

# The Master's Message

## The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

### March/April, 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](mailto:cotm47@verizon.net)

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

### Just Being There

Sometimes when a heart's broken in two  
By a harsh word spoken carelessly,  
Or the sting of rejection has wounded quite deep,  
Just being there can set a troubled soul free.

When teardrops tumble as sorrows descend  
And the day seems so dark and drear,  
A warm cup of chamomile tea soothes and calms,  
As well as a friend whose loving touch is near.

When we lose our way like a drifting ship at sea  
And the tides of life are shifting wrong,  
Just being there can shed a beam –  
Simply shining and guiding along.

If sickness calls and shadows fall,  
Just being there can shed a ray of hope.  
A listening ear, sincere prayers from the heart  
Must muster the courage to persevere and cope.

Jesus, our Master, taught compassion and mercy,  
So pause to mend that broken wing –  
For, one never knows, you may someday need  
Someone just being there with love to bring.

Linda C. Grazulis

O Lord of hosts, restore us;  
Let Your face shine upon us,  
that we may be saved.  
Psalm 80:4

• "Light trumps darkness, every time. You stick a candle  
into the dark, but you can't stick the dark into the light."  
—Jodi Picoult

## SPECIAL DATES\*

- World Day of Prayer, March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Daylight Saving time begins, March 12<sup>th</sup>
- 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Spring, March 20<sup>th</sup>
- Palm Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Maundy Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>
- Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>
- Easter Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>
- Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

## \*News From the Pews\*

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

## Note from the Consistory

The Consistory would like to thank all those who receive our newsletter by mail who sent us warm greetings and donations during the holidays. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and love hearing from you. We hope you continue to enjoy reading *The Master's Message* and if you have anything you think would be fitting, please send it along to us for future editions.

## \*CHURCH CHUCKLES\*

### Bible Lessons

**BULLETIN:** 1. Parish information read only during sermon. 2. Parishoners air-conditioning. 3. Your receipt for attending the service.

**HYMN:** A song of praise, usually sung in a key three octaves higher than that of the congregation's range.

**JESUITS:** An order of priests known for their ability to found colleges with good basketball teams.

**MANGER:** 1. Where Mary gave birth to Jesus because Joseph wasn't covered by an HMO. 2. The Bible's way of showing us that holiday travel has always been rough.

**TEN COMMANDMENTS:** The most important Top Ten list not given by David Letterman.

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A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter.

Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous.

When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

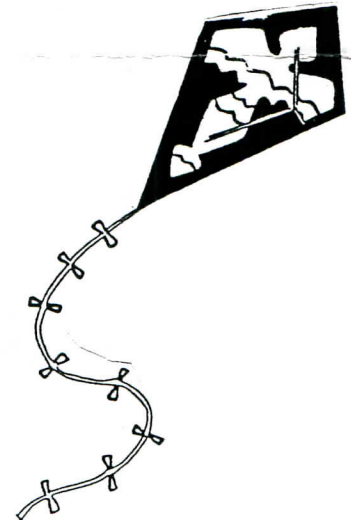
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Dear Pastor,

My father says I should learn the Ten Commandments. But I don't think I want to because we already have enough rules in our house.

Chrissy, age 6

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When Earth Day was established on April 22, 1970, by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, there was no Environmental Protection Agency or any legal or regulatory agencies to protect the environment. Earth Day was created to increase public awareness of and to garner support for the world's mounting environmental concerns.

Today, Earth Day (earthday.org) is widely recognized as a day to take Earth-friendly actions.

## A reason to celebrate

In rural Nebraska in the early 20th century, three of the four Koontz children died of diphtheria in one week. On the following Easter morning, the parents and surviving child attended church. Because Mr. Koontz was Sunday school superintendent, he read aloud the Easter message. Although many people wept, he and his wife stayed calm.

Later, a boy walking home said, "The Koontzes must really believe the Easter story."

His father answered, "All Christians do."

The boy replied, "Not the way they do!"

—Homiletics



• "Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?"

—John Wesley

If you happened to notice that you did not receive **The Master's Message in March**, it was because our copy machine totally broke down. We're sure you noticed how bad the copies of the past few newsletters were, but thanks to many donations, we were able to purchase a new machine that hopefully will produce nice clean copies for many years to come.

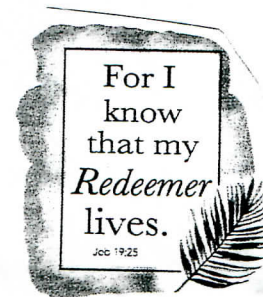
Our thanks to all those who donated and to Kevin & Ricky who researched, purchased and set up our new copier.

## Believing is seeing

When the disciples saw Jesus after his resurrection, they believed. But Thomas, who was absent, doubted until he, too, got to see and even touch Jesus. For him, as the others, seeing was believing.

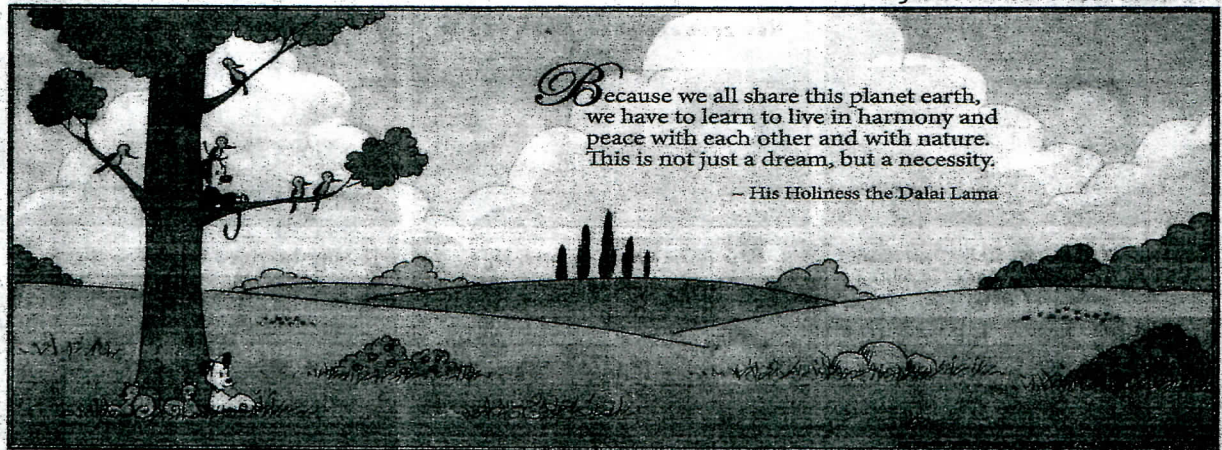
But what of us who don't get to see Jesus in the flesh? If "seeing is believing," are we out of luck? No. In fact, sometimes it works the opposite way; sometimes "believing is seeing."

Try this: Despite any doubts, choose to believe, trusting the witness of someone who's seen God at work — a biblical figure or present-day Christian. You'll be amazed at the love, healing, peace and new life that spring out of troubles. "With the eyes of your heart" (Ephesians 1:18, NRSV), you will see your Lord and your God.



## MUTTS

By PATRICK McDONNELL







## April

“When we work with love  
we renew the spirit; that  
renewal is an act of self-love,  
it nurtures our growth.”

—bell hooks, *All About Love*



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Pastor's  
EASTER  
MESSAGE

March-April Newsletter Article \*

This year, the months of March through April bring more than merely windy weather and showers; they bring the Lenten Season, Holy Week and Easter (Resurrection) Sunday! As I mentioned during morning worship on the first Sunday in Lent, instead of giving up something only to go back to that thing I had temporarily given up for Lent, I have committed over the next 40 days of Lent instead to taking on something! I have health issues that do not allow me to fast as much and as long as I desire to do. So, the thing that I have I have committed to taking on is taking more time to devote to the Lord in doing to my own personal worship and devotion one-on-one time with the Lord. Lately, I have noticed that I have unintentionally allowed other things to distract me (work, calls, emails, etc.) from, and to take precedence over and time away from doing my daily devotion and morning worship. My personal prayer and worship time is where I set aside time as soon as I open my eyes, to thank God for another day, and begin my morning ritual of praise, devotion and Scripture reading. It is my prayer and hope that this commitment will remain even after Lent to help strengthen my spiritual life and walk with Jesus.

Ironically, I am reading the Gospel of John during my morning worship and devotional time and our Bible Study is currently also studying the Gospel of John. As I read the Gospel of John 3:16: "for God so loved that world that he gave his only Son that whosoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life," I am always struck by the depth of God's love for sinful humankind—that he gave his *only* son to die for humankind's sins and to reconcile us back to the Father following Adam and Eve's original sin! And, as I continued reading in John's gospel, I began to think of how they falsely accused Jesus, how he was betrayed by one of his very own hand-picked disciples, how his other hand-picked disciples could not remain on watch in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus went to pray, how his hand-picked disciples deserted him after Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus with a kiss and for thirty pieces of silver into the hands of the chief priests, how Peter denied knowing Jesus three times before the cock crowed twice, how Jesus was tortured, mocked, spat upon, and brutalized for your sins and my sins, how he who knew no sin became the sin offering to satisfy the debt for sin that we humans rightfully owed, and how he did not open his mouth or ask his Father to take him off the cross. I could not help but begin to weep! I pondered the question, if there was *only one person* who needed to be saved, would Jesus have still gone to the cross to die and atone for that *one* person's sins? As I prayed for an answer to my inquiry, the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance that familiar hymn of the church:

Lord, I hear of show's of blessings  
Thou art scattering full and free;  
Showers the thirsty soul refreshing,  
Let some drops now fall on me!

Even me, Lord, even me.  
Even me, Lord, even me.  
Let some drops now fall on me!

Everyone will need to ponder the answer to this question for him or herself. But, for me, the lyrics of this hymn confirm the answer to my question. Yes, I believe that Jesus would have gone to that old rugged cross for just me, or even me! I pray that you all will have a meaningful fast and strength to keep your Lent commitments over these next 40 days. But most of all I pray that you will not merely temporarily give up something only to take it back up after Lent is over. Rather, I pray that you will seek to take on something during this Lenten Season that will have a lasting effect on you and for you well after Lent is over! Happy Easter Resurrection Sunday!

Shalom to you,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden  
Pastor  
Church of the Master  
Reformed Church in America

\* Reprinted from 2019 Master's Message Newsletter

- "Faith walking in the dark with God only prays him to clasp its hand more closely, does not even ask him for the lifting of the darkness."

—Phillips Brooks

- I find something in every day that pleases me. The cornerstone, my belief in God, makes my heart glad and my face shining.

—Johann Goethe's mother

- We build up the body with nutrition and exercise, but how do we build up the body of Christ? Through fellowship, training and service in love.

—A. Aronis

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## One didn't

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Three men were tried for crimes against humanity. Two committed crimes. One didn't.

Three men were given government trials. Two were given fair trials. One wasn't.

Three men were whipped and beaten. Two had it coming. One didn't.

Three men were given crosses to carry. Two earned their crosses. One didn't.

Three men were mocked and spit at along the way. Two cursed and spit back. One didn't.

Three men were nailed to crosses. Two deserved it. One didn't.

Three men agonized over their abandonment. Two had reason to be abandoned. One didn't.

Three men knew death was coming. Two resisted. One didn't.

One, two, three men died on three crosses. Three days later, two remained in their graves. One didn't.

—Author unknown

