

The Circuit Writer

The Monthly Newsletter for the churches of Chatham United Methodist Circuit

Chatham

Liberty

St. Louisville

April, 2021

From Pastor Bryan

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' John 3:1 – 7 NIV

We have "bumped" into Nicodemus several times over the last few weeks of Lent and we will bump into him again on Good Friday when we witness the completion of the rebirth that Jesus is alluding to in this scripture. Nicodemus is a smart man, a Pharisee and member of the ruling council, but he has some spiritual baggage, some spiritual clutter in his life that he feels compelled to tidy up which is why he came to Jesus.

As we know Lent gives us an opportunity to "clean up our life's closet" Making sure our inner emotions and feelings are consistent with our outer presentation. We like to present a tidy, righteous appearance to the world, but we all have messy closets full of stuff that we are ashamed of and disappointed in.

When we started our Lenten journey almost 40 days ago, we heard that Jesus would have us clean our whole soul, instead of having secret compartments to keep things we don't want deal with, or closets filled with unrighteous stuff that we want to keep hidden from others but it is not hidden from God!

So, we have had period of preparation, of self-denial, of repentance and confession, of putting our spiritual house in order, so that we can be prepared ourselves for the Easter miracle. What we discover as we make those preparations is that there are so many things that get in the way of our true embrace of the risen Christ. They are habits and preferences and inclinations that clutter our souls. Lent came along to give us time, space, and appropriate reminders that we need to clean house to receive the one we call Lord. To do this well is both a challenging and a fulfilling exercise.

As we celebrate Holy Week this month, we need to be reminded that Easter is not about a single day, a week of spiritual reflection or even forty days of personal sacrifice but rather it is a reminder a lifetime commitment to our renewal and rebirth through the water and the Spirit. Nicodemus continues his rebirth when he chooses to leave behind his life as a Pharisee and become a part, a vital part of the resurrection story of Jesus Christ. Nicodemus joins Joseph of Arimathea in taking Christ's

body from the cross, preparing it and laying it in the tomb. Certainly, his actions ended his old life as part of the Jewish ruling council but without his participation in the events there may not have been the Easter Miracle.

It is not a surprise that Lent and the renewal and rebirth of springtime coincide because the word lent means spring. We should not lose the close connection between the spiritual rebirth and renewal of the Lent and the rebirth and renewal that we see and enjoy in the physical world around us because God's handiwork is visible in both. Friends have we ever needed a spiritual and physical renewal and rebirth more than in these days. The Good News is that both have arrived!

Blessings, Bryan

Planning ahead to Worship our Lord

These are the lessons planned for the coming month. Please take the time to read the scriptures (the message lesson is always the last one listed), review the message preview and consider what the scriptures are teaching us as you prepare to come to worship each Sunday.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Maundy Thursday Drive-In Service
Chatham UMC 7 PM

Good Friday Drive-In Service
St Louisville UMC 7PM

Easter Sunrise Drive-In Service
Liberty UMC 7 AM

Join Us for In-person Easter Service:
St Louisville UMC - 9AM Chatham UMC - 10AM Liberty UMC - 11AM
Live Online at 9AM

HE IS RISEN
CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION
CHATHAMCHARGE.COM

Come Join Us!

We will have Maudy Thursday, April 1st @ Chatham, 7 PM, Good Friday April 2nd @ St Louisville 7 PM, Easter Sunrise April 4th @ Liberty, 7 AM as Drive-In services. Easter Sunday Worship beginning at 9 AM at St Louisville and then the other churches as we usually do.

April 1: Maundy Thursday, Drive-In Service, Communion, 7:00 PM, Chatham UMC

Scripture: Psalm 116:1 – 2, 12 – 19, 1 Corinthians 11:23 – 26, John 13:1 – 17

Message: *Serve Like Jesus*

Keep Watch and Pray with Jesus!

We started a custom last year, a custom where it is possible to feel the poignancy of the night that Jesus is betrayed. In essence each of you, the faithful are asked to accompany Jesus, like Peter, James and John, in the Garden and console him during his great agony as He is arrested and the trials of Good Friday begin.

On the night of Maundy Thursday, April 1st I will ask each of you to take on that challenge, to *Keep Watch and Pray* with and for Jesus! I am asking each of you to set aside one hour of time, from 9 PM Thursday until noon Friday, to pray, read and mediate on the scene in the garden that sacred night. Imagine being there with Jesus in the Garden, watching the sweat of blood drip down his face as he prepares to sacrifice himself for our sins. Dear Ones, will you *Keep Watch and Pray* for one hour to appreciate just what Jesus Christ has done for you?

April 2: Good Friday, Drive-In Service, 7:00 PM, St Louisville UMC

Scripture: Isaiah 52: 13 – 53:12, Hebrews 4:14 – 16, 5:7 – 9

Message: *Our Great High Priest*

April 4: Easter Sunrise, Drive-In Service, 7:30 AM, Liberty UMC

Scripture: Mark 16:1 – 8, Romans 6:3 - 11

Message: *Freed by Death*



April 4: Easter Sunday, Regular times, and places

Scripture: Acts 10:34 - 43, 1 Corinthians 15:1 - 11

Message: *The Miracle of Resurrection*

Description: Every day we wake up to the miracle of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is more than a fact and a promise. It is more than a triumph over tragedy, the conquering of the cross and a victory over the grave it is all of that and more. Resurrection is about transformation. It is a life, our life, being transformed and renewed by the power of Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, at work in us and in the world. The Resurrection story is our story, which sustains our living and gives us hope and joy." The thing that makes Christianity different, special and real is not that we worship a person that was good and worthy of respect and that they died doing and being what they could to make a difference in the lives of others but rather that we worship a living savior!

April 11: Second Sunday of Easter, Guest Speaker: Sharon Babbert

Scripture: Psalm 133, Acts 4:32 - 35

Message: One Heart and Soul

April 18: Third Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Luke 24:36 - 48, Acts 3:12 - 19

Message: Why Are You Surprised

Description: Peter is still feeling empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel story to the world after he gave his first sermon to the Jews at Pentecost and three thousand are saved that day. Peter comes across a lame man at the Temple Gate and heals him with a simple one-word command, *Walk!* The crowd still buzzing from the rousing sermon that Peter gave and now they are amazed at the healing that he has done. But Peter asks *Why Are You Surprised?* He tells them that what he has done has nothing to do with his own power but rather through the authority of Jesus Christ. You knew him, you rejected him, you asked that he be killed in the place of a criminal, but now you know that he has fulfilled the prophecies of old, he is the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He has been resurrected by God, we are witnesses to this so *Why Are You Surprised* by what He can do?

April 25: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Scripture: John 10:11 - 18, Acts 4:5 - 12

Message: No Other Name

Description: Peter is arrested because of his acts of healing in last week's lesson and he is hauled before Caiaphas the Jewish leader that masterminded the death of Christ, and Peter is asked *In Whose Name do you do these things?* Peter replies, by *No Other Name* than the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, the One who still lives today bring salvation for all. It is by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole! Friends, *In Whose Name* do we act in faith, *In Whose Name* do we act with compassion, *In Whose Name* do we act out of love for a broken soul? That name must *be No Other Name* than Jesus Christ who was crucified, and whom God raised from the dead!

St Louisville News

The St. Louisville Church U. M. W. met March 16, their first meeting in a year! Pastor Bryan attended the meeting. A yummy dessert was served. A Prayer Blanket was completed. A contribution was made to the local food pantry honoring Day of Prayer and Self-Denial. It was so great to get out and together with everyone after being apart for so long. Lots of ideas and suggestions for upcoming projects and events were discussed. April's meeting is April 20, at 1:00 p.m. at the church. All are welcome to attend! The church's mission focus for April is the Licking County Coalition of Care.

The Life of the Church Coming Events

April 1 – Drive-In Maundy Thursday Service, Chatham 7:00PM
April 2 – Drive-In Good Friday Service, St Louisville, 7:00 PM
April 4 – Drive-In Easter Sunrise Service, Liberty, 7:00 AM
April 7 – Bible Study, 2PM, dial 508- 924-5730
April 14 – Bible Study, 2PM, dial 508- 924-5730
April 21 – Bible Study, 2PM, dial 508- 924-5730
April 28 – Bible Study, 2PM, dial 508- 924-5730

Happy Birthday!

4/4 Arnold Pope
4/8 Jeff Bennett, Linda Wright
4/10 Betty Street
4/12 Ernestine Spradlin
4/14 Sam Ewers, Bryan Miller
4/18 Corbin Austin, Richard Gwin
4/19 John Prather
4/20 Jessie Baldwin
4/26 William Austin
4/30 Sara Warner

Please Keep these Friends in Prayer

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

St Louisville

Mark Soter	Bryan Miller
Warren Parsons	Teri Schaller
Dick and Mary Ann Power	Bonnie Pound
Pauline Cliver	Betty Street
Carolyn Miller	

Chatham

Frances Garno	Suzann Warner
Jane Smith	Sandy Bennett
Paul and Carol Rostofer	

Liberty

Sally Lindsay	Nancy & Dean
Runyon	
Larry Allen	Janet Bryant
Jennifer (Larry’s daughter)	Ruth & Rick Wilson
Donna & Joe Tate	Charlotte Vernon
Troy Mallow	Gloria Runyon

How to Worship from Home!

- 1) You can watch live at: ChathamCharge.com/live or at any of the church Facebook pages:
Facebook.com/Libertyumcjohnstown
Facebook.com/ChathamUMCNewark
Facebook.com/StLouisvilleUMC
- 2) You can watch the service later at: ChathamCharge.com/sermon (by the way you can watch old services here as well) or at any of the church Facebook pages listed above.
- 3) We have the Sermon Line that allows people to call the number, which is **617-793-8516**. The audio of the services will be available by noon on the following Monday.