

Announcements and Upcoming Events

The flowers are given by Glenn and Paige Paul to the glory of God and in memory of Glenn's dad, Albert Benner Paul.

June 26 through June 28, 9 am to Noon. VBS.

July 2, 10 a.m. **Combined Worship Service with the River Churches at Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead Museum.** Please bring a side dish to share.

July 17 to July 21, 9 am to Noon. **Summer Art Camp.** We are collecting paper towel and toilet paper rolls, cardboard egg cartons, clean gallon jugs and coffee cans with lids.

Gloria patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be
— world without end.
Amen, amen.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Doxology

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen!



Daily Bible Study

www.keyway.ca

As a point of reference, last weeks story of Abraham and Isaac took place in what would become Jerusalem.

Session:

Class of 2017
Barbara Matlack
Randy Niederer

Class of 2018
Patti Manz
Tim Shaub

Class of 2019
Mark Niederer
Kristine Schmidt, Clerk

Deacons:

Class of 2017
Judy Niederer, Secretary

Class of 2018
Gail Butterfoss
Lettie Ritner, Vice-Moderator

Class of 2019
Chris Manz, Moderator

Ministers: All members of Titusville Church
Pastor: Rev. Kenneth Good

Worship Assistant: Randy Niederer
Music Directors: Jon and Helen Eastburn

The Rev. Dr. R. William Shaub, *Pastor Emeritus*
Barbara Matlack, *Office Administrator*

May 28, 2017

THE EXTRAORDINARY

GOD'S MAJESTIC WORK of
REUNIFICATION & ADOPTION

Let us worship God!
Christ is risen! **He has risen indeed!** Today is the 7th Sunday of the Easter Season. We continue the joy and wonder which the empty tomb caused the disciples long ago. In our Extraordinary story, we say goodbye to a major character: Sarah. The account of her death is one of the longest in Hebrew

Scripture. As we accompany the Genesis story with readings through Acts, we encounter a death story far different than Sarah's. It is story of deception and shame, one which grieved the Holy Spirit of God. With Easter joy in our hearts, we look to be good witnesses, and to bear witness to the Lord by a noble life, truthfulness and sincerity.



Call to Worship

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!
Easter has a very this-worldly, present-age meaning:
Jesus is raised, so he is the Messiah, and therefore he is the world's true Lord
Jesus is raised, so God's new creation has begun—and we, his followers have a job to do!
Jesus is raised, so we must act as his heralds, announcing his lordship to the entire world, making his kingdom come on earth as in heaven!

N.T. Wright, Surprised By Hope

Prayer of Confession

On this morning of hallelujahs, we must confess how human we are, Emptier of tombs. We haven't done any great evil, but we have failed to do good when we had the chance. We have not intentionally hurt any one, nor have we offered healing to the broken. We easily accept the witness of the angel in the tomb, but find it difficult to share this good news with our friends and neighbors.

Bring us new life, Dazzling God. Where we are tired and stressed, give us the energy to serve your creation; transform our hardened hearts into fountains of grace; forgive us of all the damage we have done, and fill us with the joy of your Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, who gives us new life, we pray.

Let us pause for a silent time of personal confession...

written by Rev. Thom Shuman



Order of Liturgy

Prelude
***Call to Worship** (below)
***Opening Hymns** (below)/ Prayer
Confession (below)
—call, prayer, assurance
*Gloria patri (back page)
Scripture (below)
Message
***Hymn of Response** (below)
*Apostles Creed (back page)
*New City Catechism (inside, bottom left-hand)
Announcements
Prayers of the People
Offering
Offertory: "Immortal Invisible, God Only Wise"
*Doxology (back page)
***Sending Hymn** (below)
Benediction
Choral Benediction: "God be With You Till We Meet Again"

*Please stand if able

Scripture

Psalms 128 (page 442)
Genesis 23 (page 14)
Acts 5 (page 773)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Songs for Today

Opening Hymn
#370 "Rejoice, the Lord is King"
Hymn of Response
Insert "Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise"
Sending Hymn
#638 "I Need Thee Every Hour"

48 RIVER DRIVE | TITUSVILLE, NEW JERSEY | 08560
609 737 1385 | 609 737 2212 | office@titusvillechurch.org
www.titusvillechurch.org

facebook.com/titusvillechurch



Notes on Morning Scripture

Genesis

23:1 Kiriath Arba, (Hebron) was 19 miles from Jerusalem. Hebron means 'the Hebrew place'

23:3 Hittites are descendants of Canaan (10:15) and their land was part of God's promise to Abraham (15:20)

23:5 earlier mentions of Abraham's prosperity include 12:5 and 13:5

23:9 Machpelah background can be found at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10248-machpelah>

23:16 Shekel is a unit of weight, so the exact price is uncertain. Several readings suggest he paid a high cost for the field. Here is a fun reading: <https://coatofmanycolors.net/2012/06/20/biblical-price-index/>

23:18 first ownership by Abraham of the land promised him

5:1 This story is in the context of believers sharing their possessions that we read last week: 4:32-37

5:21 at this point in the Acts story, the Apostle's ministry is still focused on proclaiming to Israelites that Jesus was Messiah (Acts 1:8)

Web Link

<http://bibleatlas.org/hebron.htm> excellent biblical and historical summary of the city of Hebron (where Sarah died)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_the_Patriarchs Machpelah still exists. Here is a summary of its history within the mono-theistic faiths.

<http://grief.com/the-five-stages-of-grief/>

<https://tifwe.org/resource/ownership-and-property-in-the-old-testament-economy/> substantive article from biblical scholar

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/hagar-and-slavery-vs-sarah-and-freedom> sermon on Galatians 4:21-31, where Paul compares Hagar and Sarah as an allegory of The Old and New Covenant

<https://bible.org/seriespage/12-be-honest-story-ananias-and-sapphira>

New City Catechism

A 52 question catechism developed by Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York. For an introduction to this catechism, visit: <http://www.newcitycatechism.com/intro.php>

Part 2: Christ, Redemption, Grace

Week 24 Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Answer: **Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.**

To learn more about Question 24, including Scripture background, prayer, commentary and video from scholars, visit <http://newcitycatechism.com/new-city-catechism/24>

Editorial: Resurrection Hope

Sarah is a fascinating person from the Bible. Every mention of her name in the New Testament is positive. In Genesis, there were a few questionable moments, but these were brought forth alongside the faithfulness she displayed waiting for God's promise of Isaac.

Sarah's death brought a deep sense of mourning from Abraham. The story today is evidence of the great care he gave in negotiating a burial plot, the first purchase of Promised Land recorded in the story. By all accounts, Abraham secured a beautiful land for Sarah to be buried and to rest, waiting on God's completion of his promise to her. Today's story is the first story of burial in the Bible. Sarah's death narrative joins the others found in Hebrew Scripture in moving the reader to the climatic story of conquered grave.

Our Acts story is also a story of burial, but under far different circumstances. Ananias and Sapphira ultimately brought upon themselves an early death through their deceit. The Holy Spirit deems it necessary to judge quickly and powerfully. This couple tells a story, not of faithfulness, but of faithlessness.

We see the tenderness of Abraham's love in today's story. The New Testament speaks to the human grief we feel by placing it in its context. Two passages for your consideration:

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, reminds them that Christ's resurrection secures a good future for people who place their trust in the Lord. We shall be together again. Those who have died in Christ are not lost.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Co. 15:16-19)

In one of his earliest letters, Paul's hearers are concerned about those who had died before the Christ's return. Were they lost?

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who asleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

Behold the wonder of Easter! We are invited to be like Abraham and Sarah, to walk the life of faith, and to wait for God's promise. We are cautioned against the duplicity that grieves God's Spirit through our Acts story. The Gospel (which means, 'good news') is that Jesus died for our sins and he rose from the dead. We can live alongside him forever. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Prayers to the Lord and Author of Life
(offered in 5/28 worship by the congregation)

Dear Tabby, Raising Life (issues) Acts 9:36

Dear Tabby,

Sometimes I feel such little joy. I know the Bible says it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. What advice does the Bible have for finding joy?

Joyless in Jamesburg

Dear Joyless,

Today's reading from the Book of Acts provides some clues for joy. In between commentary on the early church sharing their possessions (which brought joy) and the final story of the Apostle's feeling joy because they gave witness to Christ's resurrection, is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Let's start there.

The thing about Ananias and Sapphira is that they made it so much more difficult than it needed to be. They had property and sold it, and were prepared to present a portion to the Apostles. But they conspire to say they are giving all of it when they are not. This grieves the Holy Spirit, and Peter sees through them in pronouncing his verdict. He even tells them the gift was at their disposal; they just had to speak truthfully about it.

One sad element of this story is that it didn't have to be. If the couple was just simple and truthful, there would not have been a problem. Their joylessness is rooted in their self-inflicted need to be manipulative, rather than simply face the apostles with authenticity. The story provides the clue to its readers that there is joy in simplicity and truthfulness, and a lack of joy in duplicity and lies.

The joy for the early believers was being of one heart and one mind. This is accomplished to the extent we place Jesus Christ at the center of our lives and our community. He unites. And he frees us to be a part of the body. Taking part in Christ's mission brings joy. We see this practice of sharing, testifying to Christ's resurrection, seeing God's grace at work, not seeing need as they took care of one another, and even supported one another with the encouragement that comes from significant giving to the good news. The disciples validated this type of thinking when they obeyed the Lord and testified to his resurrection. "They rejoiced because they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for Christ's name" (5:41).

You were correct: joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. You can't self-manufacture it. You can receive it when you participate in Christian community, and announcing the Gospel message. In Christ's body, there are a great variety of ways of spreading the joy, which ironically, is how you encounter it for yourself.