

THE SPIRE

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APRIL 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Mainline Protestant churches as well as our Roman Catholic counterparts often operate under worldwide lectionary systems. This simply means that the greater church assigns both Old and New Testament texts for a particular Sunday. One need not preach on the designated text. There are no ecclesiastical police who will arrest me and throw me into some theological jail. Sometimes I am asked why surrounding ministers preach similar sermons from the same text. It's not coincidental. The reason is that we may all be following the lectionary on a particular Sunday. During 2012, the lectionary Gospel is Mark. Next year it will be Luke, and in 2014 it will be Matthew. Because John is much different than the earlier Gospels, his account is mixed with the other three throughout the three year lectionary cycle.

I note the above because of my theological interest in the Gospel of Mark. The Second Evangelist is the earliest to write; some scholars suggest Mark composed less than twenty years before Jesus' death and resurrection (30-33AD?). Thus the idea of Gospel is born first from the hand of Mark. Both Matthew and Luke follow the Markan outline, but add much more of Jesus' teaching. By abbreviating

what our Lord said in favor of describing what he did, Mark is the Gospel of action. The Second Evangelist employs the Greek word, 'euthus', immediately), more than 40 times. Mark's breathless quality mimics the speed, and non-stop action of God's ultimate 'Road Warrior', Jesus Christ. Jesus heals the blind, lame, and leprous; casts out demons; and traverses the Sea of Galilee with alarming speed before he descends to Jerusalem, and his death. Notice that my last sentence is present tense. Mark, too, wrote in a mode which we call 'historical present', which means that, although the action is past, obviously, the reader is made to feel as if Jesus' ministry is going on, in what we might call 'real time'. Jesus 'says', not 'said'. Jesus 'goes', not 'went'. A generous slathering of the historical present adds to the swift flow of the narrative as it surges forward to Golgotha, the place of execution outside the walls of Jerusalem.

My last sentence ends with the place of Jesus' execution rather than resurrection because earlier scholarship believed that the latter was less important to the Gospel of Mark than the former. In 1912, the German scholar K.L. Schmidt called Mark, "a passion story with a brief introduction." In other

words the Second Evangelist's focus rests on Jesus' crucifixion. The resurrection, according to Schmidt, and other liberal scholars, proceeds as an afterthought. Perhaps one can understand such

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thinking in light of the other Gospels. Matthew, Luke and John give us vivid descriptions of the resurrected Jesus. Not only does our Lord appear to the women who approach the tomb, but there are subsequent appearances. Luke tells us how Jesus joins two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and moves from unrecognized stranger to resurrected Lord, when he breaks bread with them. Jesus vanishes, we are told, and the two express poignantly: "Did not our hearts burn within us

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while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). The Gospel of John has Jesus appear to Mary of Magdala, the first at the tomb according to the Fourth Evangelist, as well as to 'Doubting Thomas' along with the other disciples. John also appends a final chapter in which Jesus' appears where the ministry began, cooking breakfast by the Sea of Galilee. A resurrection scene in Galilee compliments



Our famous

Fish Fry Dinner,

prepared by John from

The Sea Deli,

will be available for sit-down or
take out on

Saturday

April 28

4:00-7:00pm

Tickets: \$10.00 each

On sale starting April 1st.

our Lord's earlier appearances in or near Jerusalem. Then there's the apostle Paul who notes that Jesus appeared to 500 others besides the original disciples (1st Corinthians 15:6).

What does Mark offer? It's pretty scanty compared to Paul and the other three Gospel writers. Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and Salome come to anoint the body. They see an empty tomb, and a young man dressed in a white robe who tells them to tell the disciples that Jesus has been resurrected, and that the Lord will go before them to Galilee. That's it. Jesus does not appear in the earliest Gospel. Nor is he around to punctuate his earthly ministry with a grand valediction. Mark's silence is a stark contrast to Jesus' wonderful last words in the Gospel of Matthew: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:18-19).

What is truly strange about the resurrection account in Mark is that it ends in an abrupt and enigmatic way. The final Greek phrase is 'ephoboonto gar.' The phrase means that the three women leave

the tomb in a state of terror. This ending has always posed a challenge because it is not neat or tidy, or fairy tale like. If I may say, it reeks of reality. Several scholars in the 19th and 20 centuries suggested that the last page of Mark was lost because they it was impossible for them to conceive that a Gospel could end in such a strange manner. Even early Christians of the 3rd and 4th centuries felt uncomfortable with its fearful closing, and added alternate endings, gussying up the Gospel to align it with the other three. Nevertheless the Markan ending has intrigued those who are not believers. Frank Kermode, a onetime English professor at Harvard, wrote a book entitled "The Genesis of Secrecy" (1979) in which he notes that Mark's resurrection account as well as other aspects of this Gospel defies easy interpretation or indeed interpretation whatsoever. He compares Mark favorably with such difficult literary fiction writers as James Joyce. Other scholars agree with Kermode, suggesting, too, that Mark is closer to the modern short story with its oblique and mysterious endings than it is to any writing of Mark's own period.

Which gives me pause. I wonder if Mark's resurrection is more appealing to modern folks - the atheist, agnostic, cynic, and skeptic. The resurrection of Jesus is

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Easter

celebrates Jesus' victory over death & the promise of eternal life for mankind.

STICKLEY GARDENS

The Resurrection is our energy – embrace it. It gives meaning to our daily lives and the promise of paradise in heaven after death. Stickley Gardens is a place for the eternal rest of our human remains and a celebration of our next life, with our loved ones who have passed before us, and our **Lord Jesus who died for us.**

Please come visit, feel the peace and serenity.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE COLUMBARIUM, PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
 LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON • JIM PIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER • ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)
 SANDY GREGORY (338-7626) • DIANA CLINE (338-7276) CONSISTORY LIAISON • REV STICKLEY SECRETARY

A SACRED PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION. (LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)



Birthdays

Kyle Richardson	April 1, 08
Travis Horvers	2, 98
Molly Salzman	12, 94
Zachary Burns	15, 99
Kyle Constant	17, 97
Lauren Shaffrick	20, 01
Emily Waligurski	26, 95
Kendra Rubino	26, 02
Miranda Davenport	27, 98
Cody Baker	27, 04
Molly Shambo	29, 10
Wayne Waligurski	April 1
Mildred Mattison	4
Trevor Davenport	4

Harriet Drake
Kathy Hauck
Fred Kurtz
Jeff Rafferty
Jean Dussol
Shirley Burns
Esther Stickley
Beverly Roosa
Barbara Baker
Christine Beesmer
Helen Lehtonen
Ann Every
Liz Carpinelli
Joan Sutton
Todd Jordan
Tim Schiff
Jane Merrill
Esther Keator
Henry Dussol
Karen Waligurski
Julie Jordan
Melissa Lasher
Pat Brennan
Rick Soshensky

5	Cole Jordan	May 1, 96
5	Mikayla Mellin	2, 96
6	Jonathan Helsley	5, 05
7	George Nekos, Jr.	5, 11
8	Liz Wilson	7, 91
9	Terry Conlin	2
11	Kristen Helm	2
12	Lori Baker	3
12	Gil Hoppenstedt	4
14	Faye Jansen	4
16	Kathy Burns	4

Anniversaries

19	Allan & Bonnie Dumas	13
19	Nita & William Rockwell	19
20	Carla & Craig Paton	22
22	Dan & Midge Stott	23
24	Gregg & Linda Moon	26
25	Mary Lou & Mike Christiana	28
27	Gary & Lisa Longto	30
28		
28	Jim & Sheila Craven	May 5
30	Debbie & Glenn Decker	6
	Kathy & Bob Pfeiffer	6

Missions

“What you have done for the least of these you have done for me.” Matthew 25:40

One Great Hour of Sharing is a Reformed Church of America World Service Ministry which encourages us to share our resources with others. “Sharing brings joy to those with whom we share, joy to God and joy to us.” We will partner with the RCA and other RCA churches to share God’s love to a lost and broken world through food, water, blankets and other necessities.



Thank you,
 Linda Dux, Mission Committee Chair

Ford Family News

Peter and Patty Ford have spent over twenty adventurous years as Reformed Church missionaries in Africa and their two sons have lived their young lives there with only occasional brief visits back here.

Peter visited our church a few years ago when we were supporting his service there and he still keep us up to date. (When he was teaching in Muscat, Oman, former Hurley member David Kent was a Ford congregation member, and Mary and I met Patty there when we visited.) The Fords are now in Kenya and have impressive accomplishments in their field.

In Kenya, David, their son, hoped to begin linguistic work in the Sudan translating the Bible into Arabic - he speaks it like a native - but

his visa never came through. Then he flew to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he began a new career as Linguistics Specialist; i.e., he's helping analyze some of the country's 80 languages, many unwritten, in preparation for Bible translation. David learned the country's language, Amharic.

Patty "juggles a variety of logistics as she coordinates the Diploma in Theology program which is offered at a dozen Bible schools through the East Africa region," he writes.

Peter continues at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, to teach Qur'anic Arabic and other courses in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. St. Paul's is a large Christian University. He also heads of a committee proposing to expand other specialties within a Religious Studies department. He presented a

paper at the first Qur'an Symposium at Nairobi University, one of only three Christians in the field of 22 speakers.

Andrew is finishing high school, a Christian school serving missionaries and others from 40 countries and he's been accepted to attend Regent University in Virginia Beach to major in animation. (He was awarded a Distinct Achievement in Art in school). It will be a big change for him - college life and American culture - since he has lived his whole life in Africa.

It's amazing to me that missionary families like the Fords will give up so much to help others in strange - and often dangerous - lands and to strengthen mutual peaceful relations. They are heroes, too.

Don Kent

April 21, 2012, Saturday, 9:00am - 1:00

(the more people helping the earlier we finish)

A job for everyone: painting, window washing, lawn clean-up (bring your own rake), and other assorted tasks. We'll start with coffee & donuts and assignments in Schadewald Hall.

See Jim Pirro to volunteer - walk-in help is welcome, too!



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spoken about but our Lord is not seen. As an intellectual agnostic friend noted recently about the second evangelist: "It ain't 'Disneyfied' like the other three." And perhaps, too, there is a certain psychological realism here which escapes his fellow Evangelists. When confronted with the empty tomb, and the announcement of Jesus' resurrection, the three women experience dread rather than joy. Wouldn't we, too, in their shoes? I believe our initial response would be similar. We profess belief in the resurrection, but if a bodily Jesus were to show up on our front door, we might run out the back! Without the

visuals we are left with the words and the man in white by the empty tomb. We are not called to gaze at the risen Christ in all of his glory as the other Gospel writers portray, but to heed Christ's messengers, to overcome our fears, and then to follow the faint stirrings of our hearts to Galilee, or Hurley, or Sauger-ties, or wherever Christ's call leads. I pray that Easter may cause you to celebrate the messenger's subtle word to leave whatever metaphorical cemeteries we inhabit and to rise above our fear in order to seek our Lord where resurrection, joy, and abundant living lure us toward our mutual future.

In Christ's service,

Doc Bob

Women's Guild

On April 15 we will be holding our annual Ladies Hat Sunday. What is Ladies Hat Day you might be asking? The ladies of the church wear a hat to church. It might be a hat that was worn for a special occasion many years ago or a sun hat that you love wearing during the summer or maybe a hat that you love to wear while gardening. No matter what it looks like don't forget to wear it on April 15.

We are in need of jewelry—to be more specific, any jewelry that you

have around your home that you haven't worn in months/years or don't really like. Please give these items to Shirley Ruth as we sell jewelry several times a year and our supplies are running low. Thank you for your help.

At our last meeting I told the Guild that I would be stepping down as the President. I have been honored to service as President of the Guild for the past 8 years. I thank everyone for all of their help and support they have given me over the years. Without your help and support I wouldn't have been able

to do what we all did for the Guild. I will remember this time of service with pride and smiles. Thank you!!!

We welcome and invite all women of the church to be apart of the Women's Guild. You don't have to be a member of the church to be a part of the Women's Guild. We meet right after church in the Dutch Room. So, come & see what we are all about.

Sandy Emrich-President

4/15 Ladies Hat Sunday & Meeting
5/20 Pot Luck Luncheon



"The Fiddlers are coming!"
May 19th
Watch the Sunday church bulletins for details!

Interested in having a float in the Memorial Day Parade as part of the 350th anniversary of the founding of Hurley? Contact the Church office.

Youth Group

Thank you for your support for our annual Brooks BBQ. This is a fund raiser to assist us in our upcoming retreat to Camp Warwick in April. With your help we sold 660 dinners and were able to profit approximately \$2,700.

Thank you for your donations for our annual Penny Social. We had a great time. Thank you to Diana Cline & Shannon Butler for their help in making this a huge success.

So, what will you be doing on Easter Sunday? Come to the annual Easter Dawn service and Easter Breakfast. The Youth Group will be leading the Easter Dawn service and then serving at the breakfast. Hope to see you there!!

Our April food pantry collection is Mac & Cheese. Please drop off your donations and we will get them to Queens Galley for you.

Any child who is in the 5th & above is welcome to join the Youth Group anytime. Please come & check us out.

Sandy & Katie Emrich & Lisa Longto YG Co-Leaders

Upcoming Activities

4/7/12	Easter Dawn setup & prep
4/8/12	Easter Dawn service & breakfast
4/20-22/12	Retreat to Camp Warwick
6/2/12	Car Wash at Stage One Auto to benefit the SPCA

SCIENCE *for* MINISTRY



During another beautiful week of weather, this time in March, Dr. Gram and I attended another session at the Science for Ministry Institute at Princeton Theological Seminary and had a great week on the Princeton campus. As mentioned in my December Spire article, the purpose of the Science for Ministry program is to "support effective science education programs and resources for people active in ministry" and "seeks to promote an informed and productive dialogue around issues of theology and science within churches and other Christian ministry contexts."

The class included many of those who had attended previous classes in the program, as well as some new participants, including a father and son from Texas, who were both doctors, and a Ph.D. student working on cancer genetics, who hopes to next pursue a Master of Divinity degree. The first course was "**The Challenge of Human Evolution**," and was "devoted to the specific theological challenges posed by the idea of humans evolving from and in continuity with all other living species." This course was of great interest to

me as an old biology major who has long been interested in the theory of evolution and the way explains many things that are observed in the natural world (Evolution and Charles Darwin were such a big part of my education that for our 25th wedding anniversary, Barb and I took a tour of the Galapagos Islands. Ask her about the blue-footed boobies and "Lonesome George," the last surviving member of his tortoise species). Our instructor for the week, Dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, was very interesting and an excellent teacher. We spent the first afternoon learning about Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution. The next morning was spent covering paleoanthropology and the evolution of humans. The highlight of the day was a series of photographs of cave paintings made almost 30,000 years ago and what they may have meant, as they were often mysterious, and may have suggested some sort of ritual by these early human ancestors. Finally, we talked about the human genome, and how there is less than 1% difference between human DNA and chimpanzee DNA. All of these topics were discussed from both the point of view of scientific dis-

covery and religion, such as how these discoveries influenced views on religion, as well as how religion may have evolved, and is evolution the way God creates the world.

The second course was "**The Evolution of Human Morality**," and this course was "devoted to the specific topic of human morality, as understood by the evolutionary sciences." For example, while apes may not be moral creatures, they can display a sense of reciprocity and fairness that may be building blocks of morality, but humans have developed a consciousness that allows moral discernment. Personally, I believe science can help answer many of the "How," Where, and "When" questions about how things in the natural world may work, but religion helps answer the "Why" questions. Albert Einstein said, "All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree," and a course such as this, while difficult, helps explore these connections. I certainly look forward to a better understanding of these topics, as Dr. Gram incorporates them into his sermons.

Jim Mayfield

The **BIG BREAKFAST** is back by popular demand. Save the date of **May 12, 8:00 - 11:00am** for a serve yourself buffet of scrambled eggs, pancakes, bacon, juice, coffee and tea and of course our famous HRC omelets !

Coffee Hour Volunteers - Sign up in Schadewald Hall to provide refreshments after Sunday Worship Service. See Terry Gaffken for more information.

HURLEY REFORMED
CHURCH

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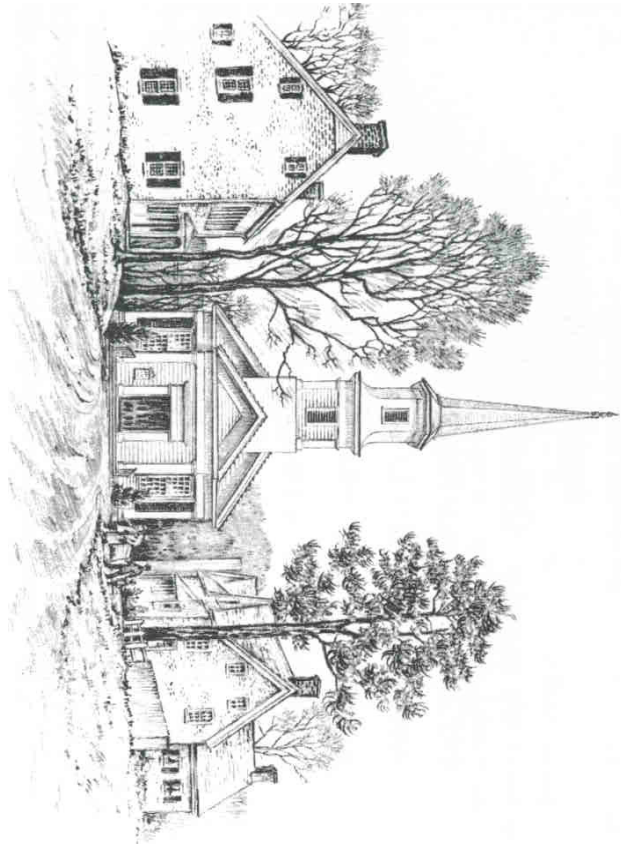
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The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW
Pastor

Celebrate Easter With Us:
Maundy Thursday 7:30pm
Easter Dawn 6:30am
Easter Breakfast 7:30am
Easter Worship 9:00 &
11:00am

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