

# The Springfield Redeemer



The Newsletter of Redemption Gate Mission Society

April 1, 2017, Vol. 6, Ed.4

“He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said.” Matthew 28:6

## It's Not About the Bunny! by Roberta D'Amico

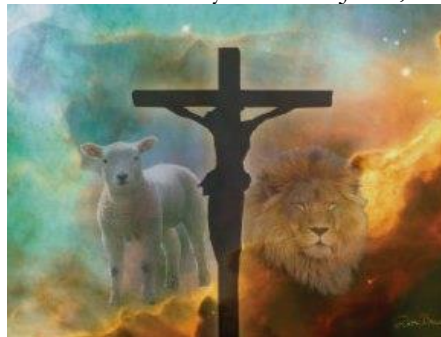
What is Easter about? As Christians, we all know that the real meaning of Easter is that Jesus died on a cross and rose again. The question facing us is, how should we celebrate it in our present ungodly world of bunnies and eggs? Here are the options; ignore the event totally; go with the easter egg hunts and candy baskets; or celebrate Jesus.

Perhaps it is helpful to consider how our present-day celebration came to be. It seems that these three events coincide at the same time in the spring! In March, we celebrate the spring equinox, when spring officially begins and the revolution of the earth around the sun crosses the line where the length of daylight and nighttime are exactly equal. In ancient times, this was widely celebrated as the “rebirth” of the year after the darkness of winter. At the same time, and connected to it, are all the ancient pagan rites of spring: rebirth, renewal, fertility. This being the God-designed season for the reproduction of many species, it is the source of the rabbit and egg symbols. Finally, it includes Passover, which is the most important connection.

Passover and Easter rarely fall on the same day. Both are determined by the Lunar calendar: Passover occurs on the 15th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, which begins with the full moon after the vernal (Spring)

equinox; Easter falls on the Sunday following the full moon after the equinox. So you have two major festivals, the pagan spring celebration and Passover.

Unless you are Jewish, have Jewish friends, or are acquainted with Hebrew Roots, you may not know the real story behind Passover. God instituted it to deliver the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt to take them to the Promised Land. It actually has a far deeper meaning than this. It is a type or a rehearsal, so to speak, of the salvation which was to come through Jesus Christ. Therefore, He instructed them to celebrate it every year in the spring to remember and to prepare their hearts for the coming Messiah. The slavery in Egypt is symbolic of our slavery to sin, as a matter of fact, Egypt itself is a type of the godless world. See Exodus 11 & 12. The Lamb is symbolic of Jesus, the



Lamb of God, Who takes away our sins. (John 1:29) The requirements for the lamb sacrificed at the Passover

were very important: it had to be a young male, perfect, with no blemish. Just like Jesus had to be sinless. Then the blood was put upon the door posts of the houses of all who believed, so the Angel of Death would “pass over” the homes of God’s people. Just as we who believe in Christ will live eternally, covered by the blood of Jesus.

They celebrated the sacrifice of Passover right up to the time when Jesus came to Earth. Then He became the last Sacrifice, being crucified on Passover, and in three days rising from the dead on Sunday. Soon after, the temple was destroyed so no more sacrifices are possible. God predetermined that He would die on Passover and resurrect Easter Sunday! In addition to this explanation of how Jesus’ death and Resurrection became combined with Easter, the Christians of the first century A.D. were all Jews who did not celebrate Easter, but as the church expanded through the centuries, and God brought Gentiles into the church, many no doubt celebrated Easter, and unfortunately brought their traditional celebrations with them. So now we have this combination of Easter and the Resurrection of Christ.

The Resurrection Day of Jesus Christ is the most important event in all of Christendom. But in recent years, it is being obscured by pagan

Easter celebrations, like Christmas is overtaken by Santa Claus. Christians could ignore the whole Easter celebration, but then we would also lose the remembrance of His death,

burial, and resurrection. Pastor Cooley says, "No, let's redeem it! Christians do not need the pagan stuff; they don't need to celebrate the natural fertility; but should celebrate the real

nature of the day, spiritual life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Savior." So it's not about the bunny, it's about the Lamb!

## Reverend Renzo Ventrice Installed as Pastor at Wachogue Congregational Church

Exciting news: on April 1, Pastor Renzo is being installed as pastor at the historic Wachogue Congregational Church, where he has been the interim pastor. The present church building, built in 1956 at 80 Arvilla Street, Springfield Massachusetts, has a long tradition of the few remaining Free Congregational Churches, as their slogan indicates: "Walking the Pilgrim Way since 1924!" Wachogue is the Indian name for the area of Springfield where it stands.

Being a Free Congregational Church means that they are accountable only to God and to each other. The church congregation is small, loving, and growing. They want to bring unity of believers to the church at Wachogue,



and so are open to other believers of diverse backgrounds.

Pastor Renzo was ordained in 1984. He preaches the old-fashioned

way, straight from the Bible, without compromise. However, his message is understandable, and he has an extensive knowledge of the Bible, history, and of the early church.

This background has helped his success in his TV ministry. He does two TV Programs on Public Access at Redemption Gate Mission Society in Springfield: one is "Great Awakening" (Gospel of John) and the other is "Christian History Made Simple" (Book of Acts). Channel 12 in Springfield.

Pastor Scott, from California, is reading the Scripture at the Installation, and Pastor Cooley is doing the invocation. Congratulations, Pastor Renzo!

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## Thank You Donors!!!

Hi, all you Redeemer Readers! This is Roberta D'Amico writing a special note of thanks all of you who donate any amount to the Redemption Gate Mission Society. It is because of you Godly people who support us that we can continue to exist. Here at Holy Grounds we also take donations for the coffee, snacks and food, but do not charge, and we are all volunteers!

Because of you, we have a church which appears to be a Coffee House and is usually open at least part of every day. With God's help, we can provide a Godly space for anyone who wishes to come in, to talk, pray, read the Bible and/or other Christian books, drink coffee, eat what God has provided for us to serve, listen to Christian music. This includes the high school students who come in at 7 a.m., the folks who come to the three Sunday church services, Saturday evening fellowships, marriage seminars, Recovery meetings, and Bible Studies.

Sorry we have not sent out individual "thank you's", but we want to know that we appreciate you. Great will be your reward in heaven.

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## Ongoing Events

**SUNDAY SERVICES:** 10 a.m.- Pastors Bobby & Kim; 2 p.m.- Pastor Renzo & Betsy Ventrice; and 6 p.m.- Transformation Centered Healing Ministries with Prophet Eric Thomas & Pastor Susan.

**MONDAY -- FRIDAY:** Morning Bible Study at 7:30 a.m.

**WED.:** Bible Study - 4:30 p.m.; Recovery at 6:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY:** Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.

**SATURDAY:** Sabbath Service 9 a.m. to 12 noon; Lunch 2 to 4 p.m.

**1<sup>ST</sup> SATURDAY:** "Marriage with God" 4 to 6 p.m.

**3<sup>RD</sup> SATURDAY:** "Singles with God" 4 to 6 p.m.

**SATURDAY NIGHTS:** April 8, 7 p.m., Carl D. April 22, 7 p.m. Open Mic with Cathy Marvici.