



Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP TIMES

- 8:45am Bible Study Groups
- 10:00am Worship in the Sanctuary

CONTACT US

Pleasant Grove UMC
P.O. Box 681900
1915 Oakdale Rd
Charlotte, NC 28216
704-392-2387

www.pleasantgrovecharlotte.com

From The Pastor's Desk

I have a confession. Writing this month's article was hard. It's March and I know everyone is expecting something about Easter, but Easter isn't until the end of March and as of my writing, we have gathered for Ash Wednesday, but we haven't even experienced the first Sunday of Lent. We haven't spent time with Jesus in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. We haven't seen Jesus cleanse the temple. We haven't waved palm branches and shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" We haven't encountered his suffering and death on a cross. So how can I write about his resurrection?

It has always bothered me that so many Christians want to celebrate Easter without using the Season of Lent to prepare themselves for Easter, without searching themselves for where they have allowed other things to take priority over God in their lives and putting God back in first place. And it has always bothered me that so many Christians want to jump from "Hosanna" to the resurrection without coming face-to-face with Jesus' suffering and death during Holy Week. Without doing the self-work of Lent, and facing the suffering and death of Jesus, we cannot fully comprehend or celebrate Easter, regardless of how many bunnies we use to decorate or eggs we hide.

Those who were following Jesus didn't comprehend the resurrection either.

They didn't even expect it. Jesus had told them he would suffer, die, and be raised from the dead, but they didn't get it. They were there. They saw first-hand his suffering and his death. But they did not expect his resurrection. Not one person kept watch at the tomb. Not one person waited for him to rise from the dead. When the women went to the tomb, they were going to complete the burial. When they found the tomb empty, they were scared. They were sad. They were confused. An angel tells them what has happened. Then the women tell the men. The men don't believe them. They had witnessed Jesus bring others back to life that had died, yet they couldn't believe Jesus was alive. Maybe it was because in other instances, they had actually seen the dead person come back to life and it was Jesus that had caused it. But with Jesus all they had was a missing body. The death and burial of Jesus was the last they had seen of him. In their tradition, the soul lingered for three days after a death and beyond that, life was impossible. Jesus had now been dead for three days. Life for him was impossible. But death was defeated, and Jesus was alive!

How many times do we feel something is impossible? We all have situations in life that we feel are hopeless. The troubles of life, the fears, the pain, the suffering, the sin in our lives, the sin of others, can overwhelm us and we feel life is impossible. But death has been defeated and there is resurrection for us! There is resurrection for us from all the troubles, the fears, the pain, the suffering, and the sin in life. That resurrection comes when we put our full trust in Jesus and we believe in his promise to be with us and give us life, no matter what comes our way. Death never has the final word.

As we go through this season of Lent, preparing ourselves for Easter, may we be asking ourselves, do we truly believe in the resurrection? Not just the resurrection of Jesus, but do we believe he will bring resurrection to our lives as well? Do we believe that he will take all the hopeless situations in our lives, and bring new life to them? Do we believe that he can turn our sorrow to joy? Our turmoil to peace?

--Pastor Glenda



General Conference is Coming to Charlotte



Our United Methodist General Conference will be held in the beautiful city of Charlotte from April 23rd through May 3rd. Delegates and Clergy from around the world will be in attendance and if you are feeling called to serve, please pick up a flyer on the table in the Sanctuary. A variety of services are needed from greeters to drivers. Please visit <https://welcometogc.org/> for more ways to be connected to this blessed event.

THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH:

IN MEMORY

Nancy Brown

Don Brown

IN HONOR

Members Hospitalized the Last Six Months

Covenant Sunday School Class



The church family extends our deepest sympathies to:

The friends and family of Jimmy Crawford on his recent passing.



Men's Fellowship Breakfast
Every Tuesday at 7:30 am
Lowesville Cafe
1610 NC-16
Mt Holly, NC 28120

News from the United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith met for their February meetings on Tuesday, February 13th, with twelve members present for Circle #3 and six present for Circle #6. These two meetings were used for planning, and everyone is looking forward to a year of service and outreach.

The first Metro District event is the annual Mission Study. It will be held at Pineville UMC on Saturday, March 2nd, beginning at 9:00 AM and ending at 2:00 PM. The hands-on mission project for this event is the collection of hygiene kits. The contents of these kits are to be placed within a gallon-sized zip lock bag. The items to be included are:

- One hand towel (15x25 – 17x27) No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels
- One washcloth – No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber washcloths
- One comb – Must be sturdy with at least six inches of teeth
- One toenail or fingernail clipper
- Bath-sized bar of soap (3 oz. or larger) No Ivory or Jergens soap. Leave in wrapper.
- One adult toothbrush – Leave in wrapper.
- Ten adhesive bandages (3/4 x 3 inches)

To assemble, lay the hand towel flat on the table and lay the washcloth in the center of the towel. Place remaining items on top of the washcloth. Fold the sides of the hand towel to cover the items. Grasp the bundle tightly and roll over the remainder of the towel. Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag, remove the excess air, and seal.

Our Circles gained three new members in 2023 and we want all ladies of the church to know that there is always a place for you to come and be a part of this vital ministry group. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month and look forward to welcoming YOU at our next gathering!

---submitted by Jeannie Upton



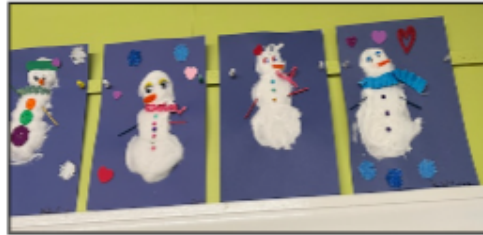
LUNCH TIME

PG Prayer Lunch

The PG Prayer Lunch meets every Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at The Stockyard Restaurant. Everyone...men and women, church members and friends, are welcome to join us. We would love to have you with us for this time of food, fellowship, and prayer as we come together seeking God's power and presence in our lives and in the world around us.

Thursdays - 11:30 AM - The Stockyard

After School Care Post



After School Care has survived all the rainy afternoons and we are now looking forward to Spring! February was filled with “heart” making activities and lots of love. We even managed to have a Valentine’s party, despite Ms. Sherrie being in Florida enjoying her “new” granddaughter, Riley, born to Michael and Heather on February 8th. Congratulations to Ms. Sherrie, but hurry back to Pleasant Grove! You sure are missed!

As we move into the month of March, we are looking forward to Saint Patrick’s Day and all the fun that surrounds that day. We also can’t wait for Easter! We will certainly have fun with colorful eggs, fluffy bunnies, and Easter treats...but we will also celebrate Jesus and His love for all of us! This time of year sure is exciting here at After School Care!!!

— submitted by Jeannie Upton
and the After School Care Staff



You Did It Again!!!



Pleasant Grove church members continue to open their hearts with their generous giving to help those who are homeless and struggling during these winter months. Through your generosity, 51 tubes of ChapStick, 25 bags of cough drops, 137 pairs of hand and foot warmers, 78 caps and hats, 28 pairs of gloves, 69 pairs of socks, and a few other assorted items were donated and delivered to Roof Above located in downtown Charlotte. Roof Above is a comprehensive homeless service provider whose goal is to raise awareness and unite the community to help end homelessness. Your donations, care, and compassion will ALWAYS make a difference in the fight against homelessness in our city! Also, a big thank you to a sweet and special church member who handmade a generous number of hats for donation! Once again, God is blessing others through us! Thanks be to God!!!

At the end of life, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by “I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.” ---Mother Teresa

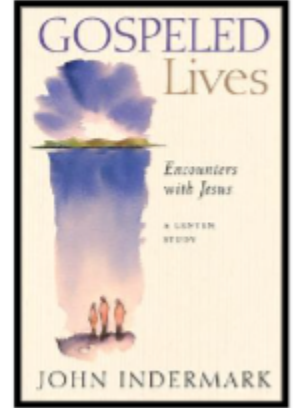
Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done. ---Proverbs 19:17

---submitted by Mary Usher

Lenten Bible Study Continues Through March

Our Lenten Bible Study, entitled, **Gospeled Lives**, continues through the month of March. Even if you couldn't attend the first couple of gatherings, we invite you to join this study now. We all make gains in our spiritual growth and our devotion to God when we study His word together.

Gospeled Lives are lives that have encountered Jesus Christ. Christ's call leads to a continually unfolding story for each of us. An encounter with the living Christ demands a response, John Indermark says. In this book you will learn about New Testament characters who encountered Jesus. Some responded with joy and gratitude. Others ignored or rejected His offer of Good News.



Indermark's powerful reflections on the various Biblical characters, along with daily reading of scripture, written prayers, and suggested exercises, make an ideal study for individuals or groups. Each chapter contains five daily readings.

Here are some of the New Testament characters you will explore:

Bartimaeus – The women at Jesus' tomb – Mary and Jesus' family – The slave of the high priest
A rich young man – Herod Antipas – The woman with the hemorrhage
The Gerasene demoniac - Mary Magdalene – Ten lepers

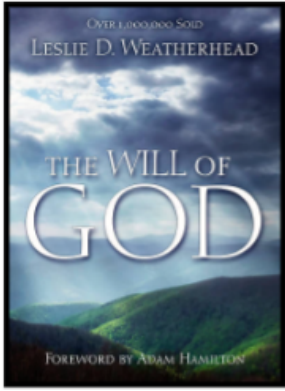
Books for this study are \$13 and you can place it in the offering plate with "Lenten Study" on the envelope. If you are unable to purchase a book, please still come. The inability to purchase materials should NEVER be a reason not to participate. We look forward to exploring God's word together with **Gospeled Lives** as our launch Point!



Our Lending Library is Here for You!!!

Don't forget that Pleasant Grove has its own lending library! If you are looking for a good read...something that will inspire, inform, entertain, or help you along on your walk with the Lord...then we just may have what you need. We are located in the Gathering Room of the Family Life Center. Simply choose your title, take it home, enjoy it, and return it for others. Simple, isn't it? The books await. Let's get reading!!!





Recommended Reading

For the month of March, which takes in most of the Lenten season, we have a great book suggestion for the entire church family. **The Will of God**, most likely the best-known work of Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, has sold more than a million copies and has been a lifeline for grieving persons seeking to understand the intent and will of God while living in the middle of sorrow and pain.

Leslie Weatherhead was ordained as a Methodist preacher in 1915. He remained in the ministry until 1960 when he retired as the senior minister at the City Temple in London, England. His books, like his sermons, were an extension of his pastoral ministry. Many of his books were written to answer questions that might cause some to hesitate at embracing a life of faith or to address the doubts that many believers struggle with from time to time. In his writing and his preaching, he hoped to help people follow Christ, to make sense of the world they live in, and to live out their faith in their day-to-day life.

This small book contains five “talks” (sermons) that Weatherhead delivered to his City Temple congregation. They were written as Britain endured years of engagement in World War II, living through nightly air raids for almost two months without relief. It was his hope that through these words, his congregation might come to a better understanding of the will of God, and the unrelenting compassion of a loving God. He uses Matthew 18:14 as his entry point for the sermons. And consequently, believes that we should divide God’s will into three parts: the intentional will of God, the circumstantial will of God, and the ultimate will of God. By viewing God’s will through this lens, we can see how His will is accomplished despite human interference and a sinful world.

Pastor Glenda recommended **The Will of God** to us. She writes that it can challenge some of our traditional ways of thinking and add depth to our understanding of God’s will. Pastor Glenda says, “I love Leslie Weatherhead because he always challenges me, no matter which of his books I am reading. And he writes in a way that, although he was writing 80 or so years ago, it’s still easy to read and understand today.”

I was able to read **The Will of God** in one day...but I am far from finished with it. It is so rich and thoughtful, so full of relatable illustrations, so insightful, that I will be revisiting it many times over. As readers, we need to let Weatherhead’s revelations soak into our hearts, minds, and souls in small “bites” for maximum understanding. The content of this book is just as relevant today as it was during the horrors of WWII. We all spend time looking for how the will of God is at work in today’s world with its divisiveness, increasing crime rates, and global conflicts. This book can help us all see and understand how the will of God is still at work in our world. It has been said that Leslie Weatherhead’s greatest desires were “to help nonreligious people find faith and to help Christians build a faith that could stand in the face of a changing world. He sought to challenge, comfort, deepen, and equip his readers. And he hoped to compel them to live their faith in such a way that they not only were praying but working to see that God’s kingdom would come ‘on earth as it is in heaven.’” I believe that if you spend some time with this little volume, you will find that he is accomplishing his desires even today.

The Will of God is available from many online booksellers and is also available from our own Lending Library at Pleasant Grove. We hope that you will enjoy reading **The Will of God** and that you will be brought into a deeper understanding of God’s will for the world and for your own life. Happy Reading!

---submitted by Sherri Brown



The Recipe Box

Happy Saint Patrick's Day! Here is a recipe you can add to your Saint Patrick's Day feast. Full of calcium and magnesium, plus some fiber, this rendition will go well with your Shepherd's Pie, Soda Bread, and Pistachio Pudding! (Jell-o makes a delicious instant green pudding mix... both regular and sugar-free!)

Irish Bacon and Cabbage

1 package center-cut, thick-sliced bacon
1 large green cabbage
32 ounces chicken broth
1 Tbsp. mustard seed
1 medium onion
Salt and pepper to taste



Cut bacon into 4th's and separate each quarter slice. Peel onion and cut into 8 wedges. Cut cabbage, remove the core, and cut into 12 wedges.

Place bacon in a large stockpot over medium to medium-high heat, stirring as it begins to sizzle. Add onion and sauté 3 to 4 minutes. Then add cabbage, broth, and mustard seeds. Stir to move the cabbage to the bottom of the pot and bacon to the top.

Cover and simmer for 30 minutes to soften the cabbage. Stir once or twice during the cook time. Salt and pepper to taste.

You can store this dish for 3 to 5 days. Just reheat it in a skillet.
Mealtainn! (Pronounced "meelteen!" which is Irish for "enjoy!")

May good luck be with you wherever you go,
and your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow!

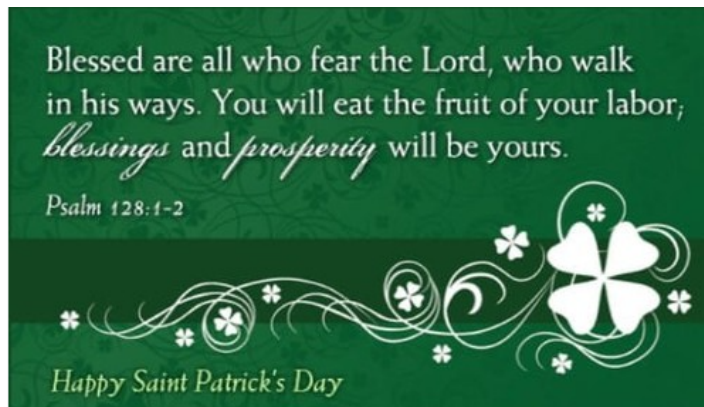
---submitted by Peggy Green



Happy Saint Patrick's Day!!!

Saint Patrick's Day is an annual observance that commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and as a result, celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish in general. These celebrations usually involve parades, festivals, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks. This year Saint Patrick's Day falls on Sunday, March 17th.

The volunteers with Pleasant News want to wish you a Happy Saint Patrick's Day! And while you may remember to wear green that day, and you just might pin a shamrock on your lapel, we want you to remember one more thing. As followers of Christ, we don't just consider ourselves lucky...we KNOW we are blessed! We are blessed to have a personal relationship with Jesus. We are blessed to be able to talk to God about anything. We are blessed to have the Holy Scriptures as our guidebook. And we are blessed to be a part of a loving, caring, and compassionate fellowship. Happy Saint Patrick's Day, Pleasant Grove!!! And remember, not just lucky...blessed!!!



Cemetery Clean Up Day



Be sure to remember that there is a clean up day scheduled for our Pleasant Grove Memorial Park on Saturday, March 16th . At this time all Christmas or Winter seasonal flowers will be disposed of in preparation for Spring and the Easter season. Please be sure to remove any floral arrangements that you wish to save before that date. Thanks for your help and consideration as we seek to maintain our church cemetery in a manner that honors God and our departed saints.



The Flower Calendar is Available for 2024

Are you celebrating a milestone or special event? Is there a special someone you would like to honor or remember? The Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board in the Office building for Sunday arrangements for the Altar. You will be contacted the week of that Sunday for more information on how your listing will be in the bulletin. We look forward to serving you with this beautiful expression of love and devotion.



Helping Our Neighbors

Don't miss out on our latest opportunity to help our neighbors! At the end of the month, we will once again be helping ten families from Oakdale School who find themselves in a food-insecure situation. Students will be home from school during the week of Spring break and will not have access to the two meals served each day. This presents a hardship for families. These gift cards will be a Godsend for them! Each family will be able to use the gift to put together a nice meal in celebration of Easter, or they can use it to stock up on the essentials they need week-in and week-out. Please contribute what you can by marking your donation for Oakdale School and know that you are a part of reaching throughout our neighborhood with the love of Jesus Christ. How blessed we are to be able to bless others!!!



Spring Forward

Be sure to "spring forward" before you go to bed on Saturday, March 9th . If you don't, you just might be late for church on Sunday, the 10th! Don't forget!!!



Are You Ready to Help Again???

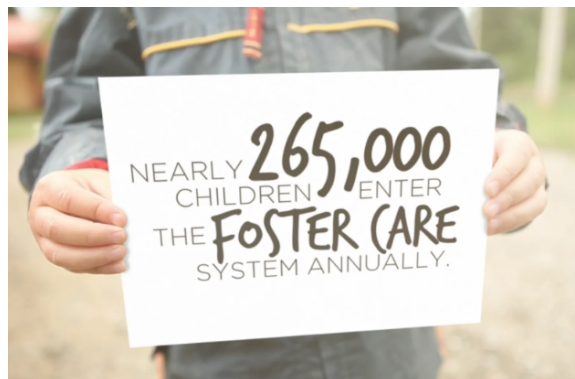


Pleasant Grove has a rich history of helping people in need...from our students across the street, to folks experiencing food instability, to people who find themselves without a home, to those who have been victims of a natural disaster. In the coming month we are going to help a totally different population. We are going to help those who are already helping others! And this organization, Foster Village Charlotte, just happens to be near and dear to our hearts here at Pleasant Grove.

Foster Village Charlotte believes that strengthening the systems that support children experiencing foster care leads to a resilient next generation that breaks the cycle of childhood adversity and trauma. The wonderful people at Foster Village Charlotte believe in and operate within three main pillars: Equip, Connect, and Advocate. Children in foster care are equipped by having their needs met with dignity. Families caring for children in foster care are connected to each other and to ongoing, holistic support. Children in foster care have advocates who ensure dignity for the children and for the families who are providing care.

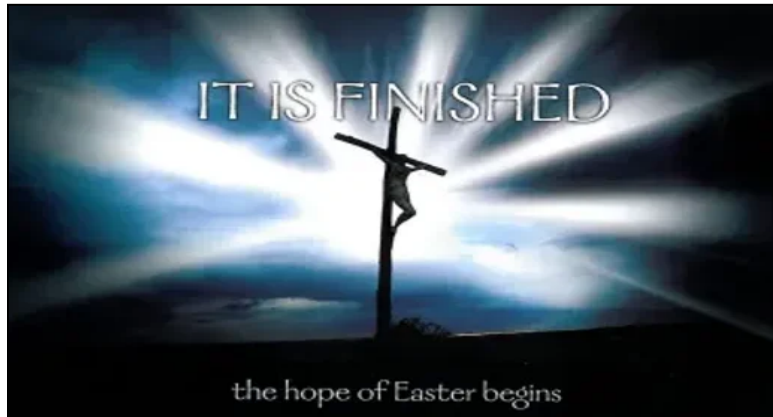
Foster Village has been a big help to our own Randy and Mandi Ferguson. Randy and Mandi report that they have received support and access to resources while they love on, and care for Zeke, Breezy, and Eli. One of the things that Foster Village provides for families is a welcome kit with each child, which is age specific for that child. Out of necessity, they are very particular about what is included in these welcome kits. And while we want to support Foster Village in providing these kits, we find it imperative to work within their specific framework. The best way for us to do this is to donate gift cards. We will be collecting Amazon gift cards through Easter Sunday. You can donate an Amazon gift card in any amount from \$10-\$100. These can be purchased at most grocery stores and at Lowes. If you would rather, you can make a monetary donation in any amount. Just make your check out to the church, marking it for Foster Village, and we will shop for the gift cards. You can place your donation of gift cards in the basket at the front of the sanctuary. You can place your monetary donation in the offering basket on Sunday mornings or you can drop it off in the church office.

It is exciting for us to be able to support an organization that has been so important to the Ferguson family! In a way, we are honoring Randy and Mandi as they care for their three little sweeties while also helping others who have been called to provide care for children in crisis. We can think of no better way to pass on our blessings than to extend God's love to children and their foster families. Thanks once again, Pleasant Grove, for being the hands, feet, and heart of Christ!!!



Good Friday at The Grove

Our observance of Good Friday is a somber occasion and one that the church family has always maintained. It is on this momentous day that we remember the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We also remember that it was through His sacrifice that we were forgiven our sins and given the promise of eternal life. But, because we are Easter people, and we know that the story of Jesus' death ended with the glory of resurrection, we can approach Good Friday with hope and assurance instead of hopelessness and questioning. We invite the church family to gather for our Good Friday service on Friday, March 29th, at 6:00 PM, in our chapel. Let's experience this holy observance together.



Easter at The Grove

Easter is such an exciting time around Pleasant Grove! After spending the Lenten season contemplating God's incredible gift of eternal life and our own mortality, it is a time to embrace the forgiveness of our sins and the future that awaits us all. We celebrate this reality with joy, with gratitude, and with thanksgiving!

On Sunday, March 31st, we will once again gather to celebrate our Risen Savior through worship, music, food, and fellowship. Please plan to join your church family on this most beautiful of days! Let's celebrate Resurrection Sunday together!!!

7:00 AM Sunrise Service at The Coop (the former Scout Hut)

8:00 AM Biscuit Breakfast at the Church

9:00 AM Sunday School

10:00 AM Easter Sunday Worship



Love in Action

At our recent Ash Wednesday service, we were blessed to have four of our After School Care students join us in worship. They sat in the front row and were very attentive during a service that can be hard for any of us to process and understand. As we moved through the service, referencing both Old and New Testament scripture, spending time in prayer, and considering the significance of the imposition of ashes, the children sat quietly and patiently. And then, Pastor Glenda did a beautiful and loving thing. She paused her planned order of service, went right over to the students, and took the time to explain what we were doing, and what God was doing for us in very simple and understandable terms. She allowed them to ask questions and then to decide how they each wanted to participate. Pastor Glenda's attention to these young people was such a caring and affirmative response. It was truly "love in action!" We were all blessed by the presence of these four young friends. And we were also blessed to see God's love for His children on display. May we all be inspired by what happened during this service and may God always be lifted high in everything we do!



Our gym is open to the church family and community for indoor walking on Monday and Wednesday mornings between the hours of 9:00 and 11:00. It will never be too hot, too cold, or too wet to walk in our gym! So, you have no excuses! Everyone is welcome to come enjoy the fellowship and movement as we all work toward better health together!

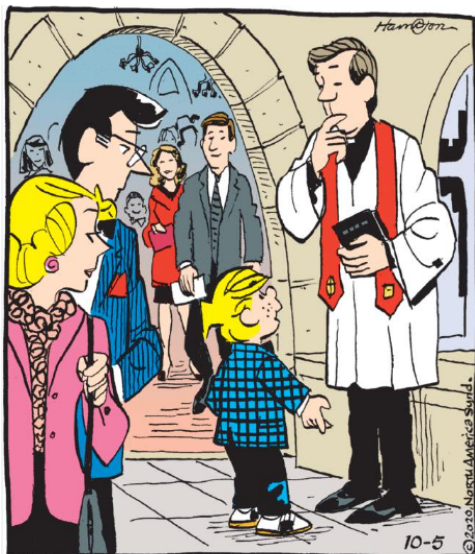
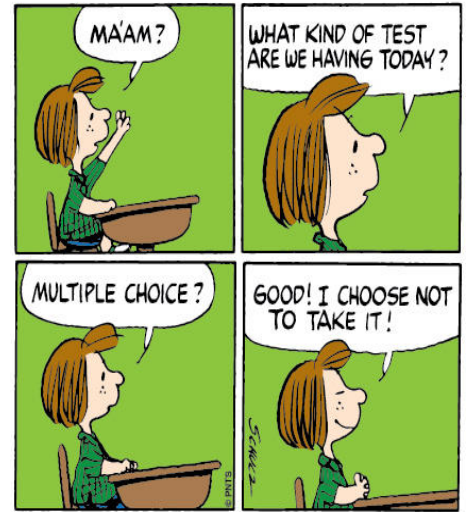


Happy Easter!!!

The small band of volunteers who work on Pleasant News each month would like to wish the Pleasant Grove family a joyous and blessed Easter! For children, it is a happy and fun-filled time with dyed eggs, bunny ears, baby chicks, and lots and lots of candy. But most of us understand that it is much, much more. Easter Sunday is a time of great celebration as we greet the Risen Savior! We understand, on this most holy of days, that our sins are forgiven and that an eternity in heaven is available to us as believers. And it begins a season of assurance that there is nothing God won't do to reach us with His love, grace, and mercy! So, as we worship together as a church family, hide and hunt eggs, and sneak a piece of chocolate or two, let's be sure to take the time to soak all of this in...and thank God for His amazing gift of Jesus Christ, His Son and our Savior. Let's raise a Holy Hallelujah to the heavens and let His light shine in our lives from this day forward! Happy Easter!!!



Just For Giggles



“I LIKED THAT PART ABOUT THE FATHER
AND HIS SON'S HOLY GOATS.”



“A day
without
laughter is
a day
wasted”

Easter Word Search

G S N O I T P M E D E R Y Y M
J J U Y K I R Y T T F X E O L
R L K F W E E C I O J E R C K
X Y N G Q C U W V U P C M C K
R C R O S S H R E D P H M N E
I F V A I B Q U I R G P Q R N
S A Q Z M T M I R A C L E T S
E I A O I R C H R C O Y I U E
N T T P R C G E Y O H S S R L
I H H S O O C A R K I E P V K
N W O R C S D U B R J V R G T
O H T N G N T E S F U L A M I
D P V O U Q F L D K A S Y S H
Z M E S B Z Z W E M L Y E D F
E T G L M E G K B S L T R R U

APOSTLES
CROWN
LAMB
PRAYER
RESURRECTION
SON

CHURCH
FAITH
MARY
REDEMPTION
RISEN
SUNDAY

CROSS
JESUS
MIRACLE
REJOICE
SAVIOR
TOMB

