

**Peckville and Bradley Memorial United Methodist Charge
Lenten 2012 Newsletter**

From the Pastor's pen

I watched a fascinating documentary about insects, specifically, termites, how they live, breed, survive. I saw how countless numbers construct above-ground towers of hardened soil, many 10ft. tall lasting twenty years.

Suddenly an aardvark, in haste to feed, accidentally dug into the heart of the tower exposing the queen's quarters, then left. (Aardvarks don't purposely destroy a colony, but the mistake was made.) Exposed to light and air termite workers began the repairs in a frenzied attempt to save their queen. And they would have done it except for one thing. A scouting army ant saw the vulnerability.

This one army ant was immediately spotted by a single termite guard who initiated attack. First the army ant seemed winning, then the termite, and the struggle was pitifully real. The documenter said that the battle had larger consequences than the fight between two insects. The stakes were higher than any of us could imagine because the whole colony's existence hinged on the outcome. If the scouting army ant escaped to transmit the development, the colony would fall. If the termite won, the colony would survive.

Unfortunately, the termite was bested and soon countless thousands of army ants penetrated the cavity, overcame defenders, killed the queen, and the termite metropolis was destroyed before my astonished eyes. Breathless and spellbound, I watched the tragic, indescribable scene, all caught

on camera by a lucky but amazing skillful photographer.

Later, forgetting the documentary, I Prayed, "Lord the world is so large, I am but one speck. The world is composed of so many, I am but one person..." and as I said "one person," the awful battle between two insects surfaced. And it was then I realized the significance of "the one" affecting "the many." And it was then I realized how one person may affect a family, a church, a community, for good or ill. And it was then I knew in some mysterious way those two dueling insects knew the enormity of their duty, even as I must my own.

In some respect, our Lord Jesus must have felt this struggle too, the cross on which He hung was to be the beginning of life for all those who believed.

Rev Michael Shambora

Lent

As early as the mid-fourth century, Christians have observed a time of preparation before the Easter celebration. The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days. The forty days of Lent recall the 40 day fast of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:1-2) and Moses' 40 day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28). It is a time of simplicity and preparation.

2012 Ecumenical Lenten Services
Sponsored by the Mid-Valley Ministerium
Wednesdays at 7:00pm
Fellowship after service

February 29 – St James/St. George church
Jermyn, Rev. Wally Koch preaching.
March 7 – Blakely Baptist Church, Rev. Michael
Shambora preaching.
March 14 – to be announced
March 21 – Peckville UMC – speaker to be
announced
March 28 – United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Al
Wagaman preaching.

Peckville Choir News

The choir is growing!!!! We are so excited to
welcome all the new faces and voices who have
joined us over the past couple of months in raising
our voices in Praise to Our Lord and King!!
Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!! There is always
room for more!!

A word from the Peckville Finance Chairperson

Friends,

This may be premature, but the weather so
far this winter has not been too cold to snowy, but
we still have to contend with March. Lent is
beginning and with it let us remember the season
and the journey that Christ made and ended with
the crucifixion and His resurrection on Easter
Sunday. We have been holding our Sunday worship
services downstairs in the Fellowship Room but
now we are moving back upstairs to our beautiful,
spacious sanctuary with those beautiful stained
glass windows.

As we prepare for Lent, let us be mindful of
the many blessings we have and to be mindful of the
needs of others. Our church has always been known
as a giving church and for helping with the needs of
others in the community. Please continue your
support to our church and also with your prayers,
presence, gifts, service and witness.

Respectfully yours,
Bob Elvidge,
Finance Chairman

Our Lenten Gift to our Church

Please remember we no longer have Lenten
calendars or envelopes to cut down on our expenses,
but we still need your gift in order to do the work of
the Church. You may put it in your regular weekly
envelope and put in the spot that says other Lenten
gift, or please feel free to put it in a separate
envelope and mark it with your name and Lenten
gift to my church. Thank You.

Easter Sunrise Service

We will be holding a joint sunrise service with our
brothers and sisters in Christ at the Presbyterian
church at 6:30am with breakfast to follow at the
Presbyterian church. To make reservations please
call Tom and Beth Taylor at 383-2119.

Lent and Easter

Connecting Worship and Daily Living in Lent

By Rev. Daniel Benedict

Lent is a time of preparation for the initiation of people into the Christian life in baptism. It is also a time for the church to journey together toward Easter and the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. Lent is not about being miserable, sad, and funereal in anticipation of Good Friday. The Sundays of Lent are not part of the forty days of Lent and so remain "little Easters," as are all Sundays. Fasting and giving up something can be part of Lenten disciplines, but so can taking on some things. Taken from umc.org

Holy Thursday and Good Friday Services

Holy Thursday Communion service at Peckville
UMC , April 5 at 7:00pm.

Good Friday services will be held at the Blakely
Baptist church on Friday April 6 from 12:00 noon
to 3:00pm and at the Bradley Memorial United
Methodist Church at 7:00pm.

GRADUATES

If anyone knows of college or high school students who will be graduating in the spring, please let Rev Mike or Beth Taylor know. Thank You.

Scranton District Lay Academy

The lay Academy has announced that the spring Lay Academy will be held at the Hawley UMC . Friday April 27 , Saturday April 28 and Saturday May 5 at the Hawley UMC. For more information please contact Beth Taylor. Pamphlets will be available shortly.

Jesus and the Bunny

Submitted by Sarah J. Tolliver

Jesus was walking down the path in the wilderness. A bunny ran up to Him crying, “Lord, Lord, this is the worst day of my life. My children died of Bunny leukemia, my burrow burned down, and of all things, my mate ran off with the rare. Why does God let these things happen?” “Mistaken little bunny, your opinion is not rare. All creation thinks God is the Cause of events. He isn’t. But He knows everything right down to the number of cottons in your tail.” The End

EASTER MEMORIALS

Peckville’s Easter Memorials and honoriums should be in by Sunday April 17(Palm Sunday). Gifts and information should be given to the following people.

Memorial Fund – Bill Llewellyn

Organ & Renovation – Sue Lucas or Sue Snyder

Warring-Fendick Scholarship Fund – Sue Lucas or Sue Snyder

Music Fund – Bonny Taylor

Flowers – Bob Elvidge

(To insure your memorial or honoriums will be in the booklet please have them in by April 1. This will be a great help for the secretary. Thank you.)

Expanding Our Circle of Experience (and influence)

Imagine if you never left Northeastern Pennsylvania. That you never read any books about other areas, lands, or cultures, if you never saw anything beyond the borders of Lackawanna County even if only on television or films, or if no one shared pictures or movies with you on facebook or youtube of their vacation trips to other areas.

Our little valley would be all that you know. While it is one of the most beautiful areas I know, there are other places just as beautiful, other cultures just as interesting. We would be missing out if we didn’t leave our own little world now and again.

We live in an era when the world seems to be getting ever so much smaller. I read somewhere that there is more information available in the Sunday edition of the New York Times than the average medieval towns folk was exposed to during their entire lifetime. Yet most of us seem to be still very parochial in our view of the world or religion for that matter. I was reminded of an experience this past Sunday when Rev. Mike mentioned about the caste system in India even though the country is a democracy.

About twelve years ago the company I work for was moving to a new technology, we had a consultant who was an Indian national, his name was Kumar. He was a good friend and a big help getting us up to speed on the new technology. One evening we were working over the phone on a problem in our New York office. Kumar and I on the phone in Scranton and a person acting as our eyes and hands in New York. His name was Abraham. As time wore on, frustration with the problem was elevating on both ends of the call. At one point we were having difficulty getting our point across to Abraham. Kumar asked me to mute the phone. Kumar proceeded to tell me that Abraham must be from a certain region of India, because he didn’t seem to be very smart. I had to laugh to myself since I realized that even though many of us have prejudices about folks from India, they have their own prejudices within their own county. As do Americans.

In religion and even within Christianity we have our own prejudices. But after all, in Christ we have more similarities than differences. One is not right and the other wrong. Never mind what televangelists say. After all there is only one baptism. The pastor, whether minister or priest, Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox, is only an instrument, God does the work.

As Methodists we are a product of openness of mind. In that John Wesley, an Anglican Priest was impressed by the faith of a group of Moravian Germans in prayer during a life threatening storm, while on a voyage from England to Georgia, to spread the Gospel to American Indians and during

a society meeting on Aldersgate Street in London and while Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans was being read, John Wesley felt his "Heart Strangely Warmed". He describes it as: "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and the assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Furthermore Wesley reached back to the early fathers of the church to the Greek Patriarchs and theologians during his studies.

We have an opportunity through the Mid-Valley Ministerium to expand our experience by attending Lenten services each Wednesday during Lent. We can visit at least four different churches other than our own. Each with a slightly different response to the Gospel, but you will be amazed at the similarities.

I hope to see all who are able each Wednesday at the Lenten services in the various churches. Let the world see our Open hearts. Open minds. Open Doors. Open Hearts: That we love all, Open Minds: That we understand that not all have the same response to God's love. Open Doors: That we not only are welcoming, but that we are willing to go out into the world to find commonality with and celebrate the differences in our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Submitted by Tom Taylor

Growing in God's Love and Grace

Recently we had a new addition to our family. His name is Brayden Thomas Taylor. He has become the joy and love of the Loney /Taylor Families. But the greatest joy for me has been to watch his mom and dad fall more in love with him every day and to watch Brayden growing in recognition and love for his parents. Yes, he will smile for his aunts and uncles and his grandparents but the reaction when he sees or hears Tom or Stephanie cannot compare to any reaction the rest of us receive. Brayden knows his parents, he knows they are the most important people in his 10 week old little life. And he will soon learn that whatever he will do, where ever he goes, whatever mistakes he may make in his life, he will always have their unconditional love. And throughout his life he will grow in that love and become the strong and independent man they will have nurtured and prayerfully he will return that unconditional love.

As Christians this is a gift we have received from God. As his children we have God's

unconditional love and his unconditional forgiveness that cannot compare to any other relationship we will ever have. Do we realize how important God's love and grace to our lives is? Do we appreciate what God has done for us? And do we want to grow in that love and grow closer to God? Do we realize that whatever we do, where ever we go, whatever mistakes we will make in this life, his love and grace are unconditional.

Yes God's love and grace is un-merited, and unconditional, but our Heavenly Father wants us to grow in that love as a forgiven people. We cannot just say great I am loved, my sins are forgiven, and that is that. God wants us to grow in his love and grace just as Brayden will grow in the love and grace of his mom and dad.

Accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior is a journey. It is our duty to grow in holiness of heart and life. John Wesley described it as "having the mind of Christ". We need to continue to grow in God's grace and love to live, serve, pray, and worship in such a way that we become an extension of God and become His hands on earth. We are to grow and become so filled with God's love and grace that there is no longer any room for sin and evil in our lives. John Wesley called this "perfection in love" and with God's help we should always be moving "on to perfection".

We do this by what we call the "Means of Grace" and we divide them into 2 sections:

We have the works of Piety: Prayer (private and Family), Public Worship, The Lord's Supper, Reading and studying scripture, Christian Conference and fasting or abstinence.

Next is the works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the jails and prisons, sheltering the homeless, welcoming the stranger, peacemaking, and acts of common good.

In order to maintain some sort of balance between the two as a Christian community we need each other. Because naturally, depending on who we are we would only chose the works that fit our personality and leave the others go. But the truth is in order to grow in God's life and grace we need to participate in both works of piety and works of mercy. To me the works of piety come so much easier than the works of mercy, it is hard for me to put myself out there but hopefully knowing it is so important to "Having the mind of Christ" will help

me in the future to put myself out there more often and become better at the works of mercy.

I realize looking at this list may be overwhelming, so I invite you this Lenten season to choose a couple of them to put into practice every day, and make it a habit. I have heard it takes 21 days before something becomes a habit. Imagine at the end of Lent we will have had 40 days to grow in God's love and Grace! I wish for each of you God's Love and grace to grow abundantly this Lenten season.

God's peace, Beth Taylor

Looking ahead:

Although it is almost a year away. Mark your calendars now for our annual Sky Lake retreat. Dates for 2013 are February 1st through the 3rd

Calendar of events

Bible study, Tuesday evenings at Peckville UMC, 7:00p.m. All are invited.

Peckville Choir meets on Thursday's at 6:45p.m. All are invited.

2/29 – Lenten service at St. James/St. George in Jermyn

3/1 – Peckville Administrative Board meeting at 8:00pm

3/ 4 – Welsh Cookie orders in today

3/7 – Lenten service at the Blakely Baptist church

3/12 – Welsh Cookies made at Peckville **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED**

3/14 – Lenten service place to be announced

3/21 – Lenten service at Peckville UMC

3/27 – Staff Parish Relations committee, 7:00pm at Bradley Memorial

3/28 – Lenten service at United Presbyterian

4/1 – Palm Sunday

4/5 – Holy Thursday service, 7:00pm Peckville UMC

4/6 – Good Friday services at Blakely Baptist church 12:00 noon until 3:00pm

4/6 – Good Friday service at Bradley Memorial at 7:00pm

Because the hospitals no longer call a pastor because it interferes with the patient's right to privacy, the pastor asks that the family of anyone in the hospital please call her. It will be the only way she will know. Thank You.

Rev Shambora can be reached
any time at 371-8123.

You may reach the charge secretary (Beth Taylor) at 383-2119, edt1157@yahoo.com

The Peckville United Methodist Church is now on the World Wide Web at www.peckvilleumc.org and Facebook.

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Crown Him with many crowns,

The lamb upon his throne.

Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.

*Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.*

**The mission statement of the
Peckville and Bradley Memorial Churches:
To Glorify God by sharing
The Gospel of Jesus Christ,
Nurturing disciples,
And reaching out to a world in need.**