

# Third Word News & Notes

APRIL 2014

## *Pastor's Message*

RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE  
*"Unless I see, I will not believe"* John 20:25

One of the few Apostles we know anything about is Thomas, who is popularly referred to as "The Doubter". He is the one who stated categorically that he would not believe in Jesus' resurrection unless he could see and touch the risen Lord. Although Thomas is gently chided for a lack of faith, I believe he represents all of us who are in the habit of basing our beliefs on credible evidence, especially when it comes to things hard to believe, like resurrection and eternal life. Belief in such things is a "leap of faith", but there are good reasons for making the leap.

People over the centuries have claimed to have seen the face of Jesus in a vision. Others have had near death experiences in which they remember visiting heaven, and meeting Jesus and departed loved ones. *Heaven is for Real*, a recently released movie is the story of a 4 year old boy who during a life threatening operation visited heaven. Such accounts are intriguing but they cannot be considered eyewitness testimony. Such experiences may be convincing to those who had them, but not to others.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, MD, the leading expert in the field of Death and Dying and who ministered to the dying for more than forty years, began her work as a skeptic on the subject of life after death. But as she worked more and more with dying patients she became convinced that death does not put an end to us. Something essential about us departs at death and leaves our body behind like a coat we have taken off and laid aside.

Those at the bedside of terminal patients have noted that the process of dying resembles someone who is in labor, as if the one who is dying is struggling to give birth to new life which they enter at the point of death.

Our Christian confidence in life after death is not based on our experiences and observations, but on what we believe about God. We believe in a God who cherishes each of us and whose love for us is stronger than death. To believe in eternal life is to believe in this kind of a loving God. Amen.

*"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe"* John 20:29

Happy Easter,  
Pastor Norm



Maundy Thursday Candles



Sunrise Service At Miner Cemetery

## Easter Was Alive With Activity

Holy Week observance began on Palm Sunday with our Processional around the Sanctuary. Jesus, played by Mark Fiderio, led a donkey, followed by our Sunday school students waving palm branches as the Congregation sang, Hosanna, Loud Hosanna.

Our Maundy Thursday service was on April 17. Maundy Thursday is a memorial to the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples, and the events leading up to the crucifixion. After communion, seven candles are extinguished after a Gospel reading.



Deacon Breakfast

Sunrise Service at Miner Cemetery was well attended. The service began at 6:30 at the cemetery. The congregation was then invited to come to breakfast at the church. The Deacon Board put on a wonderful, hot breakfast of

eggs, bacon, homefries, toast and baked goods.

Easter morning continued with the Family Service at 10 am which began with the pageant "Seeds of Joy". The pageant players were: Victoria Vior, Garret Hoyt, Abby & Hannah Blakeslee, Emily LaValley and Christopher LaValley. They did a great job in telling all that we are planting seeds of joy. The day ended with the annual Easter Egg Hunt. We had over 500 eggs in the yard plus prizes for the children. What a great time by all of the families that participated. Thanks to the congregation for their generous donations.

Pastor Norm's Easter Message was, "Love Bats Last" showing that God makes sure that love in the end is stronger than death.



Easter Pageant

## Third Church Hosts Northeast Fellowship

On March 22nd, Third Church hosted about 50 members of the Northeast Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches. Fifteen Churches from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey were represented. Rev. Dr. Phil Jackson facilitated the discussion. The day was devoted to setting the priorities of the Fellowship that will best serve the needs of member churches

in the future. Those in attendance worked in small groups and then shared the results of their discussion with all the delegates. A report will be presented at the Spring meeting of the Fellowship on May 18. Our thanks go to Barbara Erlendson for organizing this event and making it a great success. The group was also addressed by Rev. Dr. Betsy Mauro of Olivet College. She told the delegates about strategic reorganization that is taking place within the NACCC.

## Missions At Work



The Missions Group served a full dinner for the homeless at St. Vincent DePaul on Main Street in Middletown on March 23rd. The meal was a spicy goulash with bread, green salad, coffee, lemonade and angel food layer cake for

dessert. The group served about 80 people that night. Everyone had all they could eat, and were very grateful for such a delicious meal. Our mission team was praised for their work by those in attendance. Thanks to Jackie Clark for preparing the meal and the coordinating the service. Thanks also to Pastor Norm, Nate Chapin, Chris Chapin, Mary Ellen Chapin and Kim Kennedy who volunteered to serve and clean up afterwards. We will be looking for new volunteers to serve at our next meal at St. Vincents in the Fall.

The Partnership For Sharing group offered a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner on March 8th. It was a delicious meal in the Irish tradition. The evening was a great success thanks to the patrons and the devoted workers.

Mission Group hosted a Military Whist on April 10th. It is a card game that has many loyal followers. The evening had the usual card playing and raffle prizes.

Partnership For Sharing is offering its annual Pot Roast Dinner on April 26th. The meal is one of the most popular and, as always, delicious.

Sam Clark is building a garden shed as an Eagle Scout project to benefit the Garden Committee of Third Church. The shed will house all that is needed to keep our garden tools and supplies for

the season and winter. He raised all of the funds from members of the congregation and local businesses. We are so proud of Sam for his Scouting accomplishments and his service to our Church.

Missions is holding its annual Tag & Bake Sale on May 9th and 10th. All proceeds go toward Mission projects done throughout the year. Many hands are needed to serve.

A Blood Drive was held at the church on April 23rd. The day was chaired by Cookie Stojak with thanks to several volunteers.

Ladies Aid is starting to prepare for the upcoming Strawberry Festival for June 12th. It is a much anticipated event by the community and the church alike.