



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 August 9, 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

O God of open hands, we offer this prayer to you today in gratitude that you come to us and save us over and over again. You model for us perfect generosity, of your time, your Spirit, and your love. We are in a strange and lonely time right now, Lord, and we need you to fill us with inspiration and creativity to find new ways of reaching out a helping hand. Open our hearts to not only give love and attention, but to lean into our vulnerable sides and receive it, too. We pray all of this 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.

How Firm a Foundation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwGW8qRqz4I>

Performed by Sovereign Grace Music

Let the Waters Rise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYjzKk-TeP8>

Performed by Mikeschair

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 37:1-4, 12-28

¹ Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. ² This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³ And Israel said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.' He answered, 'Here I am.' ¹⁴ So he said to him, 'Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.' So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, ¹⁵ and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, 'What are you seeking?' ¹⁶ 'I am seeking my brothers,' he said; 'tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.' ¹⁷ The man said, 'They have gone away, for I heard them say, "Let us go to Dothan."' So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.' ²¹ But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, 'Let us not take his life.' ²² Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him'—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?' ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.' And his brothers agreed. ²⁸ When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

²⁸ Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' ²⁹ He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus.

³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Reflection

Meditation for 10th Sunday after Pentecost

“Don’t Be Afraid to Reach Out”

I wonder what this familiar Gospel story would look like today in this age of physical distancing. Perhaps the winds and the waves would mitigate any spread of the virus, but our context today invites a different perspective on a familiar story. Upon Jesus’ command, Peter got out of the boat and began to walk toward Jesus. As he became self-conscious of his actions and aware of the environment surrounding him, he began to sink. He cried out and Jesus reached out a hand to keep him from sinking. Together, both of them entered the boat safely. Without a helping hand from Jesus, Peter would have perished.

In our culture, particularly here in the Midwest, we are so used to reaching out a hand as we greet one another, whether for the first time or one-hundredth time. It has been a habit that has been difficult to break in these days of physical distancing. As I entered the funeral home for Scott’s funeral a couple of weeks ago, I literally had to stop myself as I reached out to shake the hand of the funeral director working with us.

Sadly, we also know that our hands can be used in hurtful ways, too. Those who have been struck by the hand of another, particularly if done repeatedly, often flinch when a hand is raised in their direction. If you have had that kind of experience, you know what I mean. A raised hand, particularly from a stranger, can be a frightening thing. A raised hand, particularly from a loved one, can create a life-long wound. In these days of protest, we have sadly heard many instances in which hands have been raised with the intent of doing violence.

In his book *With Open Hands*, well-known author Henri Nouwen reminds us of the healing power of hands. When we have had the experience of someone reaching out a helping hand, we have known the power of healing hands. Perhaps it has been a literal experience such as boarding a boat, exiting a car or bus, or walking up onto a stage. Perhaps it has been a more metaphorical experience such as getting help when in need,

bringing consolation in a time of distress, or offering support in a time of illness. Hopefully, each of us has known some time in our life when someone has reached out a hand that has felt salvific at the time. Nouwen reminds us that when hands are extended in healing, they are the hands of God.

Our passage from Matthew also invites us to ponder how we might extend healing hands to others, particularly when we cannot do so literally. How do we, as the Church, extend hands of healing and help? Sadly, many have felt beaten up and abused by those in the Church. Even so, I suspect there are many more who have experienced the healing touch of God’s hand in the church. This year, as we move through this time of COVID-19, we will be challenged to consider how we might raise healing hands to those in need. The traditional ways in which we have done so are not possible. We may not be able to raise a healing hand literally, but we can still be here for one another, for our neighborhood, and for those in need in our community and world.

Even in the midst of a pandemic, we here at FCC have continued with Acts of Kindness. Our Outreach has included assisting local entities and giving support to our Region. Stay tuned for more opportunities to reach out to those in need all around us. We are also invited to reach out in our community by advocating for justice for all people.

It takes courage to reach out to others, both as we seek help and as we offer it. We may be rejected and our hand may be slapped away. However, our gesture may be warmly received. We may not see the results right away. We, like Peter, can have the courage to reach out because God, through Christ, reached out, and continues to reach out, to us. When we think about it, as the Disciples did, we realize that God’s willingness to reach out to us gives us courage to reach out to God and one another. With Peter we may call out to Jesus to “save us” as we know he has, he does, and he always will.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

August 9, 2020

Spiritual Practice

Everyday Blessings

In Our Church Family:

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

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 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*
- Peggy, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, co-worker of Sara Lugn*

Our Timothys:

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

In the Nebraska Region:

- Pawnee City FCC and Rev. Duane Westing

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Thomas Smith serving in Korea

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



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

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

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Celtic Christianity is its affinity with nature. The Celts enthusiastically affirmed the psalmist's declaration, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims [God's] handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). The Celts believed that all creation is alive with God's presence. Because God's Spirit dwells in all living things, everything is inherently good; therefore all creation is to be treated sacramentally.

A consequence of believing all creation is alive with God's presence was that everything could be a window to God. Celts found nature an "icon." They could "see into" it and see God. Every moment, every location could become a time and place for encountering God.

Brad Kent, "Beneath the Celtic Cross of Jesus"
Presbyterians Today, Jan/Feb 2002

The Celts were not the only people to enjoy this "miracle of mindfulness," as the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh calls it. The great Reformer Martin Luther said that we should be reminded of our baptism every time we wash our faces. Others have said that being in the rain or swimming should lead us to do the same. Just as Jews hang the *Mezuzah*, containing portions of the Law on the doorpost, to be reminded of God's word each time they enter or leave their home in (Deuteronomy 6), what things could you do throughout the day to remind you of God?

Say or write a prayer for daily activities. What do you do each day that is a prompt for thanksgiving or petition? "Thank you God that I still have my teeth," as you brush, or "Help me to be patience as I dust."

An Everyday Blessing - By Kris Haig

*Bless to me my potted plants, O God.
Bless to me their green leaves
Bless to me their sturdy stems
Bless to me their ghostly roots that stretch deep
into the secret loam.*

*Bless the pots that encircle them
Bless the water I pour on them
Bless the rivers and reservoirs, the pipes and spigots,
and the sea-green glass pitcher
that catches and carries your water of life.*

*Bless the sun that draws my plants to itself
and bless you, O Christ,
who draw me to yourself.*