



The Chalice News

First Christian Church is a member church of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): www.disciples.org

Turning up the heat from God this summer

By Pastor Michael

Summertime. Some more time. Although the days don't really get longer, summer days lazily drift by, and the extended daylight gives the illusion that indeed, days somehow have more time than they did in the darkness of winter. I'm not crazy about the extended daylight hours. If you happen to live in a tropical climate like Florida, it's a curse. Because it gets hot. Crazy stupid hot. And the longer it's light outside, the longer it stays hot. Crazy stupid hot.

I've been thinking about the heat though, or perhaps hallucinating from it. Heat is an interesting analogy for the energy of God. The First Testament often speaks of God appearing as a "pillar of fire," and fire is often used as a symbol of cleansing and preparation for new growth. But the heat from the fire can be just as powerful as the flame itself.

Heat can be comforting or overwhelming. Most of us love sitting around a campfire or a fireplace, but if you sit too close you'll get burned. The heat of summer can also burn us. Can the heat of God burn us?

We often talk about God's warm, loving embrace. Is God's heat always constant and comfortable? Is it always a warm embrace? Or perhaps, does God occasionally turn up the heat to make us jump out of our seats and take notice of something? Like the jarring heat of summer, maybe God often burns us up a little, and in so doing, burns away a little of our hubris, our pride, our ego.

God is the energy that drives all reality, the source of all sources. We are created to exist as one with that source. Humans, however, like the comfortable warmth of a small flame. We like to be on the outside of the heat. We're afraid to get burned, even though almost every burn moment of our lives leads to new, often surprising growth.

The brutal summer heat reminds me that there is a spiritual heat within each of us, and that it's there to both comfort us and call us to attentiveness. The heat of God within burns like an unattended bonfire, and can get so hot that it bursts forth through us in acts of random spiritual compassion, love, justice, and mercy. This summer, I might be looking at getting a little burned as a good thing.



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The Prisoner

By Pastor Tony

The following story is an adaptation of a trust game that we played in my youth group when I was a teenager. It involved a blindfolded volunteer and the rest of the group. The object was to make your way to the finish line by discerning the proper commands being shouted out. In each instance there were two people who gave opposing commands. The first gave the right instructions to the finish line. The second, instructions which would cause the volunteer to miss the goal.

A young man living in a large kingdom was sentenced for a crime, and as punishment was entered into a contest. The contest, oddly, was that he would go into the coliseum blindfolded, and follow the instructions that were given to him until he won his freedom.

While waiting to enter the arena the audience was given their own instructions: they were to yell out suggestions of things that the prisoner could do, from telling him to stand on his head, to singing and dancing around, whatever they could think of. Meanwhile, an aid to the king would shout out

instructions to the prisoner as though it were a matter of life and death. The instructions were that the convicted would have to find the king and hug him. This action would set him free. But, the king's aid could only shout his instructions from a distance and not come close to the prisoner.

As soon as the prisoner entered the arena, the crowd shouted out in an uproar that was heard all over the city. Each person tried to get the attention of the prisoner. The king's aid was also shouting, but it was no use. The prisoner, upon hearing so many voices, became paralyzed by fear and confusion. His mind, full of so many voices, kept him from making any decision at all. He started to move around at random and without purpose, stumbling over obstacles put in his

path and getting many bumps and bruises in the process.

The king's aid managed to enter the arena and continued to shout instructions to the prisoner. Meanwhile, the sheriff wanted to keep his arrest quotas high, so he had started shouting his own instructions to the prisoner to keep him away from the path towards the king. Aid and sheriff each yelled conflicting instructions into the prisoner's ear, while the rest of the audience continued their riotous uproar. Eventually, the two messengers were standing so close, the volunteer could hear both messages;





The Prisoner *(Continued from previous page)*

but because the messages were opposed to each other, he vacillated. He followed one for a bit, and then was convinced by the other to go the opposite direction.

After this went on for some time, the prince, who saw the fear on the young man's face, entered the arena, boldly walked up to the prisoner, and with a gentle touch on the young man's shoulder and with kind reassuring words whispered into his ear, slowly guided his steps towards the place where the king was seated. Every so often the prisoner would focus on the other voices, but he slowly began to trust the prince's words and guiding hand more and more.

Up until this point, the audience was fighting each other, trying to drown out those around them with louder shouts of their own. Upon seeing the prisoner so close to the goal, they started shouting out in unison, "Don't go! Don't go!" Those in the audience who up to this point had been shouting their own individual instructions, suddenly joined in unison to keep the volunteer from taking those final steps.

But the prince never took his hands off the prisoner, and with encouraging words, continued to guide him towards the king. As the prisoner drew closer to the just and merciful ruler, the king reached out, gently removed the blindfold, and embraced the prisoner while telling him, "You are free!" The coliseum erupted into thunderous cheers and applause!

"Grammie N" helps kids with reading skills

By Trudy Kellum

The school year in Lee County just came to an end, and the kids in my classroom had an important farewell to write to a special friend they've come to know as "Grammie N." At FCC Naples, Grammie N is known to us as Dorothy Newton.

With a heart for children and making sure they have books to read, Dorothy has supported several classrooms over the years by purchasing books and writing letters of encouragement to the students. A highlight of the year for my second grade students was receiving books, notes, and other special presents from Grammie N; and even being able to keep the books to share with their families.

Grammie N doesn't want any attention brought to her "behind the scenes" acts of service and generosity, but I couldn't help but share my

gratitude for the difference she has made this year in the lives of my eighteen students.

Thank you, Dorothy!





HHC brings blessings to many area school children

By Dara Albert

Many thanks from HHC to a generous and loving congregation! Your ability to embody Christ consciousness by spreading the love of God in real, tangible ways is changing lives and renewing spirits.

As you know, we started the **Weekend FoodPack Program** to get nutritious, kid-friendly emergency food portions into the hands



of kids who don't have enough to eat at home on the weekend. When our partner at Naples Park Elementary, Ms. Frizzi reached out to some kids to see if this might be helpful to them, she got some seriously heartstring-pulling responses: "I don't have a lot to eat...all I eat is dinner. My mom and dad work hard to get food (but) one time we didn't eat for a day"

"I am writing this note to ask you... could you send me a snack because my mom is always at work doing overtime and I get left alone with my grandma and not much to eat"

Once we started making FoodPack deliveries, she started getting thank you notes, which she also shared with us: "I really like the Hershey Milk Shake and I also enjoyed the other snacks. I

think you keep on doing (this) all year long. Thank you SO much!"

"I gave some to my family (and) they said that they enjoyed it"

Now that the Leadership Team approved our start up money for **Blessings in a Backpack**, we will be able to serve even more children next year! Please continue to give generously to keep this program going - it's doing a lot of good.

We are also sending **volunteers to St. Matthew's House** to help with their many outreach programs. We're pleased to be able to support them with our **Friends and Family of FCC volunteer initiative**. If you are interested in joining us, for an hour or for regular weekly shifts, or anything in between, please contact Donna Martin at Donna@stmatthewshouse.org to schedule an orientation.

From **FCEH (Faith Communities to End Homelessness)**, we told you recently about an advocacy initiative about reimbursement delays - monies that the non-profits serving the homeless population needed to be receiving in a timely manner from the county and the Clerk's office. Now, largely due to the efforts of FCC, we have been invited to attend, along with a large number of non-profit representatives and county officials, a "roundtable discussion" on this topic. The Clerk's office has been very open and willing to talk with us. Pastor Michael and I will also meet with County officials after the roundtable. This is a real chance to be change-makers and peace-creators.

Please continue to keep these initiatives in your prayers, as we strive to show our world that because of our loving and creative God, we are all one. All the good we do for one, we do for all, and for God. Thank you for your support.



Global Ministries

By Phyllis Byrd

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

“Just Communities” is the department at the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) with which I work as the Director. There are many projects Just Communities has undertaken. The “One People Campaign” is our peace initiative in Kenya and many African countries, to teach and promote peaceful lives and approaches to controversy, especially during and following elections. Just Communities produced and distributed copies of “Young African Express,” an educational magazine to the young people in the community. Young African Express is a comic booklet which addresses issues often present in communities and discusses the role of church members in it.

Recently we visited a group of women in Kawangwar, an informal settlement in Nairobi. The women are HIV-positive and have initiated an income-generating project to support themselves and their children. There we met the four year old daughter of one of the women, who had suffered third degree burns to her head and face. Blessing is her name. Her mother explained she did not have enough money to pay the price of the procedure to treat Blessing’s burns. Now Blessing’s condition was more serious, she could not close her eyes to sleep and she had difficulty breathing because the burns had affected her nose and mouth. Just Communities contacted the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services in Uganda

(CoRSU), which performs low cost surgery to children with disabilities. Blessing and her mother traveled twelve hours by bus from Nairobi to Kampala, Uganda arriving early on Sunday morning. They had an appointment to see a doctor at the hospital the next day. The doctor felt surgery was urgent because there were infections developing in Blessings’ eyes. The surgery was scheduled for two days later. The doctors successfully reconstructed much of Blessings’ face and more surgery is to come. We thank God for the many people who made Blessings’ medical treatment possible.

God, we pray that communities in Kenya will be able to focus on their daily lives in peace. We pray for Blessing as she continues to heal and recover, and we pray for the work of Just Communities that it may continue the impact it’s making among peoples in Kenya.

Phyllis Byrd serves in Nairobi Kenya, as a theological educator with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa as a theological educator. This is a joint appointment with the Presbyterian Church, USA and Global Ministries.





“Lord teach us to pray” at General Assembly

The Disciples General Assembly is Saturday, July 13 through Wednesday, July 17, 2013 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. This year’s theme is "Lord, Teach Us To Pray," based on Luke 11:1-4.

“He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.” (NRSV)

The Disciples website describes General Assembly as “a recipe that takes on a little different character depending on the cook (you). All the ingredients are necessary for full flavor but you can adjust to your interests and tastes and take home a rich dish of knowledge and experience to use where you live.”

Learning opportunities abound at General Assembly

At General Assembly, “you can join a learning community that will meet over the course of several days and offer practical knowledge you can take back to your home congregation. In fact, if you register and follow one community, you can earn continuing education credits (CEUs) through Christian Theological Seminary. The five communities will focus on stewardship, media and arts, sacred conversations, spirituality and missional transformation. You can also pick and choose from among the offerings of the different communities if CEUs aren’t important to you.

And that isn’t all! On Sunday morning following worship on site, there will be more than 20 opportunities for “Sunday School” classes ranging from clergy support to feeding the hungry. There will be morning speakers Monday through Wednesday to reflect on prayer, spirit and hope and the exhibit hall will have displays and booths representing ministries, colleges and more.

Add an overflowing cup of worship

General Assembly is a great place to worship with Disciples from all over the United States and Canada. Since there are so





Worship with disciples from around the world

Continued from previous page

many – we’re talking thousands! – the singing is phenomenal and the worship leaders are some of the best. It is also a place to experiment a little. If you’ve never experienced a litany or liturgical dance, you might get your chance. If you are a hymnal-and-organ person, you might also get to taste some new flavors of music. And the preaching! We don’t think you’ll be sleeping through any of this line up, particularly with the energy Sunday morning that includes the leaders, present and future, of our church.

If you don’t go with a group of friends, you will soon have some. Besides becoming acquainted with folks through the learning communities, there are luncheons and dinners galore. We Disciples are, after all, a people of the table! And, of course, you might just see some friends from your region at an after session or just out in the corridor.

Mix a little business with the pleasure of GA

During the preaching Sunday night and then also during the business sessions Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, you can learn about the really amazing breadth of ministries and mission supported by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). You will hear and see reports from the general ministries and hear about issues that are important to folks in the life of the church. Even if you aren’t a voting delegate, you can sit in the nonvoting section and expand your knowledge of the larger church.

The mix of business, worship, fellowship and education, with our brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world, creates a unique and powerful experience.





June Serving Schedule

- June 2 Greeter: Esther & Phil
Elders: Beverly Krepel and Helen Carpenter
Communion Prep: Jamie Burchett
Counting: Beverly & Joe Krepel
- June 9 Greeter: Lynn & Jamie
Elders: Beverly Krepel and Helen Carpenter
Communion Prep: Donna Botma
Counting: Beverly & Joe Krepel
- June 16 Greeter: Grace Williams
Elders: Beverly Krepel and Helen Carpenter
Communion Prep: Martha Cecere
Counting: Beverly & Joe Krepel
- June 23 Greeter: Beverly & Joe
Elders: Beverly Krepel and Helen Carpenter
Communion Prep: JoAnn Aycock
Counting: Beverly & Joe Krepel
- June 30 Greeter: Dorothy Newton
Elders: Beverly Krepel and Helen Carpenter
Communion Prep: Dorothy Newton
Counting: Beverly & Joe Krepel



June-July Birthday Celebrations

- June 1 - Patrick McArdle June 20 - Beverly Wolf
- June 3 - Tory Hendry June 21 - Jim Shene
- June 5 - Charlotte Adams June 29 - Mike Hartz
- June 10 - Phil Cox June 30 - Lani Overton
- June 11 - Callie Galbraith
- July 3 - Berkely & Carter Burchett July 17 - Janet Zimmer
- July 4 - Marie Reader July 28 - Susan Leonard
- July 9 - Luc Kellum July 28 - Madelyn Kellum
- July 10 - Jessica Bechtold July 29 - Kathy Streiler
- July 15 - Wayne Zimmer July 31 - Joe Krepel

Finance Report

April - May giving:

Sunday Worship Offering: **\$13,535.10**

Other Income: **\$6,683.46**

Worship space setup: **\$65.00**

Dorcas Women's Circle: **\$140.00**

Care Team: **\$15.00**

Mission Trip: **\$287.00**

General/Local Outreach: **\$2,731.65**

Week of Compassion: **\$1,025.00**

Easter Offering: **\$20.00**

Total: \$24,502.21

