

HOME AND OVERSEAS PAPER APRIL 2022

Chickens and eggs are traditionally associated with Easter and for this paper, I carried out a little research into why this is so. Eggs have been a part of Spring rituals for a very long time – after the long Winter, chickens and other birds start to lay their eggs again, each egg contains new life mirroring the season of Spring. Early Christians recognised the power of the egg as a symbol of new life and connected this with the new life found in the resurrection of Jesus. In addition, the chick emerging from the egg can be used as a symbol of Christ emerging from the tomb.

It is an Eastern European tradition to decorate eggs at Easter time – perhaps Circle members could decorate an egg in support of the people of Ukraine this Easter time and pray that their sufferings will soon come to an end.

In addition to the above Christian-related information, I found that chickens are quite amazing creatures! So, I thought I would provide some fun facts about Chickens for this month's paper.

1. Hens 'talk' or cluck to their chicks in the eggs before the chicks have hatched. As the chicks develop in the egg, they begin to make noises back to their mother hen. When a chick hatches it can recognise its own mother's voice and will follow it everywhere.
2. Chickens have their own language – over 30 unique sounds which are used for different purposes have been found.
3. Chickens teach other. Hens teach their babies from a young age what they should and shouldn't eat.
4. Unlike humans, chickens can see violet and ultraviolet light. A rooster can therefore see the sunrise much sooner than humans can.
5. Chickens can recognise up to 100 human faces.
6. The first chicken joke was written in 1847 in the New York Monthly Magazine. Here is an example of these usually terrible jokes!
Q: Why did the rubber chicken cross the road?
A: She wanted to stretch her legs
7. The oldest chicken ever, lived to be 22 years old. The average lifespan is 4-5 years which doubles in the case of well-kept backyard chickens.
8. They are the most common bird on the planet and outnumber humans 4:1.
9. The term "pecking order" comes from chickens. They have a very strong hierarchy with the top of the hierarchy dictating the rules to those chickens below.
10. Chickens create dust baths to keep themselves clean and to keep cool in Summer.

Below is a lovely picture of a hen protecting her chicks (and an appropriate Bible verse):



How many times have I wanted to put my arms round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me! (Luke 13:34b)

Happy Easter Sisters!

Sr. Janet Cooper