



Mary Dodson Dice, editor February 2018

Rev. Timothy C. Dice, minister Volume II, Edition 1

## Pastor's Ponderings

Notes from the man behind the pulpit Rev. Timothy C Dice, Minister. BA, MDiv

#### Thank You, Reflection, and Memoriam

The Advent and Christmas season around the church always requires a lot of volunteer work, preparation, and sharing. We are thankful: for all of you who helped Frankie Edmonson get out and put up the decorations. For Fleta Hunley, who announced the donations for the Angels on the Tree during our worship services. For readers who assisted Rev. Dice with meditations around the Advent Wreath. For gifts of love and appreciation shared with the pastor and his family. For Maurine Frank and Mary Dice for demonstrating and making special decorations at the Advent Preparation Party. For Robin and her musical contributions. (Did you hear the bells on Christmas Day?) We are thankful ... For those of you who carried on regular duties (such as teaching and leading) so that things moved smoothly through the season. For all those who attended services and meetings in spite of some challenging weather conditions. On the tenth day of Christmas the Good Lord sent to us (not ten Lord's A-Leapin') but "A Large, cold white blanket!' The snow of January 3 blanketed the church grounds. It was a pretty thick white blanket in some places, but we weathered the storm. Thanks to one and all.

#### Pink and Gray on St. Valentine's Day, a Brief Reflection

The other day as I was dressing for the office, I found myself putting on a pink shirt with a gray sweater and gray necktie. Having just finished some of our calendar plans, I knew that Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday fell on the same day this year (very unusual). I realized how appropriate these two colors would be for February 14. St. Valentine was a Roman priest during the reign of the Emperor Claudius. Claudius persecuted and opposed the church. He made an edict that prohibited the marriage of young couples. The logic behind the edict was that unmarried soldiers fought better than married ones because they were not afraid for their wives or families if they were killed in action. St. Valentine opposed the edict and actively performed marriages for young couples. Eventually he was caught, imprisoned, and tortured for his marrying activities. Before his execution, he wrote a letter of encouragement to a young woman he had cured of blindness. His closing words in the letter have had an impact on our modern holiday. He signed his note, "From Your Valentine." Remember his devotion to the faith and to love and marriage as you wear pink. The gray ashes of Ash Wednesday remind us that "We are dust, and to dust we shall return." We begin

our time of Lenten preparations as we wear gray and remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We make the spiritual journey from the Ashes of Wednesday to the Hill of Calvary. Wear pink and gray on St. Valentine's Day. (Hey, that rhymes! Not such a bad color combination, either.)

#### Until We Meet Again

Since the last newsletter, we have lost two dear ones from our fellowship. After a long health struggle, <u>Howard Almond</u> passed away and was remembered in a service of celebration at his home on Nov. 11. Family, friends, and church members spoke affectionately (and humorously) of him. His remains were lovingly committed unto the river - waters of life.

A tribute to the life of <u>Art Swenson</u> was held in our Fellowship Hall on December 31. Appropriately for Art, the tribute was held at the conclusion of our fifth Sunday luncheon – one last potluck for a man who really enjoyed them! Please pray for Mary Beth, Diana, and their families as they continue down the path of life without their loved ones.

The following poem is offered in memory of Howard and Art. Both had interest in the sea (fishing, sailing, crabbing, oyster gardening, etc.) This poem speaks of the attraction the seas have for many humans. The concluding line, however, suggests something beyond just a single sea voyage. Sweet Dreams! ("Spume" is an interesting word to look up.

#### Sea Fever

By John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by; And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking.

And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied; And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying, And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life, To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;

And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover, And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

## **Looking Forward**

The Worship Committee met in January to plan for the upcoming months and merge events with others on the church calendar. Here are some of the plans in the works. (Watch the weekly bulletin for further details on these events.)

We encourage all members and friends to attend the Sweetheart Breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 8:30 a.m. Bring your sweetheart! The Men's Group has some pleasant surprises in store for all who attend. It is always a wonderful event.

(2) This year the Week of Compassion runs from Feb. 18 through Feb. 25. On Sunday, Feb. 25, we will have a worship service led by volunteer lay leaders. They will take us "On a Mission Trip" using daily devotions and work itinerary from an actual mission trip. Rev. Dice is seeking volunteer readers (similar to last year's Laity Sunday) to present the "message" in this format. Everyone in attendance will be enlightened and inspired by the trip.

Before mid-March, Disciple Men will be sponsoring their annual "Chili When It's Chilly" Supper. Watch for the actual date, and then invite neighbors and friends to attend.

Palm Sunday is March 25; it marks the beginning of Holy Week.

We are offering once again to have the local ministerial association use our sanctuary for the daily services, which begin at noon.

The Worship Committee was hoping to find a church partner to host a Seder service with us this year, but as of this date we do not have a partner. (Philippi is not available.) Our back-up plan is to have a communion service on Maundy Thursday, with a contemporary focus and theme.

Easter is April 1 (no foolin').

The planned date for the Men's Musical is April 15. (Please have your taxes prepared in advance so you don't miss out on this event -- LOL.)

We will have a special service on April 22 to celebrate Earth Day. The message will focus on our responsibility as caretakers of God's creation and will provide positive suggestions for being a "good caretaker." Materials for this service will be adapted from *Green Chalice*, a branch of the Disciples Home Mission organization.

For schedule updates and changes, watch your Sunday bulletin or check our church site web at www.westvilledisciples.org.

Dear God,

Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

Joyce

## **Chairperson Chimes**

Behind every church board is a dedicated chairperson

Barbara Nelson

Chair of the Board

Thoughts about forgiveness

Scripture References:

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Matthew 6: 9-13

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke 23: 34

The Bible has a lot to say about forgiveness. There are times when we humans get angry, when people hurt us, or when we feel betrayed. We have options at that point. We can hold on to anger forever, letting it build and fester inside of us, or we can let go of our anger and resentment in order to experience forgiveness.

To understand Christ is to understand forgiveness. Jesus came into our world to do many things: to teach us about God, to show us how to love, and to defeat evil on our behalf. But His primary goal was forgiveness—The Son of God suffered and died so that we could receive the wonderful gift of gracious mercy.

What is forgiveness? In the Bible, the Greek word translated "forgiveness" literally means "to let go." Forgiveness is letting go of the need for revenge and releasing negative thoughts of bitterness and resentment. Forgiveness occurs when a person does not demand payment for a debt. Jesus used this comparison when he taught his followers to pray: "Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is in debt to us." (Luke 11: 4) Likewise, in his parable of the unmerciful slave, Jesus equated forgiveness with canceling a debt. (Matthew 18:23-35).

However, forgiveness does not require us to forget. Forgiveness does not require us to completely forget a wrong. Even God forgets our sins; He chooses to forgive them. There are times when we need to remember that someone hurt us because we need to avoid situations that allow the perpetrator to hurt us again. Abusive relationships are a good example. We should not necessarily go back to the abuser because we forgave him or her. We can let go of the anger and the resentment, but not forget the harm. We can take measures to prevent the abuse from happening again. Forgiveness is not condoning or excusing. Forgiveness does not minimize, justify, or excuse the wrong that was done. Forgiveness also does not mean denying the harm and the feelings that the injury produced. The act that hurt or offended you might always be with you, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help free you. (continued on next page).

Why is forgiveness good? We are the ones who suffer most when we choose not to forgive. When we do forgive, the Lord sets our hearts free from the anger, bitterness, resentment, and hurt that previously imprisoned us; however, most times forgiveness is a slow process. We can pray for God to deal with the injustices and offenders accordingly. Then we ought to leave that prayer at the altar. We no longer have to carry the anger. Although it is normal for us to feel anger toward sin and injustice, it is not our job to judge the other person in their sin. The best reason to forgive is because Jesus commanded us to. We learn from Scripture, if we don't forgive, neither will we be forgiven. (Matthew 6:14-16). For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (NIV). Pastor Allen K Katz, a minister in the upper Midwest United States, posted the following in a blog that sums this up so beautifully. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:13). Offering forgiveness is hard for us. When we are hurt or disappointed, we want to be repaid for the grief and inconvenience that we've suffered. It only seems right. But the Bible says, 'forgive as the Lord forgave you.' To forgive as the Lord forgives requires that we let others off the hook with no compensation requested or paid."

Why is forgiveness so very difficult? To our way of thinking, to forgive is to give up your rights. To forgive seems irresponsible - if there is no penalty to be paid, what's to keep that person from hurting you again? To forgive might make you feel like a doormat, a perpetual victim who won't stand up for himself. We don't understand the value of forgiveness because we are flawed not just in our relationships but also in our thinking. It takes strength to put aside our thirst for vengeance and offer mercy instead. It takes a loving heart to work through angry feelings and reach out to embrace those who have hurt you. It takes wisdom to understand that no one is faultless and entitled to claim the moral high ground in a dispute.

But forgiveness is not the same as leniency. Far too often we say things like "that's all right" instead of "I forgive you." The difference between these statements is huge. Saying "that's all right" gives the impression that nothing all that bad was done. Saying "that's all right" is telling a lie to salvage your own pride, because you don't want to admit how badly you were hurt. But when you say "I forgive you," you are holding the other person accountable for his/her behavior. When you say, "I forgive you," you are admitting that you were hurt, but you are willing to give up all claims for revenge.

This is the way that our Lord forgives us. Jesus does not excuse our sin; He doesn't trivialize it or let us duck responsibility for it. Jesus also knows there is no way we can possibly make up for all the bad things that we have done. Because He loves us, the Lord of Life suffered death on the cross on our behalf, and He did so without any

expectation of being repaid for what it cost Him. Jesus demonstrates what forgiveness is really all about.

Forgiveness is the ultimate expression of love.

Dear God.

Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.

Larry

## Maurine Frank Says...

If you came to our church ...

...You'd see a tiny brick building that has stood strong and sturdy to securely hold Christian worshipers since 1858. If you came in the front door, you'd cross by a wooden sign that says "Welcome," and that welcome would extend to all people of faith or those in search of faith, without regard to age, race, economic condition, disability, or sexual orientation. If you use a wheelchair, or a walker, we have a door that would be accessible to you.

If you came to our church through the back parking lot, you'd pass through our Fellowship Hall, where we meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month for fun and food and laughter and a common connection with strangers and friends alike. Through either door you enter, you would be warmly greeted by no less than three people, and that welcome would be reinforced by the spirit and words printed in our bulletin: "Our Church bids you welcome. Here may you find comfort, inspiration, fellowship, guidance, forgiveness and an opportunity to serve God." And as you read those words, you also will hear, "Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

If you came to our church, you'd find kindred spirits in either our Men's Group, or our CWF - Christian Women's Fellowship group, who gather in friendship to focus on the needs of the disadvantaged in our community and how we may care for them. Or if you came by 9:45 on Sunday morning you would be invited for Bible Café, time for enjoying a good breakfast while learning more about the teachings of the Bible so that you would come to know Jesus as a human being, living and incarnate.

If you came to our church, you may not know every song we sing, because we sometimes try the newer, more modern renditions, but you can joyfully join in on others because we always include those wonderful old familiar hymns that everyone loves so well.

#### Editor-reals

Elucidation and other ostentatious words

#### Mary Dodson Dice

Newsletter Editor

Okay, I have one newsletter under my belt - and with just a couple of minor flubs. My apologies to Naomi Sutton for publishing the wrong date for her birthday. Did you know Microsoft Word has a helpful feature that automatically numbers things listed in sequence? Yep, it will thoughtfully advance to the next number, but it doesn't like to let you change the numbers manually. In the last newsletter, even though the next birthday after December 12 was December 14 (Naomi's), it insisted the next one after the 12th had to be the 13th. Word and I fought over that one half a dozen times. I thought I had outsmarted it, but it managed to change it one more time when my back was turned. It reminds me of Woody Allen's "My War with Machines," in which all the appliances are out to get him. Word fought me on April's birthdays in this issue, but I prevailed!

The second mistake was assuming we published quarterly. I guess I forgot how to count or failed to notice all these years that we had only been receiving newsletters three times a year. So I missed publishing the January birthdays. Sheldon Adkins blew out another birthday candle on January 13, and Marion Sutton renewed his contract on January 22. (I promise I have nothing against the Suttons or their birthdays. I plead novice jitters!)

(continued on next page)

Do you have anything interesting or exciting happening in your life? I am going to add a "News from the Pews" section for reporting just such items. I'll kick it off this issue with news about the next musical at West Point. I should have my head examined for agreeing to this one, but we are tackling *Hairspray*. Don't get me wrong; it's a great show, and there is a lot of dancing. The problem is *there is a lot of dancing*. This year I am taking on a dozen numbers of various length and complexity. Who knows when I'll see you again!

We have only been rehearsing for a few weeks, but the director and I began by experienced something we had never faced before. Because of the subject matter and historical accuracy required, we find ourselves having to segregate the performers. When all the students dance in the same scene, I have to put the black students in the back or on another side of the stage, away from the white students. It was hard to choreograph like that in the first place, but I find myself instinctively wanting to move them so they are not separate. And I hate having to refer to them as blacks and whites. Even though my childhood included the tail end of the era before desegregation, I grew up in an area of Southern California where every school I attended was not only integrated, but the racial mix of students was pretty evenly

divided. I never really experienced separation of color, and the idea is foreign and very uncomfortable to me. I find myself apologizing to the kids for having to adhere to the accuracy of the era.

As they do each year, all the students get along beautifully. And the "segregated" students have reassured us several times that they understand the reasoning behind everything we have to do. It is uplifting to know that this sort of thing bothers us, and we are blessed to work with young people who recognize that they are simply portraying history.

The musical will run March 8, 9, and 10 at 7 p.m. in the Olssen/Robinson Auditorium on the West Point campus. Tickets are \$10 and \$15 for patron (preferred) seating. I can arrange tickets for you.

Come see the show; and remember, You Can't Stop the Beat!

Father John, while walking along the pavement in front of his church, heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son, Rory, and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and some cotton wool, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased. Rory, the minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said, "Glory be unto the Faaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he goooes."

While working for Meals-on-Wheels, Paul used to take his 4-year-old daughter, Lois, with him on his afternoon rounds. Lois was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the walking sticks, triangular walkers and the wheelchairs.

One day Paul found Lois staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As he prepared himself for the inevitable barrage of questions, Lois merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy is never going to believe this."

A young mother was struggling to get the tomato ketchup out of the bottle for her daughter's hot dog. As she was trying, the phone rang and her 4-year-old daughter answered. It was the pastor and she told him, "Sorry, mummy can't come to the phone right now because she's hitting the bottle!"

## Busy, Busy, Busy (Blessed, Blessed, Blessed)

#### Women's Whisperings

Frankie Edmonson

Last year was a busy one for the women of Westville Christian Church. Sue Freeman and Barbara Nelson are in charge of served, and they kept us busy helping others. Spreading Christian love is their purpose. On Thanksgiving, we provided special dinners for two families, and we adopted a family at Christmas, blessing them with gifts and food.

We want to thank everyone who contributed to the Heifer Project. I know we were able to send a lot of animals to help others help themselves. Giving a man a fish is one thing, but teaching him to fish becomes a continued blessing.

Soldier boxes are so important, and school supplies are vital to the academic success of students. The backpack program allows children to eat on weekends, when they do not have school lunches. Providing for widows and children is the work of God.

We thank you for all your support and donations to help us achieve our goals.

Maurine provides us to meaningful worship and study to keep us motivated to give from our hearts.

Anne sends cards to lift people's spirits.

Fleta is our new Treasurer and keeps the money flowing for God's good deeds.

Diana and Sue keep our minutes, so we know where we are going and what we are doing..

We take turns providing special desserts, and we hold a wonderful reception our meetings,. Please come and join us for a wonderful women's fellowship. All women are invited. Keep us in your prayers and help us do God's work.

In Christian love,

Frankie

Dear God,

Instead of letting people die and haveing to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you got?

Jane

#### Good and Faithful Servants

#### **February**

Elders Mary Dice and David Freeman Deacons Cady Dice and Barbara Nelson

Greeter Marion Sutton

Counters Fleta Hunley and Betty Lou Stephens

Communion Sue Freeman

#### March

Elders Barbara Nelson and Fido Stephens
Deacons Maurine Frank and Spender Hodges

Greeter Frankie Edmonson

Counters Frankie Edmonson and Barbara Nelson

Communion Mary Beth Almond

#### April

Elders Mary Beth Almond and Mary Dice Deacons Mo Staton and Marion Sutton

Greeter Mo Staton

Counters Mary Beth Almond and Anne Long

Communion Barbara Nelson

#### May

Elders Frankie Edmondson and David Freeman

Deacons Sue Freeman and John Nelson

Greeter Maurine Frank

Counters Maurine Frank and Sue Freeman

Communion Mary Dice

Please have communion prepared and in the sanctuary by 10:30 a.m. Deacons are asked to collect and dispose of communion cups and bulletins and to give attendance sheets to Rev. Dice. Elders may serve as Deacons, if needed.

For questions, please contact:

Frankie Edmondson for Elders, Communion, and Greeters John Nelson for Deacons

Anne Long for Counting Committee

#### Dear God,

Sometimes I think about you even when I am not praying.

#### Elliott

Nathan, after his first day at school, returned home and told his mother, "I'm wasting my time at school. I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk."

# Put Another Candle on your Birthday Cake

## February

7 Mary Dice

## March

- 2 Madeline Edmonson
- 3 Robert Todd
- 26 Barbara Nelson

## April

- 10 Robin Powell11 Vinson Miller
- 12 Haley Beatley

## May

- 1 William Henry Hunley
- 2 Betty Lou Stephens
- 9 Stephanie Todd
- 30 Scout Edmonson