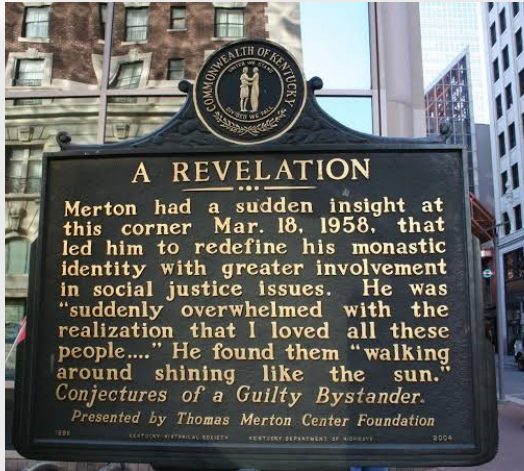


In the summer of 2023, I attended the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) which took place in Louisville, KY. Before I begin, shout out to all my fine, Kentuckians and GO Wildcats! Well, in the downtown shopping district there stands a most unusual bronze plaque that makes one take a double take. Typically you think of markers commemorate a natural or historical feature or local political hero, but this one on the street corner in Louisville marks a mystical experience -one that happened to the monk Thomas Merton on March 18, 1958: "In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we would not be client to one another even though we were total strangers...There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun."

From time to time God gives us these liminal spaces, a space "in-between", a place where you are on a



threshold between what was and what comes next. Or, perhaps Paul would say the veil of the curtain gets lifted for a sneak peek or lifted below the surface enough to make one say *awe*. You get a sense, deep feeling, a snapshot of the Divine presence. And, once you have seen you cannot unseen or once you tasted you cannot un-taste. Some dare to venture by saying that we recognize ourselves not just as our brother's keeper but as our brother. Or, Jesus said in John 14 verse 20 "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." There are moments we recognize our need for one another and mutual love for one another in such times. Unfortunately, it quite often takes natural disasters such as a hurricane in SWFL or tornado in the Midwest or God forbid a national pandemic to grab our attention (for the record, not that God causes any of that). Yet, we can argue the silver lining of any tragedy is folks coming together from different tribes, crossing over socioeconomic/political

barriers as we work together recognizing and understanding our shared humankind and strive for a better world.

This past summer, I spent an hour at my old seminary looking around the hallways and found myself memorized by a quote in the library that I've been finding the right moment to share: "Love God, love yourself and love everyone you meet. Then the theological questions you continue to struggle with will be answered or they will become unimportant to you." I love this being hung in such a rigorous, academic graduate school. That is, at the very end, it's still about agape (unconditional love in action) and humility that truly matter throughout life and it is exactly what Jesus fully embodies or might I say pours out to the entire cosmos. Just ask Paul or what scholars believe was an early hymn/poem from the church in Philippi: "Christ Jesus did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself by taking the form of a slave, becoming human, and humbling himself to death on a cross" (2:6-8).

Therefore, being a little bit of a liturgical geek and clergy, I am thankful for World Communion Sunday. On this day, we add bread to the list of humility and love, as we remember our unity in Christ and in particular Christ's infinite large table that has space for all. The requirement is not intelligence, faith, good deeds or any amount of worthiness. Instead, Christ's table is for broken women and men alike who hunger. Yes, it's a Sunday that has been celebrated since 1933, officially adopted by the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1936, and in 1940 by the Federal Council of Churches (predecessor to the National Council of Churches). Whether you were born and raised in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or another mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, or grew up in one of the numerous nondenominational/evangelical churches, this is a Sunday designed to remember our unity and put aside often overemphasized differences for at least for one day to recognize our foundation in Christ.



Sunday, Oct. 4, I am happy to share with everyone we about a joint worship service with our friends at Full Gospel Assembly. The service will take place at our normal time in the sanctuary, and there will be a potluck that follows. Not only will we celebrate World Communion Sunday with Full Gospel Assembly, but also the fact Pastor Joseph, Pastor Eddy, and all of their worshippers have been meeting at Fort Myers Christian Church for a year. So this will be quite the celebration! I hope you attend, as we celebrate our Oneness as children of God and as people who place our allegiance to Jesus.

-Grace and Peace Pastor 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

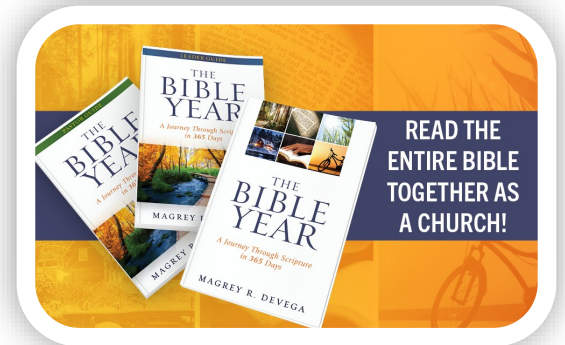
(The "FMCC Cross Connection" email contains the ongoing prayer list)

Rev. Ed Bodanske, medical issues, Church Family
Mike Burns, upcoming appointments after a stroke, Church Family
(update) Linda Garlow, cochlear implant, Church Family
Family and Friends of Linda Widman, in Linda's death, Church Family
Mary and John Burns, safe travels to Italy, Church Family
(Update) Skip and Barb Hill, Skip is having home rehab after congestive heart failure, Mary and John Burns (friend and neighbor)
(Update) Claire Skody, waiting pathology results from cancer surgery, Mary and John Burns (lifelong friend)
Shirley Fizer, recovering from major hiatal hernia surgery, Church Family
Treasure Werner, recovering from a cyst surgery, Church Family
Mackenzie Lee, severe migraines, Church Family
Donald Hancock, reconstruction surgery on his chest, Linda Lee (cousin)
Howard Cooper, successful reconstruction hand surgery and cancer removed from his nose, Linda Lee (brother)
Ronald Cooper, in the hospital with lung complications, Linda Lee (nephew)
Sidney Runyon, ankle, Church Family
Carol Vickers, wound care, Church Family
Wally Swartz, back at home from infection, Church Family
Rhonda and Mark, upcoming surgeries, Betty Johnston (daughter and son-in-law)
Ruth, diagnosed with cancer, Judy Hesse (neighbor)

October Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Let us know)

Elias Runyon	13th
Carol Krueger	14th
Ulrich Knobel-Simonsmeier	16th
Jon and Ann Goodnight	20th



Monday Morning Bible Study 10-11:30am

Beginning Oct. 12, join us as we discuss Acts thru Ephesians. See Weekly email for assigned reading schedule.

New Ministry Highlight

Putting together PBJ sack lunches. Join us for our next service opportunity this Wednesday, from 9-10:30am. Afterwards the sack lunches will be distributed to clients waiting in line at the pantry. Thank you for PBJ and Jelly donations.



Outreach Corner:

We have moved into the fall season. We are excited to have two AA groups using our fellowship hall. One group meets on Tuesday (7-8pm) evening and the other meets on Friday evening. This is a blessing to be able to have them here. The new group that meets on Friday (7:30-8:30pm), one week they have a meeting where they have a discussion and the next week, they have speaker.

-Linda Lee