

## ...from area churches

### The real you

The Resurrection of Christ has given every believer the destiny to be a new creature hidden in Christ! It is more than just knowing that through the completed work of the cross, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and our faith in that work, we have forgiveness of sin and life eternal. There is the here and now and the understanding we can have life and that more abundantly.

The Apostle Paul gives us the understanding: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17 (KJV)

Understanding what it means to be a "new creature in Christ" is essential for enjoying the abundant life of freedom that Jesus Christ has provided for every believer. We learn how to avoid the common traps of poor self-image and self-condemnation as we begin to view ourselves from God's perspective—rather than from man's perspective. Assurance, confidence and consistency will characterize our daily lives as we grow in an understanding of what God has provided for us in Christ. We need to begin at the beginning: What does it mean to be a new creature and what impact does this have on our lives?

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22)

In the age of grace, when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit instantly baptizes us "into Christ" and thus into His body. Being "in Christ" is often referred to as positional truth. The baptism of I Corinthians 12:13 rightly viewed as the

mechanics of positional truth: "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Much religious confusion surrounds the topic of baptism, but in Scripture the main issue behind baptism is total identification. This is something that happens to every individual believer the moment we trust Christ: we are totally identified with Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings" (Eph. 1:3). It is in Christ that we are made complete (Colossians 2:10). It is in Christ that "in everything ye are enriched by Him" (I Cor. 1:5). Thus it is in Christ that we are made "new creatures." We are no longer "in Adam." Now we are "in Christ." When we step out of Adam into Christ, He steps out of heaven into us and makes us into new creatures...members of the "one new man," the body of Christ.

In order to understand our new identity as new creatures in Christ, perhaps we should start with Adam and the "old things" of which we once were a part. Paul sets forth the story of the old creation in Romans 5 by beginning where the Bible begins, with the first man, Adam:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure

of him that was to come." (Rom. 5:12-14)

"Condemnation," "death," "made sinners"... that's what we receive from Adam. We are born with the same nature and destiny that Adam possessed after his fall. Every grave marker in every cemetery is a testimony that God's Word is true. Because all of us have sinned, death works in us all. "Death reigns" as king over the old creation. And this is more than simply physical death, for Revelation 21:8 declares: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Adam's legacy is that in our very nature we are sinners. We sin because we are sinners...it's our nature to do so. Sin reigns...it is our master; we are its slave. The testimony of Scripture is clear: We are "the servants of sin" (Rom. 6:17, 21). In John 8:34 Jesus Christ declares: "... Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Sin has come and gripped us so tightly that it runs all of the old creation. The old creation characterized by selfishness, anger, lying, self-centeredness, lust, stealing, malice, bitterness, greed, evil thoughts, and pride...make your own list. The Bible calls it sin and it so dominates the old creation that these things are thought of as normal human behavior. People do them all the time. We don't think anything of it because "that's the way people are." Exactly: Sin runs the old

-See THE REAL YOU/PAGE EIGHT

### A cause to die for

Anyone who reads the Gospel of Jesus Christ has to ask himself if he really believes in the resurrection of Jesus. As a notion, it is completely contrary to our experience. We have all seen people die, but we have not seen anyone rise from the dead.

Many have no difficulty in believing that Jesus died.

The details are given in the Gospels: he was crucified, nailed to the cross, his side pierced with a lance, and he himself exclaimed, "It is finished."

However, there is a strange realism in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. The apostles did not expect him to rise from the dead; they were

astonished. They were not even the first ones to go to the tomb; the women did. They also did not go to the tomb expecting the resurrection. They went bringing spices to anoint the body. Mary Magdalene thought the body was stolen.

Thomas, one of the twelve, was totally incredulous. "I will never believe it without probing the nail-prints in his hands, without putting my finger in the nailmarks and my hand into his side." (Jn. 20:25) What a wonderful transformation a week later, when he was able to say, "My Lord and my God." (Jn. 20, 28)

Yet, greater than that, those apostles not only went and preached Jesus, almost all died martyrs. Would any

of them be so foolish as to die for a truth in which they did not believe? Martyrdom speaks louder than words. And what about St. Paul? He was initially a persecutor of the Church. He was able to write to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:3-8), "Christ died for our sins... on the third day he was raised to life."

He goes on to tell that Jesus appeared to Cephas, to 500 brothers, to all the apostles, and last of all to himself.

May you and I be imbued in that same faith so that Easter is the joyous occasion to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

Father Gerry Condon  
St. Patrick's/St. William's Catholic parishes

### God's love and the resurrection

Although the Christian message is one of sharing God's love with all people, it would not have become such a unique religion without the Easter event.

The Holy Scriptures of the Christian faith, (the Holy Bible) relate that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover Feast, because his ministry of inclusion of all people into God's Kingdom was a threat to the established Jewish religion of exclusion of those who did not follow its purity code. His body was taken from the cross on the evening of that day because the Jewish leaders did not want it displayed on the Sabbath, which began at sunset. Prior to the body being taken from the cross, death was pronounced. Thereafter, a couple of Jesus' disciples (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) asked the governor of Jerusalem, Pilate, if they could take the body and place it in a tomb. Pilate consented. These two disciples then took the body, wrapped in it a burial cloth with myrrh and aloes, and placed it in the tomb. Joseph then placed a stone in front of the tomb. At the request of the Jewish priests and Pharisees, Pilate placed a Roman army detail to stand guard over the tomb for three days, to make sure that none of Jesus' disciples could steal the body and claim that he had been res-

urrected.

While it was still dark on the first day of the week, the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial, Mary came to the tomb to re-apply the spices. When she arrived at the tomb, she saw that the stone had been rolled away and that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb. Jesus then appeared to her and told her to go tell His disciples that he had risen. She did so. Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved came to the tomb to see for themselves that it was empty. Later in the day, Jesus appeared to the disciples. He continued to teach His message of inclusion and shalom—an evening-up of the playing field—that God loves everyone, and that we are to love others as He loves us, for 40 days prior to His ascension.

Had it not been for the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, which was confirmed by His disciples—both women and men—recognition that Jesus is the Son of God would not have been as easily accepted.

Therefore, the Easter message is that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, is risen! He is risen, indeed! We are all called to follow His teachings of acceptance of everyone. We are all called to defend and care for those less fortunate than we are. We are all called to

love everyone in the same way that God loves us... unconditionally, unceasingly, universally.

As Christians, we believe the message of Jesus—that all who accept the gift of faith that God is our Creator, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Presence within and among us—all have eternal life and are forgiven of their deviations from God's love upon confession of these miscues.

So on this Easter morning, Sunday, April 8, 2012, we proclaim with conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is risen; He is risen indeed! And we encourage everyone in greater Heppner to attend a worship service this day and join in praising God, our Creator, for giving us the Good News of Jesus.

The celebration begins with the Ecumenical Sunrise Service at the football grandstands at 7 a.m.

At Heppner United Methodist Church we will be serving our community breakfast between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. This is a free-will donation meal. Come and eat, without worrying about how much it will cost.

At 10:30 a.m. we will have our celebration of Easter worship service.

Pastor Jonathan Enz  
United Methodist Church

### Death not the last word

Jesus died. Jesus lives. Doesn't that tell the story in reverse? For every other historical figure, we tell about life, and then report a death, both past tense, done and over with. For Jesus, the news is upside down and backward, like everything else about him. He was a king born into poverty. He lived a sinless life in the company of sinners and outcasts. He was with God at the creation of the world but he let the world beat him and betray him and

nail him to a cross. He died too soon, but God's love was stronger than death. He lives.

It's a mystery we won't fully understand until the day we see him face to face...a day that might take us by surprise. But for those who believe in Jesus, that surprise is filled with joy...the kind of surprising joy that greeted certain women who came to care for a dead body early one Sunday morning and found an empty tomb instead.

The story of Jesus doesn't end with death, because death doesn't have the last word. God does. Love wins. Those who accept the gift of God's love, revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, win too: life in God's presence forever, an abundant life that begins now.

Jesus died. Jesus lives. And that's good news for us.

Pastor Katy Anderson  
All Saints Episcopal/Hope Lutheran churches

### USDA warns of fraud

USDA officials learned recently that fraudulent letters and phone calls are being sent to individuals and businesses in several states. The letters purportedly come from a USDA procurement officer and seek personal information.

"These letters are false and in no case should

a recipient respond with personal and financial information," states a USDA release.

The fraudulent letters bear USDA's logo and seal and are signed by an individual identified as "Frank Rutenberg" using a title of "Senior Procurement Officer."

Recipients should not respond or supply any information. USDA is investigating this matter.

If you suspect you have received such a letter or have questions, contact USDA at procurement.policy@dm.usda.gov or call 202-720-9448.

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### MARCH'S CHARACTER TRAIT INTEGRITY



Back (L-R): Queen Maggie Collins, Serenity Rodriguez, Jimmy Adams, Claire Grieb, Reiah Waite, Shayna Osmen, Gibson McCurry, Justice Petzoldt, and Wyatt Corwin. Front (L-R): Brian Lindsay, Jonathon Waddell, Jennie Adams, Bill Alldritt, Ireland Martin, ZaBrena Masterson, Gracie Orem, Evan Kollman and Jazmin Barrett. Not pictured Landon Mitchell.



Bottom (L-R): HHS students of the month Tim Gould, Kaden Clark, Joseph Schmidt, Jaden Orr, Bryce Fowler and Ryan Bennett

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