



In the Loop

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February 20, 2025
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Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Everyone assumes that Jesus was angry when he chased the cattle out, released the doves, poured out the coins, and turned over the tables in the Temple, and maybe he was upset (John 2:12–22; Mark 11:12–25; Matthew 21:12–22; Luke 19:45–48). But were all four evangelists really trying to tell us that Jesus was humanly emotional? When we focus on Jesus' emotions, we miss the powerful message Jesus was trying to communicate – Jesus was trying to reveal God's absolute gentleness, compassion and mercy for us.

What if the disturbance in the Temple was Jesus' announcement that the Temple, of that time with all of its blood sacrifices was finished, done for, over, and Jesus – as the Risen Christ – is going to take its place. People at a Jewish festival of that time, such as the Passover, would have a priest kill an animal as a means for a vindictive god to forgive their sins. After such constant practice, they seemed to be okay collaborating with the Roman crucifixion of a person as a means of appeasing an angry god.

Jesus Christ put an end to all fearful sacrificial schemes for manipulating God and instead revealed God's absolute gentleness, compassion and mercy. Christ showed no vengeance after the resurrection, only peace and continual, unconditional love for all. You don't have to be afraid or attempt to manipulate a God who loves you. God does not love us because we are good; God loves us because God is good. Nothing we can do will either decrease or increase God's eternal and infinite eagerness to love us!



This is why Jesus said, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”* ... *But he was speaking of the temple of his body* (John 2:19, 21). Jesus is saying the new temple is not a building. Rather, it is nothing less than the Reign of God.

Jesus explains the Reign of God by saying, *“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ... As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ... This in my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you”* (John 15:5, 9, 12).

Christ Jesus moves us beyond the counting, measuring, fearing, distrusting, threatening, deserving, manipulating, separating, and punishing ways of dealing with others, God, and self. We are to surrender everything, even our attitudes, completely to God. Christ invites us to live in accord with God's character which is merciful, gracious, faithful, forgiving, and forever steadfast in love (Exodus 34:6–7).

Blessings to all as we share and live in God's Love together!

Receiving Pastor Tom's Podcasts on Cellphones

Pastor Tom continues to put his live podcasts, called "Daily Inspirations," on YouTube and our website. These are "live" five-to-six-minute podcasts in which Tom can receive "Chats" online while he's recording the Daily Inspiration. Pastor Tom has helped some folks use their cellphones to access his podcasts. The instructions are the same for users of cellphones or laptops or desktops.

Visit our website www.centennialcc.org to view his podcasts. Once you are on our website, click "worship" at the top of the page, and then click "online." You will have a choice: You can see Pastor Tom's most current podcast by clicking his picture on the left of the screen. You can also listen to his previous videos by clicking on the three "bars" in the upper right corner of Tom's image and choosing a podcast from the list.

Pastor Tom's upcoming "live" podcasts are scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday. You can subscribe to Pastor Tom's podcast by clicking "**Daily Inspirations**" or click "**Watch on YouTube.**" Once on the YouTube site, click the word "**Subscribe**" under his picture. This can send you a reminder of his "Daily Inspirations."

Notice that once you have clicked "online" in the worship section of our website, you can see and listen to our worship services by clicking the image of our church on the right of the screen. We hope this will be beneficial for you and our community. Please let us know how we are doing and how we can further assist you. Thank you!

Daily Inspirations by Pastor Tom Cici

Sunday Worship 10:15AM



BULLETIN FEBRUARY 23, 2025



OUR VISION STATEMENT
Spreading the message of God's Love,
in our church and in our community,
through caring for each other.

Important Statement from the General Minister and President: Multifaith Action

February 11, 2025

Dear Disciples,

Today we are proud to join a multifaith coalition and the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) in opposition to the rescission of the sensitive locations policy, which is a direct violation of the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). This decision directly interferes with our ability to fulfill our religious mandate and serve all of our congregants equally and with the dignity they deserve. We don't take this step lightly, but this extreme action from the federal government challenges a foundation of our faith and threatens to shatter our consecrated spaces. Our faith compels us to take a stand and protect our places of worship. As Disciples of Christ, we seek to protect the right of each congregation to worship and serve in their spaces as they wish to do. Our General Assembly invited all congregations in a 2017 resolution to become "immigrant-welcoming." We take seriously the command in Scripture to welcome the stranger (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV), and Jesus' teaching that whenever we minister to one of the least of these, we are ministering to him (Matthew 25:40 NRSV). Our General Board unanimously approved our joining this multifaith coalition in taking this action.

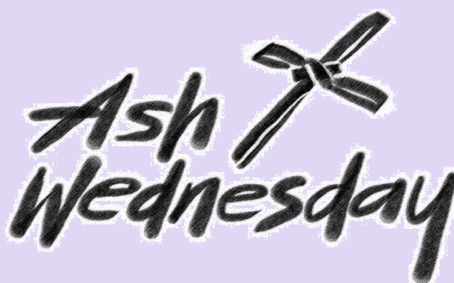
We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us. As part of this multifaith coalition, we seek to affirm that we do indeed welcome all. If you or anyone in your congregation has a question about this action, please feel free to contact: news@disciples.org.

Moving towards wholeness together,
Rev. Terri Hord Owens
General Minister and President



Ash Wednesday Service and Meal – March 5, 2025

Our Worship Committee is hosting a meal after our Ash Wednesday Service. Start the first day of Lent with prayer, reflection, and receiving the imposition of ashes on your forehead (or the back of your hand) by attending our Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th in our sanctuary beginning 5:00 p.m. The black ashes are a sign of human sin and mortality; they are placed on you in the form of a cross to help us reflect on the love, forgiveness and eternal life offered to us by the Risen Christ who transforms us with the breath of God’s Holy Spirit.



Please stay after the service to enjoy a meal in our Fellowship Hall. Our Worship Committee will serve heart-shaped cookies, soups, Gondolas, and beverages. Please make plans to attend our Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th at 5:00 p.m. in our sanctuary and then enjoy good food with good companionship in our Fellowship Hall afterward.

A Lenten Sermon Series . . . by Pastor Tom

The season of Epiphany ends with Transfiguration Sunday on March 2nd, the time we celebrate the mystery that the light of God shown through the face of Jesus Christ. The next weekend, we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent, and I begin a five-week Lenten sermon series: **“Parables: Stories from Jesus.”** This is the agenda of our 2025 Lenten sermon series:



<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Scriptures:</u>	<u>Themes:</u>
March 2, 2025	Luke 9:28–37	The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ
March 9, 2025	Luke 13:1–9	The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree
March 16, 2025	Matthew 20:1–16	The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard
March 23, 2025	Luke 15:11–20	The Story of the Younger Son
March 30, 2025	Luke 15:11–24	The Story of the Father Calling for Celebration
April 6, 2025	Luke 15:25–32	The Story of the Elder Son

A parable is a unique form of literature that’s always trying to subvert business as usual by undoing our reliance on what we think is logical. Yet we typically do not let parables do that for us. Our ego is so in control that we try to figure them out inside of our existing consciousness – or, more commonly, we just ignore them or consider them out of date. Parables aim to subvert our old consciousness and offer us a way through by utterly reframing our worldview.

Jesus often used parables to discuss the “Reign” of God. Mostly, Jesus told parables to describe the nature of God.

February 2025

				THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				20 Monthly Prayer Service: 5P-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30P	21	22
23 Week of Compassion Ends Loose Change Offering Worship 10:15A	24	25 Elders 6:30P-FH	26 Bridge 12P-GH Choir-6:30P	27 Ladies Luncheon 11:30A-Panera/Blm TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6P- Tony's Diner	28	March 1
2 Worship 10:15A	3 Homecoming Task Force 4:30P-GH	4	5 Ash Wednesday Bridge 12P-GH Ash Wednesday Service: 5P Choir-6:30P	6 Outreach 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah FGNA: 7P-FH	7 World Day of Prayer	8
9* Daylight Saving Second Sunday Food Pantry Worship 10:15A	10 Trustees 11A-GH	11 CWF 9:30a-FH	12 Bridge 12P-GH Choir-6:30P	13 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Board meeting 6P-FH	14	March 15

***March 9– Celebration of life for Larry Carius; 2P-5P at Rob Dob's 801 N Hershey Blm.**



Homecoming Weekend

Saturday, August 16—Sunday, August 17

Our theme will be “*Welcome Home*”. This will be an opportunity to reconnect with some of our former members and pastors and reach out to new people in the community as well!



Continuing Prayers

Anita Poling, Charlotte Leach, Barb Leach, Brenda, Susie Hallahan, Quinton, Janis, Paul Dawson, Janice, Sarah Hiatt, Susie, Western North Carolina, Nathan, Hope's baby August, Debbie Holiday, Sisters Kelly Bestful and Lisa Behl, Tim, Kris Carius, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus and Pat Murphy, Charlie Middleton, James, Neil, Cameron Cook, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Ann Burmaster, Ron Geske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Linda and Pete Rasmussen, Fern Scaggs

At Home/Assisted Living

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland; The Pointe, Pontiac-Rae Geske;

Nursing Home

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iliff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade, Pontiac-Ron Geske;

Military

Mark Brienon, Keyla Folsom, Troy Guyran, Benjamin Horn, Michael Iverson, John Thomas, Darrell Walton, Glen Whitecotton, Christopher Wilson-Poston

March Birthdays and Anniversaries	
Deb Reed	03/03
Joe Peebles	03/09
Marla Gaines-Starke	03/11
Mark and Beth Rupe	03/11
Barbara and Don Short	03/11
Diane Andres	03/15
Barbara and Frank Leach	03/17
Ruth Valentine	03/26

Our challenge for the week –

Pray this prayer every day –

Loving and gracious God, I remember that nothing is impossible with You. We trust you and depend on you always taking care of us. Guide us and help us to do your will because we are safe in your arms.

[Wait and listen.]