

Holy Week Schedule of Events

- April 13th: EASTER CONCERT, "THE CROSS HAS THE FINAL WORD", AT 7 PM
- April 14th: PALM SUNDAY:
WORSHIP SERVICES AT 8:15 & 11 AM
EASTER CONCERT, "THE CROSS HAS THE FINAL WORD", AT 6 PM
- April 18th: MAUNDY THURSDAY:
COMMUNION SERVICE AT 7 PM
- April 19th: GOOD FRIDAY:
MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST AT 7 AM
TENEBRAE SERVICE AT 7 PM
- April 21ST: EASTER SUNDAY:
SUNRISE SERVICE AT 6:30 AM
EASTER BREAKFAST AT 7 AM
TRIUMPHANT RESURRECTION SERVICE AT 8:15 & 11 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:45 AM

HIS FINISHED WORK

OUR FUTURE HOPE

LAFAYETTE FEDERATED CHURCH
 180 ROUTE 15, LAFAYETTE, NJ 07848
 973-383-4461 / WWW.LFC.ORG



CONNECTION

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR...

It's amazing how the morning can shed light on things that were once so hard to see.

As a child, I can remember one stormy night lying in bed, terrified of the multi-armed monster I'd convinced myself was flailing around outside my window; however, thanks to the morning's light (and a little convincing from my dad), I discovered that it was only the old oak tree in the yard.

The crucifixion of Jesus must have felt like the darkest day ever for those early followers of Jesus, yet all that changed by the light of the first Easter morning that illuminated the empty tomb. This is such a vivid reminder that until a person sees the resurrected Jesus for who He really is, they are condemned to stumble around in darkness, without hope, and without life.

Isn't it interesting how those who encountered Jesus right after the resurrection all struggled with seeing Him for who He was? Yet even now, some 2000 years later, it is still hard for some to see Jesus for who He is. Many of our friends, family members, and neighbors struggle with who Jesus is and what His resurrection means for their lives.

For some, like Mary in John 20:11-18, they have a hard time seeing Jesus for who He is because they are blinded by personal pain, and they're unable to see Him clearly through their tears. For Mary, she was unable to recognize Jesus until He called her by name- when He acknowledged that He knew her, that He understood her, that He loved her. Today, maybe we need to remind those in our lives that Jesus knows them by name, that He understands their pain and heartache. We need to share that part of following Jesus is allowing Him to carry those hurts and pain, to give them comfort in times of sorrow. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 11:28: **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."**

(Continued on Page 7)

Inside this issue

- Family Ministries 2
- Kingdom Expansion 3, 6
- Student Ministry..4
- Worship & Music 5
- Pastor Aaron (cont'd).....7

As this past winter was starting to get old (too much snow and ice), I saw something that reminded me of our Savior's love. It came when I noticed the pure white snow glistening on the tree branches with the contrasting beautiful red cardinal sitting perched on the snow-covered branch. It reminded me how over 2000 years ago Jesus came into this world to die on a cross for my sins, for your sins. He shed His blood so that my sin-stained, dirty self could be washed clean as the pure white snow.

In my Sunday School class we are studying Jesus' prayer found in John Chapter 17. One verse that just blows me away is John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone (meaning the disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message." Jesus prayed for "me" and for "you." That's amazing to think the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords prayed for me! The good news is that He hasn't stopped, He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us today. So as we go into this new season of the year (Spring) why not take some time to, for lack of better words, "stop and smell the roses." Take some time out of your busy day, and just sit still and spend time with the Lord. Go for a walk and just bask on God's amazing creation, or stop and admire His handy-work in the rippling of the waves on a pond or the delicate flower that just burst through the ground after a hard winter. Jesus is there waiting to hear from us, so why not spend some time with Him.

One of my biggest joys here at LFC is working side by side with some of the most amazing people. Recently I had someone share with me an article she was writing for a program she was involved with. This article really speaks perfectly to how we should take time to do some "Spiritual Spring Cleaning." With her permission I have attached the article for you to enjoy as I did.

SPRING CLEANING

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

"Spring is here! Outside, the sun is shining and the birds are chirping. The fresh air and warmer temperatures lift our spirits and energize us. During this time of year, we may experience the urge to "spring clean" and create a fresh start.

While spring cleaning is commonly associated with cleaning one's home, it can also be applied to our hearts. In the same way our homes become disorganized and cluttered, we may lose sight of what is important and stray away from spiritual discipline.

So, how do we go about spiritual spring cleaning? It is important to evaluate ourselves and identify the aspects of our spiritual walk that need improvement. Is the way we think honorable to God? Is He pleased with our actions and the way we treat others? Colossians 1:10 says, "So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

When the Holy Spirit is at work within us, we can demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, kindness, gentleness and self-control. If we are lacking in these things, it may be because we are not spending time with the Lord and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

Once we have identified our shortcomings, we can work towards eliminating things in our life that may be hindering us spiritually. For example, worry, selfish ambition and impurity can hold us back in our walk with Christ. We do not have to go about the spiritual cleaning process alone, though. When we bring our burdens to the Lord, He walks alongside us. Through Him, we can become clean again and find forgiveness. In addition, reading His Word can help us to become stronger in our faith. According to Psalm 119:105, the Word acts as "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

Ultimately, spending time with the Lord and reading His Word are the only tools we need in spiritual spring cleaning. Through self-evaluation and spending time in prayer, God can reveal to us the areas of our lives where we need improvement. So, during this season of spring, I encourage you to renew your walk with Christ and draw closer to Him. Spending time in prayer and in God's Word allows us to align our hearts with His and live in a way that is honorable to Him."

In Christ Service,

Pastor Glenn

For others, they find themselves like Peter, who feared an encounter with the Risen Lord because of his past failings. He had denied knowing Jesus and had fallen so far away. In John 20, we see Peter as a man who feared that Jesus would be angry, unforgiving, and unwilling to have a relationship with him. What changed Peter's life? He came face to face with the forgiving power of the Jesus.

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

¹⁸I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do

not want to go." ¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

As those who have come to know this forgiving Savior for ourselves, we must be passionate about sharing with others the truth of God's love and forgiveness, the reason Jesus came to die, and that He desires a relationship with His lost sheep. In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, "**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.**"

I want to challenge you to look at this Easter season as an opportunity to help your lost friends, family members, co-workers, and fellow students see Jesus for who He truly is. Plan now to invite someone to the Easter concert and to Easter services. I'm convinced that Easter is a prime opportunity to share Jesus with those for whom we have been praying and being intentional about investing our lives in.

Who will you help see the real Jesus this Easter?

Pastor Aaron

LAFAYETTE FEDERATED CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

As of: February 28, 2019

Total Income:	\$170,270.52
Total Expenses:	\$178,132.22

In response to our church family taking a step of faith with this year's budget, we want to faithfully keep the congregation informed to the status of where we stand in giving compared to budget and expenses. Please prayerfully consider remaining faithful in your regular giving commitment.

Each believer is called to be able to share and interact with the people God has placed around them. Although it's a privilege, it can be somewhat daunting to many of us. So, God has led us to sponsor a special weekend training on April 27th-28th by Dr. Mark Farnham from *Apologetics for the Church*. Dr. Farnham is a professor at Lancaster Bible College and does seminars and trainings to equip ALL believers with the tools and confidence to share their faith with unbelievers. Don't forget to mark your calendars for April 27th-28th. God will equip us through the Holy Spirit as we engage those around us with the hope of Jesus.

Next, verse 7 includes a warning for us not to be wise in our own eyes or lean on our own understanding and to shun evil. The definition of shun is to "persistently avoid, ignore or reject through antipathy or caution." When we rely on God's spirit to lead us, he gives us the power to shun evil (Titus 2:11-14). We should fear God, not in the sense of being afraid, but in the sense of being filled with awe and wonder at who he is and what he has done for us.

Then again in verses 8-10 is a reminder that God's commands are there to help us live a more fulfilled life, bringing health to our bodies and nourishment to our bones. I'm reminded of a John Piper quote, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." When our relationship with Jesus satisfies us as it was intended to, then we will glorify God with all that we have - our physical bodies, our financial resources - everything! We honor God (vs 9) with our first fruits because all we have is ultimately from Him and we are blessed with more so that we can share with others (vs 10) out of the abundance of His blessing in our lives.

At LFC, we highly value missions and the opportunity to serve God where he leads us. God has led us to pursue two mission opportunities this summer - Sussex Project and the Winchester Project. Both of these projects are family friendly, providing opportunities for you to serve with your children and alongside people of all ages. The Sussex Project (June 25th-June 29th) is a local project designed to help each believer encounter and meet physical needs in our community, while also sharing the gospel and encouraging those we meet.

You can choose to serve all week or just for a few hours. The Winchester Project (July 21st-July 26th) is a family friendly mission trip in partnership with Center Church in New Hampshire. It's focus is helping to run a Backyard Bible Club type ministry called "Food and Fun" as well as some potential sports ministry and/or home repair ministry components. (Applications available in April)

I would encourage you to reread Proverbs 3:1-10 and ask God to lead you as you deepen your trust relationship with Him. As a result of deepening our relationship with Him, we can actively look for ways to serve as an expression of how thankful we are for what He has done in our lives. We can share the love of Jesus with those He has placed in our lives and make an impact on those around us for His glory.

Pastor Brian

EQUIP 2019 Conference
Sharing your Faith without Fear
APRIL 27 - 28

SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH
 9:00-10:00 AM Every Believer Confident
 10:30-11:30 AM Understanding & Reaching Roman Catholics
 7:00-8:00 PM Encountering Skeptics & Atheists

SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH:
 8:15 AM Pulling Down Strongholds
 9:45 AM The Problem of Evil & Suffering
 11:00 AM The Historicity of the Resurrection

GOD AT WORK

Each month when the Elders meet, we have a time at the beginning of our meeting called "God at work." It's a time where we are able to encourage and share with one another where we have seen God at work in our lives and those around us. I love that part of our meeting. On the same note, I wanted to share something with you that He has been teaching me recently and encourage you to look for God at work in your life.

Recently I've been studying the book of Judges during devotions. It's amazing to see how God graciously provides for his people, even though they continually struggle to trust Him. Over and over again throughout the book of Judges, we see the nation of Israel fall into a vicious cycle where they trust God one moment and the next seek after other gods.

In the same way, we can go through our own vicious cycle with God. We have a tendency to follow our own ways, seek after other desires, and then cry out to God to save us when things go wrong. We struggle with trust. As I studied Judges, the Lord led me to a couple other verses that deal with trust - Proverbs 3:5-6.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

These verses provide a foundation for making decisions in life. Recently, we started a Good News Bible Club at Lafayette School with two other local churches. The reason why we pursued this ministry was because we believed that the Lord was leading us to have a Bible club on a public school campus. It wasn't just to start another program. It was because we trusted God to lead us and provide. He has provided us with a great multi-church team and the children have been excited to learn about Jesus! We trusted God to make our paths straight, and He did.

As I thought about these verses a little more, I was led to study the surrounding verses. Take a moment to read Proverbs 3:1-10. These verses offer us some insight into what it looks like to seek God's direction for our lives.

Proverbs 3 begins with a call for us to remember and follow God's truth, His word. Verse 1 commands us to keep the commands of God in our hearts. It's first and foremost a call to a relationship. By immersing ourselves in His word on a regular basis, we will see how He wants us to live. Verse 2 shows the blessings and benefits of obeying His word. As He blesses us physically and financially, we can then use those things to serve Him because we recognize that all we have is from Him and belongs to Him. In verse 3, we find out that if we follow Him and immerse ourselves in His word, we will display the fruits of the Spirit and as a result, in verse 4, it will be a testimony to the people that God has placed around us.

These four verses show the benefits of pursuing a personal relationship with God; the benefits of trusting Him. It's this relationship that we hope people that visit The Well, LFC's food pantry, experience. We have been so blessed by the community response so far! Since January 12, we have had about 60 families register for help from The Well. We look at those 60 families as 60 relationships. We want to share with those people that the ultimate blessing is to be in a personal relationship with God. Please pray for that ministry as God continues to provide us with so many opportunities to build relationships.

That brings us to the familiar verses of 5 and 6. 'Trust' in verse 5 carries with it the idea, "to lie helpless, facedown" like a servant waiting on his master's commands. What a powerful picture! God as our sovereign King is worthy of our worship and we need to be truly dependent on him to provide everything! Most importantly, he has provided by sending His one and only Son Jesus to rescue us and give us life. He has also given us the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us in all areas, including telling those around us about the hope of the Gospel.

(Continued on Page 6)

BUILDING...

Early Spring means planning for what comes throughout the summer in the student ministry, and we are excited for some of our summer plans. The most exciting piece however is building on what God has recently been doing in the lives of our students both individually and collectively as a group. As we look back at the winter retreats, and even recent teaching series that we have gone through it is refreshing to see the growth in our students and their response in worship.

Right now we are continuing to challenge our students to:

◇ **Live out Authentic Faith in Jesus.**

The theme of our Sr. High Winter Retreat was Authentic Faith, and our push has been for our students to remember that Authentic Faith leads to radical obedience. I want to share with you that we are seeing the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives leading them to radical obedience! We have students who are considering things like serving in camp ministries this summer, being a part of our local summer missions trip, or even simply taking a step of obedience to be Baptized.

◇ **Be relational, and Be a witness.**

We are wrapping up a series on living out the 1,2,3's of the great commission and I can tell you that our students are responding. The as leaders we see them wrestling with who they might want to invite to events and praying about who the Holy Spirit is laying on their hearts to declare the truth to.

◇ **Reflect on the Word Daily.**

We began a new habit together about 3-4 months ago. Most weeks when the students come to youth group on Saturday night there is key verse for the week. Students are writing these verses down on notecards and taking them with them all week long.

It has been a blessing for us to see note cards stuck in the back of phone cases, or tucked inside of their Bible. The challenge is to pull that card out daily (even hourly!) and reflect on what they learned the previous weekend. Then, at the end of the week students are encouraged to share that notecard with a friend to encourage them with the same passage of Scripture. Please be praying for our students that the Word of God would continue to take root in their hearts.

It is always exciting to see growth in individual lives, but even more so when there seems to be growth in a whole group of people. I look forward to continuing to share stories of growth with you, but even more so I pray that you will see evidence of change brought about through the Holy Spirit in the lives our students. Thank you in advance for continuing to pray for these students as they seek to be ambassadors wherever they go. They are such a special part of our church family!

All for Jesus,

Pastor Ryan

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- 4/1: J.O.Y. CLUB LUNCHEON
- 4/7: SPRING SUNDAY SCHOOL SEMESTER BEGINS. STRENGTHENING YOUR MARRIAGE 2019 FOCUS option: "Building Strong Marriages by God's Design"
- 4/13: CHURCHWIDE SPRING CLEANUP
- 4/14: NEW MEMBERS RECEPTION
- 5/17-18: FGF WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, WYCOFF

THE CROSS HAS THE FINAL WORD

As I was listening to music while planning the Easter Cantata this year, a title caught my eye; "The Cross Has the Final Word". What a thought, especially in today's world where facts are secondary to our ideas and desires. That no matter what we or others do, no matter what we or others say, when we stand before God, truth prevails and all that matters is that we stand in Christ and the work of redemption that He accomplished on our behalf on the cross.

God's love for us had Him put the plan of redemption in play right from the beginning in the garden. God's love for us had Jesus empty Himself and come to earth as a man. God's love for us is what drove our Lord to the cross. God's love for us is what compelled Him to willingly lay down His life there. God's love for US! All of us, mired in our sin and so unworthy of that love.

That is a message that transforms lives. We matter to God and He has done what was needed to restore the fellowship that was broken by sin. It is not what we have done, but what He has done.

But it is even more than that. In a world that is full of sin and darkness, the cross triumphs over everything. "Evil may put up its strongest fight but the cross has the final word".

The risen Savior has defeated death! The words of the bridge of the song say it so well; "There's nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing greater than the name of Jesus. All the honor, all the power, all the glory to the name of Jesus!"

We live in an interesting world today. We are told that we, just by being who we are, have great worth. That we deserve anything and everything we desire. Of course, when those desires and wants conflict with someone else's desires and wants, we have a problem! The truth is that we do have great worth, but not because of who we are, but to borrow an accurate idiom, Whose we are. Whose name do we claim?

This is the message our world needs today! We will be sharing it in our Cantata Saturday, April 13th at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 14th at 6:00 p.m. Invite someone who needs to hear this truth. Come with those who need to be reminded of how much our God loves us. But even if you can't come, share this truth every opportunity you can and live in its power. The cross has the final word!

