

The Good News

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

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



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Good Samaritan



Being the Good Samaritan, reaching out when it may not be expected to someone who needs a hand, needs to know they are not alone, needs some extra care and support, should not be all that challenging. There are opportunities daily- and I know a lot of us are already doing those things.

Jesus didn't tell that story to shame anyone, and good preachers ought not to tell it to make anyone feel bad about what they aren't doing. It is an opportunity to lift up what we are doing (I admit, I didn't do that when I preached on that story a few weeks back) and remind people that our 'salvation' isn't really about keeping score but about how those around us are doing, and what we can do to help them out, whether we know them or they are strangers to us, or whether they live next door or half way around the world. Opportunities abound. Here are three, right here in Cannon Falls:

National Night Out Tuesday, Oct. 6, is National Night Out, a nation-wide effort to help make neighborhoods safer by getting to know who lives next door. Block parties are planned, and first-responders are a big part of the effort. Last year, we set up an awning (thanks, Roman!), served root beer floats, had yard games available, and welcomed police officers and a fire truck. Many members came and helped. We had fun greeting old friends and members and plenty of persons new to us as well, including families with children. It was a great way to spend the evening and let people know there are some wonderful people inside this big old building on the corner. We are doing it again this year, from 6 to 8 pm. Servers and helpers, game players and greeters are welcome! If you have yard games we can borrow, let me know!

Good Sam Jam On behalf of CCIC, we are hosting a concert with Brother Timothy and his family. He assisted with worship in June, and led the congregation in singing some of his own songs and some familiar songs too. After expenses, we hope to benefit CCIC's Good Sam Fund. There's a full article inside this month's newsletter. Publicity has gone out in a variety of ways, but help us assure a successful event by letting friend and family and family know.

Finally, **Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity** will begin a house here in Cannon mid-August. A dozen AmeriCorps volunteers will be working on the house from August 16-October 16, and we have received a request to assist with meals – lunches during the week. I'd be more than happy to pick a week in late September/early October to work with others to prepare lunch for these 12. If anyone else would be interested in doing that with me, I'd be glad to work with you. Having been on multiple Habitat builds, I know what a gift it is to have a good meal, even a simple one, to look forward to each day.

Each of these is one way, one invitation, to be a neighbor to someone new, someone who could benefit from the kindness and simple generosity we are able to extend because of who we are called and even blessed to be.

Pr. Glen

Take
Note

Ask The Preacher! During the sermon on August 4th, you can ask Pr. Glen any question you want about the church, the bible, faith, etc.

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 August 4th

Greeter: Bruce and Mavis Johnson

Reader: Mavis Johnson

Sound Technician: Jim Hvistendahl

Sunday August 11th

Greeter: Chuck and Carol Emery

Reader: Linda Nelson

Sound Technician: Roman Mercier

Sunday August 18th

Greeter: Jon and Julie Woodman

Reader: Julie Woodman

Sound Technician: Steve Sullivan

Sunday August 25th

Greeter: Ray and Sandra Meglic

Reader: Sandra Meglic

Sound Technician: Byron Nowariak

Serving Committee for August

The Serving Committee for August is Jon and Beth Sagers, Gloria Strain and Roman Mercier.

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.

Festival at St. Mark's

St. Mark's in Randolph is having its annual festival on Sunday August 4th. Festivity includes live music, silent auction, live auction, cash raffle, kid's activities and a craft and bake sale. Feast of bbq roast port, sweet corn, baked beans, salads, pies and root beer floats is served from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. Presale meal prices are \$12 for adults and \$5.00 for children, \$15.00 and \$7.00 on the day of the feast. Go to stmarkschurchfestival@gmail.com to purchase in advance.

Mark Your Calendars!

Our congregation will again be hosting our neighbors for National Night Out on Tuesday, Aug. 6th from 6 to 8 pm. We will be serving Root Beer Floats on our front lawn, and a variety of yard games will be available. Come on by!

National Night Out is a national effort being promoted locally by the CF Police Dept. as a community-building campaign encouraging police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. Sometime during the evening, police and fire dept. staff will stop by.

To make this a success, we need to:

- Invite our neighbors, and your neighbors and friends.
- Have 3-4 people willing to serve Root Beer Floats from 6-8 pm.
- Help clean up a bit at 8 pm.
- Have a few yard games loaned for the evening.

Talk to Pastor Glen if you can help with any of these items.

Women's Coffee



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

CCIC Monthly Supper

The Community Churches Interaction Council (CCIC) holds monthly suppers on the last Sunday of each month at FCC. August's supper will be hosted by Cannon Valley Senior Center on August 25th at 5:00 pm.

Synod's Final Plenary

Written by Sara Fitzgerald

The United Church of Christ's 32nd General Synod wound to a close on Tuesday, June 25, with moments of levity and moments of tears, calls to prayer and calls to the street.

The final afternoon plenary began with the usual "Speak Out" opportunity, this time capped by the Council of Conference Ministers joining in singing their own lyrics to the "Doxology," praising the delegates and their patience with the "clickers," the Synod's electronic voting devices.

Noting that the start of the Monday afternoon plenary had been delayed so that delegates could participate in a march and rally to protest U.S. immigration policies, Moderator Norman Williams asked for a report back on the action. Noel Anderson, Church World Service's grassroots coordinator for immigrants' rights and coordinator of the UCC National Collaborative on Immigration, started it off by leading the gathering in a chant; "UCC is loud and clear; immigrants are welcome here!" Anderson, who helped coordinate the march, celebrated Synod participation, noting that between 500 and 1,000 people participated in the rally.

Local organizers from the UCC Wisconsin Conference and Voces de Frontera expressed their appreciation of the Synod support for the march. Associate Conference Minister Lisa Hart, who works on immigration issues, said local activists were "overwhelmed and grateful for the support of the UCC."

Note: This is not the full article. For more information go to the UCC website.



Brother Timothy In Concert: A Good Sam Jam

Timothy Frantzich, who helped lead worship by singing and leading us in song on June 9 is returning to do a concert for CCIC in our sanctuary on Sunday, August 11, at 6:30 pm.

Proceeds from the concert, after expenses (honorarium to Brother Timothy), will go to the CCIC (Community Churches Interaction Council) Good Samaritan Fund, supporting Cannon Valley residents in need of emergency funds to meet expenses beyond their immediate abilities.

Brother Timothy will sing a few songs on his own and then he will be joined by his wife Carrie and their two daughters Esther and Svea. There is nothing quite like family harmony!

They will sing everything from Neil Young to John Prine, original songs and even an old hymns, all in three part harmony. It's going to be a special evening, and a wide circle of local and regional residents and churches have been invited. A free will donation of \$10-20 is suggested to meet expenses and benefit the Good Sam Fund. Root beer floats will be served following the concert.

Ministry without limits

by Aaron Fuller

A congregation I once served opened their building monthly for a Narcotics Anonymous group. The relationship was conflict-free until a parishioner discovered a pill on the fellowship hall floor and called the police. An analysis determined it wasn't an illegal substance, but the congregation harbored concerns. "What if a young child had picked it up and it was an illegal drug?"

The congregation council met to determine a course of action. While members acknowledged their long-standing relationship with the group as part of their ministry, the risk of illegal drugs was too great. The council voted to discontinue the relationship. I abstained from voting, but I struggled with the decision.

July's lectionary texts include the classic story of the good Samaritan. A traditional interpretation of the story invites us to

consider which character we should identify with as Christians. But the more relevant question is the one I still ask myself when I consider the decision my former council made years ago: "What is the level of commitment God calls us to make in our ministry?"

In his timeless book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Marlin Luther King Jr. wrote: "From time immemorial men have lived by the principle that self-preservation is the first law of life.' But this is a false assumption. I would say that other-preservation is the first law of life."

When we make our commitments to ministry, I wonder if we are more concerned about self-preservation or "other-preservation." The stories of the good Samaritan and the civil rights movement share the same, clear message: ministry is always about other-preservation, and we should spare no expense in how far we go to extend God's love and grace to those who need it.

Nevertheless, we live in a time when self-preservation is the law that rules not just our society, but also our congregations. A scarcity of resources and the need for boundaries are justifications we use to limit our ministry to others. Yet if we incline our ears, we know many are lying on the side of the road of life, crying out in anguish.

Other-preservation is about sparing no expense to raise another back to life. Like the Samaritan, we risk our reputations, stretch our resources, give time we don't have, and perhaps even risk our sense of comfort or security to do what is right. We do this because Christ wants us to share in the restoration, liberation and salvation of those whose pain so often goes ignored. Perhaps Christ also leads us here for the sake of our own salvation as well-salvation from our fear, prejudice and complacency.

The summer vacation months are often downtimes in the life and ministry of congregations. Yet we would do well to reflect on the good Samaritan this month and ask ourselves how committed we are to God's work of other-preservation.

"Yet if we incline our ears, we know many are lying on the side of the road of life, crying out in anguish"

Are We Good Samaritans?

That familiarity can prevent us from actually hearing the story, the way we might hear it if it was new to us.

One method for seeing a familiar story in a fresh way comes to us from literary analysis and creative writing workshops, as well as from spiritual practices. Ask yourself, "Who am I in this story?" We can see a story differently by looking at it through the eyes and viewpoints of different characters.

Many of us want to believe that we would be the Good Samaritan. We are trained to see ourselves as the hero.

We don't want to believe that we might avoid those who need our help, the way the priest and the Levite do. We don't want to see the ways we ambush each other, as the robbers do in the story. Perhaps we'd prefer to be the innkeeper—the character who gets to play a part in caring for the person in need without being the one who takes the risks.

Here are some questions that might help us approach the story from different angles:

- Who is in our path who needs help?
- What do the wounds look like? Not everyone who needs help will bleed in obvious ways.
- What roles do we play that might keep us from seeing those who need help?
- When we can't help in a direct way, how can we be like the innkeeper and play a supporting role?
- What resources do we have to share?
- How can we help suffering people with their physical needs?
- What other kinds of suffering might we alleviate if we shared resources?
- When is sharing our financial resources the best way we can help? When do we need to play a more active role in bandaging the wounds?
- What other ways can we show love for our neighbors? How do we translate love into action?

- Kristin Berkey-Abbott

August, 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 9:30 am Worship w/communion 10:30 am Adult Study St. Mark's Festival in Randolph	5 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	6 10:00 am Bible Study 	7 6:00 pm Praise Band	8	9	10
11 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Study 6:30 pm Brother Timothy Concert for CCIC Good Sam fund	12 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	13 10:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Trustees	14 6:00 pm Praise Band	15 10:00 am Women's Coffee	16	17 1:30 - 3:00 pm Visit at The Gardens
18 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Study	19 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	20 10:00 am Bible Study	21 6:00 pm Praise Band	22	23	24
25 9:30 am Worship w/All For You 5:00 pm CCIC Dinner	26 10:30 am Grief Support 4:00 & 6:15 pm - Yoga	27 10:00 am Bible Study	28 6:00 pm Praise Band	29	30	31

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