

### *Pastor's Message*

I think sometimes we are so wrongheaded in how we live our lives. Every year we come to an event that changed everything. It's called Easter. And yet we, particularly God's people - the people of the Church, neglect our responsibilities. Our nation is in terrible trouble and we have the answer to move things in the right direction.

What do I mean by this? Well let me lay it out as clearly as I can. Jesus Christ died on a cross. And three days later Jesus rose from the grave. This, my friends, is a historical fact. Jesus came and died for the sins of the whole world. And after three days in the grave, He was raised from the dead. It wasn't just the few, but for the many that He did this. However, there are only a few who have believed this - so far.

Anyway, this plan of God's was for the whole world. It was meant to affect every facet of our daily existence. I mean our economics, our politics, our families and anything and everything else you can think of are of great concern to God. God created us and all which we live with. Meaning, He has a plan and a purpose for all of us.

There was a theologian and a Cambridge professor by the name of William Perkins. He studied biblical texts and concluded that God had ordained three distinct spheres of society: family, church, and state.

Another deeply respected theologian was Abraham Kuyper. He took William Perkins ideas and termed them as *Sphere Sovereignty*. His understanding was that each sphere has a proper domain. When the spheres are balanced and each institution is properly managing its own areas of responsibility, peace and prosperity result. When they are imbalanced because an institution abandons its responsibility or oversteps into another domain, society begins to unravel and head toward oppression and misery.

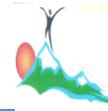
I want you to think about sphere sovereignty as three balloons in a box just big enough to fit them all. If one balloon is blown up bigger, the other two get squeezed. Sphere sovereignty says the balance between the institutions in society is like that. If the church sphere gets too big, as often happened in the Middle Ages, families and the government will get squeezed. If the family sphere gets too big, as happened in Italy in the 1400s when a handful of powerful families, such as the Medici, controlled everything, the church and the government will find it difficult to operate properly.

Today, the rapid expansion of government can be expected to hurt families and churches. Okay, after you have lived with these questions for awhile I'd like you to think about how our world functions. And think about the various problems which we come up against. Let me give an example. When faced with a difficult decision, such as who should take care of the poor, we need to grapple with three questions.

1. Is this the proper domain of this sphere?
2. What is the effect on the other spheres?
3. Could this problem be better solved another way?

Let's say a local government has to make decisions about caring for children who are without families. The city could decide to take matters into its own hands and house the children in city-run orphanages. Is this wise? The government taking on the responsibility of raising children could risk damaging the family sphere and allowing the church to forgo its responsibility to the fatherless. Also, the government is not equipped like the family or the church to offer the sort of precise solutions required when dealing with individual lives.

If, on the other hand, the city government asks churches for help, the churches can recruit and



support families willing to take in foster children. The government can exercise its proper role as a clearinghouse for identifying children in need of help. Families can expand their borders and give unwanted children a loving environment in which to grow and flourish.

C.S. Lewis, I believe, summarized it well when he said, *"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."*

It is my hope that as we celebrate Easter this year, will be the start of seeing and then functioning in a more proper order with the role of family, church, and state in a better balance. Wouldn't that be a wonderful gift for us to offer to the world in which we live? And the first step is by beginning to ask the right questions.

A friend in Christ,

*Pastor Vern*

### *Administrative Board*

The Administrative Board met on March 5<sup>th</sup> with nine members present. The Financial Secretary reported receipts in February were \$5099, and the treasurer reports expenses of \$6366.

Our Pastor, as always, was busy with the work of the Church. He officiated at three funerals, attended prayer meetings and Board meetings, made several hospital, home and public visits. He also attended accountability and Men's Group meetings and assisted at the Food Pantry. He participates in Ruritan, after school program at DCS. We are very thankful to have Vern as our pastor.

Tom Springer and Jon Benedict are working on obtaining supplies for the new room behind the organ pipes in the sanctuary. Vern is taking care of having steps installed where the organ used to sit.

Fortunately, Dick Smith still has some of the red carpet on hand to fill in that space where the organ was. The Community Chorus will present their Easter concert in our sanctuary at 2:30 P.M. on March 25<sup>th</sup>. We will be providing cookies and punch.

Plans are underway for a Maundy Thursday service at the Parish House. Easter Sunrise Service will take place at Highland Forest at 6 a.m. No Communion on Easter Sunday. Communion will be served on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Terry and Martha Major will be our guest speakers on that day, with an update on Haiti.

Mike Harris will be unable to head up the Day of Worship this year. Does anyone else want to head this up??? Contact Vern if you are willing to serve.

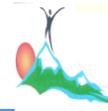
Respectfully Submitted,

Bonnie Ziegler, Clerk

### *Mission*

Our Mission sub-committee will be meeting soon to discuss a more even disbursement throughout the year for Mission monies that formerly have been sent out in November. This will place less burden on our recourses at holiday time and still provide allocations within our proposed budget.

Thank you to all who helped us at the Food Pantry over the holidays to distribute extra Christmas holiday meals to 98 families in the DeRuyter area. We cannot thank you enough for the churches continued support of personal hygiene items, laundry soap, and canned goods that are given out every week. We have a very special Cornell Co-Operative agent, (Liz Coffey), that visits us on a monthly basis during our regular hours and provides samples of healthy meal options with recipes that our clients and staff all enjoy. She even provides



classes at the Library teaching people how to shop more economically, including a visit to local grocery stores! Our churches involvement at the pantry has been a gift to volunteers and clients, but we could not continue without the benefit of the entire community. Thank you to all!

There has been a special request from our Missionaries – Carlos and Caryn Benitez: On February 26<sup>th</sup> Caryn woke up with no hearing in her right ear. Medical facilities are fairly good in their part of East Asia and she was diagnosed with Right Idiopathic Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss. She is currently on steroids and awaiting further testing this month, but we need to pray for her in connection with this unexpected illness and future treatment. May God be with Caryn and Carlos as she navigates her way through this turn of events. Their address is available if anyone wishes to correspond with them personally and will be posted on the bulletin board at Church.

Bob (and Jeanetta) Reed in Florida had a very interesting Christmas newsletter. Bob recently attended a weekend retreat for KAIROS Prison Ministry. This is a maximum-security prison outreach that he states in all his 35 years of Chaplaincy in jails and large Correctional Facilities is one of the most impacting outreaches for the incarcerated that he has ever observed. The program gives the possibility of creating an authentic Christian Community for inmates while they are still inside. The program runs from Thursday – Sunday with one on one involvement between inmates and leaders that result in lasting meaningful relationships that help sustain the inmate while incarcerated with continued follow-up. They experience a ground- breaking experience with the Lord, fellow inmates and volunteers who reach out with love and concern! What makes the program a powerful event is in it's simplicity and lack of spiritual celebrities to stimulate attendance. It is the volunteer that ends up being the tool God uses in a profound way and makes a more cohesive

community within the facility. It is a family built on hope in Jesus that care for one another within the prison walls with big follow-up. He says he wishes he had known about this program years ago and asks for our prayers that this multi-faceted Christ Centered Ministry be expanded into more facilities. Go to – [mykairos.org](http://mykairos.org) to glimpse Kairos in action.

### *Christian Education*

Happy Spring!

Linda and Jon's young adult class is focusing on how important it is to be kind to everyone. They continue to meet at the Parish House, which is working out well.

The PK-6<sup>th</sup> grade has been studying the importance and meaning of Easter with lessons that are hands on and games too.

Next time you have some M&M's think of the

“Sweet Truth of Easter”

Hold the M&M's and turn them and you will see the “M” become a “W” and “E” and then a “3”.

The “E” stands for Easter

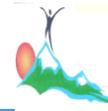
The “3” represents the 3 days Jesus spent in the grave.

The “M” reminds us of the mercy the Messiah showed as He died in our place.

The “W” reminds us that He is worthy of our worship and calls us to be His witnesses

As always thank you for your support.

Maurine



*Vacation Bible School News*

Come join in the planning of the VBS program on April 8<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM. at the Cuyler church. Thought about helping this year? Then set the date for July 16-20 and become a volunteer.

*Calling All Ladies*

Save the date! Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> for an afternoon of “Ladies Tea”. Watch for the details.

*Calendar of Events*

**Each Sun.** @ 9:30 am Sunday School Classes  
@ 11 am Worship Service

**Each Tues.** @ 8:30 am– Prayer in Pastor Vern’s office

**Each Wed.** @ 6:30-7:30 pm –Prayer @ Parish House

**1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of month** - M&M’s

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat. of month**

14<sup>th</sup> - Men's group meets @ 8 am. @ PH

28<sup>th</sup> - Men's group meets @ 8 am. @ Lynn’s Diner

**April 1<sup>st</sup>**-6am Easter Sunrise Service-Highland Forest

No Sunday School Classes

11am Easter Service @ our Church

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>**- 7pm Admin Bd meeting @ PH

**April 5<sup>th</sup>**-7pm Spiritual Bd meeting @ PH

**April 8<sup>th</sup>**- 11 am Haiti presentation-Pastor Terry Major & Martha Major  
Also-Communion Service

**April 8<sup>th</sup>**- VBS Meeting at 2 PM Cuyler Church

**April 17<sup>th</sup>**- Ruritan Dinner at Parish House

*Birthdays & Anniversaries*

Apr 3~~Aubrey Hennigan

Apr 9~~Laurie Palladino

Apr 9~~Ola Mae Haskins

Apr 10~Carrie Lidell Long

Apr 12~~Maurine Brown

Apr 13~~Tom Springer

Apr 15~~Ann Etter

Apr 16~~ Bobby Cuddeback

Apr 17~~Joan Ball

Apr 20~~Dorothy Arnold

Apr 21~~Amy Downs

Apr 25~~Becky Wightman

Apr 30~~Hunter Baker



*Reading Corner*

When we live and pray as Jesus did, then like him we can have the complete confidence that the Father has heard us, even while we are still praying (John 11:41). The power and authority that God has given his people lies in this unity with Jesus; our life, our longing, and our prayer must be united with his. Excerpt from “The Prayer God Answers” by Eberhard Arnold & Richard J. Foster

*National Day of Prayer*

Thursday May 3<sup>rd</sup> is National Day of Prayer. The theme this year is UNITY.

Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:3