In the Loop

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September 17, 2026
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Listening and Talking . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Silence precedes, undergirds, and grounds everything. Unless we learn how to live there, go there, and abide in this different phenomenon, everything – words, events, relationships, identities – become rather superficial, without depth or context. We are in danger of becoming just a shell with less and less inside, and less contact with the depth and reality of things – where all the lasting vitality is found. This is what Jesus calls "a spring inside us – gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14). God is always found in the depths of things, even in the depths of our sin and brokenness. Depths are always silent.

Silence is not just that which is around words and underneath images and events. Silence is at the very foundation of all reality. It is that out of which all being comes and to which all things return. (The word "silence" can be interchanged with nothingness, emptiness, vastness, formlessness, or any undefined reality.)

All things are in fact made out of nothing; every something, by God's plan it seems, first comes from nothing! Such silence is described in the Bible as a "formless void," and the Spirit of God "hovers" over this "trackless waste and emptiness" (Genesis 1:2), *as if to impregnate creation with God – which silent mystery I would call the original birth of "Christ"!* (See John 1:1-5).

It seems that the coming together of these Two Great Silences is the primal conception and the beginning of Everything! The Spirit is silent, secret, invisible, but totally powerful and always effective, humble, and quite willing to give the credit to others for all the further millennia of unfolding creation ("evolution").

In silence and solitude, we can finally get our selves (our feelings, our needs, our compulsion, our reactions) out of the way and return "to the face we had before we were born" as the Zen masters put it. Who am I before I was a pastor or a teacher or a male or an American or whatever I call myself? And before that? And before that? None of this status stuff makes any difference. It's not important. It doesn't really exist. That free and deeply desirous position of nothingness and emptiness is where God can most powerfully meet us and teach us.

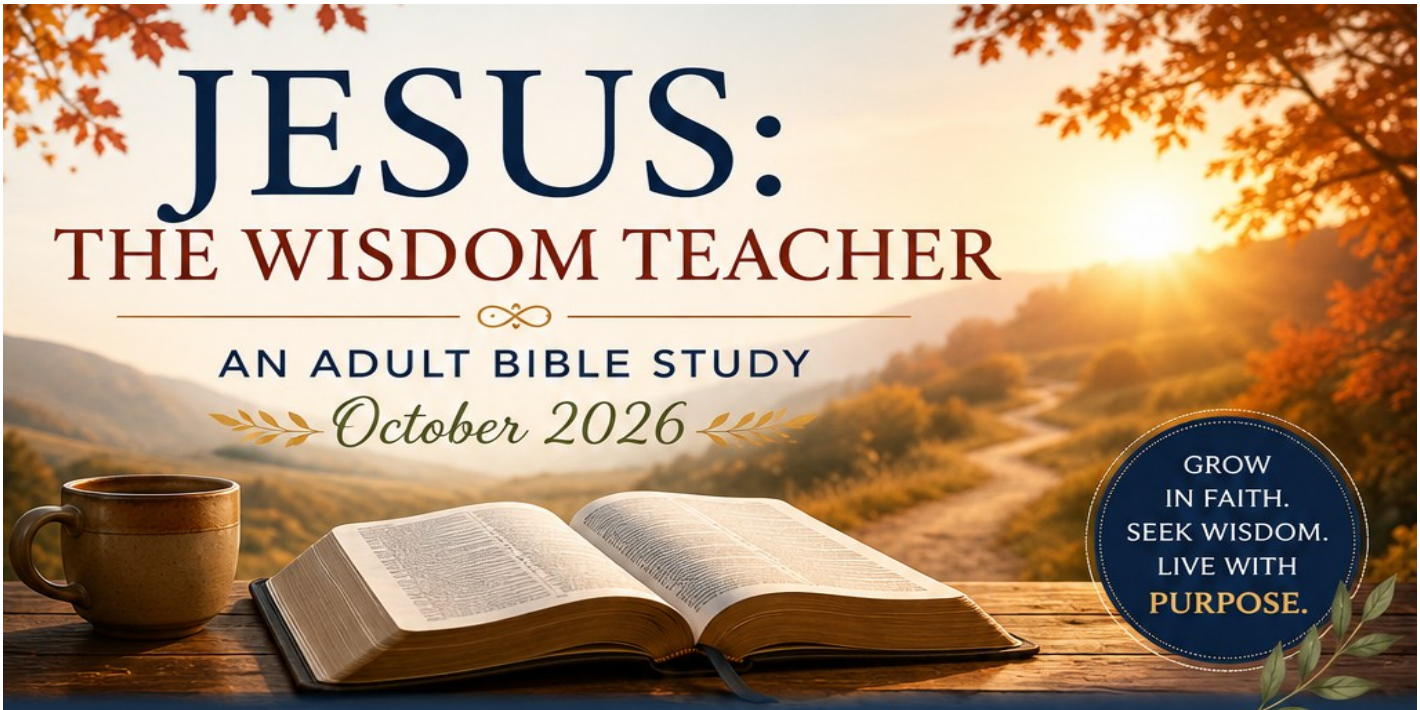
Our True self is in union with God. If you can first rest in the nothing, you will then be prepared for the something. When nothing creates something, we call that *grace!* Another word for "grace" is simply Love. Please trust me when I say, you have been given everything. We all live by God's provision. I believe this is how we "stand firm in the One Spirit" (Philippians 1:27–28).

Be tender to each other and be a blessing to all you meet.

We Are Hosting a Joint Worship Service with NCC
October 11th - Centennial's Sanctuary – 10:15 AM

Rev. Dr. William E. Crowder Jr. will visit us on October 11th. He will be visiting us just eight days after being installed as our first Regional Minister of our new upcoming Living Waters Region consisting of Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan. Rev. Lori Kyle (pastor of NCC) and Rev. Tom Cici are planning a "blended worship service" which should allow participants of Centennial and NCC to recognize their own worship styles. This will allow Dr. Crowder to know each congregation as well. He is also planning to deliver a 3 – 5 minute message.

Please stay for a joint potluck lunch and meet Dr. Crowder following the worship service. The Centennial / NCC liaison team – Peg & Kip Hayden, Lisa McClure and Nikki Brauer – are organizing the potluck.



Jesus was a Wisdom Teacher who stayed close to the ground of wisdom: the transformation of human consciousness. He asked those timeless and deeply personal questions:

- **What does** it mean to die before you die?
- **How do you** go about losing your little life to find the bigger one?
- **Is it possible to live** on this planet with a generosity, abundance, fearlessness, and beauty that mirror the Divine God?

These are the wisdom questions, and they are the entire field of Jesus' concern. All three are addressed in the **Gospel of Luke, Chapter 12.** Additionally, we will study these four scripture passages to see how Jesus addresses these questions and what are his answers.

1ST WEEK OF OCTOBER
John 14:1–14
Jesus, the Way to the Father

2ND WEEK OF OCTOBER
Mark 8:27–38
Perceptions of Jesus Christ

3RD WEEK OF OCTOBER
Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21
Almsgiving and Fasting

4TH WEEK OF OCTOBER
Luke 10:25–37
The Greatest Commandment

Pastor Tom will be facilitating this new Bible study for adults. No need to purchase a new book. Simply attend one of these Bible Study groups and bring your Bible. Hope to see you in one of these adult Bible Study classes.

A NEW ADULT STUDY THIS FALL:

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
October 4th through 25th
9:00 AM

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY
October 7th through 28th
10:30 AM

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." ~ Psalm 119:105

Here is the link to register for the Regional Assembly 2026 Events

www.cciwdisciples.org/ra-2026

"All you thirsty ones, come to me and drink!
Believe in me so that rivers of living water
will burst out from within you."

- John 7:37–38

September 17 - October 17, 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				17 Monthly Prayer Mtg: 4:30P - FH TOPS: 5:15P - Proverbs	18 CWF: Crafting 9:30A - FH	19 Noodle Making for the Bazaar 9:00A - FM
20 Worship Service 10:15A	21	22	23 Choir Practice 6:30P	24 TOPS: 5:15P - Proverbs Men's Dinner: 6P Flame @ Bloom in College Hills Mall	25 CWF: Crafting 9:30A - FH	26
27 Worship Service 10:15A Loose Change Offering	28 Worship Meeting: 10:30A –FH	29	30 Choir Practice 6:30P	1 Outreach Meeting: 11A-FH TOPS: 5:15P - Proverbs	2 Making Apple Dumplings for Holiday Bazaar 9:00 A - FH	3
4 Sunday School 9A - FH World Communion Sunday Service and Blessing of Shawls 10:15A	5	6	7 Bible Study 10:30A - FH	8 TOPS: 5:15P - Proverbs	9	10
11 Sunday School 9A - FH Centennial hosts CCC & NCC Joint Worship Service 10:15A Followed by Joint Potluck Lunch after worship with Dr. Crowder Second Sunday Food Pantry	12 Trustees: 11A—FH PRC Meeting: 12P—FH	13 CWF Meeting: 9:30A-Fh	14 Bible Study 10:30A - FH	15 Monthly Prayer Service: 4:30P-FH TOPS: 5:15P - Proverbs Book Club: 6:30P	16	17 Making Noodles for Holiday Bazaar 9:00 A - FH

The Power of Prayer

Prayer Request

Please pray for the family of Dave Calhoon who passed away last week. He is the ex-husband of Marla Gaines-Starke who was notified of his death a week later. Gracious God, may Marla and her son, Nick, be aware of your comforting and healing Presence, and bring them joy.

Continuing Prayers

Peggy Crawford, Karen Middleton, Doris Miller, Josh Dewar, Dale Carter**,** Gary Cochran, and Shari Reinle, Manny Martinez, Terry Utsinger, Nick Calhoon, Tracy Hallakan, Peggy Wade, Miles McReynolds, JoAnne Pritchard, Michelle Stevens, Nikki McCreary, Joe Taylor, Janet Keefe, Celestia Jones, David Smith, Tiffany Ward, Nancy Jones, Amber Newell, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus & Pat Murphy, Ann Burmaster, Scott Giffith, Linda and Pete Rasmussen, Fern Scaggs, Deb Reed

At Home/Assisted Living

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland, and Frank Leach

Nursing Home

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Pat Iliff; Pontiac-Goldwater -Ron Geske

Our challenge for the week –
Pray this prayer every day –

Loving God, I desire to place you first in my life. I choose to receive your gracious love and extend it to others. May all humanity live harmoniously in one Spirit. [Wait and listen]

Upcoming Anniversaries	
Tom & Marian Cici	10/08
Aaron & Katie Matej	10/29

Upcoming Birthdays	
Sarah Todd	09/21
Joe Culpepper	09/22
Mark Hines	09/28
Frank Leach	09/29
Bill Wetzel	09/29
Julie Hatten	10/6
Michael Schoeninger	10/10
Sue Miller	10/12
Jack Keefe	10/26