



In the Loop

Centennial Christian Church
1219 E Grove Bloomington, IL. 61701
Ph. 309-828-2185

May 16, 2024
<https://www.centennialcc.org>
email: people@centennialcc.org

Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Do you realize that over two thousand years ago, it was unlawful and considered an unclean practice to heal people? But Jesus crossed such boundaries and healed people which helped lead to modern medicine. If you still wonder, “Is the risen Christ still around?” just look at all the healings.

Since the Spirit of Christ abides in all humanity allowing us to identify humanity as the Body of Christ, I believe true followers of Jesus Christ also responds lovingly to sick people. We find ways of driving out the illness without driving away the person. We drive out things like germs instead of casting out the person as unclean. And in our days of more advanced medicine, think of the change we have made in dealing with conditions such as Down syndrome and Alzheimer’s disease. We don’t automatically put these people away in fear. We find that persons with Down syndrome or Alzheimer’s become an important people in the community, who return love a hundred-fold.

Jesus began the practice of driving out the evil without casting out the person as unclean. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, he cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-28). What kind of unclean spirit was Jesus casting out? However we understand the possession of the man in this biblical story, it is the imposition of something alien and oppressive that Jesus cast out of him without doing him any harm. We get an important clue as to the nature of this alien invasion when the unclean spirit says: “I know who you are, the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24).

We often think that Jesus told the unclean spirit to be silent because the spirit was correct, and Jesus didn’t want his true identity spread throughout the countryside. However, the term “Holy One of God” refers to Israel’s priesthood. One of the main jobs of the priest was to expel anybody who was “unclean.” Jesus silences the unclean spirit because the spirit is wrong. Jesus does not represent a priesthood who expels the “unclean.” Quite the opposite.

Jesus is expelling the collective attitude that the man is unclean when it is the crowd’s spirit that has invaded the man and declared him unclean. By casting out this spirit, Jesus makes the man clean so that he can rejoin the community. Any person was cast out of the synagogue and considered unclean if they were sick in any way, dirty, bleeding, had an immoral reputation, a child, or a foreigner.

Jesus is not healing an individual; he is healing a community. Jesus is giving the community an opportunity to be healed, and free to love, and welcome all God’s creation. For this to take place, the community must renounce the rivalry that had been imposed on one vulnerable person. Jesus is using his powerful authority to strengthen and liberate all of Israel. The Gospel of Mark shows that Jesus’ liberation of Israel includes judging the leadership both of the scribes (the teachers) and priests.



Continued on next page

Today, those demons might include alcohol and drugs (even prescription drugs) which cause escapism and denial. Those demons might include out-of-control consumerism and debt. We might be held back (possessed) from true freedom by the rampant violence and sex all around us in our culture which in turn causes negativity, hatred, and anxiety-ridden fear. We are still possessed, as a society, by the demon of poverty which is caused by our own selfishness and rivalry.

As disciples of Christ, I believe Jesus Christ calls us to be healers, to stand against all the demons that possess us and keep us from freedom. The first step to being a healer involves the same issue that confronted Jesus on the first day of his ministry: to bring freedom and healing to others from the unholy spirits that society imposes upon us, but never at the cost of destroying or harming other people.

Everybody deserves to receive justice; everybody is love and is to be loved; and everybody is worthy of grace and mercy. It is in the sharing that we find each other and God, and discover ourselves set free. Sharing our True Selves as humans united to God through the Holy Spirit of Christ connects all of us as one, and takes seriously the reality of God's grace. At first this sharing may be painful, causing some noise and convulsions of spirit, but soon it is worth it, for we discover God's goodness and human joy.

Blessings as we serve together in the Resurrection of Christ.



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 have a little candle-lighting ceremony lifting up the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which Paul mentions in Romans 12:6–8 (1) Prophecy; (2) Ministry; (3) Teaching; (4) Exhortation; (5) Giving; (6) Leading; and (7) Compassion. The Apostle Paul and Peter explain in 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, Ephesians 4:11–12, and 1 Peter 4:3–11 that the Holy Spirit gives us many more gifts so that we may use them in building up the body of Christ and serving all God's children.



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**

Centennial Christian Church Official Ballot

May 19, 2024

Yes to all below: _____

Individual Votes:

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

Board 1-year term

Chair: Mark Rupe	___yes ___no ___abstain
Vice Chair: Julie Dawson	___yes ___no ___abstain
Secretary: Melissa McCoy	___yes ___no ___abstain
Treasurer: Bill Wetzel	___yes ___no ___abstain
Asst. Treasurer: Janet Keefe	___yes ___no ___abstain

Nominating 3-year term

Kay Carius	___yes ___no ___abstain
Sunshine Wetzel	___yes ___no ___abstain

Trustees 3-year term

Dan Frizzell	___yes ___no ___abstain
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Elders 3-year term

Joe Peebles	___yes ___no ___abstain
Mark Rupe	___yes ___no ___abstain

Deacons 3-year term

Diane Andres	___yes ___no ___abstain
Marian Cici	___yes ___no ___abstain
Julie Dawson	___yes ___no ___abstain
Janet Keefe	___yes ___no ___abstain
James Ryan	___yes ___no ___abstain
Esther Sengpiel	___yes ___no ___abstain
Jim Sengpiel	___yes ___no ___abstain

VISIONING STATEMENT



Spreading the message of God's Love, in our church and in our community, through caring for each other.

Worship & Spirituality	Provide expanded and additional worship opportunities
Fellowship	Encourage a family feeling by caring for each other
Outreach	Share God's love in our community by nurturing and caring for others
Communication	Improve communications in all we do including our digital presence

We're Having A Christian Baptism on Sunday, May 26th



Perry Watson is preparing for his public baptism which will take place during the worship service on Sunday, May 26, 2024. He has been taking Pastor Classes with Pastor Tom. On Pentecost Sunday, May 19, he will make his Renunciation of Evil, and Profession of Faith in Christ Jesus. Then during our 10:15 AM worship service on the following Sunday, of Memorial Day weekend, he will receive God's renewing grace through baptism, and thereby become one with the whole people of God.

Please let Pastor Tom know if you would like to prepare for your call to baptism. We will make necessary plans to accommodate your request. Blessings!

May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12 Mother's Day Second Sunday Food Pantry Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A	13 Trustees 11A-GH	14 CWF 9:30A-FH	15 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	16 Worship Comm. 10A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30P Elder's Meeting 6:30P-FH	17	18 Worship Comm. 11A-FH
19 Pentecost Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A Congregational Meeting after Worship	20 PRC 12P-Isaiah	21	22 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	23 Ladies Luncheon 11:30A- Kobe Restaurant TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6PM- Garden of Paradise	24	25
26 Loose Change Offering Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A Baptism-10:15A	27 MEMORIAL DAY Church Office Closed	28	29 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	30 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	31	June 1
2 Adult Bible Study 9A-FH Worship *10:15A Graduate Reception after worship	3	4	5 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-FH Bridge 12P-GH Choir 6:30P	6 Outreach 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah FGNA 7P-FH	7	8

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

FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Great Hall
 FGNA-Founder's Grove Neighborhood Association



Graduate Reception after Worship Sunday, June 2, 2024

Join us after worship on June 2nd in the Great Hall to celebrate the graduation of Ayden Jackson and Sophia Tabadatze. Please encourage them through cards and join them for some cake.



Prayer Requests

Please pray for Kip and Peg's daughter, Sara, and her family. Her daughter Ellie has lupus, Kaeleigh's appt. had been robbed, their dog Chloe was put down, and Nathan continues to have medical and psychological issues. Please pray for their health and well-being.

Marty Fry, the mother of Perry Watson's friend, Shellie, is in Gibson Hospital after she fell and broke her pelvis. Please pray for the healing of Marty and hopeful assurance for her family.

Continuing Prayers

Greg Firkus, Lisa Behl, Diane, Tracey, Holly Irvin, Eric, Angie, Tammy, Taylor, Charlie Middleton, James, Neil, Barb Leach, Cameron Cook, Angie Simpson, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Gery Conlin, Leonard Bates, Ann Burmaster, Cole, Ron Geske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Fern Scaggs, Marian Wrinkle

At Home/Assisted Living

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

Nursing Home

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iliff; 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:

Pentecost for New Church Ministry; Gilead Chicago, IL; Root and Branch CC; New Beginnings Fellowship; ANEW Church

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

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

Gracious and loving God, we thank you and accept your Spirit within us. May your Spirit make us humbler and more honest, more thoughtful and creative, more compassionate and courageous, more united and alive.

[Listen and receive.]