



# THE BELL

## A Monthly Newsletter

### 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Christian Church

#### THE NATURE OF TRANSITION

May 21<sup>st</sup> was Ascension Sunday when we celebrate Christ's ascension into heaven. It has lingered with me and wouldn't let me go until I realized its relevance to today's times. The event of the ascension was preceded by Jesus' words of comfort and encouragement, found in John and Luke, to prepare the disciples for his absence and what it is they must do next. On the actual day he tells them to stay in Jerusalem and wait - wait until the baptism of the Holy Spirit is visited upon them, wait for power to come, wait and do nothing in the meantime, just patiently wait.



Sounds familiar in this current pandemic, although the disciples didn't have to deal with isolation and social distancing. But when the power would eventually come, that would be the sign that the next phase of Christ's work was to begin - the turning over to us the responsibility for the continuing work that Jesus had started (the establishment and development of the kingdom of God on earth) and the going forth with it. But first there would have to be this period of 10 days from Ascension to Pentecost in order for people to transition from sorrow and loss due to his physical absence to the state of readiness for accepting powerful inspiration and profound elation. Ten days isn't much compared to our many weeks stretching into months, as we wait for the coronavirus to clear or reduce to manageable safe levels, and as we also wait for vaccines to be produced. Can you imagine the impatience of the disciples if they had to undergo what we have had to do in terms of waiting during an unrevealed amount of time for some unknown power to come upon them. But then they also didn't have the great bugaboo of politics getting in the way. Although, we might wonder if maybe there were some disciples who got impatient anyway and began pushing to go back to fishing and start earning a living again, or theorizing that possibly the promise of the Holy Spirit's power was just a hoax since nothing had happened yet for several days?

Transitions are upsetting, even painful, and living through them can be tough as we have all experienced, now and at other times in our lives, especially when one doesn't know the length of time of the transition. The disciples, too, had no idea what their new normal would be like. We, on the other hand, have seen glimpses of our new normal, or hopefully what is our 'temporary' new normal, and we don't like what we see. Social distancing has had to become distant socializing, and it literally doesn't 'feel' right due to the loss of real human physical contact. Out of our impatience, our 'cabin fever,' and certainly our concern with the crushing impact on our economy, we are gingerly trying to open up business, save the economy, and restore people's livelihoods.

Our churches seem to be caught in the middle. Some churches are still respecting the virus's ability to undo personal and communal health, and are therefore refraining from reopening right now. However, many churches in their eagerness to reassemble, are opening up again, often in defiance of their state's current mandates and lockdowns. Certain political forces are also pushing to relax social distance guidelines, and encouraging churches to open. Lawsuits have even been filed claiming that the ban on religious gatherings is in violation of the 1st Amendment. It is at that point that there occurs a breach in the social contract we share with each other in terms of how we're going to live with each other in an established community. It strikes right at the heart of what it means to live 'together' in community. We have said recently that 'we're all in this together' or that 'we're going to get through this together.' Then when people get antsy, anxious, irritable, lonely, or depressed, some turn to their self-interests, abandoning interpersonal concerns, and become obsessive about their individual 'rights.' 'Togetherness' is sacrificed, and the primary focus becomes the exercise of one's own personal rights and freedoms.

**THE NATURE OF TRANSITION** (Continued from Page 1)

The Bible has little to say about individual rights, but is more concerned with issues of righteousness and social justice, and how the community of faith is affected by and responds to the injurious actions of others. From the beginning, God was intentional about developing a community of faithful individuals, but not by finding a vast number of well-principled, ethical, self-righteous individuals and then asking them to form a community. Rather, it was done by finding those individuals who were already seeking the wisdom of God in terms of guidance for living, and were willing to faithfully follow whatever guidance they received. One of promises to Abraham was that if he were to be faithful to God, he would become the father of a community of faith composed of a never-ending line of successive generations of descendants, thus guaranteeing the that the community would be everlasting. With Moses, the 10 Commandments were not initially chiseled in stone as a set moral rules to follow for getting our own private selves right with God; they were rules for living harmoniously in a community of faith with others and with God. With everyone respecting and honoring each other by following these commandments and other laws, the community would not only thrive, but would also become God's instrument for attracting others to want to participate in a loving community of faith. In looking to Jesus, we see his two commandments are based on love and deal directly with our relationships - one regarding God and the other with our fellow neighbors. It's also interesting in light of that to look at the Lord's Prayer. It is NOT primarily our private prayer to use 'to get right with God' personally. In it, the word 'us' is used four times.

The word 'our' is used four times.

The word 'we' is used once.

The personal pronouns 'I, me, mine' are not used at all in the prayer.



So again, the emphasis is on how we live, move, and have our being with one another and with God in the community of faith, and praying to set ourselves aright within that divine and communal context.

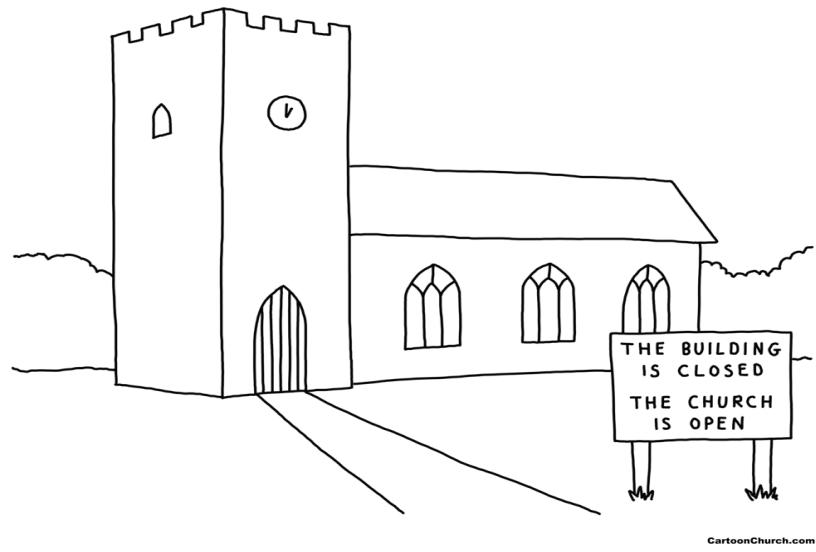
Our Bill of Rights has taken centuries to develop, beginning with the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of Rights, and finally our own Constitution, and involving many great political thinkers along the way. We even have now an International Bill of Human Rights. I love our Bill of Rights and am glad to be living in the very country that created and established them, experiencing the freedoms that are ensured and protected by them. I'm glad and proud that the country has wrangled over them in challenging times and has defended them through the court system, and even added more to them over time to further safeguard our rights and freedoms. Clearly the document is a living and vibrant force in our society, and reflects the living vibrancy of our people and culture. But the current misuse and fixation on rights by the impatient and the politically driven comes at the expense of the 'togetherness' we recently proclaimed (dare I say 'promised') to each other. The demand to open churches is a demand to ignore the love, compassion, and mercy that the mask is a symbol of; it is a flouting of the wisdom of science; and it is a disregard of everything that communities of faith stand for and have been practicing these many months. The Memorial Day weekend of unmasked socializers, be they brave or foolish, are now our 'canaries in the coal mine.' What will be the result? What I do know is that the Bill of Rights does not demand, command, compel, suggest, or even encourage us to reach out in love to honor and protect the medically vulnerable, or our children, or any and all others at this time. If anything, the Bill of Rights causes us to clutch dearly, protect, and defend our individual federally-established rights. But the community of faith reminds us that life is a gift from God to be cherished and used in both loving and appropriate ways in caring for the needs of others. It turns us outward from obsessive concerns about our personal rights, and sensitizes us to the network of relationships in which we live to assist and care for each other. This pandemic is not just a worldly medical crisis like so many previous ones in history. It is a worldly transition in which we must determine who we are, and who we want to and can yet become. I choose to live in a community of faith, and live according to its loving precepts and extraordinary examples.

## The power of Pentecost

by Paul Stroble, From Ministry Matters



Celebrating Pentecost Sunday provides the occasion for Christians to recognize God's Holy Spirit at work in the life of the church and in the lives of individuals. What is this day? Where does it originate? The word *Pentecost* comes from the Greek word *pentecoste*, which means fiftieth; and on the Christian calendar, Pentecost is the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection. The Jewish festival of Pentecost is also called *Shavu'ot*, or "weeks," because it follows Passover by seven complete weeks. The Christian traditions surrounding Pentecost originate in Acts 2, where the gathered disciples experience the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit.



## Music Camp and Spring Basement Sale Cancelled

With disappointment and sadness, we must cancel these events we so enjoy. All the more reason to make them both bigger and better next year.



## THANK YOU FOR BEAUTIFYING THE GROUNDS AT 15<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Mark Carlson refurbished the shed in such a way that it should last many more years, and it was also painted. It looks great on the new parking lot. Much gratitude to Mark or his hard work.



## THANK YOU FOR BEAUTIFYING THE GROUNDS AT 15<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Cont'd from page 3)

Must appreciation for the hard work that Bill and Judy Holmer have put in on the gardens; weeding, planting, and watering with tender loving care. Bill is also maintaining the mower and weeder which was recently donated by Bob and Annie Bloomer. For all this and more, we thank them.

Omar has completed rebuilding the garden walls around the church, and used the same materials that were already there. A fantastic job!

For Mark, Omar, Bill and Judie, Annie and Bob, and all others who helped in this endeavor,

**!! MUCH APPRECIATION FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE !!**



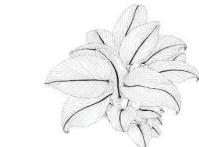
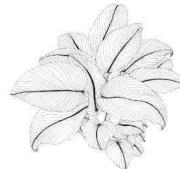
West Entrance



West Entrance



OFFICE



North Entrance

### HELP WANTED

Persons to help with the flower beds at the church, 1-2 hours a week.

There is "Weedy Wednesday"-picking up sticks/twigs and pulling some unwanteds and possible trimming



"Thirsty Tuesdays and Thursdays" (as well as Monday-Sundays) unless it is raining

Call Judie Holmer 304 890 6042 or email at [churchjudie@gmail.com](mailto:churchjudie@gmail.com)



## President's Commentary May 13, 2020

This morning we posted investment results for April. What a change from March 31! All five of our funds turned in a strong performance, participating in April's market recovery.

The stock market's disconnect with the economy has been on full display in recent weeks. Over 30 million Americans have lost their jobs and the unemployment rate spiked 14.7%, a level not seen since the Great Depression. Yet, the stock market rose. In the face of such historically awful news, how could the stock market go up? News isn't news when it is expected. The markets already knew that the April employment report was going to be terrible. Widely anticipated, the markets looked past the awful jobless claim numbers and focused on the eventual recovery. Markets are primarily forward-looking vehicles.

In 2019, London business school professors Elroy Dimson, Paul Marsh, and Mike Staunton published a 119-year history of the financial markets. They examined the relationship between a country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate and its future stock market returns. What they discovered was unexpected and definitely counter-intuitive. They found a **negative** correlation between national per capita GDP growth and stock performance. The market is not the economy!

We are living in extraordinary times, during the greatest pandemic to reach us since the Spanish Flu 102 years ago and the economic equivalent of putting a patient into a coma to help cure a serious disease. Mixed and conflicting messages from our leaders and the financial markets only increase our unsettledness. No wonder fear is starting to feel like the new normal.

### Anniversaries

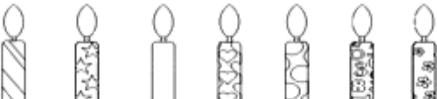
06/03	Daniel & Jennie DEIBERT
06/12	Kenneth & Charleen ENSTROM
06/21	Doug & Marcia NELSON



In volatile times it is natural to look at the path behind us and use that as a guide to the future in front of us. But as investors, relying too heavily on the past is like driving a car using just the rearview mirror—that would lead to poor outcomes. None of us knows what the near-term future holds. So, we have to be prepared for a range of possible outcomes through thoughtful diversification and dogged discipline. As famed investor Sir John Templeton said, "The only investors who shouldn't diversify are those who are right 100% of the time."

### Birthdays

Teri MILLER	06/02
Daniel DEIBERT	06/03
Kathy WESTON	06/06
Darren BUTCHER	06/10
Gary TROYER	06/12
Jerry HARRIS	06/16
Sandy WENTLER	06/18
Karen HITCHCOCK	06/19
Bob BLOOMER	06/21
Obedi NKURUNZIZA	06/22



As we begin to emerge from this lockdown and begin making important decisions about how we get on with life, let us rise above fear and embrace God and each other. Markets and economies are resilient—and so are we. Your heroic and selfless service during this crisis is inspiring. I have been watching many of you on YouTube, listening to your sermons, and participating in your worship. Your message of hope and proclamation of resurrection are what hold us all together right now. Thank you!

Blessings,  
Gary W. Kidwell, President  
Christian Church Foundation

### Foot Clinic

If State and Unity Point at Home COVID-19 guidelines allow, Foot Clinic will be held on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Appointments are available between 9:00am and 11:30am. The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board outside the Church Office or call (309) 786-6295.

### May Attendance

Our doors were closed, and your presence was missed. Until we meet again, may you be daily blessed.

### PROFIT & LOSS REPORT

Total Income	\$39,605.20
Total Expenses	\$31,218.37
Net Income	\$ 8,386.83

## Elders Prayer Update Bell Edition

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."* **Deuteronomy 31:6**  
Please keep these friends, family and caregivers in your daily thoughts and prayers.  
A card or a phone call to let them know they are not forgotten while we are apart.

Johnny (Sabrinna)  
Suzie (cancer) family  
Francisco "PaPas" (family)

Steve Nourie is now home after heart surgery. (Sally & family)

Scott Holden (Anne & family)  
Jake (family)  
Rod Danner (Zack & Curt)  
Lisa Hatlett  
Dick Hatlett (Marge, Lisa and family)  
Barbara Crangle (Marcia, Doug, Kathi & Jeff)  
Dolores Frybarger (Richard & family)  
Tiffany Johnson-Cancer (family)  
Michael Thompson (Clara Delle's son)  
Michael Hager (friend of Weston's)  
C.D. Thompson (family)  
Bob, David, Jane (Kathy & Don)  
Mona Mlekush (Ron, Alice, Margaret, Sandy and family)  
Vickie Andereck (Jesse & Melba)  
Wayne Carter (Suzanne, Eric, Sabrinna, Zac, Mike & family)  
Ron Lyons (Alice, Sandy, Mona & Margaret)  
Dawn Fensterbusch (Kathy, Don & Penny)  
Mark Stevens (Nancy & family)  
Melanie Becker (Scott, Diane & Dorothy & family)  
Olivet Jagusah (Shelia & family)  
Kent Christensen (Kathy & Don)  
George & Jo (Kathy & Don)  
Judy, Sandy B., Michael (Kathy & Don)  
Jon M. (Rita & family)  
Cyndee Browner  
Derrick R.

I am happy to announce our grandson Nathaniel Popp was married to Miruki Hamada May 24<sup>rd</sup> in Okinawa, Japan. Nathaniel is serving in the Air Force and will be leaving Japan for the UK and his next post in November.



## 30-DAY SCRIPTURE WRITING CHALLENGE

God speaks to us through His Word, so take some time each day to write down the following Scripture. If you have time, you might want to also write a prayer that the Scripture leads you to pray, or your reflections as you write.

- |   |                   |   |                      |
|---|-------------------|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 1</b>  | Titus 3:5–7       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 16</b> | Proverbs 11:30–31    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 2</b>  | Philippians 2:3   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 17</b> | 3 John 1:4           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 3</b>  | Ecclesiastes 5:2  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 18</b> | 2 Thessalonians 2:15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 4</b>  | 2 Samuel 22:28    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 19</b> | Psalm 37:8–9         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 5</b>  | 2 Chronicles 7:14 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 20</b> | Leviticus 20:8       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 6</b>  | Proverbs 14:27    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 21</b> | Psalm 27:4           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 7</b>  | Psalm 25:9        | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 22</b> | Hosea 6:1–2          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 8</b>  | Daniel 10:12      | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 23</b> | Joel 2:12–13         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 9</b>  | Ephesians 3:16–21 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 24</b> | Matthew 6:14–15      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 10</b> | John 1:16         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 25</b> | Daniel 9:9           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 11</b> | Genesis 1:26      | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 26</b> | Acts 3:19            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 12</b> | Malachi 4:2       | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 27</b> | James 5:20           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 13</b> | 2 Samuel 22:4     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 28</b> | Numbers 14:19        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 14</b> | Numbers 6:24–26   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 29</b> | Psalm 118:14         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 15</b> | 2 Corinthians 4:6 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>June 30</b> | Genesis 15:6         |

June 2020

**ALL SCHEDULED EVENTS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL  
SUCH TIME AS THE STATE OF ILLINOIS STAY AT  
HOME ORDER IS LIFTED.**