

## God's Grace Given!

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. (John 1: 14 – 18)

Jesus Christ holds the promise of a new day for the whole world. Like the first beam of light, which splits the darkness between heaven and earth, the birth of Jesus Christ was--and still is--the breakthrough of help and hope. To all those neglected and despised in the world he is the One who declares, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." To all those bowed down by toil and the grim futility of life for which there seems to be no future at all, he is the One who calls, Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes, Jesus speaks with the voice of hope: "Hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."

To all who lie on beds of suffering and pain, troubled by loneliness and frustration, he says with quiet confidence, "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." To all who quake at the prospect of death, struggling against something for which there is no cure this side of eternity, he asserts with quiet confidence, "I am the Resurrection and the life... whoever believes in me shall never die."

Oh, come, blest Dayspring from on high  
And cheer us by your drawing nigh.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Truly because of God's grace we can all have a Happy New Year and even unto all eternity. May the Lord continue to shine His light upon you, and may His light in you shine through to others held still in the darkness of unbelief. God bless! Pastor Les

How silently and sometimes quickly the days seem to slip by as we move from Christmas to Epiphany (three kings) to Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Certainly in between these special church calendar events are others such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, and send your pastor (all expenses paid) to the Bahamas month. As this New Year begins I will be or soon will be in the correct parsonage. My most grateful thanks to everyone for everything and a special thanks to those who have worked very hard to get the parsonage ready for me. I look forward to a new year with all of you as well as the planning and sharing of the adventures that the year will bring us. Certainly we know that Christ must be our guide and inspiration through each day or else we will wonder in a desert of uncertainty. I encourage all of you to be involved with your church family and part of that involvement I would hope includes being at a Bible study. Let the journey begin!!!!

In Christ's service,

Pastor Les

P.S. Remember this newsletter will come out quarterly from now on instead of monthly. Announcements of events happening that are not included in the newsletter will be made in worship times as usual. If you are physically unable to attend worship yet would like to be informed then please contact the church secretary and ask what is scheduled for the upcoming week or next (716-791-4978). Also remember please that sometimes a meeting may need to take place and not enough time will be available to inform everyone.

## **Activities & Meetings**

**Fillmore Chapel Administrative Council** meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month following worship.

**Ransomville Administrative Council** meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

**ARKS** meet on Sunday evenings at Ransomville Church from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

**Prayer and Support Group** meet on Mondays at 10:00 AM at the Ransomville Church.

**Bible Study** meet on Wednesday evenings at Ransomville Church at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Fillmore Chapel United Methodist Women** meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

**Ransomville United Methodist Women** meet the last Thursday of every month at 1:00 PM. Locations to be announced.

## **Calendar of Events**

### **January**

6<sup>th</sup> – Penny & Food Collection

8<sup>th</sup> – Ransomville Administrative Council meeting at 7:00 PM

10<sup>th</sup> – Charge Conference at Ransomville Church at 7:00 PM

20<sup>th</sup> – Fillmore Chapel Administrative Council following Worship

### **February**

3<sup>rd</sup> – Communion, Penny & Food Collection at Ransomville Church

6<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday

12<sup>th</sup> – Ransomville Administrative Council meeting at 7:00 PM

17<sup>th</sup> – Fillmore Chapel Administrative Council meeting following Worship

### **March**

2<sup>nd</sup> – Penny & Food Collection

9<sup>th</sup> – Daylight Savings Time begins

16<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday

20<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday

20<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday

23<sup>rd</sup> – Easter

## Think of Him

When you see the Easter Bunny's  
Fur so snowy bright;  
Think of how Christ took our sins  
And washed them snowy whit.

When your Easter bonnet  
You place upon your head;  
Think of how they placed on Him  
That thorny crown so red.

When you tint those Easter eggs  
With stripes of every hue;  
Think of all the stripes He bore  
Upon His back for you.

When you see the Easter lilies  
Decked in stately grace;  
Think of our new bodies  
When we gaze upon His face.

When you spend this Easter,  
Think of His love for you;  
For Jesus is our Easter!  
He makes our lives brand new!

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ,  
He is a new creature:  
Old things are passed away;  
Behold, all things are become new.”  
(II Corinthians 5: 17)*

## HOW LENT BEGAN

By Hoyt Hickman

Lent began in the early church as the time for intensive final preparation and examination of candidates for baptism at Easter.

Candidates spent as much as three years in preparation that was more like apprenticeship than classroom instruction. This concluded with a time of "scrutinies" that became what we know as Lent. It was a time of self-examination and of scrutiny by other Christians to determine if a candidate was ready for baptism.

Later, when large numbers of adult candidates were no longer being baptized, Lent became a time when all Christians were challenged to seek spiritual renewal.

The first recorded reference to Lent as 40 days was at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. This time came to be seen as comparable to Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, when he fasted and prepared himself for his ministry.

Lent actually lasts 46 days, but the six Sundays in Lent do not count as part of the 40 because Sunday is a festive celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Even in Lent, every Sunday is a "little Easter."

### Lessons of Lent

Lent is a season when we reflect on the sinless life of our Savior, Jesus, and the salvation he won for us through his suffering and death for us on the cross. This period of preparation begins on Ash Wednesday, lasts for 40 days, and takes us to Good Friday, the day of Christ's death, and on to Easter, the day of his resurrection. In that time, we are called upon to be students of our Savior.

**Palms:** The palms of Palm Sunday are a symbol of praise. People praised Jesus as a king and the Son of David. They waved their palms to welcome the Lord into their midst. With the palms we raise on this Palm Sunday, we praise the very King of our souls, and we welcome the One who has come to walk the road of suffering and death that should have been ours to tread.

**The Bread and Cup:** On Maundy Thursday, Christ took bread and said, "Take and eat." He took the cup of wine. "Take and drink," he said. When we take Holy Communion on this year's Maundy Thursday, we get a glimpse of what that first Maundy Thursday must have been like. We are nourished in our faith and cleansed of our sins each time we do this sacrament in remembrance of him.

**The Cross:** Good Friday is the day when we truly "lift high the cross." Though the cross was an agent of execution, Christ's death on the cross on Good Friday transformed it into a device for our deliverance. We lift our eyes to the cross of Christ on this Good Friday 2000 years later and recognize that our sins were nailed to it and the ways of wickedness were put to death there forever.

**The Tomb:** On Holy Saturday we find ourselves acutely aware of the reality of death. Jesus was dead. He was wrapped in grave clothes. He was buried in a tomb. And the fact is that each of us has a tomb in our future. We will one day die. But the silver lining is that Holy Saturday gives way to Easter Sunday, when Christ breaks forth from the grave and makes it possible for us all to break forth from our tombs on the Last Day.

### January Birthdays

#### **Ransomville**

6 – Katherine Truesdell  
7 – Clyde Burmaster  
16 – Linda Randall  
Truesdell  
19 – James Harbison  
21 – Sue Burmaster  
21 – Harold Barnes  
21 – Alan Spring

#### **Fillmore Chapel**

1 – Herberta Skellen  
1 – Elberta Wills  
1 – Lisa Sembert  
5 – Kendra Schultz  
9 – Matthew Hillman  
11 – Spencer Segar  
12 – Maureen Koroschetz  
14 – Cathy Wills  
14 – Joseph Heasley  
15 – Beth Skellen  
16 – Erin Wilkinson

### Anniversaries

#### **Ransomville**

3 – Julie & Dana Hatchett  
18 – Denton & Esther Hardison  
28 – Earl & Jane Steiner

### February Birthdays

#### **Ransomville**

3 – Nancy Trank  
5 – Eric Olsen  
6 – Pam Jacobs  
7 – Earl J. Robins  
10 – Tom Jacobs  
11 – Gina Piva  
11 – Samuel Schroeder

15 – Dorothy Baker  
19 – Dean Schroeder  
19 – Paige Hardison  
21 – Steve Olsen  
25 – Patricia Robins  
26 – Daniel Schroeder  
27 – Lila Myers

#### **Fillmore Chapel**

2 – Mona Carney  
2 – Doug Ortiz  
2 – Donna Sulinski  
9 – Cindy Stewart  
13 – Brett Senek

17 – Megan Tweed  
18 – C. Kenneth Wills, III  
24 – Jeff Wilkinson  
25 – Caleb Canfield

### March Birthdays

#### **Ransomville**

1 – Bill McLaughin  
3 – Callin Wade  
3 – Teresa Trank  
8 – Raymond Graf  
8 – Gage Maacks  
9 – Julie Spring Hatchett  
10 – Eric Truesdell  
10 – Doug S. Siez  
12 – Nicole York

12 – Betty Manchester  
16 – Amanda Jacobs  
19 – Timothy  
20 – Michael Trank  
20 – Amanda Nichols  
22 – Marion Frey  
22 – Amy Olsen  
24 – Ann Jacobs  
30 – Teresa Willms

#### **Fillmore Chapel**

1 – Pam Lederhouse  
9 – Hazel Lederhouse  
10 – Olivia May Wills  
16 – Larry Peters

22 – Andrew Hillman  
24 – Austin Susice  
26 – Sue Lederhouse  
27 – Marc Canfield

### Anniversaries

#### **Ransomville**

4 – Raymond & Erva Graf

#### **Fillmore Chapel**

2 – Chester & Donna Sulinski  
26 – Jim & Pam Tweed

Please let us know updates for the  
Birthday and Anniversary list.

## United Methodist Women

**Fillmore Chapel United Methodist Women:** The women have made a donation in the amount of \$150.00 to the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen in memory of Betty Lederhouse. Betty passed away on December 28, 2005.

### A.R.K.S. Youth News From Hap Skellen

2008 will be a year of challenge. As you read this, look around the church, how many teens in church today. Not Many. That's the Challenge facing us as a church family and those of us in youth ministries. Just last week I talked to a youth leader I have respected for many years, and they are calling it quits, they just can't get the youth to come anymore. Awhile back I attended a church where they are shutting down the youth group. Youth events like the Fall Gathering that we as a group attended started out with 1,000 est. now it draws 300 – 400.

Where are the teens going? What are they doing? Why will a teen go to a sports practice 7 days a week and stay after school for hours practicing for a play but will not come to church for an hour on Sunday morning, or come for a youth meeting once a week? These are questions that need to be answered.

There have been nights that I have sat in an empty youth room, planned an event, and no one shows up. We need to ask what needs to change. We are two small churches, we do not have the gym, and we do not have a game room that the big churches can offer.

The challenge this year for me is to figure out the answer to that question and re-energize the youth group. Make a group that they can't wait to come to.

I ask you to pray for this group, we always can use help driving, need someone to help run a weekly Bible study. Just come out to a meeting and hangout with the teens. Teens I think need to see adults care and love them. We may be small but we have a whole lot of love to give.

If you know a teen, ask them what are they looking for, and pass it on to Mom York or me. My e-mail is [hskellen@aol.com](mailto:hskellen@aol.com).

It maybe I have run my course, and they need someone different, what ever it takes to get them coming back to youth.

Like I have said many times to the teens I count them as a blessing in my life.