



THE MUSTARD SEED

Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree... *Matthew 13:32*

Presbyterian Church of Ruston PCUSA

March 2017



The Reformation – part 2

Last month you read about the corruption in the Catholic Church.

Given the hierarchical nature of the church, it would seem that a systematic reform would have to begin at the top. But that would mean that the pope would have to initiate such reform. As one can imagine, by the 1400s it had become clear that the popes were not going to lead a general reform of the church so the reformers began to look elsewhere.

There was an attempt to reform the church at the lower levels of the church like in the dioceses. That worked with some success in some places. Reform at the local church level did not work because morality could not be enforced without the support of the bishop.

No matter how corrupt the church was, no matter how many reform programs were dreamed up, debated or even implemented, the church remained strong and invincible. The reason was that no matter how bad the church seemed to be its principal commodity was salvation. No other group, no other organization could claim that so the church had a monopoly on salvation. The church was the gatekeeper to heaven. As long as the church was the only game in town that could offer salvation, its power could not be easily challenged.

Erasmus, the son of a Dutch priest, was a scholar who published the first printed text of the Greek New Testament in 1516. He also wrote works that advocated a thorough reform of church institutions. His reform seemed to be on the right track to trigger the long-awaited systematic reform of the church when it was overtaken by events in Germany. Erasmus' reform put him on a collision course with a man whose attempt to correct another abuse in the church threw him into the center of a far more sweeping reform – that man was Martin Luther.

To understand Martin Luther, one must understand his "Tower Experience." Luther was in a tower room in a monastery meditating on the Letter to the Romans when he was struck by a new interpretation of the phrase "righteousness of God." He had always thought that this phrase referred to God's absolute standards of righteousness that God expected everyone to live up to. But →

that day, Luther had the sense that it meant that righteousness comes from God to us by faith. In other words, forgiveness of sins and salvation are freely available to us regardless of our merit. It is grace operating through faith. This doctrine which is hallmark of Protestantism is known as justification by faith. This became the foundation of everything he would do.

Stayed tuned next month to hear about Martin Luther and indulgences.

The Realignment that is Lent

Each week recently I have been watching short video clips on Facebook featuring Janet Jacobsen in her role as a physical therapist talking about exercises that one can do to strengthen parts of the body that causes pain or ways we can do things differently so that our bodies function better. That has made me think about Lent. In this season, we are called to pay particular attention to the ways in which we are out of kilter spiritually and to do what it takes to get back in faithful sync. We are called also to tend to the larger Body of Christ, offering ourselves to its hurting places, renewing our commitment to its health, and moving steadily forward together following the life and witness of Jesus. In doing so, we align ourselves with the grace-filled purpose of our lives.

And so this season, we listen to our bones and muscles and ask what it will take them to function properly. We notice our imbalances and do what it takes to re-ground ourselves. We tend to our own pain and the suffering of the world and do something to help alleviate that which can be relieved. And we consider the Body, asking what reconciliation among God's people really involves and then do a little something (or a big something) that might help a lost one, or a disenfranchised one, or a stray one to feel welcome in the Body.

So consider doing some realigning over the course of these forty days. Our bodies, our souls and the larger body of Christ need a season like this to name what's not quite right and to take intentional steps toward



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righting it, whatever that means in terms of faithful response to self, and God, and neighbor. And then ultimately, through the grace of God, we will be healed, we will be whole, and new life will come.

THE MAN IN THE PAINTING

By now many of you have stopped in to take a look at our newly-refurbished library and old Fellowship Hall. Once located in the Sunday School wing where Joe Hill's office is now situated, the John P. Graham Memorial Library was a beautiful room of books, maps, history, and knowledge which was lovingly cared for by Mrs. Susan Carothers and, prior to that, by Dr. Frances Fletcher. After the Presbytery office joined us, the Graham Library was moved to its present location and became nothing more than a catch-all room of clutter. The beautiful oil painting of Mr. Graham was relocated to the parlor and was eventually moved upstairs for safekeeping while the parlor was renovated years ago. But now, the man in the painting is safely back home in the library that bears his name.

I have had the privilege of working on the inaugural library display which highlights aspects of John Purcell Graham's life. As the display is self-explanatory, I will only mention a few highlights as follows:

- The "Alma Mater" that we so proudly sing at every Louisiana Tech University graduation and sporting event was composed by John P. Graham.
- Dedicated to preserving the history of all Presbyterians in Ruston and Lincoln Parish, Mr. Graham compiled a series of historical reviews which he had published and distributed at his own expense.
- Two volumes of hymns were composed by John P. Graham. It is my hope that we can sing a couple of those hymns during worship in the coming weeks.

I would also like to encourage you to take a few minutes to read the framed letter that is in the display case. This letter from 1887 asks for contributions so that "a Presbyterian Church organization here, with a membership of twenty-one" could erect a building of their own in which to worship. John Purcell Graham was around seven years old at the time that this letter was composed. His mother, Mrs. E. M. (Florence) Graham, and his aunt, Mrs. Maggie Null, were two of the women who signed off on this letter. Judge E. M. Graham, John's father, was mentioned in the letter as the one designated to oversee →

the contributed funds. I encourage you to read their heartfelt letter and know that, no matter where we have come from, or which locations or under which Church names we have worshipped in the past, we are all here together today because of the prayerful hopes and determination of those men and women in that letter who first desired to establish permanent Presbyterian roots here in Ruston.

The "Life of John P. Graham" exhibit will be on display in the library through May 1st. I hope that you will enjoy getting to know the man in the painting as much as I have

Brides.....Please Say "I Do"

The next library display will be "Here Comes The Bride" by Pat Smith. Do you have a wedding photo that you would be willing to share? Please say, "I do!" We would love to see what you looked like on your wedding day. Please provide the Church office with a photograph, along with your wedding date and where you were married. Due to display case space limitations, we ask that your photo be 5x7 or smaller with a minimal-sized frame. The deadline for photo submissions is April 30th. This display will begin in mid-May.



FLOWER CALENDAR

The Worship Committee would like to remind the congregation that the new Flower Calendar for 2017 is on the bulletin board in the hallway by our dining room. Bouquets provided need not be elaborate or expensive — sometimes, the simpler the better! A few stems from a garden, a bouquet from the grocery store in a vase, or whatever appeals to you. You are encouraged to sign up for a Sunday that you would like to honor or remember a person, a special event (birthday or anniversary) or a commemoration of a blessing in your life. There might even be two bouquets on a Sunday. That's ok too! Let Diane Dablow know in advance to whom or what you are dedicating your bouquet so she can print this in the bulletin for that Sunday. It will be wonderful for us all to visually express our gratitude through God's gifts from nature.

Buddy Ball Games

The Spring season for Buddy Ball is just around the corner. Games will be played at the J.C. Love Softball Complex off of Highway 167 South. The younger teams will play at 10:00 a.m. and older teams play at 11:00 on the following Saturdays: April 1, 8, 22, 29. Please mark your calendars and come out to cheer on these wonderful kids!



Memorials

Connie Nieto Alexander
Billy Arrant

Suggestions For Daily Bible Study and Prayer

Thursday March 1

Morning Ps. 27, 147:12–20 Evening Ps. 126, 102 Gen. 39:1–23 1 Cor. 2:14–3:15 Mark 2:1–12

Friday March 2

Morning Ps. 22, 148 Evening Ps. 105, 130 Gen. 40:1–23 1 Cor. 3:16–23 Mark 2:13–22

Saturday March 3

Morning Ps. 43, 149 Evening Ps. 31, 143 Gen. 41:1–13 1 Cor. 4:1–7 Mark 2:23–3:6

Sunday March 4

Second Sunday in Lent Morning Ps. 84, 150 Evening Ps. 42, 32 Gen. 41:14–45 Rom. 6:3–14 John 5:19–24

Monday March 5

Morning Ps. 119:73–80, 145 Evening Ps. 121, 6 Gen. 41:46–57 1 Cor. 4:8–20 Mark 3:7–19a

Tuesday March 6

Morning Ps. 34, 146 Evening Ps. 25, 91 Gen. 42:1–17 1 Cor. 5:1–8 Mark 3:19b–35

Wednesday March 7

Morning Ps. 5, 147:1–11 Evening Ps. 27, 51 Gen. 42:18–28 1 Cor. 5:9–6:11 Mark 4:1–20

Thursday March 8

Morning Ps. 27, 147:12–20 Evening Ps. 126, 102 Gen. 42:29–38 1 Cor. 6:12–20 Mark 4:21–34

Friday March 9

Morning Ps. 22, 148 Evening Ps. 105, 130 Gen. 43:1–15 1 Cor. 7:1–9 Mark 4:35–41

Saturday March 10

Morning Ps. 43, 149 Evening Ps. 31, 143 Gen. 43:16–34 1 Cor. 7:10–24 Mark 5:1–20

Sunday March 11

Third Sunday in Lent Morning Ps. 84, 150 Evening Ps. 42, 32 Gen. 44:1–17 Rom. 8:1–10 John 5:25–29

Monday March 12

Morning Ps. 119:73–80, 145 Evening Ps. 121, 6 Gen. 44:18–34 1 Cor. 7:25–31 Mark 5:21–43

Tuesday March 13

Morning Ps. 34, 146 Evening Ps. 25, 91 Gen. 45:1–15 1 Cor. 7:32–40 Mark 6:1–13

Wednesday March 14

Morning Ps. 5, 147:1–11 Evening Ps. 27, 51 Gen. 45:16–28 1 Cor. 8:1–13 Mark 6:13–29

Thursday March 15

Morning Ps. 27, 147:12–20 Evening Ps. 126, 102 Gen. 46:1–7, 28–34 1 Cor. 9:1–15 Mark 6:30–46

Friday March 16

Morning Ps. 22, 148 Evening Ps. 105, 130 Gen. 47:1–26 1 Cor. 9:16–27 Mark 6:47–56

Saturday March 17

Morning Ps. 43, 149 Evening Ps. 31, 143 Gen. 47:27–48:7 1 Cor. 10:1–13 Mark 7:1–23

Sunday March 18

Fourth Sunday in Lent Morning Ps. 84, 150 Evening Ps. 42, 32 Gen. 48:8–22 Rom. 8:11–25 John 6:27–40

Monday March 19

Morning Ps. 119:73–80, 145 Evening Ps. 121, 6 Gen. 49:1–28 1 Cor. 10:14–11:1 Mark 7:24–37

Tuesday March 20

Morning Ps. 34, 146 Evening Ps. 25, 91 Gen. 49:29–50:14 1 Cor. 11:2–34 Mark 8:1–10

Wednesday March 21

Morning Ps. 5, 147:1–11 Evening Ps. 27, 51 Gen. 50:15–26 1 Cor. 12:1–11 Mark 8:11–26

Thursday March 22

Morning Ps. 27, 147:12–20 Evening Ps. 126, 102 Exod. 1:6–22 1 Cor. 12:12–26 Mark 8:27–9:1

Friday March 23

Morning Ps. 22, 148 Evening Ps. 105, 130 Exod. 2:1–22 1 Cor. 12:27–13:3 Mark 9:2–13

Saturday March 24

Morning Ps. 43, 149 Evening Ps. 31, 143 Exodus 2:23–3:15 1 Cor. 13:1–13 Mark 9:14–29

Saturday, March 25

Morning: Pss. 43; 149 Evening: Pss. 31; 143 Jer. 13:1–11 Rom. 6:12–23 John 8:47–59

Sunday, March 26

4th Sunday in Lent Morning: Pss. 84; 150 Evening: Pss. 42; 32 Jer. 14:1–9 (10–16) 17–22 Gal. 4:21–5:1 Mark 8:11–21

Monday, March 27

Morning: Pss. 119:73–80; 145 Evening: Pss. 121; 6 Jer. 16:(1–9) 10–21 Rom. 7:1–12 John 6:1–15

Tuesday, March 28

Morning: Pss. 34; 146 Evening: Pss. 25; 91 Jer. 17:19–27 Rom. 7:13–25 John 6:16–27

Wednesday, March 29

Morning: Pss. 5; 147:1–11 Evening: Pss. 27; 51 Jer. 18:1–11 Rom. 8:1–11 John 6:27–40

Thursday, March 30


Morning: Pss. 27; 147:12–20 Evening: Pss. 126; 102 Jer. 22:13–23 Rom. 8:12–27 John 6:41–51

Friday, March 31

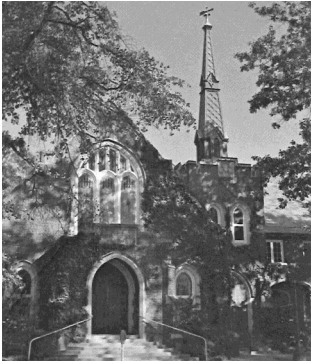
Morning: Pss. 22; 148 Evening: Pss. 105; 130 Jer. 23:1–8 Rom. 8:28–39 John 6:52–59



MARCH 2017

S	T	W	T	F	S	
		1 2:00 Communion at Princeton Place 6:00 Choir rehearsal	2 11:30 Book Study "Grounded"	3	4	
5 10:00 Doug Jenkins Class 10:45 Worship 11:00 Children's SSchool 12:00 Lunch-CC/Fellowship	6	7 9:45 Parlor Prayer Group	8 11:30 Lunch on Us 5:30 Lenten Supper 6:00 Choir	9 11:30 Lunch Bunch	10	11
12 10:00 Doug Jenkins Class 10:45 Worship/Communion 11:00 Children's SS 6:00p Robin Dickens Circle- Faye Wiggins	13	14 9:45 Parlor Prayer Group	15 8:00a Men's Breakfast 11:30 Lunch On Us 5:30 Lenten Supper	16	17	18
19 10:00 Doug Jenkins Class 10:45 Worship 11:00 Children's SS  Amy Neuroth	20 6:00 Session	21 9:45 Parlor Prayer Group	22 11:30 Lunch On Us 5:30 Lenten Supper 6:00 Choir  Eric Konkol	23 11:30 Book Study "Grounded"	24	25  Sallie Johnston
26 10:00 Doug Jenkins Class 10:45 Worship 11:00 Children's SS	27	28 9:45a Parlor Prayer-Group	29 11:30 Lunch On Us 5:30 Lenten Supper 6:00 Choir	30 11:30 Book Study		

Notes: Deadline for articles in April Mustard Seed is Monday, March 27.
 Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 9 Maundy Thursday Service - April 13, 7:00 p.m.
 Easter - Sunday, April 15 - Sunrise Service at 1104 D'Arbonne Dr. 6:30 a.m.
 (Sunrise 6:38a.m.)



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