

The CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLE

Volume 42, No. 7

United Church of Christ

July 2018

Moderator's View

On Humility

I recently read an article that posed, for me, a thought-provoking question:

Did God create humankind... or did humans create God?

This got me thinking about the relationship between God and us, and the words we use to describe it.

Here are verbs that came to mind on our relative position to God. We are to:

- Fear
- Serve
- Worship
- Obey
- Glorify

Which got me thinking about what that means to us mortals. I think it's **humility**.

According to dictionary.com, humility is "the state of not being proud or arrogant... of being modest." On the flip side, arrogance is "an offensive display of superiority or self-importance; overbearing pride." The Alcoholics Anonymous definition of humility is: "Not thinking less of yourself, just thinking of yourself less."

Continued on next page

I admit that I struggle with this. I'm basically insecure – consider myself “less than” as AA puts it. I gravitate towards my comfort zone, places where I can be productive, efficient, and a good manager. Sometimes I come across as controlling or abrasive. But it's all based on fear – fear of failure, of not being good enough, of being “found out” as an imposter.

This past Sunday, I asked Ben Coonrod (a prayer chaplain) to pray with me after the service. I told Ben that I wanted to *feel* God in my life, that I wanted to have a relationship with God that would give me comfort and hope. That I wanted to be a “human being” not a “human doing.” Ben wisely told me that my work on behalf of the church *was* a spiritual offering... that God loves me for who I am... and that I'm OK.

So, what is God's relation to us? A few more verbs come to mind. God:

- Forgives
- Listens
- Answers
- Saves
- Loves

So... did we create God or did God create us? If the end-game is love, I don't think it matters. I can't tell you how grateful I am for God's unconditional love. The Trinity helps me be a better person. For me, that's all that counts.

Nancy Keswani
Moderator

MUSINGS FROM PASTOR MIKE

I like to think that I am a follower of the Carpenter. That is -- I am a Jesus follower. Clyde Steckel, in his book, **New Ecclesiology & Polity: The United Church of Christ**, discusses how the UCC can re-vision itself in a postmodern world. One of those ways is by identifying ourselves as Jesus followers. But what kind of Jesus are we talking about? This piece from Jim Meisner, Jr. describes an alternative view.

Jesus was born to a poor, young, unmarried mother raised by a man that wasn't his biological father. Jesus was a refugee; his family fled across a desert to a foreign land searching for safety and a better life. Jesus was an unemployed homeless day laborer living under the brutal control of an oppressive government.

The message of Jesus was counter to the religious establishment and the dominant culture. He was opposed by the religious leaders and disrespected by the leaders of mainstream society. Jesus was a victim of police brutality but in a moment of forgiveness, he healed the wound of his oppressor. Jesus died alone-rejected and abandoned, his body assigned to an unmarked grave.

Jesus is on the side of the mother losing her child...Jesus is with the children...Jesus is inside locked cages.

That is the Jesus I can follow!

Loving each one of you on the journey.

Church Council Highlights

June 2018



- Phil Taylor was unanimously voted on as Assistant Moderator.
- Mark Fagerlin presented highlights of changes to the Church Bylaws that the Transition Leadership Team is working on.
- Discussion about measuring the effectiveness of our promotional activities. We will continue asking “how did you hear about us” on the visitor sign-in sheet, at inquirers class, and at new-member supper.
- Discussion about our current guidelines for building rental and other uses of our facilities. These documents will be revisited and, if necessary, modified.
- Newly created “Guidelines for Sunday Bulletin Submissions” were approved. Guidelines for Chronicle content already existed.
- Agreement to produce a series of personal stories for the Chronicle featuring each Ministry and sub-group. A schedule will be determined. Suggestion to put a permanent meeting list in each Chronicle was agreed on.
- Brainstorming about how to encourage more members to assume leadership roles and how to potentially modify those roles to make leadership more accessible.
- Treasurer Ron Miller reported that revenue is down \$2K and expenses up \$4K which is normal for this time of year. In July, Ron will ask each Ministry leader how much to budget for 2019. Agreement to allocate \$1K to the Compassionate Action social-justice group.
- Ministry of Physical Resources reported that the refurbished Church sign is nearly complete.
- Ministry to Members & Friends advised Council that our childcare provider is leaving. A replacement will need to be found.
- A decision was made to hold the next Church Retreat in the Spring of 2019. A committee will be formed to organize the event and determine content.

Council will not meet in July. The next meeting is August 8, 10 am, in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Nancy Keswani, Moderator

A MENTAL HEALTH “REFRESH”

Have you, like me, ever wished that you could refresh your mind just like your computer? Well, I feel these times of fear-based news and agendas seem to put us on overload. Our Mental Health Committee was voicing this at our recent monthly meeting. Our committee is getting smaller and the needs are getting more pressing. We would like to ‘ratchet’ up our involvement in the life of the church.

Mental Health issues have been getting more press lately with the deaths of 2 charismatic celebrities. The opioid epidemic has drawn our attention as well. With suicide and deaths from drugs, we can no longer be in denial about these emotional and physical stressors which cross all lines. It is more important than ever to help erase the stigma of these often unseen disabilities so that those who hurt can ask for help and we can rise to the occasion.

Last September we were officially recognized as a WISE congregation. We are a **Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive (Engaged) Covenant**. How can we help? It can start one person at a time or collectively with open hearts and the question “How are you **REALLY?**” Then, wait to listen and be present. It’s not an overwhelming task. It is the first step of a journey. And what are we doing anyway? I like the saying “All we are doing is walking each other home.” My minister up North ended each service by saying “Treat every heart as if it were breaking.” Let’s get “Refreshed” on a topic that cries for help with the causes of Mental Illness so that we can decrease the band aids often used for the symptoms.

If you have questions, or want to be on our Mental Health Committee, you may be in contact with Ken Whitney, chairperson. Committee members are Bob Koopman, Ellen Honea, Karel Bodamer, Jim Luzzadder, and Rand Bishop.

Karel Bodamer

Focus on Forum

July 2018



The Forum, an informal adult education feature of our church, is held from 9:00 to 10:15 on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall (before the 10:30 service). All are welcome to attend. Contact the coordinators, Romella or Ed O'Keefe, (edrookeefe@att.net) if you would like to present a topic or recommend a speaker. Remember: all points of view are welcome...No correct doctrine required!

JULY 1 – Writers' Forum

Rand Bishop, Coordinator

Four times a year we devote a Forum to this church's many talented writers and writer-friends who read from their work in various styles – prose, poetry, essays, etc. – on various subjects. If you would like to read from your original work, contact our Writers' coordinator, Rand Bishop, at randbishop33@gmail.com or call 697-0090. Come and help us celebrate our creativity!

JULY 8- Keeping Children Safe Around Guns: It's An Adult Responsibility

Eileen Douglas & Richard Talley

Gun-related deaths are now the third leading cause of death for American children and teens. The BeSMART campaign was created to bring together responsible adults to reduce youth suicides and unintentional shootings that occur when children get ahold of unsecured firearms. Parents and grandparents or anyone who cares for children can benefit from this program that encourages conversations with family members and friends about securing firearms when children are present. You will learn how to safeguard your own children and grandchildren and how to be a resource in your family and community.

The Rev. Eileen Douglas and Richard Talley are trained instructors of the BeSMART curriculum. Eileen is a retired teacher and minister, working on a doctorate in Transformative Social Change. Richard is a retired microbiologist, artist, businessman and minister, soon to receive his doctoral degree. They live in Hendersonville and are founders of Pathways to Peace and Justice and an alternative ministry called Pathfinders.

July 15 - What's Next? Vision and Caring at FCUCC

Larry Anderson

It's good to check-in with each other every so often. Minister and psychologist Larry Anderson will lead us in a time of sharing the good things that we see happening in our church, any concerns that we may have, ways to support the ministry of our church and our own spiritual growth, and considering ways that we can support each other in better and better ways.

July 22 - The Ethics and Economics of Healthcare for All

Kyla Moore

What did Jesus say about caring for the sick and poor? Is it moral to deny healthcare because someone lacks the money to pay for the healthcare they need? Do we have a moral responsibility to help the sick? Is there a way to provide healthcare to absolutely all U.S. residents? In her discussion Kyla Moore urges congregations to see a moral imperative in being involved in the cause of healthcare for all.

July 29- The Best Three Months of Life: Creating a Beautiful End of Life Experience

Diane Swift

If you were told that you have only three months to live, what would you want those three months to look like? What is your current reality? Death is inevitable and most of us find it difficult to talk about it, but this final transition can be the most meaningful time of one's life. This talk will provide an opportunity to examine five domains of life essential to prepare for dying: spiritual, emotional, mental, (your legacy), physical and practical after-death issues. Diane will bring insight, warmth, understanding, and, perhaps, some humor to this discussion.

Diane Swift was a psychotherapist for forty years. She is an ordained minister, a prayer chaplain at Unity Church and FCUCC and an Associate member of First Congregational Church. She recently was certified as a Sacred Passage Doula by the Conscious Dying Institute to assist those preparing for the end of life and those who are grieving.

Chronicle Submissions

In a sincere effort to communicate all the good things happening at First Congregational, we'd like to share the guidelines for submitting content to The Chronicle.

Articles of 400 words or less should be submitted directly to the respective Ministry Facilitator for approval and submission for publication no later than the 20th of the month. Upon approval of the article, the Ministry Facilitator will forward the article to the church office for publication in the next newsletter. Only articles forwarded through a ministry facilitator will be accepted.

Save-the-date notices kept to 50 words or less may be submitted directly to Sheryl in the church office. See deadline schedule below for the remainder of 2018.

Thank you for your support!

CHRONICLE DEADLINES

August - due July 20

September - due August 24

October - due September 21

November - due October 23

December/January - due November 20



THE WRITERS ROUNDTABLE

Thursday, July 26th

Writers--whether members of the church or not--who would like to read from their work (any genre) at a Writers' Roundtable are invited to register with Rand Bishop (697-0090 or randbishop33@gmail.com). Listeners are also welcome. The Writers' Roundtable meets on the fourth Thursday of every month in the Church Parlor at 11:30 am. If you're reading, please bring 5-6 duplicates of your work to share. Check with Rand for details.





Fellowship Supper

Tuesday, July 17

5:30 pm

July 17, 2018 Fellowship Supper: Songs of Connection: Heart, Soul, and Humor with David “Sotar” Hoffman. This is an opportunity to experience a variety of engaging, entertaining, and spiritually rich songs from various traditions. Many of which will be easy to sing along with and meant to be an infectious invitation to feel the joy of blended voice and community. In addition to heart-centered song, music and meditation facilitation, David is a counselor, wellness consultant, Reiki practitioner, singer, and yoga/movement teacher. **Bring a dish to share plus your own place setting, including plate, utensils and a cup for coffee or tea.** Prepare to have a fun-filled evening which will begin at 5:30 with a Social Time followed by a Pot Luck Supper at 6:00 and program at 6:45. See you there!

The FCUCC Book Club will meet in the church library on July 10 at 2:00 to discuss "Enrique's Journey" by Ana V. Ras and Sonia Nazario. A National Bestseller based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, this astonishing story puts human face on the ongoing debate about immigration reform in the United States. Enrique's Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Isabel Allende writes "If you are only going to read one nonfiction book this year it has to be this one, because you know these young heroes. They live next door. This book discussion will be led by Joanne Kimmell (jokimmel@morrisbb.net). All are invited.

EVERYBODY BELONGS

Adult Forum (Ed O'Keefe)	Sunday 9:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Ashley Lecture Group (John Parris)	3 rd Friday 2:00 pm	Library
Bible Study (Barbara Rathbun)	Wednesdays 5:00 pm	Parlor
Choir Rehearsal (Mark Acker)	Thursdays 3:30 pm	Choir room
Church Council (Nancy Keswani)	2 nd Wednesday 10:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Compassionate Action Group (co-chairs Stephanie Lowder / Bal Goleman)	1 st Wednesday 2:00 pm	Fellowship Hall
Compassionate Book Group (Ed O'Keefe)	2 nd & 4 th Thursday 2:00 pm	Library
FCUCC Book Group (Joanne Kimmell)	2 nd Tuesday 2:00 pm	Library
Fellowship Supper (Claudia Schopper)	3 rd Tuesday 5:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Finance Ministry (Roger Woolsey)	2 nd Tuesday 10:00 am	Library
Mental Health Group (Ken Whitney)	3 rd Friday 9:00 am	Library
Missions Group (Claudia Schopper)	2 nd Thursday 10:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Physical Resources Ministry (Nancy Irving)	3 rd Wednesday 10:00 am	Library
Prayer Shawl Group (Romella Hart-O'Keefe)	1 st Tuesday 10:00 am	Parlor
Worship Ministry (John Parris)	1 st Thursday 10:00 am	Library
Writers Round Table (Rand Bishop)	4 th Thursday 11:30 am	Parlor
Ministry to the Larger Community (Sammye Whitney)		no regularly scheduled meetings
Ministry to Members and Friends(Ann Allen & Jeannie Stewart)		no regularly scheduled meetings
Visioning Sacred Grounds (Melissa Melum)		no regularly scheduled meetings

We Want You!

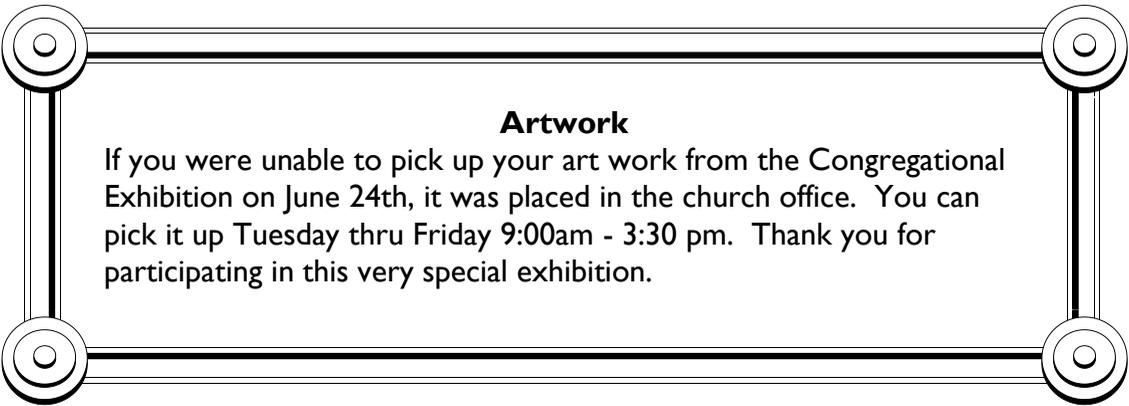
The Prayer Chaplains' program is almost one year old and we want YOU to consider joining us for a second year! By deepening your own prayer life, you will learn ways to minister to others' spiritual needs.

A Prayer Chaplain learns to:

- recognize the four main types of prayer.
- hold spiritual space.
- lovingly listen.
- pray with others from the heart.
- keep in confidence what is shared.

The Prayer Chaplains' commitment to hold spiritual space with and for others is a one-year commitment. Training for new chaplains and those who may decide to continue for a second year will begin in September, 2018, with a week-end retreat at our UCC Conference center in Blowing Rock, NC, from Friday, September 7 at 4:00 PM through Sunday lunch, September 9. This is a 50-hour training program that continues at the church on Saturdays after the retreat for 6 weeks (skipping Saturday, October 20: Ashley Lecture) ending on October 27th. Cost for the entire training program, including the two night retreat, materials, and meals, is \$180.

If interested, please contact Ed and Romella O'Keefe for more information at 828-890-4889 or email them at edrookeefe@att.net. The deadline for the training sign-up commitment (with a \$50.00 deposit – made out to the church) is July 7.



Artwork

If you were unable to pick up your art work from the Congregational Exhibition on June 24th, it was placed in the church office. You can pick it up Tuesday thru Friday 9:00am - 3:30 pm. Thank you for participating in this very special exhibition.

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. *Reject racism.*
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

Missions/Service Team members will take a break from the regular schedule in July. **The next meeting is Thursday, August 9, 10 a.m.** Nonetheless, Pastor Mike plans to continue visiting agencies we support. He has already met with Safelight, Interfaith Assistance Ministry, the Free Clinics and the Rescue Mission.

At our June 14 meeting, we voted to allocate:

\$1,000 to Hendersonville Rescue Mission-Connie Knight, FCUCC liaison
(earmarked for food program)

\$500 to Interfaith Assistance Ministry-Sharon Johnson, liaison
(“A Taste of Hendersonville” sponsorship- **Save the date: August 14, 2018**)

\$250 to Camplify-Claudia Schopper, liaison (camper support) *A new Missions Agency*

\$750 to Homes for Youth -Connie Knight & Nancy Kaczor, liaisons (general operating fund)

In addition, we approved an emergency donation of \$300 to the Veterans Healing Farm to repair flood damage. Bob Miles is the liaison.

June Fellowship Supper attendees enjoyed hearing from Elizabeth Moss, who became Executive Director of Interfaith Assistance Ministry (IAM) last year. She and colleague Rebecca Moon shared a brief history of IAM, noting that FCUCC members generously helped underwrite a 3-year capital campaign which resulted in the construction of the new 310 Freeman Street location. FCUCC is also one of the top 10 area churches supporting IAM’s work. Offering “a hand up, not a hand out” in 2017, IAM assisted over 9,500 of our neighbors with food, clothing, utility bills, etc. For more details, especially how to volunteer, see www.iamhendersoncounty.org .

HELP WANTED SUNDAY SCHOOL. Dee Burke (Solara), the Sunday School Nursery teacher, is moving. A replacement is needed. If anyone knows of someone interested in this position, please contact Ann Allen aabitter-sweet@bellsouth.net or Jeannie Stewart at greenbriar13@gmail.com. This position pays 30.00 per Sunday. Ginger Fisher is the Sunday School teacher for the older children. Volunteers from the congregation are needed to fill in when either teacher is absent. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Ann Allen or Jeannie Stewart.

COME TO THE WELL

What a fitting title for a piece about prayer. We are thirsty, so we go to the well for water to sustain us for we can hardly survive without it. We are dusty or soiled with what we do, so we go to the well to be clean ourselves up. Or it may be that we simply feel tired or low and we go to the well to splash water on our faces to be refreshed.

Prayer may be likened to going to the Well of God when we are spiritually thirsty, perhaps even dehydrated, to receive the Living Water of Life that sustains our lives. We may have done something we regret, something that may have hurt someone or ourselves. In prayer we can find forgiveness and be able to move on with our lives without carrying the burden of that weight. Or it might simply be that we are out of sorts, not grounded, not present. A prayer of gratitude can refresh us, remind us how we are blessed and let us move forward with new eyes and a fresh face.

Science tells us that adults are about 60% water and that at birth babies are about 78% water. The Spirit of God is within us. The Living Water of God is around us. So as babies shine so brightly with the Shining Light of Life, as adults let us “be as children” and go to the Well often and quench our thirst, cleanse and refresh our lives.

Be sure and drink enough water today!

Ben Coonrod



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays - July 2018

4: Staton Hilliard
11: Patsy McCurry
13: Bal Goleman
16: Catherine Fairbanks
19: Louise Vier
21: Joan McKinney
22: Mike Sollom
24: Marilyn Brain
25: Philip Taylor
26: Hank Federlein
26: Roger & Mary Woolsey

Anniversaries - July 2018

2: Ron & Jayne Miller
2: Roger & Sherry Haagenon
7: Nicholas & Marjorie Pence
8: John & Barbara Rathbun
11: Carl & Jean Schoendorfer
20: Lester & Louise Vier
28: Mark & Ericka Fagerlin

*Charlie Hofacker
Memorial Garden Service*

Saturday, July 7, 2018

4:00 p.m.

The family has invited all to attend

July Lectionary

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 1

2 Sam 1:1, 17-27 • Ps 130 or

Wis of Sol 1:13-15, 2:23-24 or Lam 3:22-33 • Ps 30

2 Cor 8:7-15

Mk 5:21-43

Healing Powers

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 8

2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10 • Ps 48 or

Ezek 2:1-5 • Ps 123

Mk 6:1-13

Sent with Power

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 15

2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19 • Ps 24 or

Amos 7:7-15 • Ps 85:8-13

Eph 1:3-14

Mk 6:14-29

God-Inspired Joy

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 22

2 Sam 7:1-14a • Ps 89:20-37 or

Jer 23:1-6 • Ps 23

Eph 2:11-22

Mk 6:30-34, 53-56

Wherever You Are

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

July 29

2 Sam 11:1-15 • Ps 14 or

2 Kings 4:42-44 • Ps 145-10-18

Eph 3:14-21

Jn 6:1-21

God's Abundant Presence



ATTENDANCE

June 3: 154

10: 150

Fathers Day 17: 125

24: 144

Average Sunday Attendance:

143

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Next Chronicle deadline is July 20

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An Open and Affirming Congregation