

The Good News of...

April 2020



Brandon Christian Church



Oh my goodness! Life is certainly chaotic right now. Do you feel as though you are living in the midst of a storm? COVID-19 spreading rapidly across the globe. Stock markets are crashing as people panic in response. Grocery shelves are empty of toilet paper and cleaning supplies. It feels as though a tornado has struck and there is Jesus sleeping peacefully in the back of the boat.

For a little background—read with me this text from the Gospel of Mark 4:35-41:

“Later that day, after it grew dark, Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s cross over to the other side of the lake.’ After they had sent the crowd away, they shoved off from shore with him, as he had been teaching from the boat, and there were other boats that sailed with them. Suddenly, as they were crossing the lake, a ferocious tempest arose, with violent winds and waves that were crashing into the boat until it was all but swamped. But Jesus was calmly sleeping in the stern, resting on a cushion. So they shook him awake, saying, ‘Teacher, don’t you even care that we are all about to die!’ Fully awake, he rebuked the storm and shouted to the sea, ‘Hush! Calm down!’ All at once the wind stopped howling and the water became perfectly calm. Then he turned to his disciples and said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Haven’t you learned to trust yet?’ But they were overwhelmed with fear and awe and said to one another, ‘Who is this man who has such authority that even the wind and waves obey him?’”

As I was thinking about all the fears surrounding the Coronavirus, I felt like we are living in a storm. So—this morning I read through the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark and something struck me that I had never thought much about before—Jesus was actually deeply asleep in the midst of this storm. My organist in Fort Myers had lived on a boat for 12 years. He told many stories of his life onboard. He said that it is hard to sleep in the midst of a storm when the ship is rocking and rolling—when the waves are crashing and the cargo groans against its bonds threatening to break loose at any moment. Everyone is needed to help keep the ship on an even keel.

Even though I live in a stationary home—I know how anxiety can keep me awake—often creating its own storms of fretting, fear and anxiety.

So...sleeping in the midst of storms is a sign of extreme stupidity or of supreme confidence.

Jesus’ response when the disciples woke him shows that his sleep was one of confidence. He trusted completely that the God who formed the waters and allowed the storms—the God who called him beloved Son—was still in control and would keep them all safe no matter how violently the waters raged. In the midst of the storm he was able to find rest and refreshment.



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Dear friends, COVID-19 has us moving as much online as possible. This means that most meetings will take place on Zoom. To prepare for this it is recommended you go to www.zoom.us and create an account, this will allow you to access BCC (DOC) meetings and participate. A camera and microphone are not required—you can type and people will see it, however, speakers or headphones are required. There is also a Zoom app that can be found in the Apple Store for iOS and in the Google Play store for Android. See you there! See page 6 for more info.



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Sometimes I think that we forget that Jesus is in the boat with us.

Loved Ones—sometimes I am not sure that we really want to wake him. The storm itself is frightening. But Jesus calming of the storm is terrifying!

Loved Ones, we are in the midst of stormy times. None of us know what the future holds. We are anxious about losing our jobs and homes. We are not sure if we will have health insurance to cover us if we get ill.

How much confidence do we have that Jesus is in the boat with us? And what would it look like for him to calm this storm? It is so easy for us to pray for the solution we want to see happen. That COVID-19 would disappear quickly. That there will not be another recession as a result of the economic downturn. That those we love will not get sick. It is hard for us to have the faith to believe that whatever God allows to happen in this storm—Jesus is still with us. It is he—not us who is in control.

Yet in the midst of storms good happens and there are signs of hope if we will only look at them

I read online that a woman in Wuhan posted on Facebook a couple of days ago about the good her family has experienced since the lockdown. Here is a glimpse of what she said—her family has spent more time together and they have grown closer as a result. Her prayer life has never been better and she has become aware of the amazing community around her. She can hear the birds that are usually drowned out by traffic noise and the beauty of the spring bursting forth around her is magnificent.

In the midst of storms do you notice only the difficult things? What about the good? What have you already experienced that has been good in the midst of this storm?

My prayer today is that God will calm the storm and that we will be able to find rest and confidence in whatever that calming looks like. May we also notice the good of what God is doing in our midst.

My prayer today is that we will remember “It may be Friday—but Sunday is coming!” Yes! We celebrate Easter soon and rejoice in all that means for us. Jesus died on a cross to show the depth and breadth of God’s love for us. Jesus rose again on Sunday to show that God has the final word—on everything! We are God’s own and nothing is going to happen to us that with Jesus we cannot face or handle. Rejoice—in the midst of the storm. Rejoice—you are people of the Resurrection!



Happy Easter! *Rev Day*

A Prayer for our Time:

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair.

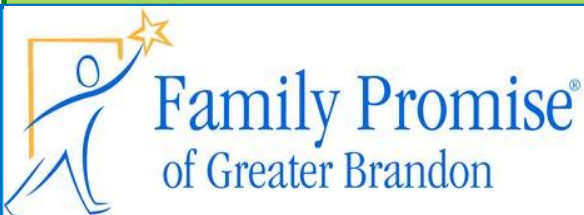
May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us. --Kerry Weber



Building community, strengthening lives.

Family Promise is scheduled to be using the BCC facilities at the end of April. Currently they are scheduled to arrive on April 26 and leave on May 3. Sue is looking into whether there is still a family with them. Family Promise has suspended intake of new families at the moment, and they have eliminated face-to-face contact between the families and the volunteers. We would be looking for volunteers to prepare meals for the family and deliver them to the Day Center. Please stay tuned to the Flock Talk for more information closer to the end of April.

Moderator's Message

I wanted to give everyone a summary of how BCC is responding to the ever-changing world in which we are currently living. Please follow the current health and safety guidelines for your location. It would be easy to be focused on all the negative issues and what the future will bring, but let's remember all the blessings we continue to have and the opportunities available to serve. During these unprecedented times, the worship team (Rev Day, Rick, praise band, Elders) are dedicated servants finding ways to allow us to still worship via Facebook Live.

Also, give Rick a thank you as March marks 7 years at BCC! We delayed his Fellowship Hall celebration because of the current restrictions, but it will be rescheduled when we get back to in person services. From what I observed we had a few more Facebook Live attendees than the first week. The videos are being loaded to YouTube so you can watch at any time, simply search for Brandon Christian Church Disciples of Christ.

Jamie has been doing a wonderful job of keeping us informed while juggling a lot of balls keeping the church office running. Rev Day is experimenting with new and different methods of keeping us connected as well as spiritually inspired and fed. The Elders and Rev Day are available if you need someone to talk or pray with. Don is zooming with the Wednesday morning men's study (this would be a great time to join us from the comfort of your home) and Sunday morning faith groups. Steve Blinder is restarting the Matthew bible study Wednesday, also via Zoom. The Meals on Wheels folks are still at it, but with fewer people preparing and we are keeping our distance when picking up and delivering meals.

Since we have fewer opportunities to serve others at our building use this time to check on each other, your family (Zoom seems to be the app of the virus lockdown, except when your parents don't have internet like mine), neighbors or anyone you know that may need help getting groceries or just someone to talk with for a while. If you could use assistance of any kind contact your Elders, your Peace Group, Karlita and I, or a fellow BCCer.

Stay safe and remember to thank God for your blessings.

Art Konnerth Moderator BCC

Florida Disciples Camps and Retreats

May 23-25 Summer Family Camp

May 23-25 Young Adult Retreat

June 7-13 HS Canoe Camp

June 14-19 Elem Equestrian Camp

June 21-26 Midway Camp

June 28-July 3 Junior Camp

July 5-11 Spiritual Arts Camp

**July 12-17 MS Outdoor Adventure
Camp**

July 17-19 Uno Camp

The following is quoted from an email dated March 30, 2020 from Mary Beth Harper that addresses concerns over COVID-19 interfering with summer camps:

"The Outdoor Ministry Committee met via Zoom last week and developed the following plan:

Our first choice is of course to offer summer camp as planned. Should the Coronavirus prevent moving ahead as scheduled, our second option would be to compress the schedule, moving camps to July. That would mean being creative with the schedule and probably doubling up camps more than we already do. The third options would be to offer some type of virtual camp experience. Our curriculum developer, Inside Out Curriculum, will work with us should that become a necessity. Fourth, we are encouraging campers and their churches to send in scholarship applications and register now, but pay later if necessary.

That's what I know right now. We are certainly in a fluid time, so stay tuned."

Announcements will be made in Flock Talk and the weekly and monthly newsletters as we learn more about any possible changes to the schedule for The Retreat.

Things to Know for April

April 1—Fossil Fools Day

April 5—Palm Sunday— 11:00,
Facebook Live

April 5—Elders, 12:45—Zoom

April 5—Board Mtg, 5p—Zoom

April 5 and 12—Special Offering
for Easter, Give Plus has option.

April 9—Maundy Thurs.

April 10—Good Friday

April 10—Food 4 Tht—Zoom

April 12—Easter Sunday:
Stay tuned to Flock Talk for up-
dates about Easter Worship info.

April 19—Earth Sunday

April 22—Earth Day

April 24—Arbor Day

April 26 to May 3:
Family Promise



Birthdays!

Apr 2—John Peterson

Apr 6—Mireya Leung

Apr 7—Gail Cain

Apr 8—Alexandria Booth, Brett Powell

Apr 19—Elizabeth Smiley

Apr 26—Rich Denton

Anniversaries!

No Anniversaries

FINANCE MEETING—THURS, APR 9
7:00PM, ZOOM

ELDERS' MEETING—SUN, APR 5
12:45PM, ZOOM

BOARD MEETING—SUN, APR 5
5PM—ZOOM

In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty.

In all things, love!



Food for Thought will meet on April 10th at 11:00 on Zoom (meeting ID #) Everyone is invited to come and participate. Participants discuss a variety of topics which have multiple view-points. The intention is to share ideas, but also to become better listeners and learn how to have conversations around difficult topics. Come check it out some time, you won't regret it!

The starting point for this month's discussion will be a recent Tweet from Disciples minister Rev. Dr. William Barber II: "This virus is teaching us that from now on, living wages, guaranteed health care for all, unemployment & labor rights are not far left issues, but issues of right vs wrong and life vs death."

SWIFT

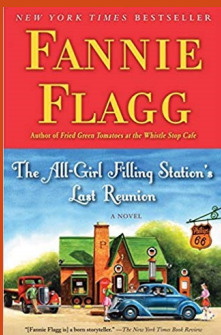
(Single Women in Fellowship Together)

SWIFT will be taking the month of April off, but hopes to resume in May via Zoom if in-person gatherings are still restricted. For more information, contact Betty at 813-404-9393 or bdawson@dawsoncrew.com



Christian Book Discussion

See pg 5 for the rest of the schedule



The Christian Book Discussion will be taking a break for April and May due to Easter and Mothers Day respectively. The next book discussion is scheduled for June 14, and the book is "The All-Girls Filling Station's Last Reunion" by Frannie Flagg.

"Mrs. Sookie Poole of Point Clear, Alabama, has just married off the last of her daughters and is looking forward to relaxing and perhaps traveling with her husband, Earle. The only thing left to contend with is her mother, the formidable Lenore Simmons Krackenberry. Lenore may be a lot of fun for other people, but is, for the most part, an overbearing presence for her daughter. Then one day, quite by accident, Sookie discovers a secret about her mother's past that knocks her for a loop and suddenly calls into question everything she ever thought she knew about herself, her family, and her future."

Christian Book Discussion

Here are the books for the rest of the year:

April and May—No discussions (Easter and Mothers Day)

June 14—The All-Girls Filling Station’s Last Reunion; Fannie Flagg (Lots of books, CDs, and large print—used \$9)

July 12—Sometimes Amazing Things Happen; Elizabeth Ford (1 book, used \$7-\$15)

Aug 9—The Fever Tree; Jennifer McVeigh (books, CDs, and downloads—used \$2-\$6)

Sept 13—The Giver of Stars; Jojo Mayes (**Holds**, lots of books, still expensive online \$10-\$15)

Oct 11—Mere Christianity; C.S. Lewis (8 Books reg and lg print, used &2-\$6)

Nov 8—Where the Crawdads Sing; Delia Owens (**Holds**; lots of books, download, online \$12-\$15)

Dec 13—The Blue Bottle Club; Penelope J. Stokes (1 reg, 1 lg print, used \$6)



You are seeing a lot about this thing called Zoom and you might be wondering what it is. Zoom is a communication tool that enables group meetings via computer. The Sherman’s have generously donated a Zoom Pro account for the church to use.

To get started, go to www.zoom.us and create your Zoom account for free. Your

free version will allow you to have video conferences with other Zoom members for 45 minutes per meeting. The Pro version the church has a meeting time limit of 24 hours.

To participate in a Zoom meeting you would log in and select “Join A Meeting” at the top of the page and enter the meeting code that you have been provided by the person organizing the meeting. Often they will be able to send you a link, clicking on that will take you right into the meeting. One of the best features of Zoom is that there is an option to teleconference in so those without computers are still able to participate.

To host a meeting using the BCC Zoom Pro account simply email Don and let him know the dates/times you need set up and he will get you the information you need to disseminate to your group members.

There are also apps that you can download in The Apple Store and Google Play Store so you can use your phone or tablet if you don’t a computer, or if it is more convenient for you. If you have any questions give Jamie a call at the office and he will do his best to walk you through it.

Zoom Meeting ID #'s: - Generally the meeting code will be the same each week/month—check with the leader for any changes.

Matthew Bible Study; Wednesday’s at 2:00pm—[178 394 910](tel:178394910)

Brandon Christian Sunday School; Sunday’s at 10:00am—[821 838 128](tel:821838128)

Wednesday Men’s Study; Wednesday’s at 7:00am—[477 335 768](tel:477335768)

Food For Thought; Second Friday’s Monthly at 11:00am—[290 091 239](tel:290091239)

FEEDING TAMPA BAY

Volunteers are helping at the Publix Community Market from 11:30am to 3:30pm the final Monday of every month. During Mission Week, several BCC volunteers enjoyed their time helping with this ministry, and it was decided that we would continue. Some folks meet at the church and carpool to the location at 4702 Transport Drive, Bldg. 6, Tampa, and others meet the group on-site. It mostly involves helping people select food items and carry them to their car or other transportation. If you would like to volunteer, the next date is **Mon, April 27th**. Contact Steven Blinder at (813) 514-3815 for more information.

Help is also needed on Thursdays at 1:00pm at the Gibsonton Elementary School location of Feeding Tampa Bay!

As of publishing Feeding Tampa Bay was still operating using Social Distancing Guidelines. Please contact Steven before setting out to make sure that they are still meeting.

GIVE+
Electronic Giving Options



Brandon Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) participates in Give Plus, an electronic tithing program that enables tithing electronically. Set-up is a breeze and there are options to have your donation go to a specific fund or offering (like the Building Fund for BCC or the Easter Special Offering for the DOC). To start, you can either go to the “Giving” page on brandonchristianchurch.org and click the button that says “Click Here to Donate through Give Plus), this will take you a form where you can put in what you would like to donate to where. On the right side of that page should be an option for you to create a profile. That doesn’t take long and then you are good to go. Once you set up your account you may need to go back to the BCC page and click again to be taken back to the giving form.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Jamie during office hours and he will do his best to walk you through it.

“This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

— Psalm 118:24 NRSV

2020 Easter Offering

REJOICE

A special day offering of
Disciples Mission Fund

APRIL 5 AND 12, 2020



Find more stories from our general ministries and give online at disciplesmissionfund.org.

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” - Psalm 118:24 NRSV

Across the United States, Canada, and beyond, Disciples are rejoicing in all the Lord has made.

We rejoice with the **Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries** (Obra Hispana), **National Convocation**, and **North American/Pacific Asian Disciples** (NAPAD), who will be holding their biennial gatherings together this summer for the first time.

We rejoice with the growing number of congregations who, with support from **Green Chalice** and **Disciples Home Missions**, find new ways to care all the Lord has made—developing recycling programs, installing solar panels, planting community gardens, and more.

We rejoice in all the stories and voices preserved by the **Disciples of Christ Historical Society**, who work every day to document and share our Church’s heritage.

We rejoice that lives are restored through the work done by the **National Benevolent Association’s** Prison and Jail Ministry. This collaborative group develops and shares resources to help Disciples serve and minister to those currently and formerly incarcerated.

We rejoice in the work **Disciples Women** do together to combat human trafficking, working together with **Global Ministries**, to partner with organizations supporting vulnerable communities around the world.

This Easter, we rejoice together as one Church, as the One Body of Christ. We rejoice in all that we accomplish together, and the work God accomplishes through us.

Let us rejoice that the Easter offering, through Disciples Mission Fund, makes the ministry—and so much more—possible.

Through the general ministries of our Church, lives are changed and our world is transformed. Will you rejoice with us and give to this special day offering?

This Easter season, let us rejoice in all the ways our wider Church embodies the Spirit of Resurrection, through life-giving ministry.

“Easter Special Offering” is now an option in Give Plus to enable you to donate to this Special Offering online if you would like. If you haven’t set up Give Plus yet, it is a snap. See the previous page for instructions on how to set up and use Give Plus. As always, if you have questions give the office a call and Jamie will do his best to try to help you out as much as he is able.

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table as God has welcomed us.

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IDENTITY STATEMENT

