

Q. How Many Dogs Does It Take to Change A Light Bulb?

Depends on the breed..

Golden Retriever: The sun is shining, the day is young, we've got our whole lives ahead of us, and you're inside worrying about a stupid burned out bulb?

Border Collie: Just one. And then I'll replace any wiring that's not up to code.

Dachshund: You know I can't reach that stupid lamp!

Lab: Oh, me, me!!!! Pleeeeeeeeeeze let me change the light bulb! Can I? Can I? Huh? Huh? Huh? Can I? Pleeeeeeeeeeze, please, please, please!

Jack Russell: I'll just pop it in while I'm bouncing off the walls and furniture.

Old English Sheep Dog: Light bulb? I'm sorry, but I don't see a light bulb?

Greyhound: It isn't moving. Who cares?

Toy Poodle: I'll just blow in the Border Collie's ear and he'll do it. By the time he finishes rewiring the house, my nails will be dry.

How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb? It depends largely on denomination...

Charismatic: Only 1. Hands already in the air.

Roman Catholic: None, candles only.

Baptists: At least 15. One to change the light bulb, and 14 on the committee to approve the change and decide who needs to bring the potato salad and fried chicken.

Episcopalians: Three. One to call the electrician, one to mix the drinks and one to talk about how much better the old one was.

Presbyterians: None. Lights will go on and off at pre-destined times.

How many TV Evangelists does it take to change a light bulb?

33. One to do it, 2 to bask in its glory, 30 to take a collection in the bulb's name.

How many teenage girls does it take to screw in a light bulb?

One, but she'll be on the phone for five hours telling all her friends about it.

How many accountants does it take to change a light bulb?

What kind of answer did you have in mind?

As we move through the rest of this sermon keep a hold of the light bulb stories.... You may need them later in the sermon....

The event we celebrate today, the resurrection of Jesus Christ offers new light for the world! The resurrection of Jesus Christ is, for sure, the very center of the Christian faith, the cornerstone, the foundation, the crux of how it is God loves the world. The presence of the Risen Jesus with us and for us is the entire story, the big kahuna, the whole shebang. The resurrection is everything including the kitchen sink, the loaded potato, the whole kit and caboodle, the whole enchilada, the whole ball game, the alpha and omega, the “‘a’ to ‘z’”!

The affirmation at the center of this day: that Jesus was crucified, dead and buried, and that on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, can never be reduced to a statement to which we give or withhold intellectual assent. The Easter event, the presence of the Risen Lord with us, is much more than this. The Resurrection is an experience that can and needs to take hold of our lives TODAY! The Resurrection is an experience that can and needs to grab hold of our imaginations TODAY, and fill us with wonder and forever change the way we live today and from now on.

On the first Easter morning, those who walked and ran to the tomb into which Jesus body had been placed had no immediate answer to the question concerning the meaning of Easter. Even though the evidence was right there before their eyes, they faced the challenge of trying to make sense out of something that at first appeared senseless.

The first witnesses to Easter did not immediately declare – “Jesus is Alive!” Even though Jesus had told them many times that He would go to Jerusalem where He would face death and come back to them on the third day Mary and Simon Peter and John when they saw the empty tomb, did not immediately turn to each other and say: “Remember what Jesus told us, this is what He meant! The Lord is Risen! He is Risen indeed!” But with time, and some help and prompting, they began to connect what they saw with their eyes with their memories of Jesus’ words, and with their experience of their Savior – and slowly, as the pieces were fit together - it came to make sense – Jesus is Alive! The Lord is Risen! Risen indeed! And it would be this experience that would propel the new church forward despite opposition and persecution. And still today the good news communicated through the resurrection is shared in every part of our world.

Let me ask each of you this question today: What will Easter mean to you this year?

And let me pose another question, a paraphrase of those overused jokes at the start of this sermon: How many light bulbs does it take to change the world? The answer: Just one! Just one and this is no joke!

The compact fluorescent light bulb or “CFL” can and will alter the fate of the entire planet. It’s a product with the potential to go a long way to solving some of the most profound issues facing our world today: rising prices, energy consumption, pollution, dependence on fossil fuels. Yes, it costs a little more than those light bulbs that have seen little or no change in almost a century, but it offers great energy savings over its 10 year life span. CFL’s give bright, steady light to rival regular bulbs using 75% less electricity, generating 200 degrees less surface heat than the traditional bulb, and it will need to be changed every 10yrs not every 4 months.

The potential impact of using CFL's is staggering. If every one of the 100 million homes in America swapped out just one incandescent with one of these "swirls" the energy saved would eliminate the equivalent pollution of 1.3 million cars on the road, or save enough electricity to power a city of 1.5 million people, or close two power plants. If that's not mind-blowing enough, consider this: Many modern homes have between 50 and 100 light bulb sockets (go ahead, go home and count them!). What would the impact be if every home installed five swirls, or 10 or 50?

Let's take a survey? How many of you have at least a few CFL at home?
How many of you have turned over the majority of your lights to CFL?

Is it possible that some of us find it difficult to believe that a new light has the potential to help save the world? Maybe, but on Easter Sunday I think not! Given all the CFL can do how much more true is it that the new light brought into our world and into our lives by the Risen Lord Jesus Christ can save the world!

Easter is God's original lighting revolution. And, yes, the Easter God, the God who has taken on and defeated death, the God who encounters us in Jesus Christ, who has a calling and a purpose for all of us, this God is also very interested in seeing us take great care of the earth and asks us to demonstrate this care for creation at home and here on our church campus!

Bad stuff happens, no question about that: hurt, pain, exploitation, oppression, AIDS, strokes, heart attacks, loss, war, pandemics, Swine Flu, recession, job losses, and foreclosure. We can all likely add something to this list out of our own personal or family experience. Bad stuff does happen, and our lives are spent trying to avoid the bad stuff and to hold onto, if only momentarily, the good stuff. Bad stuff happens and so we ask: Why? Often times the answer is: We don't know, we may never know. Really bad stuff happens. There are times, from our limited human perspective when it seems that more 'bad' than 'good' happens. But good stuff does happen! Resurrection happens!! Victory over death, the ultimate, final terrible thing has happened. Death the great and seemingly final enemy is defeated.

God always has the last word and the first word as well. The first word was "Let there be light." The last word will contain and convey the same Good News that was contained in the first word. The Word God speaks is always about Good News – whether the "actual" word used is love or grace or mercy or forgiveness or peace or joy or justice or repentance or conversion or renewal – God's Word is always Good News – all because of Easter!

We know Robert Louis Stevenson as the author of books such as Treasure Island, Kidnapped and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde – as a boy he was very intrigued by the work of the lamplighter who went along the streets of his home town in Edinburgh, Scotland, with a ladder and a torch, lighting the gas lamps for the night. One evening the young Robert stood watching with childish fascination and his parents heard him exclaim, "Look, look! There's a man out there punching holes in the darkness!" My friends, once again on this Easter Day, God is punching holes in the darkness, God is lifting the shadows, God is bringing new light into our world and into our lives.

The story of Easter morning is at the heart of our faith. Today, by your presence here you have chosen to be reminded of Easter. Together, we have given a high priority to understanding what happened all those years ago and what Easter means and asks of us today. Now we are all invited to share and live this great glad news by aligning our lives with the life of the Risen Jesus. We are all invited to trust and follow Jesus, to plan to live as Jesus did, to show mercy, to offer forgiveness, to seek peace.

I want to call each of you, whether you're here every week or once a year, to commit yourself to Jesus Christ our Risen Savior, our resurrected Lord. Find yourself in the Easter story. Allow the Risen Jesus to renew your life, to change your way of living and through you change the life of your family, your community, your world.

Here at Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church our goal as a church community, week by week, and month by month, is to worship God and serve our neighbors, to listen for God's call and offer care to those in need, to learn and pray and practice, live out our faith, to encourage those who are down and to support those in trouble.

In all of this we have one purpose - to help each, and all who are drawn to align our lives with the new light for the world that comes to us in Jesus Christ. As we do this, bad stuff still happens; we still fail and fall, but we also come to experience an unshakeable hope, a generous love, a reassuring peace. As friends and followers of Jesus we do impact our hurting world as we live and share our experience of the hope and love of the Risen Jesus.

Easter begins today! Change the bulb! Switch on! Get connected! Join in! New light for the World!
New light for the whole world! Jesus is Risen! Jesus is Risen Indeed! New Light for the World! Amen.