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The Pastor's Pen

Heaven or Hell?

Interesting title – heaven or hell? There's a small church on one of the back roads in Crestview that I pass occasionally and recently the church sign had this question: "Heaven or Hell? Your choice." It is our choice and really there are only two choices. But do we stop and think that every decision we make, every word we speak takes us a little closer to one or the other? Satan exists because he is part of God's Word. He tempted Eve with the fruit of the tree (Genesis 3). He tormented Job (Book of Job). He approached Jesus during his 40 days of fasting (Matthew 4). We know we can't buy our way into heaven. We can't even work our way into heaven. Our choice is how we live our lives and whether or not we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and share the good news of His salvation. This is what drives us to do good works, to love our neighbor and take care of those less fortunate. It is our desire to please God that allows us to step outside of our comfort zone. And our desire to obey his Word. Matthew tells us:

(continued on page 2)

Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals Scripture Reference (Begin Year A)

March 2

Transfiguration of the Lord

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 2 *or* Psalm 99

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

March 5 - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 *or* Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 51:1-17

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

March 9 - First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

March 16 - Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17 *or* Matthew 17:1-9

March 23 - Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

March 30 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23 Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

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March Birthdays

Jeanette Harman	12
Betsy Dodson	22
Jeff Bolstad	25
Maria Bailey	31

Events this Month

March 2
Fellowship dinner, 11:30 a.m.
March 4
Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.
March 5
Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper, 6 p.m.
March 9
Communion service, 10:30 a.m.
Session meeting, 11:30 a.m.
Daylight Savings Time
March 12
Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
March 19
Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
March 21
Last "Acts 16:5" meeting
March 25
Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
March 29
Prayer Shawl, 10:00 a.m.
March 30
5 th Sunday Praise service, 10:30 a.m.

Must Do List

Start on the repair
of our stained
glass windows

April Fellowship dinner hosted
by Jean Mourey

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Lent is a time of reflection. It is a time when we can stop and evaluate our past and our future. We have a choice. There are only two roads. Heaven or Hell. What choices can we make to put us on the right road and keep us there?

Love, Jo

Session Meeting Minutes JANUARY 19, 2014

Session members present:

Jean Mourey
Leslie Yandle

Guests present:

Betsy Dodson
Tammy Mendiola
Margaret Neustaedter

Moderator

Jo Kublik

Welcome

The meeting was called to order with prayer given by Jo.

A quorum was not present. The guests present were the newly elected session members. Ordination and installation will be Sunday February 2, 2014.

No reports were read. A decision was made to limit the session to five members for the coming year.

Betsy informed us of a letter the church received notifying us of a bequest from Bernice Elizabeth Parker in the amount of \$1718.71. The acknowledgment of receipt was signed by Jean Mourey, clerk of session.

Jo Kublik passed out the report of congregants who signed the Time and Talent requests. The committee heads will contact these people for assistance on the various committees.

Committee Heads -

Property - Betsy Dodson

Christian Education - Tammy Mendiola

Stewardship - Margaret Neustaedter

Worship - Margaret Neustaedter

Membership/Mission - Jean Mourey

Personnel - Leslie Yandle

Leslie asked we encourage Nicole Frenk to continue as event coordinator and PR person.



Short News Items

If you would like to schedule an appointment with Pastor Jo, please call 850-902-1653 to schedule a time and location to meet with her.

Do you need a ride to church or to a special event? If so, call Linda Lade at 623-0017 and she will either drive you or get someone else who can.

Some have asked about the collection of stamps for Duval Home. If you will get them to Linda Lade, she will make sure they get there.

Session Highlights

First Presbyterian Church
Milton, FL

A discussion was held regarding participation in Scratch Ankle and River Walk. Tammy stated it was probably too late to get a booth for Scratch Ankle. As River Walk is being held during Lent, it was decided not to participate this year.

A decision was made to have our annual Spring Fling Saturday, May 2, 2014. Tammy Mendiola will do PR for this event with Sharon Stebbins handling children's games and Margaret Neustaedter in charge of food. Jo Kublik will contact the pastor of Pace Presbyterian Church to inquire if they would be interested in co-hosting this event.

Jo Kublik informed us of a conference being held at Montreat, NC, October 20-22, 2014, for members of small churches. A suggestion was made to use the money from a bequest to subsidize travel expenses for those who would like to attend.

The meeting adjourned with prayer given by Leslie Yandle.

Calendar of Events

March 2014

- 3/3: 1st Sunday fellowship dinner, 11:30 a.m.
- 3/4: Bible study, 10:00 a.m.
- 3/5: Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper, 6:00 p.m.
- 3/9: Communion service, 10:30 a.m.
Session meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 3/12: Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m., 4th day, 6:00 p.m.
- 3/19: Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
- 3/21: Last "Acts 16:5" meeting
- 3/26: Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
- 3/29: Prayer Shawl/Chrismon ornaments, 10:00 a.m.
- 3/30: 5th Sunday Praise service, 10:30 a.m.

April 2014

- 4/1: Bible study, 10:00 a.m.
- 4/2: Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m.
- 4/6: 1st Sunday fellowship dinner, 11:30 a.m.
- 4/9: Lenten dinner, 6:00 p.m., 4th day, 6:00 p.m.
- 4/13: Palm Sunday communion service, 10:30 a.m.
Session meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 4/17: Maundy Thursday communion service, 6 p.m.
- 4/20: Easter Sunrise service, 6:30 p.m.
Communion service, 10:30 a.m.
- 4/26: Prayer Shawl, 10:00 a.m.

What do you know about St Patrick?

Patrick, sometimes reviled, often revered, was a man who became a saint and, in the process, lost his identity as a man.

Myth tells extraordinary stories surrounding Patrick's life. Captured at sixteen, he served as a slave in northern Ireland and later left to receive his religious training in Gaul. Having been anointed and sent to Ireland by the Pope, Patrick used the shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity, thereby saving Ireland from her heathen ways. Adorned with miter and staff in hand, he drove the snakes from Ireland, ousted the High King at Tara, communed with God atop Crough Patrick, and performed other wondrous feats.

However, a critical evaluation of history finds no truth to these fantastic stories. Patrick was born in southwestern Britain around 390 A.D. in his wealthy upperclass father's villa. He lived a childhood as any other of the day and engaged in the sins that young people do. He confessed these sins to a beloved friend who later in life exposed him and cast question upon his legitimacy as Bishop of Ireland. Kidnapped by Irish pirates at sixteen, he spent six years as a slave tending sheep in County Mayo near Sligo. As noted by R.P.C. Hanson in *The Life and Writings of the Historical Saint Patrick*, "the people of the diocese of Killala can boast their territory saw Patrick's captivity with much more probability than those who live near Mount Slemish in County Antrim."

Patrick probably made his escape from Mayo to the coast of Wexford and returned home to Britain. Upon his return, Patrick received his theological training in Britain, not Gaul. Patrick was not sent to Ireland by the Pope, but by church authority in Britain. Patrick did not introduce Christianity to Ireland as this had been done by earlier missionaries and the first Bishop of Ireland, Palladius, who was ordained and sent to Ireland in 431 A.D. by Pope Celestine. Patrick wore no miter as they weren't invented for another 500 years and the anecdote about the shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity was tacked on a thousand years after his death. Patrick never climbed Crough Patrick nor met a High King at Tara as there were no High Kings in Ireland during his lifetime.

There are probably at least two sources for the snakes which Patrick "drove" out of Ireland. A symbol for the goddess worship practiced in Ireland prior to Christianity was the snake or serpent. The conversion of Ireland to Christianity symbolically banished the "snake" from the land. Secondly, the bloody cult of Crom Cruaich in County Caven demanded human sacrifice to a serpent deity and the dismantling of this cult by Christianity is now remembered as the "snakes being driven from Ireland."

Upon Patrick's arrival in Ireland, he led a successful mission, anointing clergy and baptizing thousands. An outcast among the stratified classes of Irish society, he endured many hardships and wrote, "I daily expect either assassination or trickery or reduction to slavery".

Patrick did not enjoy much influence in Irish society and in many ways it was the similarity of the Christian myth to existing pagan beliefs that gradually made converts of the Irish people. Both systems believed in a supreme spirit and taught survival of the soul after death. The pagan druids had a spirit named "Hesus" who, being associated with the oak tree, was remarkably similar to Jesus on the cross. The old goddess Maire became Mary and the essence of the Celtic goddess Brigit evolved into the christian St. Brigid.

The defining event of Patrick's life was his abduction. Ripped from a comfortable upbringing and forced into servitude, Patrick never recovered from the trauma. Upon his return to Britain many of his friends had gone on to fine educations and prominence whereas Patrick, an outsider as a slave in Ireland, became an outsider in his home society. To his dismay, Patrick was neither a great orator nor did he have a facility with the written word. He wrote late in life, "That is why I am now ashamed and am seriously afraid of revealing my unskillfulness, the fact that I cannot hold forth in speech to cultivated people in exact language." As an older man he still regarded himself as a "poor ignorant orphan" and an "exile and refugee" who was "very little educated". After returning as Bishop to the land that had once considered him a slave, he never left again, becoming more closely identified with the Irish people than the British.

As a man, Patrick was devastated by captivity. In his years of slavery he developed a deep faith and sense of conviction in his God which provided him tremendous missionary zeal. Perhaps finding more acceptance among the society of his captors, Patrick dedicated his life's energy to the Irish Christian mission and he died there around 460 A.D. with no ordained successor.

As a saint, Patrick is larger than life for those who need him to be. Perhaps this March 17 we can forgo the green beer and the snake charming and remember just the man who overcame great odds to carry out his life's work on the beautiful and cruel island of Eire.

St Patrick Day Facts

Celebrate When: March 17th.

Saint Patrick's Day is in honor of the Patron Saint of Ireland, who brought Christianity to the Emerald Isles, as Ireland is known. It is truly a day of celebrating Irish history, ancestry, traditions and customs.

Are you Irish perchance?: Well, the saying goes everyone is a little Irish on Saint Patrick's Day.

Roots of Tradition: Saint Patrick's Day is held in honor of Saint Patrick, the missionary who brought Christianity to the Irish people in the 400's A.D.

Erin Go Braugh: Perhaps the most common Irish term you will hear. It means "Ireland Forever".

Did You Know? Over 34 million Americans are of Irish descent. That's almost nine times the population of Ireland.

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Choir Practice, 8:45 Sunday School, 9:30 Worship/Congregational meeting, 10:30 Fellowship dinner, 11:30	3	4 Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.	5 Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper, 6 p.m.	6	7	8
9 Choir Practice, 8:45 Sunday School, 9:30 Communion, 10:30 Session meeting, 11:30 Daylight Savings	10	11	12 Lenten Supper, 6 p.m. Jeanette Harman	13	14	15 Acts 16:5 Meeting, Dogwoods Acres
16 Choir Practice, 8:45 Sunday School, 9:30 Worship, 10:30	17  St Patrick's Day	18	19 Lenten Supper, 6 p.m.	20	21	22 Prayer Shawl/ Chrismon ornaments, 10:00 a.m. Betsy Dodson
23 Choir Practice, 8:45 Sunday School, 9:30 Worship, 10:30	24	25 Jeff Bolstad	26 Lenten Supper, 6 p.m.	27	28	29
30 Choir Practice, 8:45 Sunday School, 9:30 Casual Sunday, 10:30	31 Maria Bailey					

Valentine's Day

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
 The remaining letters spell a popular Valentine's Day item.

P I H S D N E I R F D I P U C A L
 V D H S U R C A C F B A L E N D O
 N Y N T I A E A S O L C T O Y M V
 S R N E N S N L Y E H O I E R I E
 T L E D I D S F A O N T W S A R B
 R E Y S L R R E C T C T L E U E I
 A W S E R I F O N A I A I C R R R
 E E S E E E L L R D S O O M B S D
 H J C N S A V T R O N U N T E D S
 T G D N T O T O P I P O A S F N A
 E N Y E A A R O L L G C F E H I T
 E I S D U M R B E L O V E D B I G
 W L O D R P O A F F E C T I O N P
 S R E M A L F R R E N T R A P A R
 E A Y C N A F O R E V E R L I K E
 R D R O T I U S D N O I T O V E D

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|------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| ADMIRER | COUPLE | FLOWERS | LOVERS |
| ADORE | CRUSH | FONDNESS | PARTNER |
| AFFECTION | CUPID | FOREVER | PROPOSAL |
| ATTRACTION | DARLING | FRIENDSHIP | RELATIONSHIP |
| BEAU | DATE | GIFT | RESTAURANT |
| BELOVED | DEAR | GIRLFRIEND | ROMANCE |
| BOYFRIEND | DEVOTION | HEARTS | ROSES |
| CANDLES | FANCY | JEWELRY | SENTIMENT |
| CANDY | FEBRUARY | LIKE | SUITOR |
| CHOCOLATES | FLAME | LOVEBIRDS | SWEETHEART |