

REV. JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

April 2018



Dear Friends,

As I get older, I realize Easter has always been my favorite time of the year. At Easter my heart and mind is most clearly focused on family, friends, and God. My favorite Easter memories are from a time when I was about 7 years old. They flow together like the scenes from a home movie.



Scene 1- Mom and Dad are taking my sister Jeannie and I on our annual clothes shopping trip to find our new "Easter Church Clothes". I remember we found Jeannie's new dress and a very cute Easter bonnet at the first store we went to, but we couldn't find a suit in my size. My Mom made me try on "at least a thousand suits" before she found the one she said was just perfect. OK, so maybe it was only 10 suits, but when you're 7 years old, and don't like to try on clothes, it seemed like a thousand suits!

Scene 2 – I'm at the Easter Sunday worship service at Christ United Methodist Church in Tyrone. I see white lilies and brightly colored tulips behind the altar; and our church organist Harry Lykens motioning the choir to stand as our Church Family sang *Up from the Grave He Arose*". I see my favorite Sunday School teacher, Verva Miles. I remember "feeling like I belonged to this great big family" when I was in church.

Scene 3 – Jeannie and I are sitting on the living room floor, playing with our toys and looking at our Easter baskets after we came home from church and changed out of our "good clothes". Our biggest decision was "what do we eat first - chocolate bunnies or yellow Marshmallow Peeps?" Now, as I'm nearly 63 years old, I realize life was sure a lot simpler when I was 7 years old! Mom picked my clothes, the flowers were pretty, songs were great, people were friendly, and there were lots of chocolate bunnies and Marshmallow Peeps!

Looking back, at age 7, I'm not sure I totally understood what the preacher meant when he said, "*Jesus arose from a grave, and we too can arise from places in our lives that feel like we're dead, and if we accept Jesus in our hearts, we can live forever!*" Now I know what the preacher meant as he talked about "*the places in our lives that feel like we're dead!*"

- *As adults, we know firsthand about feelings of loss.* I miss my Grandparents and Dad so much.
- *As adults, we know the uneasy feeling in the pit of our belly when we make difficult decisions.* They wear us down when we feel like we're faced with "no win" choices. I long for the decisions of my childhood, "what do I eat first - chocolate bunnies or Marshmallow Peeps?"

However, what I know is that since I accepted Jesus into my heart, I know what real joy feels like! I have the promise of eternal life in heaven and I know I have abundant life here on earth. Now I face the complex decisions of life with greater peace since I know who holds the answers to all the questions in the world.

Now I know God has all the answers, and the answers all center on God's Love and following the teachings of Jesus! My prayer for you is that you experience God's love and Joy this Easter! I'm looking forward to seeing you at Church.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim