



Community of Christ

The Communicator



Forgiving our Shortcomings

At the April Women's Breakfast Group that met at McCoys, we had a totally spontaneous group discussion. It was a very special morning, and we'd love to have more of you join us on June 19th at Rainbow Restaurant at 212. Laurel! In April someone brought up Barbara Howard's outstanding article, "Be Vulnerable to Divine Grace," in that month's Herald. We talked briefly about how many years ago a church member remembered as Brother Blue was able to *forgive* the racist manner by which he, as a black man, was excluded from full participation in church life. When he received a Peace Award many years later, his explanation was that he learned "not to hold on to anger for more than five minutes!" At our breakfast table, we all agreed that his kind of forgiveness promoted healing, inner peace, and contributed to eventual reconciliation. However, we *also* agreed that it is *not always easy* to forgive. Why is that?

I find it fascinating to read authors who explain that Jesus had a much more Eastern than Western mind, not limited by black and white, dualistic thinking often found in the Greek/Roman world. His use of the imagination, speaking in parables and telling stories went beyond rational explanations or rules. This, as we know, often baffled his disciples. The kind of vision Jesus kept trying to teach his disciples is still difficult for us today. He used parables that reconciled opposites, like "being rich" is "being poor", "finding your life is losing it"; "losing your life is finding it", etc. Today we are told that these kinds of images speak the language of the soul.

In trying to understand how Jesus could forgive those who arrested and eventually killed him, it would be easy to say, "But Jesus was Divine, and therefore, *of course*, he could forgive!" I've heard people say, in defense of their own shortcomings, "After all, I'm NOT Jesus Christ!" But with that perspective, we come up against another paradox. Jesus *invites*

us to claim our own inner nature as "beloved" while at the same time *unconditionally loving each other*, human warts and all!

When we look at the world through purely logical or "rational" eyes, we cannot grasp that deeper wisdom. In my Easter message, I quoted Richard Rohr, a Franciscan author and retreat director who said, "We can't see what we've not been trained to look for." Our "logical" minds are so trained to accept "judgment" about ourselves and others, that it takes the "good news" of Jesus to *turn us upside down* before we can experience transformation!

Ironically, I've heard it said there are generally only two things that lead human beings to transformation. One is suffering and the other is prayer. Both are pathways to our being changed. Think about that and see if you agree. Personally, I can look back twenty-two years when I was grieving the loss of a loved one. Despite the fact that at that time in my life I was asking hard questions about my relationship with God, my response to this unexpected tragedy was to pray for guidance and strength! The irony was that at the same time I was praying, my critical mind (mostly ego) said, "Sharon, I can't believe you're praying; you don't even believe in prayer!" My inner dialogue went like this. My logical "mind" had become cynical about prayer, but a more trusting, child-like part of me seemed to know *exactly* what I needed. I had to learn to hold the tension of these seeming opposites. Eventually my concepts about God began to change, my faith in the God of my new understanding grew in strength and I was fortunate to have opportunities to learn about styles of prayer I'd not known about in my earlier life.

I no longer believe there is only one way to pray. I am reading a book by Jane Vennard, entitled *A Praying Congregation*, and I see how important it is to realize our personalities, current needs, faith and background all influence how we pray. One thing is certain, however. Jesus modeled a prayerful life and we are invited to pray always

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June Calendar



June 3rd Worship Coordinators Meeting 7 p.m.

June 7th: Baptismal Service

June 7th: Bonnie Thomas' Baby

Shower 2 p.m.

June 14th 2 cents a meal

June 14th: Second Sunday Social 5 p.m.

June 18th: Leadership Meeting

June 19th Friday Morning Breakfast Club will meet at the Rainbow Café at 9 a.m.

June 21st: Communicator Items are due



June Birthdays

Scott Watkins 06/02

Oceana Alcoser 06/04

Kate Ytell 06/09

Don Struble 06/09

Katie Watkins 06/12

Cash Robinson 06/14

Gary Jones 06/17

Ben Swall-Yarrington 06/19

Matt Jackson 06/19

Bonnie Thomas 06/20

Les Cunningham 06/21

Wanda Florom 06/21

Marc McKenzie 06/26

OUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Below are our March and April contributions to both the World Church and the Local Congregation:

March:

WORLD CHURCH

World Ministries \$1,205.00

Oblation 195.00

World Hunger 215.00

LOCAL

Congregation 3,362.22

Building 16.00

2 Cents a Meal 104.00

Family Assistance 65.00

April:

WORLD CHURCH

World Ministries \$1,032.50

Oblation 328.00

World Hunger 170.00

LOCAL;

Congregation 2,644.50

Building (including Gift Shop) 54.50

2 Cents a meal (offering omitted in April but made up for in May)

Family Assistance 45.00



Congratulations

Tim Sundell graduated from Graceland, with a Bachelors in Arts and Music, with an emphasis in Vocal Performance and a minor in Theater.



We saw it in the Paper!!

Zach Fronapfel played an amazing defense for the Under 13 Arsenal Gold soccer team.

Reed Mc Fall was on the third place 6th grade 300 yard relay team at the PSD Track and Field meet.

Bob Fulton was among those receiving a thumbs up for speaking at Leshar Junior High Career Exploration Day.

Becky Troyer was one who helped Friends in Harmony raise funds for scholarships to Front Range Community College.

Isabel Thacker PHS Counselor worked with one of the Boettcher Foundation scholars.

Marilyn Garner purchased a property in Loveland.

Several from our congregation were listed as donors or those honored by donations to Outreach International.

Did you see the picture in May Herald of Ron Hirst (Cheyenne) being honored at his super annotation after 47 years of Priesthood service? Many years ago, Ron was noted for being the best Deacon that ever was.

The Communicator

The full color version of the communicator is available online. Please consider receiving your communicator by email to cut down printing cost.



The congregation would like to thank: Tom Beck, Sharon Fulton, Debbie Jones, Marilyn Garner, Shauna Clark, Bill and Pat Miner, Rick and Kay Bunch, and all the volunteers for a fantastic Sunday school year.

Second Sunday Social – June 14th!
5:00 p.m. - Potluck Supper!
6:00 – 7:30: WCN Panel Discussion
With guest speakers
Childcare provided during the panel

In April, 2008, a small group of supporters of **Welcoming Community Network (WCN)** began a process of introducing information about WCN to our local congregation in Fort Collins. The growing group now realizes that a frequently heard question is “Why do we need to be public about our welcoming of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in particular? We *already* welcome everyone who comes through our doors!” WCN hopes that you will attend this special presentation, bring your questions, and listen with an open mind to find answers to that question. No decision will be made that evening about whether or not our congregation decides to officially affiliate with WCN.

A panel of six people has been invited to help us better understand what it means to have a church community that openly welcomes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and how their faith life has been affected by their experience.

Since gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation, we are particularly grateful that **Kim Dower**, a pharmacist from Aurora will talk about the broader topic of Transgender and share what it has meant to her to transgender from male to female, including the impact at her workplace.

Kim’s adult daughter, **Rochelle**, from Wheaton, Wyoming will talk about having a parent go through this process and the impact it has had on her life.

Dawn and Jim Stahl, from Greenwood congregation, will individually share what it was like when their son, Dale, came out to them as gay.

Hal Chorpenning, Senior Pastor of *Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ*, will talk about what it is to pastor a congregation that is *Open and Affirming*, signifying their affiliation with an organization like WCN in Community of Christ. .

Carol Halac, *Plymouth UCC* member, will describe what she faced when her church went through a process of education on the above topics.

Sharon Troyer, Pastor, will moderate the panel.

You are invited to visit the Welcoming Community Network (WCN) webpage at <http://www.welcomingcommunitynetwork.org/>. There you will find their mission statement, brochure and extensive educational information, including *Frequently Asked Questions*.

WCN Committee: Tom Beck, Kathy Bridwell, Kay Bunch, Rick Bunch, Max Coopwood, Dick Foster, Julie Foster, Bob Fulton, Sharon Fulton, Betty Jones, Jon Mendenhall, Nancy Mendenhall, Shirley Remmenga, Dave Simons, Voni Simons, Bonnie Thomas & Steve Thomas

Baby Shower



For Bonnie Thomas will be held in the Fellowship Hall on **June 7th at 2 p.m.** Bonnie is having a girl and is registered at Babies- R-Us and Target.

Contemplative Outreach of Northern Colorado

Meets at Community of Christ June 6th

On Saturday, June 6th, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., *Contemplative Outreach of Northern Colorado* will meet at Community of Christ. From 8:00 – 8:30 in the fellowship hall is registration, coffee, snacks and fellowship. At 8:30 in the sanctuary participants will share in Centering Prayer and newcomers can receive introduction to this prayer form. Later in the morning, Sharon Troyer has been asked to present a workshop about The Enneagram. She plans to show how “practicing God’s Presence” helps people find their own inner wisdom and lets God remove barriers to receiving and giving love. The Enneagram describes how we over rely on our personalities at the expense of being guided by what Christians call the “mind of Christ.” Everyone interested in learning about The Enneagram and/or Centering Prayer is welcome! Bring a sack lunch, and if you register by June 3rd, pay only \$35 instead of \$40. Send check payable to Northern Colorado Contemplative Outreach at P O Box 272311, Fort Collins, 80527-2311 or call Irene Wherritt or Fran Milde at (970) 689-3101 for more information.

Children and Community Service

Sunday, April 26, the Sunday school children celebrated Earth Day by picking up trash in the neighborhood. In addition to this community service project they learned to appreciate the beautiful earth we all inhabit. Thanks kids!



(Continued from page 1) One definition of prayer that speaks to my heart is “taking time to BE with God.” It can be listening to the Spirit within us, and seeking to align ourselves with the will of God. Centering Prayer is such a prayer form, made most well known through the teaching and books of Thomas Keating. It may be a style of prayer that could enrich *your* prayer life. If it interests you, I invite you to consider any of the scheduled meetings of Contemplative Outreach of Northern Colorado. Their next gathering is at Community of Christ on June 6th.

Pastor Sharon P. Troyer