



FROM THE PASTOR

The Cross and the Star Thrower

The *Harper's Bible Dictionary* reminds us that the word "Easter" comes from the name of the Norse goddess, *Eastre*, whose festival was observed at the vernal equinox, and is akin to the Latin word for "dawn" and the Greek word for "east." Also, for all of us who have a hard time remembering how the date for Easter is set each year, the *Dictionary* provides us with the answer: "observed on the first Sunday after the full moon on or following the vernal equinox." And, yes, this year it comes about as early as is possible – on March 23.

Easter comes at the culmination of the Lenten season following the events of Holy Week that begin on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. The most significant event in Holy Week is the crucifixion, when Jesus died on the cross. But as we know, on the third day after that day of darkness and apparent defeat, there were those who experienced the resurrection of Jesus, and who continued to experience Jesus, as Marcus Borg expresses it, "as a living spiritual reality, a figure of the present, not simply a memory from the past." Easter was God's "Yes" to life and love and all that was lifted up in the life and ministry of Jesus. With all that in mind, Susan Miller once wrote a very helpful and meaningful piece, *The Cross and the Star Thrower*. What follows is her story:



Loren Eiseley, a naturalist, tells a story about a star thrower. He was in the seaside town of Costabel, and, plagued by insomnia, spent the early morning hours walking the beach. Each day at sunrise, he found townspeople combing the sand for starfish which had washed ashore during the night, to kill them for commercial purposes. Eiseley thought this was a sign, however small, of all the ways the world says "No" to life.

One morning, however, Eiseley got up unusually early, and discovered a solitary figure on the beach. This man, too, was gathering starfish, but each time he found one alive he would pick it up and throw it as far as he could out beyond the breaking surf, back to the nurturing ocean from which it came. As days went by, Eiseley found this man embarked on his mission of mercy each morning, seven days a week, no matter the weather.

Eiseley called this man "The Star Thrower." On the beach in Costabel, everything that Eiseley had been taught about evolution and the survival of the fittest was contradicted by one man. For this man, strong as he was, reached down to save the weak. Eiseley wondered if there is a star thrower at work in the universe, a God who contradicts death, a God whose nature is mercy itself.

During this season of Lent, our focus is on the Cross. This cross is one of the ways that human beings said "No" to life. And yet, through the cross of Jesus, God says a resounding "Yes" to life. Through this cross of Jesus, God reaches down to save us from ourselves. Through this cross of Jesus, God rescues us from certain death – he hurls us back into the fullness of life. And he invites us to take up our crosses and follow him – to become star throwers ourselves, cherishing life for all people. Through the Cross of Jesus, God invites us to join our voices with his in a resounding "Yes" to life.

A blessed Easter to all our church members and friends!

Larry W. Smith

CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

- Mar. 2 Sunday, 9:00 A.M. Capital Campaign **Team Captains meeting** (Corner Room).
 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (begin in class). One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be received.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Cherub Choir**.
 Sunday, 11:30 A.M. **Junior Choir**.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Resource Group meeting** in the sanctuary.
- Mar. 3 Monday, 6:40 P.M. **Music Committee**.
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir**.
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Christian Education Committee**.
 Monday, **Honor Court** will be hosted in Hartford by our church.
- Mar. 4 Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. **Adult Study**.
- Mar. 5 Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. **Capital Campaign Review**.
 Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:15 P.M. **Confirmation Class**.
- Mar. 6 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir**.
- Mar. 8 Saturday, 6:30 A.M. **JYF/SYF Ski Trip**. Meet at the church parking lot.
- Mar. 9 Sunday, 8:30 A.M. **Teachers' Meeting** (with Communion).
 Sunday, 9:00 A.M. **Missions Committee**.
 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (begin in class).
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. Capital Campaign **Callers meeting** in sanctuary.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Cherub Choir**.
 Sunday, 11:30 A.M. **Junior Choir**.
- Mar. 10 Monday, 10:00 A.M. **Prayer Shawl Ministry**.
 Monday, 6:30 P.M. **Board of Trustees**.
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir**.
- Mar. 11 Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. **Adult Study**.
- Mar. 12 Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. **Church Council**.
- Mar. 13 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir**.
- Mar. 16 Sunday, 9:50 A.M. Children line up in Parish Hall for **processional** with palms.
 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School.
 Sunday, 11:00 A.M. **Palm Sunday Pot Luck**.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Cherub Choir**.
 Sunday, 11:30 A.M. **Junior Choir**.
 Sunday, 4:00 P.M. Capital Campaign **Training**.
- Mar. 17 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir**.
- Mar. 18 Tuesday, Adult Study will NOT meet.
 Tuesday, 7:00 P.M. **Diaconate**.
- Mar. 19 Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir** (note change of day for March).
- Mar. 20 Thursday, 7:30 P.M. **Maundy Thursday** worship.
- Mar. 23 **Easter Sunday**, 9:00 A.M. and 10:30 A.M. Worship. Church School classes do NOT meet. Nursery care will be provided for the 9:00 A.M. service.
- Mar. 24 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir**.
- Mar. 25 Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. **Adult Study**.
- Mar. 26 Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:15 P.M. **Confirmation Class**.
- Mar. 27 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir**.
- Mar. 30 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (*begin in church*).
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Junior Choir**.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **SYF meeting**.
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Capital Campaign Kick-Off Brunch**.

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