

The Peace Visitor



Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, May your blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church again. Julian Rush

You all know how much I love celebrating birth days. I love to publicly acknowledge the ones that end in five or zero. I try to catch the eighties and nineties as often as we can. For the church universal, our birthday celebration should focus on the celebration of Pentecost. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the work of building the new community fell into the hands of the apostles and disciples. They were tentative about this new role and had hidden themselves away in an upper room. It was then that a rushing wind swept in bringing with it an empowering and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost, the church was truly born.

I know that throughout my life some of my birthdays have been better than others. They are invitations to look at how I have lived my year and how I desire my future to unfold. It is true of institutions too. This year marks our 125th birthday of Peace Church. I know that for several years we have been looking over our shoulder at the past birthdays and seeing ones that make us nostalgic for the good old days, but others if we look hard enough were filled with challenge and at times heartbreak. This year as we celebrate we are also dreaming about our future.

As a member of the group looking at the constitution and bylaws I know that we are dreaming forward while looking back. It will mean shedding layers of systems that no longer work. But that process should allow us to place a new infrastructure around our future endeavors. We are not the mostly German speaking church of 1892 nor the rapidly expanding church of 1972. We are in a process of rising again from what we were to what we might become.

One of my favorite hymns is *In the Midst of New Dimensions*. In that hymn, Julian Rush names the God who leads as “God of Rainbow, Fiery Pillar, leading where the eagles soar.” He talks about how God has always and still leads us into new ways of being. The last verse is the one at top of this page. It evokes that even if the future is bleak or unknown the direction and spirit can be rekindled in us. To me this is the spirit of Pentecost. It breathes life into the church over and over again and I see it breathing life into us in the same fashion. Let us take in the spirit and welcome a new call. I can only imagine how beautiful we might be for a 150 year old, can you? Let us dream that together as we move with the spirit.

Pastor John

May 2017

Pastor John's Theology Word of the Month:

Pen·te·cost['pen(t)ə,kôst] NOUN

The Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension, held on the seventh Sunday after Easter.
the day on which Pentecost is held. Also called Whitsunday.
the Jewish festival of Shavuoth.

The Jewish festival that coincides with Pentecost is the time when the first fruits of the new growing season were offered at the temple. We often think of the fruit of the spirit being poured out at Pentecost. Spiritual Fruit becomes that which is offered back to the service of the church, a new offering of first fruit.

*"We now need to put as much effort into defining a just peace as we have done in the past in defining a just war."
- Dr. Robert V. Moss*



The Just Peace Church vision is a hallmark of United Church of Christ theological identity. For 30 years, the Just Peace Church pronouncement has inspired a grassroots movement of UCC congregations committed to corporately naming and boldly proclaiming a public identity as a justice-doing, peace-seeking church. The Just Peace pronouncement articulated the UCC position on war and peace distinct from other approaches such as crusade, pacifism, or "just war." Grounded in UCC polity and covenantal theology, the position focuses attention on alleviating systemic injustice of all types using non-violence and calls us to offer the message, grounded in the hope of reconciliation in Jesus, that "Peace is possible."

Justice and Witness Ministries is committed to a revitalized Just Peace Church movement and to empowering and resourcing congregations to create a stronger justice and peace witness. Now is the time to rekindle our commitment to Just Peace and make visible our longstanding witness to this approach. To do so, we will be working to update the list of Just Peace Churches in the UCC and will keep this site up to date with educational resources.

Does your church consider itself to be a Just Peace congregation? What is your church doing to live out its calling to be a Just Peace church? What does it mean to be a Just Peace Church in times like these?

Following the church service on June 4, we will be having a discussion about Peace UCC's role in the Just Peace vision. Please join us for this important chance to shape our policy!

Planting Your Spring Garden For the Garden of Your Daily Living

Plant Three Rows of Peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce Be Faithful
2. Lettuce Be Kind
3. Lettuce Be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

No Garden is Complete Without Turnips

1. Turnip for Meetings
2. Turnip for Service
3. Turnip to Help One Another

To Conclude Our Garden, We Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme for Each Other
2. Thyme for Family
3. Thyme for Friends



*Water Freely with Patience
and Cultivate with Love.
There is Much Fruit in
Your Garden Because You
Reap What You Sow.*



FAITH FORMATION *Our Civility Project*

Make the World More Civil, Idea #45— “Push in your chair when you leave the table. Why stop with your own chair? Be a good chair steward and make life less of an obstacle course. You might prevent an unforeseen accident in the meantime.”

This idea reminds me of an old adage: “A stitch in time saves nine.” Solving problems before they get worse helps us all be more efficient! Since June is National Safety Month, it’s a great time to review some of the church’s policies and procedures for the safety of all who use our building.

From the National Health Information Center: Injuries are a leading cause of disability for people of all ages – and they are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 1 to 44. The good news is everyone can get involved to help prevent injuries. During National Safety Month, we encourage you to learn more about important safety issues like prescription painkiller abuse, transportation safety, and slips, trips, and falls.

- Prescription painkiller abuse: Prescription painkiller overdoses are a growing problem in the United States, especially among women. About 18 women die every day from a prescription painkiller overdose – more than 4 times as many as back in 1999.
- Transportation safety: Doing other activities while driving – like texting or eating – distracts you and increases your chance of crashing. Almost 1 in 5 crashes (17%) that injured someone involved distracted driving.
- Slips, trips, and falls: One in 4 older adults falls each year. Many falls lead to broken bones and other health problems. You can make a difference. Find out ways to help reduce the risk of these safety issues.

Simple tips:

- Add the poison control number to your cell phone: 1-800-222-1222. You never know when you might need it! Don't guess what you should do. Get accurate answers. It's free and confidential.
- Create an “Emergency Medical File” with the information you or a loved one will need if you have a medical emergency, and keep it where it’s easily accessible to take along in an emergency. Include *Advanced Care Directive and Living Will unless they are on file at the hospital *Birthdates for everyone in your household. It’s easy to forget the year a family member was born and the family member may be unconscious. *Social Security Numbers *Copies of your insurance cards, front and back if you don’t keep them in your wallet *Phone numbers of doctors as well as after hours phone number *List of all medications and their dosages *Drug and food allergies *Preferred pharmacy name

Faith Formation is not just Sunday School classes or a moment of the service. It’s the day-to-day wrestling with how to be God’s people, living in community in the world. A few more tips are printed on the Fridays of the calendar. Try them, then discuss: What did you learn this month?

Let me know how it goes. —*Michelle Dettmann, Faith Formation Rep Pro-tem*
Return to Civility: a Speed of Laughter Project, John Sweeney & The Brave New Workshop. 2007



Did you know...?

Mental illnesses are medical conditions.

Research has shown that mental illness has a biological basis. Mental illnesses are brain disorders associated with changes in the brain's structure, chemistry and function, which in turn affects how a person thinks, feels and acts.

One in every four adults is affected by mental illness.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that one in four adults in the U.S. experience some kind of mental health disorder in a given year. However, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion. Approximately 1 in 17 Americans, or about 13.6 million people, live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder.

Stigma prevents many people from seeking treatment.

Approximately 60 percent of adults and almost one-half of youth ages 8 to 15 with a mental illness received no mental health services in the previous year. In some locations, services simply are not available or are not affordable to the people who need them. In many cases, people avoid treatment because of the fear of stigma.

Treatment works and recovery is possible.

There is no "cure" for mental illness, but with effective treatment (which may include medication, therapy, other services and support), most people experience relief from their symptoms and live productive, fulfilling lives.

Most people with mental illness are not violent.

The most common form of violence by those who have mental illness is violence against themselves. People with serious mental illnesses are far more likely to be victims of violent crime than perpetrators of it.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. May 21 is Mental Health Sunday. We share this blog post to remind everyone that “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

In Defense of Being Fragile—May 15, 2017 by Galen Broaddus

When I was a sophomore in college, I had to take an introductory literature course to fulfill one of my humanities requirements. (This was before I was on track to become an English teacher and arguably was one of the reasons I ended up there.)

One of the many works we read in that class was Tennessee Williams’s play *The Glass Menagerie*. I had always been a fan of plays, but there was something about this play that resonated strongly with me.

For those not familiar, the play focuses on the Wingfield family: the matriarch Amanda, whose husband has abandoned the family and who longs for the better days of the past; the son (and narrator) Tom, who works to support the family in his father’s absence but who clearly wants to leave the family behind and set out on his own; and the daughter Laura, who is so severely introverted that she dropped out of high school and spends much of her time with her collection of glass figurines (the titular glass menagerie).

The character I was almost immediately drawn to was Laura, the girl who had wanted so badly to be accepted by others in high school but who was unable to make those connections. At the point in the play when she thinks she is about to make such a connection with someone from her past, one of the figurines — a unicorn — gets knocked out of the case and is broken. There is no subtlety in this symbolism: Laura is that fragile figurine, having been broken by someone who she trusted to be careful with her.

Given what I personally experienced as a child, I couldn’t help but relate to Laura. More to the point, I felt that what happened to her was utterly unfair. No one in the story treats her with the delicate touch she needs (and deserves), even though virtually all of them realize that she is so fragile, and there is every reason to think that her emotional fragility is due to circumstances beyond her control.

But there is a sort of verisimilitude in this: The world does not treat fragility as a morally neutral trait. To be fragile is to be weak, to lack the will to be more, to be pitied.

And that leaves fragile people with a few possible outcomes: Find ways to simulate strength in order to prevent further harm (although this won’t for a second change how broken you feel) or...don’t survive at all.

This isn’t just a lamentable state of affairs. It is an utterly infuriating one.

Fragile people aren’t lesser; they simply don’t embody the standard of strength that others expect (or, often, demand). They do not project a false strength but embrace vulnerability. To be fragile — openly so — is to be honest about the fact that we are not creatures who are immune to being cut to our very core.

Societal attitudes against fragility, though, are pervasive. There’s a segment of the populace for whom these attitudes comport all too well with other compassion-less stances — the kind of people who decry the “participation trophy” stereotype of my generation and political correctness and appeals for diversity and inclusion in the public square. (I am tempted here to tie these views to the political right, but these days, I feel like you can find proponents of these views on the left as well, even if less commonly.)

But even among people who reject these stances, you can see subtle hints of similar attitudes. In 2011, racial and social justice scholar Robin DiAngelo coined a term for a very useful concept: white fragility. In a paper of the same name, DiAngelo defines this term as “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves.” Basically, because white people aren’t generally forced to confront the issue of race (and certainly not in the ways that people of color are forced to confront these issues perpetually as a part of daily life), they — I mean, we — will get defensive and lash out, sometimes violently, when confronted with the topic and the notion of their own privilege.

It’s a phenomenon that one can find with many groups that have privilege, and I have seen similar observations about men, to take just one group. (I also think there’s a similar phenomenon with Western Christians, which is why things like the “War on Christmas” take hold in places like the US.)

Calling it “fragility,” though, seems both backward and counterproductive to me. Groups with privilege are almost always the ones who control the narratives about what it means to be strong, so calling them “fragile” in a way fails to acknowledge this basic disadvantage that is used against fragile people as I’ve laid it out earlier (people who do not conform to this generally straight, white, masculine, abled, etc. view of strength).

And — perhaps more insidiously — it is ripe for abuse. The fact that “fragile” is used pejoratively in society makes it an easy insult, and I have seen it used on countless occasions by people arguing for social justice as an epithet against their interlocutors. (The irony of social justice-oriented people using such a term that has a history of being used against the marginalized is not lost on me.)

It also doesn’t address the fundamental problem: People with privilege are frequently unwilling or unable to grapple with serious issues because their privilege typically insulates them from it. Calling them “fragile” in a way that denotes weakness — in other words, hijacking the stigma to get a cheap shot in — not only reinforces the stigma but in fact obscures the real issue. And if privileged people are going to find ways to overcome this particular kind of fragility, it will take more than mere insults.

Mind you, I’m not arguing against calling it “fragility” in this context — I have taken to heart the advice of marginalized folks that avoiding a useful term because some people misuse it for malicious purposes is not reasonable, and besides, the term is established enough that I cannot envision another term easily displacing it.

But I’m done with the stigma. There’s nothing wrong with being fragile, and there’s everything wrong with mistreating people for failing to live up to your arbitrary standard of strength — be it physical, mental, or emotional.

If we want a better, more compassionate world, this is a good place to start.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/rivers/2017/05/defense-fragile/>





2017 is our 125th Anniversary!

Throughout the year, we will celebrate this milestone. Invite people who would want to come back for anniversary events!

On the Anniversary Calendar already:

Sunday, August 13, 10 AM—Annual Picnic at Riverside Park Pavilion

Sunday, December 3, 10 AM—Formal Anniversary Worship with guest preacher Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister—A lunch at a local restaurant will follow. This will be an RSVP-needed event! More details as we get closer. :-)

If anyone is interested in creating a reunion of a Youth Group gang or Confirmation class, a Couple's Club, Women's Fellowship, Quilters gathering, or any other event, please talk to a member of the Council and we'll see how we can help make it happen! To this end, if you have ever been in a Women's Circle, there are plans afoot to have dinner together at a local restaurant to celebrate and reminisce. If you are interested, please talk to Shirley Hoff or Michelle Dettmann and let us know your ideas.

Please also submit addresses of former members, family, and friends who should be added to any mailings related to the 125 year celebrations.

FUN FACT: Did you know that volunteers hand-dug our church basement? Forty-five men of the church, after their work-days elsewhere, came and shoveled mounds of dirt from under the old foundations, creating new foundations and cement basement walls. With this volunteer labor and a borrowed conveyor belt, this project took most of the winter of 1947-48. The church women, of course, provided food! The final touch-ups of cement floors and electrical work, etc., occurred around Labor Day of 1948.

We will be providing lunch for the volunteers at Habitat for Humanity's Build for Unity site this summer.

Our date will be Tuesday, June 27, the day of the Wall Raising! We'll need to provide food for about 75 people. Please check your schedules to see if you can help provide food, take food to the site, and/or serve. We'll need a few people other than John. Please let Pastor John know if you are able to help. We should also have a sign-up sheet available soon.



Remember to keep us up-to-date on your address and other contact info.

Did we miss your birthday on the calendar? Let us know!

Thought of the Month

What specific aspect of being a child do you miss the most?

From The Conversation Piece: Creative Questions to Tickle the Mind

Remember to let us know if you are ill or hospitalized. The hospital can't let us know you are there, due to HIPAA and other privacy concerns. The only way we know to put you on the prayer list and come visit is if you call the office and leave us the information.

Also, let us know if you wish to be put on the prayer chain or the prayer list in the bulletin. We want to know how much information you are comfortable sharing.

Thanks so much!



Are you able to visit or send a note to members who are homebound or living in long-term care?

They would love to hear from you.

Marlys Burke

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Leif Larsen

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The Sunshine Report—Joys and Concerns

Marge Johnson, sympathy on the death of her stepson

Emily Fuller, get well following a fall

Michelle Dettmann, get well following gallbladder surgery

Andrew & Ingrid Pederson, sympathy on the death of Ingrid's mother

Phyllis Behrens, get well following a fall



PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Staff

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Secretary: Michelle Dettmann

Choir Director: Roger Towler

Organist: Mark Ochu

Custodian: WACOSA

Conference Minister: Rev. Shari Prestemon

Associate Conference Minister: Rick Wagner

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Treasurer: Brad Hanson

Financial Secretary: Michelle Dettmann

Council Secretary: Linda Vierkant

Members at Large: Curt Hutchens, Val Broste

Trustees: Bruce Michaels

Mission: Rick Fine

TTT: Mark Hoff

ROSE: Beverly Tallent

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