

# CHRONICLER

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

www.evangelicalucc-cape.org

MARCH 2008

## Easter Sure Is Early This Year

Easter is termed a movable feast because it is not fixed in relation to our calendar. Easter falls at some point between late March and late April each year. Although we are used to Easter moving around the calendar, this does seem strange compared to our civic holidays. After all, we always celebrate Independence Day on July 4. Why not celebrate Easter on the actual **day of Christ's resurrection? Why not? Because we don't know exactly when the resurrection occurred on our modern calendar!**

When we look back at Bible times, it is difficult to understand how people could live without **calendars and clocks. I can't** imagine how I could live without knowing the year, month, day, hour, minute with atomic clock precision. Our calendars and clocks seem precise and scientific. However, how precise are they, when we have to add a whole day to February this year to keep the calendar accurate?

Accurate in what sense? A calendar is only accurate and useful if the cycle of the months corresponds with the cycle of the seasons. July should always be in summer and January should always be in winter. Our 365 day Gregorian calendar (named after the Pope Gregory

XIII who issued a papal bull reforming the calendar on 24 February 1582) gradually drifts away from the cycle of the seasons, requiring us to add the extra day to February every 4 years, a practice begun in 46 BC.

For the farmers and herders of the Bible keeping the calendar in sync with the seasons was even more important for them than it is for us. One of the primary reasons for developing a calendar is to know when to plant your crops. The best calendar is a solar calendar, which relies of measurement of equinoxes and solstices.

However, if like the **ancient Jews, you don't have** the capability to make precise astronomical measurements, it is much easier to develop a lunar calendar. A lunar calendar is based on the phases of the moon, which are easy to observe. However, a lunar calendar drifts relative to the seasons. Over a period of around 34 years, each month makes a complete cycle of the seasons. This makes a lunar calendar

useless for agricultural purposes. The solution devised by the ancient Jews was to develop a lunar calendar based on the appearance of the new crescent moon, and then to adjust the calendar to keep it in accord with the seasons by

*The Promise  
of Easter*



*“Steeped in Tradition, Stirred by the Spirit,  
Sweetened with Love”*

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adding an extra month every two or three years—a lunisolar calendar.

In addition to aiding with agriculture, the Jews used the calendar to regulate the cycle of religious observances in accordance with the Torah—the first five books of the Bible. The Jewish holidays have a fixed date in the Hebrew calendar—Passover is always celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month called Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew year. Although Passover is the same date in the Hebrew calendar, each year it is on a different day of our **Gregorian solar calendar**. In today's world, both the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars are based on precise astronomical observations and mathematical calculations. It is therefore possible to calculate the Gregorian date of Passover using conversion tables and formulas or by using computer programs, many of which are available free on the web.

Jesus was crucified on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and rose from the dead on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan some year between AD 27 to 33. Because of this uncertainty, it is impossible to calculate the actual calendar date of the resurrection under the Gregorian calendar. Of course, this leads to an obvious solution—calculate the date of Passover, add two days and you have Easter. However, there is one problem. The resurrection occurred on a Sunday and the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan can be on any day of the week.

Therefore, instead of basing their calculation of Easter on Passover, the Church decided to make their own calculation, setting Easter as the Sunday after the first full moon on or after the day of the vernal equinox. However, instead of using the actual vernal equinox—the date when the Sun will cross directly over the Earth's equator on March 20 or 21—Easter calculations always use March 21 as a starting point. As a result, Easter falls on 35 possible dates ranging from March 22 to April 25 in a cycle lasting exactly 5,700,000 years. As a result, Easter not only moves around on the Gregorian calendar, but its re-

lationship to the Jewish Passover varies from year to year.

This method of setting Easter was developed after the Council of Nicaea, in 325 AD. (Those same folks gave us the Nicene Creed.) Most Christians adopted it over the centuries, although the Eastern Orthodox Church never adopted the Gregorian calendar, which means that their Easter usually falls on a different date! There have been many proposals over the years to make Easter a fixed feast, like Christmas or to base it on a universal astronomical standard, but these reforms never seem to get much support.

For most of us, the movement of Easter across the calendar is a mystery, or sometimes an inconvenience, especially when it comes so early! However, like most strange church traditions, a closer look reveals a rich and fascinating history of how to reconcile the essential mystery of the resurrection with a need for a regular cycle of religious life. Christ lived, died, and rose from the dead in a world without our clocks and calendars. Yet his resurrection is as real and relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it has ever been.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge  
the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

Amen.

Your Friend in Christ,  
Pastor Dan Johnson

## Spiritual Fellowship

### ASAP

The ASAP Youth Group would like to say Thank You to everyone who stayed for their annual Spaghetti Meal and Bingo Event. The ASAP was able to collect a little over \$300.00. A special thanks goes to the adult sponsors, the cooks, their parents and to the members of our congregation for all their help.

Please remember to bring your rummage sale items to church this week. The rummage sale is scheduled for Saturday, March 8th. We need all the help we can get. *THANKS!*

### Union of Concerned Christians

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| March 5  | Prepare and Serve Lenten Meal  |
| April 13 | UCC will help with the church Ham Supper   |
| April 20 | Dogwood-Azalea Tour at <b>Charleston, then "dutch treat"</b> dinner at Giant City Lodge, Makanda, IL |

### Friendship Circle

The Friendship Circle will meet March 11th at 7:00 PM. Grace Coy will lead the devotions. Pastor Dan Johnson will present a program about Easter. Dorothy Klein & Grace Coy will provide our refreshments.

### Lent Schedule

#### *Wednesday Night Schedule*

5:30 Light Lenten Meal

6:45 Brief Evening Prayer—Offertory collection for One Great Hour of Sharing

7:00 Open Gym

#### *Meal Schedule*

March 5—Union of Concerned Christians

March 12—Council

March 20—Maundy Thursday

Casserole Dinner @ 5:30 PM

\*Please bring a casserole and/or contribute to the meal expenses.

Communion/Tenebrae Service @ 6:30 PM

#### *Other Events*

March 21—Good Friday Cross Walk, 12:15 PM

Old St. Vincent's Church

—Good Friday Prayer Service

6:45 PM @ Evangelical UCC

March 22—Easter Vigil 6:45 PM @ EUCC

March 23—Sunrise Service 6:30 AM @

Riverfront Park—If raining go to

1st Presbyterian Church — Broadway

### Mary– Martha News

Church Women United will celebrate World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 7th at 9:00 AM **at Old St. Vincent's in downtown Cape. "God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding" is the topic for the worship service.** All the women of EUCC are encouraged to attend.

Mary-Martha Circle will meet on Thursday, March 6th following our winter vacation. Dorothy Klein will give the devotions and serve refreshments.

In 1973 our church joined other churches who participated in the Church Women United **"Blanket Drive" for Church World Services.** That first year \$400.00 was collected. Since then the offerings reach several thousand dollars annually. **On this 35th "March Blanket Month" following the 2008 ice storms we should all be aware of the value of a \$5.00 wool blanket!** Envelopes will be in the church pews.

Alta Proffer, our oldest EUCC member will celebrate her 100th Birthday on March 26th. **Let's send her lots of cards at Fountainbleau Lodge.**



## 100th Birthday

## For Your Information

### All-Church Rummage Sale

Saturday, March 8, 2008  
 8 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
 Evangelical United Church of Christ  
 33 South Ellis  
 Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Good Used Clothing  
 Variety of Household Items  
 Miscellaneous Items

Chili and Hot Dogs  
 available for purchase  
 from 11:00 AM—2:00 PM

Proceeds to Benefit  
 A.S.A.P. Youth Group  
 (Always Say A Prayer)

## Memorial Gifts



**With Deepest Sympathy**

### Memorial Fund

In Memory of Ken Otey  
 Gary & Clodine Metje

### Memorial General Fund

Kenneth Otey  
 S.G. & Grace Coy

### Youth Group

ASAP Youth Group  
 Calvin & Verla Sailer  
 In Memory of Harold Stahlman

## Council Financial Report

Beginning Check Book	Balance 1-1-08	\$36,269.22
Deposits	January	\$6,508.03
	Interest	\$0.29
Total Deposits for January		\$6,508.32
Distributions	January	\$7,014.67
Ending Check Book	Balance 1-31-08	\$35,762.87
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A.G. Edwards Account	{Memorial Fund}	
	Interest	\$27.05
	Deposits	\$495.00
Ending Balance	As of 12/31/07	\$11,788.70
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Check Book Balance	As of 2/18/08	\$34,093.56

## Prayer List & Friends at Home

### Prayer List

In case of hospitalization or surgery please notify our church office. When being admitted to a hospital be sure to tell them that you are affiliated with this congregation. \* indicates a new request.

*Please note: after six months names will be removed from the prayer list, unless an update is made to the church office.*

Leo Amelunke; 09-07  
Loyd Bollinger  
S.G. Coy  
\*Family of Reece Dgson; 03-08  
**Michael "Benji" Doerhoff; 01-08**  
Ruby Doughty; 03-08  
Joan Hope; 03-08  
Mary Huckstep  
\*Carol Huebert; 02-08  
Frankie Hutson; 11-07  
Jaden, 1 & 1/2 yrs old—seizures; 12-07  
\*Ernest & Ida Mae Jordan  
Robert Juergens; 08-07  
Frank Maevers, Sr.  
Kenny Mehrle  
Cheryl Olson; 01-08  
[**Mary Huckstep's granddaughter**]  
Helen Owens; 01-08  
Tonya Pobst; 09-07  
Paul Propst; 08-07  
\*Sharon Reif; 03-08  
Calvin Sailer; 01-08  
Kaylyn Sneathen; 08-07  
Susan Spinks; 01-08  
Wesley, Kailey &  
Kimberley Spinks; 01-08  
Andrea Truitt; 11-07  
LaDonna Wills; 09-07

### Friends at Home

Ratliff Nursing Home  
717 N. Sprigg Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Polly Wilmsmeyer

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Fountainbleau Lodge  
2001 N. Kingshighway  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Alta Proffer

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Lutheran Home  
2825 Bloomfield Road  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703

Dorothy Cole  
Frank Maevers, Sr.  
Leonard Moore  
Andora Peetz

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House Bound

Ruby Doughty  
711 South Pacific Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703-7836

Esther Nussbaum  
181 Gopher Lane  
Gordonville, MO 63701-9506

Helen Owens  
2237 West Cape Rock Drive  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-2857

“With everlasting Love I will have compassion on you ...”

Isaiah 54 : 8

Evangelical United Church of Christ  
33 South Ellis Street  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63703-6201

Pastor Dan Johnson  
Church Phone: 573-335-5611  
Church e-mail: eucc-cape@sbcglobal.net  
Church Web Site: evangelicalucc-cape.org

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ETC.



### Meal-a-Month for FISH

Cold or Hot Cereal  
Canned Fruit  
Spaghetti Sauce & Pasta  
Canned Soup, Chili or Stew  
Red Beans & Rice  
Macaroni & Cheese  
Tea Bags

*Thank You!*

### SEE YOU THERE ...

Order for Good Friday (3/21 6:45 PM)  
The Order for Good Friday is intended to rehearse the passion story of our Savior Jesus Christ. While the mood is solemn; it is also one of hope, looking forward to the great Easter celebration.

The Great Vigil of Easter (3/22 at 6:45 PM)  
The Great Vigil of Easter, scheduled anytime between after sunset on Holy Saturday and before sunrise on Easter Sunday, is an ancient liturgy of the church with deep roots in scripture. It is a full liturgy, rich in symbolism and dramatic in form.

*Source: Book of Worship, UCC*