

MOVING SPIRIT

February, 2009

Eskaton Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

I'm writing this in the midst of Lent, that season of "heart-preparation" in the Christian year when believers anticipate Passion Week and the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter morning. A few years ago, Rev. Terry Brown, our assistant minister, painted this abstract portrait of Jesus during His "Passion" (Terry's title). This tiny black and white copy doesn't quite convey the impact of the large colorful original, but it does display the reality of our Lord's intense human suffering on the Cross.

Christ's Passion marks the pinnacle of the mystery in the *Incarnation*. The Emmanuel ("*God with us*") of Christmas became the Suffering Savior of Good Friday. God was willing to take upon Himself the humanity of the race He was determined to redeem, even if it meant a painful death by public execution.

Prophet in His preaching, **Priest** in His sacrificial death, and **King** in His resurrection, Jesus, even though God, became qualified as a real human being, to be the leader of a new humanity that is destined to pick up where we fell down back in Eden. This is real hope for a lost and tragically divided human race.

There is no "good news" for humans that surpasses this message of pardon for



sins by divine grace alone. There is no more human-friendly hope than that of full restoration of body, soul, and spirit through resurrection. Of all theologies and philosophies, this grace and hope are exclusively the plan and promise of the God-Man, our Creator who became one of us. Alleluia, what a Savior!

— Pastor David Hatton

Parish Proclamations

A NEW MEMORIAL PROJECT

Years ago we began a memorial fund to buy the church paraments we now use to decorate our Communion table and pulpit. This year we hope to purchase a set of eight colorful, decorative banners (2x6 ft.) called "Symbols of Faith." One of these would be hung each Sunday on the east wall near the back entrance of the Music Room, to coincide with various Christian seasons or sermon

themes. This 8-banner set is around \$1200, and a picture of them will be displayed on the entry table at church during the next several weeks. What a blessing it would be to have these and dedicate them on this Easter Sunday, as we did our paraments on Easter of 1997.

Personal Pulpit

DANCING WITH GOD

When I meditated on the word GUIDANCE, I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes drew back to the word GUIDANCE. When I saw "G", I thought of God, followed by "U" and "I". "**God**", "**U**" and "**I**" **DANCE**.
God, You and I dance.

As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life. Once again, I became willing to let God lead.

My prayer for you today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon you on

this day and every day. May you abide in God as God abides in you. Dance together with God, trusting God to lead and to guide you through each season of your life. And I hope you dance!

—author unknown

Pithy Pieces

Acronyms illustrated

TRUST: *To Rest Utterly Secure Today*

GRACE: *God's Rescue At Crisis Events*

FAITH: *Forsaking All, I Trust Him*

MERCIFUL: *My Everlasting Redeemer Can Infinitely Furnish Ultimate Love*

WORSHIP: *When Our Righteous Service Has Indwelling Power*

PEACE: *Perfect Enjoyment At Christ's Expense*

PRAYER: *Prepare Rightly At Your Early Rising*

Prayer's Priority

THE PRAYER

(attributed to Billy Graham)

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask Your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that is exactly what we have done. We've lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

We confess that we've ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it *Pluralism*. We've worshiped other gods and called it *Multi-culturalism*. We've endorsed perversion and called it *Alternative Lifestyle*. We've exploited the poor and called it *Lottery*. We've rewarded laziness and called it *Welfare*.

We've killed our unborn and called it *Choice*. We've shot abortionists and called it *Justifiable*. We've neglected to discipline our children and called it *Building Self-esteem*. We've abused power and called it *Politics*. We've coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it *Ambition*. We've polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it *Freedom*. We've ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it *Enlightenment*.

Search us O God, and know our hearts today, cleanse us from every sin and set us free. I ask it in the name of your Son, the Living Savior, JESUS CHRIST. Amen

Perpetual Precepts

A Cherokee Legend

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage? His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN. He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own.

The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the

only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm.

We too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, our Heavenly Father is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

Poetry's Place

HUGS

It's wondrous what a hug can do,
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say "I love you so,"
Or, "Gee, I hate to see you go."
A hug is, "Welcome back again!"
"Great to see you! Where've you been?"
A hug can soothe a small child's pain
And bring a rainbow after rain.
The hug? There's been no doubt about it!
We scarcely could survive without it.
A hug delights and warms and charms.
It must be why God gave us arms.
Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers,
And chances are your favorite aunts
Love them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them. Puppies love them.
Heads of state are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier,
And make the dullest day seem merrier.
No need to fret about your store of 'em.
The more you give, the more there are of
'em.
So stretch those arms without delay

And give someone a hug today!

– Anonymous

Pearls of Prudence

PREDICTIONS...

If the Stock Market Crashes

1. The Bible will still have all the answers.
 2. Prayer will still be the most powerful thing on earth.
 3. The Holy Spirit will still work through God's Word.
 4. God will still honor the praises of His people.
 5. There will still be the preaching of God's Word.
 6. There will still be singing of praise to God.
 7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people.
 8. There will still be room at the Cross.
 9. Jesus will still love you.
 10. Jesus will still save the lost when they come to Him in obedient faith.
- Isn't it great to remember Who is really in control? "*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8).

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THREES

- 3 things in life that, once gone, never come back: *Time, Words, Opportunity*
- 3 things in life that can destroy a person: *Anger, Pride, Unforgiveness*
- 3 things in life that you should never lose: *Hope, Peace, Honesty*
- 3 things in life that are most valuable: *Love, Family, Friends*
- 3 things in life that are never certain:

Fortune, Success, Dreams

3 things that make a person:

Commitment, Sincerity, Hard work

3 things that are truly constant:

Father - Son - Holy Spirit

Pleasurable Pastime

THE 84 YEAR-OLD BRIDE

A local news station interviewed an 84-year-old lady because she had just gotten married—for the fourth time. The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 84, and then about her new husband's occupation. "He's a funeral director," she answered.

"Interesting," the newsman thought. He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living.

She answered proudly, explaining that she first married a banker when she was in her early 20's, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40's, later on a preacher when in her 60's, and now, in her 80's, a funeral director.

He looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers.

"Easy, son," she smiled. "I married one for the money,...two for the show,... three to get ready,... and four to go!"

Priceless Prose

DO YOU BELIEVE IN EASTER?

Edith Burns was a favorite patient of Dr. Will Phillips. One morning he went to his office with a heavy heart, and there she sat in the waiting room with her big

black Bible in her lap earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her. Her habit of introducing herself was: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would be saved.

When walking in, Dr. Phillips saw nurse Beverly, who had first met Edith when taking her blood pressure. Edith began by saying, "My name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" When Beverly said, "Yes," Edith asked her what she believed about it. Beverly said, "Well, it's about egg hunts, going to church, and dressing up." Edith kept pressing her about the real meaning of Easter, and Beverly was finally led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Phillips said, "Beverly, don't call Edith in quite yet. A delivery may be taking place in the waiting room."

When she was called in, Edith sat down, looked at the doctor, and said, "Dr. Will, why are you so sad? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?"

He gently told her, "Edith, the report on your tests came in. It says you have cancer and won't be with us very long."

Edith said, "Why, Will Phillips, shame on you! Do you think God makes mistakes? You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!"

Edith kept coming to Dr. Phillips, and one day called about being put into the

hospital. "Will, I'm very near home," she said, "so can you make sure that they put women next to me in my room who need to know about Easter."

Well, they did just that, and many women who shared that room with her did become Christians. Everybody on that floor from staff to patients started calling her "Edith Easter"—everyone except Phyllis Cross, the head nurse.

Phyllis made it plain that she thought Edith was a "religious nut." As an Army nurse, she had seen and heard it all. She had been married three times, was hard, cold, and did everything by the book.

One day the two nurses attending Edith were sick, and Phyllis Cross had to go in and give her a shot. When she entered, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you, I love you, and I've been praying for you."

Phyllis answered, "Well, you can quit. It won't work. I'm not interested."

Edith replied, "Well, I've prayed and asked God not to let me go home until you come into His family."

"Then you'll never die, because that won't happen," she said and left. But every day, as Phyllis walked in, Edith would say, "God loves you, Phyllis, and I love you, and I'm praying for you."

One day Phyllis felt literally drawn to Edith's room like iron to a magnet. She sat down on the bed and Edith said, "I'm so glad you've come, because God told me that today is your special day."

Phyllis said, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but never me." Edith

replied, "Phyllis, I wanted to many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked..."

Edith Burns took her Bible and shared with Phyllis the Easter Story of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. She said, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus is alive and wants to live in your heart?"

Phyllis said, "I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life." Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart. When she left the room, she felt carried out on angels' wings.

When Phyllis came in two days later, Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?" She answered, "It's Good Friday." But Edith said, "Oh, no, for you every day is Easter. Happy Easter, Phyllis!"

On Easter morning, Phyllis came into work, did some of her duties, then went down to the flower shop to get some Easter lilies for Edith to wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed with her eyes closed, as if in prayer. That big black Bible was on her lap with both her hands inside it. There was a sweet smile on her face. When she went over and tried to pick up her hand, Phyllis realized that Edith had passed away.

Her left hand was on John 14: "*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself...*" Her right hand was on Revelation 21:4, "*And*

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Phyllis took one look at her peaceful body, then lifted up her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith!"

When she left that bedside and walked out of the room, Phyllis immediately went over to a table where two student nurses were sitting, and said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?" — author unknown

