

Church Chatter



April 2014

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love." *1 Corinthians 16: 13-14*

SIGNS OF THINGS TO COME

What is Easter and why does it matter? I think the question is important for those of us who look to Jesus in faith. And a number of answers can be given which are in various degrees true. Easter was the vindication of Jesus. It was the source of the early disciples' courage. It was an indication that the grave is not the end of life. And many more statements could be said about Easter that are true.

If I were to condense the meaning of Easter into one sentence, I think it would be this: "Easter is a sign of things to come." Easter is more than just an astonishing event that happened to Jesus two thousand years ago in which he came back alive. And it is more than an inward experience had by his disciples, no matter how vivid and compelling it might have been. Yes, I believe Easter involves something amazing happening to the body of Jesus and the hearts of the disciples but it is more than only those things. But there is more. Easter is not just an odd event locked in the past or a powerful experience inspired by Jesus. What happened to Jesus is not a one time only affair. Rather it is a promise about something yet to come that involves us. It is a glimpse of glory to be revealed. Adopting the language of agriculture, the scriptures declare, "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

The resurrected Jesus is like the first apple to ripen on the tree. But he's not the last. A whole crop will follow the first one and in many ways will be like it. The resurrection of Jesus is a wonderful sign of our future. In the transformed and risen Christ we see what we will be like beyond the confines, not of bodily existence, but of corruptible physical existence. "All flesh is not the same... The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:39, 42).

An intriguing passage of scripture says of life yet to come that "what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). We

will be like the risen Christ. In some ways we will remain as we are now and in other ways we will be delightfully different. This is a hope that changes the way we see everything. It is a hope that already begins new life into our present lives. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Grace and Peace,
Craig



We Invite YOU To Join Us
In Celebrating Holy Week

- **Palm Sunday:** Sunday, April 13th
8:30am & 10:45am
- **Maundy Thursday:** Thursday, April 17th
at 7:00pm
- **Good Friday Prayer Vigil:** Friday, April 18th
The doors will be open from 12pm to 3pm
- **D-Unit Lock-In:** Friday, April 18th
from 7pm to Saturday, April 19th, at 11am
- **Egg Hunt:** Saturday, April 19th
from 10am to 11am
- **Easter Sunday:** Sunday, April 20th
6:30am in the garden
8:30am & 10:45am in the Sanctuary



Easter Breakfast



We invite you to join us for the Easter Breakfast event everyone will be talking about! Breakfast will begin 7:15am, immediately following the Sunrise Service. We are hoping to have the usual mouth-watering favorites: Scrambled eggs, French toast, bacon, sausage, egg-braids, ham hash-brown cheddar bake, and deviled eggs. Additionally, we will be posting a sign-up sheet for other breakfast delicacies that we invite people to bring, such as bagels, cream cheese, orange juice, and fruit (cut and ready to serve). So come hungry, and we look forward to seeing you there!

PRESCHOOL NEWS

We have some exciting news to share. Our very kind and generous families raised over \$6000 for St. Jude Children's Hospital at our annual Trike-a-Thon. The children enjoyed riding their bikes and scooters, learning about bike safety, and of course, learning the valuable lesson that it can be lots of fun to help others. Over the years our school has raised a total of \$46,276 to help the children at St. Jude's ☺

In April we will be celebrating the season of Easter, Spring, and Earth Day. We will be learning about the miracles of God's world; flowers, trees, birds and bugs. We'll have an Earth Day parade, and while doing a clean-up of our grounds, the children learn about taking good care of all we have been given. Before our Spring break the children were able to enjoy a visit from farm animals; ducks, goats, bunnies, a calf, a llama, and Cubby the farm dog. They got to feed, brush, and pet the animals...it was loads of fun!

Summer camp, fall preschool, VPK, and full-time care registration is underway. Classes are filling up fast. We encourage you to register early to guarantee your child's space. Miss Margie has a fun-packed summer planned for our summer session. Stop by for more information.

APRIL PRESCHOOL HAPPENINGS

- 4/1-2 Preschool Sharing with Pastor Craig
- 4/8 Graduation Photos
- 4/15-16 Preschool Sharing with Ms. Alice
- 4/18 Good Friday – All Closed
- 4/20 Happy Easter!
- 4/22 Earth Day Parade & Clean-Up
- 4/23 PJammin for Childhood Cancer
- 4/24 Science Fair – 3 Year Old Classes



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 4th Wilbur Nembhard
- Shelby Suelzer
- 5th Theresa Ciresi
- Emma Winston
- 11th Donna Pruner
- 12th Ashley Ehlebracht
- 13th Aida Arias-Thurlow
- Moya McFarlane
- 14th Yolene St. Germain
- 17th James Hypolite
- Patti Johnson
- Scott Johnson
- Cecilia Lewis
- Robin Woolbridge
- 20th Tom Boehm
- 24th Emily Herman
- 27th Steven Bramley
- Robert Rutkauskas
- 30th Reggie Ghann

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 7th Michael & Diane Wead
- 13th Romeo & Ruby Espiritu

[We apologize if your name is not on the list. Please call the office to update your information!]



Donna Mecalianos joined the church because she "likes everything about the church." "I think Pastor Craig is great, and Ms Alice is very nice. If I have a problem, I know where to go." Donna is a native of Indiana, has lived in New York and Texas and has been a Florida resident since 1999. She is retired from Macy's. Donna was introduced to the church by Billie Schaeffer, which says a lot about the power of Christian witness to bring people to church.

Barbara Cacho, who joined at the 8:30 service recently, loves the "family atmosphere and the closeness of the members." I don't like mega churches; this is a good fit for me," she said. Originally from New York, Barbara has been a Florida resident for many years. She works at a doctor's office.

RPCC is delighted to have Donna and Barbara as new members and extends a warm welcome!

EASTER MEANS...

Most of us get excited about Easter. Recently Paul Veliyathil, chair for the Elders, challenged the Elders to answer the following question in one sentence: What does Easter mean to me? We share their answers here.

- **Bill Vasquez:** Aside from the resurrection and its meaning, Easter means a renewed opportunity to reflect on one's relationship with God and the purpose of one's life.
- **Paul Veliyathil:** For me, Resurrection means that Jesus of Nazareth is alive today, within me as Holy Spirit and beside me as ya'll.
- **Sybil Campbell:** Easter is an occasion which reaffirms God's love for me.
- **Jennifer Bramley:** Easter means joy because an eternity awaits us through Jesus' resurrection.
- **David Bramley:** Easter means that He is risen, He is Risen indeed!
- **Ingrid Chung:** Easter is a time of reflection, renewal and hope, and a time that reveals God's plan unfolding rapidly before our eyes.
- **Billie Abell:** Life!
- **Alice Price:** Easter is the joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection bringing with it an acknowledgement that life is filled with endless hope.

BLESSINGS

God is always at work, and blessings come in all shapes and sizes! We would love to include some of your blessings in an upcoming Chatter. Please email your blessing to the church office at royalpalmchristianchurch@gmail.com

EASTER FLOWERS

As you may know, each year during the Easter season we decorate the sanctuary in celebration of Jesus' resurrection, and in honor and memory of loved ones. This year we are going to be celebrating a little differently than in previous years. We will still have a limited number of Easter lilies; however, we will also be decorating with a selection of spring bouquets.

If you wish to contribute to the celebration fund, we welcome any donations and will still offer the option to recognize a loved one in our Easter bulletin. Information and donation forms will be available in the Narthex as of April 1st. This change is made in effort to reduce unnecessary waste and in response to allergen concerns. The Worship Team (committee) will welcome your feedback to this change after we celebrate Easter!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

It's never too early to start thinking about VBS! We will be hosting our annual Vacation Bible School on June 8th - 12th, 2014. Mark your calendars!

PRAYER VIGIL

Then Jesus went with his followers to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." "Stay here and watch with me." After walking a little farther away from them, Jesus fell to the ground and prayed. Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. He said to them, "Stay awake and pray." (Paraphrased, Matthew 26:36-40)

You are invited to keep watch and pray following the Maundy Thursday service thru 3:00 pm on Good Friday. Please join this prayer vigil for at least a half hour time period or more. You may pray from the church garden, the sanctuary (noon to 3:00 pm), home or your workplace. A sign-up sheet is posted in the Narthex.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our CWF will be planning visits to a few nursing homes in August and September. We are asking the men and women of our church family that if you knit or crochet, would you be willing to make shawls or lap blankets for us to give to the patients who may need one? Please feel free to take creative liberty and use whatever colors, combinations, and patterns appeal to you.

The CWF will collect whatever you've made during July and deliver them on our visits. We greatly appreciate this wonderful opportunity to serve the Lord in this unique and special way.

DO YOU FOLLOW RPCC?

If you are on Facebook, have you "liked" our church page? An easy way to keep up with what is happening is to get Facebook posts from the church. In our hectic world, helpful reminders can keep you on top of things. If you don't want to miss anything, add Royal Palm Christian Church to your list of Facebook pages you follow.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." *Psalm 51:10*



The Lenten Season

Before Easter certain words begin to be used that may be unfamiliar to many people, especially those not raised in church. One of these words is Lent. No, not lint, the tiny fluffy bits you brush from your clothing. Lent - the six-week period prior to Easter. It is a time of preparation, reflection and prayer, and an occasion for repentance and the renewal of one's faith. In centuries past, Lent was the last stage of getting ready for baptism.

Some people "give up" things for Lent – a favorite food or activity – as an expression of devotion. This is a form of fasting. Others make special contributions to charities or volunteer their time to work in programs that serve those who are disadvantaged in some way: reading to the blind, working in a food bank, tutoring children or any number of other activities. Lent is also a time for prayerful study. All of these are intended to ready the hearts and minds of Christians for the celebration of Easter.

This forty-day period recalling the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness praying and fasting before he began his ministry recorded in the Gospels – and excluding Sundays – begins with Ash Wednesday. Our annual Ash Wednesday service offers quiet and reflective time culminating with ashes being placed on foreheads – or in some cases, the back of the hand – which is symbolic of repentance and mortality. Our ashes are from the burned palms fronds used the previous Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday takes place the week before Easter and marks the beginning of Holy Week. On Palm Sunday we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, when he was greeted by a joyful crowd. It is sometimes called Passion Sunday in view of the suffering (passion) of Jesus on the cross a few days after his arrival in Jerusalem. On Palm Sunday we give palm fronds to all worshipers, and the children process in at the beginning of the service, waving their palm fronds.

Another special day later that week is Maundy Thursday. The word "Maundy" is derived from a Latin word, "mandatum," which is

translated, "commandment." This is taken from Jesus' statement spoken the evening when he was arrested, "I give you a new *commandment* that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). We remember the institution of the Lord's Supper as we share communion during the Maundy Thursday service. Sometimes we incorporate foot washing into the service, because, according to the Gospel of John (13:1-17), Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

On Good Friday the crucifixion of Jesus is remembered during a Prayer Vigil from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. The Sanctuary will be opened for anyone who would like to come pray and meditate.

On Easter morning we have three worship services here at Royal Palm Christian Church. The first one is a 6:30 a.m. sunrise service held in the garden area on the west side of the church. We will also gather for worship at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. There will be a delightful Easter breakfast immediately after the sunrise service. Breakfast will also be available after the 8:30 a.m. service. May God richly bless you as we share this holy time together.



We invite you to join us for dinner and Bingo on
Saturday, April 5th
The fun starts at 6pm!



Admission includes: dinner; a delicious spaghetti plate, salad, roll, drink, and dessert; and participation in our Bingo extravaganza!

Adult Admission: \$5
Child Admission: \$3

So grab a friend, bring the family, and be ready for fun- because you won't want to miss what's shaping up to be a great night of food, fun, and fellowship!





2014 Summer Camps

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida

Registration forms are available by calling
the Christian Church Conference Center at 352-236-2302
or on the website: www.fldisciplesconfctr.org or
or by emailing mbharper@fldisciplesconfctr.org



Dates	Camp	for people who've Completed grades	Cost*
June 15-21	CYF Conference	9 - 12	\$390 (340)
June 15-20	Equestrian Camp I	3 - 6	\$510 (460)
June 29-July 5	Canoe Camp	9 - 12	\$315 (265)
July 3-5	Family Camp	People of all ages	\$135 (100)
July 6-11	Midway Camp	6 - 8	\$350 (300)
July 13-18	Equestrian Camp II	3 - 6	\$510 (460)
July 13-18	Power Up	7 - 11	\$350 (300)
July 20-25	Junior Camp	3 - 5	\$350 (300)
July 25-27	Uno Camp	K - 2 w/adult	\$150 (100)
July 27-Aug. 1	Water Ski Camp @ Lake Placid	10 - 12	\$475
August 1-5	Young Adult Canoe Camp	12 to age 25	\$225 (175)



*Due to the very generous gift of a Florida Disciple, we are offering a one-time \$50 discount for each camp held at the Christian Church Conference Center (except Family Camp) if registrations are turned in by June 1st. Family Camp discount is \$35 per person.



For complete information, including Directors and Description, please check out the Summer Camps Description booklet available at your church or by visiting www.fldisciplesconfctr.org

royalpalmchristianchurch@gmail.com



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