



# First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16<sup>th</sup> 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 August 2, 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 who transforms us, we pray for your presence this day. So many of us feel like we are in a cold, dark time, unsure of what to do and who to trust. We lay all of this worry and anxiety at your feet and pray for you to bless us today. We pray to you in thanksgiving, that we may be able to overlook what we lack, and focus on that which we have in abundance. O Lord, we pray that you may transform our lives so that we can be a beacon of your love in this world. We pray that through the blessing you give us, we can in turn be a blessing to our neighbors. In the name of your son Jesus, Amen.

**New Way to Connect!**  
**Dial-A-Sermon 402-205-5988**  
**Call any time to hear Pastor Karen's sermon for the week!**

## 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.

### Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6oq-sRsfIQ>

*From E.C. Schirmer Music Company*

### Jesus Messiah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4whBsh9ovI>

*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 32:22-31*

<sup>22</sup> The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. <sup>24</sup> Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' <sup>27</sup> So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' <sup>28</sup> Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' <sup>31</sup> The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

## *Matthew 14:13-21*

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup> When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' <sup>17</sup> They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' <sup>18</sup> And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' <sup>19</sup> Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup> And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup> And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

# Reflection

*Meditation for 9th Sunday after Pentecost*

## “Blessed and Transformed”

In his book *The Book of Words: Talking Spiritual Life, Living Spiritual Talk*, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner says: “Blessings give reverent and routine voice to our conviction that life is good, one blessing after another. Even, and especially, when life is cold and dark.” This story from Genesis today reinforces Rabbi Kushner’s perspective. Jacob’s transformation was expressed in his name change and in the blessing he received from God. Jacob came to this moment in his life through great struggle and pain. In fact, his entire life was fraught with struggle and pain. Both the struggle and pain that he experienced, and the struggle and pain that he caused. It was through this very human character that we still see the hand of God at work.

Once again, we come upon Jacob after a long day, exhausted and alone. He was again in the wilderness and fleeing from what he supposed would be the wrath of his wronged brother Esau. He brought all his belongings and his family with him, but he left them on the other side of the river. Although exhausted, he did not fall asleep this time. Instead, he had an encounter with a stranger with whom he wrestled all night long. We do not know until the end of the story that this stranger was God. Jacob came away from this wrestling match completely and utterly changed. He was physically changed, evidenced by a limp that probably plagued him the rest of his life. More importantly, however, his identity is changed. He was no longer Jacob, the devious one, but he received a new name, Israel, which literally means “may God persevere.”

Jacob’s transformation came at a high price and was not an easy or quick process. The successes and mistakes throughout his life shaped the man he later became. His literal struggle with God that night was also a metaphor for a life-time of struggle. God’s blessing ultimately came, not in the good times of Jacob’s life, but at the end of a painful struggle. Jacob’s blessing literally came in the “cold and dark” of his life. In addition to the blessing, Jacob was given a new name. This new name, Israel, was a symbol of the hopeful future that awaited him. It also became the name of the community that followed.

This blessing and transformation was not only meant for one man; this blessing and transformation is intended for us all. Like Jacob, we wrestle with God in the “cold and dark” of our lives today. As we move through months of COVID-19 and learn about the protests and struggles for justice and equality in our country and world, we find ourselves wrestling and yearning for transformation and blessing. So often, God comes to us most clearly in these times of struggle as we move through the “cold and dark” realities of our lives. Perhaps that gives added depth to the transformation and blessing we receive as individuals and communities. Like Jacob, we may walk away limping, but, we also walk away transformed and blessed!

AMEN

# Prayers & Praises

## August 2, 2020

# Spiritual Practice

## Finger Labyrinth

### In Our Church Family:

- William Deterding
- Betty Ferguson
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- Roger & Jessica Vocasek
- Marj Snodgrass
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Gwen Belden
- Roxie Pickel
- Our sympathy to the family of Scott Dietrick upon his passing Sunday, July 19th

### 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*
- Tricia Gangwish, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson*

### Friends:

- Pam Larsen, *continuing to fight cancer, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Peggy Westburg, *praise for improvement, though there is still no cure for her cancer, 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 Timothy's:

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

### In the Nebraska Region:

- Omaha FCC and Rev. Josh Sawyer

### Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Cindy Moraga-Selva serving in Mexico

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners



The tradition of the Lucca Cathedral in Italy lives on today through the use of finger labyrinths. In a tradition dating from the ninth century, today's parishoners can trace the twenty-inch path chiseled into the wall of the cathedral as a preparation for worship.

Use your finger or a pointed object to prayerfully "walk" this labyrinth. Don't use a writing instrument if you wish to use this path again.



If you are interested in walking a real labyrinth, you may visit Crestwood Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at 8000 A Street, Lincoln, NE 68510.

From the Office of Spiritual Formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Check out our weekly video at [www.fcclincoln.org](http://www.fcclincoln.org), First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

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