

April 1, 2014

The Oaks



Riverton First United Methodist Church, (217) 629-9721

Scratchings from the Dixon Pencil

Betting on God

It seems like everywhere I look lately I see a bar, a restaurant or convenience store proclaiming that it now has video gaming. This form of gambling has exploded since its recent legalization. I think that is unfortunate because of the social costs of expanded gambling, things like addiction, corruption and losses of money that should have gone toward groceries, children's clothes etc. It is a source of income for the businesses and revenue for the state in taxes and license fees, but I don't think these benefits balance out the social and moral costs. That's all I'm going to say about legal gambling right now, though.

What I really want to talk about in this column is another form of betting – gambling on God. I got to thinking along these lines partly because of the bumper crop of video gaming signs. But it is also relevant because Easter is this month. You see, the person I am thinking about, who proposed a famous wager about God, is a man named Blaise Pascal. His last name, Pascal, is the French form of the Greek/Latin word paschal. A dictionary defines paschal as “relating to Passover or Easter.” Theologians talk about the Paschal Lamb, for instance, which is the lamb that is sacrificed for the Passover meal in Judaism, or to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, the ultimate sacrifice whose death and resurrection we remember at Easter.

Blaise Pascal, whose last name means Easter, lived in the 1600s. He was a mathematician, scientist, inventor, philosopher and devout Christian. He did pioneering work in probability theory, measurement of atmospheric pressure, and invented a calculator. The computer programming language PASCAL is named in his honor. He died young, but left a manuscript which contained his notes toward an unfinished book on Christian apologetics – a defense of Christianity against its critics. One of the central parts of it was this piece we call Pascal's Wager. Here's how it goes:

- Either God exists or he does not exist. Human reason cannot fully prove or disprove it. But in our lives we have to choose one option or the other. If you try not to choose, that decision is itself a negative choice, living as if God does not exist.
- If you choose to believe in God, and God really exists, then you gain all the promises in the Bible, like happiness now and eternal life in heaven. All you lose by that choice is some temporal pleasures (sins and vices you would have committed in a godless life).
- If you choose to believe in God, but God is not real, you still only lose those temporal pleasures, but you will live a good life with a sense of purpose (actually a gain even though you bet wrong).
- If you choose not to believe in God, but God really does exist, your loss is infinite – no eternal life or happiness (hell instead). And all you gain is some temporary pleasures.
- If you bet against God and are right, that he does not exist, you only win those temporal pleasures. But you lose a sense of purpose or meaning in life. (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE...)

So bet on God. You have everything to gain: happiness and a good life here and the infinite blessing of heaven. Even if you are wrong, all you miss out on are some temporal pleasures.

Never bet against God. God has already won the cosmic battle against evil by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Paschal (or Pascal) Lamb.

Happy Easter!
Pastor Jonathan Dixon

Summer Lunch Program

Exciting news--Riverton School District is gearing up to have a Summer Lunch Program for the months of June and July!!

The meals will be prepared at the Elementary School and then distributed to further sites. We can be praying for this time of healthy activities for anyone 18 and younger. It will begin around 11 daily --Monday through Friday.

Pray and consider how you can be involved:

1. Volunteer at a site (full or part time)
2. Assist with games at any of the sites
3. Read books at a site
4. Check the eaters in at a site
5. Deliver the meals
6. Pray for the volunteers and workers
7. Come and work at the Kick off at the end of May.
8. Learn about the work and encourage as you are able.
9. Thanks God for this wonderful opportunity to have well nourished young people that work toward a fruitful future.
10. Come and care for the people on site.

April Birthdays

Zachary Thomas	4/14/1992
Barry Tester	4/15
Josey Stoneburner	4/16/1997
Staci Byers	4/18
Helen Julius	4/19
Megan Mackenzie	4/19/1995
Nadine Mackenzie	4/21/1986
Marsha Sutton	4/24/1951
Janet Gowin	4/29/1940

April Anniversary

Craig and Connie Thomas 4/15/1989

Trustee News

The trustees are headed to "yard mode". Spring is coming. It is a promise! With that thought in mind, the church needs a new mower. Our John Deere mower is at least thirty years old and has had numerous repairs. It needs to be replaced. Most of the money has been appropriated, but not all. There are several bids on a new mower and we will ask for demonstrations at the church before a decision will be made for the purchase. IF you feel compelled, wish to make a donation toward this purchase, please indicate that your donation is for that item. It will be greatly appreciated.

We will need to do a clean-up the church yard day in the near future. Please watch for more information in the Sunday bulletins.

RFUMC Calendar – April 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7:00 PM Trustees	2 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 AM CLM at Church	3	4	5
6 Fifth Sunday of Lent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Class; 3:00 PM Health Insurance Informational Meeting at Conference Center	7	8 7:00 PM United Methodist Women	9 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 CLM at Church; 12:00 PM CLM Advi- sory Committee; 7:00 PM Choir Practice	10	11	12
13 Palm/Passion Sunday 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Study; 6:30 PM Fi- nance and Administra- tion Meeting	14	15 6:00 PM United Methodist Men	16 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	17	18 7:00 PM Good Friday Service here	19
20 7:00 AM Easter Sunrise Service at Riverton First Baptist Church; 8:00 AM Fellowship Breakfast there; 9:30 AM Easter Worship here; 10:30 AM Easter Egg Hunt for children	21	22	23 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	24	25	26
27 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Study	28	29	30 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice			

Looking Ahead...

May 7, Mother-Child Banquet with “Heavenly Harmony”

May 11, Mothers Day

May 23, Teddy Bear Graduation here

May 30, Summer Lunch Program Kick-off

June 4-7 Annual Conference in Peoria

June 15, Fathers Day

June 22-27, Vacation Bible School

Next Newsletter Deadline: April 20



The United Methodist Women

Will meet: Tuesday, April 8 at 7:00 PM

Program: Betty Peel

Hostesses: Nadine Mackenzie and Hope
McKenzie

We welcome all the ladies of the Church.
Come see us in the fellowship hall.

Quilting Update

The quilters have completed the "hanky quilt" they had been working on for a very, very, very long time. Another quilt is in the frame and we are looking forward to begin the quilting on it. It is made up of embroidered blocks in teal, black and yellow. It is a fresh looking combination and we are looking forward to working on it.

Don't forget, we are always anxious to teach you to quilt.....or just come down and laugh/chat with the quilters.

Scrip Cards

Easter is almost here! Need cards to fill those Easter baskets/cards? We can help. Then don't forget that graduation is going to be here before you know it! Also baby showers, wedding showers, vacation time, etc. Gift cards are good for all those things, plus your normal shopping trips. We can help!

Through the process of your purchase of these gift cards, the SCRIP account paid another \$1,000.00 on the church's loan principal at the end of March. It is our goal for 2014 to pay a total of at least \$3,000.00 on the loan. This will be accomplished only through your participation. Thank you for the past purchases you've made.

Mother-Child Banquet

May 7, 2014, 6:00 PM

Entertainment will be shared by
"Heavenly Harmony"

Meat, Desert and Drink will be provided.
We ask you to share a dish

Reservations due by May 4, 2014

Call:

Mary Pugh, 629-9021
Bonnie Klaves, 629-9794
Or
Marsha Sutton, 629-8258



Riverton First United Methodist
429 East Lincoln
Riverton, IL 62561



Address Correction Requested

RFUMC PHONE: (217) 629-9721
E-MAIL: rvrtnumc@sbcglobal.net
WEBSITE: www.rivertonfirstumc.org

MISSION STATEMENT: *Our mission is to draw people into relationship with Christ and the church and to lovingly challenge them to spiritual growth.*

OUR VISION: *A warm fellowship of Christians in the Riverton area, growing in numbers and spiritual nurture, with facilities and programs to do ministry in the name of Jesus Christ for generations to come.*

