You came up short against the Law, but instead of facing God's wrath, you fell into God's arms of mercy and grace. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you came to believe that God's son, Jesus, died on the cross for your sin and was raised from the dead as the first fruit of a new creation. You were baptized—chosen to be a child of God, called to follow Jesus as an example of the way God would have us interact with each other. You have found your new life to be fulfilling, but somewhat difficult, seeing that much of what Jesus modeled flies in the face of what the world tells us. Sometimes, the world pushes back against the coming kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed. Sometimes we suffer for our beliefs and actions in Jesus' name. How can one deal with such negativity without losing faith?

The first letter of Peter provides an answer to that question. It reminds those who would follow Jesus that they are born anew into a wonderful inheritance—they are God's own people: chosen, redeemed, and called. And, although this doesn't guarantee that their faith won't be tested, or that they themselves won't suffer for it, 1st Peter does assure its readers that their relationship with God is guaranteed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the end, we won't be put to shame. In the meantime, we cast our burdens on Christ, who loves us beyond measure! (from *God's Own People* c. 2011 AF)

Pastor Tom will lead the Forum through five sessions of study, using the bible study materials he wrote for Augsburg Fortress. They feature the second reading from each of the first five Sundays following Easter. The worship themes and sermons will also be based on these readings from 1 Peter.

You are encouraged to take time to read 1 Peter over the Easter holiday (it's brief).



Messiah's Mission and Vision Statements

We believe in Jesus Christ, who died and was raised for us. Through Baptism we are called to grow in Christ and to proclaim him in word and deed. We gather in worship to celebrate the promise of God's grace, love and forgiveness. In the power of the Holy Spirit we use the gifts that God has given us for the sake of each other, our communities and the world. Messiah's Vision is to invite people to faith, to care for each other with love, to help one another grow in faith, and to share our gifts with others.

Deadline for the newsletter is the 20th of each month.
Please submit articles to news@messiahnh.org

Help Wanted

Please sign up to bring bread, soup or beverages for our Wednesday evening suppers.

Also sign up for worship assistant duties for Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Easter Brunch Coordinator—see story on page 2.

Come Share the Spirit!



Sunday School 9:30 am
Worship Service 10:30 am

Messiah Lutheran Church is located at 303 Rt.101E in Amherst 1/2 mile east of the shops of "Salzburg Square". Contact the church by calling 603-673-2011 or visit us online at <http://www.messiahnh.org>



**Messiah Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 488
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