Our Easter Offering

“And Jesus called them to Him, saying,
...for to such belongs the kingdom of God”
Luke 18:16

For this year’s Easter Offering, the Missions Committee has chosen as our focus two of Sydenstricker’s youth ministries—Jeremiah Project and Teaching Our Toddlers Preschool.

These ministries provide the opportunity to build upon a foundation for Christ’s love and grace in the nurturing embrace of the children of our Church. Often the children of TOT Preschool receive their first introduction to our Lord through their chapel experiences at the Preschool. As our youth grow and mature, Jeremiah Project gives them the opportunity to build their faith through an outreach mission that offers hands-on experiences in bringing Christ’s love to others through Christian service. It is through the Jeremiah Project that our youth are able to strengthen their Christian walk as they embrace Christ’s command to do for the least of those among us.

Over the years, the Sydenstricker family has generously supported our various outreach programs. The Missions Committee asks that you again prayerfully consider your support to these two, most important missions areas.

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4th Annual Handbell Recital

Sydenstricker United Methodist Church

Sunday, June 3rd
6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Featuring music by the Jubilate Ringers, Worzship Youth Choir, and Kidz Choir. Selections include hymns, classical works, original compositions and a guest appearance from pop artist Lady Gaga!
TOT Preschoolers Share Easter Vacation Plans

TOT’s Roving Reporter with clipboard in hand visited classrooms asking the questions about Easter and Spring Break plans. Entering the class for threes, a little fellow wearing a red t-shirt shared, “I’m going to find candy and we will dress up”. Two girls busy playing with the tree house play center said that they are going on a picnic. Some of the children in the second class of threes revealed plans for trips to the beach and long picnics if it is sunny and nice.

TOT four-year-olds plans were more detailed. One boy at the snack table stated loudly, “We are going to New York City for two days!” Another child added emphatically, “I am going to a cabin; I am going to a cabin!” Quickly a third little fellow shared “I am staying home every day.”

Across the room from the housekeeping play area, a four-year-old wearing a princess crown and frilly long dress exclaimed, “I’m staying home too, but we are doing an Easter Party!” Her friend wearing multiple necklaces and serving pizza slices to two children at the table shared, “my baby sister is having a birthday party end of Lent time!” One of the “pizza eaters” let me know that he will go to the beach, but only if it is sunny and nice out. The second boy looked quizzical as he shared, “I’m going for an Easter Party, I think.” Another Pre-K student said, “Mom hasn’t told me plans, but someone’s coming to visit”. One child added, “we are going to Florida because we never go there.” Many cousins are meeting over the holidays also. One child stated that grandma was going to the beach with her...she added,” Ocean City, Maryland.”

The children return to school April 10...memories of vacations will fade as they fill their minds with stories shared in chapel time with Pastor Jim and music with Mr. Smith. Teachers will be singing songs in preparation for “Mom Comes to School Day” in May. Swinging and running on the playground together; playing in the new castle will be foremost important. Using the new listening center with CD’s and accompanying storybooks; playing with the new tree house play house and building with the magna tiles will be their focus. Learning through their play will fill their mornings.
He stopped by my office to speak. There was a lot of fear in his voice; a lot of apprehension too. It was coming out as anger but beneath the anger was a fear that had to be torturous. His job was gone. The unemployment benefits were nearly exhausted. Sure he had applied for new jobs. Hundreds of people were applying for the same half dozen jobs and who knew how long they would last. He was already two months behind with his house payments. The credit card representatives were calling his home almost daily asking when they would see their money. His wife was working all the overtime she could get which wasn’t much. He had always believed that if a man worked hard to take care of his family, he’d always be able to do something. He was wrong. No matter how hard he looked there was nothing. Even the fast food restaurants were not calling him back. His own preacher talked about having faith and hope but this man was in my office because he had run out of both. He was afraid that he could not talk to his own minister. Obviously he did not have enough faith or confidence because his prayers for a new job were not being answered.

I listened. I did not want to belittle the importance of faith and hope and yet, because this man was in my office that told me he was not lacking in either. What was missing was a job!

He was confused because his preacher’s message did not align with his own, traumatic, life experience.

I thought about Jesus’ experience. He too was abandoned by those he trusted. He too had always done the right thing only to discover that being right sometimes is not enough. He was also being crucified through no fault of his own. Where was the hope in “My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me?”

Yet, it is in this prayer that I find hope. Even when we feel abandoned by God, we can still pray and have the assurance that God hears us. Lent, our time of self-denial, is always followed by the story of Christ’s passion; Jesus’ own story of self-denial. The passion is always followed by death, darkness, hopelessness and gloom. But, the story never ends on Good Friday. It does not stop at the sealed tomb or even the empty one. The Easter story always is an experience of resurrection! The darkest night is never the last night. The most hopeless day is never the final day. The forgotten prayer is never unheard by God. Because, there is Easter, every sunset has a sunrise. After every bad day brings forth a new day.

We are Easter people. It is perfectly okay and reasonable for us to sometimes be depressed and even for us to be ready to give up. Yet, our hope is that when life is at its lowest, God is at his greatest! The worst day of your life is never the last day. Only God has the final word and even when you give up on yourself, God has not given up on you. Easter! It is not just a holy day. It is the day of resurrection and new life for those of us who feel like we are all out of hope. Hope is in the Lord. Faith is not the belief that we can do it. Faith is believing that God has already done it.

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**SHARE THE WALK**

The Trustees and Pavilion Committee are inviting and challenging the congregation to join them on a walking adventure that includes everyone from the youngest to oldest, and all ages in between beginning Sunday, April 15.

Watch for more details after Easter and be prepared to come along and have fun!
Youth Fellowship at the Game Table

by Grant Greffey

Something special is going on at the Youth’s monthly board game nights. And we want to share it with a wider audience in April with a “Eurogame Night with the Youth.”

Back in 2002, a father asked me why we couldn’t have a board game event once per month for the youth. We had after all been having board game tournaments at the New Year’s Lock-In. My response was that our logistical challenge was in getting a second adult chaperone for an ongoing commitment. The other youth leaders were good sports and supported the annual lock-in, but his was taking things to another level. Well, this man stepped up and volunteered to be that second chaperone as we started up.

The point of these events has always been to provide a safe and wholesome venue for socializing—and to have fun. They also provide a nice social event for our youth to invite friends into our church community. The adult volunteers typically bring snacks and drinks—as well as new games that they want to break in.

We only had a couple of hard-core “regulars” at first. But our numbers grew. And as hoped, our youth will sometimes bring guests. We have also had some alumni decide to come back when they were in town. Last year, a relative of one of our former students donated a total of $600 to our Game Night program. After prayerful consideration, we used the money to start a Game Library. Some other donations added to our inventory. At our last event, we had 24 attendees—10 of whom were adults. Apparently our games are not “just for kids.” And the robust attendance this year led us to move the events from the Agape House to Hottle Hall.

Our game library has a variety of games—racing games, economic/resource management games, military strategy games, word games, and party games. Some of the games have a religious theme. And of course, our youth and adult volunteers bring their own games.

Many if not most of the games that we typically play at our board game nights are what are known as “Eurogames” since many of them were developed in Europe. A precise definition is hard to come by, but usually a Eurogame involves a lot of player interaction, choices with consequences, multiple ways to win, and management of resources. They generally lack the “cut-throat” elimination mentality of Monopoly or Risk. (Risk was in fact originally published in France). Everyone is in the game until the end—even in games with conflict/combat in them. And the games also don’t drag on endlessly. Most can be played in 2 hours or less. Most of them have a theme set in an exotic locale or period of history.

My first Eurogame experience came at a game convention in Kalamazoo, MI, in 1998. I was introduced to the now classic The Settlers of Catan, which recently got some free publicity from the television comedy The Big Bang Theory.

One of the more popular games with our youth has been Puerto Rico, where players are rival plantation owners on the island of Puerto Rico in the 16th century.

Power Grid has become another youth favorite. In Power Grid, the goal is to sell electricity to the largest customer base when the game ends.

The big hit at the March game night was Ticket to Ride—actually an American game in the Eurogame style.

For players with a more aggressive bent, we have Small World.

We would like a rough idea of the numbers planning to come. If you have any questions, you can talk to Steve Schwartz (703-495-0300) or yours truly, Grant Greffey (703-455-5664).

Our Next Game Night

Friday, April 13
7-11 PM
Hottle Hall
For ages 12—112!

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The Steeple
the way we treat and raise our offspring. The problem is, when we do this, we still don’t end up “fixing” ourselves and oftentimes we end up “breaking” our kids in ways we didn’t expect. So use this time with your teenager to create an honest dialogue over your own fears, personal shortcomings and hopes for them and give them the space and time to do the same. Share with your teenager the fears you have for them. (Think specific—not just the really “obvious” or “big” fears. Think of the every day fears that may not seem that big to anyone else but drive you and your parenting.) Can you think of anything from your own personal experience as you grew up that caused you to have this fear for your child? How has your personal fear dictated the way you parent?

Family psychologist John Rosemond says this about encouraging our children and their dreams. “It’s time we tell them that doing great things starts with accomplishing small goals.” Does it seem like a scary thing to allow your child to do this? What are some of the big goals you have in mind for your child? Does the way you parent encourage or hamper their big dreams? What are some of the small, more attainable goals you can set for them—that don’t scare you to death, but also give them a proper perspective on what is required to make their dreams happen? Ask your teenager what are some of the big dreams they have for themselves—and ask them what are some smaller attainable things they can begin to accomplish now that will help them as they strive for these bigger goals. How can you help them make this happen without over stepping your bounds and doing too much?

What can you do as a parent to better support them and equip them as they journey towards discovering who they are and who they want to be?

**Upcoming Series for UMYF - Fake I.D.**

It’s an age-old problem—one that begins to plague us around the time adolescence hits and, if we aren’t careful, follows us around the rest of our lives. It is the question of who we are—what makes up our identity, what defines us, what makes us, us. But imagine if, instead of wrestling with these questions in the complexity of adulthood, we started to tackle them in the formative teenage years? What if we took a good, long, hard look at some of the foundational questions during the years that shape us more than any others? Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? We are going to begin to scratch the surface of identity tackling the difficult to ask—and even more difficult to answer—questions that ultimately end up defining who we are.

**PARENT CUE: Fake I.D.**

1. Be a student of what they are learning
2. Be a student of your student
3. Action point

I think we would all admit that one of our biggest parenting faux pas come when we try to live vicariously through our children—trying to fix what was wrong circumstantially for us or in us by

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**Hurricane Katrina Relief Mission Trip for Youth**

**Who can attend:** Any current 8th-12th graders

**Cost:** $300

**Dates:** July 14-22

**Contact:** Hannah Knowland at youth@sumcdisciples.org for more information.
Mother-Daughter Tea
Bring your favorite tea cup or mug and join us for the Mother-Daughter Tea on April 14. Bring your mother or daughter or adopt one for the day or come by yourself. After all, each one of us is someone’s daughter. Join us at 2 pm in Hottle Hall, where some tables will be decorated to represent a country or mission. Bring a refreshment to share and/or your teacup. Women and children all ages are welcome at the UMW Tea.

General Meeting
We also have a general meeting this month on April 25. Come as you are from work or home at 6 PM, Kidz Choir time, to Hottle Hall. Bring an appetizer if you can to tide anyone over who has hunger pangs. Children in tow are welcome.

Spring Sale
Are you going to be doing some spring cleaning? Save all of your unwanted knick-knacks, kitchen goods, toys, games, puzzles, linens, etc., for the upcoming Spring Sale on May 5. Keep May 4 and 5 open because we need people to help set up and run the sale.

Planned Events
April 2: UMW Board Meeting 7-9 pm, Hottle Hall
April 3: Prayer Shawl Ministry, 7-9 pm, Library
April 15: Mother-Daughter Tea 2 pm, Hottle Hall
April 21: Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am-noon, Library
April 25: General Meeting, 6 pm, Hottle Hall
May 1: Prayer Shawl Ministry, 7-9 pm, Library
May 4: Spring Sale set-up, time TBD, Hottle Hall
May 5: Spring Sale 9 am -12 pm, Hottle Hall
May 14: UMW Board Meeting, 7-9 pm Hotlle Hall
May 19: Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am-noon, Library

Save Pastor Keary from a repeat of last year’s lonely birthday “celebration” →
Join this year’s celebration at a Rising Hope Mission Church fundraiser:
Tues., Apr. 17, 11 am-9 pm
at Mamma’s Kitchen
7601 Fordson Rd, Alexandria -near Hybla Valley
10% of all sales will go to Rising Hope
American, Greek, Mediterranean & Italian Foods
Walk-in or for reservations: 571-312-6690
Pastor Keary will be there 5-9 pm
Remember—10% of all sales—all day!
In January, ECHO provided 292 client families, totaling 927 people, with 1962 bags of food, 293 bags of clothes, 205 winter coats, 16 layettes, 6 refurbished computers, 171 sets of bed linens. This doesn’t count books and toys or small appliances. Nor does it count the more than $20,000 that was paid to vendors for people in need of emergency rental assistance, medicine, heat, water and other necessities of life. ECHO cannot address every woe in our community, but with your help, we are addressing the pressing needs of many of our needy neighbors.

Gratefully,
Jane Curtis
Community Relations Chair

Mark April 14 on your calendar for ECHO’s ever-popular Spring “Yard” Sale - which is actually not held in the yard, but in the gymnasium of St. Bernadette Catholic Church, 7600 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The gym is behind the church building. Doors open at 8:00 am and the early birds get the coolest items. Proceeds from the yard sale go to ECHO. To see more about ECHO’s mission, visit www.echo-inc.org.

Once again, ECHO is registered for the Feinstein Foundation’s Challenge Grant. All food donations as well as financial gifts that come in to ECHO as a result of the Feinstein challenge between March 1 and April 30 qualify for a proportionate amount of matching funds. More information about the foundation can be found at www.feinsteinfoundation.org. Checks may be sent directly to ECHO at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, VA 22150. Don’t forget to indicate on the memo line of the check that it is in response to the Feinstein challenge so that it will count toward the matching funds.

PANTRY NEEDS: Currently, the ECHO food pantry needs vegetable oil, dried milk, toilet paper, detergent, child and adult over-the-counter pain medications, bandages, peanut butter, jelly, facial tissue, and coffee. Donations may be dropped in the ECHO bin outside Hottle Hall or delivered to the donation door at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road on weekdays between 9:30 am and 12:30 pm, or Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings between 7:00 and 9:00. Receipts are provided.

Please go through your pantry and donate food that you haven't eaten (nothing that has expired please)!! At this time, LCAC has a strong need for healthy cereals, pastas and pasta sauce (in plastic bottles). They also need peanut butter, jelly, canned fruit, hamburger helper, hearty soups, brown rice, dried and canned beans and size 5 diapers. Store brands are fine!

There is also a need for items used for cleaning, including dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, bar soaps, toothpaste, deodorants, toilet paper, etc. We are also taking your recycled plastic or paper bags which are used to give out food. Please put all items in the Lorton bin outside Hottle Hall. Thank you!
Thank you Sydenstricker. On March 12 we shipped 16 boxes of canned foods, magazines, toiletries and candy. Total weight was over 225 pounds!

We also want to let you know that Jennifer Riordan has stepped down from leading this mission to move to other mission activities and asked me to replace her. She has done wonderfully in this mission for several years and I hope to continue her quality work and care of our Warriors.

**Here are things we are planning to do in the coming months:**

*June 23 - Fifth Annual Katz’s Deli Lunch at Walter Reed*

*July 14 - Third Annual Range Day at Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club*

**Events to be scheduled:** Potomac River cruise from the Hoffmaster Marina; *Rock fishing on the Chesapeake;* An event at Fort Belvoir; *Boxes for our Warriors in November;* Thanksgiving dinners; *Christmas dinners;* New Year’s Day treats to eat while watching the Bowl Games.

We will keep you all informed and we need to know of warriors, family, friends or neighbors so that we can pray for them, send packages and send them the famous salamis from Katz’s Deli. We need their names and mailing addresses. Please let the front office or Gene Russell - ENRussell@msn.com - know. Currently we have the following names:

- MAJ Adam Points - Church member and son of Ron and Lois Points
- 1LT Paul Finelli - from Kenena Spalding
- Richard Cote - from Jeannine Rodgers

**Heads-Up:**

**New Lifetouch Photo Directory Coming**

**Photo Dates**

Think about staying close to home the week of May 22-26 or June 5-9. Those are the dates set aside for church family photographs. Get those students before they go off for the summer!

Sign-ups for photography appointments will be done mostly online. More information will be coming via the weekend bulletins in April about the Directory.

**Loan Your Photos**

We would appreciate your loaning the office your candid shots which you may have taken at some of our church events. You may also send them electronically to (admin@sumcdisciples.org). We will use some of them for the “Activities” pages of the directory. Please put your name and phone number on the back of each photo, as well as what the activity is, place in an envelope, and give to Susan Hartley, Administrative Assistant. Photo quality must be good for publication, and all photographs will be returned to you if you give us your actual prints.

**You are Cordially Invited to**

The 1st annual Upper Pohick Community League (UPCL) Coffee House Event located in the Little Red Schoolhouse (across the street from our church) on Saturday, April 28. Please stop by and visit between 6-9 PM. There will be entertainment and refreshments. Learn more about this historical, one-room schoolhouse and enjoy some fellowship with your Fairfax County neighbors.
The 2012 General Conference will be held April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Florida. This is the denomination’s highest governing body which meets once every four years to establish church law, budget, direction, and vision. There are 988 delegates from around the world. Our denomination is a global church, not merely a United States church with foreign outposts. In fact, of the 988 delegates 372 will come from outside the United States. The largest annual conference in the church is the North Katanga Annual Conference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It boasts 52 delegates or about twice as many as Virginia.

“Each General Conference has a major impact on the life of our denomination and our role in the world,” said the Rev. Gere Reist II, secretary of the General Conference. “When delegates decide where to invest our money and our talent, they also decide who will live and who will die, who will hear the Gospel and who will not, who will be welcomed into the life of the church and who will be turned aside. It is an awesome task and a high calling.”

While social debates such as homosexual ordination tend to receive the greatest media attention, the larger issues tend to focus on the more practical functions of the conference such as budgeting and personnel management. This year the General Conference will approve a budget of just over $600 million for 2013-2016. This is a 6% decrease from the past and represents a mere 3% of the total expenditures of the denomination. There will also be a proposal to discontinue guaranteed appointments of our fully ordained clergy which many see as a breach of the covenant that we established and kept with our clergy for nearly two centuries. Furthermore, drastic changes to pension plans of the clergy are being recommended. While proposing such changes to the already lowest paid professionals in the country (starting salary with a 3-year master’s degree is still below $40,000 for a full 12-month year) the denomination pledges to attract more and younger clergy. Many believe that these two goals are inconsistent so discussions could be interesting.


Special thanks to the donor of the new freezer, as we are able to store over 400 hundred loaves of bread. Way to go Brothers and Sisters --- God bless.

Join us again Wednesday, April 4, in Hottle Hall to make sandwiches.

Wednesday, March 7 was another great day weather-wise. Men and women from several churches, in addition to Sydenstricker, met to make sandwiches for Martha’s Table. This is a good example that among churches there can be diversity of form but unity of spirit. On this day this unity made 2,851 sandwiches, including 573 meat and cheese and 2,278 egg salad. On behalf of Martha’s Table, I would like to thank all of those that make monetary contributions, donate eggs and their labor every month along with the people that donate condiments and the cheese for the making of the cheese and meat sandwiches. A special thanks to the donor of the new freezer, as we are able to store over 400 hundred loaves of bread. Way to go Brothers and Sisters --- God bless.

Join us again Wednesday, April 4, in Hottle Hall to make sandwiches.
Spring has sprung! Celebrate with a chaise lounge in the shade, a tall, cool drink, and—of course—a book. We hope one or more of the Book Group’s upcoming choices will be your “backyard book.” Join us!

Our meeting dates and selections are:

**April 16:** *Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns - a “quiet classic”

**May 21:** *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand - more acclaimed nonfiction from the author of *Seabiscuit*

**June 18:** *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P. D. James - James sets her mystery at Mr. Darcy’s mansion!

We meet the third Monday of the month at 7:30 PM in the church library. For more information, contact Rebecca Burrows (rsburrows@cox.net) or Irene McGhee (ibmcghee@verizon.net).

The Nursery staff has a new member! We welcomed **Jenny Kram** to the Nursery staff on March 25. Jenny joins Tracey Crowell and Tatiane Alves in caring for the youngest in our church family. Tracey Crowell is the senior member of the team as she has been caring for our children in our Nursery for over 15 years. Tatiane Alves joined the team in April 2011. Anyone who passes the Nursery on Sunday morning will see that the Nursery is a busy place, with many smiling faces. Welcome to SUMC, Jenny!

Additionally, the Nursery has a new **Nursery Coordinator**! **Ruth Hall** has accepted this important position in the life of our church family. As Coordinator, Ruth will be working with the Nursery staff to ensure the Nursery has the appropriate staff and volunteers for worship services.
Easter Object Lesson for Children: Resurrection

Ingredients:
- One can of crescent roll dough
- Large Marshmallows
- Melted butter
- Cinnamon sugar
- Bible or Easter storybook

Assemble rolls and read the story as you go along

1. Read John 19 from the Bible, preferably a Children’s Bible.
2. As you unroll the crescent, explain that it represents the cloth Jesus was wrapped in.
3. Give your child a marshmallow and make observations on how it represents Jesus:
   - White - Jesus pure and sinless
   - Sweet - Jesus was kind
   - Soft - Jesus was gentle
4. Melt Butter and roll the marshmallows in it. This symbolizes the embalming oils.
5. Then, roll the marshmallows in cinnamon sugar. This is like the spices used to prepare his body for burial.
6. Wrap the marshmallow in the crescent roll cloth, pinching the dough together securely. This represents how they would have wrapped Jesus’ body
7. Put the rolls in the oven (symbolizing the tomb) and bake for the amount of time specified on the package.
8. While the rolls are baking, read John 20:1-18.
9. Open the tomb and remove the rolls. When they’re cool enough to handle, break one open and discover what happened to the marshmallow. Its disappearance represents the strips of linen left behind, but no more body. Jesus is raised!

Follow up with 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. Jesus is coming again!

Blood Drive May 6

Please make your own appointment. It’s easy! Go to inova.org/donateblood. Click on Donate Blood 2 times and enter sponsor code 0384. Call Blanche Powell with questions at 703.866.9307.

Thanks to ALL our faithful donors. Due to travel plans, Blanche and Ron will be out much of April so we are really relying on our SUMC disciples to make appointments and help us spread the word! Your gift of life-saving blood is critical! Thanks.

Nursery News (Continued from pg. 10)

and special events, coordinating parent volunteers to clean sheets and toys and providing supplies as needed. Any group wishing to request the Nursery be available for a special event at the church should contact Ruth to discuss the request. Thank you, Ruth for accepting this position!

God is good all the time!!
And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, "In one year, I am going to make it rain and cover the whole Earth with water until all flesh is destroyed. But I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living thing on the earth. therefore, I am commanding you to build an Ark."

In a flash of lightning, God delivered the specifications for an Ark. In fear and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark. "Remember" said the Lord, "You must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year."

Exactly one year later, fierce storm clouds covered the earth and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard weeping. "Noah," He shouted. "Where is the Ark?"

"Lord, please forgive me!" cried Noah. "I did my best, but there were big problems. First, I had to get a permit for construction and your plans did not meet the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw the plans. Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system and flotation devices.

"Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

"Then I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the Spotted Owl. I finally convinced the U.S. Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won't let me catch any owls. So, no owls.

"The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but still no owls.

"When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. Then the Army Engineers demanded a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a map.

"Right now, I am trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard. "The IRS has seized my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I just got a notice from the state that I owe them some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a "recreational watercraft"."

"Finally, the ACLU got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event and therefore unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another five or six years!" Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky.

Noah looked up hopefully. "You mean You are not going to destroy the earth, Lord?"

"No," said the Lord sadly. "I don't have to. Government already has."

And now you know why the nursery project has been taking so long!
If you took the same excuses people use for not going to church and apply them to other important areas of life, you’d realize how inconsistent we can be in our logic. For example, “Reasons Not To Wash:”

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who make soap are only after your money.
3. I wash on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter.
4. People who wash are hypocrites—they think they are cleaner than everyone else.
5. There are so many different kinds of soap I can’t decide which one is best.
6. I used to wash, but it got boring so I stopped.
7. None of my friends wash.
8. The bathroom is never warm enough in the winter or cool enough in the summer.
9. I’ll start washing when I get older and dirtier.

A Massachusetts woman recently bought two rats from a pet shop to save them from being fed to snakes. About three months later, however, she contacted the state chapter of the ASPCA to report that her duo had quickly exploded to a total of 71 rats, according to a January 30, 2012, UPI story.

**UNDER THE CATEGORY OF “NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED”**

Sometimes you end up with too much of a good thing - or even too much of something not so good.

A Massachusetts woman recently bought two rats from a pet shop to save them from being fed to snakes. About three months later, however, she contacted the state chapter of the ASPCA to report that her duo had quickly exploded to a total of 71 rats, according to a January 30, 2012, UPI story.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day. 
Acts 10:39-40, NRSV
The other day a group of us were discussing the amazing artwork that was about to be installed in the Narthex and we realized that because this Lenten season would focus on the Stations of the Cross, it would have a pretty heavy theme. We also reflected on the statement or sentiment we've heard from some that Lent is a buildup to Easter and "once Easter comes it's all over." Lent occupies a huge part of our hearts, minds, and souls for six weeks - as it should - and yet, the coming Easter season realizes and fulfills the whole promise! Yes, Christ had to die but that's not the point; the point is… He Lives! You should reflect on Christ's living walk on this earth after His resurrection.

Our Lenten mission theme Imagine No Malaria is a beautiful, outreaching campaign: a campaign that shows the unbeliever, the doubter, and the skeptic that our congregation is about God’s work as we live on earth today. Those who mistrust organized religion for not mustering enough effort to eradicate children's unnecessary deaths will see Christ's practical love in action.

As we enter the Easter season we will embark on a new campaign that will capitalize on the energy that comes from Easter to show people that the Spirit walks in Sydenstricker's campus and that we are good stewards of that energy. Then after that, two more projects will serve those who need us the most - the poor and needy, the homeless, and the forgotten. All this before July 5th!

This congregation is moving some mountains and I look forward to everyone's input, feedback, collaboration and cooperation as we move forward.

**A Few Bits of Need and Thanks:**

We are in need of an Acolyte Coordinator. This person would set up and maintain the rotation list of Acolytes for Sundays. Your child may want to be an Acolyte: it is a high honor (carrying Christ's light into and out of the Sanctuary) and I wish to thank those who have previously done it. We simply need for someone to assist with it. Please contact one of the Pastors, myself, or Irene McGhee if interested.

We also have outstanding parents running our Children's Church but need a pair (or partnership of pairs) of teachers for the 3rd Sunday each month. If interested contact Shirley Edwards, the Pastors, or myself. Finally I want to sincerely thank Ruth Hall for volunteering to be our Nursery Coordinator! That is a great ministry, one my wife has served in, and very vital to our church. Blessings to each and every one of you my brothers and sisters!

*Joe Hoffmaster, Chairman*

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**HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES**

**April 1, 2012**

8:30 & 11 am—Selections from Handel’s Messiah (Sanctuary)
9:45—Contemporary worship (Sanctuary)

**April 5-8, 2012**

7:30 pm—Maundy Thursday, communion (Sanctuary)
7:30 pm—Holy Friday (Sanctuary)
5:30 pm—Saturday Easter worship (Chapel)
6:30 am—Sunrise Service (Chapel graveyard)
7:15 am—Easter Breakfast (Hottle Hall)
8:30 am—Traditional worship (Sanctuary)
9:45 am—Contemporary worship (Sanctuary)
11:00 am—Traditional worship (Sanctuary)