



The Link

Volume 40, Number 24

August 27, 2009

Sunday Worship:

8/30/09 at 9:20 AM

Tim Diebel Preaching
"Giving the Perfect Gift"
James 1:17-27

9/6/09 at 9:20 AM

Tim Diebel Preaching

9/13/09 at 9:20 AM

Tim Diebel Preaching

Prayer Themes:

August 29: **SCL - School for Congregational Learning:**

Please pray for this annual event for our Region, and for all who lead and participate in this time of growth and renewal.

September 7: **Labor day:** Please pray for all those whose labors we depend on for our everyday needs, and for all who travel for the holiday weekend.

September 13: **Christ Community Church:**

Please pray for this community who will be joining the congregations who worship every Sunday in our building.

Saturday, Sept. 12

8:30 - 12:00



Back to (Sunday) School Clean Up Day

Fall is fast approaching, and with it the beginning of a new season of learning and faith development. It's time to get the third floor classrooms freshened and organized and readied for Sunday morning Learning Hour Classes and Wednesday evening LOGOS groups - plus the myriad other experiences that take place in those rooms. On Saturday, September 12, everyone is encouraged to gather for a morning of "clean up and clean out". In fact, although the initial focus will be on the 3rd floor educational spaces, with enough help we can straighten and clean up several other areas in our building as well. So, come and help with the effort, from 8:30 a.m. - noon. Bring a vacuum cleaner, a mop/bucket, a brush or broom, rags/towels, cleaning supplies - anything you are comfortable working with. Assignments will given out as you arrive to use the hours efficiently. Help get ready for a fabulous fall!

Food for Thought



I first met Matthew Sleeth while I was on Sabbatical in 2006 and visiting the Disciple church of my youth. I had never heard of him but was enticed to go early to hear him speak at the Sunday school time by the title of his presentation, "Serve God: Save The Planet". What I heard that day was the testimony of a young man who over a period of many months had observed the increasing number of medical problems that seemed related to environmental causes and who sought to understand his personal role in caring for God's creation. His decision to give up his successful medical career (along with more than half of his worldly possessions) was supported by his family, who had accompanied him on his journey. Now all four of them are engaged in a lifestyle which supports their beliefs and supports Matthew as he travels around the country speaking. They have formed a non-profit called Blessed Earth, and in the last two years have spoken more than 850 times in various venues, inspiring many people to recognize God's call to care for all creation.

Our Habitat project last year inspired my interest in Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity. He died recently and so I will never have the privilege of meeting him, but I am inspired by his vision and tenacity. In the 1960's, the young Fullers had just about everything material that a young couple could possibly desire - net worth in the millions, houses, cars, boats, and land; but their marriage was in trouble. After a difficult separation and a period of soul-searching, confession and prayer, they realized that their lives had gone astray, and they sought to find God's plan for their future. They literally sold what they had, giving most of the money away. They entered into a time of spiritual retreat at Koinonia Farm in Georgia led by Clarence Jordan. Jordan insisted that we must return to Jesus' way of loving our enemies. He would often state, "that doesn't make sense from the secular perspective, but we're God's people He gives us the strength to love our enemies - and even help them if we get the chance." Here they experienced a gathered fellowship patterned after the early church, devoted to helping impoverished tenant farmers. It was the farmers' need for housing which would eventually grow into the Habitat for Humanity that we know.

What amazing stories! Two couples, who by most measures were very successful, even wealthy - neither considered themselves to be particularly religious, but both recognized over time that something was lacking in their lives. They began a process of discernment, study and observation; of prayer and listening; of seeking and becoming receptive to God's leadership. They started their new journeys with small efforts, but with great vision, positive attitudes, and extraordinary faith.

Most of us would agree that God's call to us is rarely clear. It often begins with our simply being receptive and observant so that we recognize opportunity when it comes our way. Surely discernment is required, but after our questions have been answered and we have spent time in prayer, hopefully our response will be "How can we make this work?" We have already accomplished this with the Farmers' Market and the English classes and LOGOS and the Boys and Girls Club and the Health Ministry.

May God continue to bless our vision for the future and our efforts to discern His call.

Sondra

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LOGOS

LOGOS Begins September 16!!!

It's LOGOS season again! LOGOS is our congregation's mid-week program of Christian nurture for children and youth, kindergarten through 12th grade. We begin our 9th season on Wednesday, September 16. There are several things that need to happen before we open the doors.



1. We need the registrations and fees for your kids, grandkids, neighbors and friends' kids. See Jane DeHaven for registration forms. The **early bird deadline is Sunday, August 30.**
2. If you have already agreed to volunteer, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Please plan on participating in **Volunteer Training Wednesday, September 2 from 5:15 to 7:00 p.m.** Dinner (freewill offering) and childcare are provided. RSVP to Jane.
3. Volunteers of all stripes are needed to clean classrooms on the mezzanine and 3rd floor as well as set-up in the newly remodeled Fellowship Hall. Come anytime after **8:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 12 and bring cleaning supplies.**
4. If you are not a volunteer or don't have kids participating, you have a very important job: **pray for the children, youth and volunteers** that we are blessed with God's touch as we embark on this journey of Christian relationships. Your prayers are important, too.

Jane DeHaven
LOGOS Director
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Fall Learning Hour Begins Sunday, 9/13

CLASSES FOR ALL AGES



A FRESH LOOK

AT AN OLD BOOK:

FALL BIBLE STUDY FOR ADULTS

Let's start at the very beginning. That would be Genesis, of course, and on September 13 we will begin at the very beginning of that dynamic, but often controversial Biblical document.

Richard Walters, Juanita Scriven, and Steve Franklin will lead a 13-week discussion covering this fascinating collection of familiar stories. In addition to the Biblical text, each class participant will receive a weekly supplement from a well known creative writer that will stimulate deeper understanding of the biblical story.

We hope to see both old and new SOJOURNER'S CLASS members on September 13 in the Informal Lounge at 11:10 a.m. This should prove to be a unique faith and study opportunity.

Bring a friend, or come and make a new friend.

Seeking our

Golden Members

If you, or someone you know, have been a member of First Christian (*parent churches University Christian or Central Christian*) for 50 years or more, please notify the church office. (Or you may sign up on the list in the Narthex on Sundays.)

We are looking to do some type of formal recognition of these folks who have been a part of our worship and ministry for so long. Please help us in making our list as complete as possible.

Labyrinth Returns in October

During the afternoon of October 11, the Chancel will once again be transformed into a labyrinth, available for walking by whomever chooses to come. The canvas labyrinth, owned by Iowa Religious Media Service, stretches to the outer reaches of the chancel, establishing a series of circuits - or walkways - for meditation and quiet contemplation. So what, more exactly, is the purpose of such a walk?

We are all on the path... exactly where we need to be. The labyrinth is a model of that path.

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol which relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The Labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools.



A labyrinth is an archetype with which we can have a direct experience. We can walk it. It is a metaphor for life's journey. It is a symbol that creates a sacred space and place and takes us out of our ego to "That Which Is Within."

Labyrinths and mazes have often been confused. When most people hear of a labyrinth they think of a maze. A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is like a puzzle to be solved. It has twists, turns, and blind alleys. It is a left brain task that requires logical, sequential, analytical activity to find the correct path into the maze and out.

A labyrinth has only one path. The way in is the way out. There are no blind alleys. The path leads you on a circuitous path to the center and out again.

A labyrinth is a right-brain task. It involves intuition, creativity, and imagery. With a maze many choices must be made and an active mind is needed to solve the problem of finding the center. With a labyrinth there is only one choice to be made. The choice is to enter or not. A more passive, receptive mindset is needed. The choice is whether or not to walk a spiritual path.

At its most basic level the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

Mark this special opportunity on your calendar and look forward to a walk of your own.



Farmers Market Final Five!

There remain the five Wednesdays of September to shop the Market for 2009! This is peak time for harvesting late summer fruits and veggies, and the time when fall produce and winter-keepers start to appear. Look for apples and pumpkins, and start planning what you will need for long-term storage and for home-canning.

We continue to need volunteers. Be sure to sign up on the bulletin board for your chosen task(s)!



Disciple Women's Luncheon
Thursday, September 3 - 12:00 noon
Fellowship Hall
Everyone is invited
Chicken Fettuccini by Peggy Olson

Non-circle members please call the church office to make your reservation.

Coming next month

Dog Fest

Sept. 26, 3-11 pm



First Christian's Widening Fellowship of Churches



Beginning Sunday, September 13, our congregation will welcome new guests to our building. On that day, the members of Christ Community Church will join the Burundian Fellowship, Church of the Holy Spirit, and First Christian Church in sharing our building for worship, fellowship and learning.

At a congregational meeting held Sunday, August 23, those present voted to approve the Church Board's recommendation to enter into a one-year agreement with Christ Community Church at the end of which a thorough evaluation will occur as to the costs involved and the workability of the relationship.

Christ Community, a congregation affiliated with the Mennonite denomination, will utilize classroom spaces while our congregation worships in the sanctuary. Following Fellowship Time, First Christian members and guests will move to classroom areas, while Christ Community folk will begin worship in the sanctuary. Beyond Sunday mornings, any other use of the building will be cleared with the FCC church calendar, and be subject to building use fees. Their weekly small group meetings occur in homes, and staff offices elsewhere.

A Core Team is soon to be named, comprised of representatives from both congregations. This "relationship management" group will meet at least quarterly to address any challenges which might arise, and to consider opportunities for shared activities.

Among the emerging missional priorities we have discerned is being a "Welcoming Community," with the goal of being "intentional about extending hospitality to all people." This new relationship will afford us a near and present "laboratory" for living into this calling. More will be written in coming issues about who their congregation is. In the meantime, help us welcome these new guests.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you like to knit or crochet (or would like to learn) you are welcome to participate in our ministry of prayerful needlework to create shawls which are given as a tangible way to envelop an ailing member in our prayers.

Tim recently visited his mother in Texas, following her knee surgery, taking one of our prayer shawls with him. She writes,

"Dear Friends,

What a lovely thrill to receive the beautiful prayer shawl. I am so touched and so appreciative. The colors are wonderful and the bag has a permanent home on my walker. I feel so honored and blessed. The 'deliverer' has been a great gift as well. It will be hard to part with him. You have a wonderful church and this special ministry is a blessing.

*Lovingly,
Merita Diebel"*

To learn more about participating in the ministry of Prayer Shawls, please contact:
Lois Carlson,
Sally Nadolsky,
Gladys Sawyer, or
Paula Wilkerson.



First Christian Church

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Sunday Morning Schedule:

9:20 am -- Morning Worship

10:45 am ---- Friendship Time

11:00 am ----- Learning Hour

OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Thurs — 8:30-4:30

Friday — 8:30-1:00

The Link ...

... is published twice per month.
Submissions are due Wednesday of
the previous week and may be edited
for length, clarity, or for consistency
with other articles.

NEXT DEADLINE:

August 27 (Sept. 10 issue)

The Church Office

will be

CLOSED

Friday, Sept. 4

and Monday, Sept. 7

WE ARE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, an Open & Welcoming community of faith, called to witness to God's creative power in the midst of a richly diverse neighborhood. We are challenged to share in a vibrant Spirit-led common life. As we mature in the Spirit and respond to God's calling, we are empowered and compelled to reach out to neighbors near and far in a reconciling ministry partnership.

A VIEW FROM THE PAST

Here is a look at the "Young Married Folks Bible Class" of 1914.

The view is toward the southeast corner of the 1909 "Auditorium" building.

Notice the 1889 "Chapel" building to the north, which was the original University Christian Church.

Have you seen the new "Heritage" display cabinets in the Fellowship Hall?

