



# In the Loop

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## Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

A friend of mine told me a powerful story of a young girl who was holding a sign that read, “I am hungry, please give me food.” She stood on a corner while people kept walking by her without stopping. Some people didn’t notice her standing there. Finally, a homeless lady, pushing her cart, gave this youth her bag of lunch. An observer, watching the whole thing, gave the homeless lady \$50.

This story reminds me of the narrative in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John in which a man born blind receives his sight. This narrative is much more than a miracle in which Jesus cures a man of his blindness. It also reveals a blindness that Jesus couldn’t cure in everyone – not if they didn’t want to be cured, or even know that they were blind.

“What blindness is that,” you say? It’s insisting that you’re righteous. It’s making a harsh judgement about someone else being unrighteous while insisting that you are completely righteous in every way possible. It’s judging others and driving them away (or eliminating them) as a basis of keeping your own status. It’s the acts of expulsion, such as in the practices of racism, prejudices, violence, and injustice to the poor. Humanity has always built community on being over-against someone else. We have been blinded by our self-righteousness, and convinced that we are right to do so.

The Christian Trinitarian God is a fountain of love and mercy. Imagine three buckets on a moving waterwheel. Each bucket fills and empties out, then swings back to be filled again. The Father empties into Christ of the universe, nothing held back. Christ empties into the Spirit of God, nothing held back. The Spirit empties fully into the Father. The reason they can empty themselves out is they know they will be filled again. They know that God is infinite love, the ground of our being.

Imagine yourself as a bucket on that divine waterwheel. If you don’t believe that love is the center of the universe, you live in a scarcity model where there’s not enough – food, money, security, health care, mercy, love – to go around. You can’t risk letting go because you’re not sure you’ll be refilled. If you’re defending your own image and identity, then your ego remains full of itself, which is the opposite of living in the eternal and generous self-emptying love of God.



As long as you show up with some vulnerability, the Holy Spirit and God in Christ can keep working with you (see the story above). Self-sufficiency makes experiencing God impossible! God’s power comes through humility, all life-giving, and a flow of love.

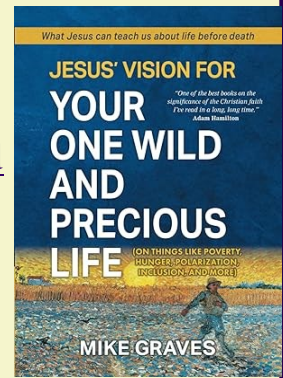
Blessings as we serve together in the Resurrection of Christ.

## A New Adult Study

A new 9:00 A.M. Sunday school program and 10:30 A.M. Adult Bible Study will begin on Sunday, May 5th and Wednesday, May 8th, respectively. These sessions will use Mike Graves' book, Jesus' Vision for Your One Wild and Precious Life: on things like poverty, hunger, polarization, inclusion, and more (Market Square Publishing, 2023).

Rev. Kip Hayden nominated this book for our study. The book was highly recommended by a group called, "Word & Way," and individuals whom Kip trusts totally. The book has a larger print than most and is very readable. At the end of each of the nine (9) sections are good reflective questions for discussion.

Karen Lorack Mitchell will lead the discussions at the adult Sunday school classes. Kip Hayden will facilitate and lead the discussions at the adult Bible Study sessions on Wednesdays. Hope to see you in many of these adult Bible study classes.



## We're Having A Luncheon on Sunday, May 5th

We are gathering for a luncheon in our Fellowship Hall immediately following our worship service on May 5, 2024. We will be celebrating the life of Tom "Billy" Roby. Soup and "Billy's Cornbread" will be provided for lunch. You are welcome to bring a dessert or a salad (but not a requirement).

Additionally, our Elders will report on the efforts of their recent Visioning retreat in April at Walter Scott Camp and Learning Center. They have been hard at work and have much to report on the upcoming Visioning Plan for the next three years.



## Mother's Day: Sunday, May 12th

Please attend our Worship Service to celebrate all the ladies on Mother's Day, May 12, 2024. Each woman will receive a gift to take home. Mother's Day is all about sharing love. "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love". (1 Corinthians 13:13).

## Celebrating the Day of Pentecost: Sunday, May 19th

We are doing more than wearing red on Pentecost Sunday. Yes, wear red during our worship service on May 19 as we celebrate the Day of Pentecost. But we are going to do more than that. Our worship committee is baking cupcakes and icing them with Pentecost decorations to give out to each person present at our worship service. (Sorry, virtual presence doesn't receive a cupcake.) Pastor Tom will be lifting up the seven heavenly virtues – often enumerated as chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, and humility – by lighting a candle as he defines and elaborates on each. These virtues point Christians to God, and away from doing sinful activity. The cultivation of the seven heavenly virtues is expected to result in good works. Hoping to celebrate Pentecost with you!





APRIL 2024  
volume 1, issue 2

## Disciples Women Spring Gathering: Ties that Bind

Several members of Centennial joined members from other CCIW churches at First Christian Church in Peoria to create quilts for Project Linus of Central Il which provides hand made blankets to children ages 0—18 who are traumatized or otherwise in need. Project Linus has distributed nearly 9.5 million blankets to children in need since its inception in 1995

Attending: Jan Dill, Sue Miller, Laurel Poshard, JoAnne Pritchard and Ruth Valentine.



## DISCIPLES WOMEN CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) BLOOMINGTON, IL BAZAARS AND BLESSING BOXES

Since 1936, the women and men of Centennial Christian Church have worked for months to prepare for and host the annual Holiday Bazaar. Occurring on the second Saturday of November, the Bazaar offers home-made bake goods, craft items, attic treasures, and a soup and sandwich lunch. The event is organized and led by the women of the church but Laurel Poshard and Sue Miller, key leaders in this event, emphasize that it happens because of the commitment and participation of all church member, as well as others in the community.

Currently, attic treasures are being donated. Work has already begun in the homes of many as hand-knit projects and other craft items are being made. Some of these hand-crafted items are displayed for purchase in the Great Hall of the church throughout the year. In May, the women will begin to meet each Tuesday to work on the craft items together. Workers have included children as young as six and as old as 93! The craft days have become a way of inviting others who are not regular participants in Sunday worship to come and be a part of the mission of the church.

In 2023, the Disciples Women raised over \$8000 as the bazaar welcomed guests from 8 AM - 3 PM and lunch was served from 10:30 AM- 1 PM. While many hands are needed to make this event happen, the following coordinate the various areas of the Bazaar: Kitchen, Joe Peebles, Baked Goods Janet Keefe, and Attic Treasures Kay Carius. Laurel Poshard chairs the entire event.



The monies that are raised help to support the congregation's Blessing Box which is displayed prominently on Grove Street. The Blessing Box ministry began several years ago and provides much-needed food and other basic products to those in need in the Bloomington- Normal Community. Each month approximately \$1000 of nonperishable foods, hygiene supplies, diapers, and paper products are purchased by one of four church shoppers. In addition to the purchased items, food and other supplies as well as cash are donated by congregation members and residents of the Founders Grove Neighborhood. These items are then stocked in the Blessing Box and distributed anonymously to those in need.

In addition to the Blessing Box Ministry, the Disciples Women of Centennial Christian Church donate to 12 agencies that provide assistance to women, children, and families. While support is now financial, for ten years the women of the church collected clothes and other items and shipped or delivered them to an Appalachian Ministry in Kentucky. And, working in conjunction with the Outreach Committee of the church, Disciples Women at CCC have an active ministry with the homeless population of Bloomington delivering crocheted mats made from plastic bags, hygiene kits, and more. All of this between monthly study and fellowship meetings from September through May.

Laurel Poshard summed up the ministries of the Disciples Women saying, "this is what we are called to do."



Laurel Poshard

Sue Miller

## Center for Hope

May's food pantry designate is Hope Food Pantry. The director of Center for Hope Outreach Programs, Patriece Gentry, passed away from her terminal illness.

To honor Patriece, the Center is having a special drive for high-demand items. The items needed follow: toilet paper, paper towels, laundry/dish detergent, soap, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and grocery store gift cards (any amount).

We hope you'll consider participating in this worthwhile request by bringing items listed above during **food pantry Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**.

Thank you for helping to support Center for Hope.

Outreach



# CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024

Immediately following Worship to  
vote on the slate of officer  
candidates to serve from  
July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025  
and  
to accept Visioning Statement



**Annual Church  
ELECTION**



**Annual Church  
ELECTION**



Elder Retreat  
April 19-20, 2024  
Camp Walter Scott





Sunday, April 21st, 2024  
Earth Sunday  
Planting Ceremony



# May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>28</b> <b>Pastor Tom vacation</b> → Loose change offering Worship *10:15A	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b> Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	<b>2</b> Outreach. 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Pastor Tom vacation ends</b>
<b>5***</b> Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	<b>9</b> TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12 Mother's Day</b> Second Sunday Food Pantry Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	<b>13</b> Trustees 11A-GH	<b>14</b> CWF 9:30A-FH	<b>15</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	<b>16</b> Worship Comm. 10A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30P Elder's Meeting 6:30P-FH	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Worship Comm. 11A-FH
<b>19 Pentecost</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH <b>Congregational Meeting after Worship</b>	<b>20</b> PRC 12P-Isaiah	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH	<b>23</b> Ladies Luncheon 11:30A TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6PM	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Loose Change Offering Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH	<b>30</b> TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	<b>31</b>	<b>June 1</b>

\*Online worship <https://www.facebook.com/pg/centennialcc.org>

FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Great Hall

**\*\*\* Immediately after Worship on May 5th, please gather in our Fellowship Hall to enjoy a light luncheon as we celebrate the life of Tom "Billy" Robey and receive the results from the recent Elder's Visioning Retreat.**



**Continuing Prayers**

Diane, Tracey, Holly Irvin, Eric, Barbara Short, Angie, Tammy, Taylor, Celia Middleton, Charlie Middleton, Karen Middleton, James, Neil, Barb Leach, Cameron Cook, Angie Simpson, Jackie Stenchier, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Gery Conlin, Leonard Bates, Ann Burmaster, Cole, Ron Giske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Fern Skaggs, Marian Wrinkle

**At Home/Assisted Living**

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland; The Pointe (Pontiac) Rae Ann Giske

**Nursing Home**

Hickory Point Christian Village( Forsyth)-Ruth Role; The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Kliff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade ( Pontiac)-Ron Giske; Bickford House - Priscilla (Pry) Stam

**Military**

Mark Brienens, Keyla Folsom, Troy Guy ran, Benjamin Horn, Michael Iverson, John Thomas, Darrell Walton, Glen White cotton, Christopher Wilson-Poston

**Prayers for CCIW congregations and ministries:**

Colfax CC, IL, Arrowsmith CC, IL, New Covenant Community Church, Bloomington, IL; FCC Muir, MI

<b>May Birthdays and Anniversaries</b>	
<b>Diane and Ike Andres</b>	<b>05/11</b>
Melissa McCoy	05/12
Sharon Frizzell	05/17
<b>Kay and Geoff Davis</b>	<b>05/25</b>
Will Dawson	05/27
Kay Carius	05/28

**Our challenge for the week –  
Pray this prayer every day –**

Loving God, you are the source of our life. Form us into a holy and caring community of your people, molding us by the breath of your Spirit. Reveal in and through this corporate body the face of your loving Christ.  
[Listen and receive.]