From the Pastor…

“He descended into hell.” It is by far the most controversial line in the Apostles’ Creed. I remember how strange it sounded when I first started attending a Presbyterian Church. We never said it in the church where I grew up. After becoming a Presbyterian, I remember later checking out a hymnal in that old home church and noting that that this questionable line was not included in the Creed itself but was footnoted at the bottom of the page (And I have wondered at times whether it is not best to leave it there.).

So what does it mean? When we want to know the meaning of a document, or any part of it, we always need to look for “original intent.” We do not start by asking, “What does it mean to me?” Or even, “What does it mean to certain scholarly folkn?” We should strive to know what it meant to the person(s) who wrote it. Therein lies a huge problem. Not only do we not know who wrote the Apostles Creed (We do know it was not the apostles.), we do not even know precisely it was written. Furthermore, this controversial clause was apparently a late insertion to the Creed. Therefore, we have no record of the writers’ deliberations, commentary, scripture proofs, nothing. The best we can do is engage in “sanctified speculation.”

And there has been “speculation” good and bad. I will only mention the two views which seem most worthy of our consideration. First, there is the view that Jesus’ descent into hell refers the spiritual agony Jesus endured on the cross as his Father turned away from him and the wrath of God was poured out upon him. This was the view held by John Calvin and is the view asserted in the Heidelberg Catechism in question #44: “Why does the creed add, ‘He descended to hell?’ To assure me in times of personal crisis and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.”

The scriptures certainly testify that Christ endured “unspeakable anguish” on the cross and that his suffering was intended to deliver believers from the torment of hell. Furthermore, the case can be made that the writers of the Creed had Jesus’ anguish on the cross in mind with the words “He descended into hell.”

That said, there is another view more worthy still of our consideration. It is the view articulated in our own Westminster Larger Catechism question #50, which reads: “Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death? Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.” It short, the catechism is affirming, the fact that Jesus really and truly died. He died to the point of the separation of body and spirit. The Creed has just stated that Jesus “suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and buried.” Now this clause “He descended into hell” is added as a sort of punctuation mark to underline the fact that Jesus really and truly died on the cross. It appears the clause was added to refute any who questioned whether it was really Jesus who died on the cross, as well as those who might have acknowledged it was Jesus on the cross but denied that he truly died. The Creed is then saying, “Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, Israel’s Messiah and the Son of God, did really and truly and fully die on the cross.”

So why does it matter? In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 the apostle Paul states, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, …” (ESV). It matters because Jesus had to really and truly die as the second Adam in order to secure our forgiveness. Furthermore, we find confidence that just as Jesus truly died and later rose in victory over death, so will all truly dead Christians rise again. In other words by his descent into hell Jesus removed the “sting of death” for believers. Thanks be to God.

Grace & Peace,, Pastor Layton
Circle II met on February 24th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall for their continued study of Paul’s letter to the Philippians entitled Perseverance in the Faith. This lesson was based on Philippians: 3:12-21, where Paul states his desires to “gain Christ,” to be “found in Him,” to know “the power of His resurrection,” and even to become “like Him in His death.” He wants his life to be devoted totally to the glory of Christ. All Christians are blessed by having before them the supreme example of the life of Christ. Christlikeness is the high goal that is set before us.”

Plans were made for our upcoming Salad Supper on March 31st. Plans are also being made for the upcoming Easter Egg/Scavenger Hunt to be held on April 4th – be on the lookout for coming details in our church bulletin. We continue to minister to our college students, shut-ins & missionaries.

Our next regular meeting will be our Salad Supper on March 31st in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 pm. Any lady not currently involved in Circle, we would love to have you join us for this delicious meal and the fellowship.  

Patricia McCormick, Secretary

Circle III met Tuesday, February 3rd at 1:00 PM with 7 members present. There was only a business meeting since the project was to pack Valentine bags for the shut-ins, military, and college students. Twenty-three bags were packed.

The project for March is to bring cards and stamps for the card ministry. Encouragement and sympathy cards are needed most. Susan DeWitt will lead the lesson, Rejoicing in Forgiveness, Psalm 32. Please join us!

Jan Stivers, Secretary

WIC Update

The first Bible study led by Lorraine Buracker was held on February 7th with 15 ladies attending. The study will continue for several months, and all ladies are invited to attend and encouraged to bring friends. The next one is Saturday, March 21st at 10:00 AM. We hope you will join us!

Several ladies will be traveling to Advance, NC on Saturday, March 7th, 9 AM—4 PM for a one day conference titled Unspeakable Joy. The fee is being paid for by our church and if you would like to attend, please contact me. We will meet at the church to carpool. loriclark@carolina.rr.com or 895-9602.

Mark your calendars now for our upcoming Spring Fling for ladies on Saturday, April 18th. More information will be in the bulletin and next newsletter.

Lori Clark, President

Choir Notes 🎵 Easter is almost upon us and as we being to make preparations may our hearts be fully receptive and remain steadfast in our observance of this sacred time of year. As believers, we accept the teachings of scripture, believing Jesus is our only hope and salvation, yet it is conducive for many who are undecided, to follow the suggestive ideas of secularism. Thus, Easter has no meaning, only serving as commercialized gain to the worldly. Sadly, they have little hope for salvation. “Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31). In living a Christian life, one must remain faithful to the biblical teachings of Jesus, placing their emphasis on the sovereignty of Easter, and refraining from following the ideals of humanism and worldly customs.

The choir remains receptive to our Lord’s guidance with hope and faith as we prepare for the annual Easter Cantata, one of the highlights of the year in our church. The theme, “The Day He Wore My Crown,” is certainly what our Savior did when He suffered and died for our sins, in order that we might have eternal life. We are so unworthy yet He loved us that much. What an amazing story on love and grace!

The choir is honored and looks forward to presenting this beautiful story during Easter.

In Divine Hope, Billy Carter

Vacation Bible School

The Session is looking for a volunteer to be a Vacation Bible School Director. Any church member who is interested should speak to Pastor Layton or one of the Session members as soon as possible.
Happy Birthday
March


Nursery Calendar
1  Barbara & Jase Wagers
8  Joleen Moore & Amanda Cloninger
15 Kristi & Alex Wagers
22 Lori Clark
29 Barbara & Jase Wagers

Greeters
1  M/M Tim Clark & Family
8  Mr. Bill Black
15 Mr. Timm Dazey & Family
22 M/M Chris Meacham
29 M/M Richard Smith & Family

Flower Calendar
1  Doris Hill
8  Barbara Ingram & Kim Parsons
15 Sami Poore
22 Barbara Wagers
29 Jane Smith & Victoria Smith

Children’s Corner
The youth group in our church hosted the annual Sr. Citizen and Grandparents Valentine Luncheon Sunday, February 15th in the Fellowship Hall. Despite the severe wind and cold, at least 70 people attended this special event, which followed the morning worship service. A time of warmth, fellowship, entertainment, and meal was enjoyed by all in attendance, including many visitors. One can see the results, by the hard work and dedication put forth by our youth, who, under the guidance of faithful leaders, are inspired and encouraged in doing their best in whatever their task may be.

Activities, happenings, and grade reports at various schools involving our young people is as follows:


Emma Russell, Kayla Hawkins, and Carley Lambeth attended the annual Beta Club convention in Greensboro February 8-9. Each of them competed in various crafts and handicraft and did well in competition, contending against over one hundred other schools. Also, the Rockingham Middle School Chorus has been invited to compete in “Festival of Disney” to be held in Disney World during the week of Easter. More on this in the next edition.

Mineral Springs School: A/B Honor Roll (1st week grading period): Jamie K Sears and Makayla Webb


Temple Christian School: A/B Honor Roll: Ava Berry

The youth have begun rehearsal for the annual Easter play. This program has always been one of the highlights of the year on our young people’s calendar and this year’s event promises to be no exception.

Our youth and youth leaders are truly appreciated for their hard work and dedication to our youth programs. Not only are they committed to our youth and our church, but most of all to our Lord who is pleased by their efforts.

In Faithful Service, Billy Carter

February
Sunday
School Statistics

Average Attendance: 33
Average Offering: $28.00
Youth Schedule
The youth will meet at 5:30 PM on Sunday evenings. The Session has agreed to pay all trip fees in full for youth in the church and those actively participating in Youth Group.

Youth Refreshments & Youth Schedule
You are invited to provide refreshments for the youth and see them in action. There are 16 youth actively involved, with the average attendance being 12. There is a sign-up sheet on the youth bulletin board in the old fellowship hall. Refreshments are served at approximately 6:45 PM on Sunday evenings.

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<td>6:00 PM Dinner, Prayer &amp; Bible Study</td>
<td>7:00 PM Deacon’s Meeting</td>
<td>9 AM—4 PM Unspeakable Joy conference for ladies in Advance, NC. Contact Lori Clark if interested</td>
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Ladies—Mark your calendar now for Saturday, April 18, Spring Fling in the Fellowship Hall. More information will be in the bulletin and next newsletter.