

Journeys

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WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY WE WELCOME YOU HERE.

FROM THE
Pastor's Pen



Let's Think About It – No, Just Do It!

Thomas Jefferson once declared, “Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.” The sentiment didn't make it into any of our nation's founding documents, but the view seems to dominate our culture. Americans love ACTION.

An exciting new idea comes up and everyone in an organization starts working furiously to “make it happen.” It's a great idea. Everyone's excited. They want to see themselves—and they want others to see them—as people who get things done. “I'm on it” is their mantra.

In contrast, there are those who ponder. We don't notice them very often—precisely because they're quietly contemplating whatever has caught their ear or eye. If you want to know what they're thinking, you need to ask them.

We all have a preference for action or contemplation. We hinder our humanity, however, when we ignore our non-preference. The separation of action and contemplation is regretful.

Richard Rohr, OSF, strives to integrate contemplation and action in his Christian faith. He writes: “Some degree of inner experience is necessary for true spiritual authority, but we need some form of outer validation, too. We need to be taken seriously as competent and committed individuals and not just “inner” people. . . .

“God offers us quiet, contemplative eyes; and God also calls us to prophetic and critical involvement in the pain and sufferings of our world—both at the same time. This is so obvious in the life and ministry of Jesus that I wonder why it has not been taught as an essential part of Christianity.”

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses both outward action and inner contemplation. *The Messenger* interpretive translation of the Bible expresses Jesus' words with informal, day-to-day English.

"When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself. You've seen them in action, I'm sure—'play actors' I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that's all they get.

"When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out."

True contemplation is a form of prayer. Jesus says something important about that, too: "When you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for fifteen minutes of fame! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense God's grace.

"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense." [Matthew 6:6-8]

Part of our work as Christians is to explore various forms of meditation and contemplation to discover how we can connect with God most meaningfully. When we allow God to fully engage us, we inevitably become people of action as we share God's love with the world.

In a similar manner, as we strive to perform as instruments of God's love in the world, we inevitably call on God to strengthen our hearts

and minds. We need God's peace so we can faithfully meet the challenges the world imposes on us.

A legal expert asked Jesus which law of Moses was the greatest. We know how Jesus responded: "... you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength. . ." [Mark 12:30]. That sums up contemplation and action pretty well.

— Pastor Bob Fogal

Have a
LOVELY
month!



HOLD THE FOOD DONATIONS!! The Doylestown Food Pantry received an overwhelming amount of food donations during the holidays. YEAH! Therefore, due to storage limitations, they are asking us to hold our food donations until March! FYI in 2020 we donated almost 2,000 pounds of food. That's almost a ton! Incredible job!



MEN'S CLOTHING DRIVE

The Covid-19 Pandemic has created financial hardship for many individuals and families. Closing businesses meant loss of income so severe that some lost their homes. Many didn't have enough money to provide food for their family. With the help of community members, the congregation of Carversville United Church of Christ sponsored a food drive in Fall 2020. Nearly 2000 lbs. of food was collected and donated to the Doylestown Food Pantry.

Now the church's Mission Committee has become aware of another opportunity to reach out to those in need. The Allentown Rescue Mission in Allentown that provides shelter to homeless men is soliciting "gently used" clothing. Requests include **MEN'S heavy and light coats, outdoor vests, sweaters, jeans, pants, long and short sleeve shirts, button down shirts, sweat-shirts, fleece shirts and jackets, gloves, belts, hats, scarves, shoes, NEW socks and NEW underwear (L and XL)*.**

The church is sponsoring a MEN'S (not women's or children's) clothing drive from Sunday, Feb. 7, through Feb. 21, to benefit the Allentown Rescue Mission. Donations should be placed in waterproof trash bags. Thanks to Troop #64 for providing a tent to be erected in the church's parking lot to collect bagged donations only.

*Note: While the Pandemic restricts in-person shopping, please consider using Smile Amazon to make purchases. Smile Amazon allows shoppers to choose a charity to which a percentage of the purchase price is directed. Carversville UCC qualifies as one of those charities!



*"You don't love someone because they're perfect, you love them in spite of the fact that they're not."
— Jodi Picoult*



SCOUTING NEWS

Troop 64 has been very busy getting ready for the Klondike Derby at Camp Ockanickon. Our next trip will be a day of skiing at Elk Mountain and the Scouts are really looking forward to both events. February 14 is SCOUT SUNDAY!!! We are sad to miss our time together on Scout Sunday, but we are happy to report that a few Scouts and a few leaders will participate in the service which you can watch at anytime. We are so appreciative of all that CUCC does for our Troop. We look forward to a time when

worshiping together will again be possible. Be well. With Gratitude, Troop 64.



LOVE
is the closest
to MAGIC!



BRIARLEAF FEB 2021

*“How should we like it were starts to burn
with a passion for us we could not return?
If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.”*

W. H. Auden - 1907-1973

Briarleaf continues to remain closed to all visitors. In the meantime, we plan to continue to send 30 notes to cheer the residents each month. During January we were able to produce 30 cards to send for Valentine’s Day!

If you would like to write a short note to a Briarleaf resident on behalf of Carversville UCC, contact Catherine Halper at chalper@aol.com. We target completing them by the 15th of each month.

The small investment of your time will yield rich rewards!



MODERATOR’S MINUTE

MODERATOR’S MINUTE

*“Let the morning bring me word
of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.”*

Psalm 143



While many cultures do not celebrate love on February 14th, here we fill this mid-winter day with small rituals, cards & chocolates, making life-long fond memories.

Legend has it that Valentine’s Day commemorates the day in 269 AD. that Valentinus, a priest & theologian was executed for trying to convert the emperor Claudius II Gothicus to Christianity. Valentinus is credited with restoring the sight of his jailer’s blind daughter.

The night before he died, Valentinus wrote a farewell note to the girl, which he signed, “From Your Valentine.”

By fifth century Rome, Juno, the pagan goddess of love and marriage, was honored on Feb. 14. During the celebration, men would draw women’s names and court them for

marriage – that is until Pope Gelasius declared the day St. Valentine’s Day to honor the martyr Valentinus and end the practice. Around the world celebrations mirror our Valentine’s Day:

Argentinians celebrate “the week of sweetness” in July when lovers exchange kisses and receive chocolates and other sweets.

South Koreans celebrate love on the 14th of every month: “the day of roses” in May, “the day of kisses” in June, “the day of hugs” in December” and in April single people celebrate “the black day” by eating black noodles.

In the Philippines, Valentine’s Day is the time when many young couples marry in an event sponsored by the government as a form of public service.

In Ghana, Feb. 14 was declared by the government as “National Chocolate Day” to increase tourism and market their large chocolate production industry.

In Bulgaria, Feb. 14 is San Trifon Zartan “day of winemakers.” Young and old couples celebrate their love with a glass of wonderful local wine.

On January 25, Wales celebrates the “day of San Dwywnwen” when lovers have exchanged hand carved wooden spoons since the 16th century.

In Spain on 9th Oct., to mark the feast of Saint Dionysus men make ‘macadora’ in marzipan for their sweethearts.

No matter how we commemorate love, it is an enduring truth that Christian love includes mercy and charity. The Greek word agape (God’s Love) describes a selfless, giving love – something that we could all use more of in these trying times.

Catherine Halper



PRAYING HANDS

Here is a list of those who would benefit from receiving cards-perhaps a Valentine. We encourage you all to reach out to these people.

Card List for February

- Pearl Howard - c/o Future Care
Chesapeake, Room 208, 305 College Parkway, Arnold, MD 21012
- Jim & Sally Seeton- 1850 Lower Mountain Road West, Furlong, PA 18925
- Audrey Taylor - 6651 Ferry Rd, New Hope, PA 18938

During our church closure please remember to send your church offering to Carversville UCC at P.O. Box 26, Carversville, PA 18913.

Articles for the March newsletter should be sent to Cathy Price at cathyprice2@verizon.net and Sue Wulf at slswulf@com-cast.net by Monday, February 15. Thanks!

CUCC FAITH FORMATION

PROPHECY

“When it comes to understanding others, we rarely tax our imaginations.” — Lawrence Hill

In polarized times, and times of crisis, prophets arise, and people pay attention. This has been true since ancient times. We tend to turn to the Judeo-Christian scriptures, yet scholars have found prophetic traditions throughout ancient near eastern cultures. Yet other ancient prophetic literature does not have the concept of the Covenant – that is God’s choosing a people to reveal Himself, to accomplish His plan over time.

Yet while it is the predictive visions and the endless debate about their meaning that fascinate today’s readers, prophecy in the Judeo-Christian tradition is more interested in causation than in prediction. It was the *message* that was inspired. The visions were only opportunities to deliver the message. The book of Hosea delivers such a message, and it speaks to our time and place in history.

The book of Hosea is one of twelve books – the so-called “Minor Prophets” (Twelve are called this because their books – not their messages – were short.) Interestingly, the name Hosea has the same root as Joshua and Yeshua (Jesus) – *salvation*.

The setting is the cosmopolitan northern kingdom – Israel – just prior to when it was conquered by Assyria. The book uses the metaphor of marriage and an unfaithful partner to illustrate His covenant relationship with Israel. (see also *Isaiah 54:5*)

” There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adul-

tery, they break all bonds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed...But let no one bring a charge, let no one accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest. You stumble day and night and the prophets stumble with you...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.” From Hosea 4: 3-6

It is God who commands Hosea to marry “*a promiscuous woman*” for “*this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.*” In this usage promiscuous refers to priestesses of Baal – the Canaanite storm god associated with fertility. Israel’s harlotry had a double meaning – both spiritual adultery against God by turning to Baal and literal prostitution in Canaanite cult worship.

God’s command to Hosea to marry a prostitute is puzzling. Yet it is not the message, it is the vision – the *opportunity to deliver* the message during a desperate time when Israel was on the brink of obliteration and exile. Hosea’s experience with the faithless wife directly paralleled God’s relationship with the Israelites who forsook Him to worship their Canaanite neighbor’s god Baal.

“Israel is corrupt. Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. A spirit of prostitution is in their hearts.” Hosea 5:3-4

In his analysis of Psalm 77¹, Walter Bruggeman describes the transfer of our agenda from “concern for self to other” as the crucial move of biblical faith. “*This psalm models the very move of faith that our cultural ideology wants to prevent. The whole consumer perspective concerns retention of self and satisfaction of self.*”

This message is also for us. We also cater to *self* when we give in to anger and despair, when we lash out at others who disagree with us, when we are self-involved and uncaring.

Bruggeman compares this movement from concern for *self to other* to the move envisioned by Jesus “*For whoever would save his*

life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save it.” Mark 8:35

¹ Bruggeman, Walter. *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty.* 2021

Catherine Halper

FAITH FORMATION STORIES & READINGS	
<i>DATE</i>	
02/07/21	Isa. 40: 21-31: <i>Like Grasshoppers</i>
02/14/21	2 Kings 2:1-12: <i>The Whirlwind</i>
LENT	
02/21/21	Ps 25: 1-10: <i>Teach Me Your Paths</i>
02/28/21	Mark 9:2-9: <i>A High Mountain Apart</i>
03/07/21	John 2: 13-22: <i>His Temple His Body</i>

AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN:

Faith, Hope,
Love,

BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS
LOVE.

-1 Corinthians 13:13



CONTACT US!

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