

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

May, 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

WWW.COTMBRONX>ORG

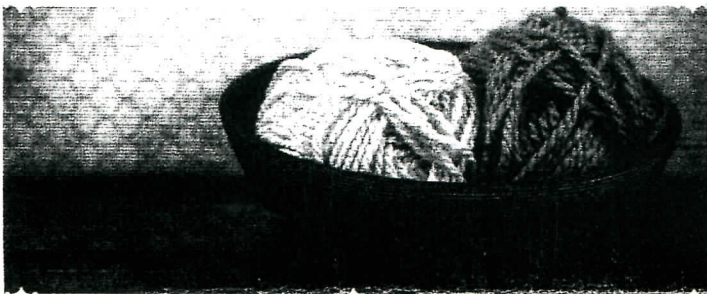
Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

Preciously Loved

The God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

It was simple in design. Five-inch yarn squares joined together to make a soft coverlet. My mother wove each square on a small loom that fit in her hands. Up and over. Down and through. Line by line, she added yarn until the little loom was filled. Then, after carefully removing the finished square, Mom began again.



When all of the yarn squares were completed, Mom placed them on the living room floor, arranging them in the way she thought looked best. Finally, she used variegated yarn to join the squares to make a small coverlet.

She called it her afghan, and it seems as if someone in the family used it every day! If we were feeling sick, mom covered us with the afghan until we recovered. Several family members could fit under the afghan's warm embrace while watching television. It even made a pretty

good imaginary "tent" when flung over a couple of dining room chairs.

Mom is in heaven now, and I'm not sure what happened to her afghan. I remember it, though, and how wonderful it felt to be wrapped up in it on a cold winter's day. Just thinking about the simply woven cover reminds me of mom's love, creativity, and care.

I'm reminded of the afghan, too, when I read today's Scripture verse. Mom's afghan serves as a simplified picture of God's love and peace—for me, and for you! First, God's love is intentional. He knows us intimately and because he knows us, he knows what we need. Because of our sin, we desperately need to be forgiven, to be reconciled with a holy God. And that's where love comes in.

Love drove Jesus to his cross, and victoriously up from the grave. Because of all Jesus did, our Father's love now surrounds us with healing, comfort, and peace. His love for us, his precious daughters, is unfailing. Constant. Reliable. Because God is love, his love for us never fails or fades. He continually loves us and, through Jesus, extends grace to us in every circumstance.



Dear Father, help me recognize your love and draw peaceful comfort from it as I live for you today. Enable me to share that love with others, especially when . . .



SPECIAL DATES*

- National Day of Prayer, May 4th
- Mother's Day, May 14th
- Ascension of the Lord, May 18th
- Armed Forces Day, May 20th
- Day of Pentecost, May 28th
- Memorial Day, May 29th

News From the Pews



Prayer Requests

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

"There is no way to be a perfect mother, and a million ways to be a good one." —Jill Churchill

"The art of mothering is to teach the art of living to children." —Elaine Heffner

- "If at first you don't succeed, try doing it the way mom told you to in the beginning."

—Unknown

Always with us

Forty days after Easter, we celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven. This occurred 10 days before Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' followers, as he had promised.

Jesus' ascension reminds Christians that although his body couldn't remain present everywhere, we can universally experience his spiritual presence. In fact, Jesus' final words to his disciples — and to us — contain this key promise: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, ESV).

CHURCH CHUCKLES

Before beginning the service, our pastor read aloud a note he'd been handed moments earlier. "It says here that I should announce that there will be no B.S. tomorrow morning," he said. He tucked the piece of paper into a pocket and added, "I'm hoping they mean 'Bible Study.'"

After pulling three double shifts in a row, my brother Billy, a hotel clerk, was worn out. On one of his few breaks, he went to the hotel restaurant to grab a bite. When his food came, Billy, his mind in a fog, bowed his head for the blessing and whispered these words to God: "Good evening, Holiday Inn, how can I help you?"

The topic for my ninth-grade class was palindromes, words or sentences that are the same read forward and backward. I asked the question "What is the first thing Adam said to Eve?" I was expecting the answer "Madam, I'm Adam," but one student had a better reply: "Wow."

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted. "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "And she turned into a telephone pole!"



A taste of God's love

In *Lost in Wonder, Love and Praise* (Abingdon Press), John Killinger describes a mother's love — and how it offers a tiny foretaste of God's love:

"It is stronger than steel, softer than down and more resilient than a green sapling on the hillside. It closes wounds, melts disappointments and enables the weakest child to stand tall and straight in the fields of adversity. I believe that this love, even at its best, is only a shadow of the love of God, a dark reflection of all that we can expect of him, both in this life and the next."

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:1-2

Mysterious ways

Before pursuing a career as a Christian singer, Ryan Stevenson was a paramedic, encountering trauma and “true brokenness.” When he received a 911 call about a woman struck by lightning, Stevenson didn’t think she’d survive. But thanks in part to his efforts, the woman made a full recovery — and later struck up a friendship with him.

One day the woman asked Stevenson, “If you could be doing anything with your life, what would it be?” His answer? Music. She gave him a check for \$2,000, and he used it to cut an EP, which led to a record deal. Through Stevenson’s chart-topping song “Eye of the Storm,” he wants to remind listeners that God “hasn’t forgotten about us. He’s still paying attention to us no matter how horrible things might seem. He’s in control.”

Blind faith

Eighteenth-century British evangelist George Whitefield once asked a coal miner what he believed.

“I believe what my church believes,” the man answered, respectfully and confidently.

“And what does your church believe?” Whitefield followed up.

“The same thing I believe,” the man said.

“And what do both of you believe?” the preacher asked again.

“We both believe the same thing,” the man assured Whitefield.

Belonging to a Christian church — and knowing exactly what it teaches — is vital but doesn’t guarantee salvation. That’s between each individual and God.

As Romans 10:9 (ESV) says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued a presidential proclamation officially establishing the first national Mother’s Day to celebrate America’s mothers.



Mom’s the word

Moms are amazing! Check out these facts gathered by the Pew Research Center:

85 million The estimated number of mothers in the U.S.

40% Households with mothers who are either the sole or primary source of income for the family.

26.7 years The median age at which women become mothers in the U.S.

79.5% The percentage of single parents in the U.S. who are mothers.

56.6% Labor force participation rate of all women with children under 18 years of age.

• “Faith is like wi-fi: It’s invisible, but it has the power to connect you to what you need.”

—Unknown

• “Your children will become what you are, so be what you want them to be.”

—David Bly

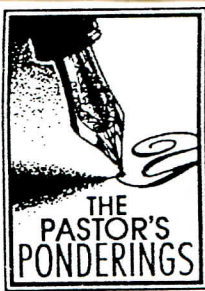




May

"When you take a flower in your hand
and really look at it, it's your
world for the moment. I want to give
that world to someone else."

—Georgia O'Keeffe



May Newsletter Article

"When May Day Becomes Mayday – Pray Day!"

According to history.com, "May Day is a May 1 celebration with a long and varied history, dating back millennia. Throughout the years, there have been many different events and festivities worldwide, most with the express purpose of welcoming in a change of season (spring in the Northern Hemisphere). In the 19th century, May Day took on a new meaning, as an international Workers' Day grew out of the 19th century labor movement for worker's rights and an eight-hour workday in the United States. May Day 2021 will be celebrated on Saturday, May 1, 2021" ([www.https://history.com](https://history.com). (Accessed on April 14, 2021)).

When I was a little girl all the children in my elementary school looked forward to making bright streamers and wrapping them around the maypole, singing songs and reciting poems at our assembly in celebration of spring and May Day! However, it is ironic that there is a homonym Mayday that sounds very much like May Day but has a completely different meaning. Whereas *May Day* is a happy, festive event we celebrate to mark the beginning of springtime and commemorate our labor movement. *Mayday* is a distress call. According to livemint.com e-paper, "Mayday is a distress call that is used to signal a life-threatening emergency, usually on a ship or a plane, although it may be used in a variety of other situations. A typical distress call will start with the word "Mayday" being said three times in a row so it is not mistaken for another similar-sounding word or phrase. This is followed by relaying the information that rescuers would need, including the nature of the emergency, the location or last know location, current weather, type and identity of craft involved, fuel remaining and the number of people in danger. The distress call has absolute priority over all other transmissions" ([www.https://livemint.com](https://livemint.com). (Accessed on April 14, 2021)).

After the year we have come through, who would have thought we would still be dealing with the Covid pandemic for an entire year or more. How we are longing for springtime and May Day as we used to know it! Despite the dark challenges we have endured all of last year and the isolation from quarantining and shut-downs, we can change our Mayday distress calls into May Day Pray-Day!

While, we are not yet ready to gather around the Maypole on May Day, God is hearing and answering our Mayday distress calls and prayers! As the old adage goes, "April showers bring May flowers!" This May God has brought us flowers of a different kind. We have been blessed to have three vaccines developed in record time to help protect Americans and other countries' citizens from the life-threatening Covid-19 virus. Loved ones who were afflicted are recovering! God is wiping our tears as we cope with life without our loved ones! Families are beginning to be able to gather in small numbers with other vaccinated members. Schools are beginning to reopen for certain grades. Clinical trials of the vaccines have begun to test their efficacy in children! Businesses are slowly beginning to reopen. Financial Assistance has been

legislated to help Americans and businesses hardest hit by the pandemic! Churches are beginning to reopen for in-person worship services! And God is blessing us to have increased attendance on remote or virtual worship services and Bible study!

As we look forward to ushering in May, let us also continue to send out Mayday calls and prayers to the Lord. But, now instead of distress calls, we can send out May Day prayers of thanksgiving for where the Lord has brought us from. He has brought us from a mighty long way! We still have a way to go to get to the end of the pandemic. But, we trust that the Lord Jesus will continue to be with us and keep us. Most of all, we look forward to celebrating May Day next year and rejoicing in the Lord for what He has done, what He is doing and what He is yet going to do. Happy May Day! Happy Spring!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden

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Pastor
Church of the Master

Ruth — a Pentecost story?

The disciples were celebrating Pentecost, originally a Jewish festival, when the Holy Spirit descended on them and birthed the church. Pentecost, which began as a harvest festival, had come to commemorate the giving of the law. The book of Ruth became integral to festival worship.

Why Ruth? This short story doesn't mention the law, let alone God giving it to Moses. Yet in Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law ("Where you go I will go Your people will be my people ..." [Ruth 1:16, NIV]), she fulfills not just the letter but the spirit of the law: lovingkindness — all the more remarkable because she's a foreigner. Boaz, too, demonstrates exorbitant kindness to Ruth.

As Christians celebrate the Spirit bridging differences in Jerusalem, uniting all nationalities by making the gospel message intelligible to all people, we too can remember Ruth's story. For in it, God unites two enemy peoples for his grand purpose: Boaz and Ruth's marriage leads to King David and, ultimately, to King Jesus. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to unite all categories of people under Christ's reign for the good of the world.

"Why don't streetlamps have ears?"

"Mom!" my 3-year-old self hissed at 6 a.m. "Why don't streetlamps have ears?" My mom later wrote (in a 1974 article) that she peered at me sleepily, silently asking a question of her own: "Seriously?!"

That year I amused — and exasperated — my parents with countless questions: "Why did sister leave one shoe here and one there?" "If God is up in heaven, how did he make the grass?" "Why are dandelions yellow?" To that query, Mom replied, "I guess that's how God wanted them" — and wrote, "In our house, we let God answer many of our questions."

I still have questions: Why is my dynamic young friend dying of cancer? Why are a parent's own children sometimes hard to love? How can we end war, poverty, sex trafficking? Should we donate money or save for college? How, exactly, does salvation work? Sometimes science or professionals are God's instruments to answer my questions. Sometimes answers come quietly to my heart — and sometimes they don't come at all.

Faith doesn't mean never questioning. It means trusting enough to ask, even when a question seems silly or pointless. Thanks, Mom and Dad, for teaching me by your loving example that God always welcomes my questions.

—Heidi Mann

