



In the Loop

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Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

Many of you know that I enjoy the practices of contemplative prayer. This prayer is also known as meditation or centering prayer. Contemplation is simply openness to God's loving presence in "what is" right in front of you. One approach to contemplative prayer is writing about your present moment.

Let me show you an example of writing about the present moment. This written reflection took place after Mother's Day when I was serving a faith community in Hoopston, Illinois.

Two weeks before Mother's Day, Marian and I purchased five "Cardinal Red" Geraniums from a local flower shop. We carefully preserved these plants by giving them sunlight and water every day until the chances of frost, hail, and severe thunderstorms left the area. Above all else, we are loved by God and we are loveable which can be learned by our words and actions.

I dragged out various small garden tools and a bag of planting soil. Then I dug five shallow holes, under the bay window, in about the same places as last year. They were the same places because the locations were concaved and contained fragments of last year's potting soil. Marian said, "Now the plants will grow to be even more beautiful in the ground."



As I carefully held the root-ball of each plant, I realized that God is in these plants just as God's Spirit is within me. I imagine God saying, "I'm so touched you want to spend this time with me. Really, I am! It just means the world to me. The thing is, I just can't bear how much I love you. It's too much! And so, at a certain point, I rush into these plants because I want to know what it feels like to be held by you."

Yes, the interruption is the presence of God who comes to us disguised as the presence of our very lives. I begin to recognize the preserving of plants, digging in soil, covering the roots with planting soil, watering the plants ... all of it, as the startling stunning infusion of infinite love colliding into the small shape of my finite and ordinary reality. There, at the intersection of everything, is God with us ... wanting to be touched, noticed, nurtured ... held by us. All we have to do is behold.

I cannot love God perfectly or show God anything perfectly. But I will always let God see me for who I truly am, and will hold sacred the gift of seeing God for all eternity. As I am aware of God's presence, I am truly, deeply, being seen by God. Now it's your turn to behold God in your writings.

Blessings on all as we share and live in the One Spirit together!



The Ripple Effect

Mission: Outdoor Assistance in Founders' Grove Neighborhood

This year, as our summer mission project, Centennial Christian Church (and our friends) is offering to help residents of the Founders' Grove neighborhood in doing small outdoor jobs. Homeowners would need to pay for materials, but Centennial Christian Church will provide labor and small tools. Tentative Dates for this mission project is: **July 29, July 31, August 1 – 5, and August 12, 2023.**

So far, we have seven locations in our Founders' Grove Neighborhood. One location is our very own CCC building which some landscape may need "tender loving care." Our neighbors from other locations are requesting outdoor painting, repairs to porches, painting a wrought iron fence, cleaning out gutters, put up a fence, and helping with landscaping. Mark Rupe, Paul Stauffer and Pastor Tom Cici are planning to visit these locations and talk to their owners shortly after Mother's Day.

The youth group from First Christian Church of Henry is planning to join us! Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in this year's local mission project. Try to attend as many of these days as possible – July 29, July 31, August 1-5, and August 12.



**Annual Church
ELECTION**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JUNE 4, 2023

Immediately following worship to vote on the slate of officer candidates to serve from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024



**Annual Church
ELECTION**



Greetings Christian Brothers and Sisters!

We've received a request from the community for help for Kelly who is 13. She has a rare form of **Fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva**. It is also known as **living statue syndrome**, and **Stone man disease**. This is a connective tissue disease that turns muscle into bone. It is a medical condition where one organ turns into another. There have only been 800 confirmed cases "ever" worldwide.

If you desire to be part of the community effort for Kelly, you may contribute to Centennial via check or cash and designate your donation "Kelly".

We are the "little" church with the "big" heart. Thank you for considering this request.

Your Outreach Group

"Little" Church "Big" Heart

Christian Brothers & Sisters!

It is hard to believe that another school year is about to conclude. Where does the time go?

As the current school year finishes, it is time to think about the upcoming school year. Back to School Alliance provides needy children with school supplies. We helped them last year and we will help again this year.

Back to School Alliance requests that all contributions be made to them by early June. Therefore, Centennial is holding a back to school drive from May 1 through May 31. If you wish to participate in this worthy cause, you may contribute check (make check out to Centennial) or cash and designate "School". If you'd rather, you may purchase any of the items below and bring them to the church.

Items Needed

24 Pack Crayons, Pencils, Pencil Erasers, Dry Eraser Markers,
Composition Notebooks, 3-Ring Pencil Pouches, Backpacks

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your support.

Your Outreach Group



Food Pantry Sunday June 11th



We appreciate your donations each month with food pantry Sunday. SNAP benefits have been reduced to prior COVID allotment thereby making the need at food pantries much more significant. The need for private donations are more prevalent now than they have been in the past.

The Junction (Home Sweet Home) is the pantry we'll be helping this month. We hope you'll consider helping your less fortunate Christian brothers and sisters by donating food items on or before **June 11th**, OR you may contribute by cash/check to Centennial and designate food pantry on the check or envelope.

Thank you for the many ways you support your community.

Your Outreach Group



To all of our
friends who attended
John's visitation.

It was so appre-
ciated and really
wonderful to
see your faces.

Thank you so
much for your
love and caring.

Ponnie

*During a time like this
we realize how much
our friends and relatives
really mean to us.*

*Your expression of sympathy
will always be remembered.*

May/June 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				18 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30p-Centennial	19	20
21 Adult Bible Study 9A-Isaiah Worship *10:15A	22	23 CWF Crafts 9:30A-FH PRC 11A-FH Elders 6:30P	24 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-Isaiah Bridge 12P-GH Choir Practice 6:30P	25 Ladies Luncheon 11:30A TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Men's Dinner 6P-Garden of Paradise	26	27
28 Loose Change Offering Adult Bible Study 9A-Isaiah Worship *10:15A	29	30 CWF Crafts 9:30A-FH	31 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-Isaiah Bridge 12P-GH Choir Practice 6:30P	June 1 Outreach 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah FGNA 7P-FH	2	3
4*** Choir Sunday Adult Bible Study 9A-Isaiah Worship *10:15A Congregational Meeting after Worship	5	6 CWF Crafts 9:30A-FH	7 Adult Bible Study 10:30A-Isaiah Bridge 12P-GH	8 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	9	10

*Online worship <https://www.facebook.com/pg/centennialcc.org>

FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Great Hall

June 4*** Camp Registrations due

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

Gracious and merciful God, you are never separated from me that I may come to you always. The greatest gift that I can give you is to always love you and your creation. May I always see your loving presence in my life.

[Wait and listen]



Prayer Request

Please pray that children have a successful end of school year and a safe and fun summer.

Continuing Prayers

Leonard Bates, Cole, Gery Conlin, Tim Gaines, Mike Geske, Dick Tarter, Terry Foland, Mary Jo Frakes, Marty and Jerry Fry, Marilyn, Scott Griffith, Pat Iliff, Janet Keefe, Ruth Lowder, Denny Pritchard, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Russ, Fern Scaggs, Joe Schroeder, Marian Wrinkle

At Home/Assisted Living

Myerling Home-Ruth Roley; Home-Doris Miller; The Pointe (Pontiac) Ron and Rae Geske

Nursing Home

Heritage Manor-Tom (Billy) Robey, Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Martin Health -Earl McIntyre; Mclean County-Pat Iliff, Denny Pritchard; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter

Military

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

Prayers for CCIW congregations and ministries: Union Ave. Litchfield, Flanagan CC, FCC Creve Coeur; FCC Lansing, MI

May/June Birthdays and Anniversaries	
Geoff and Kay Davis	5/25
Will Dawson	5/27
Kay Carius	5/28
Darla Hummel	06/05
Gwen Peebles	06/07
Jeff and Julie Hatten	6/10
Peg Hayden	06/19
Doris Miller	06/22
Barb Leach	06/30