

MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of
Moraine Valley Community Church

For the Month of April 2015

From The Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Derek
MASON



This month we celebrate the death and resurrection of our LORD, Jesus Christ.

Shortly before He went to the cross, in **John 12:23-26**, Jesus says, *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”*

If the grain of wheat is not planted in the ground (symbol of death) it remains just what it is – a single grain of wheat. But if it is sown in the ground, it will give birth to much more life. This is a visual for us to understand what Jesus is about to do but also is the example His followers are expected to reflect.

Jesus continually states and exemplifies the fact that He does not seek to be served (but rather to serve) nor does He seek His own glory (but rather to glorify God the Father). He does not desire: the riches of this world, His political standings, or His popularity

with others. He has not exalted Himself though He absolutely could. He has not made His earthly life the priority but instead has been a servant to God the Father and others in need. He has died to Himself (as a servant) and lives for God the Father. All who follow Him will also die to self and live for God as servants of the heavenly eternal kingdom. And those who are willing to do so, Jesus promises that the Father in

heaven will: bless, accept and empower them and they will have eternal life. This “dying to self” is the hardest thing for a Christian to do. We must step down from our throne of: entitlement, exaltation, control, power, success, individualism, comfort and popularity. We must make our greatest priority always to honor the LORD in all that we do (serve Him). In our society of self-pampering and excess this becomes an extremely challenging expectation. But Jesus goes much further than we are required.

Jesus willingly surrendered to injustice and death on a cross so that many would have life abundantly. Jesus’ sacrifice brings life to all who follow Him (*bears much fruit*). But that is not where the story ends. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. When we surrender to Jesus and die to our self and become servants of God, we also are raised up into a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit and the work that God will do through us will also bring life to many. Jesus paves the way - making the impossible now po

ssible. Sinful humans can now be reconciled to a sinless and holy God. But all who follow Jesus are expected to do as He did – die to self and live for God. We do not go to the cross physically but we spiritually nail our self-centered life up on the cross of Christ and it dies. Then the Holy Spirit empowers us with a new center in our being. We become God-centered as we were always meant to be. We get a taste on earth of the eternal life inheritance which is now ours in heaven. We can now walk with our God. Jesus is truly our LORD and Savior. He is our teacher and example. He is our light and life. May we all remember this Easter Season what God the Father has done for us through His Son and follow Him as we are called to do. Thank you Jesus! Amen.

Many Blessings,
Pastor Derek Mason

Who Are The Elders?

With new people joining us each week, it occurred to us at our last Elders' Meeting, that many of you do not know much about us. The Elders represent the leadership of our church. We work very closely with our Pastor Derek Mason to manage the affairs of our church – both spiritual and corporate following the guidelines set forth in our constitution.

In alphabetical order, we are

Virginia Beehn I have been a member of MVCC since 1978. At the age of seven I committed my life to Jesus when I walked down the aisle of my church in Chicago to meet Him at the altar. In 1978 my daughter and her boyfriend invited me to MVCC for the first time. Everyone made me feel at home, the pastor's messages spoke to me,

and I joined the church. Since then I've served on nearly every committee for at least one term, sung in the choir for over 30 years, and I've been privileged to sing in Sunday worship services. In my work-a-day world, I am the North Central Region Manager of Family Stations, Inc. You might recognize my voice on WJCH 91.9 FM – a radio station playing traditional Christian music. My husband (and best friend) Roy and I have raised nine children and proudly boast of over 20 grandchildren and over 20 great-grandchildren.

Bill and Pat Curtis We have been members of MVCC since 2001, following our former Pastor David Nichols to Moraine Valley when our church Westchester Baptist closed its doors. We both had a formal Catholic education from 1st grade through high school and feel that Jesus Christ has been part of our life every day. We have been happily married for twenty-two years have five children and ten grandchildren. Bill has acted as moderator of the church under our old constitution and continues to act as spokesman for the Elders. Pat acts as comptroller for MVCC. We are thankful that God led us to Moraine Valley Community Church.

Beth Heinrich It was a warm, cloudy day in August, 1988 when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. A new life had begun and thankfully the old one peeled away in what seemed like endless layers. I searched several churches from Mormon to Jehovah's Witness' and everything in between. On February 21, 1999 the Cub Scout Pack #4728 hosted a Charter Sunday at Moraine Valley Community Church and I came with my Scouts Dan & Tom and by June 6, 1999 I became a member, transferring from Moraine Valley Church in Palos Heights. I knew this was "home". I've always felt the Spirit here. By May, 2000 I started volunteering in Elsie's Pantry and was hired as secretary for Pastor Dave Nichols on

August 15th. It wasn't really my career choice, having graduated from Washburn Trade School Painter's Pre-Apprenticeship program and starting my own antique furniture repair, refinish and resale business, but God had other plans for me, and looking back, I wouldn't have been happier anywhere else. My children were baptized here; Dan in 2002 and Tom and Aimeé in 2007. I'm looking forward to getting to know our new "family" members. We're happy you're here. Welcome home!

Joyce Skowronski I was born in a very small town in Iowa. After high school I attended a Baptist college in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Getting a job as a secretary in a bigger city wasn't for me so I went to airline school and got a job with United Airlines in Chicago. This was big time - \$280.00 a month! I got married and started a family so I was a stay at home mom for 13 years. I now work downtown for an attorney. I am president-treasurer of my condo association, treasurer of the Umbrella Association, secretary of Rachel Circle, a volunteer at Elsie's pantry, and have been treasurer of our church since longer than I can remember. Think I need another job???? I like to travel with family and friends so I try to take a much needed vacation every quarter. Most important is I have Jesus Christ in my life. I don't think I could live without Him. He has blessed me in so many ways. His love is never ending. If you don't have this love, try it, you'll like it. Being a member of Moraine Valley Community church since 1969 has added much to my life.

Terry Zappa I was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico and moved to Illinois where I met my husband Tony. We have been happily married more than 20 years. My husband was born in Chicago in "little Italy" and although he was raised Catholic, we became members of MVCC in 2012. I have been a Baptist all my life

having accepted Jesus as my savior and being baptized as a young girl. My father was a Deacon in our church and my mother was head of the children's Sunday school program. I am presently the leader of the Prayer Team.

We all feel privileged to be part of the continuing story of Moraine Valley Community Church and look forward to where our Heavenly Father is leading our church. We ask for your prayers as we make the decisions that will affect the future of our church.

Food For Thought

The important things in life

A philosophy professor stood before his class with some items on the table in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, about 2 inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He then asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "Yes."

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things – your family, your partner, your health, your children – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter – like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else. The small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued “there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take your partner out dancing. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal.

Take care of the rocks first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

Author Unknown



APRIL FOOLS!

Birthdays Etc.

Pat Curtis	Apr. 5
LeRoy Crettol	Apr. 8
Herb Mohn	Apr. 19

Resurrection Remembrance

By Mary Ann Nichols

Though the dates may not all line up, it will be 13 years. This year, 2015 (Easter) Resurrection Sunday falls on April 5th. Though the number “13” reveals bad luck in some cultures or modern society...it is not disruptive for me...it is just a number. My sisters and I were in the basement of our mom’s first home where she raised us. Lo and behold, as we were looking through her old buffet and hutch, I found my Certificate of Baptism (Christening) from St. Blase Church in Argo/Summit. I was born on August 16th 1955 and was sprinkled with holy water on September 4th, 1955. I was 19 days old. Do I remember? “No.”

As a very young girl brought up in the Catholic Church, attending CCD classes, I prepared for my first confession, making up sins in a dark closet to a priest I couldn’t see on the other side, my first communion in a bride’s dress and confirmation taking the name of “Elizabeth,” the name of the mother of John the Baptist. The caveat: A booklet given to us entitled, “PAX”, had all the instructions of what is required of you to be a Catholic. One of the rules stated that you could attend services at other churches, but you could not participate. This was considered a sin.

Now, I want to make it perfectly clear, I am not putting down Catholicism, but this scared me, as far as my religion was concerned. That is how it was back in the 1960s. I thought to myself, God is God, no matter what denomination. My mommy always let us kids attend VBS at various churches every summer. The allure of churches other than Catholic seemed to draw me in. I came to the realization that my mom might have a hidden agenda. When I asked her why she didn’t go with us when our father would take us to St. Blasé, she

told me that she had signed a document that required her to raise her children Catholic so she could marry my father in the Catholic Church. My dad was born and raised Roman Catholic, so maybe, just maybe, she might be a Baptist as her mom was, my grandmother...my namesake. I was right, and once I became a teenager, I could choose where to attend services. So thereafter, mom and I attended church together for years.

I can't put a date on it, but Salvation came to me as a teenager. I was baptized by immersion at Moraine Valley Community Church on March 31st, 2002 on Easter Sunday, 13 years ago. Do I remember?... "Yes." I remember Linda Hudecek as my mentor, Virginia Beehn singing "Arise My Love" and most importantly seeing my mom's smile and the tears in her beautiful blue eyes. A deep shade of blue and purple was on my lips because "someone" forgot to turn the heater on in the baptismal pool.

What is ironic is that my one and only brother Joseph was killed on his motorcycle on March 31st, 2007. Five years later to the date. This anniversary plays on my heart with both happiness and sorrow. As Pastor Derek reminds us, "Live in the Light." May I continue to shine on. Thank you Emmanuel for all of Your blessings. I will continue to celebrate Your Resurrection Remembrance on a daily basis, not just at Easter...but every day...no matter the date on the calendar.

Remember in Prayer...

- Elsie's Food Pantry: provisions/wisdom/protection
- MVCC: wisdom/guidance/protection
- Hearts to serve – to build our church (formation of ministries)
- Discipleship/transformation/leadership development
- Tony Zappa – knees/back

- Patsy Rybka – foot recovery/health
- Tom Heinrich – healing/health/job
- Emmitt Hayes' daughter (Jerri) – cancer healing/colon
- Pete Delgado – dementia (Sarah – strength)
- Vi Wagner – hip/eyes/strength
- Arlena Reyes – Transformation/strength/protection
- Beth Heinrich – strength/wisdom/guidance
- Father – kidneys and other physical issues
- Mother - health
- Mark DeBauche: cancer healing / strength /endurance
- Becky Lewellen: strength/peace/healing/wisdom
- Rita (Lorraine's daughter-in-law) – stomach & other health issues
- Edith Martinez – Sister for healing, mom for provisions, father for healing and wisdom and guidance regarding her nephew
- Jackie Gehle – healing, peace, provisions
- Brian Mason (pastor's brother) liver issues
- Karen Hurst – healing back pain and freedom from all crutches

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YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE HIM ... HE'S NEW TO THE FAITH AND THIS IS HIS FIRST EASTER

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