

Journeys

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

FROM THE
Pastor's Pen



Sometimes—well, lots of times, actually—I come across a writing that captures so well a thought or concern I have that I ask: I can't say this better, so why should I try? May's column is one of those instances. The author, Brian McLaren, has been a keynote speaker at meetings of our United Church of Christ Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

Making New Friends: Friendship and Grace By Brian McLaren

Christian mission begins with friendship—not utilitarian friendship, the religious version of network marketing—but genuine friendship, friendship that translates love for neighbors in general into knowing, appreciating, liking, and enjoying this or that neighbor in particular. . . .

Many new friends have come into my life . . . Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, New Agers, and others—including lots of atheists and agnostics, too. One of the most dramatic of those friendships began in the aftermath of 9/11/2001. Like a lot of churches, our little congregation held a prayer service. While praying, I felt a voice speaking, as it were, in my chest: *Your Muslim neighbors are in danger of reprisals. You must try to protect them.*

The next morning, I wrote and made copies of a letter extending, belatedly, friendship toward

Muslim communities in my area, and offering solidarity and help if simmering anti-Muslim sentiments should be translated into action.

I drove to the three mosques nearby—I had never visited them before—and tried to deliver my letter in person. . . .

[At the third mosque,] I clumsily introduced myself [to the imam] as the pastor from down the street . . . I then handed him my letter, which he opened and read as I stood there awkwardly.

I remember the imam, a man short in stature, slowly looking down at the letter in the bright September sun, then up into my face, then down, then up, and each time he looked up, his eyes were more moist.

Suddenly, he threw his arms around me—a perfect stranger. . . . I still remember the feeling of his head pressed against my chest, squeezing me as if I were his long-lost brother. . . .

My host welcomed me not with hostility or even suspicion, but with the open heart of a friend. And so that day a friendship began between an Evangelical pastor named Brian and a Muslim imam we'll call Ahmad. . . .

It's one thing to say you love humanity in general, whatever their religion; it's quite another to learn to love this or that specific neighbor with his or her specific religion. So, do you have a Sikh neighbor, a Hindu coworker, a Muslim business associate, a Buddhist member of your PTA, a New Age second cousin?

Invite them into companionship over a cup of tea or coffee. Ask them questions. Display unexpected interest in them, their traditions, their beliefs, and their stories.

Learn why they left what they left, why they stay where they stay, why they love what they love. Enter their world, and welcome them into your world, without judgment.

If they reciprocate, welcome their reciprocation; if not, welcome their non-reciprocation. Experience conviviality. Join the conspiracy of plotting for the common good together.

Reference

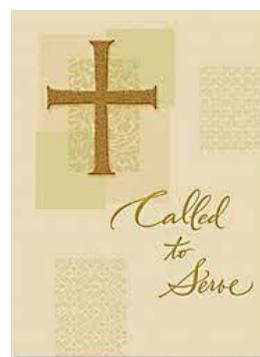
Brian D. McLaren, *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World* (Jericho Books: 2012), pp. 223, 225, 226, 231.

Source

<https://cac.org/making-new-friends-2021-04-15/>



We continue our practice of sharing in the communion service during worship on Sunday, May 2. For those of you participating in the live stream service, please be sure to have your juice, wine or other beverage available as well as bread or a cracker.



Pastor Fogal to be Ordained

Pastor Bob Fogal will be ordained as a minister of the United Church of Christ at a special worship service on Sunday, May 23, 2021, at 3:00 PM. The service will be livestreamed.

He began his ministry at Carversville UCC on February 1, 2017. The North Penn Association (the unit of our United Church of Christ governance one level "above" congregations) had to authorize him as a licensed minister to serve our church. He had previously served St. Luke's UCC in North Wales, Montgomery County, also as a licensed minister. The Association had to authorize him to serve that congregation as well.

The United Church of Christ recently approved an alternate path to ordained ministry for those who have served as licensed ministers for at least seven years. The difference between a licensed minister and an ordained minister is this.

A licensed minister is authorized to serve only in a specific place (usually a congregation), often for a pre-determined period of time. The authorization is typically renewed annually.

An ordained minister is a minister of the entire United Church of Christ. S/he can be called to be a pastor by any UCC church anywhere. There are no location or time period limitations (as is the case with licensed ministers).

Pastor Fogal completed the requirements for ordination early this year and on February 15, 2021 received approval to be ordained.

He refers to being a pastor as his third career. His first was teaching church music at an ecumenical theological seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina for ten years. He worked there under the auspices of the international agency of the United Methodist Church.

For his second career, he did philanthropic fundraising in the United States for nonprofit institutions, including higher education, healthcare, and human services. As he retired from fundraising, Pastor Fogal became an authorized licensed minister and began his third career.

It is hoped that in June, we will be able to enjoy an outdoor gathering to come together as a congregation, share conversation and congratulate Pastor Fogal on his ordination in person! Watch for details to follow as we assess covid developments.



If you are not attending church in person, please remember to send your church offering to Carversville UCC at P.O. Box 26, Carversville, PA 18913. Church expenses go on even when we're not there in person.

The Doylestown Food Pantry is once again in need of food for the many families in our area who are experiencing food insecurity. Since March we have donated 350 pounds of food to the food pantry. Most recently, using money that was donated to purchase food, I got 25 pounds of butter and 20 packages of brick cheese for the pantry.

Items wanted are: tuna, canned potatoes, canned black/kidney/pinto beans, canned fruit, cereal and spaghetti sauce. Items can be left at church outside the office Sunday 9-11:30 am; Tuesday and Thursday 9- 12am. Monetary donations can be given, too, for more butter and cheese! Write Food Pantry on the memo line of your church check. Questions? Call Sue Wulf at 215-801-9142. Thanks for caring and sharing!

- Sue Wulf



**“A mother is she who can take
the place of all others but whose
place no one else can take.”**

- Cardinal Mermillod



CON "GRAD" ULATIONS

Spencer Sterner, son of Kim and Drew Sterner, brother of Courtney, grandson of Sue and Jim Wulf, continues the family tradition of being a Penn State graduate. Spencer is graduating on May 8 with a degree in history education. WE ARE!

If you have someone graduating this year and would like to have it noted in the newsletter, let Sue Wulf know the details by May 15th and it will be included in the June/July newsletter.



THE TRADITION CONTINUES

For years, the ladies of Carversville Church have been treated to impatiens in honor of Mothers' Day! Jeanne Brown is continuing this tradition on May 9th. Impatiens plants will be given to ladies attending church, an

for those wishing to receive the blessed plants you may stop by the conference room from 11am- 12:30 pm to get one. The supply is limited so when they're gone they're g



MAY ☞ 2021

Briarleaf continues to remain closed to all visitors, but we still reach out once per month with a 'Shower of Cards' to remind the residents that they are not forgotten.

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

Bring the joy of Spring to those who are isolated from visitors!

IT IS NOT ALWAYS MAY!

'Maiden, that read'st this simple rhyme,

Enjoy thy youth, it will not stay;

Enjoy the fragrance of thy prime,

For oh, it is not always May!'

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ASSISTED-LISTENING DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE

For those needing some extra help hearing the service there are three headsets and three receivers in the front of the church at the foot of the altar. Batteries are in zip-lock bags. All people need to do is plug the headset into the little box and adjust the volume as needed. That's it and you should be able to hear the service loud and clear!

Our sympathy to Mark Bernazzoli and his family on the passing of his mother, Donna, on April 3rd. Always our friend, Mark was our organist a few years ago.

Also, we send our sympathy to the Clark family on the passing of Bill on March 19th. Bill, his wife Mary, and their children were active CUCC members some years ago.



PRAYING HANDS

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

Card List for May

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
Gordon Keckeissen- 555 N. Broad St.,
#508A, Doylestown, PA
18901
Sandy Emmett- 151 S. Limekiln Pike,
Chalfont, PA 18914



NOW WE ARE SIX

"But now I am six,

I'm as clever as clever.

So I think I'll be six

Now and forever."

- A. A. Milne.

My grandmother gave me two books when I was learning to read in 1955. In hindsight, I think it is the small things that have the greatest impact. These books certainly shaped my life and career.

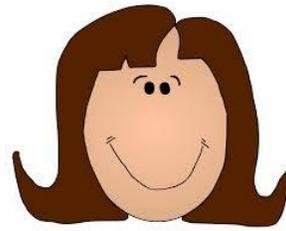
The first was a small bible with my name "Catherine Anne Charters" embossed on the cover in gold leaf. It had five photo-engraved illustrations in those particularly saturated colors produced 60 years ago. My favorite illustration was of Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Naomi, gleaning in the fields. I read that story so often that today the book opens there by itself. From that day to this, Bible stories have provided my favorite reading.

I can remember the day that she gave me the second book as if it were yesterday. We were sitting at her kitchen table with the sun shining through the window. The birds were singing in her garden just outside. She solemnly handed me a small brown volume entitled "Number Stories of Long Ago." Grandma carefully explained to me that the book was really from her father, who had been a librarian. She carefully wrote on the inside fly leaf "*To Catherine Anne Charters from her Great Grandfather Thomas W. Self.*"

The book, by David Eugene Smith, was a discard from the Toronto Public Library. It is filled with engaging stories that described mathematical concepts as entertaining puzzles learned by children in "Number Land." I have never lost my love of mathematics.

Today Smith is considered one of the founders of the field of mathematics education. His collected works are housed at Columbia University along with his more than 275 instruments of early and medieval times for purposes of calculating, measuring and astronomy.

Catherine Halper



CONTACT US!

Dr. Robert Fogal, Pastor
Tues. & Thurs: Office- 9:30 AM.-3:00 PM
and by appointment
Cell: 610.945.4955
Email: pastorfogal@gmail.com

Chris Ochadlick, Office Administrator
Tuesday and Thursday: 8 AM. - 11:00 AM

Catherine Halper, Church School Supt.
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Website: www.carversvilleucc.org
Facebook: @carversvilleUCC
YouTube: Carversville UCC
Church Phone: 215.297.5166

MOM'S FAVORITE SAYINGS.....

1. What part of NO don't you understand?
2. I don't care who started it!
3. Money doesn't grow on trees!
4. Your face is going to freeze like that!
5. Your hands are NOT broken.
6. Beds are made for sleeping, NOT jumping.
7. No one said life is fair.
8. EAT your vegetables!
9. "I don't know" is NOT an answer.
10. I LOVE YOU!!!!!!



Articles for the combined June/July news-letter should be sent to Sue Wulf at slswulf@comcast.net and Cathy Price at cathyprice2@verizon.net by Saturday, May 15. Thanks



THE LORD OF THE FLIES

"... the digital media landscape has evolved to profit from our vices more than our virtues, and it has become incredibly effective at dividing audiences into hermetic media spheres that deliver only the information and commentary that confirms the audiences' anxieties and antipathies." Timothy Dalrymple. Christianity Today.

I have written in this column about the contrast between English poetry that relies on sound & rhythm and Hebrew poetry that is highly structured. Hebrew literature relies on word plays and sound plays, presenting concepts in balanced parallel lines. Thus, biblical writers use structure to make their point poetically – something we English readers often miss. Most translations that we read do not preserve the plays on sound and word roots from the original Hebrew.

There is one remnant of Hebrew poetry that is preserved. That is the use of a "chiasm." This is a pattern of poetry expressing the message in

a descending and ascending order. The main point is found in the middle of the pattern.

A good example, that has critical meaning for us today has the punchline at Mark 3:25 *"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."*

The chiasm opens at Mark 3: 20 – 21 when Jesus' family hears about a great crowd surrounding a house he is in, making it impossible to eat, so His family sets out to take charge of him, saying *"He is out of his mind!"*

Verse 22: Jesus is accused of possession by the Torah teachers *"He has Ba'al-Zibbul in him."*

(NOTE: This is a derogatory play on the name of the Canaanite God Ba'al and literally means *"Lord of the Flies" – or Lord of Dung*)

and they say, *"It is by the ruler of the demons that he expels the demons."*

Verse 23 – 27: Jesus said *"How can Satan Expel Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom can't survive. If a household is divided against itself, that household can't survive. So, if Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he can't survive either and that's the end of him. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house."*

Verses 28 – 30 turn the Torah Teachers words in Verse 22 on their heads *"Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin".* For they were saying, *"He has an impure spirit in him."*

Verse 31 – 32 returns to Jesus' family who had come to take charge of him *"Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."*

Verse 33 – 35 tells the final parallel idea *"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he*

looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Whoever does what God wants is my brother, sister and mother!”

As in all great literature, this elegant chiasm has a moral for us.

Where we find sensationalism and extremes in the news it behooves us to step back and consider – who am I listening to? Where are my blind spots?

My daughter sent me a sample of an interesting news service provided by Ground News. Now each Tuesday evening I receive their “The Blindspot Report.” They use data from independent third-party monitors to identify the news events from the past week that received the most lopsided coverage in today’s polarized media landscape. It is an eye-opener and goes a long way to raise my consciousness.

What am I oblivious to?

Who do I choose as my family?

What is the will of God in this news?

Catherine Halper



FAITH FORMATION STORIES & READINGS	
DATE	EASTER
05/02/21	Acts 8:26 <i>How Can I Understand?</i>
05/09/21	John 15:9-17 <i>Abide in My Love</i>
05/16/21	Psalms 1 <i>Delight in the Law</i>
	PENTECOST
05/23/21	Acts 2:1-21 <i>A Violent Wind</i>
	ORDINAL TIME
05/30/21	Isaiah 6:1-8 <i>A Live Coal</i>
06/05/21	1 Samuel 8 <i>Give Us A King</i>

