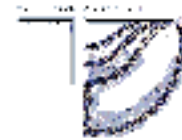


News from the Brick

Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren
5352 N. Brick Church Road
Hagerstown, IN 47346

Established 1820



Carol M. Pfeiffer, Pastor
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Jodi Johnson, Secretary
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

**April
2006**

***Continuing the Work of Jesus.
Peacefully. Simply. Together.***

Carol's Comments

"Easter Focus"

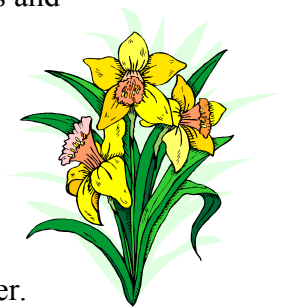
***For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23
Yet all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
John 1:12***

For every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13

What I remember about Easter as a little girl is the Sunrise Service. The service was held at a different church every year. It was very early I recall...like 6:00 or 6:30 a.m. The sun was just barely beginning to rise. I remember one particular Easter sitting in the little country church and looking out the window as the sun came up and thinking how beautiful it was. I remember yellow daffodils. Most likely I had a new Easter dress and shoes as was the tradition of many families to wear new clothes on Easter Sunday. I remember talk of the empty tomb and the words, "He is Risen." I remember the hymns: "Low in the Grave He Lay" and "He Lives."

Back then I don't think I probably really understood the significance of Easter as I do today. I don't think I even recollect any particular sermons. But I remember the joy of Easter and the beauty of the sunrise announcing the newness of life. Of course, as a child, I loved coloring the hard-boiled eggs and hunting for them on Easter day. I enjoyed the Easter basket of goodies that was left by the Easter Bunny on Easter morning filled with chocolate covered eggs, Reese's peanut cream eggs, and jelly beans. That's where my focus was back so many, many years ago...more on the goodies and new clothes than on Jesus.

But Easters for me now are not about colored eggs, chocolate candy, and jelly beans. I don't wear a brand-new dress or shoes. My focus has changed. I've grown up. (I hope). ☺ I think more about the meaning of Easter than I do about sweets and Easter bunnies. I think more about the Christ who was crucified on Friday and rose three days later.



Where is your focus on Easter morning? Is it on the guests that will be coming for dinner or the preparations for the meal? Or is it on the Risen Lord? Think about that first Easter morning. The disciples raced to the tomb and peered in and found it empty after it had been reported to them by the women that Jesus' body was gone. The impact of the moment must have been powerful for them as they gazed inside the crypt. Did someone steal the body? What happened? Where is he? And then there was the weeping Mary, who encountered Jesus in the garden and thought he was the gardener until she heard him speak her name, "Mary." Her focused changed from grief to joy in the blink of an eye.

Ponder the emotions when Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples as they hovered behind those closed doors for fear of the Jews. It was only as he spoke, "Peace be with you" that they realized he was risen indeed. He told them he would rise on the third day, and now there he is standing before them with the scars of the crucifixion on his body as proof. Their focus changed from fear and grief to joy also. Jesus still had much to teach them before he ascended into heaven. They still had much to understand. They still had growing to do. *He told them, 'This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and*