



In the Loop

Centennial Christian Church
1219 E Grove Bloomington, IL. 61701
Ph. 309-828-2185

April 3, 2025
<https://www.centennialcc.org>
email: people@centennialcc.org

Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Some time ago, when I was younger, playing as children with my siblings, we would build a snowman almost every winter. Part of the big deal, of course, is that we do it together, and get mom and dad involved in the fun. That's what it's all about. In love, you want to spend time together. So, we track snow in the house, wearing our galoshes (snow boots), asking mom for large buttons and a big carrot to put on the snowman. We coax dad to get involved by asking him for an old hat, scarf, and broom (or pitchfork). Building the snowman came to a screeching halt when someone had to use the bathroom, and everybody took a turn (one at a time). You could have built the snowman in a fraction of the time had you not been building it under those circumstances.

When Jesus speaks of God and his "Abba" (meaning daddy), it seems to me he's speaking of something like that. God, in humility, wants to grow and create with us because God values each one of us and needs all of creation. God is trying to build something out of creation and wants to do it in concert with all of us. Undoubtedly, this will take a lot longer.



As a matter of fact, it will take all of time, because the task is not to build a snowman. But the task is to share the all-encompassing and all-embracing love of God with others and all of creation as we live in God's very life. And it will take a long time, precisely because it will happen in part because of our participation and our contribution. So, God shows us tremendous patience. We have time, we have the Holy Spirit (Giver of life), and we have life on earth and eternal life with God. It doesn't happen in an instant.

The problem is that we humans become impatient with the process. We like immediate gratification. We would like to have it done right now, and on our terms. We lose faith. Patience is almost a synonym for faith. We need to faithfully choose God's love and mercy in all we do. Similarly, we need to be patient with one another as a way of faithfully choosing God's love and forgiveness as a way of life.

That's what Jesus did, isn't it? He started with the heart. He started with love, and that is precisely what Christ wants us to do. During this Lenten season, we are to examine ourselves to see if we are doing what God desires of us. Christ wants us to lead with our hearts and be servants of God in that way.

May the One Spirit speak to and through you as we journey together.

Our Upcoming Worship Services During Holy Week of 2025:

Dramatic Reading on Palm Sunday: April 13th



The Worship service on Palm Sunday is similar to that of any other Sunday, except we have a gathering of the youth and their families near the steps to the loft for a processional with palms. Additionally, the passion story will be taken from the Gospel of Mark and presented as a dramatic reading by multiple voices reading the parts of Jesus, the High Priest, Peter, Pilate, Servant and Disciples/Bystanders. Please volunteer or say “Yes” if asked to read a part in the dramatic reading. Thank you!

Maundy Thursday Service: April 17th



This year, First Christian Church of Bloomington is inviting Centennial Christian Church and hosting our joint Maundy Thursday service. The worship service begins at 7:00 PM, and a meal does not precede it. We will gather around tables in their Fellowship Hall, and each person in attendance will have an opportunity to receive Holy Communion. After partaking of Holy Communion, you are welcome to reflect on Jesus’ commandment, “that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12).

Community Good Friday Service: April 18th



We are joining the Bloomington Normal Clergy Alliance in sponsoring a Community Good Friday Service at the Mennonite Church of Normal – 805 S. Cottage Avenue from Noon (12:00) to 1:00 PM. Pastor Tom Cici and several other ministers will help lead and engage our ecumenical worship communities in reflecting on the theme: “Human Suffering and God’s Redemptive Love.” There is much strife and suffering in the world and in our nation these days, and we want to recognize the presence of this pain while also underscoring God’s ever-present love throughout such hardship. Hope to see you at our Community Good Friday Service.

Being an Inclusive Church . . . by Pastor Tom Cici

--- Discuss with Our Elders and Pastor

As I've mentioned before, when Mark Rupe and I talk to others at Centennial Christian Church about the process of being an official "Open and Affirming congregation," we get the same response, "I thought we already were! This church welcomes *all* people at the Lord's Table." Though we may begin with hospitality, where we are saying "we welcome you," Scripture calls us to journey from that place to a place of mutuality ("we value you and we need you"), where we comprehend just how deeply the global community of all God's children *need* each other in order to be the people of God (the loving "Reign" of God) we are called by Scripture to be. Ultimately, this leads to the healing and wholeness that God wants for God's creation. And this means not just saying "we welcome you," but *being* the reflection of Christ's love, which the Christian Church is called to be; to witness to all God's people not just in our words, but in our *mutual* identity as members of Christ's body though we differ in many personal ways.

Our Elders and Pastor Tom would like to give everyone in our church family (CCC) opportunities to discuss being an official "Open and Affirming congregation" at one or more of these small group sessions.

Sunday, April 27 at 11:30 AM in our Fellowship Hall

Thursday, May 01 at 6:30 PM in our Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, May 06 at 10:00 AM in our Fellowship Hall

You are not required to attend any of these small group sessions. But we would like to share the process with everyone and answer any questions you may have. Additionally, we can discuss the advantages of our congregation being a more inclusive church and the healings we can share with our community. Blessings as we journey toward Easter.



OUR VISION STATEMENT

**Spreading the message of God's Love,
in our church and in our community,**

We Are Officially Beginning Generosity Plus

We are welcoming an “on-site” weekend visit with Rev. Melissa St. Clair, Minister of Faith & Giving CC(DOC), on April 5 and 6, 2025. **For this first in-person session, everyone in the congregation is encouraged and welcome to attend the events of this weekend**, since we’ll be establishing a biblical and theological framework for stewardship and generosity and discussing the marks of a vital congregation. Please plan to attend these activities:

April 5 (Saturday)

- 9 – 11AM, our ad-hoc committee will have an overview session.
- Noon – 3:00 PM, Lunch with Rev. St. Clair who will provide two hours of biblical and theological reflections open to the entire congregation (includes pizzas from Papa Murphy, salad, chips and beverages).

April 6 (Sunday)

- 10:15 AM, Worship Service with Rev. St. Clair preaching.
- 11:30 – 2:00 PM, pot-luck luncheon (church provides meat) followed by the concluding theological reflection and Q/A with Rev. Melissa St. Clair.

This gives everyone in our faith family several attempts to hear Melissa’s introduction of Generosity Plus and theological reflections for stewardship and generosity. Peace and prayers that God will enrich our time together and multiply the abundant blessings that are already present in your midst.



We're Commencing Ripple Effect Again

Two neighboring families reached out to us after seeing our marquee and reading about the Ripple Effect in the Founders' Grove Neighborhood Association (FGNA) newsletter. Both families are elderly, unhealthy/handicapped, and in dire need of us to help them with their yard work.

Dennis and Jan Fries, 403 Leland Street, have had major back surgeries. Dennis is currently at home recovering from a major surgery involving pancreatic cancer and staying 27 days in the hospital. They need us to remove leaves and other yard waste from the flower garden in their front yard (near the street).

Larry and Trayce Spears, 1603 E. Oakland Ave, need us to take a pile of tree limbs and brush from the backyard to the front curb of their house, use their leaf blower to clean the rest of the yard, and mow their lawn. Larry suffers from a limp due to a foot problem. He and his wife take care of three grandchildren living with them and one child is handicapped. They would greatly appreciate our assistance with the yard work.

We will have sign-up sheets for this work to be tentatively done on April 18th (1:30 – 4:30pm) and/or April 19th (9am – 12pm). Also, please let Pastor Tom or Kip Hayden know if you can help with yard work before these dates. Looking forward to serving our community with you in this way again. Thank you!

April 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				3 Outreach 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	4	5 Generosity Plus Mtg.-9A 12P-Lunch Followed by biblical and theological reflection by Rev. Melissa St. Clair
6 Worship 10:15A Potluck:11:30A followed by theological reflection by Rev. Melissa St. Clair	7 Homecoming Task Force 4:30P-GH	8 CWF: 9:30A-FH	9 Bridge 12P-GH Choir-6:30P	10 Rooms for Rent Meeting:112P-GH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	11	12
13* Palm Sunday Second Sunday Food Pantry Worship 10:15A	14 Trustees 11A-GH	15	16 Bridge 12P-GH Choir-6:30P	17 Maundy Thurs. Worship Cmte. 10A-FH Maundy Service 7P@ First Christian	18 Good Friday Worship Service 12P-Mennonite Church of Norma Ripple Effect 1:30—4:30P	19 Ripple Effect 9A—12P
20 Easter Sunday Worship service w/Baptism-10:15A	21 PRC:12P-Isaiah	22 Elders:6:30P-FH	23 Bridge 12P-GH Choir-6:30P	24 Ladies Luncheon 11:30A- TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6P	25	26

Fellowship Hall

GH-Great Hall

***April 13-Baptismal candidates affirm their Faith Statements.**

April 20, 2025
10:15 AM – Easter Service





Continuing Prayers

Jake and Jacklyn, Mary Tabor, Amber Newell, Barb Leach, Charlotte Leach, Anita Poling, Susie Hallahan, Quinton, Janis, Paul Dawson, Janice, Sarah Hiatt, Susie, Western North Carolina, Nathan, Debbie Holiday, Sisters Kelly Bestful and Lisa Behl, Kris Carius, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus and Pat Murphy, James, Neil, Cameron Cook, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Ann Burmaster, Pam, 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 Iloff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade, Pontiac-Ron Geske;

Military

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

April Birthdays and Anniversaries	
Charlotte Leach	04/03
Chloe Todd	04/12
Janet Keefe	04/18
Perry Watson	04/20
JoAnne Pritchard	04/28

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

Dear Loving God, you graciously connect all humanity to yourself. We all hold each other’s hopes. We all touch each other’s hearts and shape each other’s dreams.

[Wait and listen.]