



Christian Courier

First Christian Church of Minneapolis (Disciples of Christ)

August 1, 2009

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On the Web

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[Bob's Blog](#)

[Dennis's blog](#)



General Assembly Theme:
"For the Healing of Nations"

"Questions of Faith" considered in recent sermon



Pastor Bob Brite used questions submitted on index cards by people attending worship as the basis for his sermon on Sunday, July 26. He termed this a "Sermon of the Whole," and emphasized that he was providing his own responses to the questions; any real answers would come from the Holy Spirit.

As Pastor Brite stated in response to one of the submitted questions, "If you don't ask questions, you can't get any answers."

Here are the questions that were submitted and discussed during the sermon:

1. How do I know what God expects of me?
2. When Jesus was baptized, why did the Holy Spirit come down in the form of a dove?
3. What do you say to an older person, someone who has spent a life

time in the church, who says, 'I think I have lost my faith'?"

4. How does God look at us when we have doubts? Is it OK to doubt?
5. How do we know that God blesses our sexuality?
6. How do I know whether God is pleased with me and whether the Holy Spirit is the force that is moving me?
7. What does evangelism mean to you?
8. What does it mean when the church talks about "transformation"?

If you would like to read summaries of Rev. Brite's responses to these Questions of Faith, contact Chris in the church office, who can send the questions and responses via email or "real mail" (with postage stamp). You can also find them soon on FCC's website, fccminneapolis.org.

On having doubts:

"One of the things I wish somebody had taught me is that I could put my faith in Christ or I could develop a relationship with Christ and still have doubts. I didn't know that for a long time. I thought I had to figure out every answer to every question before I could step across the line and could develop a relationship with God."

--Beliefnet.com interview with Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*

A Look at the Brite Side

“Whole Church” of Disciples together at General Assembly

As you read this, I and Mary Hurlocker will be at the biennial General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, held this year in Indianapolis, IN, which also happens to be the site of our denominational headquarters.

While it's an opportunity to touch base with old friends, general church officers, institutional representatives such as those with the Christian Church Foundation, Pension Fund, and Overseas Ministries, it's also a chance to worship in the closest thing we Disciples have to the whole Church. And, most importantly, it is the time when the closest thing we have to the whole Church comes together to speak, in democratic fashion, as the whole Church.

Our current General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins (a friend of many years--I used to tune her roommate's piano 30 years ago) has, in my opinion, done an excellent job of trying to forge a new vision to bridge the gap of many ancient divisions in the Body.

We Disciples are a diverse people: After being founded on the American Frontier 200 years ago as a unity movement, we've split twice during that time. We still have divergent opinions and stands on a whole host of issues, and the way we're set up no one body speaks for everybody. A general unit can't tell a local congregation what to practice or believe, and a local congregation can't dictate to a regional or general unit either.

It's all based on that slippery matter called covenant – working together as God's people even when we disagree, sometimes agreeing to disagree, but still getting together to support one another, fellowship with one another, and be God's people together.

Given the choice between this and a church of doctrine and hierarchy, I prefer this. It fits with both the sense of freedom we have as God's children, and responsibility we're supposed to practice as God's people.

Grace and peace to you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bob

In our prayers

Gracious God, we lift up these persons in our prayers, asking the blessing of your Grace and outpouring of your Love upon them.

We pray for **Terry Kehoe** and her family at the loss of her uncle James “Harry” Redpath; for **Mary Lou Cain** and her family at the loss of her sister; for **Ernie Brennan's** sister, Wendy, who was recently hospitalized; in happiness with **Jessica Armstrong** over her new job, and with the **Hintz/Morton family** for family reunions and the sale of their house; for the safety of **Val and Earl Dunham's** nephew, recently married and deployed to Afghanistan, and **Arlene Hillestad's** brother-in-law deployed to Kosovo; for healing for **David Pyles**; for **Lois Cobbs'** comfort and care as she moves to an Alzheimer's unit; for **Deb Murphy's** mother, going in for more testing; for **Mary Hurlocker and Pastor Brite** as they attend the General Assembly this week; for all our homebound members, especially **Jane Anderson** and **Lois Swenson**.

July Board Notes

Those attending the monthly FCC board meeting held on July 21 heard reports from the pastors and committee heads, and passed motions relating to a bequest from the Billman family.

The board voted to accept the Billman family's bequest, a "directed gift" of \$25,000, to be distributed as follows: \$10,000 for the Kit and John Billman Scholarship Fund to be used by young adult members of FCC who are freshmen or sophomores at colleges or trade schools; \$7,500 to support an initiative of the downtown churches to create an Opportunity Center for homeless people; and \$7,500 for the development of a young adult ministry First Christian Church.

Rev. Dennis Sanders distributed a Mission Calendar for July through December. Rev. Bob Brite is

still recruiting members for the Transition Team, which will have had its first meeting on July 27.

Other meeting highlights included:

- discussion of the possibility of members being able to use direct deposit for offerings
- need for at least 68 people to sign up to take pictures on Sept. 8-9 in order for members to receive a free Picture Directory
- an upcoming remodeling project: installing a fire suppression system for the kitchen exhaust fan; the Kitchen Fund will provide \$3,300 of the cost of this project.

Copies of the board meeting agenda, handouts and monthly treasurer's report are available from Pastor Bob or Chris in the church office.

Help needed for two major neighborhood ministry projects

Whittier School Supplies, Grande Sale

Whittier Park supplies

Having a new box of pencils or a spic-and-span new backpack is part of the fun of starting school in September – and part of the motivation to help children succeed.

FCC members are invited to pitch in to make sure children in the Whittier neighborhood have new school supplies for that important first day of school. Donated school supplies will be taken to Whittier Park Elementary School at the end of August. Whittier Park Elementary has a large percentage of children living below the poverty level.

People who want to help can purchase supplies from the list below and bring the "goodies" to church Aug. 9, 16 or 23, or any day of the week. Boxes will be in the lounge and narthex to drop off these gifts.

Recommended supplies are the following: **back packs, scissors, crayons, watercolor markers, glue, construction paper, 3-ring binders; pencils, rulers, notebook paper.**

Grande Sale workers

The Grande Sale, a major annual project of Women's Ministries, has a few new wrinkles this year. For one thing, there is less space to store goods before

the sale. As a result, workers will have less time to sort, price and set up the sale items.

That's why Women's Ministries is hoping that everyone – men, youth, women -- will be willing to help during sale week. Volunteers are needed to distribute advertising flyers in the neighborhood on Aug. 2, and to sort and set up after worship on Sunday, Aug. 16 and on the following Monday and Tuesday.

On the days of the sale, Aug. 20-22, sale workers, greeters and prayer walkers are needed. And finally, people are needed to clean up on Saturday, Aug. 22 after the sale. Sign-up sheets are in the lounge.

Bi-Weekly Calendar

Summer Sundays at First Christian Church

Prayer Circle 9 am (Library)
Worship at 9:30 am
 Fellowship Hour, 10:45 am
 Bible Study, 11:00 am

Reflections on the Word

From lectionary texts for Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Aug. 2

Ephesians 4: 14a-15: "We must no longer be children, tossed and blown about by every wind of doctrine.... But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..."

Reflection: Speaking the truth is often hard; it is also a mark of maturity. But truth is often multi-faceted, greater than one person alone can grasp entirely. Community helps one grow in faith and maintain perspective in times when one's faith is shaken, and helps us understand more fully what is true.

Prayer: Holy One, help us to grow in faith and humility, not to use our vision of truth as a weapon, but to bring the truth of your love to our community and wider world that truly needs it. Amen.

--Chris Wogaman

This Week at FCC

Monday, August 3
AA 8 pm

Tuesday, August 4
Worship Committee 7 pm

Thursday, August 6
Handcrafters 9 am

Friday, August 7
Article deadline for next Courier

Saturday August 8
Men's Group 9 am

Next Week at FCC

Sunday, August 9
Family Picnic at North Mississippi Park 11 - 3

Monday, August 10
Book Group @ Westphals AA 7 pm
8 pm

Tuesday, August 11
Property Committee 7 pm
SOSSCC Potluck 5:30 pm

Wednesday, August 12
Finance Committee 5:30 pm
Lectionary Bible Study 6 pm

Thursday, Aug. 13
Handcrafters 9 am
Feed My Starving Children 6 pm

Saturday, August 15
Men's Group 9 am
St. Stephen's Shelter Meal served

*A Thoughtful Church in the
Heart of the City*

Ministry Team

All Members of the Congregation
Robert Brite, Interim Minister
Dennis Sanders, Minister of Diversity and Mission
Chris Wogaman, Office Manager
Bill Stump, Director of Music
James Barnett, Pianist
Rick Bowman, Building Manager
Serena Carlson, Nursery Attendant
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