

Oh Lord our Lord, how



majestic is Your name
in all the earth. Psalm 8:1

Hillside Highlights

www.hillsideomoncton.org

April 1, 2014

A Springtime Mystery

by Katherine Britton

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Romans 1:20

When was the last time you wondered if spring would ever come? Not in the ironic sense - really wondered if winter might last forever, something like the 100 years of winter in Narnia. My guess is never. Most of North America lives in the reality of four seasons, and we expect the Earth to naturally cycle from winter to spring to summer to fall. We expect trees to unfurl new leaves this time of year because they're supposed to.

But what if they didn't? What if the trees bloomed in winter when their new leaves would freeze, or what if their flowers matured into hornets' nests instead of apples? What if they didn't bloom at all?

In his autobiographical work, *Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton remembers his journey from agnosticism to faith including such nonsensical questions. Before he became the great 20th century apologist, he was a man confined to the world of determinism, where the natural world was governed by impersonal laws or nothing. But observing spring outside his window, he was struck by the wonderful fact that for some reason, trees do indeed bloom into fruit.

"They [materialists/determinists] talked as if the fact that trees bear fruit were just as necessary as the fact that two and one trees make three. But it is not... You cannot imagine two and one not making three. But you can easily imagine trees not growing fruit..." I had always vaguely felt facts to be miracles in the sense that they were wonderful: now I began to think them miracles in the stricter sense that they were willful. I mean that they were, or might be, repeated exercises of some will. In short, I had always believed that the world involved magic: now I thought that perhaps it involved a magician." (Orthodoxy)

I owe Chesterton a great debt, because he taught me to be amazed at everyday grace. After all, how often do we marvel that the sky is blue (or grey) instead of orange or electric pink? Yet again, familiarity breeds contempt, and we forget what incredible world this "magician" made and keeps in order. Like children who see the same magic trick one too many times, we stop wondering "how did he do that?" and are bored until we see something new.

I use the term "magician" loosely - God is no mere conjurer of tricks, and Jesus didn't feed the 5,000 just to wow the crowd. But I wonder that we lose our wonder of this world, even in its fallen state. As Paul writes in Romans, the evidence of God's incredible, "eternal power" and transcendent, "divine nature" is right in front of our eyes. How do we forget a God so great that He makes trees bloom?

As winter turns to spring again, I can't help but look outside and be amazed. To paraphrase Chesterton, the fact that grass is really green - and so perfectly suited for springtime sports - truly is a miracle, a supernaturally guided fact. What an awesome God.

Intersecting Faith & Life: When was the last time you took a look outside? Consider that "the heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 8:1) and the Earth is the work of his hands. Are you properly inspired to worship their Creator?

Further Reading: Psalms 33:5, Genesis 8:22



Hey **kids** (age 4-grade 5) are you ready for a sweet night at **Power UP**? Don't miss a minute of Candy Land fun, it all starts at 6:15pm tomorrow (April 2). **Inviting a friend** to come with you would be a **real treat!**

Let's shine His light to our community this Easter!

Who are you inviting?



On Tuesday night, the EVE of the storm. 150 Hillside's gathered with a warm sense of unity for the annual operations meeting celebrating the year 2013. Also, we couldn't help but celebrate what has happened over the past 12 weeks of 2014. It was quite a celebration! For those who were unable to attend here's **Pastor Dave's "Top 10: Incredibly Amazing Hillside Celebrations the Eve of the Noreaster... #donotmissnextyearsmeeting"**

#10 - Sonshine Kids Academy, Hillside's after school program has renewed their license for another year. Sarah shared they grew from 8-48 and will max out at 60 this fall! 60 elementary kids, from our community hearing a bible story every day, gym, craft activities, healthy place to form friendships with our amazing 5 full time staff, children's ministry team!

#9 - 23 Baptisms and 38 New Members in 2013.

#8 - Fresh giving strategies including online options via Hillside Connect and Kiosks in the main lobby that will also help with registration & special events.

#7 - Kristen and Tanya shared Booming Hillside Kids ministry (largest children's programs in the entire region - VBS last summer (225 kids, 100 volunteers) & Power Up our weekly Wednesday program (avg 137 kids & 40 leaders) we are very blessed! Every number has a name, every child has a family - huge impact.

#6 - Hillside added 5 New staff additions in 2013 (Sara, Jamie, Laura, Andrew, PDave)

#5 - YTD attendance is up 13.7% after 12 weeks (despite snow storms) AND YTD giving up 14.4% after 12 weeks (again.....despite snow storms)

#4 - Because of this increase and continued momentum expected, Pastor Jerry announced that we're maintaining 2 services throughout the summer months this year!

#3 - 100 guys attended "Better Man" Winter Getaway (unprecedented for men's ministry in the region 100 guys from 1 church)

#2 - "2020 Vision" has been updated with an exciting shift in priority to focus upon finishing and furnishing a new auditorium first. Goal being to launch major capital campaign on our 41st Anniversary, Feb. 2015)

AND **#1** - Two new staff members were announced. Presenting our new Care Ministry Team..... Pastor John Weiler as our Care Pastor and Paulette Price as our Care Director. Ensuring we have an even greater sense of community caring for one another as the Acts 2 church did.



"This Sunday"

As we progress through the "Shine" series, each Sunday is an opportunity to learn about ways we can, and are, "Reflecting Him", in our home, work place, community and church. This Sunday is the 4th installment with Pastor Jerry's message "Reflect Him in Our Attitude".



If you're new to Hillside you're invited to **Getting Started** this Sunday, April 6th, Pastor Dave will host this snapshot of Hillside's ministry from 11:00am - 12:15pm. If interested, send an email to info@hillsideomoncton.org or join us in The Study (lower level) at 11am.