



“Ex Tenebris Lux - Out of Darkness, **Light**”



Holy
Week

The book of Genesis tells us that God created the universe out of nothing (ex nihilo), as a place of order, beauty, and peace. God said that it was “very good.” As we make our way once again to the Cross of Calvary, we can see throughout the

Scriptures that Jesus fulfills the storyline that runs through the Old Testament, beginning with the message of creation. The Bible assures us that the world did not happen by chance, nor through a conflict in the heavens between the forces of good and evil. God created the universe!

As we look around, and as we are constantly reminded (24/7 if we keep our television on “news” stations around the clock), order, beauty and peace are not primarily how we would characterize our world today. It may appear at times that things are out of control - that chaos reigns. But the truth is that chaos is NOT the dominant reality of God’s world, even today; and even though from our perspective ever since sin entered into God’s creation it may appear that chaos rules.

God is the ultimate reality of the world. And though every aspect of the created order has and does bear the effects of sin, we are not to despair! We are to never, never, never give up! Because God is the ultimate reality in the world, God gets the last Word. In fact, God IS the first and last Word. Jesus is “the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.” Far from denying the reality of brokenness, chaos, and darkness in the world today; we acknowledge that freely. We just know that chaos is not the ultimate reality. *Out of darkness, Light!*

How? What is our basis for such confidence in life and in our world today? Do we believe that human

beings will really all finally pull together and fix it? Really? On what basis? While most people will acknowledge that the world is definitely not as it should be (how could we think otherwise?), loud voices cannot agree on what the problems really are, and rarely do the popular voices even touch on the heart of the problems in our universe. Spending energy and resources on issues that do not get to the heart of the problems, leads only to more chaos and more despair. But as Christians, we boldly declare, *Out of darkness, Light!*

The services of **Holy Week**, from Palm Sunday through Resurrection Day, help to once again remind us of the context in which we live – and hope. Community services will be hosted by the Lake Placid Church of the Nazarene each day at noon, beginning on April 15-19. We will host a **Maundy Thursday** Communion service with a dinner that evening. And on **Good Friday**, the choir will present a cantata, *Calvary’s Mountain*, while we once again consider the *darkness - tenebris* – of that holy day. Without passing through Good Friday, and considering the darkness and chaos introduced through sin, the *light – lux* – of Resurrection Day is not as clearly seen and appreciated for the hope it is.

On **Palm Sunday afternoon, at 4:00**, we are very privileged to host a pre-release screening of the new production of the classic John Bunyan story, ***The Pilgrim’s Progress!*** The film will be released in theaters across the nation on April 18th & 20th. (Not in Highlands County.) Check out the trailer! A story for followers of Jesus of every age. Very well done! Don’t miss this opportunity! A Love Offering will be received to help provide funds for the translation of the film into numerous other languages. This story deserves to be heard again in the 21st century! Put it on your calendars! Don’t miss this blessing!! 🙏

Pastor Ray



Putting Off The Old Self

By Barbara Thayer



Barbara Thayer

Recently, I read an article in a magazine that said if you haven't worn something for two years you should get rid of it because it is unlikely you will ever wear it again. With that in mind, I went into my closet and started picking out things that fit this description. Its amazing what you hang on to simply because there is this remote possibility that you might need it. Funny how we justify hanging on to things.

In many ways we can do the same thing in our spiritual lives. We like to cling to old habits, familiar sins and OUR way of doing things. However, we find in Scripture these words in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

When we become a Christian, God gives us a new heart. We become a new person and the old has passed away, but here is a caveat. While we are made new and filled with the Holy Spirit, we still have the old man to deal with on a daily basis. That old man (the sin nature) can lead us back to our old habits, familiar sins and selfish ways. The Apostle Paul knew all about our struggle because he faced it too. In Romans 7:15, he writes: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." It is a struggle we deal with until the Lord takes us home, but we are called to put off the old self, habits and sins.

In his letter to the Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul wrote: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Paul is telling us to put off that old self because it is corrupt and can lead us into sin. Then, he tells us to put on the new self. So how can we put on that new self?

First, we need to recognize that according to God's Word we are a new creation. We have been set free in Christ and no longer have to be in bondage to sin. Those old habits really have no hold on us so we do not have to give into them. Yet there are times when it is a struggle. This is where we must apply a daily time for prayer. Talking to God is the best thing any of us can

do. We can release our burdens, seek His wisdom for our problems, and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit that we may be guided into all truth.



"Not only has God made us a new creation in Christ, but He has also given us the means to grow in our faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship."

Of course, this leads us to our second action in the process of putting off the old self. In order to change the attitude of our minds, we need to be reading His Word. It is here where our minds can be fully renewed, and we can think God's thoughts after Him. The Lord shows us who He is and who we are in this world. Most of us spend hours watching T.V., looking at our computers, or reading books along with daily chores. How many hours do we spend reading the Bible in comparison to our other activities?

Finally, we need accountability through Christian fellowship and friendship. It's hard to put off the old self on our own. We need the help of the Holy Spirit, but we also need the encouragement we receive from fellow believers. I look at worship services as a banquet that God has set before us. We can feast on the taught Word of God, sing the songs of our faith and rejoice in who God has made us to be. Home groups, Bible studies and one on one encounters with other believers all help us to stay on the righteous and holy path that God has set before us.

Not only has God made us a new creation in Christ, but He has also given us the means to grow in our faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship. Do not neglect these provisions for our faith but use them to grow in our love for the Lord. He doesn't want us wearing the old clothing of sin. He has given us a new garment of praise. Today, let us begin anew to put off the old self. 🙏

Selah!



MUSIC Ministry



Favorite Easter Hymns by Joshua Klatt

Easter is the greatest celebration of the church year. One of the reasons for this is that all of the other holidays and festivals find their fulfillment in this one day. At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world to begin the work of our salvation, a work that receives His Father's seal of approval on Easter. Reformation Sunday looks back to the reclamation of the great truths of salvation by grace through faith that were finally revealed in all their glory on Easter. When we honor the fallen on the Sunday before Memorial Day, we embrace the promise made on Easter that those who die in the Lord will be raised again. In fact, every Sunday is a sort of miniature Easter, a celebration of the Lord's resurrection and the promise it is of our own resurrection.

Our hymnals contain a great number of hymns celebrating the triumph of the Lord's resurrection as well. The following list is a short overview of some of the most common Easter hymns and their authors from the Hymnary.com database in order of their popularity in hymnals:

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (Charles Wesley, Celebration Hymnal #367)

"Crown Him with Many Crowns" (Matthew Bridges, Celebration Hymnal #45)

"Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise" (Charles Wesley)

"The Day of Resurrection" (John of Damascus)

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (Ancient Latin, Celebration Hymnal #360)

"The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done" (Ancient Latin)

"I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (Samuel Medley)

"Christ Arose" (Robert Lowry, Celebration Hymnal #357)

"Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain" (John of Damascus)

"Welcome, Happy Morning" (Venantius Fortunatus)

"Alleluia! Alleluia!" (Christopher Wordsworth, Celebration Hymnal #365)

"He Lives!" (B. D. Ackley, Celebration Hymnal #368)

"Thine Is the Glory" (Edmond Budry)

The names of two authors stand out on this list: Charles Wesley and the Syrian Christian John of Damascus who died near Jerusalem in the year 749. Wesley wrote two of the hymns on this list, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise." Wesley was called "The Sweet Bard of Methodism," and came to a saving knowledge of Christ following his ordination as a minister and a failed attempt at mission work among the Indians of Georgia. Many of his hymns (including these two) highlight the importance of saving faith, the completed work of Christ, and the joy and confidence of abiding in God while we await our union with Him in heaven.

John of Damascus is also the author of two of the hymns, "The Day of Resurrection" and "Come Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain." His life story is particularly fascinating, especially when we consider that he lived in an area that today is solidly Muslim and openly hostile to Christian witness. John was born to an ancient Christian family in 676, almost two generations after his hometown had fallen to the Islamic caliphs in 635. It would seem that he worked as a civil servant until around 706, when both he and his father were forced out of their positions by a growing persecution against the Christians of the region. At this point, John decided to devote himself to building up and strengthening the church, seeking ordination and writing voluminously on apologetics and a variety of other subjects. In addition to being one of the first Christian apologists to address the problem of Islam, he was also a great poet, considered by some to be the greatest of all the hymnwriters of the Greek Church. Though his hymns are some of the oldest on our list, they are still fresh reminders of God's Easter promise of resurrection and new life in "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (II Peter 3:13).

The Day of Resurrection!

Earth, tell it out abroad;

The Passover of gladness,

The Passover of God.

From death to life eternal,

From this world to the sky,

Our Christ hath brought us over,

With hymns of victory!





April Easter Events



Please mark your calendar for Easter week at First Presbyterian Church. There are many opportunities to prepare your heart as we celebrate and worship the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

- **Saturday, April 13th, 9:00-11:00 am - Easter Eggstravaganza** (for Babies - 5th grade) in the Genesis Center Yard. There will be popcorn, snow cones, cotton candy, bounce house, craft, face painting, cake walk, and a easter egg hunt.
- **Sunday, April 14th--Palm Sunday** - Special music celebrating Jesus' triumphal entry. Worship times are 8:00 and 9:30 am, traditional held in the sanctuary, 11:00 am contemporary will be held in the Genesis Center. Sunday School is 9:45 and 10:45 am.
- **Sunday, April 14th 4:00 pm - Movie: The Pilgrim's Progress** - Showing at FPC, Genesis Center. A love offering received to help translate the film into other languages.
- **HOLY WEEK SERVICES - April 15th-April 19th.** Lake Placid Christian Ministerial Association will be hosting Holy Week Services. Area pastors will take turns preaching each day. Services will be held at Lake Placid Church of the Nazarene from 11:30 am -12:30 pm.
- **Thursday, April 18th - Maundy Thursday (Genesis Center), a pot luck dinner at 6:00 pm.** Last names A-L main dish, M-S side dish, salad, and T-Z; dessert. A nursery from infant to 4 years old will be available. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated.
- **Friday, April 19th at 7:00 pm, Good Friday Service will be held in the sanctuary.** There will be special music by the choir. A nursery from infant to 4 years old will be available.
- **SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE** - The Lake Placid Christian Ministerial Association will be hosting the Sunrise Easter Service at the Memorial United Methodist Church at 6:30 am, 500 Kent Ave, Lake Placid.
- **Sunday, April 21st, - Easter Sunday, 8:00, 9:30 am, (traditional) in the sanctuary and 11:00 am (contemporary) worship services in the Genesis Center.** Special music at all three worship services. Special music includes Praise Ringers (bells), Orchestra, Worship Singers (choir). Sunday School is 9:45 and 10:45 am. Come and celebrate that Jesus Is Risen!!!



April Anniversaries



Wayne and Carrie Sullivan

April 1, 1978 Years Married: **42**

David and Ann Marie Wheeler

April 20, 1991 Years Married: **29**

Michael and Ellie Rubio

April 23, 2017 Years Married: **3**



Spring Report on Erskine College and Seminary



Erskine Theological Seminary, located in Due West, SC, opened its doors in 1837 for the purpose of raising up ministers of the Gospel primarily in the ARP church. Over the years we have educated men and women called to the ministry in many different denominations, and we currently have 131 students enrolled on our master's and PhD programs. Under the leadership of president Dr. Rob Gustafson, Erskine is building upon its Christian heritage and producing graduates who are influencers in their community and around the world.

Erskine College grew out of the need to have a pipeline of students for the seminary, and is now a small, Christian liberal arts college with 180-year history. Established in 1839, we have a long and rich tradition of educating young women and men for careers in education, medicine, business, and law. Erskine students who graduate from our "pre-med" courses (in quotes because we don't really have a pre-med major) have a nearly 100% acceptance rate into med school. Our alumni base consists of doctors and other medical professionals, lawyers, school teachers, accountants, sports trainers, and of course, pastors and others in ministry-related careers.


This current academic year we have nearly 550 undergraduate students enrolled; however, we have an aggressive growth strategy being implemented that could see our enrollment reach as many as 1,000 students in the next 5 years. Part of the reason for that is the addition of football to the athletic program. Athletics is a significant component of the Erskine experience, with nearly 75% of our enrollment consisting of student-athletes.

Erskine College enjoyed a successful football program until 1951, when the graduation of many GI Bill students left us with a void in players. We have the distinction of beating Florida State and Clemson

back "in the day!" Seeing the possibility of using football as a part of the growth strategy, the Board of Trustees prayerfully decided in 2018 to re-institute football, so in the fall of 2020, football will once again return to Erskine, and the excitement is palpable! Along with football comes more opportunities to increase non-student athletes, such as cheerleaders, band members, and of course, girlfriends!

With this growth comes great excitement and no shortage of challenges. We have beds for 700 students right now, so housing will need to be addressed. Food service, the bookstore, parking, and many other areas are all being considered for the future. But of utmost importance will be student support through scholarships. We will not be offering athletic scholarships, so building up our endowment and scholarship funds will be critical.

Erskine depends on the generosity of its alumni, friends, and church partners to meet the operational needs of the college and seminary. Tuition alone is not enough to provide the quality educational experience required for our students to flourish in today's ever-changing world. Besides scholarships, gifts to the Erskine Fund are vitally important. These are unrestricted gifts and used at the discretion of the College to meet the most pressing and urgent needs.

Though Erskine has a 180-year history, we truly believe the best days are yet ahead. God has His hand on the place, and we are relying on Him to direct our paths even as we lay out our plans for the next 180 years. We invite you to be a part of the future of Erskine. We are worth your investment. **April 11 is Erskine's first annual Day of Giving.** Erskine students will be eagerly taking your calls from 8 am to 5 pm @ **864-379-8881**. If you prefer to give online use www.erskine.edu/dayofgiving. 

~Thank you in advance for your gifts.~



Foreign Missions



Narnia News

A World Witness prayer letter 8 March 2019

"To bring good news to the poor" This week-end, I (Sébastien) had the opportunity to be a part of the first Libérer! training offered in the city of Strasbourg, where we will be moving to this Summer. As we have written in the past, Libérer! is a training ministry in "accompagnement spirituel" which grew out of Pastor Gilles Boucomont's experience in praying for people struggling with various life issues at the French Reformed Church of Le Marais, in Paris. His prayer ministry, based on the conviction that "no one who went to see Jesus left unchanged," is what turned this church which was on its way to closure into a dynamic congregation that has taken the lead in being Kingdom salt and light to Le Marais' large homosexual community. Over the last few years, requests for training events in France, as well as internationally, have grown dramatically. Besides meetings that have already taken place in England, Switzerland, Russia, Madagascar and Mauritius, one which I find especially exciting is the training that will be offered in Tunisia to pastors coming from the Maghreb area later in the year.

As it touches on the Strasbourg Libérer! meeting, registration was complete a month and half before the actual event, with two hundred and twenty participants signed up, mainly from the local Evangelical churches. It was non-stop from Friday evening to Sunday evening, especially for Pastor Gilles who usually carries the majority of the teaching load. We also met with a number of participants who requested appointments for prayer ministry, many of them being people who have experienced significant levels of hurt. The most memorable testimony so far comes from a couple who hit a marital crisis following one particular session. The lady was livid and beside herself, in the mode "I need help and I need it now! Gilles went to meet with them. Given the gravity of the situation, we didn't really think they would be back the following day. But

come back they did! And the lady was beaming!! The day after, she sent the following message (which I translate): "Thanks again and again to you and the whole team for this Libérer! here in Strasbourg, as far as our marriage is concerned, the timing was spot on...in spite of the tsunami we went through. We are experiencing a dimension of supernatural peace between us which is certainly the fruit of the deep healing work that happened during the night. It is truly astounding. We are rejoicing as we set out on this path. Be blessed and renewed in your strength and vision for a people of God set free to bless a world in crying need." All this points back to Jesus, anointed with the Spirit to bring good news to the poor, good news of a great joy, for all people, everywhere.

On the home front - Early February, Patti left to spend some time with her parents in Rock Hill, SC, and visit a few of our supporting churches. Upon coming back, she was off to help with the second module of the Libérer! training in Paris. We then took a very brief time to go and visit my family six hours down the highway. We were back Thursday evening. I was off to Strasbourg in the morning (see next...)

Kid news - Elise and Siméon's transition at the Jean Lurçat junior high school has been amazing. Both have virtually achieved the "rock star" status! We praise the Lord for His grace. Silas and Elijah are doing very well in their own school setting. Last week, they also got their very first French Bible. Another big news: Joel was accepted as a boarding student at Black Forest Academy, Germany, starting in September.

On support - We are humbled and deeply encouraged by your continued financial commitment toward us and have thanked the Lord for you many, many times. For others who may want to partner with us in giving, the link to use is: www.worldwitness.org. 🙏

Thank you and God bless you,

The Benicourts



Iglesia En Movimiento

Second Preview Service

Dear friends, we are excited about the growth we are seeing at Iglesia en Movimiento. For our second preview service on February 24th, there were 55 people in attendance. Counting 38 adults and 17 children at our multiethnic Latino church plant (the children are multiplying fast!). It was also very encouraging to see many people from First Presbyterian of Lake Placid, of whom, came to the service to support us. We worshiped in Spanish and English; singing contemporary worship songs and hymns by switching from Spanish to English in the songs as we lifted our voice to the Lord. This time in service, we added English translation as Tim preached in Spanish. As a latino multiethnic church we are committed to providing everything in both languages; therefore, all our printed material such as the bulletin and sermon notes were provided in both languages. Making adjustments from January, the February service went much smoother. "It was like I was hearing you in English, but you were preaching in Spanish! I understood everything perfectly!" said one English speaker who came to support the church plant. As a multiethnic Latino church, we want all people to feel welcomed regardless if their predominant language is English or Spanish. Please pray that more people will invite their friends to come and worship with us. Plan a visit with us! Our next preview service is on March 31st.

Small Groups and Spiritual Warfare

Please continue to pray as we seek to start more small groups. We have had a few setbacks. The apartment complex we had been given permission to start a small group, last minute, denied us access to the clubhouse. We have also been "working out" how small groups work as some speak English and others speak Spanish. Please pray for unity and protection of the core group as we seek to start discipleship groups. Within the last few weeks, several core group members and their loved ones

have been in the hospital for emergencies. This has not only set us back from the church plant but can be discouraging and breed a spirit of fear and hesitation. Yet we are not discouraged, because we know that "greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4) and He has "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them on the cross" (Colossians 2:15).

Prison Ministry

One thing our core group is excited about is prison ministry. It has been an incredible experience going into Hardee Correctional and teaching reformed theology to inmates. Many of our core group has had previous experience in prison ministry and this hour and a half have been serving as a catalyst to unite many of our core group members. Every week we disciple and teach seminary classes via MINTS International Seminary. Pray that it will help us sharpen our preaching, teaching, and discipleship skills for the church plant. Hebrews 13:3 says, "continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." 🙏

WE HAVE AN APP!

It has finally arrived. Iglesia en Movimiento has a smartphone app. Just download the 'Church Center' app and put our zip code in the search area (33852). You will see our church plant name and image pop up. Set Iglesia en Movimiento as your default location! You can now sign up for a small group, give online, and connect to all our social media. Please pass this info along. Thank you for your patience!



First Presbyterian Church Lake Placid A.R.P.

118 N. Oak Avenue

Lake Placid, FL 33852-6326

Cynthia Gambill, Editor

e-mail: c1wave@yahoo.com

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