

# THE SPIRIT

The Monthly Newsletter of Totowa United Methodist Church

## FROM PASTOR'S DESK



**It's so good to be back home. My staying in California was both refreshing and relaxing. I'd like to thank Carol, Pam, Renee and Janice who shared some new ministry ideas and thoughts and all of you who helped the church running smoothly while I was away. Thanks!**

**When I was a teenager, my youth pastor helped me as I tried to deal with my friends, adolescence, school, and the rest of the world. I remember him saying that I now had as a teenager a lot more "freedom." He then went on to say there are two parts to freedom: A freedom "from" and a freedom "for."**

**We recall Jesus and His Lenten experience in the desert. He was ever so tempted. He rejected those temptations. Thus, he was free "from" the tyranny and domination of sin. He left the desert free "for" a new excellence-the work of re-creation and salvation.**

**During lent we ask God's grace to free us and to free our whole world "from" whatever negativity and evil domination. We ask God's grace to free us "for" all kinds of new excellencies-lives of wholeness and perfection.**

**As Christians we are part of God's great liberating work. We are freed, and we are part of liberating others. It's two-part process-again freedom from and freedom for. Freedom is a gift but also a responsibility.**

**Paul reminds us: "For you were called to freedom, brethren, so do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).**

**Let's use our freedom for loving service to one another.**

**Your Pastor, Andrew**

## CHURCH NEWS



### March Birthdays

- 7 – Pam Gass
- 10 – Donna Murray
- 13 – Janice Defaro
- 16 – Elizabeth Marchitti
- 23 – Chuck Willer
- 24 – Ruth McManamey

### From: Linda Hackett

We are starting to collect for Easter baskets. Please see below the items we can use. If you prefer, I would be more than happy to accept donations and shop for the items we need.

Pails, Baskets, Candy, Books  
Games, Stuffed Animals  
**also please no plastic eggs**

As always, they are giving to the military, battered women shelters, homeless shelters, orphans, etc.

Thank you all for your help.



### Lenten Bible Study

**Wednesdays March 4th – April 1st  
6:00 PM**

**Please join us for 5 weeks Bible Study at parsonage starting on Wed. Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>. Based on John Ortberg's book "Who Is This Man," we will discover the influence and challenge Jesus had on history, and on your life. This study will give us an opportunity to explore how Jesus' influence has swept over history bringing his inspiration to the fields of art, science, government, medicine, education, etc. And how his vision for us to lead lives of dignity, compassion, forgiveness and hope continues to inspire and challenge humanity today. Everyone is welcome!**

### Maundy Thursday:

**Dinner Church with  
Communion, Apr. 9<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM**

### Good Friday Service:

**Seven Words from The Cross,  
Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM**

## **CHURCH NEWS** (con't)

### **Our Flag**

The town of Totowa has asked us to replace the American flag outside of the church.

We are checking different places for pricing but we are asking for a small donation from each member of the congregation to help with the cost. If everyone can spare \$1 - \$2 dollars, it should cover pricing.

### **Lessons from a Church Mouse**

She is all of 7 ½ pounds. Her age is unknown. But what we do know is that she has an endless capacity for love, joy and acceptance. And I learn from Mouse every day.

This past Sunday, she took on her usual role as greeter. As usual, she happily greeted each person who entered the sanctuary. But this Sunday, I noticed something that I had not been aware of previously – her attitude. She positioned herself at the back of the sanctuary so that she could see down the hall and both of the side doors. She waited with great anticipation to see who was coming in next, and she waited with joy. It was as if she saw each person as a gift.

It occurred to me that this is the perfect attitude for a greeter or a church member – to see each person who enters the sanctuary as a special gift. Mouse does not care if someone is old or young, a visitor or a regular. She does not care about physical appearance. She does not care if someone is

jolly or grouchy, quiet or noisy. She simply loves.

I thought about the way I react to children compared to the way Mouse does. I confess, I am sometimes on the grumpy side. As a former Sunday School Coordinator and teacher, and as one who works in the educational system, I have done my time. Sometimes, I just want to come to church and not be interrupted by restless, crying, talking, sniffing, disruptive children. After all, when I was their age, I sat quietly by my father's side throughout the service. When I am in my curmudgeon persona, I hear these ancient words: "Children should be seen and not heard." It was good enough for my parents; it should be good enough for me!

And then, Mouse invades my thinking. "Are you crazy?" her wagging tail implores me. "That little creature is alive! She moves! She laughs! She cries! She is delightful!" I snap back to reality. That little creature is the future of the church! Mouse touches my conscience with the question and the challenge: "What would Jesus do?" And I know in my heart, Jesus would welcome the restless, crying, talking, sniffing, disruptive child with a smile and with open arms and an open heart.

This month, Rev. Paek will be baptizing one of those delightful, sniffing creatures. And we as a congregation will have a choice. We will respond with a curmudgeon's impatience, or with Mouse's love, unconditional acceptance and sheer joy?

--Carol Van Houten

## HYMN OF THE MONTH

### **"It Is Well with My Soul" The United Methodist Hymnal. No. 377**

"It Is Well with My Soul," written by Horatio Spafford and composed by Philip Bliss is possibly one of the most influential and enduring hymns of all times in Christian fellowships.

Stafford had been a successful lawyer and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago. This hymn was written after traumatic events in Spafford's life. The first two were the death of his two-year-old son and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which ruined him financially. His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873, at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the SS Ville du Havre. In a late change of plan, he sent his wife Anna and children ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a powerful, iron-hulled Scottish ship, the Loch Earn.

Suddenly, all of those on board were in grave danger. Anna hurriedly brought her four children to the deck. She knelt there with them, and prayed that God would spare them if that could be His will, or to make them willing to endure whatever awaited them. Within approximately 12 minutes, the Ville du Harve slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic, carrying with it 226 of the passengers including the four daughters, Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta.

A sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down, spotted a woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel which, nine days later,

landed them in Cardiff, Wales. From there she sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...." It bore the excruciating news that family's ship had wrecked and all four of his daughters had perished. Another of the ship's survivors, Pastor Weiss, later recalled Anna saying, "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these beautiful words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died as a testament to the salvation he found in Jesus through the good and bad times in life.

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

It's incredible to think such encouraging and uplifting words were born from the depths of such unimaginable sorrow. It's an example of truly inspiring faith and trust in the Lord. And it goes to show the power our God has to overcome even the darkest times of our earthly life.

A famous hymn composer, Philip Bliss (1838-1876), was so moved by Horatio's prose, that he composed a peaceful tune to accompany the words. The song was published by Bliss and Sankey, in 1876.

**“IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL”**

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well, with my soul

It is well  
With my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul  
It is well (it is well)

With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul  
It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

## *ST. PATRICKS'S DAY*

### *MARCH 17*

The following song is a favorite recorded by the Irish Rovers on their CD "The Best of the Irish Rovers". The words are meaningful and can pertain to anyone.

Let's take a look behind  
And see what we can find  
Last year has gone for everyone  
Passed with time

What happened to us then  
Can't happen once again  
And what's now all to me?  
History

Years may come (Many years are still ahead)  
Years may go (Many years have passed)  
Some go fast (They belong to yesterday)  
Some go slow (Still the memories last)  
Some are good (Couldn't stop the laughter  
flowing)  
Some are bad (Couldn't stop the tears)

For each one (Thank the Lord that we have  
been)  
Just be glad (Together through the years)  
Whenever I review  
The lovin' times with you

I wouldn't change a single page  
We've lived through  
It wasn't always smooth  
Sometimes we'd jump the groove

We've shed some tears and then  
Loved again

Years may come (Many years are still ahead)  
Years may go (Many years have passed)

Some go fast (They belong to yesterday)  
Some go slow (Still the memories last)  
Some are good (Couldn't stop the laughter  
flowing)  
Some are bad (Couldn't stop the tears)

For each one (Thank the Lord that we have  
been)  
Just be glad (Together through the years)  
Heartaches I don't doubt  
Life's sure to dish us out

We'll beat the lot and that is what  
Life's all about  
Whatever may come true  
Ahead for me and you

Some day it all will be  
Memories  
Years may come (Many years are still ahead)  
Years may go (Many years have passed)  
Some go fast (They belong to yesterday)  
Some go slow (Still the memories last)  
Some are good (Couldn't stop the laughter  
flowing)  
Some are bad (Couldn't stop the tears)

For each one (Thank the Lord that we have  
been)  
Just be glad (Together through the years)

## DOUG'S VANTAGE POINT FOR MARCH 2020

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S STATUE

My soul there is a country, afar beyond  
the stars, where stands a winged  
sentry all skillful in the wars; There  
above noise and danger, sweet peace  
sits, crown'd with smiles, and one born  
in a manger commands the beauteous  
files.

He is thy gracious friend, and (O my  
soul awake!) Did in pure love descend,  
to die here for thy sake.

If thou cans't get but thither, there  
grows the flower of peace, the rose  
that cannot wither, thy fortress and thy  
ease. Leave then thy foolish ranges, for  
none can thee secure, but one who  
never changes, thy God, thy life, thy  
cure. "Peace by Henry Vaughn.

I copied this old poem out of an old  
book word for word, comma for  
comma. The punctuation may not be  
correct by our modern standards, but  
the meaning is clear. Too often it  
seems to me that we like to interpret  
the old stories from the Bible from our  
modern perspective or worse to  
interpret them to support our own  
agenda.

The banner of this newsletter says  
"Opinion Column" but I think it is  
more of an exploration or search for  
truth.

There is an old story in the Bible from  
the Book of Daniel and his three  
friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and  
Azariah. Their names were changed as  
was the custom for captives to  
Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Mesach, and  
Abednego. This is an old Sunday  
School story that we all know, how the  
king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a  
giant statue. Its' head was gold, chest  
and arms of silver, torso of bronze,  
legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with  
clay. (I actually did a children's sermon  
once long ago where I wore big yellow  
boots to represent the feet of clay.)  
Finally, a stone came down and  
destroyed the statue, and filled the  
whole earth,

All the wizards of Babylon were  
summoned but none could tell what  
the dream was, and the king refused to  
tell them. He was going to have them  
all killed but Daniel and his friends  
prayed to God. Finally, Daniel asked  
the chief of the king's guard for a  
chance to explain the dream.

Daniel was able to not only describe the dream but interpret its' meaning. The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar himself and the kingdom of Babylon. The other kingdoms of silver, bronze, and iron were inferior. The silver is thought by scholars to represent Persia, Daniel did predict the fall of Babylon to the Persians in a later chapter.

Bronze is thought to represent the bronze armor of the Greeks, while iron represented the iron will of the Romans. The different metals and body parts also had symbolic meaning to the ancient peoples. Gold was symbolic of virtue and change, also as Nebuchadnezzar had the power of life and death over Daniel and his friends, God in his wisdom allowed him to be supreme. The arms of silver represented the unification of the two arms of the Persian Empire. Silver also represented truth, Bronze was judgement. Iron may have represented bondage as it is mentioned in the Bible because of the fire and labor to produce it.

The feet of Iron mixed with clay represents a divided kingdom (One interpreter states that the clay is God's people as in "Thou art the potter, we are the clay" but that is not Daniel's interpretation.

The meaning of the Rock is that all kingdoms of men will fall but the kingdom of God will endure "Upon this rock I will build my church"!

The meaning of this to me is that unless we follow God's kingdom, our earthly kingdoms will fall as the statue fell. Presently our country is divided like the feet of clay. Friends are fighting each other over politics. I cannot say who is right and wrong. I can only say that we have the power to change. As Karl Schurz once said "My country right or wrong, when wrong to be made right, when right to be kept right"!



## A MATTER OF HOPE

***Civil rights icon Rosa Parks was born on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, she became what many described as "the mother of the civil rights movement," when she refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus. Her courageous action and resistance inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a seminal event for the cause of freedom.***

***Parks remained a civil rights activist for the rest of her life. Here are her inspiring words:***

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear."

"Each person must live their life as a model for others."

"I would like to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free...so other people would also be free."

"People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

"Memories of our lives, of our works and deeds will continue in others."

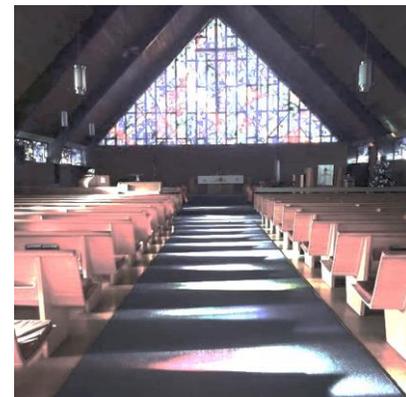
"The only way for prejudiced people to change is for them to decide for themselves that all human beings should be treated fairly. We can't force them to think that way."

"Whatever my individual desires were to be free, I was not alone. There were many others who felt the same way."

"As far back as I can remember, I knew there was something wrong with our way of life when people could be mistreated because of the color of their skin."

"Racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome."

Taken from Guideposts.org



**THE SPIRIT**

*Newsletter Editor*            **Renee Vetter**  
*Administrative Support*    **Maureen Grant**  
*Opinion Column*            **Doug Dunlop**

Please send your contributions for the APRIL issue of The Spirit by March 20, 2020 to the editor at [reneevl@verizon.net](mailto:reneevl@verizon.net). Consider events, news, stories, poems, recipes, or photos

TOTOWA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WORSHIP  
SUNDAY 10AM

105 CHURCH ST. TOTOWA NJ 07512

PH. 973-790-5961

[TOTOWAUMC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TOTOWAUMC@GMAIL.COM)

[WWW.TOTOWAUMC.ORG](http://WWW.TOTOWAUMC.ORG)