



PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



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PILGRIM CHURCH A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATION

April 1st, 2021

EASTER ALARM!

By Pastor Paul Eknes-Tucker

Easter blessings to all of you reading this Pilgrim's Progress Newsletter!

We have been in Non-Ordinary Time for over a year now, but something feels different about Easter this year. After all that our world has endured over the last year, this Easter season seems to have more hope. Could it be that we are slowly, painfully finding new life? With three vaccines now approved in the United States and the number of vaccinations over 3 million doses a day, it does seem like we are slowly crawling out of the abyss of fear, isolation and loneliness that has marked the last year. We are not there yet! There is still a long way to go and there are many obstacles to be overcome -- including the truth that we are our own worst enemies when it comes to this viral plague.

Perhaps the *saddest truth* that the last year has shown us is how potent *fear-mongering* and *disinformation* continue to be. It has long been thought that self-preservation is one of the most powerful human instincts. So, how can it be that we are our own worst enemies when it comes to doing the things that are in our own best interest? *How have the lies become so persuasive, the willingness to believe detrimental ideas so complete, that we risk the lives of those we love most with reckless behaviors?* I get that we are all tired. I get that we have had to adapt to wearing masks and staying distanced from others and washing our hands until they are raw. These adaptations require stamina, care for others and moving us out of our routines. They call forth from us the best of who

we are.

And there is my greatest fear that the pandemic will expose -- this is the best of who we are. The depth of my being resists this possibility. God's grace has taught us better ways to be in relationship, better ways to "love one

GRACE
Wins
have faith

another," better ways to see others as neighbor.

My hope this April is that we can turn this Easter Alarm into serendipitous insight. The cross was not the end of the Easter story. The Romans did not silence Jesus, they amplified His message with a movement they never could have imagined

Easter ALARM



would be the result. So, I continue to stay alert for the "best of us" moments. I remind myself that the voices of division have fallen victim to the ambitions of the powerful. And I refuse to succumb to the creep of selective pessimism that pits me against the stranger.

I pray that Easter's Alarm jolts us back to the Truth of Grace.

Love ONE Another!

The Poet Thinks About the Donkey...

Submitted By Jane Philips

I ran across this poem by Mary Oliver this morning and wanted to share it with all of you. Please enjoy!

On the outskirts of Jerusalem
the donkey waited.
Not especially brave, or filled with
understanding, he stood and waited.

*How horses, turned out into the meadow,
leap with delight!*

*How doves, released from their cages,
clatter away, splashed with sunlight!*

But the donkey, tied to a tree as usual, waited.
Then he let himself be led away.
Then he let the stranger mount.

Never had he seen such crowds!
And I wonder if he at all imagined what was to happen.
Still, he was what he had always been: small, dark, obedient.

I hope, finally, he felt brave.
I hope, finally, he loved the man who rode so lightly upon him,
as he lifted one dusty hoof and stepped, as he had to, forward.



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The Poet Thinks About the Donkey...

Also this Springtime Prayer by W.E.B. Du Bois:
Please enjoy!

"Lord of the springtime, Father of flower, field and fruit, smile on us in these earnest days with the work is heavy and the toil wearisome, lift up our hearts, O God, to the things worthwhile--sunshine and night, dripping rain, the song of birds, books and music, and the voices of our friends. Lift up our hearts to these this night and grant us Thy peace. Amen."

Experiencing The True Love Of God

By Jim Ball

It's springtime! I love springtime!

It is a most wonderful time of renewal and new growth! The leaves of the deciduous trees have started to show. The springtime flowers are in bloom, praising God, Creator of all. Birds are building nests and chicks are hatching. When I see the mother hens with their baby chicks I am, once again, reminded of one of my favorite Bible verses: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... how often have I longed to gather your children together; as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing... Jesus used a mother hen as an example of love because of the strong love a mother hen has for her chicks. A good mother hen defends her chicks from ALL assailants. From where does this love come? From God, of course. God is love. All true love comes from God above. I have experienced God's true love many times, but this one particular time...

After work about 25 years ago on a certain spring day I walked into my chicken house to check a setting hen. She was a game hen and a great mother. Her eggs were to hatch that day. From a distance of about 6 feet I peered into the nest where the hen calmly sat. I saw fuzzy, little heads

sticking out from under the hen's wings. I would come back later, after dark, to move the hen and chicks to a brooding coop.

Then, I heard the cheep of a baby chick. I looked down. A baby chick had fallen out of the nest. It was laying directly under the hen's nest. I stepped up, bent over and picked the chick up. As my uncovered head passed by the nest, the good mother hen attacked me with her dull spurs. (*I'm so glad they were dull.*) It was like she had a pair of drumsticks beating on my head. With my free hand I tried to get this hen off my head but she was quick, fierce and determined. I could not get that hen off my head. She kept beating my head with those 'drumsticks'. When I finally exited the chicken house and ran about 10 feet from it did the hen stop her defense and went back to her nest. Wow, I thought, as I gathered myself. Then, I realized I had a headache. That loving mother hen really laid a beating on me!



I have enjoyed the true love of God many times. This one time it wasn't very enjoyable but it was real. Praise God for His true love! Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

References: Song of Solomon 2:11-13; Luke 13:34; 1 John 4:8,16.

**I dedicate this in memory of Margie Miller, who loved my chicken stories.*

HAPPY Easter

LOVE LIKE
JESUS

LIVE LIKE
JESUS

serve
like
JESUS

COLOR ANSWERS:

How many did you get correct?

What was the very first color mentioned in the Bible?
(Genesis 1:30) **GREEN**

What color is sin? (Isaiah 1:18) **SCARLET**

According to Psalms, after being washed by God, what
color does the sinner become? (Psalm 51:7) **WHITER
THAN SNOW**

What color was the cloth draped over the Ark of the
Covenant? (Numbers 4:6) **BLUE**

What color cloth did Lydia sell? (Acts 16:14) **PURPLE**

According to Isaiah, what color does the Lord wear?
(Isaiah 63:2) **RED**

What color is Coriander seed? (Exodus 16:31) **WHITE**

What color did Job's face turn while he was weeping?
(Job 16:16) **RED**

A virtuous woman's clothing is silk and what color?
(Proverbs 31:22) **PURPLE**

By adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing the numbers found in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles, you will arrive at the number of persons Jesus sent out to preach, teach, and heal in His name.

The number of men who were fed with the miracle multiplication of the boy's lunch of loaves and fish (John 6:10) _____

Divided by ...
The number of lepers who were cleansed and healed by Jesus (Luke 17:12-14) ÷ _____

Multiplied by ...
The number of days Jesus was in the tomb before His resurrection (Luke 24:7) × _____

Divided by ...
The number of years the woman suffered with the issue of blood before she was healed (Matthew 9:20) ÷ _____

Plus ...
The number of years the lame man laid by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:5) + _____

Minus ...
The number of waterpots filled with water that Jesus turned into wine (John 2:6-9) - _____

Plus ...
The number of friends who carried the paralytic man to Jesus to be healed (Mark 2:3) + _____

Minus ...
The number of sons of the widow woman who had a son who was raised from the dead (Luke 7:12) - _____

Divided by ...
The number of days Lazarus was in the tomb (John 11:39) ÷ _____

Minus ...
The number of demons cast out of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2) - _____

Plus ...
The number of blind men who received their sight as Jesus passed by (Matthew 20:30) + _____

Multiplied by ...
The number of men from the country of the Gergesenes who were delivered of demons (Matthew 8:28) × _____

Equals ...
The number of followers Jesus sent out two by two to minister in His name (Luke 10:1) = _____

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When asked this riddle, **80%** of kindergarten kids got the answer, compared to **17%** of Stanford University seniors.

**What is greater than God,
More evil than the devil,
The poor have it,
The rich need it,
And if you eat it, you'll die?**

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?

The Answer is "NOTHING"

"NOTHING" is greater than God!

"NOTHING" is more evil than the Devil!

The Poor have "NOTHING"!

The Rich need "NOTHING"!

And if you eat "NOTHING", you'll die!

**POSITIVITY
IS A
Choice**

**PILGRIM BIRTHDAYS
FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL**



Teresa Moran ~ April 7th
Ben Lawson ~
April 21st
Mark David Jackson ~
April 22nd



**PILGRIM ANNIVERSARIES
FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL**

Bob Greene & Carol Schulz
April 20th

**IF WE HAVE MISSED YOUR BIRTHDAY, WE APOLOGIZE!
PLEASE LET US KNOW & WE WILL GLADLY ADD IT!**