

Bethel Messenger

News of Bethel United Methodist Church, Lower Burrell, PA (724) 339-2420



Cost-saving measures include no more newsletter mailing

Our Church Council, Finance Committee, SPRC, and Trustees have been looking closely at our expenses and seeking ways to save money as we face the reality of our current financial situation.

The Trustees have reviewed all of our service contracts to determine that our prices are fair and that the services we receive are worth what we pay. They have considered the possibility of using “in-house” labor to accomplish tasks, meaning that many more volunteers will be needed to keep the building and grounds in good order. They are also exploring the paper and cleaning supplies that we use on a regular basis to see if we can save money in that area.

While they expect to save a few dollars here and there, the Council was pleased to hear that in all cases, our expenses are not out of line. We are grateful to the Trustees who have spent many hours investigating these contracts and supplies.

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) who oversees all paid employees, spent time interviewing the four highest paid employees – the office manager, youth director, organist and choir director. Their conclusion was that to start chopping hours and cutting salaries would take the heart out of Bethel. Our employees are at the core of our ministry. Each of them goes above and beyond their salary to make Bethel what it is.

Dee George, Chair of SPRC, says, “If we are forced into cutting hours and positions, we are going to involve the whole church. This is way too important and way too detrimental to our ministry for a small group to determine.”

An immediate cost-saving measure agreed to by the Church Council was to cease mailing our monthly newsletter. We will distribute the newsletter via email and we will print copies that

can be picked up at the church. If you don't have access to either, you may request that your newsletter be mailed. Some of our Concordia folks without email will fall into this category as may others. You need to notify the office.

If you do not currently receive our emails, be sure to send us your address. Send a message to betheloffice@comcast.net with “newsletter” in the subject box. This is the last mailing you will receive.

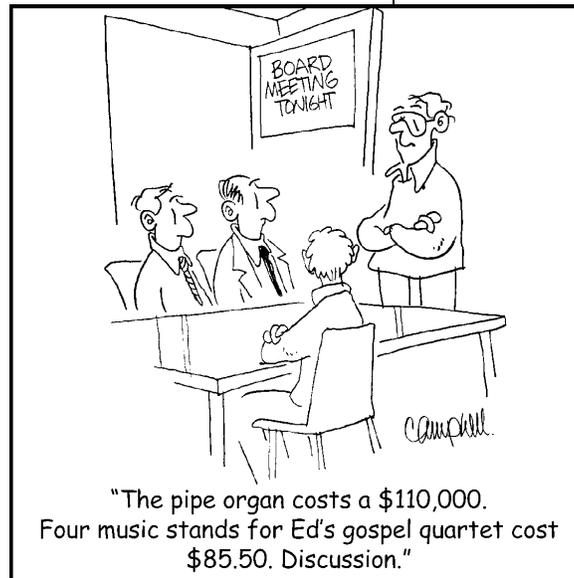
On the flip side of cutting expenses and perhaps more importantly is raising income. Members

are being asked to prayerfully consider what they give to God each month. Our society has seduced us into giving God our leftovers rather than our first fruits. Tithing is a personal expression of our faith and it often starts with baby steps. Pastor Nancy welcomes conversation with individuals or families who are struggling with this matter.

Meanwhile, Giant Eagle proceeds are being transferred into our General Fund. Certificates can be bought at the office during the week or on Sunday mornings.

Proceeds from the Pizza Hut Fundraisers are going to the General Fund, also.

As the cartoon humorously illustrates, leaders of the church are examining options, weighing consequences, and seeking to continue to be the church of Jesus Christ in the local community and throughout the world. We welcome your thoughts and questions. The next Council Meeting is Monday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m. It is open to everyone.



Let It Shine performs at Bethel

The youth performers and adult support team of *Let It Shine* Blacklight Puppetry invite you to a special performance at Bethel on Friday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m.

If you are familiar with the show, you know what a delight it is. If you have never seen it, you really need to experience what the youth of our church share all around Western PA!

A free will offering will be collected after the performance to benefit the youth group's summer trip to Youth '15 in Orlando, FL.

Alert! Spring Rummage Sale Date Change! April 17 - 18

As announced last month, the Rummage Sale Dates are changed this year!

Due to scheduling conflicts (Easter and Retreat), we have moved the Rummage Sale to the Third Weekend in April: April 17 - 18 for this year.

We will begin set-up on Monday, April 13, so please don't bring things earlier than Sunday, April 12.

As always, we need your good, clean saleable Spring Rummage. Sweaters will be tough to sell this week in April (We hope!!)

Please don't send things that our workers could not easily load into someone's car, and don't send any baby items like cribs or car seats that might be subject to safety recalls.

We need lots of help with set-up and especially clean-up. A few hours of work make the room look like it never happened on Saturday afternoon.

Ruth Circle appreciates all the help the congregation donates to the sale. All proceeds are used on Church projects.

A Bake Sale along with the Rummage Sale will benefit the Youth For their Mission Trip.

Come see *Frozen* on the big screen!

The Bethel Men's Group is sponsoring a movie night on Saturday, March 21 at 5:30 p.m. The animated Disney



musical *Frozen* will be shown on the big screen in Friendship Hall.

You may want to bring comfortable chairs or bean bags to sit on, but folding chairs are available, of course. Popcorn and drinks will be provided during the movie and homemade ice cream will be served afterwards.

Everyone, young and old is invited. Please bring a friend!

Dinner Coordinator desperately needed!

Providing bereavement dinners for member funerals is one of the nicest care ministries that we do. However, these dinners are in danger of coming to an end because there are fewer and fewer folks available and willing to

organize, set-up, serve and clean up these events.

Sharlene Alcorn has resigned as the Funeral Dinner Coordinator after many years of faithful service. "Although I can no longer be in charge, Gary and I are still willing to assist in any way that we can," she says.

Many of our "regulars" are into retirement and are snowbirds or travel extensively, making them often unavailable. We're looking for some new folks who can learn the ropes and who are willing to work these events.

Sharlene would love to tell you what is involved, help with menu planning, how to figure quantities, and all other aspects of the dinners. She welcomes calls of inquiry! (724.339.7297) Over the years, the organizers have learned to do the dinners with minimal fuss.

Please examine your heart to see if this is an area where you can serve. As a church, we must be able to commit to all member funerals or we must dissolve the program.

Creative options for leadership could be workable such as sharing the responsibility by months or quarters. In whatever capacity you can serve, we need your help!

Memorial/ Honor Gifts received

In memory of Jack Hunter

Linda Hess
Paula McManus
Joan Negley

In memory of Ed Golembiesky

Linda Hess
Paula McManus
Joan Negley

Bethel's Blessings

- ♥ Our sanctuary AV System which enabled us to host a Conference Training Event, equipping pastors and lay leaders for more effective ministry.
- ♥ Sharlene Alcorn for pulling together and serving a light breakfast and delicious lunch for the training participants. Thanks to everyone who donated food and drink, the food was delicious. Special thanks to Pat Reimer and Joan Negley for assisting with clean up.
- ♥ Jason Moran for sharing all of his gifts during worship.

- Pastor Nancy for the inspired Ash Wednesday service.
- ♥ Bob Michael for showing us strength, faith and inspiration.
 - ♥ Trish Grubb for her constant love and support of our youth group.
 - ♥ Hot Metal Bridge Church for allowing the youth an opportunity to help others.
 - ♥ All who donated to and supported the Valentine dinner, the cookie sale and the Super Bowl meal to support youth ministry.
 - ♥ Ministry through meals. Bob Michael and his brother Richard appreciate all the good

- food that is nourishing both body and soul.
- ♥ Tom DeBolt, Lynda Davis, Brian Sterlitz and Lauren Daily for conducting the annual church audit. This is an important part of our financial accountability system.
 - ♥ The Baptism of Reese Arabella Brenner on February 15. She is the first child of Jim and Erin Brenner, born on September 6, 2014.
 - ♥ Brad McAninch for the delicious Valentine's dinner and the creative restaurant ambience!
 - ♥ Cards, food, visits, cookies and phone calls to Tillie Paredes. She's so appreciative!

Serving in March

Greeters

- 1 John & Dee George
- 8 Kris & Josh Nemet
- 15 Drew & Kim Vivirito
- 22 Mike & Penny Dombroski
- 29 Drew & Peggy Homko

Nursery Workers

- 1 Jeanette Sterlitz
Joanne DeBolt
- 8 Emily & Ian Shane
- 15 Kim Vivirito
- 22 Erin Pattison
- 29 Lauren Daily
Joanne DeBolt

Counters

- 1 Lois Kay Acre
George Trew
- 8 & 15 Lois Kay Acre
Lynda Davis
- 22 & 29 Bill Salem
Lynda Davis



Thanks from the Heart

We want to thank everyone for their care and support following Ed's death. The food, the calls, the visits, the cards, the prayers and general concern have given us strength to move through the days. The love and compassion of our Bethel family means so much.

Norma, Brian and Eric
Golembiesky

Kid's love the Easter Egg Hunt

The Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt will be March 29th!! Bring all the children you know to join in the fun of an Egg hunt, games, craft, snack and more!!



We'll meet in the Sanctuary at 9:45 a.m. Many thanks to Justin

and Jennifer Celo for hosting this wonderful tradition at Bethel!!

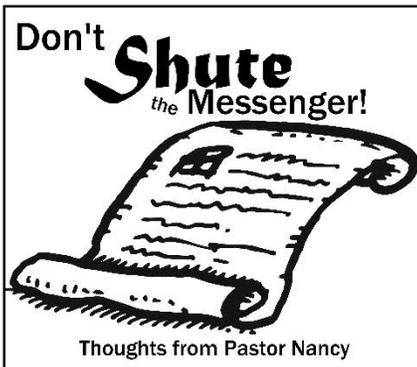
Youth Volunteer Event teaches compassion

The 2nd Annual Youth Volunteer event will be held on May 2nd at Bethel! Mark your calendars to hold the date!

This year, at the request of the Bethel Sunday School Children, the volunteer event will have 4 social issues at its focus: Military appreciation, Elderly Care and Compassion, Homelessness and Animal Abuse.

This event gives children the opportunity to learn the value of giving to others, and to bring awareness to the issues at hand.

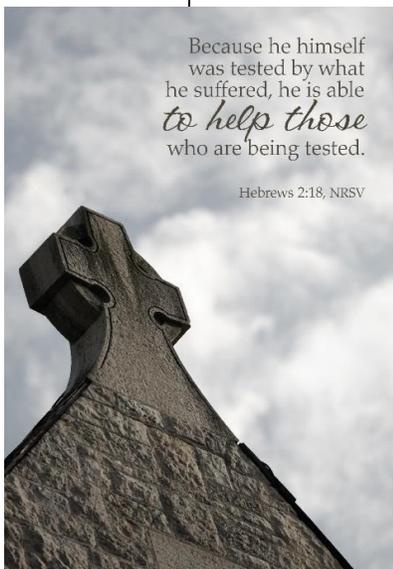
All Bethel children are welcome to bring a friend! Additional information and registration forms will be available shortly.



Working on health issues is one of my least favorite things to do. It requires me to make changes to my way of living that are not fun at the very least, and painful at most.

Temptations lurk around every corner. It seems that even a simple drive up the street catches me at the red light in front of the Donut Connection. Some days I grip the steering wheel and pray...hard. Other days it does not bother me at all.

However, seeing the numbers on my blood work come back toward and sometimes into the normal range gives me the incentive to keep moving forward. In order to care for my health and get good test results I



must die to the unhealthy choices that manifest themselves as ill health. Sigh... This is rarely an easy task but is necessary to respect the life God has given to me and live a more disciplined life...like Jesus.

In the Gospel of John 12: 20-33 two Greeks came to Philip and made a request. That was to “see Jesus.” When Philip relayed this news to Jesus, He stated what that action would entail on the part of anyone seeking the same.

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me (Jn, 12: 24-26).

The Lenten Journey is historically a journey to the foot of the Cross

of Jesus. It entails spiritual growth and death to the selfish desires and motives that keep us from living fully the life intended for us by God. In this Lenten season may we continue to seek God’s plan for our lives and we continue to live and grow into the likeness of Christ.

Pastor Nancy

Unnatural

It’s countercultural, unnatural even — this Lenten call to deny oneself and resist temptation, to put aside comfort for a time in reflection of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. It’s downright uncomfortable.

Lent is a most unwelcome experience because human nature seeks pleasure and avoids pain at all costs. But those who dare to follow Jesus into the desert will find a rich reward.

Witnessing our faith and sharing God’s love as we live, learn, and grow as Christians!

Bethel’s Current General Fund Financial Picture

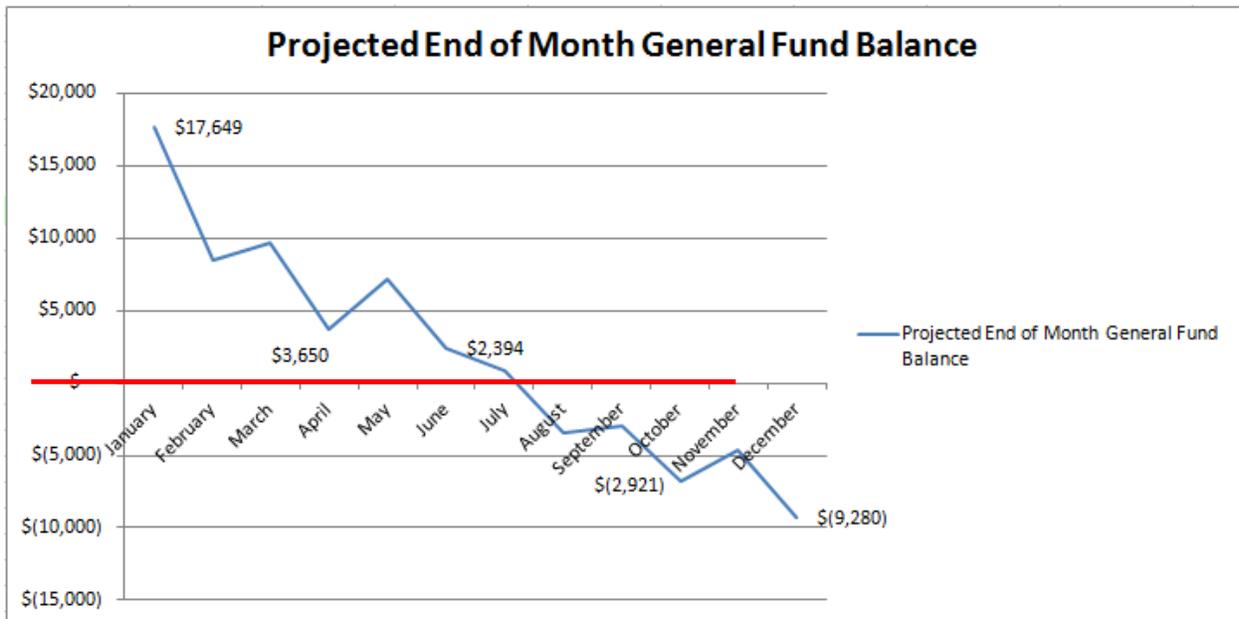
As most Bethelites are aware, our General Fund provides support for local church programs, pays staff salaries, keeps the lights on and the Church warm, provides our Church insurance, pays the taxes, and allows us to fulfill our connectional covenant to the Conference.

While we started the year with a healthy balance in the General Fund, the Finance Committee thought that at some point in 2015, the General Fund might be

insufficient to meet our responsibilities. As a result, we have done a cash flow analysis for the year and the results support the concern.



As you can see on the following page, our General Fund may run dangerously low in April and will be exhausted sometime in July if we are not able to increase giving and reduce expenses before then. This has to be taken very seriously by all members and friends of Bethel.

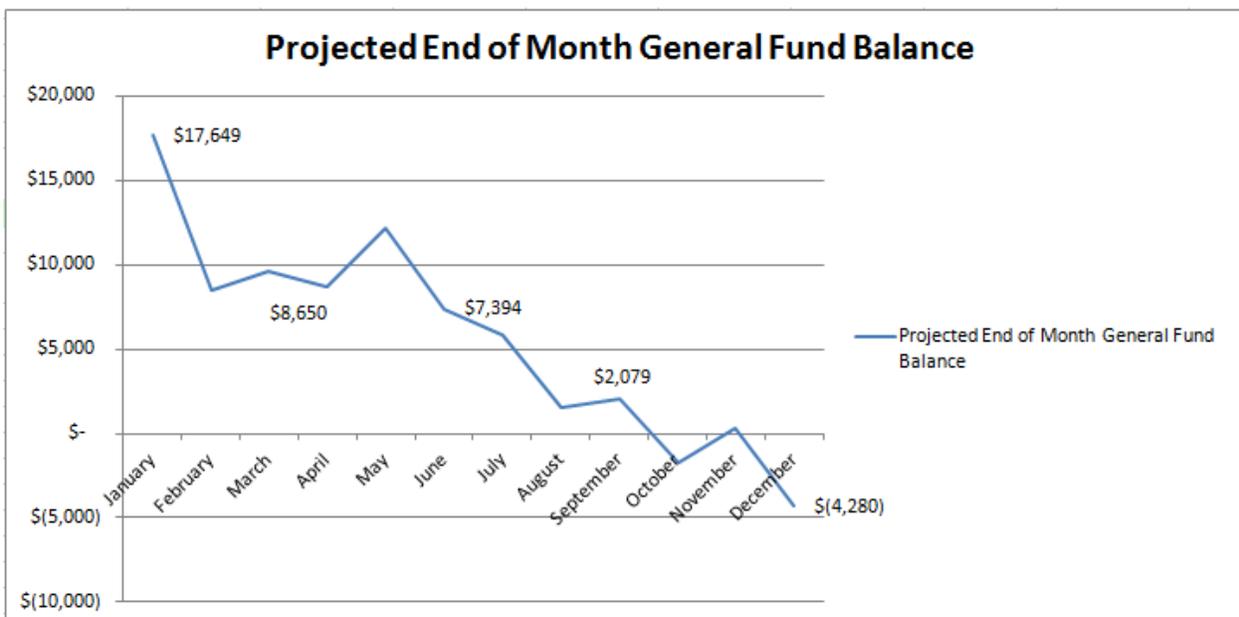


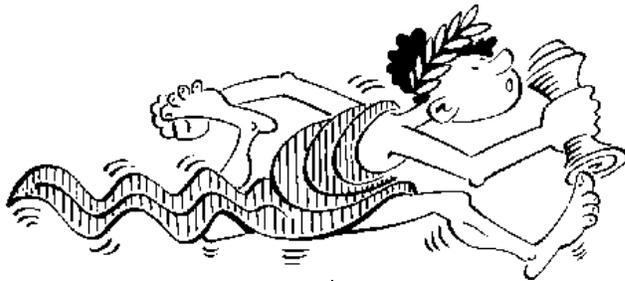
Despite a conscientious effort on the part of SPRC, Trustees, and Finance so far in 2015, we have been unable to identify significant cost-cutting measures, short of staff reductions. And SPRC reported at the last Council meeting in February that the staff reductions deemed necessary to achieve real savings would have very serious impacts on Bethel's purpose and mission as the Church.

We would ask during this sacrificial period of Lent that each Bethelite look prayerfully again at their financial commitments to God's mission and ministry, which is

the purpose of the Church. If we could increase our giving during this period by only \$5,000, our financial picture for 2015 would look much brighter, as shown in the graph below.

The projected shortfall in this scenario is much less and we would be able to navigate the summer months without as much concern during a time of the year when General Fund contributions typically may lag a bit when Church attendance is generally lower due to vacations and other commitments:





On the Run (Tidbits and Reminders)

- Bethel Book Club will meet on Monday, March 30 to discuss *Me Before You* by JoJo Moyers. New members are always welcome to join them at 7:00 in Friendship Hall for discussion and dessert.
- Pastor Nancy invites you to a time of prayerful contemplation on Maundy Thursday between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. Come to the sanctuary anytime during those hours to sit quietly in the sanctuary, pray silently at your seat or at the altar rail, read thought-provoking devotions (provided) or experience the presence of God through quiet contemplation while listening to music. "I picked the 4-7 time frame for maximum

flexibility so that folks could stop after work, avoid driving at night, or even choose to have dinner before coming," says Pastor Nancy. Come to prepare your heart for the pain of Good Friday. Be still and know that I am God. —Psalm 46:10

- A Good Friday Tenebrae Service will be held at 7:30 p.m. on April 3. The gradual extinguishing of lights reminds us of the pain of Jesus' death. In order to fully celebrate the joy of Easter morning, we must first experience the darkness of Good Friday. Join us for this poignant service.
- The Missions Committee is distributing Lenten Quarter Cards or envelopes for the

equivalent of \$10. This Lenten Discipline will benefit Kinlock Meals on Wheels.

- PIZZA HUT DAY is March 11. All purchases benefit the General Fund.
- New Camp Brochures are on the table in the hallway. Please let the office know if your child is planning to go to one of our three United Methodist Church Camps this summer. It is important that we know how to divide the available Campership Funds.
- Daylight Savings time begins March 8. Be sure to spring-ahead one hour or you'll be late for church!
- Planning for the Women's Retreat has run into obstacle after obstacle. Stay tuned through email and the bulletin as things develop.

A churchless Christian

In response to the question "Can I be a Christian without joining the church?" someone once said it's as possible as being:

- A student who will not go to school.
- A soldier who will not join an army.
- A citizen who does not pay taxes or vote.
- A salesman with no customers.
- A salesman with no customers.
- An explorer with no base camp.
- A seaman on a ship without a crew.
- A businessman on a deserted island.
- An author without readers.
- A tuba player without an orchestra.
- A parent without a family.
- A football player without a team.
- A politician who is a hermit.
- A scientist who does not share his findings.
- A bee without a hive.

—Author unknown



Tweens will meet this month on Sunday, March 15, 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. All 4th – 6th graders are invited to attend!

Easter Sunrise Service

The youth will be leading worship Easter morning, Sunday, April 5, for the annual Sunrise Service! This is always a much anticipated event. The service begins at 6:45 a.m. in the front parking lot. All youth are asked to arrive by 6:15 a.m. for set up. Dress warmly and bring a chair and blanket! Donuts and coffee will be served in Friendship Hall following the service. Come and worship our Risen Lord!

Youth 2015 Update

We are inching closer to our \$20,000 goal – more than half way there! All youth and adults committed to this trip covet your prayers as we move toward the June 24 take-off for Orlando! Upcoming fundraisers include: Valos candy (see a youth member



to order!) with orders due March 8 and delivery on March 22!

Spaghetti Dinner - The youth will be sponsoring a “take-out” Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday, March 22. Pre-orders begin Sunday, March 1. Pasta, homemade meatballs and sauce, bread and cake are on the menu (adult and child portions)! A “free will” offering will be taken and pre-orders will begin Sunday, March 1. Pick up times will be announced! All proceeds benefit the Youth General Fund.

Confirmation Class Update

The confirmation class continues to meet during Sunday school time each week. The class will be making a trip to the Conference Center in Cranberry on Saturday, March 28. More information coming soon!

Important Dates

NO YOUTH GROUP MEETING

- March 6 7:00P
Blacklight Show at Bethel!
- March 8 6:30 – 8:00P
Youth Group
Valos Candy orders due
- March 15 5:15 – 6:15P
Tweens
Youth Group 6:30 – 8:00P
- March 22
Spaghetti Dinner!
Youth Group 6:30 – 8:00P
- March 29 6:30 – 8:00P
Youth Group
- April 5 6:45A
HE IS RISEN! Sunrise Service, NO EVENING YOUTH MEETING!

Christian Symbols

Rooster

The rooster is reminiscent of Peter's threefold denial of Jesus on the night of Jesus' trial (Matthew 26:34, NIV); thus, it may represent faithlessness in general, especially in the face of danger. Because of the rooster's early-morning call, it's also symbolic of watchfulness: "Therefore keep watch," said Jesus, illustrating the return of the Son of Man, "because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn" (Mark 13:35, NIV).



Shamrock

St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead. Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them, “Is this one leaf, or three?” Inevitably, people replied that it was both, prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God: one God in three Persons — the Holy Trinity.

Paschal Candle

This large, white candle is an ancient symbol for Christ, the light of the world. The candle contains a cross and/or an Alpha and Omega to symbolize that Jesus is eternal and always present with his people. Also called the Easter candle, it plays a prominent role during Easter vigils and celebrations. Some churches also use the candle during baptisms and funerals.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1	Sally Burkett George Trew Jr
2	Gabriella Prignon
3	Joanne DeBolt
4	Jocelyn Sanders
5	Sam Greiner
7	Robby Black
10	Jean Hecker Joe McCallion
13	Amanda Bracken
15	Scott Pattison
20	John Merrick, II
25	Lilliana Shane
26	Charles Meredith
27	Lois Kay Acre
28	Bill Buffton Aubree Davis Darci Kocianski Greg Schafer
31	Dee George Randy Johnson

If your name does not appear or if the information is incorrect, please contact the office so that our records can be updated.



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

6	Bob & Brenda Reifschneider (62))
26	Roger & Nancy Milliron (55)

INDULGE FOR LENT?

Rather than sacrificing something for Lent — especially something easy and spiritually insignificant, such as chocolate — Patty Kirk, in *Guideposts* magazine, suggests finding new ways to indulge in God's presence. Surely one can do this by having extra devotions or attending Lenten worship services. But Kirk offers these ideas:

- Spend time outdoors, sensing God's magnificence.
- Spend time with others, extending generosity and compassion. Remember Jesus' promise that when you care for others, you care for him (Matthew 25:31-46).
- Pray for the "little things," coming before God in childlike trust and feeling peace.
- Watch attentively for God's answers to prayer, and receive them as reminders of his presence.
- Turn anxiety into prayer. As you frame concerns as prayers and entrust them to God, you "sacrifice" the tendency to wallow in worry.

ALL-ENCOMPASSING SAVIOR

Christ be with me, Christ within me.
Christ behind me, Christ before me.
Christ beside me, Christ to win me.
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me.
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger.
Christ in hearts of all that love me.
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.



—Hymn attributed to St. Patrick

ST. PATRICK'S DAY TRIVIA

You may know that St. Patrick used shamrocks to teach about the Trinity, but did you know these other facts about him?

- St. Patrick wasn't Irish. (His parents were Roman citizens living in either Scotland or Wales.)
- He was kidnapped and sold as a slave at age 16. After escaping six years later, he joined a monastery in England.
- March 17 is the date of St. Patrick's death, not his birth. He died in 461 A.D.
- The color originally associated with St. Patrick is blue, not green.
- The harp, not the shamrock, is the national symbol of Ireland.