

SAINT PAUL'S EPISTLE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

371 Wolcott Hill Road,
Wethersfield, CT 06109
www.stpaulswethersfield.org
(860) 529-5397

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP & STAFF SUPPORT

PASTOR

Rev. Hugh R. B. Haffenreffer
Office: (860) 529-5397
Cell Phone: (860) 966-7360
pastorh@stpaulswethersfield.org

OFFICE MANAGER

Karen Landry
karen@stpaulswethersfield.org

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Debbie Viola
debviola@stpaulswethersfield.org

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

Russ Bengtson
rbengt@sbcglobal.net

COUNCIL SECRETARY

Sue Agne

TREASURER

Roy Lewis
roy@roylewiscpa.com

FINANCIAL SECRETARY/ BOOKKEEPER

Mary Procyk
mprocyk@stpaulswethersfield.org

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Melissa Cheyney

SUPERINTENDENT OF SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

Cathy Evans

GOOD FRIDAY AND A MOTHER'S GRIEF

(First Printed in April 2006)

I am not one to see a movie over and over again. One exception, however, is Franco Zeffirelli's 1977 mini-series, *Jesus of Nazareth*. In my opinion it stands as the most moving portrayal of the life and passion of Christ to date. While Mel Gibson's 2004 *The Passion of the Christ* may have set the bar for the most realistically *gruesome* portrayal of Jesus' passion and *death*, it doesn't even come close to capturing the depth, mystery and beauty of his *life*.

Over time I have, admittedly, grown desensitized to the portrayal of Jesus' passion in Zeffirelli's film. Maybe a little dose of Gibson's movie helps to establish a kind of "reality check." After all, Jesus was tortured and executed in one of the most inhumane ways known to history—crucifixion. His treatment at the hands of the Romans would have made the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib seem mild in comparison.

What catches me off guard, however—literally moving me to tears each time—is the portrayal of Mary's passion: her suffering, her grief. Zeffirelli's Mary, the mother of Jesus, is portrayed by Olivia Hussey, who had played Juliet in his 1968 film, *Romeo and Juliet*. And while her acting throughout the movie is admittedly stilted—as if the Virgin Mary were perpetually in some slow-motion, altered state of bliss or detachment—the *grief* she portrays as she cradles and rocks the lifeless body of her crucified son gets to me every time. The grief, after all, is a *mother's* grief over her murdered son. I'm not sure that there can be any loss greater than that of a parent losing a child. Other deaths are tragic, without a doubt. But a parent's loss of their child runs the deepest. It is by its very nature a crime *against* nature.

Sandro Botticelli's, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ with Saints* (c. 1490) shown on page 3, captures this mother's grief in a moving and passionate way. Here Mary has swooned, her grief so deep, her loss so great. The overwhelming finality of holding her dead son in her arms is too much to bear.

I have always wondered, even as one with decades of theological training, whether God couldn't have found a better way to redeem the world. If God is God, why was it necessary to sacrifice his son? What parent would do such a thing?

And as soon as I ask this question, I think of the countless mothers who

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WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

Sundays at 8 and 10:30 AM; Thursdays at 7 PM

NEWS & NOTES



FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY

April 26th

Bring a Friend to Church or Sunday School on Sunday April 26th.

Invitations are available on the Fellowship Hall table. Please pick up one and send it to family and friends. Fellowship and Coffee Hour will follow the service.



A SPECIAL EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday, April 5

We need your assistance in decorating the large cross in the sanctuary on Easter Morning.

Each family should bring in a single fresh flower to place on the cross. **Mark your Calendar** as a reminder and join in our Easter Tradition.



SPRING CLEAN UP

Sunday, May 3rd at Noon

Please join us after the late service to clean up the church grounds. Dress down or bring a change of clothes. Bring a rake and a bagged lunch. Many hands make light work. All are welcome!

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sent their sons, and now daughters, off to war throughout our nation's history. I think, for example, of the unimaginable loss of life on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day and around the globe during World War II. I remember the face of my own grandmother when she shared with my mother the tragic news of the loss in the Vietnam war of my cousin Dougie Young, then just 21, to "friendly fire." In that exchange of sorrow I momentarily touched the tragic grief of countless mothers whose own dreams died in those battles.

Sometimes, history has shown, it takes the *ultimate* sacrifice to bring an end to tyranny and oppression. Death brings life. Oh, we yearn for a far better way, but in the face of evil whose intent is even greater evil, such sacrifice is the price to be paid.



Sandro Botticelli, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ with Saints* c. 1490

On that tragic Friday, the one we call "Good", a mother grieved inconsolably over the premature loss, the tragic waste, of her son—her first born, *her* dream. And as the stone was rolled across the tomb's opening, sealing death within, this mother was fated to carry the sting of that death in her heart as too many mothers have.

But wait! On the Sunday that follows, the one we call "Easter", death gave way to life. A mother's grief gave way to a *disciple's* giddy joy. Through an intervening love greater than our imagination—greater than death—that dead and lifeless son is now our risen and victorious Lord. "Oh death, where is thy sting . . . now?"

Pastor Hugh Haffrenreffer

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS . . . ABOUT EASTER

Why does the date of Easter change each year?

Unlike Christmas, which is always December 25 and, therefore, can occur on any day of the week, the dating of Easter is dependent upon when the first spring full moon occurs and then when the next Sunday takes place. Ever since the Council of Nicaea, in 325 AD, Easter was to be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon that occurred on or after the vernal (spring) equinox. To keep things simple (and because establishing the exact timing of the equinox was difficult in 325, the church settled on March 21 as the *ecclesiastical* date of spring. (This year, by the way, the first day of spring was actually March 20.)

Why does Easter sometimes take place in March and at other times in April?

Based on what we said above, we can see that the

earliest that Easter could take place is March 22 and the latest is April 25. If, for example, March 21 happens to be both a Saturday and if the moon is full on that day, then the next day (which would be the next Sunday) is Easter: March 21. If, however, the full moon took place on March 20, and if 29.5 days later (the next full moon or April 18) happens to be a Sunday, then the following Sunday, April 25 would be Easter.

How often does Easter take place on these extreme dates?

These extreme dates occur very rarely. In 2008 Easter was on March 23. It won't be that early until the year 2160. In 2111 it was on April 24. It won't take place on the 22nd until 2285! In 2038 it will take place on April 25. Then it will be not until 2095 that it will take place on the 24th again. With the median date of Easter being April 8, this year's date of April 5 puts us pretty close to the middle.

etcetera...



Adult Fellowship

Join us at the Greater Hartford Academy of Arts to see the musical *Sweet Charity*

Saturday, May 9

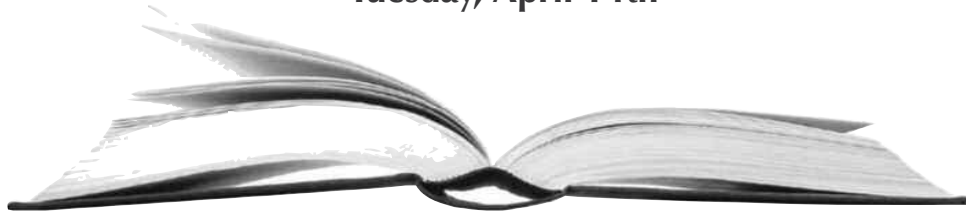
7:30 PM

Cost: \$10.00

For tickets contact: Art & Carol Bruce at 860- 257-7327

CHURCH CHAPTERS

Tuesday, April 14th



Our monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14th at 6:30 at Carole Bruce's home. Our book for this month is *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Frye* by Rachel Joyce. It tells the story of a recently retired man who sets out one morning to mail a letter to an old friend but decides to keep on walking and deliver the letter himself. He is a "quirky" character whose journey poignantly examines love and devotion; this story of faith, fidelity and redemption will stick with you!

Books will be available at the Wethersfield Public Library, saved under St. Paul's Book Club.

We have one more meeting in May before we take our summer break! We are looking for suggestions for a special book to end our winter/spring reading. Join us!

Any suggestions or questions, please call Sue Agne at 860-563-0776.



ST. PAUL'S GIVING TREE

What's the buzz this month?

Our Giving Tree focus is utilities and the amount of money that is needed to keep St. Paul's lights and other electrical needs operating here at the church.

Let's "giveowatt" and help to reduce St. Paul's "kilowatt" bills by using the envelopes in the pews or those hanging near the Giving Tree in the Fellowship Hall to make your donation. Thanks!

MONTHLY EPISTLE SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month

We prefer typed submissions that can be emailed to us, however you can leave submissions in the office with Office Manager Karen Landry

If you are including a photograph with your submission please provide a JPEG file that is separate from your typed article

If you are emailing your submission, please send to both addresses below:

Karen Landry at Karen@stpaulswethersfield.org

Aileen Casey at aileen@aileendesigns.com

St. Paul's MEMBERS IN SERVICE for APRIL 2015

ACOLYTES:

April 2 - Jared Christensen . . Maundy Thursday 7 PM
3 - Arden Adamo. Good Friday 7 PM
5 - Bryce Gentino Easter 8 AM
5 - Celia Cheyney. Easter 10:30 AM
12 - Breen Bernard
19 - Cameron Cheyney
26 - Jared Christensen

ALTAR GUILD:

Debbie Howe, Coordinator, 860-529-8583

April 2 - Deb Howe & Bill Fischer, Jr.
3 - Deb Howe
5 - Patty Bengtson & Deb Howe
12 - Jennie Dotts & Deb Howe
19 - Winnie Sawrun & Ann French
26 - Bob Bowman & Bill Fischer, Jr.

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

April 2 - Mary Procyk. 7 PM
3 - Bill Fischer, Jr,. 7 PM
5 - Art Bruce 8 AM
Patty Bengtson. 10:30 AM
12 - Art Bruce 8 AM
Mary Procyk 10:30 AM
19 - Debbie Viola 8 AM
Mary Procyk 10:30 AM
26 - Jim Newmark. 8 AM
Bill Fischer, Jr, 10:30 AM

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

Sue Agne, Coordinator, 860-563-0776

April 2 - Sue Agne Maundy Thursday 7 PM
3 - Mary Procyk. Good Friday 7 PM
5 - TBA Easter 8 AM
5 - Sue Agne. Easter 10:30 AM
12 - Walter Ruppap
19 - Curt Leonard
26 - Carole Hughes

TAPING:

Jan Pergande, Coordinator, 860-644-2888

April- Jan Pergande

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS:

Winnie Sawrun, Coordinator, 860-529-7588

April 5 - Easter Breakfast
12 - Mary Procyk
19 - Debbie & George Howe
26 - Stephanie Lohmann

FINANCE:

Mary Procyk, Coordinator, 860-257-4793

April 5 - Lillian Doerschler
12 - Heather Christensen
19 - Lois Woy
26 - Bob Bowman

READERS:

Lillian Doerschler, Coordinator, 860-529-1939

April 2 - Judy Gerken Maundy Thursday 7 PM
3 - Sue Agne Good Friday 7 PM
5 - Lillian Doerschler Easter 8 AM
5 - Mary Procyk Easter 10:30 AM
12 - Mary Procyk
19 - Bill Fischer , Jr.
26 - Patty Bengtson

USHERS:

Brian Beckwith, Coordinator; 8AM, 860-563-4066

April - Brian Beckwith

Louise Lostocco, Coordinator, 10:30AM, 860-529-3079

April 3 - TBA & TBA
5 - Mary Ann Mead & Dick Agne
12 - Mary Ann Mead & Bill Fischer, Sr.
19 - Mark Olson & Walter Ruppap
26 - Mark Olson & Walter Ruppap

APRIL 2015 | EVENT CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM	2 Maundy Thursday Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Maundy Thurs. Serv. 7 PM Choir 8 PM	3 Good Friday AA 10:00 AM Good Friday Tenebrae 7 PM	4 AA 7:30 PM
5 Easter Sunday Easter Services 8 & 10:30 AM Easter Breakfast 8:30 AM	6 Cub Scouts 6 PM	7	8 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	9 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Thurs. Night Worship 7 PM	10 AA 10:00 AM	11 AA 7:30 PM
12 2nd Sunday of Easter Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Outreach 12 PM	13	14 Ch. Chapters 6:30 PM	15 Epistle Deadline AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	16 Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Thurs. Night Worship 7 PM	17 AA 10:00 AM	18 AA 7:30 PM
19 3rd Sunday of Easter Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM	20	21	22 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	23 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Thurs. Night Worship 7 PM	24 AA 10:00 AM	25 AA 7:30 PM
26 4th Sunday of Easter <i>Bring a Friend Sunday</i> Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM	27	28 Parish Admin. 6:30 PM Ch. Council 7:30 PM	29 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	30 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Thurs. Night Worship 7 PM		

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April 2015

Volume 73, Number 4

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