

The Pipe Line

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April 28, 2021

FROM THE PASTOR

I don't remember when it was that I first started thinking of Easter as a season, rather just a day, but I have come to really enjoy it. I love the thought of Jesus staying around for 40 days after his resurrection, teaching and ministering. I love the stories of the road to Emmaus, the locked room, and the rest. On the beach of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus cooked breakfast for the disciples and restored the disgraced Peter to full fellowship and belonging. Jesus modeled forgiveness and reconciliation for absent friends, for those who had let him down, for those who didn't live up to expectations. Acts 1:3 tells us about Jesus, saying, "After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

All of you have suffered some during this past year. All have known difficulty. Some are struggling with things you don't know about. Some are facing the end of life. Some have lost a loved one.

We have the promise and assurance we are Easter people, that there is a resurrection, and that we can experience hope even as we live into the kingdom of God that is breaking in around us.

We're starting to get back to some of the things we have missed. We're gathering in person for Sunday worship again, and the choir is expected to sing this coming Sunday. The Session decided this week to have the church picnic on June 13 at Daniel Vineyards. Won't that be a nice, normal thing to do, something that seemed so far off during these past dark days. The Congregational Care Committee is doing the work to pull that together, and we'll let you know more details about what to do, but I thought it was exciting news to share because it is one more step to doing things we might have sometimes taken for granted.

The Session also voted this week to approve the Presbytery's request that BPC host the Presbytery meeting on May 19, 2022. The church had been scheduled to host a Presbytery meeting this past February, but conditions meant that it had to be conducted electronically. Our own Nancy Kissinger is moderator of the Presbytery this year, and she's done as you would expect of a consummate professional, doing the job despite obstacles or less-than-ideal conditions, dealing with Zoom and Robert's Rules of Order and a big group of Presbyterians.

We will remember and honor the lives of those lost this past year. We'll hold to the promise of the resurrection, and we'll honor those who have finished the race by continuing to live as people whose race is still being run. This is personal for me because I think of Jennifer's father, Wayne Miller, who passed away in

December. He was a really good and kind person, someone who encouraged others. I'm working on another seminary degree and Mr. Miller would always talk to me about my classes. I wish I could tell him about them now as I'm starting my last semester.

I'll let you in on a secret. I'm not a happy student at the beginning of each semester. I feel overwhelmed and tense. One of the things my new professor did in our first (Zoom!) class was to introduce us to a Cruciform, or Cross-shaped, breath prayer. I've tried things like that before, and often have felt silly or like my mind was too busy to slow down for it. But I found this breath prayer to be rather profound and soothing, and would encourage you to give it a try for one minute. Breathe in and out as normal, but pay attention.

As you breathe in, sense the resurrecting, forgiving, compassionate power of God's spirit filling you with energy.

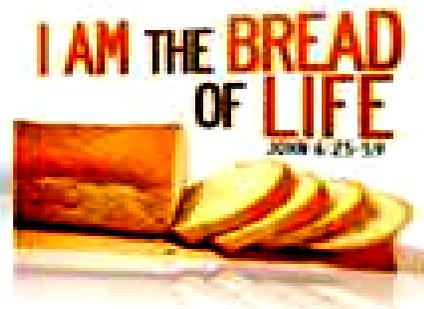
As you exhale, mindfully name and let go of the toxic things that keep you from a good relationship with God and neighbor, or that trouble you. Breath out the crucifying effects of guilt, fear, insecurity, anxiety, anger. Let go of greed or jealousy.

Allow God's resurrecting Spirit to transform the potential crucifying effects of guilt, fear, insecurity, anxiety or anger, and turn them into compassionate, forgiving love.

It reminds me of one of those treasured stories of the resurrected Jesus who met the fearful disciples behind locked doors, and said to them, "Peace be with you." He showed them his hands and side. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

God bless you!

Monte



FRIENDSHIP BREAD

The Church Growth and Service committee is leading a new ministry effort to deliver fresh baked homemade bread to people. They would like your help in identifying people to serve. It could be a shut-in or someone who has a special need, or it might be someone to whom we can show our appreciation or encouragement. You can submit your suggestions in the church box where we collect the offerings or call the church.



MEMORIAL GIFT FUND

We are grateful for the following Memorial Gifts

--In Memory of Albert "Mac" Tieche: by Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Gravely, Ms. Glenna J. Ferguson, Mr. L.M. Prince

--In Memory of Johnny Walker: by Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Gravely

--In Memory of Patricia Perkins: by Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Gravely, Mr. James Songer

--In Memory of Minnie Vandall: by Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Gravely

LECTIONARY READINGS

May 2

Acts 8:26-40 and
Ps. 22:25-31;
1 John 4:7-21;
John 15:1-8

May 9

Mother's Day
Acts 10:44-48 and
Ps. 98; 1 John 5:1-6;
John 15:9-17

May 16

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
and Ps. 1;
1 John 5:9-13;
John 17:6-19

May 23

Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21 or
Ezek. 37:1-14 and
Ps. 104:24-34, 35b;
Rom. 8:22-27 or
Acts 2:1-21;
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 30

Trinity Sunday
Is. 6:1-8 and Ps. 29;
Rom. 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Please contact Betsy Gilmer at (304)253-8923 if you would like to place flowers at the front of the church in honor or memory of someone.



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203 South Kanawha Street
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Return Service Requested



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MAY

06 Paul Wykle, Jr.	19 Bill Mullins
08 Valerie Hartling	20 Charley Maynard
09 Marcia Fairlie	20 Nick Rahall
09 Joan Wilkinson	21 Monica Rahall
09 Jean Bolen	26 Carolyn Lucas
14 Jørn Otte	26 Scott Milne
14 Marlene Blankenship	27 Debbie DiGiulian
15 Becky Callaway	



Attention all members choir practice has begun again. They'd love to have new singers join the returning members on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. New handbell ringers are also welcome. Handbell practice will begin at 6 p.m. and choir practice to follow. If you'd like to join either, please contact Kim Smith at (276)701-0273.

ELDERS ON CALL

May 2-8
Terry McGill

May 9-15
Dan Calvert & Nancy Cameron

May 16-22
Marcia Fairlie

May 23-29
Bob Mestrovic



NURTURING FAITH IDEAS

May 2—Fifth Sunday of Easter: Read 1 John 4:7-21
God is love and commands us to love one another. We live in love rather than fear because God abides in us. Are there fears or anxieties that hinder you from loving freely and boldly? In what specific ways are you called to show the love of God to someone else this week?

May 9—Sixth Sunday of Easter: Read John 15:9-17
Jesus commands the disciples to love one another sacrificially. How much would you give up for the sake of a friend? What does the 'complete joy' of Christ mean to you, and how do you share it with someone else?

May 16—Seventh Sunday of Easter: Read John 17:6-19
Jesus prays that God would protect the friends that he is sending into the world. Are these impulses at odds

with one another — staying safe and serving in the wider world? What risks are we willing to take to speak truth to those who would rather not hear it?

May 23—Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel prophesied to the dry bones, and the Holy Spirit swept over the valley to breathe new life where there had been none. Is there a part of your faith life that feels dry? How are you praying the Holy Spirit would renew your church community?

May 30—Trinity Sunday: Read Psalm 29

This psalm describes the voice of the Lord like a powerful storm that blows over the land and inspires the people to worship. When did you last simply sit in stillness and listen to the rain? What do you hear the voice of the Lord saying to you right now?

