

A Message from our Senior Minister Emeritus

Rev. Dennis Knight

The infamous art theft from the Gardner Museum in Boston that occurred nearly twenty years ago has entered the news again, with further evidence of who might have been behind the theft. I penned the following article for the April, 1990 *Messenger*, and offer it again as we approach Easter.

While staggering, the monetary loss involved – over two hundred million dollars – hardly reflects the full impact of the thievery which took place. Art, especially of this significance, is a public treasure maintained by common trust. Its value cannot be measured by any secondary marker. Two hundred million dollars might *approximate* the loss, but it could in no way *replace* the loss.

Partly for this reason, as well as other pertinent factors, the Trustees of the Museum did not have these works insured for theft. Thus, unless the paintings are recovered, the loss is truly complete. This theft is an offense against culture. It strikes against the standards by which society measures itself. Theft of art is theft from the public treasury. It is not just the Gardner Museum or the City of Boston which has lost. We all have lost.

The Church is like art. It is a treasure belonging to the public domain. The Church embodies values and standards of excellence; it reflects the highest aspirations of devoted individuals; it provides the halyard on which the banner of enlightenment is raised; it strikes the flint for the beacons which pierce the darkened corners of human misery.

Like the Gardner Museum, the Church has Trustees who are charged with its welfare. We – you and I – are they. As with all Trustees, we have to provide insurance against loss. But as the Gardner's Trustees realized, some loss cannot be covered. Some loss cannot be replaced.

The Church, like the Gardner Museum, is threatened by the thief who comes disguised in the night, who gains entrance by falsehood and then plunders the great treasures inside.

The thief who has sought entry into the Church you and I know and value is characterized by narrowness of mind and rigidity of form. S/he disguises himself as moral purity. What S/he seeks to steal is the abundant liberality of spirit which has been the driving force behind our religious tradition since it first took root in the old world and set itself upon these Massachusetts shores 370 years ago.

As we approach Easter, we have but to turn for guidance to the Great Guardian of our Faith who set himself against the moral plunderers. The peril to our heritage is real and constant. We best insure against thievery of the Church's treasures by, like Jesus, speaking out and standing forth for the right, even if that means we stand alone and in jeopardy.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 5 – Palm Sunday

10:00 AM

Worship Service

with guest minister

The Rev. Dr. Peter Wells



Rev. Wells is our Associate Conference Minister.



Thursday, April 9 – Maundy Thursday Service

5:30 PM

Waffle Supper (Hex Room)

7:00 PM

Service in the Great Hall

After our delicious waffle supper, we will gather in the Great Hall for a service with Communion and scripture readings.

Sunday, April 12 - Easter Sunday

10:00 AM Worship Service

11:00 AM Coffee Hour



Easter flowers

Order forms are included in the bulletins of call Carolyn and she will take your order. Lilies - \$10; Tulips - \$10

An Easter Egg hunt will be held during Coffee Hour.



Following worship on Easter Sunday we invite all the children to participate in our annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Memorial Garden (weather permitting). This is a fun event for all ages. If you would like to help make this day special, donations of wrapped candy are greatly appreciated. Please drop off at the church office by Palm Sunday.

CELEBRATE PASS ON THE GIFT MONTH

Join the Heifer family at Overlook Farm for an evening of camaraderie, food, and fun on **Sunday, April 5**. Activities begin at 4 PM with a farm tour followed by a Pot Luck Supper at 5 PM. Donations are welcomed. Catch the after dinner feature "12 Stones" premiering across the country at chosen locations. This is a deeply moving video with breathtaking

cinematography which captures the remarkable transformation of a community of women in Nepal. The evening will be filled with music and will wrap up with "Guess that Animal" trivia game and door prizes. We hope you will join us in our celebration of "Passing the Gift." For more information visit www.heifer.org/passonthegift or contact Kate Sheehan, Community Relations Coordinator, kate.sheehan@heifer.org or 508-886-5048. RSVP appreciated but not required.

HEIFER PROJECT KIDS FEST EWE II

Join us on **Sunday, May 3** for our second annual Kids Fest to benefit Heifer International. There will be games, storytelling, face painting, a slide show, a moon walk and yummy food. To make this day a success we need volunteers to help in the many areas. If you would be able to participate please speak to Rev. Dee of if you have any ideas about activities we could incorporate, let Dee know.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Mary Ann Wilson	1
Carolyn Kreft	5
Zachary Taylor	30

SPECTRUM MUSIC CONCERT



**Coming to Pakachoag Church on
Sunday, April 19 at 3:00 PM**

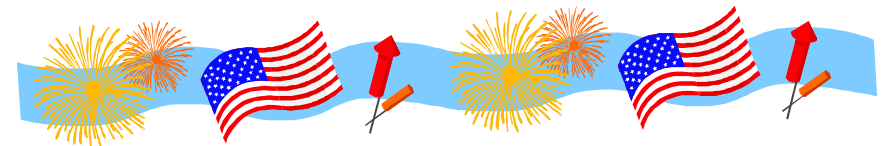
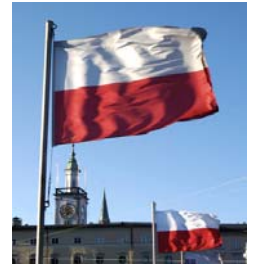
John W. Ehrlich, Spectrum's founder and music director, is well-known to the Worcester County audiences from his eight season tenure as the director of the Master Singers. The 35 member chorus will present selections of Schubert & Brahms Masterworks during the first half of the program. Following an intermission, the chorus will present "An American Sampler" music.

Seating will be at tables of 8 where guests will find a delicious selection of finger food to enjoy before the concert. During intermission, dessert and coffee will be offered. Liquid refreshment will also be available along with a wine "cash bar."

Tickets are \$15 per person and can be obtained by calling the church office 508-755-8718. Reserve a table today for best seating.

WE'RE HAVING A LUNCHEON

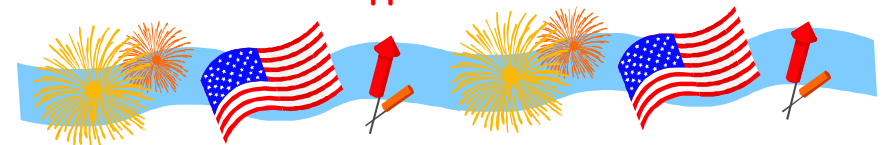
Join us for a luncheon following service on **Sunday, April 26**. We will be serving food representing the country of Poland (which is the country we chose in conjunction with our Heifer Project). Just to wet your appetites, we will be having pierogis, golabkis, kopytka, assorted breads, just to mention a few. A donation to help offset the cost of the meal will be greatly appreciated.



Pakachoag Soldier of the month

This month we are very blessed to not have another soldier serving away from home. Please keep all our men and women in the military, no matter where they serve, or what our feelings are on the war, in our constant prayers. That they may come home to their families and loved ones. If you do know of someone serving away from home, or soon will be, please contact Lynn Blanchard.

Thank you to all who serve, and the families who support them.



Cup Half Full

by Jenny LaBonte

I find it interesting to examine people's attitudes about whether they view their lives as a "cup half full" or "cup half empty". For those of you who know me, you could probably guess that I'm a "cup half full" kind of gal. Optimism comes easy to me. I'm always searching for the silver lining in the cloud. Sometimes I wonder if I am leading a charmed life, or is it just that I always view my life as a cup that runneth over with God's graces. I guess I've always subscribed to the belief that there's always someone out there that is worse-off, so I should be thankful for what I've got.

Positive thinking can get a person so far when it comes to "filling the cup", but then I'm going to go one step further and say that faith in God is what causes the cup to runneth over. Let me tell you of an experience in my life that drives this message home. Many of you remember that my family experienced a tragic total loss house fire in 2004. My husband, children and I escaped our burning house in the wee hours of the morning with only the pajamas on our backs and watched helplessly from our neighbor's living room window as firefighters tried to get the blaze under control. Interestingly, instead of feeling hopeless and afraid, I distinctly remember having a feeling of calm, steady assurance that we were in the palm of God's hand. I knew in that moment that I had to trust 100% that God would take care of us. And He did. I have never experienced such a time in my life when I have been so cared for. People reached out to us and raised us up so that we didn't want for anything. I was so in awe that total strangers would go out of their way to help us. Many people who lose all their possessions in a disaster find themselves consumed with feelings of devastation. In contrast, I felt wealthier than any other time in my life. I was filled up with people's generosity and caring and love. And by building our foundation on God's rock, it was easy to let all the material possessions just wash away and realize that we were still standing on solid ground.

I have a close friend that has had some difficult times recently with the health of her daughter. She was repeatedly given bad

news and after a while, her faith in God became shaky. She was angry and didn't understand why God hadn't answered her prayers. All along I've tried to encourage her to see her relationship with the Lord as one that helps her deal with the difficult times. I don't believe that God is there to always give us what we ask for or to pave all the roads in our lives so everything is smooth sailing. On the contrary, having a solid faith in God allows us to feel His comfort, His healing, His security that we *are* in the palm of his hand. Especially during sad, challenging, difficult, mournful times. Even when it would appear to the entire outside world that my cup may be empty, I could perceive that my cup runneth over.

I'll conclude by quoting Rick Warren, the author of Purpose Driven Life:

Life is a series of problems: either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into an other one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy. We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness.



Happy moments, PRAISE GOD.

Difficult moments, SEEK GOD.

Quiet moments, WORSHIP GOD.

Painful moments, TRUST GOD.

Every moment, THANK GOD.

God's Blessings on you today.



What's cookin' Pakachoag?

We are...and we need your recipes.

To share you recipes, log on to:

www.gandrpublishing.com

In the upper right hand corner of their home page enter:

Username: pakachoag

Password: church

or bring them to church and give them to Lynn or Cathy Blanchard.

Here's a peek at one of the recipes from our upcoming recipe book...

Pineapple Bake - submitted by Kathy Papineau

½ cup sugar
2 Tbsp flour
Pinch of salt
3 x large eggs
20 oz can crushed pineapple with juice
8 slices of bread (no crusts) cubed
3 Tbsp butter, cut into pieces

Combine all ingredients, pour into buttered dish. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve warm. Great with ham. ****Dish should be at least 8 inches square by 3 inches deep or 9"X13" ****

Living My Faith by Pat Blanchard

When I was a child, being true to my religion was fairly easy. There were rules to follow that mostly involved just not doing stuff, like lying, stealing and killing people. Honoring my parents was a bit tough at times, since I found it hard to not talk back, especially when I felt I was right, which was most of the time. In general, God and I were on pretty good terms back then. In fact, sometimes I had to make up sins to have something to confess on a Saturday morning. As I grew older, other rules came to my attention. Things like missing Mass on Sunday could send me to Hell, and according to my mom, giving birth out of wedlock was a non refundable ticket straight down. As a teenager, the rule against premarital sex was a bit tougher, and then, as a seventeen year old bride, the prohibition against birth control was a real test of faith.

Somewhere along the way, knowing how to keep my faith began to change. I realized that just not doing bad things wasn't enough. Now, I had to actually do things. I had to learn patience. I had to learn to put my family's welfare before my own wishes. I had to start reaching out and looking for ways to make life a little better for the people around me. I learned to give up prejudice I didn't even know I had, along with learning tolerance and humility. Life was so much easier when all I had to do was avoid lying, stealing and killing.

By far the hardest has been learning acceptance. The Lord's Prayer says "Thy will be done". Deceptively simple as long as God's will is what I want it to be. Not quite as easy when His plan involves lessons learned the hard way; grief and loss. Things we have all experienced in our lifetimes. This is when we realize that God is more than a Santa Claus figure who stands by, ready to fill our wish list. We learn not to ask why bad things happen, but to accept and go on.

I no longer believe an unwed mother is doomed to damnation, or that birth control is a sin. I gave up the religion of my youth years ago, but I haven't given up my faith in God. I've stopped trying to tell Him how to run my life. I believe that He is with me, at all times and is guiding me. I thank Him every day for my life and the blessings I have received. And on really bad days, I thank Him for helping me get through.