

# The Epistle

**ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA**

March, 2014

Volume 14, Number 3



## FROM THE PASTOR

There are several things that happen in the month of March that make it special to many people. For some, it is the Vernal Equinox marking the beginning of spring. For the basketball fan, it is definitely “March Madness,” the NCAA tournament.

Still others celebrate “St. Patrick’s Day” on March 17, and whether Irish or not, many will wear green on that day and watch or participate in the parades and festivities that go on.

There are many myths and stories told about “St. Patrick,” but what do we really know about the person who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and for whom this day is named?

Well, he didn’t chase the snakes out of Ireland and he may never have plucked a shamrock to teach the mystery of the Trinity. Yet St. Patrick well deserves to be honored by the people of Ireland—and by downtrodden and excluded people everywhere.

As a young boy Patrick (whose actual name was Patricius) lived a comfortable life near an English coastal city where his father was a deacon in their church. But at the age of 16, all that came to an end. Irish pirates attacked his village, abducting Patrick and many of the household servants. After arriving in Ireland, Patrick was sold as a slave to a Druid tribal chieftain who forced Patrick to work with a herd of pigs.

In the midst of all that pig filth, God began to transform Patrick's heart. In his Confessions he wrote, "I was sixteen and knew not the true God, but in a strange land the Lord opened my unbelieving eyes, and I was converted." Patrick became convinced that the kidnapping and homesickness were actually opportunities to know Christ better. "Anything that happens to me," he wrote, "whether pleasant or distasteful, I ought to accept with [serenity] giving thanks to God ... who never disappoints."

After serving as a slave for six years, Patrick escaped, boarded a boat, and found his way back home. Finally, he was back on British soil, warmly embraced by his family and his community. In his own mind, Patrick was finished with Ireland for good. Patrick was adamant: "It is not in my nature to show divine mercy toward the very ones who once enslaved me."

But once again, God changed Patrick's heart. Partially through a dramatic dream, Patrick knew that God had called him to return to Ireland--not as a slave, but as a preacher of the gospel. His family and friends tried to stop him, telling him, "Why does this fellow waste himself among dangerous enemies who don't even know God?"

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Despite their objections, Patrick used his own money to purchase a boat and sail back to Ireland in A.D. 432. Patrick then spent the rest of his life preaching the gospel in Ireland, seeing many people come to Christ. He also passionately defended the human rights of slaves, writing a letter of scathing protest to King Coroticus after his soldiers had raided a village, slaughtered the men and sold the women into slavery.

Patrick never got over what God had done for Him. In his Confessions he wrote, "I was a dumb stone lying squashed in the mud; the Mighty and Merciful God came, dug me out and set me on top of the wall. Therefore, I praise him and ought to render him something for his wonderful benefits to me both now and in eternity."

And so it was that a young Briton named Patricius died an Irishman named Patrick. And neither Ireland nor Christianity was ever quite the same.

Perhaps we don't consider ourselves a "dumb stone lying squashed in the mud." But we are all sinners in need of God's grace. And God has "dug us out" too, by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. And like Patrick, we all should "praise God and render him something for his wonderful benefits to us both now and in eternity."

See you in church!

*Jay*

MARCH HYMN OF THE MONTH - #434, "Restore in Us, O God"

This text reflects the historic understanding of Lent as a time to prepare catechumens for Baptism and penitents for reconciliation at the Easter Vigil. The first three stanzas address one of the three divine Persons, while the fourth stanza implores the help of the full Trinity. The 1987 text by Carl P. Daw is set to a 1985 tune by Hal Hopson.

Birthdays This Month

March 4 – Diane Taylor  
 8 – Janice Woods  
 10 – Dick Shuping  
 13 – Ron Lochbaum  
 20 – Billy Henryhand  
 20 – Jean Shuping  
 23 – Ashley Wyrick

Anniversaries

March 10 – CF and Pam Houglan

"In a time when nothing is more certain than change, the commitment of two people to one another has become difficult and rare. Yet, by its scarcity, the beauty and value of this exchange have only been enhanced.

*-Robert Sexton*



**IN HIS SERVICE**

MARCH USHERS

Jack Brewer  
Rosalee Brewer  
Allen Cook  
Judy Cook

MARCH COMMUNION SERVERS

Sunday, March 2 – Jack Brewer  
John Miller  
Carol Parke  
Jean Shuping



**THE WORD PROCLAIMED**

	<u>Sermon topics</u>	<u>Scripture Readers</u>
<b>March 2</b>	<b>“Back From the Mountain”</b> Text: Matthew 17:1-9	<b>Pam Houglan</b> Reading: Exodus 24:12-18
<b>March 5</b> (Ash Wednesday)	<b>“What God Wants”</b> Text: Isaiah 58:1-12	<b>Jean Shuping</b> Readings: Isaiah 58:1-12 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
<b>March 9</b>	<b>“A Better Idea”</b> Text: Matthew 4:1-11	<b>Karen Krone</b> Reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
<b>March 16</b>	<b>“A New Light Bulb”</b> Text: John 3:1-12	<b>Kathy Carroll</b> Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a
<b>March 23</b>	<b>“What Happens When You Meet Jesus”</b> Text: John 4:1-14	<b>Jeannine Bailer</b> Reading: Exodus 17:1-7
<b>March 30</b>	<b>Dialogue, Q&amp;A</b> Gospel: John 9:1-41	<b>Janet Walker</b> Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

**ANSWER TO FEBRUARY BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUESTION**

What did Jesus say is “more difficult than a camel going through the eye of a needle”? A rich man to enter the kingdom of God. See Matthew 19:24; Luke 18:25. (Not because wealth is bad in and of itself, but because it can easily become our “god” if we allow it to.)

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE**

Our Ash Wednesday worship with the imposition of ashes will be held on Wednesday evening, March 5 at 7:00pm in the sanctuary. Be with us as we begin the Season of Lent with this very meaningful service.

*\* \* \* OUR FEBRUARY RECORD \* \* \**

	<u>Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Stewardship</u>
February 2	41	\$ 2,373.00
9	54	\$ 1,876.00
16	51	\$ 1,633.00
23	38	\$ 2,437.00



**PRAYER CONCERNS:** Luke Finison, Barbara Carter, Marjorie and Jack Herndon, Andy Bristow and family, Emily Bristow, Lucy Smith, Aiden and Jeanetta French, Bob Berthold, the families of Myrna Stell and Earney Walker, Katie Williams, Chuck Adams, Ron Ervin, Dale and Nita Holder, Ruby Whitley, Jane Lochbaum, John Perkins, Joe Miles, Edith Taylor, Gary Houglan, Roger Coleman, Mark Griffin, Ed and Becky Taylor, Rick Fulp, Jim Anderson, Luke Neal, Carl Hollman, Carolyn Davis, Kevin Tewes, Terri Battle, Zachary Reavis, the family of Joe Herndon, and our own family members in the military: James Lochbaum, Andy Bristow II, Shane Finison, Brian Fountain, Rob Salka, Brandy Zehr, Brett Slate and all who serve in our armed forces.

**“...pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”**

**James 5:16 (NLT)**

***TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE***

What are the first words spoken in the Bible?

**THANKS** to my church family for the many birthday cards and other expressions of remembrance.

-Hannelore Pearman



**FOOD CART**

March’s food cart items for Greensboro Urban Ministry are macaroni and cheese and mashed potatoes. Please remember – we have a large number of families in the community who are in need of food. Thank you for all your support.

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**OUR MONTHLY “REGULARS”**



- Sunday School – Sundays, 9:45am**
- Worship – Sundays, 11:00am**
- Session meets at 12:15pm on the 2nd Sunday of each month (except July)**
- Good News Ringers – Sundays, 5:00pm**
- Men’s Fellowship – Mondays, 7:30am**
- Bell Tones – Mondays, 6:15pm**
- Alanon – Mondays, 7:00pm**
- Circles normally meet on the 1st Tuesday, times and places announced**
- Gad-A-Bouts normally meet on the 4th Tuesday, times and places announced**
- BYO Bag Supper – Wednesdays, 5:30pm**
- Bible Study – Wednesdays, 6:15pm**
- Choir Rehearsal – Wednesdays, 7:30pm**

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**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN’S CIRCLES**

The Peace/Love Circle will meet Tuesday, March 4 at 9:45am in the Epiphany classroom. The Charity Circle will meet that evening at 7:00pm at Jean Shuping’s home.

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**GAD-A-BOUITS**

The Gad-A-Bouts will be going to the Greensboro Sciquarium on Tuesday, March 25.

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**FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICE** for those with household income of \$52,000 or less on Tuesday, March 4 at the United Way of Greensboro. Call 336-378-5036 for details.

