



Worship With Us

May 6 5th Sunday of Easter
Texts: Acts 11: 1-18 and John 13: 31-35

Message: "When Good Intentions Are Not Enough"
Jesus is preparing to leave his disciples. His final instructions, "love one another." Peter was instructed to "feed my sheep" by Jesus. Now, look what happened!

May 13 6th Sunday of Easter - Blanket Sunday

Text: Acts 16: 9-15
Message: "The Color Purple"
On this Sunday, Mother's Day and Blanket Sunday, we will use the story about a woman named Lydia to reflect on our hearing and sharing the good news.

May 20 7th Sunday of Easter
Texts: Luke 24: 44-53 and Acts 1: 1-11

Message: "Sometimes...A Pause is Necessary"
We will look at some of Jesus' instructions to the disciples just prior to Pentecost.

May 27 Pentecost Sunday
Howard Shockey, Chaplain at Pleasant Hill Village in Girard, will offer the morning message.

June 3 Peace with Justice Sunday
Texts: Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15

From Poverty to Opportunity

First Church of the Brethren has signed on with the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights and the Illinois Coalition for Community Services as a co-sponsor of an three-hour forum called "Moving from Poverty to Opportunity." The forum will be held on Saturday, May 19th from 9 am until 12 noon at Union Baptist Church. Participants will learn about work being done in this area to increase access to jobs, housing, transportation, healthcare, etc. Road-blocks to new opportunities will be identified and solutions suggested. There is no fee to attend the forum. To register your attendance please call the Illinois Coalition for Community Services at 522-2378.

Act 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them separated tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...



Blanket Sunday

Our Witness Commission is inviting the congregation to share a special "Mother's Day" gift which will support Church World Service's blanket ministry. Our financial gifts will assist individuals and families around the world who are confronted with natural and human-made disasters. We will receive the gifts on Sunday, May 13.

Link Licensing Service

Terry Link was unanimously affirmed by the District Ministerial Leadership Team for licensing to the ministry in the Church of the Brethren. The licensing service will be held on Sunday, June 10th, as a part of our morning worship. Kevin Kessler, District Executive of the Illinois & Wisconsin District, will be with us to conduct the service. A time of fellowship and refreshment will follow the service.

The Vine and the Branches

I was able to visit with many people during my visit to San Francisco two months ago. Some of the visits were scheduled in advance and some just seemed to happen. I want to tell you a bit about three of the people I met.

Soon after arriving at the retreat center our group was leafing through the calendar of events on the schedule at Mercy Center. Posted on the schedule was an evening with Daniel Berrigan. Father Berrigan is a Jesuit priest in his 80's. For nearly six decades, he has been a voice for peace in a world of war. All of us in our group, except for Dennis Webb, were familiar with Berrigan's witness. I remember vividly his witness for peace, especially during the Vietnam War. What struck me first was how small and frail Daniel Berrigan seemed. But, what struck me next was the clarity and crispness in his voice as he responded to a question about what gives him hope. He had just attended an annual anti-nuclear protest in the Nevada desert that had the theme, "Walking with Sorrow." He said to us, "We walk away our sorrow, not by ignoring it, but by facing head-on the things in life that make us sorrowful. We walk away our despair by walking with and through our disappointments, our struggles, and our uncertainties." His response to that question touched me.

Another who touched me by her presence was Sr. Suzanne Toolan. Sr. Suzanne was the director of the Mercy Center retreat house when it first opened four decades ago. As director-emeritus, Suzanne still lives at the Center with other Sisters of Mercy. Unlike Father Berrigan, whom I had met before, I had never met Sr. Toolan. I did, though, know of her through her music. Suzanne is a song-writer. Two of her songs are in our Brethren hymnal.

They are numbers 227 and 472. I had sung many of her songs over the years while attending Mass with Elizabeth. When the current Mercy Center director arranged for a meeting I was elated. I thanked Sr. Suzanne for her faithfulness and for sharing her gift of music with the Church. It just seemed like the thing to do.

The third person I want to mention is Reverend Glenda Hope. Reverend Hope is a Presbyterian minister and the founder of the San Francisco Network Ministries. Glenda is 71 years old and began the Network Ministries over 40 years ago. In our time with Glenda, she offered words of challenge and hope as she spoke about her ministry with San Francisco's poor and homeless. She encouraged us to take risks in the name of Jesus. The several hours we spent with her seemed but a few minutes.

I mention these people, giving thanks to God for their presence, because a part of my study and reflection is on the theme "spiritual maturity." Our strength in faith comes not as we ignore struggle, hardship, despair and pain, but as we journey through such times and seek to discern how God is at work in the midst of our tough times. That was the message I took from my meetings with Daniel, Suzanne and Glenda. It is what I share with you.

One branch among many,
Pastor Kres



Monday AM Coffee Break...

Jan Stoller is inviting all who are able to coffee on Monday, May 14 at 10 a.m. You don't need to bring a thing except yourself and a desire for a little bit of fellowship.