

Reflections

In A Monthly Newsletter of the Spotswood Reformed Church

429 Main Street, Spotswood, NJ 08884

Serving the community since 1821

Phone: 732.251.9277 Fax: 732.251.3777

Church office e-mail:

spotswoodreformed@gmail.com

Pastor's e-mail: SRCPastorJim@aol.com

Website: spotswoodreformedchurch.org



March 2016

From the Pastor's Desk

An Amazing Story

If you ask children what Easter is about, they'd probably say something about the Easter bunny. It's a pervasive story.; not very persuasive or compelling, but cute and seemingly harmless enough.

But the story of the Easter bunny tends to displace a much more compelling Story. A true Story. An Amazing Story that I'd like to tell you right now in a few words.



The Amazing Story concerns a man, a carpenter who lived 2,000 years ago in an obscure Roman province in a town called Nazareth. At age 30, the Man hung up his leather carpenter's apron and began to speak publically up and down the countryside.

Religious leaders were ambivalent at best. Most felt deeply threatened, because this ex-carpenter taught in huge outdoor meetings with compelling authority – and he healed people. Not just colds and fevers, but crippled limbs and blind eyes. On two occasions, he even brought people back from the dead.

The religious leaders saw their orderly world spinning out of their control. And so they determined to eliminate the Man. They infiltrated his inner circle so they could grab him away from public view. And once in custody, they engineered a trial behind closed doors, and then put huge political pressure on the Roman governor to execute him immediately. Within 12 hours of his arrest,

the Man hung on a cross. Six hours later he was dead – seemingly a martyr to a glorious but hopeless cause.

But there's more. The Man did not resist his arrest and crucifixion – in fact, he had predicted it to his followers again and again. And he taught that his death would have incredible meaning – that he would give his life as a ransom for many. That is, his death would pay the ransom price for a multitude of people who were enslaved by their own sins – and set them free. That's what he said. And on that cross he prayed for his crucifiers – certainly enslaved in *their* sins – "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." And he died. A Roman centurion who saw him die said, "Surely, this man was the Son of God."

He died on a Friday at just about three in the afternoon. By dusk he had been buried by a rich follower in a tomb hollowed out of solid rock, a tomb protected by a huge stone that rolled into place along a channel in the rock, then clunk! The tomb was secure. Friday night and all day Saturday his cold body lay there.

But Sunday morning, the Sunday we call Easter, some women had come to complete the hasty burial and they found the stone rolled back and the tomb empty. An angel appeared to them saying, "He is not here, he has risen." This, too, the Man, Jesus, had foretold to his followers.

Over the next 40 days, he appeared to his disciples and others, to even 500 at one time. And then he left planet earth promising to return. His Spirit was poured out on his followers a few days later. Within a single generation his followers travelled with the Amazing Story to all of the known world. Our world has never been the same, because where people believe the Story, they find forgiveness and freedom and meaning. They receive the Spirit of God themselves and they began to love.

The Story we tell is a life-transforming Story. The only appeal it lacks to our desperately needy world is a few pastel candy Easter eggs. Tell the Amazing Story. It changes lives.

So be it for us,
JER

Thank You

To the Members of the Spotswood Reformed Church,

The Family of Amelia Bellini would like to thank you for your kind expression of sympathy. It was greatly appreciated.

Linda Radozycki

Leslie McPherson

Deacons' Soup-er Bowl Sunday

The Deacons held their 4th Annual Soup-er Bowl on February 7th, following our Worship Service. We had eleven Soup Makers who submitted their entries for the tasting. All entries were delicious! The "judges" sampled each soup and then used their change/dollars to vote for their favorites. First Place - Queen of Soup for 2016 and winner of the Golden Ladle – went to Nancy Cano for her Pea Soup.



Congratulations to 2nd Place Winner, Judie Nicol, for her Shrimp Bisque, and our 3rd Place Winner, Victoria Halbert, for her Potato Soup.

Other Excellent Soups included:

- ❖ Carole George's Chicken Orzo Soup
- ❖ Isabella Goreskie's Italian Meatball Soup
- ❖ Marsha Halbert's Ham Soup
- ❖ Janice Malanowski's Chicken Tortilla Soup
- ❖ Barb Sliker's Beef Vegetable Soup
- ❖ Mia Styles' New England Clam Chowder
- ❖ Tracy Suchicki's Chili
- ❖ Larry Tennehill's Turkey Noodle Soup

Special thanks to Dave Sliker for technical support.

Thanks to the generosity of our eleven Soup Makers and our many Soup Tasters, the Deacons raised a total of \$277 for the Deacon's Fund! On that cold February day, it was wonderful to see so many of you attend. It was a great time of fellowship and fun. We are truly blessed to have such a supportive and giving congregation! Thank you, again, and we hope to see you all next year!

Worship Team

We are well into our Lenten journey and March brings celebration of the last two weeks of Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. How blessed we are as a covenant community to be able to worship and explore our faith in light of this most holy liturgical season.

Our Team will hold its last meeting for this plan year on Tuesday, May 10th at 7:30 PM. The topic for this meeting is Plan Year-end preparations.

Going forward, please let us know if you desire to be part of planning worship and/or participating in the leading of worship through liturgy or a word for the children for

the next plan year! You can speak to any member of the team: Carole George, Kathy Romero, Margaret Tierney, or Sherry Ruckdeschel.

Our Gathered Community Comes Together for March and April

Wednesday, March 2

Soup Supper/Devotions – 6:30 PM

Sunday, March 6

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Communion Service

Please remember your CUP Offering

Wednesday, March 9

Soup Supper/Devotions – 6:30 PM

Sunday, March 13

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Wednesday, March 16

Soup Supper/Devotions – 6:30 PM

Sunday, March 20

Palm Sunday – Beginning of Holy Week

Communion Service

Please remember your CUP Offering

Monday, March 21

Morning Devotional Worship Service – 7:30 AM

Tuesday, March 22

Morning Devotional Worship Service – 7:30 AM

Wednesday, March 23

Morning Devotional Worship Service – 7:30 AM

Thursday, March 24

Morning Devotional Worship Service – 7:30 AM

Maundy Thursday Evening Service – 7:30 PM

Friday, March 25

Morning Devotional Worship Service – 7:30 AM

Good Friday Tenebrae Service – 7:30 PM

Sunday, March 27

Ecumenical Sunrise Service – 6:45 AM

Easter Sunday Worship and Communion Service

Please remember your CUP Offering



Sunday, April 3

Second Sunday of Easter

Communion Service

Please remember your CUP Offering

Sunday, April 10

Third Sunday of Easter

Sunday, April 17

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Praise and Communion Service

Please remember your CUP Offering

Sunday, April 24

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Psalter Sunday

LITURGISTS

- 3/6** George Sliker
3/27 Mark Ruckdeschel
4/3 Margaret Tierney
4/24 Dave Sliker

CHILDREN'S SERMONS

- 3/13** Rev. Ribbans
3/27 Mark Ruckdeschel
4/10 Pat Hampson
4/24 Carole George

GREETERS

- 3/6** Dave Sliker
3/13 Chuck Hager
3/20 Peggy White & Judie Nicol
3/27 Barb Sliker
4/3 **Volunteer Needed**
4/10 Junetta Bunce
4/17 **Volunteer Needed**
4/24 **Volunteer Needed**

Just a reminder that we are always in need of volunteers for greeting. Please sign up on the sheet located in the Narthex. Thanks to everyone who covers this most important ministry!

If you are unable to serve on any of the dates listed above, please find someone to cover for you. Please let Sherry Ruckdeschel know of any changes to this schedule. Thank you!

We Need Your Help

The Worship Team invites any and all in the congregation to assist us as we prepare our church for special worship:

Maundy Thursday We meet in Fellowship Hall in the morning to prepare the room for worship in the evening.

Good Friday We meet in Fellowship Hall and remove the items used for the Thursday night service.

Holy Saturday We meet in the Sanctuary in the morning to prepare the Sanctuary for Easter.

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness!” Psalm 100:1-2

Kathy Romero for
The Worship Team

**The Lectionary for March**

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105

March 6 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2

Corinthians 5:16-21;

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 13 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126;

Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

March 20 – Palm/Passion Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11;

Luke 22:14 – 23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

March 21 – Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11; Hebrews 9:11-15;

John 12:1-11

March 22 – Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31;

John 12:20-36

March 23 – Wednesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3;

John 13:21-32

March 24 – Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;

1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

March 25 – Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12; Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16 – 5:7-9;

John 18:1 – 19:42

March 26 – Holy Saturday

Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24;

Psalm 31:1-4, 1-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42

March 27 – Easter: Resurrection of the Lord

Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25;

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or

Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12

Holy Saturday Devotionals

Devotionals have been prepared for your personal prayers on Holy Saturday, March 26th. A paper listing resources that you might use to assist in your prayers will be available in the Narthex beginning Sunday, March 6th. Time spent in conversation with

God enhances our individual awareness and understanding of God's purpose in our lives. For those who wish to participate in this church-wide devotional, please set aside time and in a quiet place pour out your heart in praise of God and thanksgiving for our Lord, Jesus Christ. Your individual prayers are crucial to the life and mission of our church and don't forget to pray for yourself. Please join us.



Sincerely,
The Hope Team

Mission & Outreach Team News

The Mission and Outreach Team has planned a year full of opportunities for our church to be of service to God's people – in New Jersey, in the United States, and in the World. We will have giving projects/outreach for:

- **March.** Dina Dwelling's (apartments at the First Reformed Church in New Brunswick for victims of domestic violence). The Team will be collecting cleaning supplies (household cleaning products, clothes soap, rubber gloves, etc.) and gift cards to Target/Walmart. Following this collection, we will move to our Veterans to provide them with various toiletries.
- **April and May.** On Sunday, April 24th and Sunday, May 1st, we will be holding a clothes drive (clothes, linens, pocketbooks) for the Spotswood High School band fundraiser. As you do your spring cleaning, please set aside your bags and bring them to church to help our local youth.



- **June.** In June, the team will hold our annual Soles4Souls shoe drive. Please let your friends, relatives and neighbors know now that we will be collecting shoes and ask them to participate in this outreach to those in need.
- **July and August.** July and August will bring our collection for school supplies for local children.
- **September through December.** The Team will have new collections for Dina's Dwellings occupants and our Veterans, and will end the year with holiday outreach to families in need.
- **Communion Sundays.** Our communion week collections of food for Alice's CUP Food Pantry will be ongoing. The pantry is always in need of cereal, potatoes, beets, and laundry detergent.

The Mission and Outreach Team truly appreciates the giving hearts of our congregations and we are looking forward to a successful year of ministering to those in need.

On another note, we have news from the Mission Front: Our missionaries to Thailand, the Bunuparadah's, will be visiting the United States this year. During their stay, they will be visiting our church to report on their mission. We are looking forward to seeing them again. Please keep them in your prayers and support their ministry with your mission envelope donation each month. Also, one of our own, Judie Nicol, is planning to go on a mission trip to Haiti at the end of June! We are very excited for Judie and ask for your prayers for her during her journey.

*Carrie Lawrence for
The Mission & Outreach Team*

Interfaith Network of Care

Twenty Years of Service

I can't believe that we are celebrating our 20th Anniversary! Twenty years have gone by so fast! We have grown by leaps and bounds. To think that we have served thousands of folks to date is staggering. For the hundreds for whom the Respite program has become a lifeline, we salute you! For those who without INC would never be able to get to their critical specialist appointments, we salute you! For all those whose paths we've crossed and the friendships that have flourished between volunteers and care receivers, we salute you! Whether folks do Strong for Life exercises or receive friendly visits, all experience the connection that INC brings to people! Collectively, we have made such a marked difference in the lives of so many people! People who once felt alone and isolated are now experiencing a better quality of life because of a network of caring and compassionate volunteers, board members, and staff. We have been blessed with local congregations and their people that are committed to our mission! It has been a very fulfilling twenty years! Here's to 20 more!

*Sue Bowling,
Executive Director*

Anniversary Gala

INC will hold its 20th Anniversary Gala on Friday, April 8th from 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM at St. Thomas Knights of Columbus, 61 Pine Street in Old Bridge. Please join them as they honor all staff, board members and volunteers! Tickets are \$45 each. Ticket order forms are available in the Narthex.

Pixie Pre-School's Tricky Tray

Dear Church Members,

On Thursday, May 12th Pixie will be having a Tricky Tray at the Knights of Columbus in Spotswood. The money that is raised will be used towards our rejuvenation project. If you are interested in helping plan this event, working the night of the tricky tray, or going to local businesses to ask for donations please let Gail or Linda know.

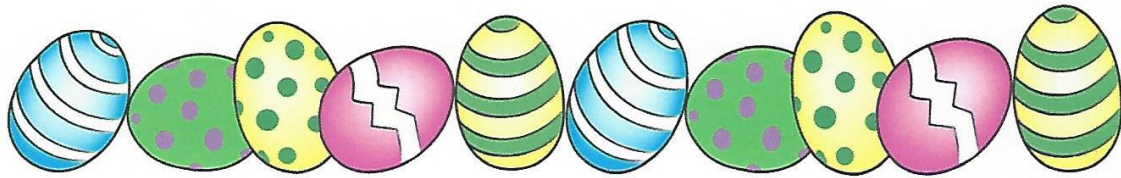


We also need prize donations. If you have a business that can donate goods or services, we would greatly appreciate it. Prizes for baskets are also needed. If you have any new merchandise in your homes that is not being used, we would be happy to take it off your hands.

Please mark your calendars and spread the word about Pixie's Tricky Tray.

*Thank You,
Pixie Staff & Students*





BREAKFAST & EASTER EGG HUNT WITH THE EASTER BUNNY



The Easter Bunny would like to invite you to have breakfast with him and then go on an Easter Egg Hunt.

When: Saturday, March 19th

Time: The Easter Bunny is eating at 9:00

Where: Pixie's Big Room

RSVP by: March 14th

ADMISSION IS \$10.00

CHILDREN UNDER 12 \$5.00

TELL THE EASTER BUNNY THAT WE WILL BE COMING

NAME _____

NUMBER OF ADULTS _____

NUMBER OF CHILDREN _____

(PLEASE ENCLOSE MONEY WITH RESERVATION)



His Legacy Will Live On..

SPECIALIST

Michael L. Gonzalez

January 22, 1988 - August 28, 2008



www.butterflycircleoffriends.org

The 8th Annual Dinner Dance Fundraiser

Saturday April 16th, 2016

7pm - 11pm

Spotswood Knights Of Columbus
30 Crescent Ave. Spotswood NJ

Join us for a night of music, dancing,
a buffet dinner, & dessert!

\$40 per person

For ticket information please contact Ida Gonzalez
732-723-9036 / idadgonzalez@butterflycircleoffriends.org
or visit www.butterflycircleoffriends.org

The Butterfly Circle of Friends is a non-profit organization
in loving memory of Spc. Michael L. Gonzalez.
Our mission is to assist those in need, primarily focusing on veterans, service members, and their families.



Prayer Requests

Dennis Adamic (Mae Vaughn's grandson) – at home in Spotswood; *Sandra Adamic* (Mae Vaughn's daughter) – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Janet Applegate* – at home in Old Bridge; *Ann Bailey* – at home in Spotswood; *Deanna Bobash* (Kelly Ortt's mother) – at home in Sayreville; *Chris Broscious* (Sharon Farmer's son) – at home in Kentucky; *Florence Cano* – in Twining Village, Holland, PA; *Jacque Chica and her newborn daughter, Esme* (Pat Hampson's grand-daughter and great-granddaughter) – at home in Colonia; *Kyle Davidson* (Barbara Brain's great nephew) – at home in Oregon; *Pat DeFazio* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Teresa Dunlop* (Margaret Tierney's sister) – at home in East Stroudsburg, PA; *Megan Farmer* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Sharon Farmer* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Eunice Harrigfeld* – at home in Spotswood; *Russell Reisert* (Nancy Goretskie's brother-in-law) – at RWJ Hospital In New Brunswick; *Linda Rodriguez* (Shirley Leary's and Barbara Jagemann's niece) – at a rehabilitation facility in Sebastian, FL; *Tracy Suchcicki* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Joan Worthington* – at home in Toms River; *Beverly Jawidzik*, *Scottie McTaggart*, and *Marie Riddle* – at the Reformed Church Home.

Easter Prayer

On this day, loving and gracious God, we once again sing Alleluia. We praise You and bless You for raising Jesus up from the dead, and we praise and bless You for all the times You have raised us up through Your grace.

In this Easter season and always, when we are weak and unable to make good decisions; when we are stubborn and refuse to forgive others; when we are afraid or discouraged and forget that You strengthen us; when we are too selfish or too weary to follow Jesus as we should; raise us up, loving God, raise us up.

Thank you for giving us new life in Jesus and for His presence among us this Eastertime and always.

Amen.



March Birthdays

March 1	Raymond Michalowski
March 2	Ann Bailey
March 6	Shirley Smith
March 13	Chuck Hager
March 19	Victoria Halbert
March 19	Cheryl Redline
March 22	Tracy Suchcicki
March 23	Ellen Popielarczyk
March 24	Luke Knox
March 25	Janice Malanowski
March 25	Ava Styles

Reformed Church Home Friends Birthdays

March 3	Harry Christensen
March 7	Barbara Duma
March 11	Josephine Gario
March 16	Carmela Rossetti
March 17	Anthony Carmeli
March 24	Pat Brink
March 24	August Molnar
March 24	Marie Riddle
March 24	Eileen Stec
March 25	Gerry Marino
March 28	Beverly Jawidzik
March 28	Rita Perretti
March 29	Johann Cerny

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.

For further information, and how to become involved in our church life, please call on one or more of the following people:

James E. Ribbans, Pastor
 Joseph W. Woods, Pastor Emeritus
 Kathryn Romero, Minister of Music, Elder
 Linda Soley, Church Treasurer
 Charles Uhl, Financial Secretary
 Sherry Ruckdeschel, Administrative Assistant, Clerk of Consistory, Newsletter Editor
 Junetta Bunce – Elder, Interfaith Network of Care
 Sharon Farmer – Deacon
 Carole George – New Circle Chair
 Rita Hussey – Sunday School Superintendent
 Carrie Lawrence – Deacon, COHM Board Member
 James Lockwood – Interfaith Network of Care
 Jennifer Mullen-Sommer – Elder Delegate to Classis
 Janice Ortt – Elder
 Mark Ruckdeschel – Vice President of Consistory, Elder
 Alice Ryan – Elizabeth Circle Chair, Alice's CUP Food Pantry Coordinator for SRC
 Kevin Styles – Deacon
 Michelle Tennill – Deacon
 Ken VanWageninge – Cemetery Chair
 Peggy White – Elder

TEAM AND TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Building & Grounds Team

Nancy Cano
 Kelly Ortt
 David Sliker
 Kevin Styles

Christian Education Team

Mark Ruckdeschel – Team Chair
 Elizabeth Goretskie
 Marcia Halbert
 Victoria Halbert
 Rita Hussey
 Janice Ortt
 Nikki Ortt
 Tracy Suchcicki
 Michelle Tennill

Finance Team

Kevin Styles – Team Chair
 George Berry
 Chuck Hager
 Linda Soley
 Charlie Uhl
 Ken VanWageninge

HOPE Team

Junetta Bunce
 Joanne Dombroski
 Carole George
 Rita Hussey
 Judie Nicol
 Kathy Romero
 Mark Ruckdeschel
 Sherry Ruckdeschel
 George Sliker
 Tracy Suchcicki
 Peggy White

Mission & Outreach Team

Carrie Lawrence – Team Co-Chair
 Laura Swiderski – Team Co-Chair
 Pat DeFazio
 Sharon Farmer
 Eunice Harrigfeld
 Pat Hilman
 Judie Nicol
 Alice Ryan
 Barbara Sliker
 Mae Vaughn
 Peggy White

Pixie Task Force

David Sliker - Chair
 Kelly Ortt
 Barbara Sliker

Worship Team

Carole George – Team Co-Chair
 Kathy Romero – Team Co-Chair
 Sherry Ruckdeschel
 Margaret Tierney

Please contact the church office with any change to Team memberships.