
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



Good Grief

I've been preaching this month on grief, a 3-part series on how common yet how difficult grief is (we don't have rituals around grief that give people permission to grieve or for others to walk with those who are grieving), how necessary grief is (grief is part of our healing from losses or wounds, and it requires honesty and openness with God, ourselves, and with each other if we are to heal well), and how grief can be a teacher (we can learn from our losses in ways that can help us and others, turning sympathy into empathy.)

There is much more that can be said about grief, and others have said even these things much better than I ever could, but in these days of our shared losses as a result of the pandemic under which we are living, as well as the deep political and racial divides the pandemic highlights, it seemed necessary to at least raise the issue, or acknowledge grief as symptom of what we are all experiencing to some degree.

And there are anniversaries of losses in these weeks, and with the approaching holiday season, our sense of loss will only grow stronger. Grief can look like anger, fear, depression, anxiety, sadness, hopelessness, or any number of emotions we may not be able to easily understand in a given situation.

I want to call our attention to the Beatitudes, in part because they are likely among the most familiar of Jesus' teachings, but also because they might ring true to those who are grieving or experiencing grief in all those ways I've just mentioned.

In both Matthew and Luke, where the Beatitudes are found, Jesus' audiences are those in need of healing – the broken ones, the ones beat up by life, those who felt they had no place or community, those who had even been told they did not belong. They were overwhelmed and overcome.

It is to these persons – the humbled, the meek, the poor, the mourning, the hungry and thirsty, the persecuted... the down and out, the left behind, the lonely and abandoned, the lost and alone, the angry, the confused, the hopeless, the misunderstood... to these persons comes the message that their story does not end here. That there is more to their life than what is happening now, than what they know and see and feel in this moment, in these days.

When we feel we have been pushed to the edge – or when our own missteps find us there, when we have hit bottom – whether we were shoved or our own foolishness led us there - if we can stop trying to lay blame, we might find that God is there to find us, to meet us, to show us the way back up and out. This is not where God longs for us to be. God does not intend for us or for the world to be this way. Life, new life, is the option, the choice, the gift, we are being offered. Always.

May you be able to find God as you grieve, when you are ready, so you might know new life.

Pastor 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.

Prayer Chain

Morning - Bonnie Hvistendahl 263-4120

Evening - Mavis Johnson 263-2857

When you are in need of prayer for yourself or others, your request will be passed along to the above prayer chains.

Daily Readings and Meditations

If you are interested in adding daily readings and meditations to your schedule during this time a part from community worship as a way to feed your spirit and deepen your faith, here are two resources:

1. The United Church of Christ has a team of gifted writers who offer **Daily Devotional**, brief scripture-based meditations available online. They appear in your inbox at about 3 a.m. every day. You can subscribe by searching for daily devotional ucc"
2. dailylectio.net provides a prayer, a Psalm, and 2-3 other readings each day of the week. They are thematically connected to the lectionary texts assigned for each Sunday, from which Pastor Glen draws for preaching. The intent of the daily readings is to highlight the connection between Sunday worship and the rest of your daily life.

Using **dailyLectio.net** puts you in touch with the cycles of stories and celebrations that carry us through the church's year as well as enhance your personal faith development through scripture and prayer.

For those who do not access online resources, Pastor Glen will publish the references for the daily readings for the week ahead in the weekly mailing that Ki sends to you, that includes the text of any of his messages posted online.



Prayer Partners

Each week, we pick staff and members or families at random for us to lift in prayer that week, for no reason other than praying for one another is a good thing to do.

Our *Prayer Partners* this week are **Bruce & Mavis Johnson, Rodney Lundell, and Mary Ellen Sturm.**

Joys and Concerns

Pat Green's cousin, Willis Moorhouse of Cannon Falls, his wife, and four family members contracted the covid-19 virus and are recovering. They traveled by van to North Carolina to attend the church funeral service of Willis' sister, Elda Mae. Willis was hospitalized five days in Northfield and said it was the worst experience he had ever had. All family members are gradually recovering. REMEMBER: Wear your mask and avoid crowds!

Linda Hindal will be having surgery on Nov. 4 surgery to repair a torn meniscus (knee), then be home for recovery and therapy.

Lila Engstrom continues her physical therapy while staying in the rehab unit at Regina Senior Living. Cards are welcome, addressed to Lila c/o Regina Senior Living, 1175 Nininger Road, Hastings MN 55033.

Please share your Joys and Concerns with Ki (cannonfallsucc@gmail.com, 263-2901) or Pr. Glen (pastor.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com, 651-641-1832) by Monday of each week.

Selfies

It's not always easy to be separated from family and friends, to work from home, or to not be able to work. So what have you been up to? Share with us your stories or your photos.

From the Mission's Committee.

Fall greetings from the Mission Committee, Thank you for your support of Neighbors in Need. We received \$425.00 to this mission. Due to Covid 19 the annual November Feed My Starving Children Mobile Packing Event

has been canceled. So, the Mission committee would like to put our church's focus locally and support The Good Samaritan Fund. This fund was established by CCIC to provide emergency help in times of crisis, with payments towards a utility bill, rent, car repair, etc. Credit arrangements are made for items such as groceries at the local grocery store. To insure accountability, no one is given cash, and assistance is limited to \$400 per person/family each year.

We know that this pandemic has negatively impacted many families financially and the need for help will only increase as winter sets in. We hope that you will consider supporting this mission for the month of November. As before, make your checks out to the church and on the memo line write Good Sam Fund. The checks can be placed in the treasurer slot at church or sent to Jon Sagers, 4006 343rd Street, Stanton, MN 55018.

We have two options for those who want to participate in the Shoebox Ministry this month. You can go online to samaritanpurse.org and click on "Build a Shoebox." You can build your own shoebox, they can build one for you, or you can help pay for postage. This must be done by Nov. 23rd. If you want to do the traditional method you need to have your filled shoebox at church by Monday, Nov. 16th. Cindy Mae is willing to deliver them to a drop off church in Red Wing on Nov. 17th.

*Be sure to include who the box is for: BOY or GIRL, 2-4 years, 5-9 years, or 10-14 years

December missions: Goodhue County Christmas Project and the Christmas Fund. Updates and information will be given in the weeks ahead. As you can see we have some great opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Sincerely,
The Mission Committee

Thought for the month: Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.

Fiddle Fest

Mary Pat Kleven received a Southeast Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC) grant to host the Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest at the church last May, but COVID has sent the program online instead.



Bill and Emily graciously allowed us to use their barn to do some of the recording needed for the online program.

The bands Upper Midwest Folk Fiddlers and "Pa's" fiddle music from "The Little House on the Prairie" recorded their segments for the online concert to be posted **November 7th**, as well as some of the tunes for the online workshops. The full concert will be available on YouTube. Mary Pat will send out more information once it is posted.

Outreach Ministry Team

We are starting to work on recording for Advent and Christmas Services. Volunteers needed who are willing to sing, dance or do a reading.

We would also appreciate pictures for Christmas of your family, your Christmas decorations, craft projects or other holiday activities. We'll include them in the services to share with our church family. Contact the church office or send an email to outreach.cannonfallsucc@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Please note: October's worship services on DVD will be at the Church by November 1st.
Cindy Mae

From the Trustees

Watch for your stewardship letter in the mail. Please return the pledge or estimate of giving form to Treasurer, Jon Sagers, by Nov. 15th.

Also, we continue to seek donations to close the gap between income and actual costs (\$27,450) for the sanctuary roof replacement. Thank you for your generosity!



Utilizing Time

(from October Stewardship)

What will give our life more meaning? We are blessed with many gifts, not the least of which is time. God has put us in this environment, among these people and these opportunities. We will be accountable to God for the way in which we use our tie to relate to these people, respect the environment, and avail ourselves of the opportunities, and the manner in which we carry out our responsibilities.

Lost possessions may be replaced, a broken friendship can be mended, but one cannot regain time squandered in selfish pursuits.

Many of us are preoccupied with pursuing the age-old question, "What is the meaning of Life?" when we should be asking, "What will give our lives more meaning?" The utilization of time can be used in answer to this question.

Since our existence must be filled with an aim in order to make it a life, it is necessary to use our time and energy in pursuit of this aim. Wanting to do something does not bring it about.

Willing ourselves to do something means that we plan to make the effort to bring it about. That means setting priorities which answer this question as we awaken each morning, "What can I do to serve the Lord today?"

Prodigal Son

In our time of social distancing, this carved wood sculpture of the return of the prodigal son by Marie Romero Cash reminds us what it means to hold and be held.

A native of New Mexico, Cash works with natural pigments and local woods like pinyon pine to make her folk art pieces, keeping alive the traditions of the Hispanic "saint-makers" who once crafted simply styled holy images for outlying communities in what is now the American Southwest, at a time when religious artifacts from Mexico were in short supply.

The father from the parable lifts his eyes toward heaven in gratitude for the return of his wayward son, now safely at rest in his

arms. The father's features and kneeling pose evoke imagery of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, praying for the will of God to be done. Says Cash, "It hurts not to be able to reach out and touch a loved one, especially if you live alone. You feel like an orphan with no one but yourself to navigate through the days that run together. In this sculpture, the son is back in an embrace he has missed for so long."



Stewardship Minute

November 2020

There is an old legend about how the great beasts first learned to live as they were set upon the world by God. Each of them had been quite self-centered, but realized that being what God intended them to be and do led to them great freedom and joy.

The legend went on, sadly, to point out that when humankind learned to live in God's world, mankind had not made the same realizations; had not learned that the greatest joy comes in doing the will of God. When our main focus is on ourselves, the legend says, we have wandered from freedom into a sort of bondage. We are locked into the misery we have brought upon ourselves by not choosing to love, obey, and serve our Creator. The Good News Christ came to say to mankind is this: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." Matthew 6:33

This month's issue of **Stewardship** brings to light that the secret of living an abundant, joyous life comes as we live one will and that "one will" is the will of God. Living any other way is to struggle in a lost and confused state, and with the nagging feeling that life should be better than it is. That includes being whom God wants us to be, doing what God wants us to do, having what God wants us to have, and giving what God wants us to give. The legend says that the animals

Prayer: *Lord of all, grant us the courage and the will to be what you want us to be and to do all you want us to do. Amen*

November, 2020

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



1 On-line Message	2	3 10:00 am Bible Study	4	5	6	7
8 On-line Message 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	9	10 10:00 am Bible Study	11	12	13	14
15 On-line Message 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	16	17 10:00 am Bible Study	18	19	20	21
22 On-line Message 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	23	24 10:00 am Bible Study	25	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29 On-line Message 10:00 am Adult Study on Zoom	30	<p><i>Adult Study is meeting via Zoom at 10 am Sundays on the dates noted. We are reading short biographical sketches of persons who have lived out their faith in ways that have impacted the world. 2-3 short biographies are discussed each week. RSVP to Pastor Glen or Ki by Friday noon each week for a copy of the readings and a Zoom link to the weekly session.</i></p>				

Our building is closed but the Church is always open when we are the Body of Christ in the World. Stay safe and healthy until we see you again

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