

Foresight

Looking to the Future

Christian Church of Villa Park
1336 S. Villa Avenue
Villa Park, IL 60181

Phone: (630) 833-7262

E-mail: ccvp1336@yahoo.com

Pastor: Rev. Laura Jennison Reed



Tuesday, January 12, 2021



The light of the star we celebrated on Epiphany, the light that drew the Magi to find Jesus, draws us too. We journeyed with them to the house where Jesus lived and we travel with them as they head back into their regular lives. As they left, the Magi intended to return home by the way they came, the way familiar to them. Yet, they ended up needing to take a new way. God put them on a different path. Their, and our, encounter with the Christ child means we can no longer stay on the same old paths. We are changed and so is our way forward in God.

This is good news; it is the promise of all that God is doing in our lives and the world. It is also scary and anxiety producing. Real, deep change is never easy. It forces us to reexamine ourselves and our priorities. It opens our eyes to things we ignored for as long as possible and makes continued ignorance impossible. We can no longer hide from those things we wish we never knew.

In our lives, individually and communally, we are facing many big changes. What does the world look like after this pandemic? What does our congregation's life look like after we can come back together? What does it look like if we sell our property? What does true racial justice look like in our country? How do we stand for it? How and when do we return to our offices and schools, our dinner parties and in person meetings?

In our anxiety about what comes next, what the future looks like, how we get through this, we may be tempted to fall back into our old, familiar places and thought patterns. There is comfort in what we have always known. But, while God is with us and comforts us in our distress and anxiety, God does not allow us to remain static. God's comfort is in love and possibility not in keeping things the same. God is drawing us nearer and that means change. It means doing our best to live into God's calls for the world now.

Whether it's a new job, a new routine, a new friendship or breaking down the systems of economic and racial injustice, standing and stepping into change is frightening. We cannot know exactly how things will play out. There is risk in every possibility. But God is with us. God is calling us to go a different way. We cannot go back the way we came. We cannot continue things as they have been, comfortable in their familiarity but keeping us in darkness, separated from the wholeness we experience in God. Let us be filled with light, radiant with joy, and walk the paths God lays before us.

Laura

Join Us for Sunday School!

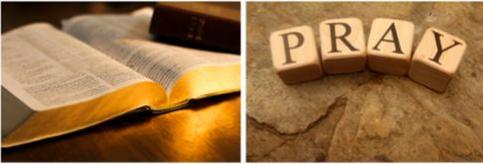


We meet by Zoom at 11:30am for an all-ages Sunday school. We hope you will join us each Sunday as we hear stories, talk about them and our lives, and do a few fun crafts as well. The Zoom link is in the weekly email announcements or you may email one of us and we will send it to you. There will be no class on December 27.

If you would like to receive materials for the classes, please let one of us know. But you can attend with or without those materials.

Laura Reed, Ruth Martin, Betty Prorak

Discernment Conversation on Sunday - Listening to God Through One Another



We have evidence all around us, in our own lives and the lives of others, that engaging difficult questions requires pausing our own thoughts so that we can really listen to one another. If we cannot truly listen, truly hear one another's stories, we are merely shouting past each other not conversing.

[On Sunday, January 17, at 12:30 pm we will come together in discerning conversation on Zoom](#) (info in link and below). We seek to come together in a spirit of faith and hope and love of one another. We want to hear one another's concerns, to listen to ideas we haven't thought of before. For these reasons we pray together. We set aside our own desires and listen for the wisdom of God.

We know there are barriers we have to overcome in our own spirits to reach a place of true presence to God and one another. We can imagine that there will be words spoken that we might prefer not to hear. We know that agreeing to a set of conversation principles can help us speak faithfully together. As you prayerfully prepare for our conversation, please review these principles.*

- Take full advantage of the opportunity provided to become settled in God's presence.
- Listen to others with your entire self (senses, feelings, intuition, imagination and rational faculties).
- Do not interrupt.
- Pause between speakers to absorb what has been said.
- Do not formulate what you want to say while someone else is speaking.
- Speak for yourself, expressing your own thoughts and feelings, referring to your own experiences. Avoid being hypothetical. Steer away from making broad generalizations.
- Do not challenge what others say. Rather, ask good questions that enable you to wonder about things together.
- Listen to the group as a whole – to those who have spoken aloud as well as to those who haven't. If you notice that someone hasn't spoken, feel free to ask what s/he is thinking. Some people aren't as comfortable as others at asserting themselves in conversation, but when space is created for them to speak, they have much to offer because they have been listening and observing quietly.
- Leave space for anyone who may want to speak a first time before speaking a second time yourself.
- Hold your desires and opinions – even your convictions – lightly. Be willing to be influenced by others whom you respect.

We are asked to discern an answer to a question. Is God calling us to sell our property to New Life Bible Chapel under the terms outlined in the letter of intent? We seek to reach unity in spirit. As we talk about whether or not we are in unity of spirit we will be using four phrases that embody different places we might be.*

- I agree completely with the group
- I agree but with some reservation; however, I have expressed my reservations and feel I have been heard by the group, so I can go forward in peace.
- I don't agree, but I feel comfortable deferring to those who have particular wisdom, who are most affected, who have greater certainty.
- No, I don't agree and cannot go forward. In order for me to agree, we will need to go back to the drawing board, wait and pray.

Any one of these may be prayerfully discerned.

Pray: God, Teacher, Comforter, Guide, open my heart and my ears so that I may hear your voice in the voices of my community. Free me from all desires for my own will. Lend me your wisdom. Guide our spirits as we seek to discern your will. Amen.

*These are taken from [Pursuing God's Will Together](#), Ruth Haley Barton

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84911864509?pwd=YktlK3FHTXV0OW1JejNoSXpkWVJ5UT09>

Phone: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 849 1186 4509

Passcode: 277948

Tuesday and Thursday Gatherings

On Tuesdays at 10:00am and Thursdays at 7:30pm you can join others from CCVP online or by phone through Zoom meetings to chat and/or pray. Call 1-312-626-6799. On Tuesdays, meeting ID 212 368 731 with password 437319. On Thursdays, meeting ID 347 464 975 with password 186082. Zoom computer links are in the weekly email announcements.

Disciples Food Pantry – December Stats:

205 Households served

785 People served

The Pantry is open every Wednesday 9:30-11:30am.

Clients enter from Villa Avenue
and receive food by the parking lot door.

Worship

Worship will continue on Facebook Live each Sunday at 10am. You are welcome in the sanctuary at that time if you have read the guidelines posted on the church's website and are comfortable in coming.

A video of each worship service is also available on the church's website on the worship page.

December 31, 2020 Financial Summary

	December	YTD
Income for budget items:	\$9,076.14	\$106,326.48
Budgeted expenses:	\$7,180.07	\$99,571.94

Thank you for your faithful giving! If you are able, please continue to give to the work of the church by mailing a check to the church or by giving online at

<https://www.myoffering.com/eonline/index.php/dashboard/login/4498>

Questions? Contact Betty Prorak at 847-977-0797 or BLProrak@yahoo.com

We Find Joy and Give Thanks for...



Christmas trees and lights and sharing them with children.

All of God's creation.

Heat in the church building!

The Pantry serving 70 families on Wednesday, December 23.

The beauty of snow.

The hope of a new year.

Innovative ways families found to spend time together safely over the holidays.

Improved health of Michelle (Boucher) Vickers.

Wonderful children's books to share during worship.

February Birthdays



- 5 Ariana Mendoza
- 6 Heidi Gomez
- 8 Ruth Martin
- 16 Jayne Hochstetler

Please Pray...



For Clover Fuller.

For Bonner Springs First Christian Church, Kansas (Pat Manahan's church). Their pastor resigned shortly before Christmas.

For strength and healing for Clara Craft.

For continued healing for Ruth Martin after her hip surgery on December 18.

For healing and health for Pantry volunteers Michelle, Scott, and Sue.

For Michelle (Boucher) and Ron Vickers, Wally and Kelley, and all others who have contracted COVID.

Dear Disciples January 7, 2021

General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens addressed this message to the church after the turmoil of Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol building.

"No matter your politics, we've lost our moral compass as a nation and we have to get really clear about what is morally right." She goes on to call on the church to be the light of Christ in the world:

<https://disciples.org/from-the-gmp/dear-disciples-january-7-2021/>

Fund-raising with Gift Cards, Amazon

The next order for Jewel gift cards will be placed at the beginning of February. Please let Betty Prorak know what card(s) you would like to order by February 7 for them to be delivered by February 14. The church receives 5% of the cost of any cards we order as a group.



The next Great Lakes Scrip gift card order will be due on March 7. There are many different gift cards available, each giving the church a portion of your purchase price. If this will be your first order from www.shopwithscrip.com, please contact Betty Prorak (BLProrak@yahoo.com) for the church's enrollment code.



Do you shop at Amazon.com? If you do, a portion of your purchase price for qualifying items can come to the Christian Church of Villa Park by choosing the church as your recipient in their AmazonSmile program. It doesn't cost you anything extra to participate; it just shares the profit with a charity of your choice. If you have any questions, ask Betty Prorak.



The new burner unit for the boiler in the church building was installed on Wednesday, December 23, just hours before the outside temperature plummeted to a point that would have frozen water and heating pipes overnight. God is good all the time!

The Proraks enjoyed a few online game sessions over the holidays. Some of the games were online with all participating, sometimes with children paired with adults. One was a boxed game that all three households own that was set up with a camera on the one part that all had to see.

From Heather Smith via email to Jane Reid: Heather has been fighting an infection since July, but is hopeful that an IV antibiotic will finally get rid of it. She continues to take classes online and says that she uses her studies in everything. Because she has dealt for years with a weakened immune system, COVID is just another sickness that she needs to stay away from. She had good masks long before masks were recommended. Finally, "...other than that, I am doing fine! I have my mind, and soul! I have God and Jesus to get me through it! So, I am good with it."

From Jane Reid, a gift that she received from her granddaughter Olivia: a small notebook with seven Bible verses to copy, one on each page. Together they tell an important message. These are the verses to copy: James 1:6, 2 Corinthians 5:7, 2 Kings 20:5, Isaiah 26:3, Romans 15:13, John 4: 24, 2 Samuel 22:31. Jane commented, "It took me a long time to learn not to just read the lessons of the Bible, but to understand what they really are telling me and to live by them. When I learned these particular passages, my life made a big change, everything is much easier to live with God's way in charge. "

Food for Thought...

You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.
Isiah 58:12 (The Message)

The clarity that comes from rage should also tell us what kind of world we want to see, not just what kind of things we want to get rid of.

Brittney Cooper, *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
Psalm 126:4-5

Joy is the serious business of Heaven.

C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcom: Chiefly on Prayer*

Merciful God of peace, your word, spoken by the prophets, restores your people's life and hope. Fill our hearts with the joy of your saving grace, that we may hold fast to your great goodness and in our lives proclaim your justice in all the world. Amen.

From "Revised Common Lectionary Prayers"

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.
Deuteronomy 4:9

History, despite its wrenching pain
Cannot be unlived, but faced
With courage, need not be lived again.

Maya Angelou, "On the Pulse of Morning"

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.
1 John 4:7-8

Love pulls people back to their feet. Bodies and souls are fed. Bones and lives heal. New blades of grass grow from charred soil.

Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*