



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

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Week of May 16, 2021



Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: We gather to worship the One who crafted creation out of chaos.

Many: Our cries of joy join the anthems of the universe.

One: We gather to lift our praise to the God who gives us voice.

Many: We bring the songs which have echoed in our hearts all week long.

One: We gather as the children of God, our joy unbroken in God's love.

Many: Young and old, tone deaf and perfect pitched lift the new, new songs of faith.

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

If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

O God of forgiveness and love, we open our hearts to you in prayer. We know there is no desire of our heart unknown to you, no behavior truly hidden. Cleanse us of our iniquities by your never-ending forgiveness. Transform us into beings that radiate light and love, just like your Son, Jesus. Allow your Spirit to guide us as we live out our days, steering us away from gossip, pettiness, and jealousy, and moving us into love and compassion. We pray this in the name of never-ending love itself, Jesus Christ. 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.

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

Even if you are worshiping 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 Reading

Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ ‘Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

1 John 5:1-6

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴ for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵ Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Reflection

Meditation for the 7th Sunday of Easter

“Water is Thicker than Blood”

I suspect you are familiar with that old saying “blood is thicker than water.” The implication of this proverb is the idea that familial relationships are far stronger than any other. As I pondered our readings for today I found myself wondering if that was the perspective of the witnesses to this baptism story in the book of Acts. The author of this passage tells us that it was a mixed crowd, those who had been circumcised and Gentiles who had not. At this point in the story, among the followers of Jesus were many who believed they would continue to follow the practices and customs of Judaism. Jesus had been a Jewish rabbi and much of his ministry was within the Jewish community. However, more and more Gentiles were joining their movement. During his earthly life Jesus had reached out to Gentiles as well. The author of this passage remarked in verse 45 “The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.” I suspect many of them would have affirmed the above proverb that “blood is thicker than water.” Many of them probably believed that the ties of family and their connection to the Jewish community of the first century were the defining marks of the followers of the Risen Christ.

However, it became clear that something new and powerful was happening in this gathering. I want to suggest that our scripture lessons today asserts a very different reality. Perhaps the best proverb for this event would be “water is thicker than blood.” This early community of the faithful learned that familial connections and communities of origin were not the defining status any more. They experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit on circumcised and uncircumcised alike. Now, the waters of baptism would bind them together in a way that blood connections could not. As Christians, we are not bound together by our families or relational affiliations. As Christians, no matter our background, we are

bound together by the waters of baptism.

In his book *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* pastor and writer Frederick Buechner said:

“Baptism consists of getting dunked or sprinkled. Which technique is used matters about as much as whether you pray kneeling or standing on your head. Dunking is a better symbol, however. Going under symbolizes the end of everything about your life that is less than human. Coming up again symbolizes the beginning in you of something strange and new and hopeful. You can breathe again.”

For Buechner, the type of baptism was not as important as the awareness that baptism is about “the forgiving and transforming love of God.”

It was the forgiving and transforming love of God that was experienced that day as the Holy Spirit was poured out on all the believers. It was the forgiving and transforming love of God that was symbolized in the waters of baptism. It was the forgiving and transforming love of God that was poured out on all those who extolled God and professed their faith in Jesus the Christ. In the opening words to the section on Christian Baptism, the Chalice Worship book says: “Persons become disciples of Christ as they are moved by God’s spirit to turn away from sin and evil, make a profession of faith, receive God’s renewing grace through baptism, and thereby become one with the whole people of God.”

So, our lesson from Acts does affirm that “water is thicker than blood.” The waters of baptism draw us together as believers. Through our baptism “we are one with the whole people of God.”

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

May 16, 2021

In Our Church Family:

- Georgann Jordan
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Jessica Vocasek
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Vic Burgess
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Dave Harris

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Rick Pickel, for entering hospice care, son of Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Fred Ogren, prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren
- Tricia Gangwish, prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson
- Will Oldenburg, prayers as his current tour of duty is coming to an end and he is heading home, cousin of D'Arcy Blosser
- John Swanson's father, in nursing home with COVID-19
- Phyllis Jones, hospitalized with COVID, cousin of Dick Pickel
- Mark Carpenter, with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Roger Christianson, with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson
- Our sympathy to Kara Madison, upon the recent passing of her father
- Our sympathy to the Dockhorn family, upon the passing of Rick's father
- Kristen, sister of Leigh Lestina

Friends:

- Karen, during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball
- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, diagnosed with glioblastoma, prayers for healing, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser
- Cedric Gibb, healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart
- Tomi, healing prayers for cancer diagnosis, friend of Sara Lugn
- Carson Mousel, 13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer
- Judy Nord, with bile duct cancer, friend of Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Betty Finck, praise for improvements, friend of Pastor Karen

Our Timothys:

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

In the Nebraska Region:

Humboldt Christian Church and Rev. Howard Blecha

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

Danielle Murry - Knowles serving in Lesotho

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at

www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

I Come with Joy

Text: Brian Wren, 1968

Music: American folk melody

I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved, and free,
the life of Jesus to recall,
in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love
in Christ's communion bread,
in Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one,
and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.

The Spirit of the risen Christ,
unseen but ever near,
is in such friendship better known,
alive among us here,
alive among us here.

Together met, together bound
by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.

