

THE PRESTON JUNIOR PILGRIM

MARCH 2013

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

THE WINTER drags on...the sun hasn't shown its face in days and how much more depressing can the news get when right in our midst little children are slaughtered. What's the rhyme and reason to all of this one asks. How does one acknowledge the horrors of the world without becoming engulfed in them? How does one stay positive during this introspective time of lent; the only answer I know is to let the **Son** shine in.

A YOUNG heartbroken mother who loses, not only her two sons, but her mother as well, is able to say: "God has two beautiful angels helping Him now; my boys are in an amazing place." When one gets to their wits end, God is there. God is always there. There is a place within each of us that only God can fill. Perhaps during time of extreme pain, one comes face to face with where things are really at in this world. Christ says in Matthew 11:28-30: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

IN TIMES of depression, turn **off** the news; reading the Bible can provide a soothing solace to the soul. Jesus calls to all weary souls to cast off their worries and lean on him (*see above*). This is a beautiful way to get encouraged and look at trouble in the eye and say, "I'm not going to get tied down and stay there, there is someone far greater than I who will deliver me from these disturbing times." Take it to the Lord in prayer...what a friend we have in Jesus! When you're feeling overwhelmed, surround yourself with positive people...staying positive will keep your wits about you. It will help you have inner hope once again. Oftentimes doing for others will lift our spirits...I know it does mine! Think about 5 things you are grateful for...how do you feel now? It's so easy to look at what's not right and tuck away those "undeserved kindnesses from God...grace."

SPRING IS coming...the crocus are popping their heads beneath the winter snow. "*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease,*" Genesis 8:22. God **keeps** his promises, of that we can be sure. As God renews the face of the earth, He stands ready to renew you and I through his written word, through the people he sends into our lives.

DURING THIS TIME OF LENT, while Jesus is in the wilderness reflecting upon his public ministry, during this barren time in the desert, perhaps a depleted time in our own lives for hundreds of different reasons, remember to let the **SON** shine in. It will make *all the difference*.

May the **SON** shine through me,

Sandy Dudek

MARCH BIBLE VERSES

"Children, obey your parents..." (Ephesians 6:1) (N3-Grade 2)

“...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...” Galatians 5:22-23 (Grades 3-12)

PLEASE ENCOURAGE students to learn these verses. To qualify for an award at the end of the year, verses must be correctly recited by the end of each month to a Bible Memory Verse Coordinator assigned by Mrs. Dudek. **The May verse needs to be recited by May 5th to allow time for those receiving a Bible Memory Verses award.** Nursery 3 & 4 students say their verse to the teacher and she will mark them off.

PLEASE MARK THE DATE...March 17th...our next storytelling session with Judy Ladegard will be “PALM SUNDAY.” We hope your children will be here each Sunday...there is much to learn and so little time! Why not plan to come to a storytelling session and see what’s happening...call Mrs. Dudek to arrange it!

THE SENIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP is conducting a fundraiser of flower bulbs and plants that will arrive in time for spring planting. The sale ends March 24th. Call Cheryl Giuliano (860.376.8901) at the church office to get an order form. Profit realized will benefit youth group activities.

“**NO ROOM IN THE INN**” was our second interactive storytelling session on December 16th and it was very well received by the children. Our storyteller, Judy Ladegard, had many of the teens involved helping her with the presentation complete with a very effective Mary (**Amanda Migliaccio**) labor pains and all!

“**NOAH’S ARK**” , our third interactive storytelling session on January 27th was terrific. I got to slip in while the preschool, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade groups were in there. The room is generally speaking on the dark side with twinkling stars and our storyteller sitting on the floor in front of her tent. The whole setting has kids at attention and learning Bible stories that I hope will be written in their hearts for years to come.

Two more storytelling sessions are scheduled this Sunday School year involving other adults as well as Judy. One of these we are hoping to repeat on Children’s Day so parents will get a view of what and how their children are learning. As time goes on, I am hoping others will “catch the vision” and want to get involved. Teaching our children the faith is no small thing and a certain way to influence our future adults for the good.

THE SEVENTH GRADERS who would like to complete their class goal should speak to Mrs. Dudek. **Emma Price** already has done hers. The class goal is to learn the parts of the worship service and lead 3 worship services on a Sunday morning; the K-6, preschool, and the 7th/8th graders and high school. I meet with them during the week to prepare them so they will feel confident on the Sunday morning they are leading.

THE CONFIRMATION PANCAKE SUPPER will be held **Sunday, February 10th, 4:30-6:00 p.m.** There will be “all you can eat pancakes”; sausage, juice, coffee, and assorted pastries will also be served. Tickets are available after church or you may call the church office to reserve them.

THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP to Harrisburg, PA, (this is the correct place!) July 28-August 3, 2013 is filled. Letters went out this week to youth participants requesting the secondary deposit of **\$60.00** be paid to Cheryl Giuliano by Sunday, February 10th. The check should be made out to PCCC Youth Missions. Participants **must** be registered and active in the Sunday School for at least one year.

THE SCRIP PROGRAM is an ongoing fundraiser that greatly benefits the youth missions trips program. Scrip (debit) cards are available to purchase for hundreds of stores, gas stations, donut shops, bookstores, grocery stores, etc. where you do business. You do not pay any extra amount to purchase these cards; however, the youth missions will receive a percentage back that varies according to the business. For example...if you purchase a Macy’s card for \$100.00, youth missions will be rewarded 10% for the sale...no charge to you, but

profit to the program; WalMart is 2%, Stop & Shop 4%, etc. Cards can be purchased for varying amounts. Sheets with participating businesses listed are always available in the Information Center. Checks to purchase these cards should be made out to “**PCCC Youth Missions**”. If you have questions, call coordinators Jerry & Cheryl Giuliano (860-376-8901).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL dates have been set for **July 15-19th**. Sandy Dudek and Judy Ladegard will be directing it again this year. At the present time we are reviewing curriculums and a decision will be made soon. Regardless of the curriculum, we always have a great week with lots of learning and fun. So...mark your calendars and invite your friends to join us.

THE SENIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (grades 9-12) were busy during December as they did a Christmas scavenger hunt at the Westbrook Mall, participated in our Christmas caroling event, and served pizza and dessert after the Sunday School pageant. This Sunday (February 3rd) they will be participating in playing games and sharing snacks here at the church.

THE JUNIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (Grades 6-8) were busy, as well, during December with movies, Christmas caroling and a Christmas party and gift exchange. In January they had an excellent time bowling. Their popular lasagna dinner is scheduled for **March 23rd** from **5-7:00 p.m.** Tickets will be on sale soon. If you like lasagna, this is a dinner you won't want to miss. This group led by Diane Schrage (860.376.6360) and Rev. Stan (860.887.4647) always welcomes new participants.

ENVELOPES similar to those the adults use for worship are available to the children. Please ask me if you'd like a box for your child. The Sunday School is self-supporting so even if your child attends church in the summertime, when the offering is placed in a Sunday School envelope, it is given to the Board of Religious Education treasurer.

KALID, the High School class's mission child, is sent \$35.00 monthly. There is a large jar in front of the altar in the Sunday School for the children to put offerings and anyone else who would like to contribute to the cause. This young man from Ethiopia has high hopes of becoming a doctor one day. Offerings this year are barely keeping up our pledge to World Vision for this young man. Please encourage your children to remember him.