

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

July/August, 2023

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

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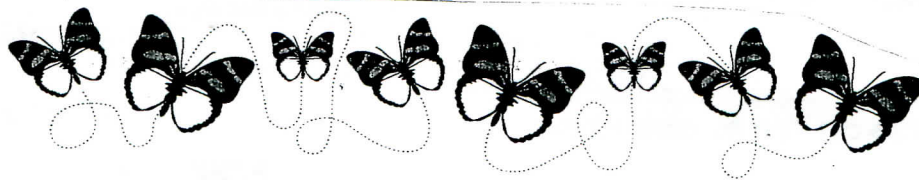
Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor



One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his older deacons to lead in the opening prayer. The deacon stood up, bowed his head and said, "Lord, I hate buttermilk."

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The deacon continued, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was totally perplexed. The deacon continued, "Lord, I ain't too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits."

"Lord, help us realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what You are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen."



*If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God,
then we will be a nation gone under."*

—Ronald Reagan

SPECIAL DATES*

- Independence Day, July 4th

News From the Pews



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

CONGRATULATIONS and our Best Wishes



to:

Laura Rivera Thiebaud who earned a Master's Degree in Administration. This is Laura's 2nd Masters degree.

Summer Worship Schedule

Beginning Sunday, July 2nd, our worship service will begin at 10:00 AM and will continue through Sunday, September 3rd. We will return to 11:00 worship on Sunday, September 10th.

A lesson from chickens

I have often noticed that when chickens quit quarreling over their food, they often find that there is enough for all of them. I wonder if it might not be the same with the human race.

—Don Marquis

CHURCH CHUCKLES

Louie was shipwrecked and lived alone on a desert island for years until he was finally rescued. Before leaving the island, he gave the rescue party a tour. "I built myself a house. That's it there. Here's the barn and over here is the church I worshipped in".

"What's that building over there?" one of them asked. Louie sneered. "That's the church I used to belong to."

The pastor asked his flock, "What would you like people to say when you're in your casket?"

One congregant says, "I'd like them to say I was a fine family man." Another says, "I'd like them to say I helped people." The third responds, "I'd like them to say, 'Look! I think he's moving!'"

Giving a sermon one Sunday, I heard two teenage girls in the back giggling and disturbing people. I interrupted my sermon and announced sternly, "There are two of you here who have not heard a word I've said." That quieted them down.

When the service was over, I went to greet people at the front door. Three adults apologized for going to sleep in church, promising it would never happen again.

Independence overrated

It might have been humorous, if it hadn't hurt so much. One moment I was on my front porch. The next I was lying flat on my side, wedged between a bush and the house. In a split second, my 13-pound puppy had taken off after a bird, yanking me off my feet.

All it took was one ill-timed moment of distraction to transform me from a strong, reasonably healthy adult to a helpless, badly bruised victim of misfortune. Unable to move, I was pondering my dilemma when a strong hand reached down. My neighbor had rushed to my aid. Embarrassed but grateful, I accepted his help.

I'm not as independent or self-sufficient as I'd like to think I am. We were created to need and be needed. That isn't a bad thing.

—Kari Myers (adapted from *HomeTouch*)



"God has given us two hands: one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing."

—Billy Graham

Raise Your Glass

An alternative to carbonated soft drinks and a good source of antioxidants, iced tea is delicious plain or can be customized with a squeeze of lemon, a handful of other fruits, like raspberries, strawberries or blueberries; or the addition of herbs, like mint, thyme or basil.

Brewed, unsweetened black iced tea has just 2 calories and less than a gram of carbohydrates in an 8-ounce serving.

So, stay cool and drink up!



Don't forget God

Robert Brault said, "A vacation trip is one-third pleasure, fondly remembered, and two-thirds aggravation, entirely forgotten."

Much of the hassle involved with getting away comes from packing. What do we need? How can we save space? Where are the items we haven't used since the last vacation?

Inevitably, we forget something — sunscreen, umbrella, diapers. Vacationers miss these items almost immediately and quickly replace them. Do we also often "forget" the Bible at home? Do we leave our prayer and worship routines behind? Do we take a vacation from our faith?

We may not notice those missing "items" as quickly, but they're crucial nonetheless. God never schedules a getaway from us. This summer, take a vacation with God, not from God.

- "I was not born to be free: I was born to adore and to obey."
—C.S. Lewis

Summer — time to stand and stare

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

—"Leisure," W.H. Davies

Taking the long way

It's human nature to look for shortcuts. We want the quickest, surest route to our destination. Delays, detours and dead ends are frustrating and discouraging.

Consider this: "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea" (Exodus 13:17-18, NRSV). The Red Sea looked like a fatal wrong turn, but God was protecting the Israelites. He had a plan in place to lead them to the promised land.

When God seems to prefer delays and detours in your life, keep in mind that the long way just might be better.



TODAY'S INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE

"Though nobody can go back and make a new beginning...Anyone can start over and make a new ending."

-Chico Xavier

Sink or swim?



People's stories about learning to swim often sound like this: "My dad tossed me into the water. I didn't have a choice — I flailed around until I found myself swimming!"

But an elderly Christian tells a variation of this story: "Wanting to teach me to swim, my father threw me off the dock into the lake. I sank." But then he goes on: "So my father jumped in with me."

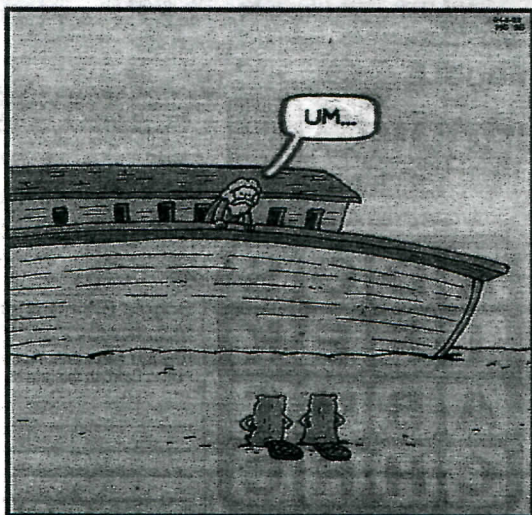
The storyteller's wisdom shines in his application: "God doesn't toss us into life and leave us alone to sink or swim. By sending Jesus, God jumped right in with us to save us from death, hold us protectively and help us navigate life."

Spiritual insomnia

Studies show that most Americans don't get adequate sleep. Whether an overcrowded schedule or insomnia is to blame, the short- and long-term effects are alarming. It's tough to maintain a healthy mind and body when you're sleep-deprived.

Likewise, we require sufficient, regular quiet time with God to stay spiritually healthy. Even Jesus needed time alone with God. Luke 5:16 says Jesus withdrew to deserted places to pray. Think how much more we need to listen for God's voice and learn from his Word!

Between the Lines



Between the Lines © 2019 Max Garcia

Late bloomers

The pink crepe myrtle finally bloomed — two full months after every other tree of its kind in the area and just as the changing weather signaled the season's end. Between the rocky soil, too much shade and not enough water, the tree was doing the best it could under the circumstances.

Sound familiar? Like that tree, we're often " ... afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, NRSV). At times, everything seems to go against us. Nothing comes easily. Life is a struggle.

But in Christ, we are not undone. We can persevere. We can bloom, even under the harshest circumstances.



Vocation time

It's powerful to know that God is using you to accomplish amazing things. Summer can provide opportunity for such experiences. Call it a "vocation vacation"! (A vocation is something God calls you to do.)

If you're planning a family trip, for example, call ahead and offer to donate some time at a local homeless shelter or urban ministry. Ask for a short tour, as well. If you want to hike in the mountains, contact a Bible camp to see if they need volunteers.

Call a local YMCA, parks-and-recreation department or volunteer hotline to see where assistance is desired. Other possibilities include volunteering for programs that allow people with special needs or the elderly to enjoy outdoor activities.

You'll enjoy summertime fun (vacation) and the knowledge that God is working through you (vocation).



Don't Take
a Vacation
from Church



July and August bring long, hot summer days, fireworks, barbecues, picnics, school and family vacations. But, most of all, it brings us together to celebrate the one thing that makes us all proud to be an American, enjoying our hard fought and won freedoms. Each year, as our nation celebrates the Fourth of July or Independence Day, when the Colonies regarding themselves as thirteen newly independent sovereign states at war with and against British rule, at the Continental Congress, declared their independence with these words (Wikipedia):

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (Declaration of Independence - July 4, 1776).

These words from the preamble of the Declaration of Independence were written over 200 years ago, but they still resonate with Americans everywhere. However, for far too many people they are aspirational at best and unfulfilled at worse given the recent rise in lack of civility, partisan rancor, discrimination, senseless violence, terrorism and intolerance that threatens our freedom and way of life.

Another great American, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, gave an address in 1941 that is known as his famous “Four Freedoms” State of the Union Speech, when America was about to enter into World War II. “Roosevelt insisted that people in all nations of the world shared Americans’ entitlement to four freedoms: the *freedom of speech and expression*, the *freedom to worship God in his own way*, *freedom from want* and *freedom from fear*.” (History.com/this-day-in-history).

I contend that all of these freedoms can be summarized in the greatest freedom of all! In the Gospel of John, Jesus, the Great Liberator, said “if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36). He is not concerned with whether we are first, second or third generation Americans, or whether we are recent immigrants, or the sons and daughters of immigrants, or slaves. For, God has no respect of persons and we are one in Christ Jesus.

As we prepare to celebrate our nation’s Independence Day, let us remember to give thanks and praise to Jesus first and foremost for purchasing our freedom from sin by the shedding of his precious blood. Then, let us remember to thank God for all of our service men and women, and first responders who paid a dear price for our freedom—those who have given their lives fighting to protect our great nation. May God bless America the land of the free and the brave! Have a Happy and safe 4th of July!

Shalom to you,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor
Church of the Master

2023 National Prayer For America¹

We come with fervent hearts to praise You Lord.

You are The Word, the Way, Truth and Life.

The Alpha and Omega, Lion of Judah, Almighty God

who was, and is, and is to come. You clothed

Yourself in flesh and dwelt among us, to remove

our sin and clothe us in Your righteousness that

we might dwell with You forever and ever.

With broken, humbled hearts we repent of our

sins. Confessing to You our faithlessness,

prayerlessness, and disobedience. Forgive us for

our doubt, our prideful and quarrelsome words

that reveal our unclean hearts. Cleanse us and

renew a right and steadfast spirit within us we

pray.

With grateful hearts we thank You fervently for

the blessings in our life and throughout

America; they are more than we are able to

¹ The National Day of Prayer is observed the first Thursday in May. However, we need not limit prayer for the United States of America, our nation and country to one particular month or day. Let us all pray that God continue to shed His Grace on Thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea ("America the Beautiful").

count. We will remember Your grace and testify
to Your goodness in all generations. Help us to
refrain from complaining, but instead be
prompted to pray faithfully in every
circumstance. Teach us to have a content heart
knowing You are always enough for our every
need.

As the Church we commit to pray and love our
neighbor and nation as You loved us, that our
reputation in this world would be rooted in Your
love. Holy Spirit work and overflow through us
in every prayer, thought, word, and deed. May
our character, conversations, and conduct
reflect the righteousness in which You clothed
us and command us to live.

With an obedient heart we put on the full armor
of God; Your breastplate of righteousness
guards our heart from which flows the springs of
life. We pray fervently for our communities and
country; the people who are in the Church,
Family, Education, Business and Workplace,

Military, Government, Arts, Entertainment and
Media. Every person is Your workmanship,
fearfully and wonderfully created and loved.

With hopeful hearts we pray that all would
choose to receive Your love and follow You. We
pray that America would confess, "Jesus is
Lord" and reflect Your righteousness in every
sphere of influence, and every aspect of our
lives. We ask that heavenly hope would flood
our hearts, silence hate, and that You will heal
our land.

Believing You; all You are, all You said, and all
You have promised, we pray fervently in
righteousness and avail much. In Jesus Name
we pray, Amen!

Kathy Branzell

President, National Day of Prayer Task Force