Gerrardstown Good News



**Signs of Life** Pastor Karen

It’s almost March. I’m ready for spring! How about you? I went on a hunt to find signs of spring… I didn’t have to go far. There were buds on the tree just outside my door and some early signs of Jonquils and Tulips a little bit up the walk. There were signs of perennials coming back to life and even some grass and weeds looking very green. No matter what the temperatures tell me, spring is pushing its way through the earth and out to the edges of the tree limbs.

What about you and me? Where are the signs of life springing up in us? Well if you are reading this that means you woke up today and are breathing! You are alive! But how about your spiritual life? What are the signs of life there? It’s easy to read a scripture, pray a few prayers for others and go on our way or just wing a prayer and move on with our day. Are we really alive to the Spirit of God who often speaks so quietly we won’t hear, unless we are listening carefully?

Our life signs may not be as green or as fruitful as we’d like. Jesus told us the fruit that overflows out of our mind and mouth is the result of what is in our heart. (Matt. 15:18-19) What kind of tree or plant are we becoming? Are we an Oak of righteousness or a bramble bush all sticky and dry? Or could we be a tree planted by the streams of water sinking our roots deep? If I am honest I sometimes find that my roots are pretty short and my temper likewise. I pray often for a change of heart and to have the joy of God’s salvation restored in me. (Psalm 51:12)

There is a passage in Jeremiah that speaks to these signs of life: “Thus says the LORD: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the LORD. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse-- who can understand it? I, the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.” (Jer. 17:5-10 NRS- emphasis added)

Thank goodness Jesus came to overcome the curse! He invites us to join him and those others who also want to bear much good fruit as we wait upon the Lord, trusting in God praying and worshiping together, letting God be our trust! This trust must be very important if Jeremiah repeated it! As Christ’s followers come together, we trust God in Jesus, we don’t have to worry or fret about things. Instead we can seek the Lord about them, entrusting to God what is beyond us and together giving him our praise and thanksgiving.

At times we may need to admit our wayward hearts and dry fruitlessness, then God can work a miracle in us through the cross of Jesus where all the selfish intentions we carry were crucified with him. Therefore, even though Easter is weeks away, we can even now receive his resurrection light and life in our souls and hearts today. Jesus can eradicate the hard, lifeless parts as he fills us with his living water that will irrigate and grow the seed of trusting faith so we will produce good fruit in how we think, speak, and act. Just like the plants and trees that are showing signs of spring surging in their buds and branches, we can be like the trees planted by streams of living water. And if we search, we may find signs of trust and beginning of fruit in our lives.

***You can watch the sermon videos online at gerrardstownpc.com or check out GPC on Facebook at Gerrardstown Presbyterian Church Life***

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**March Events @ GPC**

**\*March 1-March 30th Journey with Jesus to Jerusalem** continues– pick up a packet today in the Hall or on Sunday mornings or email gerrardstpc@gmail.com to request one be emailed to you.

**\*Worship Every Sunday at 11am**

**\*Sunday March 11th Fellowship Breakfast** 9:30am-10:45am in the Hall before Worship at 11am

**\*Sunday March 18th – Worship and Communion 11am**

**\*Thursday March 22nd – Session** meets 7pm

**\*Saturday March 24th – Easter Make and Take with Dinner 3:30pm-5:30pm**

**Holy Week Schedule:**

**\*Sunday March 25th Palm Sunday** service 11am

**\*Tues. March 27th – Community Dinner 4:30pm-6:30pm** in the Church Hall

**\*Thursday March 28th Maundy Thursday Service 7pm** with Communion

**\*March 30th Good Friday Prayer Stations** in the Sanctuary **and Prayer Walk** in the Cemetery

 ***If you know anyone in need of help for addiction or mental illness, WV has a 24 hour hotline 1-844-HELP4WV. The Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is 1-800-273-8255. If you know anyone who is having trouble paying a light bill, rent or needs mortgage help and other social services can be found by calling 211.***

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**Easter Make and Take**

**Saturday March 24th**

**3:30pm-5:30pm**

Please join us for an afternoon that includes learning more about Jesus and the Easter story through hands-on learning activities, crafts and discussion during our sit down fellowship dinner. All children will leave with a bag full of their self-created projects, crafts and an Easter book. For more information email gerrardstpc@gmail.com or call 304-226-2316



GPC is on a Journey to Jerusalem with Jesus. We hope you will join us. Just ask Pastor Karen for a packet that includes Sign Post devotions and a place to record your miles. As you walk, record your miles and turn them in every week as together we walk 5922 miles to Jerusalem by Good Friday of Holy Week. May our time walking strengthen our bodies, minds and spirits as we prepare for Resurrection Sunday April 1st!

**February Session Meeting Highlights**

Session continues to study the book *Success Is Who You Are* as their devotional.

Minutes of Annual Congregational meeting and January Session Meeting were approved.

Clerk reported a Ladies Retreat is offered by Charlestown Presbyterian on April 21st. It will be led by Kelly Latta cost is $25. All women of the church are invited.

Monthly subscription cost is $44 per month for Focus on the Family and Church Around the World.

Session approved the current vouchers brought from the congregation for Mission funding.

Flower orders for Easter are due early March.

The Gladden Family used the Hall for a dinner following a funeral Feb. 17th and gave a $200 donation. Hall will be used March 17th for a birthday party.

Family and Children’s Ministry is planning an Easter Make and Take March 24th 3:30pm-5:30pm using the Hall and Sanctuary building. The committee will offer the congregation opportunities to assist in this event. Children will be invited to participate in leading Call to Worship on Palm Sunday.

Holy Week services were approved and are listed on the calendar in this newsletter.

A request to move the spotlights closer to the pulpit was approved by Session.

Session members are researching a new landscaping plan and the costs involved for the outside of the church.

Mission was made possible through the donations made in January on Souper Bowl Sunday and from the EPMC Ash Wednesday Service participants with the outcome for CCAP Loaves and Fishes being 151 lbs of non-perishable foods and donations of over $140. Thank you to all!

Please check the bulletin board across from the coat rack in the Sanctuary for other thank you notes from other Missions made possible in our community.

**2018 Lenten Giving Opportunities**

****We are collecting items for those men, women and children who find themselves living with no place to call home. The following items are needed: Blankets, bed linens, bath towels, sleeping bags, coats, gloves, warm socks, non-perishable food items and personal care items such as: toothpaste/brush, deodorant, shampoo, shaving cream, etc. Any warm outerwear (hats, gloves, coats, etc) will be accepted. Please no clothing.

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We are also collecting items needed by homeless pets at the Berkeley County Animal Shelter: Bleach, Liquid Laundry detergent, dish detergent, Pine Sol, paper towels, trash bags (13 gal. & 39 gal.), cat and dog treats, towels, blankets, rugs, kitten dry (brown only) food, puppy chow (brown only), dry (brown only) cat and dog food, canned cat and dog food, cat litter (non-scoopable type).



One Great Hour of Sharing is also an opportunity to give. Envelopes and inserts will be in the bulletins later this month.