

Musings...

October 13, 2020

Come join us today at 5:30 pm, in the sunshine or under the shade trees as we continue our 30 minute vesper services. Tim Jackson will be offering the devotional. Please wear your mask and bring your own lawn chair if you have one – otherwise we will happily provide a chair. We will social distance. **Note:** We also are glad to accept your tithes and offerings at this time. We hope to see many of you there.

Joys and Prayer Concerns:

*June Wilson would like to thank everyone for all of their prayers during her recent health concerns. After several tests and procedures, with the Blessings of God, the doctors have ruled out any threatening problems and concluded that medication should help her situation.

*Keith and Julie Miller. Julie will begin chemo therapy on Wednesday, October 14 and Keith will have rotator cuff repair surgery on Thursday, October 15. Prayers are much appreciated.

*From Connie Collins: All is well! My family members are clear of the virus. None of us are contagious any longer. I just want everyone to know that I appreciate their prayers and concern, but I am completely back to normal and back to work as usual.

Announcements:

*On September 29, 2020 the Official Board sent out letters and information concerning the vote on the proposed pastoral call of Reverend Michelle Funk as First Christian's settled pastor. The Board of Deacons will be making telephone calls to obtain your vote this week. Thank you in advance for your vote.

*By now you will have received a pledge card for your 2021 pledge. Please return to First Christian UCC as soon as possible. You may send it in the mail or bring it to the church office. Thank you all for your faithfulness!

*Benjie Terrell encouraged us to take part in the “Men of Steel Harvest Time” event that was held yesterday. Thanks for all who participated. The Board of Deacons has suggested that we donate to this fundraiser that is raising money for their prison ministry, outreach to widows and other needs in the community. If you choose to make a donation, please write check to Men of Steel and pass the check on to Connie Collins. Please submit your check by October 31st.

Birthdays for October

Ann Strange	October 13
Michael Smith	October 20
Bob Horne	October 29

Anniversaries for October

Jim and Cyndi Horne	October 28
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*This past Sunday we had a blessing of the animals. Our pets have such a wonderful place in our lives and it was a joy to honor them. As a follow-up, we would like to be introduced to your pets! If you have a furry friend (present or past) please send a picture with your name and your pet's name to TimJackson@firstchristianucc.org or drop it off/ mail it to the church. We will share the pictures soon!

*We are continuing with our virtual Zoom Sunday School which is held each Sunday at 9:30 am. This Sunday we will have a time of checking in, updating each other and sharing how we are doing during this unusual time. The link and instructions for joining our Zoom Sunday School on October 18th at 9:30 am is at the bottom of today's Musings.

*Sunday, October 18: Deborah will bring the message.

*Please contact us if you have a pastoral concern, joy or announcement you would like us to know about. Also, we would love to connect via phone to just hear your voice and to hear how you are doing. Feel free to call us at the below phone numbers.

Tim Jackson 336.908.1126 timjackson@firstchristianucc.org

Deborah Suess 336.317.5384 deborah.firstchristianucc@gmail.com

Zoom Instruction:

If you are joining on zoom by computer, smart phone or ipad – just click on this link:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/99385710248>

It may redirect you to a second link. Follow that. It will then take just a few seconds for the “zoom host” (Tim or Deborah) to admit you.

Devotional thoughts:

This past Sunday we gave thanks for God's gift of creation. We particularly focused on the blessing of the animals as we considered the perspective of St. Francis of Assisi. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake invites us to share a “mirroring” experience with the animal world so that we might have a glimpse of the reality that Francis lived throughout his life. Why not give it a try? Blessings, Deborah

Everything was a mirror for Francis. What he saw in the natural world, in the sky, in animals, and even plants was a reflection of God's glory. His first biographer, Thomas of Celano, writes about how Francis was constantly praising creatures for giving God glory just by their very existence. They could simply be and be themselves. Eventually, nature mirrored back the same message to Francis himself: He could just be and be himself in all of his freedom and joy and poverty.

Be Present with an Animal

If a cat is purring while you stroke it, be completely present to the stroking and the purring—rather than stroking distractedly while having a conversation or watching TV. The cat is present; become present with it. Or listen to a bird singing. I live in England, and my favorite birdsong is that of blackbirds singing in the spring and early summer. I listen to their songs, which change every time they sing. Often I hear another blackbird respond: they interact with each other and reply to each other's tunes and variations.

They are present to each other. We can be present through listening. Wherever you live, you will be able to find birds singing. . . .

Get to Know Another Species

If you keep a cat, dog, horse, parrot, budgerigar, rabbit, hamster, ferret, lizard, goldfish, stick insect, or another kind of animal, you are already getting to know another species. If you have, or have had, more than one cat, dog, horse, or other animal, you will also know that each animal is different. Each expresses its unique individuality within the context of its species' instincts.

If you do not have a companion animal, or even if you do, you can get to know a wild species by observing individuals that live near you—like birds in your garden or in a nearby park—watching and listening to them, perhaps feeding them, relating to them throughout the year. Or you can raise caterpillars or tadpoles and witness their transformation into butterflies, moths, or frogs.

The better you know your chosen kind of animal, the more you will appreciate its way of being, its form of life. You will feel connected to a world much wider than your human concerns, and with which you share a common source.