

August 2023 Edition

I'm back! The past month I have been in and out of the office and sometimes not even in the pulpit, but starting next week I'll dive into a new early fall sermon series as well as Bible Study. During this time, I served as a junior camp counselor at The Retreat in Silver Springs, in Ocala, FL. Additionally, my son Colton and I flew into St. Louis, MO, for a few days to spend time with my family and of course watched a Cardinals game. Subsequently, we drove one of my nieces down to Smith Lake in Alabama to meet Kate, Mya, and my in-laws at their lake house. For the record, we even topped off the gas tank at a famous "Buc-ees" gas station that has been the talk of the town and spent an hour in the place (did I mention this was a gas station?!) Yes, I was definitely back in the deep South. Prior to driving back to my hometown in Missouri, the entire family stayed overnight in Huntsville, AL, where we ate at my favorite Mexican restaurant and even made a surprise visit to my first full-time church outside of Huntsville. It looked, smelled, and appeared just the same or as my former secretary said with her country accent "Things here remain frozen in time." This brought many great memories to Kate and I as we recalled our humble beginnings, funny stories, many caring souls, and found ourselves in awe looking back at God's plans. Nevertheless, as you read this article I'm in Louisville, KY, for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Assembly with clergy from all over the country and world.



From being back in the office the past two weeks as well as catching up reading emails, there are two things that I am mindful of. While I might no longer have an overly romantic version of being a pastor (Sorry, I grew up watching with my parents the show *7th Heaven*) it is a blessing to love what you do and to be excited to do it. Although I naturally wonder what might be next for our family, especially due to Kate's health, in the meantime I'm thankful and I give God thanks for each day being able to serve at Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Just this past week from our extended Bible Study, assisting Bob and Johnny with property matters, cooking hot dogs at the food pantry with Harry, or preaching over at Brookdale and making a few home visits- I'm truly grateful for being able to do so and to be part of a loving community. Secondly, at the same time, no matter how much you love your work, intentional breaks from your regular rhythm or schedule are healthy and offer you fresh perspective on that work. I believe this is true with practically everything we do, including relationships, jobs, caring for loved ones, etc. Breaking up my usual rhythm gives me fresh perspective, take note what I've been missing, what is worthy of more time or needs to be cut, distance to see problems differently, rejuvenates my energy, even stokes my creativity, and allows me to arrive back with a sense of what truly is important. The disruption of my typical rhythm creates space in which I can grow and gain valuable wisdom into my own life.

A handful of congregants have shared with me their excitement about the energy and health of our church during these hot summer months. While I have jokingly replied that the church is growing because I have been away and you have been spared from hearing my voice from the pulpit, there is at least some truth to it. It has been a blessing for the congregation to hear from Rev. Dr. Jim Carpenter, our Regional Minister Rev. Sandy Messick, and now Rev. John Vickers. Not only do we have fine retired pastors, we are blessed to have faithful elders and deacons who serve each week. With that said, if you are new to being an elder/deacon, or just want a refresher about the responsibilities of the elders/deacons, please stay after worship on Sunday, August 27.

Finally, in the beginning of August, I'll begin a sermon series called Blessed! We will examine this word bless in Scripture as well as get practical noting what it means to be blessed and to be a blessing.
-Zach (The picture is from the inside of my first church where I baptized both of my nieces)

Prayers and Praise to God from February

(update) Pam Williams, stage four lung cancer, Church Family

Terry Blasi, successful shoulder surgery on Thursday, John Blasi Sr. (wife)

(update) Ray and Linda Schneider, Health Park Hospital, Church Family

(update) Dr. Jim Carpenter and Family, in the death of Dan Floeck, Church Family (brother-in-law)

Kenny Runyon, Gulfcoast Hospital, Church Family

Dean Brown, vascular procedures, a total of four beginning August 8, Church Family

Peter, Linda Lee

Michael Velandar, spent several days in the hospital without a diagnosis, Harris Family (friends' son)

Unity Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in the unexpected and tragic death of their new pastor Rev. Anthony L. Chapman, Greater Church Family

Hildur Skaggs, heart complications, Church Family

Peggy Roley, eye complications, Church Family



Welcome New Members

In July we gained two new families: Bill and Linda Garlow as well as Shane and Evelyn Pickwick

Beginning August 7, Mondays, 10-11:30am



Outreach Corner

If you are interested in making a difference for a FMCC congregant who is not able to worship in-person or could use a word of encouragement, please contact Chana Weaver for information on Caring Circle. This group from FMCC sends a handwritten note each month to someone in need. Please consider joining this ministry effort.

Thank you to those who helped with the back-to-school backpacks. We will still be collecting them for the next couple of weeks.

Are you interested in our outreach ministry or would you like to share some ideas and ways to get more involved in the upcoming fall and winter months? We invite you to attend a meeting on Sunday, August 13, directly after worship in the fellowship hall. Finally, a big thank you to those who served at the Gladiolus Food Pantry last Wednesday and those who helped serve at the reception for Nicole. **-Linda Lee (Outreach)**



August Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Mary Jane Ginter 6th

Kathy Coates 8th

Ruth Berry 9th

Denny and Sherry Floore 14th

Mike and Karen Burns 18th

Harry and Mary Rubin 18th

Joyce Turney 26th

General Assembly

This is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination gathering that will have business sessions with voting on resolutions, powerful worship and seminars, reports and incredible stories of the ministry from Week of Compassion, National Benevolent Association, and so much more. And, yes, it's expected for there to be a bunch of additional nerdy things to happen since a multitude of clergy are gathering under one roof.