

MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of
Moraine Valley Community Church

For the Month of May 2016

From The Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Derek
MASON



Why do so many Christian churches downplay or even forget the holiday of **Pentecost**? Many Christians do not even know what it is! The word, “**Pentecost**” comes from a Greek word meaning “the fiftieth (day)” and it parallels to the **Feast of Weeks** in the Old Testament. This Feast had an important significance to Israel’s harvests but more importantly (theologically), it commemorates the anniversary of the day that God gave His Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Therefore, on **Passover** (the Jewish holiday which is associated with Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection) Israel was freed from their enslavement to Pharaoh and were taught how to embrace the presence of God at Mt. Sinai. Likewise, Jesus frees us from our enslavement to sin (through the cross) and shows us how to embrace a greater presence of God. On the **Feast of Weeks** (fifty days later – *Pentecost*) Israel officially came under the Kingship of the LORD – as a nation (to live under His Laws). Therefore, **Pentecost** is the official birth of the nation of Israel (God’s people) and similarly, **Pentecost** is the official birth of the church of Jesus Christ. The LORD is committed to

His people and they are committed to Him (covenant/union, loyalty and peace treaty).

The LORD’s presence in the Old Testament was often represented by a pillar of fire (or pillar of cloud) which was often seen over the Tabernacle (the moveable tent of where God dwelt with Israel on earth after the Exodus) or physically leading them through the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. It was a physical and visual presence of power, provision, guidance and protection and Moses would not go anywhere without it (Exod 33:15-16). Moses stated that the only thing that makes the people of God distinct from all other peoples of the earth *is the LORD’s presence*. In the New Testament, Jesus commands that His disciples not go anywhere until they receive the promised Holy Spirit (the presence of God). However, this presence would be something much greater than anything ever seen before in Scripture. God would no longer be among His people in power but now He will be IN His people in power! The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples as pillars of fire (Acts 2:3-4) (like the pillar of fire over the Tabernacle).

Therefore, Christians have three really big holidays which must be celebrated: (1) **Christmas** – which remembers the human birth of our Savior – the promise fulfilled, (2) **Easter** – which remembers the purification of God’s people from sin (grace) through the sacrifice of God’s Son and His resurrection from the dead, and (3) **Pentecost** – which remembers the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for God’s purified people so that they might join Him

in His ministry of reconciliation to a hopeless and condemned world. **Pentecost** is the celebration which brings us to where we are today – saved by the grace of God and now empowered by the Holy Spirit (so to others) until the Day that Jesus returns for Final Judgment upon all evil.

The Holy Spirit is something which cannot be controlled but rather must be humbly surrendered to. Therefore, our world does not like this part of Christianity. We have to surrender our control and let God lead and provide. Humans generally despise submission and ambiguity. But this is how the salvation of God works, whether we like it or not. If we want the grace, mercy, provisions, power, freedom, and life of God (which only He can give), then we have to play by His rules alone. If we want to live in His Kingdom, then we need to recognize Him as King. In order to gain our lives we have to lose them to Christ (submission) (Matt 16:24-25). **Pentecost** is now the celebration of the birth of the church of Christ and a time in which God's presence is united intimately with His people – so to battle the forces of darkness and save all that are His. May we remember this incredible moment in history with honor, praise and thanksgiving! Because this new presence that we have IN God (through Christ and by the Holy Spirit) is alone what makes us distinct from all other people (it is our identity)! Amen!

Many Blessings,
Pastor Derek Mason

Birthdays Etc.

Sarah Delgado	May 1
Virginia McReynolds	May 7
Dan Tabert	May 12
Louise Raeder	May 20
Joan DeBauche	May 29
Rick Wilkinson	May 31



In Memoriam

Please join together in prayer as we mourn the passing of a longtime member of our Moraine Valley Community Church family

Linda Hudecek went to be with our Lord on April 22

Remember also her friends and family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

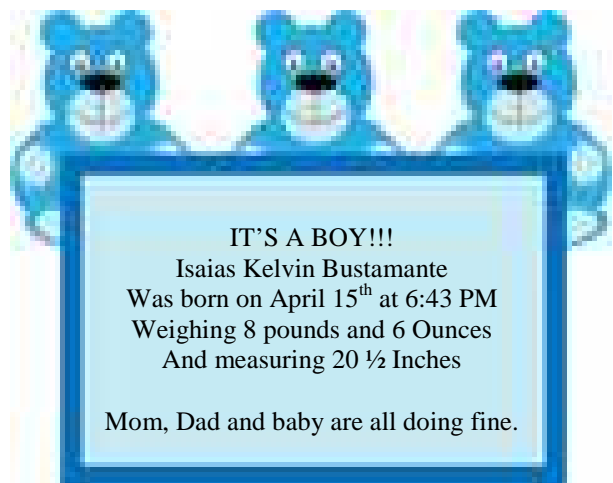
Church Signs

Those little pearls of wisdom found in front of America's Churches

Free Trip To Heaven...Details Inside.

God is like Allstate, you're in good hands.

God Sent The Very First Text Message: The Bible!



Food For Thought

It Is No Secret

Back in the 50's there was a well known radio host/comedian/song writer in Hollywood named Stuart Hamblen who was noted for his drinking, womanizing, partying, etc. One of his bigger hits at the time was "I won't go hunting with you Jake, but I'll go chasing women".

One day, along came a young preacher holding a tent revival. Hamblen had him on his radio show presumably to poke fun at him. In order to gather more material for his show, Hamblin showed up at one of the revival meetings. Early in the service the preacher announced, "There is one man in this audience who is a big fake." There were probably others who thought the same thing, but Hamblen was convinced that he was the one the preacher was talking about (some would call that conviction), but he was having none of that.

Still the words continued to haunt him until a couple of nights later he showed up drunk at the preacher's hotel door around 2 am demanding that the preacher pray for him! But the preacher refused, saying, "This is between you and God and I'm not going to get in the middle of it." But he did invite Stuart in and they talked until about 5 am at which point Stuart dropped to his knees and with tears, cried out to God.

But that is not the end of the story. Stuart quit drinking, quit chasing women, and quit everything that was "fun". Soon he began to lose favor with the Hollywood crowd. He was ultimately fired by the radio station when he refused to accept a beer company as a sponsor. Hard times were upon him. He tried writing a couple of "Christian" songs but the only one that had much success was "This Old House", written for his friend Rosemary Clooney.

As he continued to struggle, a long time friend named John took him aside and told him, "All your troubles started when you 'got religion', was it worth it all?"

Stuart answered simply, "Yes".

Then his friend asked, "You liked your booze so much, don't you ever miss it?" Stuart's answer was, "No".

John then said, "I don't understand how you could give it up so easily."

And Stuart's response was, "It's no big secret. All things are possible with God."

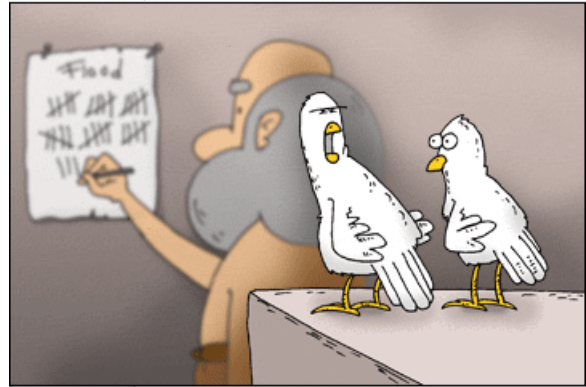
To this John said "That's a catchy phrase. You should write a song about it."

And the rest, as they say, is history. The song Stuart wrote was "It Is No Secret"

*It is no secret what God can do.
What He's done for others, He'll do for you.
With arms wide open, He'll welcome you.
It is no secret, what God can do....*

By the way..... the friend was John Wayne.
And the young preacher who refused to pray for Stuart Hamblen? That was Billy Graham.

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(See Genesis 6-8)

07-16-2010

OH I TOTALLY FOUND LAND A FEW DAYS AGO,
I'M JUST REALLY ENJOYING HAVING IT ALL
TO MYSELF FOR A BIT

Remember in Prayer...

- Elsie's Food Pantry: provisions/wisdom/protection
- MVCC: wisdom/guidance/protection
 - Hearts to serve – to build our church (formation of ministries)
 - Wisdom and guidance in our new location
 - Discipleship/transformation/leadership
 - Youth and Children's Ministry growth and development
- Pete Delgado – dementia (Sarah – strength)
- Vi Wagner – hip/arm/eyes/strength
- Mark DeBauche: cancer healing / strength /pain

- Roy Beehn – provisions, healing from his open heart surgery
- Tony Juarez – blessings on his new job and provisions at home
- Russ McGurty – job, family & insurance situation, surgery and pain relief
- Dan Tabert – foot recovery, cancer healing, peace, guidance, provisions
- Harriet – strength in her legs, walking
- Becky Lewellen – employment
- Herb Mohn - prostate cancer treatment success
- Bill Clemente – family healing and provisions
- Kathy Delgado’s sons
- Doreen DeBauche – continued healing and recovery
- Pat Pepe – minor injuries from an automobile accident and a bout with pneumonia

Living Water Youth Group

This past month was spent focusing on our character and what it looks like to live a life that displays the characteristics of God. Along with good conversations about character, *Living Water Youth Group* has also had a few new leaders that have helped us grow in promising ways.

When it comes to a youth group of our size, one of the challenges is to create space for meaningful conversations. When there are only a few people to give input often conversations can be short and shallow, but this has not been the case here. We have spent the month talking about topics such as our role models and the life they live, encouraging each other and serving others. These topics, and the activities that we have done with them, have given students the chance to ask some deeper questions about the way we are to live.

There are a few reasons that I believe that we have been able to have this more meaningful conversations, even with a smaller group. One reason is that we have had a few additional young ladies step up and assist with the leadership of the group. Our leadership team has grown and the students have responded really well to having more leaders to talk to, hang out with, and build a relationship with.

Another reason that we have been able to have these conversations is that God has been continually at work in the hearts of all those involved with *Living Water Youth Group*. God has created a group that gets along, trusts and loves each other. These bonds allow for students to ask questions that they may not always be comfortable asking. Youth group has become a safe place and time for students to explore what it means to follow God.

Thank you to everyone that has been praying for the youth group. Your prayers

Answered Prayer...

Great attendance through Easter holiday and continuing afterwards

- Beth Heinrich’s father – attending church regularly and heart surrendered to Jesus
- Tony Juarez – new job
- The many people whom God is drawing in to Him through our church
- Increased Bible Study participation & prayer team participation

and support mean so much as this ministry is continuing to grow. As we start to look toward the summer months we are planning to hold some bigger events that we are hoping will reach out more into the community. Please continue to pray for *Living Water Youth Group* as we seek out what God has planned next.

Megan Bustamante

Youth Director



From The Elders' Table

Are you wondering what the Elders' have been up to lately? Actually, what's interesting is where the Elders (along with several of our church leaders) have been. On April 21, they attended the 20th Celebration Banquet of Converge Mid America. For those of you not familiar, Converge Mid America is the church assistance organization Moraine Valley Community Church joined last year. What is Converge Mid America? It is an organization of likeminded churches born out of the Swedish Baptist Covenant. By the way, it does not replace our affiliation with American Baptist Churches USA. Why then did we join a second organization of churches you may ask. This organization enhances our ability to grow our church by

showing us how other likeminded churches have grown. Converge makes available to our pastor and our church leaders programs and workshops with online training and practical resources. The benefits to our church are too numerous to mention in this article. By joining, we are also helping to spread God's word partnering with other churches to help plant new churches throughout the world. As we move forward as a church eager to spread the Gospel, we need the help and resources of an organization such as Converge. Our church leaders and Elders look forward to other Converge events at which they can meet other church leaders and share ideas and receive encouragement to strengthen us as a church.

Advice From An Old Farmer

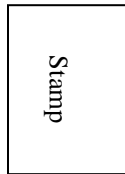
Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.

Live a good, honorable life... Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.

Elsie's Pantry News

Elsie's Pantry may be looking for Volunteers on Saturday, May 7th 3-5 pm for the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" Campaign presented by the US Post Office. Work will include bringing in the bins of food collected and sorting. We will also need someone with a truck who would be willing to bring the empty bins back to the Worth Post Office on 111th & Harlem Ave. Also coming soon: 31st Annual Hunger Walk at Jackson Park June 25th. Our hopes are to break all records for hikers and donations. More information will be coming in May.

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