

# Crosscurrents

May 2011



Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church | 5299 Jamesville Road | DeWitt, NY | 13214 | 315.446.0960 | [www.phpchurch.org](http://www.phpchurch.org)

## From Pastor Pete

*At our Sunday morning forum on Palm Sunday a few of us were sharing memorable quotes about the resurrection of Jesus from death. I remembered a line from the following piece by Clarence Jordan, "Some Thoughts on the Resurrection of Jesus." This impacted me greatly when I first read it nearly 40 years ago (!) – and I'd like to share it with you here in its entirety. While it may not say everything you might want such a reflection to say, to my mind it says what at least must be said.*



“If we see in the resurrection of Jesus, the new proof of man’s immortality, we will miss the profound meaning and the secret of its tremendous power. For God did not interrupt the orderly process of nature and raise his Son from the grave to convince a few skeptics that they really will live again in spite of their unbelief. By and large, man’s belief in his own immortality has been prevalent and persistent, both inside and outside Christianity. Such drastic “proof” then, for a commonly accepted belief simply was not, and is not now, needed. Easter’s meaning lies deeper than this.

By raising Jesus from the dead, God refused to keep him on the other side of the grave. He gave him back to the world. He simply would not take “No” for an answer. His love would let Him neither leave nor forsake us. He raised Jesus, not as an invitation to come to heaven when we die, but as a declaration that he himself has now established permanent residence on earth. The resurrection places Jesus on this side of the grave, here and now, in the midst of this life. He is not standing on the shore of eternity beckoning us to join him there; He is standing beside us strengthening our life. The good news of the resurrection is not that we should die and go home with Him, but that He is risen and comes home with us. It is not that life is something which man endures but that which God endows.

So on the morning of the resurrection God put life in the present tense, not in the future. He gave us not a promise but a Presence, not hope for the future but power for the present; not as assurance that we shall live someday, but that he is risen today. Jesus’ resurrection is not to convince the incredulous, nor to demean the fearful, but to enkindle the believer.

When he arose from the dead, he planted himself eternally in the midst of our present affairs, and made it impossible for us to substitute heaven’s rewards for earth’s demands. For why should we wish to live with Him forever if we have no desire to live for Him through the flickering moments of this life? And why do we think we will love Him hereafter if we have not loved Him here? Does death have the power to transform pleasure-seeking, murderous men into living angels? If so, then death, not God, is our deliverer. The grave is our salvation. The resurrection of Jesus, then, offers no glittering crown in heaven but a compelling confrontation now. He meets us where we are.

This is incredibly joyful news to those who love Him. It is horribly terrifying news to those that hate Him.

The proof that God raised Jesus from the dead is not the empty tomb, but the full hearts of his transformed disciples; the crowing evidence that He lives is not a vacant grave but a spirit-filled fellowship; not a rolled away stone but a carried away church. We are the evidence. Look at what he has done to us and is doing through us!”

*Peter*

## **The Church at Worship May 2011**

*Worship begins Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. All who are interested are invited to gather in the Conference Room at 9:20 a.m. to pray for our church and pastor as we worship together.*

### **May 1**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

Rev. Howard Rose preaching

### **May 8**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

Luke 24:13-35

“Burning Hearts”

### **May 15**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Annual Meeting/Worship

Sacrament of Communion

Ordination and Installation of

Officers

*We lift up and celebrate our ministry over the past year as part of our worship.*

### **May 22**

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Children’s Service and Teacher Recognition

*Potluck picnic follows worship.*

### **May 29**

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

John 14:15-21

“Keeping Love”

## **Leadership Day Saturday, May 7 8:30-12:00**

Don’t forget our Leadership Day gathering on Saturday morning, May 7. Our Living the Mission Task Force, along with Pastor Pete and our consultant Mark Betley will lead the leaders in helping set the course for a future that is faithful to our mission as a congregation and as disciples of Jesus Christ. It’s going to be a great morning! All who provide for the ministry at Pebble Hill are encouraged to come. Let the church office know if you’re coming, and if you need child care.

## **Grounds/Garden Cleanup, Sat. May 21 9:00-12:00**

The Property Committee and the Community Garden Team are hosting an outdoor clean-up day at the church on Saturday, May 21. There will a list of outdoor chores, and men and boys of the church are especially invited to help ready the gardens for tilling and planting. We’re hoping to expand our community garden part of the project this year, with men and boys of the church taking the lead. We can grow lots more food for hungry people if we have more help! Come any time that morning. There will be coffee, juice and goodies available.  
April 25-27.

## **Pebble Hill Gardens Meeting – May 18**

There will be a gardens planning meeting on Wednesday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the church. There will be room this season for individual plots to rent, and we hope to expand our community garden area to grow vegetables for the Jamesville Food Pantry as well as the New Jerusalem Food Pantry. If you have questions, or would like to help, contact Marilyn Cornell, Pebble Hill Gardens Team Coordinator.

## **Worship Planning Team**

The Worship Committee would like to invite more people to be part of our worship planning at Pebble Hill. Rather than being a permanent member of the committee, maybe you’d like to help for a season. The next meeting of the committee is on Tuesday, May 24 at 7:00 p.m. We’ll be planning for our worship from September until Advent. Our worship is organized around the weekly lectionary readings, and themes are coordinated in so far as possible with the children’s educational curriculum. Your gifts for participation in leading worship, helping with chancel and sanctuary decor, sharing gifts of music and other arts, are all welcome. If you have questions, or would like to be part of a creative worship team, please contact Pastor Pete or Carolyn Layburn, Worship Committee chairperson.

## **Leadership Day Gathering – Saturday, May 7**

For the past year a group of Pebble Hill members, at the direction of Session, has been meeting to consider the changes before us as a church community, and how to address them in an authentic way as we move into the future. This group came to be called the “Living the Mission” task force. Tim Frazee presented a power point report on this work at our annual meeting on February 6. Other members of the task force are Bill Byrne, Kathy Herron, Kathy Fanella, Amy VanKirk, Mary Elizabeth Haas, and Pastor Pete. Darlene Vinyard, Nick Abu-Absi and Janet Rider were also part of the group in its first few months.

We’ve been working with consultant Mark Betley, who has encouraged us to focus on our current statement of mission as a congregation, *“To love and serve God and neighbor with open hearts, open hands, and open minds,”* and how we do, don’t, and might live it out more explicitly in our ministry together and our individual lives. The group has been working closely with Mark in going through a process that has been revealing, challenging, and exciting. Now we are ready to “take it out” to the congregation – and we want to start with the leadership of the church – everyone who is involved in actually doing the ministry – teachers, caregivers, musicians, nursery care providers, Bible study leaders, those who offer hospitality, welcome visitors, recruit ushers or lay readers, serve as elders and deacons, take care of the facilities, etc. You are those who provide the ministry of our church.

A letter of invitation was sent out to all ministry providers to gather on Saturday, May 7 from 8:30 (gathering and refreshments) until 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Mark Betley will be with us, and he, along with the Living the Mission task force, will facilitate our time together. We hope as many as possible will be able to gather for this wonderful continuing education opportunity, and help set the course for a future that is faithful to our mission as a congregation and as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **Summer Worship Music**

With summer approaching, our wonderful choir takes a hiatus, but the ministry of music goes on! We’d like to have special music provided each Sunday this summer to enhance our worship. Either vocal or instrumental, alone or in groups – if you’d like to provide music for worship this summer, contact Pastor Pete.



## **Adult Education in May**

**May 1** – Rev. Howard Rose, guest preacher on May 1, will also lead a forum discussion on “Quantum Theology,” based on a book of the same title by Irish priest Diarmuid O’nurchu. The discussion will explore his vision of the intersection between quantum physics and spirituality.

**May 8 & 15** – Dan Radcliffe – “Worship as Evangelism”

**May 22** – All-church picnic following Teacher Recognition and Children’s Worship Sunday. No adult education.

**May 29** – Memorial Day weekend. No adult education.

**June 5** – Marilyn Cornell will share her recent experiences on a mission trip to Haiti, where she worked with teachers and young students in a school in the rural northern part of the country.

**June 12** – Pastor Pete will lead a discussion on “Christian Practices.” What are some of the most important activities that compose a Christian life? How can our Christian faith and tradition help us to practice our faith in daily life? What are some practical ways of being Christian?

## **Spring Salad Luncheon**

This event for all the women in our church and their friends is scheduled on May 18th (Wednesday) at 12:00 noon followed by an interesting talk on “Birds of the Bible” by Mrs. Lois Spitzer who has been a bird-watcher since 1987 and a member of the Bible and Book Club for over 25 years.

For those who are in any of our women circles and are interested in this luncheon, please sign up with your circle leaders and bring salads to share. Those who do not plan to bring salads can contribute \$5.00 instead. Women who do not belong to a circle, may sign up with the event organizer, Deborah Mueller through email, [deborahypwong@twcnny.rr.com](mailto:deborahypwong@twcnny.rr.com) or call her at 449-2578. It is important to sign up because it helps volunteers do the setup.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the luncheon which provides an opportunity to know each other better and share the fellowship. Thank you for your attention and support.

—*The Pebble Hill Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team*



## **Meditation on Psalm 23**

*By Bill Byrne*

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

First things first: The Lord is God, and I am like a sheep. There is only one God, but many of us sheep. We are all led by God to what is best for us, but we do not always see that. We scatter in different directions, looking for excitement and the greener grass on the other side of the fence. Instead of following the shepherd, we follow each other, seeking pleasure, new experiences. We do what we think will make us feel good. We do not see, nor are we willing to acknowledge, that everything we need has already been provided for us.

**He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.**

Why does God have to tell us where and when to rest? Shouldn't our need for rest, in the safe place that he has provided for us, be obvious to us? Why is it that we don't act in our own best interest? The shepherd makes sure that we have still water to drink, when we need it. He provides for all that we truly need. Why do we fail to see this?

**He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

In my sadness, He brings me joy. In my despair, He shows me hope. He opens up new directions for me to go when I find myself lost, overwhelmed, inadequate, and frustrated. We are His creatures; He has given us His rules and told us His expectations. He has shown us the way for us to participate in the glory of His creation.

**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**

You have given us the ability to recognize many of the dangers we face in life. You have shown us that you will always be with us. In your death and resurrection, we know that we are forgiven and redeemed. As we recognize the shepherd by his rod and staff, we recognize your love for us in the sacrifice of your Son.

**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**

Despite all my faults and shortcomings, you bless me as would be done by the host of a banquet where all are accepted and none are rejected. You honor me as a victor despite all the ways I have failed you. You have provided for me in abundance. What more can I possibly ask for?

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Your favor has never been withdrawn from us. Your care has been constant and loving. Your Son has prepared a place for us in your eternal house. I live in gratitude and hope, in the confidence of your guidance, protection, and love.

## Community Garden Project

It's April 21<sup>st</sup> and I can't believe it is snowing outside. O.K., yes I can it's CNY and we have had an incredibly long winter this year. I bet you're thinking as I have: will this ever end? Well, hope springs eternal and I believe that summer IS right around the corner. So is our Community Garden Project. In fact, the garden is sitting and waiting for US to get it going this year.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. there will be a meeting for all interested folks (held in the Fellowship area). At that time, I will share my ideas for this year's plantings and the prep work that needs to be done to make our crop a success. A work day is being planned for May 21<sup>st</sup>. On that day the garden will need to be readied for the tilling that will have to take place the following week. In the mean time, I am contacting the previous years' gardeners to reserve their areas.

I am sure there will be available plots for rent. Please let folks know, in the community, that they may contact me at 662-3675 or [garden50@frontiernet.net](mailto:garden50@frontiernet.net) if they desire to rent a plot.

In order to make this a "fruitful" project for the community and local food pantries, we will need open hands and open hearts to help.

Thank you,

*Marilyn Cornell, Garden coordinator*





## **Easter Egg Hunt**

Wow! This year we welcomed 41 infants, toddlers, kids, and teens to the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Family Ministries Easter Egg Hunt! Although the weather did not cooperate, our indoor hunt resulted in kids playing and interacting together more closely, and parents had a chance to meet and talk. About half of the kids were from our own families, but friends, Stay'n Play members, and locals who had seen the sign made up the other half.

Thank you to everyone for the support to make this community event happen!



## **Sunrise Service**

He is Alive! We shared the good news as we recalled the events of Holy Week through Bible readings and prayers from the children's Lenten devotional at the Easter Sunrise service. Children and adults alike participated in the readings and sang the closing song together. As the service drew to a close, all were invited to add flowers to the stark grape vine cross. What a beautiful way to celebrate Easter!



## **Lenten Discovery**

Thank you to everyone who contributed and participated this year in making the Wednesday night Lenten Discovery series another success. Each of the five nights we enjoyed yummy dinners, fellowship time (and playtime for the kids), intergenerational worship, and various workshops.

Kids and teens completed the LEGO City of Jerusalem project, learned to read music and rehearsed hand chimes for use in worship, and participated in banner creation.

While some adults enjoyed LEGOs, chimes, and banner projects with all ages, others enjoyed Pastor Pete's study series, "The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance."

A big thank-you to Jean Soper for coordinating the meals and clean up, and to Darlene Vinyard and her daughter Julia for the design and extensive construction work on the two new worship banners.

## Lent in Children's Worship

This year our Lenten education program for children and adults followed the events of Holy Week. This theme echoed from the children's take home devotional sticker project, to the games played in PreK/K, to the LEGO Jerusalem project, to Dan Radcliffe's adult education series from the *Being Reformed* series, to the *Lenten Discovery* program, and finally to the Sunrise service worship.

Pictures on the walls in PreK/K and Children's Worship followed the story with a verse for each element (you can view these on the bulletin board in the hallway). A worship ritual used each week in both age groups allowed children to remember the images, making the shape of a cross out of small images that reminded children of each element of the story: the palms, two hearts to remember the great commandment, a jar of oil for anointing Jesus, chalice and bread for the last supper, praying hands for the Garden of Gethsemane, a crown of thorns for Jesus' suffering, and finally a bouquet of lilies for the resurrection.

Our program began with a map of Jerusalem, and then children located and colored in various places important to the coming stories. Over the next weeks, children, teens and adults built the LEGO city of Jerusalem. On Palm Sunday, we gathered around the completed model and used a worship liturgy from our curriculum to retell the whole story, moving our LEGO figures around the city to illustrate the verses the children read and singing responses. It was truly a worship experience, with a dozen or more children surrounding the model and each taking turns as we read the 26 passages, singing "*Lamb of God*" and "*Jesus, Remember Me*" as responses between sections.

I'd like to thank the parents who helped the kids complete the devotional work at home during the week. It was clear that the kids who followed the readings and used the stickers at home were the most engaged in the story on Sunday.





# Laughing Matters

## Kids' Perspectives

A Sunday School teacher asked her class, “Does anyone here know what we mean by sins of omission?”

A small girl replied: “Aren’t those the sins we should have committed, but didn’t?”

.....

Little Bobby was spending the weekend with his grandmother. His grandmother decided to take him to the park on Saturday morning. It had been snowing all night and everything was beautiful.

His grandmother remarked...“doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God painted this just for you?”

Bobby said, “Yes, God did it and he did it left-handed.”

This confused his grandmother a bit, and she asked him, “What makes you say God did this with his left hand?”

“Well,” said Bobby, “we learned at Sunday School last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand.”

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