

Journeys

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WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY WE WELCOME YOU HERE.

FROM THE *Pastor's Pen*



Lent is the time during the church year when we more often hear the words ‘sin’ and ‘repent.’ The words seem to go together, as in ‘repent of our sin.’ The idea is that we turn away from sinful ways and turn towards the rightness (or righteousness) of God’s way.

Repentance is fundamental to our biblical faith. John baptized people in the River Jordan as a sign of their repentance. Time after time, the Old Testament relates how the ancient Jews turned away from Yahweh’s will and purpose for them, who then punishes them—often by having their enemies conquer them. The ancients then repent, and God forgives them. This occurs repeatedly in Jewish lore.

There are certain large ‘rules’ we all need to obey, many of which are expressed in or derived from the Ten Commandments. During the last 100+ years,

however, we have learned how to look at sin in new ways.

Church of England theologian Sam Wells has described social isolation as the chief human problem in our age. The pandemic has highlighted this problem, but countless people have lived isolated lives for a long the time—people we either forget about or perhaps would rather not know: the homeless, the addicts, the elderly, the hungry, the wounded, the broken-hearted.

Isolation keeps us from connecting meaningfully with God and our neighbors—even ourselves. Isolation diminishes our humanity. The quickest way to drive someone insane is to put them in solitary confinement.

Isolating ourselves from God and from others—staying away from God and others—is the opposite of how Christ would have us live. This is why reconciliation is so important in God’s work—and therefore our work—because isolation is sin.

Another term that helps us understand sin is damage. We inflict damage on others (and others inflict damage on us) by always insisting on our point of view, carrying grudges, applying stereotypes,

arguing continuously, and a host of other behaviors that foster disrespect and hatefulness.

When we speak of damage, though, we presuppose a wholeness and health that existed prior to the damage. We are created good, but something happens, something damages us. But we can be restored to health.

Through study and discussion, prayer and reflection, we explore what is God's will for us—how we can pursue God's purposes for us. This includes how we can avoid being isolated—how we can prevent ourselves from damaging others—how we can overcome damage inflicted on us.

The significance of isolation and damage as sin becomes clear by looking at a couple verses from Paul's second letter to the early church in Corinth: *We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends!* ²¹ *Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God* (5:20b-21).

First, let's substitute isolation for sin: *We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends!* ²¹ *Christ was without [isolation], but for our sake God made him share our [isolation] in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.*

Then, damage: *We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends!* ²¹ *Christ was without [damage], but for our sake God made him share our [damage] in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.*

So when we repent, we turn toward God. We don't just ask for forgiveness, however, and then feel better for a bit. Turning toward God means we also turn toward our neighbor to share God's love with them, alleviating their isolation (and maybe ours, too), healing their damaged souls (and maybe ours, too).

– Pastor Fogal



JOURNEY THROUGH LENT TO THE CROSS

As we travel through Lent we are reminded of the road to the Cross that Jesus traveled. The light of the Lenten candles slowly fades as we retell the story of Jesus' betrayal, suffering and death.

You are invited to join us on Sunday mornings at 10 o'clock for our live-stream worship services through our website. The services are also available on YouTube at later times if that is more convenient.

On **Palm Sunday, March 28, at 10 a.m.**, we join the throngs as Jesus makes his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Then, on **Maundy Thursday, April 1, at 7p.m.**, at a quiet meditative service, we celebrate the Last Supper with Holy Communion.

A joyful service of the Resurrection is planned for **Easter, April 4, at 10 a.m.** We celebrate with the

uplifting music provided by organist Lynn Bullock and soloist Ed Meyers. Dr. Fogal will deliver the Easter message and Holy Communion will be served.

Remember all services are live-stream only. Know that you are worshipping with other members of the family of Christ even if we cannot be together in person



TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN.....

It's been almost a year since we gathered in the social hall to share coffee and conversation. This socializing was a great time to learn about people who may be in need of some extra financial help. If help was appropriate, it came from the Deacons' Fund.

Throughout the pandemic we have been able to provide some support by using funds in the Deacons' Fund. At this point we have drained this fund and would like to rebuild it so we will be prepared to offer help in the future to those in need.

If you want to support this very important program, contributions can be made to the Deacons' Fund. **Make sure to put Deacons' Fund on the memo line of your check or add a note if making a cash donation.**

Luke 12:48 tells us that “ **To whom much is given, much will be required.**” This means we are held responsible for what we have been given and it is expected that we will share our blessings with others.

Thanks for caring and sharing little church with the big heart!



“I bind myself to-day.

*To a strong power, an invocation of the Trinity,
I believe in a Threeness with confession of a
Oneness in the Creator of Judgment.”*

– St. Patrick. The Hymne¹ or Breastplate

I have always been fascinated by the obsession with St. Patrick's Day here in the USA. Although my family emigrated from Ireland to Canada in the late 18th century – before the famine – March 17th was not a huge thing in the Ontario that I grew up in. This year, I decided to find out why.

I discovered that the first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland but in America on 17th March 1601 in a Spanish colony in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. (The Spanish Colony had an Irish vicar – *Ricardo Artur.*)

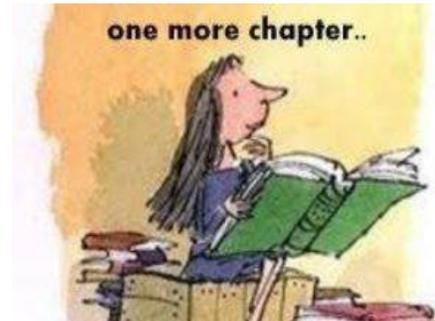
By 1737, more than two dozen Irish Presbyterians gathered on 17th March in honor of St. Patrick to form the Charitable Irish Society “*to assist distressed Irishmen in the city.*” By 1845, close to a million had fled to America to escape the Great Irish Potato Famine. They started to organize. Their “green machine,” became an important political swing vote, and annual St. Patrick's Day parades became a show of strength for Irish Americans. By 1948, President Harry S. Truman was in attendance. By 1962, the Chicago River was dyed green for St. Patrick's Day.

Today, the anniversary of St. Patrick's death on 17th March 461 A.D. is celebrated all over the world, but the largest celebrations are held in the USA.

As for me – I plan to spend the day with my Grandmother's cookbook. When I sit down to eat the Irish soda bread, corned beef & cabbage, and champ (mashed potatoes with scallions, milk & butter,) I'll raise a glass of Murphy's Irish Stout to Patricus Maewyn Succat.

¹ "Patrick made this hymn. In the time of Loegaire, son of Niall, it was made. Now, the cause of making it was to protect himself with his monks against the deadly enemies who were in ambush against the clerics. And this is a corslet of faith for the protection of body and soul against devils and human beings and vices." – Irish preface to the Hymn found in the Liber Hymnorum, Trinity College, Dublin, folio 196

Catherine Halper



What's the Book Group Doing?

The Book Group needed a new book to read so we picked The Mystery of Mrs. Christie by Marie Benedict. We're giving it a try in the hopes that we'll be able to meet to discuss it when we can shovel out this snow and meet outside. BRRRRR! LOL!! Maybe we should write our thoughts down so we don't forget. Happy reading.



☞ MAR ☞ 2021

*What is a letter? A bridge in the night
From my soul to your soul; and over it go
Envoys of darkness or envoys of light.
Ladings of blessing or hurdens of woe.*
Amos Russel Wells - 1862 - 1933

Briarleaf continues to remain closed to all visitors. In the meantime, we plan to continue to send 30 notes to cheer the residents each month. During mid-February we sent an extra box of 54 cards with Heart-shaped glasses for a Valentine's Day Celebration.

If you would like to write a short note to a Briarleaf resident on behalf of Carversville UCC, contact Catherine Halper at chalper@aol.com. We target completing them by the 15th of each month. The small investment of your time will yield rich rewards!



EASTER FLOWERS

by Jeanne Brown

As our church remains closed for in-person services, the Easter Sunday worship service will be live-streamed. As is our long-standing tradition, we will have the Easter flower arrangement displayed in front of the altar.

The flowers have been ordered. They will bring a welcome bit of spring into your home or a friend's, after such a cold and snowy winter.

The following is a list of plants available and their cost:

Stick to them at all stages of your life and enjoy a healthy life...

If you see the moon, you will see the beauty of God...

If you see the sun, you will see the power of God...

If you see a mirror, you will see God's best creation.

So believe it.

We are all tourists, God is our travel agent who has already identified our routes, bookings and destinations... trust him and enjoy life.

Life is just a journey! Therefore, live today!

Tomorrow may not be.



Faith Formation

A FORCE OF NATURE

“Hershel Shanks’ legacy of opening up the field of Biblical archeology was a testament to his sense of justice and transformed not just Biblical archeology but the trajectory of both the Jewish and Christian worlds. He will be greatly missed.”

Nadine Epstein, CEO & Editor of Moment magazine

On 5th February 2021, a giant influence on biblical scholarship passed away. Born in 1930 in Sharon, PA, Hershel Shanks earned undergraduate degrees in English & Sociology before completing a Harvard University law degree. For a quarter of a century, he practiced and published law – first handling US Court of Appeals and Supreme Court cases for the US Justice Department and then in private practice. When he moved his family to Israel in 1972 for a sabbatical, he encountered the subject that was to absorb the second half of his life. He took his wife and daughters to archaeological digs on the weekends, but found little information available at the sites, including at Hezekiah’s Tunnel.

This ancient feat of engineering was dug during Hezekiah’s reign (726-697 B.C.) to bring fresh water into Jerusalem to withstand the siege of the Assyrians

(*Isaiah 36:1-2.*) It is a long channel filled with thigh-high water that Hershel had begun exploring with a flashlight.

He was to later recall that *“At the entrance to Hezekiah’s Tunnel, there was just an Arab selling candles to help people who wanted to visit it.”*

In 1973 he published *“The City of David: A Guide to Biblical Jerusalem.”* This was the beginning of a long love affair that bridged Hershel’s writing, research, and amateur archaeological skills.

In 1975, he founded the Biblical Archeology Society (BAS) which began publication of *“The Biblical Archeology Review (BAR).* In a 2010 interview by New York Times book critic Richard Bernstein, he said *“My concept was to publish a little newsletter about Israel as a land of stones. I had ambitions of maybe someday getting to a circulation of 10,000. Fifteen thousand was a dream. I did not have any aspirations to become an icon of biblical archaeology, but it happened. We have nearly 150,000 subscribers and a quarter of a million readers.”*

For more than forty years, Mr. Shanks translated the world of biblical archaeology to general readers by magazines, books, and conferences. An enterprising journalist, he published archaeological scoops that were frequently picked up by mainstream news.

By 1985, while attending a conference of Dead Sea Scroll scholars at New York University, Hershel first became emotional about access to the Dead Sea Scrolls – or rather the lack of access. After their discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls remained unpublished for nearly 50 years. It was called the *“Scandal of the 20th century.”*

Publication was controlled by Jordan and assigned to eight scholars, but the publications of this team gradually dwindled until they finally came to a halt. The unpublished texts remained unavailable to the public or to other scholars. Then BAS published a two-volume set of photographs of them.

At least two directors of the powerful Israeli Antiquities Authority were livid. One Israeli scholar sued Mr. Shanks over a copyright violation, costing him \$100,000 in damages & legal fees.

The scrolls have had an enormous effect on scholarship, principally in three areas- (1) the origins of early Christian thought; (2) the development of the Hebrew Bible; and (3) the history of Judaism and its

varied religious beliefs during the period from about 250 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.

To see the Scrolls for yourself, go to a free online digitized virtual library:

The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Library at https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/?locale=en_US

Catherine Halper

FAITH FORMATION STORIES & READINGS	
DATE	LENT
03/07/21	John 2: 13-22 <i>His Temple His Body</i>
03/14/21	Num 21:4-9 <i>Serpent on the Pole</i>
03/21/21	Jeremiah 31:31-34 <i>A New Covenant</i>
03/28/21	Psalm 118 <i>The Chief Cornerstone</i>
04/04/21	Acts 10:34 <i>God Shows No Partiality</i>

