

The Call

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IN MORRISTOWN

Butterflies

TEACH THE EASTER STORY



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Shock Trial

“Yes, there is a big trial that scares the wits out of me,” says Bishop Ray Chamberlain. “The consequences will be dire.”

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In the bulb there is a flower, in the seed an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free!

— From “Hymn of Promise,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*



By Annette Bender

MORRISTOWN, Tenn. — “The worst part for me,” says Suzanne Hughes, director of children’s ministries at First Morristown United Methodist Church, “is the stinky food you have to put in the cups with the caterpillars.”

She describes the food that the children are feeding to caterpillars as “mushy army-green with specks of orange and yellow.”

Apparently, the kids agree with her. They turn up their noses at the cups where the caterpillars are ensconced with their meals.

But soon, the children will be rewarded for their temporary displeasure. In a few days, the caterpillars will become cocoons, which Hughes will tape to a special net. By Easter Sunday, the cocoons will produce butterflies, which members of the congregation



Photo by Steve Bender, *The Call*

Suzanne Hughes, center, shows the children a cup where a caterpillar will live and eat until it spins into a cocoon.

will release after the worship services.

Raising caterpillars to adulthood and releasing butterflies on Easter is a ritual practiced at First Morristown UMC for the past six years, Hughes said.

“The story of Jesus’ resurrection and the symbolism are taught every week when the children take care of the cocoons and feed the butterflies before they are released,” she said.

Different age groups have participated in the project in the past. This year, it’s the nursery-school group raising the caterpillars.

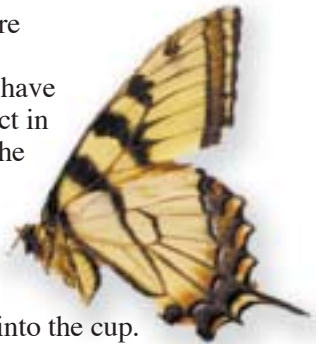
“I’d be squished in there,” says Logan Hughes, age 5, peering into the cup. “Are we going to name them? I want to name mine Logan.”

“I think they are pretty,” says Sarah Elizabeth Morelock, age 4. “On Easter it will be a butterfly.”

Technically speaking, the caterpillars ordered from an insect web site will emerge into moths instead of butterflies — Painted Lady moths. On April 11, the children, their families, and other members of the congregation are invited to the church’s memory garden at 9:30 or 11:30 a.m. to bid the moths good-bye.

The memory garden seemed appropriate, Hughes said, because it is designated for the “ashes of loved ones” within the church.

The hope is that, in this special place, the children will see the Easter story in the wings of a lady. ■



Dammann verdict prompts strong reaction

The Rev. Karen Dammann was found not guilty of “practices declared by the United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings” after a March 17-20 trial in Bothell, Wash. For both local and national reactions to the verdict, including Bishop Ray Chamberlain’s statement, see pages 6-7. ■