

# *The Master's Message*

## *The Newsletter of the Church of the Master*

### *April, 2024*

*Virtual Adult Bible Study*  
*Wednesday, 7:00 PM*  
*Saturday, 12:00*

*2783 Lafayette Avenue*  
*Bronx, N.Y. 10465*  
*718-597-6298*

*Sunday Worship*  
*Sunday 11:00 am*

*[cotm47@verizon.net](mailto:cotm47@verizon.net)*

*[WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG](http://WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG)*

*Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor*



### *Friends*

To offer trust in times of need,  
To see misfortune through,  
To feel the pain when you are cut  
Because they bleed some too.  
To make no judgment heedlessly,  
To defend from idle talk,  
To know that only you can wear  
The shoes in which you walk.  
To share a tear in sadness,  
To be first with a hand,  
To be forgiving of mistakes  
Because they understand.

To only be a call away,  
To hear you laugh or cry,  
To make your living better  
And mourn you when you die.  
There is no greater tribute  
To which one can ascend  
Than to earn the simple title –  
The one that's called a friend.

C. David Hay



## SPECIAL DATES\*

- Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

## \*News From the Pews\*



Continue praying for:  
Ellen McCullough,  
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,  
Loretta Byrd, Alice & Alex Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual "**Hour of Prayer Power**" every Friday at 7:00 PM. The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860, code: 371231#

Our **Online Bible Study** meets  
Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00.  
Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273)  
for information on joining



## After Easter

*After* is every Christian's middle name. In his autobiography *A Song of Ascents*, missionary E. Stanley Jones tells of an African man who changed his name to After immediately following his conversion. Because all things were new and different and important after he met Christ, the man wanted to reflect that new reality in his name as well as in his thinking.

Easter is what makes us After Christians. After Easter, nothing in life is ever the same again.

- "When you talk, choose the very same words that you would use if Jesus were looking over your shoulder. Because he is."

—Marie T. Freeman

## \*CHURCH CHUCKLES\*

Sammy asked his mother if he could fill his little plastic pool with water, and since it was such a nice day, she agreed. Looking out the kitchen window, Sammy's mother was amused to see him lift the family's dog into the pool, then watched as he quickly dunked the dog's head and let it out a moment later. Next, he went and got the family's pet rabbit out of its hutch and did the same thing. Sammy's mother was getting curious, although it was obvious he wasn't harming his pets. She went back to her chores until Sammy came running into the house.

"Mommy, can you please help me? The cat doesn't want to be baptized."

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear God,

I think you'd be proud of me! So far today I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, lusted, lost my temper, or been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that.

In a few minutes, though, I'm going to get out of bed. From then on I'm probably going to need a lot of help.

Amen.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Every evening I turn my worries over to God. He's going to be up all night anyway."

Mary C. Crowley



## Why me?

When our puppy developed hip dysplasia requiring surgery, I asked, "Why him? Why me?" Finding no satisfying answer, I proceeded to feel sorry for Mocha and myself — sorry for his pain and suffering and for the financial sacrifice we'd have to make to help him.

So I was surprised to observe that Mocha didn't share my dismay. He hopped along happily on three legs without complaint. Neither did the surgery dampen his spirits. Never mind the six-inch scar or the cone around his collar. The ordeal made no noticeable impact on his determination to enjoy life.

I reasoned, "That's because he doesn't have the capacity to ask why bad things happen to good dogs." But then a thought occurred: Perhaps if God revealed the answers, our human minds wouldn't have the capacity to understand. So maybe Mocha had the right idea. Maybe it's better not to waste time wondering why and just be thankful instead for what we have.

—Kari Myers

When Forest Gump died, he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "Welcome, Forest. We've heard a lot about you." He continued, "Unfortunately, it's getting pretty crowded up here and we find that we now have to give people an entrance examination before we let them in."

"Okay," said Forest. "I hope it's not too hard. I've already been through a test. My momma used to say, 'Life is like a final exam. It's hard'". "Yes, Forest, I know. But this test is only three questions. Here they are:

1) Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?"

2) How many seconds are in a year?

3) What is God's first name?

"Well, sir," said Forest, "the first one is easy. Which two days begin with the letter 'T'? Today and Tomorrow." St. Peter looked surprised and said, "Well, that wasn't the answer I was looking for, but you have a point. I give you credit for that answer.

"The next question," said Forest, "How many seconds are in a year? "Twelve." "Twelve?" said St. Peter, surprised and confused. "Yes sir. January 2<sup>nd</sup>, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>..." St. Peter interrupted him. "I see what you mean. I'll have to give you credit for that one, too."

"And the last question," said Forest, "What is God's first name? It's Andy." "Andy?" said St. Peter, in shock. "How did you come up with 'Andy'?"

"I learned it in church. We used to sing about it." Forest broke into song, "Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am His own."

St. Peter opened the gate to heaven and said, "Run, Forest, Run!"



## Voice recognition

I was preaching on the fourth Sunday of Easter, when many churches hear the gospel about Jesus as the Good Shepherd. I explained how Middle Eastern shepherds, of old and today, call their sheep from a commingled flock; across the hillside in various tones is heard: "Manah! Manah!" — Arabic for "Follow me!"

I imitated this call throughout my sermon, pointing out that Jesus also calls us in a distinct voice. Suddenly, from the back of the sanctuary, my 16-month-old son unexpectedly helped make my point. He answered my fourth or fifth "Manah!" with his own little "Manah!" and the congregation — and preacher — burst into laughter.

My son recognized his mommy's voice from the pulpit, and I, without a doubt, knew the response came from *my* child, not another. Likewise, Jesus knows us individually. We learn his voice by listening to it daily, and there is true delight each time Shepherd and sheep come together.

—Heidi Mann





THOUGHTS  
FROM  
THE PASTOR



“April showers bring May flowers” is the old adage we learned in primary school to highlight the special characteristics of the various seasons. But the innocence with which we recited and sang this adage is long past. Instead, we see showers turning into atmospheric rivers according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (“NOAA”).

“Atmospheric rivers are relatively long, narrow regions in the atmosphere—like rivers in the sky—that transport most of the water vapor outside of the tropics. While atmospheric rivers can vary greatly in size and strength, the average atmospheric river carries an amount of water vapor roughly equivalent to the average flow of water at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Exceptionally strong atmospheric rivers can transport up to 15 times that amount. When the atmospheric rivers make landfall, they often release this water vapor in the form of rain or snow” (<https://www.noaa.gov>).

Whatever one’s beliefs are about the validity of climate change, clearly something dramatic is changing in the severity of rainstorms, tornadoes, droughts, wildfires, and other weather events in our environment and around the world. When I think of the challenges facing our generation and generations to come with regard to being good stewards of the earth and the environment, I am reminded of a branch of theology known as ecotheology.

“Ecotheology” explores the interaction between ecological values, such as sustainability, and the human domination of nature. The [recent 20<sup>th</sup> century] movement has produced numerous religious-environmental projects around the world” (See Wikipedia).

Moreover, I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist that tells us,

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods” (Psalm 24:1-2).

From the beginning of creation, God gave Adam and Eve, and by extension humanity, dominion over the earth and all that is within it. But, we have not always been good stewards of God’s blessed and beautiful creation. We have too often taken for granted God’s creation and nature.

As we move into the month of April, I cannot help but reflect on the showers that God sends upon the earth, and the fact that He sends the sunshine and rain upon the good as well as the evil. I can envision God sending down showers of blessings upon believers and by extension unbelievers. This reminds us of God's goodness. His grace and mercy are embodied in the beautiful hymn "Even Me" which lyrics are,

Lord I hear of showers of blessings  
Thou are scattering full and free  
Showers the thirsty souls refreshing  
Let some drops now fall on me

Even me Lord  
Even me  
Even me Lord  
Even me

Even though we are not worthy or deserving of God's grace and mercy. He sent his only Begotten Son into the world that the world through Christ Jesus might be saved! As I reflect on the Word of God and the words of the hymn, how blessed we are that God sends showers of blessings down from above upon each one of us individually and upon humanity collectively. May we endeavor to be good stewards of the creation that God has blessed us with and given us dominion over to sustain us and future generations.

As many of you know, in addition to my calling to pulpit ministry, I have been employed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 2 ("EPA") as an Assistant Regional Counsel for nearly 35 years. In my work at EPA, we have reached to our Indian nations within New York State and the State of New Jersey. The Indian nations have often admonished the EPA that we must clean the environment, not merely down to our science-based actionable levels, but rather down to seven generations. Because these indigenous peoples live off the land and the land sustains their way of life, they realize what they do today within their lands will impact generations for years to come. I pray that we will see our outreach ministry and work for the

Lord to include being good stewards of this beautiful creation God has graced us with and that He will continue to shower down His blessings upon our generation and generations to come who will serve the Lord Jesus! Let us pray that the April showers will indeed bring May flowers!

Shalom to you now,

*Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden*

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Church of the Master



### Suffer no fools

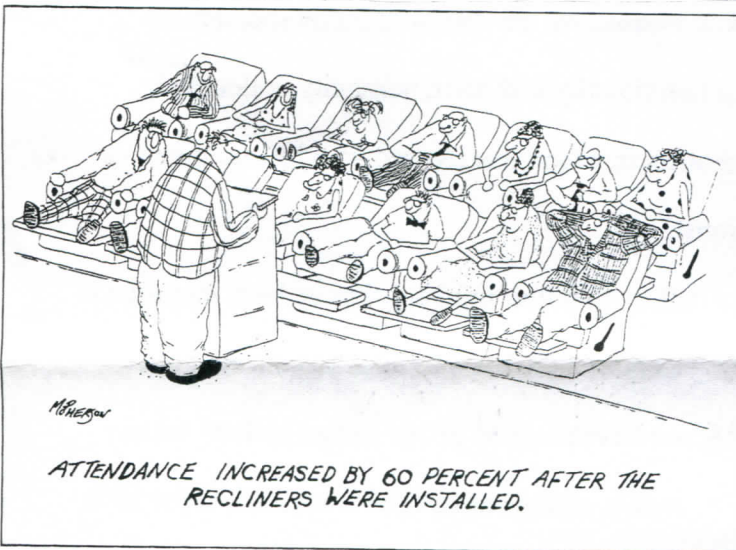
Sometimes-controversial preacher Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) once received a letter containing two words: "April Fool."

Immediately, Beecher wrote to a New York newspaper, describing the missive. "I have received many a letter where a man forgot to sign his name," he wrote. "This is the first time I ever knew of a writer signing his name and forgetting to write a letter."



**Earth Day**

Be a good steward of God's creation



ATTENDANCE INCREASED BY 60 PERCENT AFTER THE RECLINERS WERE INSTALLED.

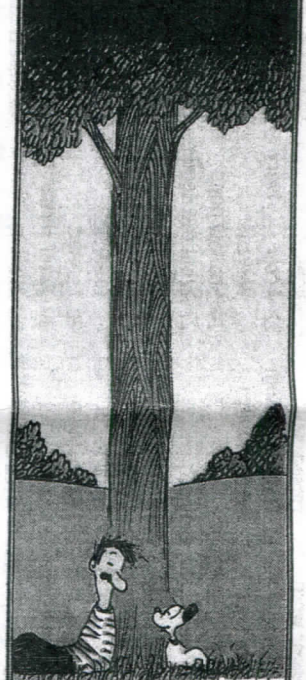
- "Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."  
—Martin Luther
- "In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."  
—Mark Twain



### Mutts

To reconnect with nature is key if we want to save the planet.

Jane Goodall



HAPPY EARTH DAY!