



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor

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Week of July 19, 2020



Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.

If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we ask that you follow along with this printed service. Find a comfortable place to be, relax your body, and calm your mind. Try to come into a prayerful mindset. As you pray the community prayer, remember, your fellow congregants at First Christian will be praying this along with you. Feel free to keep this prayer to pray all week.

Community Prayer

Dear God of our waking and sleeping, we come to you tired, weary, and worn out. Our days are long, the information we receive is contradictory, and in many cases, we don't know what is the best course of action for us to take. Lord, help us to remember that you are with us always, in the stressful times as well as the joyful. Give us the patience and ability to relax our minds and bodies to make ourselves receptive when you communicate with us. Help us to continue showing love to ourselves and our neighbors. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVejAW8Dmqv8Jmk5rzj43g>

Worship Playlist

Unfortunately, one piece of the worship service that we cannot replicate on paper is our wonderful music ministry. Below are links to the songs for this week's worship and reflection. If you have access to the internet, you can type in the links below - OR - you can type the name of each song into YouTube's search engine to enjoy the music this week.

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UHB6ftNgGY>

Performed by Szabo Music

How Great is Our God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLQltd3MbE>

Performed by Chris Tomlin

Even if you are worshipping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 28:10-19

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the LORD stood beside him and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!' ¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' ¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Beth-el; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Romans 8:12-25

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Reflection

Meditation for 7th Sunday after Pentecost

“Sweet Dreams?”

Have you noticed that you seem to be dreaming more these days? Perhaps you're noticing more vivid and often disturbing dreams, particularly during these past few months. I know I have. As we moved deeper into the months of COVID-19, I remembered hearing experts tell us that this phenomenon was not as surprising as one might think. Kelli Miller wrote an article for WebMD entitled “COVID and Sleep: Sweet Dreams Aren't Made of This.” In this article, she noted that “More than 87% of Americans have had unusual dreams since the pandemic began, according to a Sleep Standards survey of 1,000 dreamers in the United States.” She went on to say “Nightmares, dreams, and sleep disturbances are common in times of trauma and disaster.”

During times of stress and anxiety our fears and concerns often arise in our dreams. Perhaps this was also true for Jacob. He was a fugitive, running from his family and their wrath after he tricked his brother Esau into selling him his birthright. In this state of anxiety and fear, he falls asleep, and naturally, he dreams.

While scientists point out that our dreams often mirror our waking fears and anxieties, I would venture to say that sometimes our dreams open us to communications from God. We have several stories throughout the Hebrew Scriptures of those who had powerful dreams in which they realized God was communicating with them. Jacob is only one person in a long line of those who shared their dreams and, through them, discovered God's intentions for themselves and others. We are at our

most vulnerable, receptive, and relaxed when we sleep. As Jacob learned, it may be when we surrender to sleep we open ourselves to God. Perhaps one of the gifts of dreams is that it makes us aware of our fears and anxieties. In this state of awareness we are more able to lift them to God.

I am no dream interpreter, but there are some key elements to Jacob's dream that seem to arise naturally out of his experiences. He fled from family and was totally alone. He found himself in a desolate place, and undoubtedly exhausted by his flight, he fell asleep. While asleep, angels appeared, and then God stood beside him. God told him that there would be a future, one he could not possibly imagine. Then God said in verse 15 “Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Jacob responded in the next verse which is probably one of the best known in Scripture. In verse 16 he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!” God had come to him in this isolated place and in the unexpected space of his dream.

We may not dream as Jacob did, but hopefully, we have a few vivid dreams that remind us of God's presence. God still comes to us in many unexpected times and places. If our dreams do not provide such vivid reminders of God's guidance and presence, may we make space in our waking dreams and prayers for that reminder. Just like Jacob, God is present even in the most distressing times and God has a future for us all, often one so wonderful we cannot imagine it now.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

July 19, 2020

In Our Church Family:

- William Deterding
- Betty Ferguson
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- Roger & Jessica Vocasek
- Scott Dietrick
- Marj Snodgrass
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Gwen Belden

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Friends and Family of Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Rick Pickel, *going back in for treatments, son of Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Herb, *prayers for health and wellness, cousin of Tom Mason*
- Fred Ogren, *prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Our sympathy to Betty Gish, *on the passing of her brother Monsignor James Dawson*

Friends:

- Pam Larsen, *continuing to fight cancer, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Peggy Westburg, *prayers during chemotherapy, friend of Lindsay Swanson*
- Karen, *during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball*
- Dennis, *battling cancer, friend of the Effle Family*
- Will Barrett, *for healing with gut issues, high-school aged neighbor of the Blossers*
- Prayers for justice and equality for our brothers & sisters of color throughout the nation. We are ALL created in God's Image! *from Tom Mason*

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

- North Platte FCC

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Raul F. Santiago Rivera serving in Puerto Rico

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Spiritual Practice

Developing Your Own Prayer of the Heart

It is possible to discover your own prayer of the heart by using the following process based on the work of Episcopal author Ron DelBene.

1. **Relax.** Find a posture that allows you to be relaxed and alert. It helps to sit fairly straight. Close your eyes and breathe deeply several times. Consciously release any muscle tension you become aware of. Breathe in peace, breathe out tension.

2. **Relax your mind.** If particular thoughts keep returning, gather them up and give them to God to hold for you during this time. You can take them back later if you want.

3. **Visualize Jesus.** Imagine that Jesus is sitting next to you or standing in front of you. He looks into your eyes and calls you by name, asking you, "What do you want me to do for you?" Hear his question and let your response surface from deep within. If more than one thing comes to mind, identify the root desire beneath all the others, express it in a short phrase. Examples: Heal me. Give me strength. Grant me peace. Love me. Teach me your truth.

4. **Find your name for God.** How do you address God? What is your name for the Divine? Call to mind the name, title, or word you find most meaningful when you speak to God in prayer. Examples: Jesus, Holy One, Living Spirit, Eternal God, Teacher, Father, Mother, Lord, Holy Mystery.

5. **Bring together your name for God and your desire.** Combine the name you use to address God with the phrase that expresses what it is that you want Jesus to do for you. This should become a single short phrase that flows easily in your mind. Examples: Holy One, grant me peace. Jesus, heal me. Eternal God, give me strength. Holy Mystery, teach me your truth.

6. **Pray the phrase.** Sit quietly and repeat the phrase gently in your mind for the next few minutes.

7. **Rest into silence.** Let your phrase fade into silence. Rest in the silence, letting the Spirit guide you into the enfolding love of God.

For further reading:

DelBene, Ron. *The Breath of Life: A Simple Way to Pray*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1992.