

Two Biblical stories have always stood out to me throughout the years. In fact, one I have a painting right outside of the church offices. Jesus, messiah, Lord, Savior, who bends down on His knees to wash the disciples' feet. Two, Jesus praying alone and saying those powerful, transforming words "Father, not my will but your will be done." Perhaps you can just visualize this as well. Three words that come to my mind: love, service, and surrendering. If I had to use one Greek word (*kenoo*), Kenosis, which means pouring out or self-emptying. Circling back to the second Scripture of Jesus praying, some art even displays the disciples sleeping at some distance (yes, even the inner group can miss it). On the surface reading we can understand this as the disciples are merely tired. I am sure there would be countless practical and emotional reasons to rationalize this theory. However, I wonder if the deeper understanding is that the disciples still do not "see it". They still do not understand, see, and know who this Jesus is. Perhaps do I dare to say they were not enlightened until after the resurrection that Jesus' kingdom was a nonviolent movement of wholeness and reconciliation, and bringing glimpses of heaven down to earth via love, service, and surrender.

While the past month you have heard about upcoming seen and unseen expenditures on property, I am writing in hopes we continue to stay on track following in the way of Jesus in humble servanthood. Churches that use their only meetings or important gathers merely discussing how to make ends meet and focus only on survival mood, rarely make a difference in the world and ironically fold even faster. In short, let us continue to live our faith out loud this fall.

During a much needed summer trip visiting my father who began hospice, my mother and I managed one morning to participate in a weekly ministry at her local church which provides her with much purpose and joy while giving back. In such a new, sad time in our family's life, I was reminded even in the midst of sickness, declining health, and even loss, we are called to follow Jesus in the Path of servanthood. Not only because we want to make a difference and help others, but also because I'm fully convinced serving is uniquely baked into the very universe as one of the primary ways God blesses, gives energy and life, and sustains all parties (perhaps the giver even much more) (Try it, if you do not believe me. Wait, we do this each year with the angel tree). Despite have been tugged around and introduced 21 different times to each of my mother's church ladies, introduced as a pastor, and then having to explain at least another 42 times who/what were the (Disciples of Christ), I eventually had my heart warmed by working side by side my own mom putting together bags of lunches for the homeless. Out of the 21 different volunteers, approximately 19 were faithful women (Kudos, to the women who quite often run the day-to-day operations of most mainline protestant churches and even Catholic parishes as well as who are portrayed throughout the Gospel narratives being with Jesus from cradle to cross. Yes, I did borrow that line from our very own Gail.)



Similar to our previous quarterly ministry of bagging rice and beans that has already run its course, I am envisioning a ministry at Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that can better fit our context and be a blessing to others. I would like to set up an assembly line of volunteers who make PBJ sandwiches, then we add two or three extra items in the bag such as a granola bar, fruit snacks, and a pack of cookies. I have spoken to Miriam about this idea, and she loves it with a request if we could make it fresh on (Wednesday mornings) and then asked for some strawberry jelly (I'll have to think about hinting at such a high demand of strawberry jelly JK). I would like to see this as an ongoing ministry not only with our current church members, but I think this would be a fine way to invite friends, possibly outside groups from the Gulf Shore Singles, Corvette Group, and AA Group, to help donate or even give a hand putting together the sack lunches. With that said, please mark your calendars for two dates: Wednesdays, September 9 and 23, from 9-11 to help put together bags of lunches to have them delivered to the Gladiolus Food Pantry that is open weekly, Wednesdays from 11am-4pm.

In the midst of stepping up meeting our own practical needs at the church, let us remember there are numerous people out of our doors with much larger issues such as finding daily bread. In fact, my mom's close friend and the coordinator of the sack lunches at her church, Barbara, is passionate since she personally knows what it is to be in dire need, to live in her car, and to need a sandwich. She knows what it feels like to experience the love of God through real people's minds, hearts, and hands coming together in a meaningful way. Barbara is a true testimony of someone who has been transformed by grace to now go out and show grace. Therefore, let us also always be amazed and in awe of Jesus that we want to go out in love, service, and surrendering ourselves to the will of God by befriending our neighbors in real, concrete, and sustaining ways.

-Peace and Grace, Zach

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" -Philippians 4:6-7

Recent Prayer Requests

(The "FMCC Cross Connection" email contains the ongoing prayer list)

Wally Swartz, infection at Gulf Coast Hospital, Church Family
Shirley Runyon, recent laser eye surgery, Church Family
Kerry Runyon, recovering from broken ankle, Church Family
Werner Beldo, upcoming cataract surgery on Sept.1, Church Family
Rev. John Vickers, Church Family
Rhonda and Mark, upcoming surgeries, Betty Johnston (daughter and son-in-law)
Vicki Iori, successful heart catheterization, Church Family
Ruth, diagnosed with cancer, Judy Hesse (neighbor)
Linda Garlow, heart complications, Church Family
Shirley Fizer, upcoming major surgery on Sept. 9, Church Family
Teresa, recent hip surgery, Vicki Iorio (friend)
Robert, diagnosed with an aggressive cancer, Sherry Swartz (son)
Mike, recovering from a serious fall, Pam Johnson (brother-in-law)
Ann DelGuercio, serious medical issues, Mary Burns (friend)
John Battazzo, recovering back at home from major surgery at Moffitt, Former Member
Ronald Cooper, broken leg and serious lung concerns, Linda Lee (nephew)

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Let us know)

John Burns	7th
Rev. Dr. Jim Carpenter	9th
Colton Seitz	11th
Michelle Blasi-Foo	13th
Tama Knobel-Simonsmeier	14th
Sydney D'Alessandro	24th

Potlucks are Back!

Sunday, September 13

Sunday, October 18



Upcoming Fall Women Bible Study

Signup in the narthex for a study led by Judy Hesse that explores how the Books of the Bible are connected. Signup in narthex.



Linda's Corner:

Well summer is almost over so with fall approaching we have decided to bring back potlucks for the fall months with some creative and fun ideas. You can mark your calendar for a potluck dinner on September 13 immediately after church with a fun game of trivia bingo. During October, we will welcome back our northern visitors. And before the year ends, we will have a dinner with our friends at Full Gospel Assembly Church. In the meantime, bring some PBJ and plan to participate in our upcoming "bags of lunches" for the Gladiolus Food Pantry.

-Linda Lee, Outreach Chair