
The Good News

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

220 West Main Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 (507) 263-2901

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A loving congregational family that celebrates God's presence among us



Discipleship 101

I confess I am not a light traveler. When I was involved with the students coming from the Philippines to study at United Theological Seminary for a year, I would meet them at the airport. They would get off the plane with a single carry-on bag. And that's all they had. For a full 9 months of living on campus, that is all they brought with them. It was all they owned.

When I traveled with Tom Liddle to the Philippines four years ago, he packed like an experienced camper, which he is. And I am not. I even bought a new oversized camper's backpack, like Tom had, hoping that would be all I would pack and carry this time. But no, I still had that, and a full sized carry-on, in addition to my regular backpack. I really tried to pack lighter, and I did, to a degree, but I still had two bags, more than I needed. Someone described this as packing, for "just in case." And I did it again when we went to Parma OH in June. It's embarrassing.

Jesus' challenge to the disciples as he sent them out to teach and heal was to go out without anything they would normally have with them, even just for one day - nothing, not a clean shirt, nothing to snack on, no money to buy food or rent a room for the night, just the shirt on their backs, the shoes on their feet, and a walking stick. They were to rely on the kindness of strangers, as they went door to door, teaching, preaching, and healing, just as they had seen Jesus done.

The kind of hospitality they were anticipating was not unusual; it was the practice, it was the custom of the day, to offer food and even a bed to strangers who came to your door. It was never demanded: such welcome could be counted on.

This isn't a story about whether or not Jesus wants us to open our doors to strange preachers wearing dirty tunics and sandals. It's about how we might share what we believe, what we know about the love of God, how we might take that out into the world and make it real so that others will see and know how good and real it is just as we do, and how like Jesus' healings, it can make lives whole, restore families, and repair communities.

And when communities or congregations live in judgement rather than acceptance, when they live in the past rather than looking to the future, when they are unable to be welcoming and open and instead close their minds and their hearts to emerging realities, not even the gospel, not even the promise of lives made whole, of families restored, and communities repaired, will sound like good news.

Yes, God's in charge, but our role is to join with one another in making known God's will and work, as we know it in Jesus Christ, in and through our lives, and our life together as a community of faith.

Pr. Glen

Pastoral Care Needs

Call Pastor Glen in the event of a pastoral care need. Either call his home 651-641-1832 or cell 651-757-0314. Email pastor@citlink.net.

Volunteer Schedule

Sunday July 7th

Greeter: Joe and Stacy Coyle

Reader: Samuel Coyle

Sound Technician: Jim Hvistendahl

Sunday July 14th

Greeter: Gary and Linda Sheridan

Reader: Linda Nelson

Sound Technician: Roman Mercier

Sunday July 21st

Greeter: Jerome and Merva Swanson

Reader: Barb Herrington-Hall

Sound Technician: Steve Sullivan

Sunday July 28th

Greeter: Fred and Rhonda Foster

Reader: Rhonda Foster

Sound Technician: Byron Nowariak

Serving Committee for July

The Serving Committee for July is Mary Pat Klevan, Mary Ellen Sturm, Kathy Gerbracht, and Bonnie Kronenberger.

Prayer Chain

Morning - Bonnie Hvistendahl 263-4120

Evening - Mavis Johnson 263-2857

When you are in need of prayer for yourself or others, please call the church office at 263-2901. Your

request will be passed along to the above prayer chains.

Education/Fellowship

Anyone is welcome to join us at any time!

Tuesday Bible Study meets weekly at 10 a.m. at church. We usually meet for just over an hour, as long as we manage to stay on task! Pastor Glen leads the study, focusing on the text(s) planned for the coming Sunday's sermon.

Sunday Morning Study begins about 15 minutes after worship ends, and meets each week, except for the last Sunday of each

month. Our meetings will begin again on July 7th. We will be viewing the video series, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, by Lauren Winner, based on her book of the same title, which suggests ways Jewish spiritual practices can enhance Christian faith.

From the Mission Committee



We believe that God wants to take care of our needs and give us enough to share with others. As individuals and as the church, it is our privilege to give generously to people in need; locally, regionally, nationally, and abroad.

In May we focused on One Great Hour of Sharing as part of Our Churches Wider Mission. So far, we have collected \$540.

Youth Workcamp

197 youth and adults participated in the workcamp in Parma OH, July 16-22. 33 crews of 5-6 persons worked on 25 homes during the week, 6 hours a day, Mon-Friday. (Wednesday was a half day.)

A lot of scraping and painting was done, inside and out, but railings, stairs and fences were built, and portions of walls were re-built. Morning and noon devotions and evening worship centered on God's relentless pursuit of David. Working together, basketball, banana math, a 30-year old RV, and card games all provided opportunities for relationships to deepen. Come hear about our trip during worship on July 7.

Adults participating are Joe Coyle, Cindy Mae Nelson, Jon Sagers, John Coyle (Joe's brother), and Glen Herrington-Hall. Youth include Samuel and Thomas Coyle (Joe's sons), Brady and Taylor Coyle (John's children), and a couple of friends. Read about the travels via the blog on our website.

CCIC Monthly Supper

The Community Churches Interaction Council (CCIC) holds monthly suppers on the last Sunday of each month at FCC. June's supper will be hosted by Urland Lutheran Church on June 30th at 5:00 pm.

Women's Coffee



Join us every 3rd Thursday at 10:00 am for coffee at Hi-Quality Bakery.

The Gardens

The next Garden's visit is on July 20th from 1:30 - 3:00 pm. Everyone is welcome and appreciated.



Breaking Chains

June 2, 2019 Bulletin



There's a reason The Book of Acts is not called The Book of Hanging Around Doing Nothing. This book, which tells the story of the second generation of Jesus' followers, is definitely the adventure story of the New Testament. Full of perilous journeys, sometimes deadly confrontations, and miraculous encounters, you can almost picture it as a comic book, "Kapow!" and "Blam!" exploding in bright colors from the margins.

Having freed a slave and in so doing, robbed the slave owner of his ill-gotten livelihood, Paul and his trusty sidekick Silas are taken prisoner. Dragged to the center of town, attacked by a crowd, stripped of their clothing and beaten, our heroes find themselves thrown into the local slammer! Kapow! Blam! In a comic book, Paul and Silas would use their superpower (Invisibility? Incredible strength? Shooting magma out of their ears?) to escape the prison and enact revenge on those who have wronged them.

But Acts is not a comic book after all, because the story doesn't end here. Indeed, God's story is just beginning. Once in prison, Paul and Silas draw on one of the most transformative superpowers of God's people - they begin to sign together. When they sing, they strengthen themselves after a painful ordeal. When they sing, they bring a measure of comfort to those around them, who have also suffered unimaginable trials. When they sing, walls crumble and chains are broken. And look! It's not just prisoners who are freed by their hymns. The jailer too, is freed from the bondage of being a cog in

the machinery of punishment. In the song, God helps them sing, there is not such a neat division between the good guys and the bad guys - just people, together, in need of freedom and redemption.

Remember when you sing in a community, that you are not just making your way through a series of notes and words. You are using one of your most potent superpowers, stronger than any kapow or blam. So sing like it's your superpower. Sing to warm yourself. Sing to comfort the imprisoned. Sing to knock down walls. Sing to break chains. Sing to bring people toward the Holy One. Sing because we all, whether powerful or powerless, await salvation.

Holy Spirit - We raise our voices in song. May the words and the tunes together fill us with joy and comfort, strengthen us with resilience and courage, lead us toward freedom and salvation. And may we, through our songs, bring these gifts to all the world. Amen

Prayer for Racial Justice

We pray:

O God of unconditional love, you who show no partiality in respect to people of nations, we have heard your good news, and in hearing, believe. We know that your sanctuary is a house of worship for all people, with no regard for the color of our skin. As we worship you, knit us into a people, in a seamless garment of many colors. May we celebrate our unity, made whole in our diversity. Forgive us for our inability to let our "old selves" die to the world. We acknowledge that we participate in structures that are inherently racist, and yet we do nothing to remedy it. Show us when we fail, when we judge others according to the color of their flesh. Amen.

Adapted from the United Church of Christ's "Prayers for Racial Justice Sunday" and from the United Church of Canada

From UCC Resources

I'm the college chaplain, and I gather every Sunday with a group of students at our college's Presbyterian House. The Sunday after the town hall, we discussed our community's race relations. The students of color spoke up, frustrated and angry, about

what was left unsaid at the town hall and the issues they felt they couldn't address in that setting. They also shared their distrust of our college to do anything more about the problem than talk. One student said, "Yeah, it's like all we ever do is refer these problems to a committee, and committees are where everything goes to die."

As I listened, I fought off my white instinct to respond defensively and deflect the anger my students of color were sharing. It was an uncomfortable conversation. It was also a good one, because we didn't give up on each other.

I hadn't planned it this way, but a reading I had prepped to share after this conversation turned into a perfect segue. I passed out copies of Brian Doyle's short essay "Leap," along with a trigger warning that it is a difficult piece to read about the tragedy of September 11. In the essay, Doyle focuses on a couple who leaped from the south tower, hand in hand. About this scene, Doyle writes:

Their hands reaching and joining is the most powerful prayer I can imagine, the most eloquent, the most graceful. It is everything that we are capable of against horror and loss and death. It is what makes me believe that we are not craven fools and charlatans to believe in God, to believe that human beings have greatness and holiness within them like seeds that open only under great fires, to believe that some unimaginable essence of who we are persists past the dissolution of what we were, to believe against evil hourly evidence that love is why we are here.

After our conversation about the town hall, Doyle's words spoke to us—not only about our need for each other but about our God-given ability to reach for each other.

When Peter quotes the prophet Joel at the end of this reading from Acts, he paints a picture of Pentecost as a salvation story. Salvation here is more than a vague promise of eternal life. Salvation turns us toward each other, toward real life and real lives. The miracle of Pentecost reveals a diverse community—women and men from the first community of Christians along with

immigrants living in Jerusalem who had come "from every nation under heaven"—listening to each other, understanding each other, reaching for each other as the Holy Spirit gives them ability.

It's a miracle of community that is possible for us all—because, as Doyle writes, love is why we are here.

Teri McDowell

Deported



Here is a message posted by Pastor Betty Rendon, who landed in Bogotá after being deported

from the United States. Not surprisingly, in the middle of her suffering, she is planning to launch a new ministry... please take the time to read:

"Thank you God and thank you to all of you who are praying for peace and justice.

These are the suitcases prepared by ICE for people arriving in their destination cities. The only items in these suitcases are papers...letters received by people we love, and the medicine we receive.

I think it is necessary to develop a Ministry in the Colombian consulate that provides better care and a better welcome to these people who arrive with broken hearts, without suitcases, without clothes, without possibilities of making a call and without money to eat and buy the passage to finish arriving at the destination place. Each person has felt violently attacked by ICE, either because they violently entered their home or were attacked at their place of work, on the street, or in their car. The prisons seem purgatory, a place you only hear the crying and the gnashing of teeth.

I am now in Bogota because I found a good Samaritan. A family that has given me solidarity and support. Thank you, Beautiful family for all your care.

Pastor Betty Rendon

July, 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 	5	6
7 9:30 am Worship w/communion 10:30 am Adult Study	8 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	9 10:00 am Bible Study	10 6:00 pm Praise Band	11	12	13
14 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Study	15 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	16 10:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Trustees	17 6:00 pm Praise Band	18 10:00 am Women's Coffee	19	20 1:30 - 3:00 pm Visit at The Gardens
21 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Study	22 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	23 10:00 am Bible Study	24 6:00 pm Praise Band	25	26 27 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pr. Glen on vacation</div>	
28 9:30 am Worship w/All For You 5:00 pm CCIC Dinner <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">Pr. Glen on vacation</div>	29 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	30 10:00 am Bible Study	31 6:00 pm Praise Band			

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