



**ANNANDALE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

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**The Grapevine
September - 2021**

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September 2021 Grapevine

Celtic Christianity!

Today when we think of Celtic traditions, we think of Ireland and Scotland. However, back in the time of Christ and later, the Celts were spread all across Europe, even into some of the areas where the apostle Paul made his missionary journeys. Celtic Christianity is based in the teachings of John, both the Gospel of John and John's letters. In our time it is centered in the northern British Isles. The Celtic Christian tradition have a long history, and yet we know very little about it. I'm no expert, but if I had to describe the main focus of the Celtic branch of our faith, I would say they are focused on a loving God, who originally made this creation good. After all, Genesis chapter 1 does describe creation as good 7 times in that short chapter. Christianity in today's world has become ever more fragmented. One tradition will focus on one aspect of living out the faith, and another tradition focuses on a slightly different aspect. I think this is becoming more and more of a problem both inside Christianity and also outside Christianity. When we focus on our differences, it makes it difficult for those new to the faith to believe in an all-loving Jesus.

I think that Celtic Christianity may hold the key to bringing us together as Christ's family once again, but only if we are humble enough to listen to what that tradition teaches. It may sound a little loosey-goosey to some of us, but author J. Philip Newell introduces the Celtic tradition in this way. "Celtic spirituality is more poetic than doctrinal. Belief is pointed to rather than defined. ... But if one phrase had to be chosen to point to the difference, it would be the title of Dame Julian's series of dreamlike visions of Christ, "The Revelation of Love."

Other branches of Christianity divide themselves often by trying to define how salvation works. Did Jesus substitute himself for us on the cross? Did Jesus sacrifice himself to satisfy the wrath of God towards us sinners? Was Jesus the scapegoat that saves us from our sins? While I believe that all of these understandings are partially true, I also think that this approach only focuses on “how does salvation work,” and doesn’t really get us to the heart of the matter. It is easy to get stuck in the smaller details of “how.” Personally, I don’t care so much about the “How” as I do the “Why.”

Celtic Christianity tries to get behind all the various theories of atonement, and answer the question, what motive did God have for working through Jesus on the cross? The answer to that is simple, and yet will take a lifetime for us to comprehend. God and Jesus gave everything for us out of the love they had for us, and for all creation. As a result, we have the promise that Love will always find a way, a way through anything. There isn’t enough room here to do the Celtic tradition justice, so if you want to know more, let me recommend an author, and one of his books. John Philip Newell writes many books on the Celtic Christian tradition, but the first one of them that I read was titled, “A New Harmony: the Spirit, the earth, and the human Soul.”

And may you feel the love that God has for you always, every moment of every day.

May God’s Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Paul". The script is cursive and elegant.

Pastor Paul D. Baker

Annandale UMC Giving and Attendance

Giving –Aug. 2021 Attendance –Aug. 2021

Aug. 1, 2021	\$2,118.00	19 – in-person 30 – online
Aug. 8, 2021	\$721.74	17 – in-person
	\$140.00 August Mission March – Apportionments	
	\$1,251.10 Rummage Sale Income	
Aug. 15, 2021	\$1,633.00	26 – in-person 35 – online
	\$136.00 Corn feed freewill offering	
Aug. 22, 2021	\$727.00	20 – in-person 48 – online
Aug. 29, 2021	\$405.00	20 – in-person 30 – online
	\$50.00 Memorial Fund	

General funds needed each week: \$2,519.00

August income: \$6,209.84 August expense: \$8,850.97

2021 apportionments = \$14,020.00

Monthly apportionments = \$1,170.00

Apportionments paid June, July, August 50% = \$586.71

Apportionments paid YTD = \$7,627.23



Our September Mission March on Sunday, September 12, 2021 will go to apportionments. Apportionments are the share each annual conference or local church pays to support international, national, and local missions.

Worship Information and DVD's available

Bishop's pastoral letter: COVID precautions amid surge in cases

August 11, 2021

Re-Gathering Plan for Churches



By: Bishop David Bard
Interim Bishop,
Minnesota Conference

Bishop David Bard has turned the dial on the Minnesota Conference's [Phased Re-Gathering Plan for Churches](#) from blue to yellow. Below is a letter to Minnesota United Methodists explaining the reason for the change and offering specific guidelines:

Dear Friends in Christ in the United Methodist Churches of Minnesota,

I greet you in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.

I hope the summer has afforded you opportunities for rest, refreshment, and renewal. I hope you have been able to enjoy the beauty of our state. I hope you have been able to connect with family and friends, perhaps after a long absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The summer began with deep hope that we were putting this pandemic in the rear-view mirror. People were being vaccinated at rapid rates. Case rates, test positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths were all declining. Yet this pandemic has been filled with unpredictability, and we are once again entering a new phase.

The Delta variant is more easily transmitted, and there have been breakthrough cases among those who have been vaccinated. The latest research indicates that vaccinated people, though remarkably protected from being infected with COVID, are still able to become infected. When they are infected, they are less likely to suffer severe illness or be hospitalized, yet appear able to spread the virus to others. The result of the slowing of vaccinations and the spread of the Delta variant is that test positivity rates are up—now surpassing 5 percent in Minnesota (with some counties substantially higher), case rates are up, and hospitalizations and deaths are increasing, particularly in those places where fewer people have been vaccinated.

I know that, in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ, you want to do all you can to promote public health, further the common good, and care for the well-being of others. How might we do that in this new phase of the pandemic?

First and foremost, if you have not been vaccinated and are eligible to receive a vaccine, do it. It is the single most important thing you can do to care for yourself and for others. Those currently suffering the most serious illness right now are the unvaccinated. Of those who are currently hospitalized with COVID, well over 90 percent are people who have not been vaccinated. Please get vaccinated. Encourage your fellow-church members to get vaccinated.

Because the positivity rate has exceeded 5 percent for the state as a whole, which means there is substantial community transmission, we are moving the dial back to yellow in our [Phased Re-Gathering Plan for Churches](#). We understand there is great variation across our state in terms of community transmission and vaccination levels among your congregants, but please use caution. **When your county surpasses a 5 percent positivity rate (check your county's current rate here), we ask that you reinstate the yellow phase guidelines of social distancing, indoor masking, and no congregational singing.** After vaccinations, masking and social distancing are the next best tools we have for slowing the spread of

After vaccinations, masking and social distancing are the next best tools we have for slowing the spread of the coronavirus, and slowing the spread also prevents the virus from developing into new variants. And of course, outdoor gatherings are considerably safer than indoor gatherings, so that is a great option as weather permits.

Friends, we are not where we had hoped to be at this point in the summer. We had hoped vaccination rates would have outpaced virus variations. We had hoped that our masks could be put in the bottom of our drawers or in the back of our closets. Yet I believe that by God's grace we can muster the resilience, the kindness, and the determination to do what needs to be done to get past this pandemic. As followers of Jesus, we can lead in promoting public health, furthering the common good, and caring for the well-being of others. Thank you.



September Worship Themes

Practical Faith - James

September 5, 2021 Reconciliation of Divisions

Scripture Reading: James 1:17-27

September 12, 2021 Taming the Tongue

Scripture Reading: James 3:1-12

September 19, 2021 The Root of Conflict

Scripture Reading: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

September 26, 2021 Power of Prayer

Scripture Reading: James 5:13-20

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