

Blessing Everything

by Molly Baskette, senior minister of First Church Somerville UCC in Somerville, MA. She is the author of [*Real Good Church: How Our Church Came Back from the Dead and Yours Can Too*](#), and the just-published [*Standing Naked Before God: The Art of Public Confession*](#).

Behold, I have received a command to bless; when God has blessed, then I cannot revoke it."- Numbers 23:20

A new study is out, from the Pew Study Research Center for Religion and Public Life, those data analysts so skilled at setting the hands of Protestants wringing. It notified us of a trend we were already aware of, if we were paying any attention: that market share among mainline coreligionists is dropping, and the fastest-growing religious demographic in America is: people with no religion at all.

Here's the thing: there are *so many* people who need what our churches have to offer them that I honestly can't believe we are still wringing our hands over the data. What if we did more blessing with our hands, and less wringing?

There are so many people hungry for good news and good liturgy and radical community, people who want to learn how to pray, and who need places where they can bring their whole selves in, with their doubts and their heresies and their spiritual wounds.

They come like what we used to call bag ladies, and they need to unpack everything and make a big mess all over the floor and figure out what to keep and what to toss away. Can we give folks space to do this, come and fall apart, come and unpack their baggage all over the floor, and rest a while? Can we raise our magic God-given hands and bless their mess, bless their baggage and their brokenness, their track marks and their tearstains, and remind them that, right now even, they are shining like the sun?

Prayer

Great Blesser, Your poet Marge Piercy told us, "Bless whatever you can with eyes and hands and tongue. If you can't bless it, get ready to make it new." Amen.



The Dump and the Church, by Anthony B. Robinson, a United Church of Christ minister, a speaker, teacher, and writer. His newest book is [*Called to Lead: Paul's Letters to Timothy for a New Day*](#). You can read Tony's "Weekly Meditation" and "What's Tony Thinking?" at his website, www.anthonbrobinson.com.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."- Psalm 51: 17

During the summer my wife and I are mostly at the family cabin in the mountains of northeastern Oregon.

On Sundays we go to town, where we have two stops. First stop is the county dump, which is open 10 to 3. The dump is on the outskirts of town, at the end of a dead-end road. There I heft our black bag of garbage into the maw of the waiting dumpster.

Second stop is church, a Methodist church, a block off the main street, where we worship in the summers. The hours are about the same. Going to the dump and church on the same trip makes deciding how to dress a challenge.

There's another challenge: putting too much distance between our two stops. We sometimes think all the yucky stuff belongs in a hidden, out-of-the-way place; while at church it is only the nice stuff that is acceptable—us highly functioning and working well.

I'm not suggesting that we take our household garbage to church (although that might be symbolically provocative). I am thinking that what we might call our spiritual garbage, the broken parts of our lives, the stuff that has the embarrassing odor of flaw and failure, belongs at church and before God. Author Roberta Bondi once commented, "The church tends to invite our noble selves; God wants our real selves."

The Psalmist tells us this. He does not tell us that God requires we have everything perfect. Oddly, the one thing God really welcomes is something broken—the broken heart, a fractured spirit. What may be garbage to us may be precious to God, who was into recycling long before we ever heard that word.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for your assurance that my broken heart and contrite spirit are welcome in your presence and in your house. Amen.

Prayer Needs:

- ◆ For those with cancer and undergoing Cancer Treatment:
*Kathy Brinkman *Emelia (4 yrs old) *Fred Kretzinger
- For those with various health issues and concerns:
*Harvey (Karol Smith's brother), * Jeannie (Sue Davies' sister)
*Ray Neall
- ◆ For First Christian Church's Homebound Members
- ◆ For growth in all ministries and areas of service at
First Christian Church
- ◆ For those who are seeking employment
- ◆ For those having trouble making ends meet
- ◆ For peaceful and just solutions to conflicts around the world.



August Birthdays

- 3 Pat Riker
- 9 Jeff Weber
- 10 Karol Smith
- 10 Steven Strayer
- 12 David England
- 13 Jared Siebert
- 15 Beth Reynolds
- 17 Marilyn Hobbs
- 24 Tim Wolfe

August Anniversaries

- 8/4 Gene & Erma Weist
- 8/9 Andre Hawks & Colleen Robinson
- 8/15 Allen & Pat Sharninghouse
- 8/19 Lenny & Marilyn Hobbs

Deb Kirk is our featured church member of the month. Although she was born here in Findlay, she lived some of her married life in the Bowling Green area. They moved back here to raise two daughters, Jenny and Angela, Deb attended Mission Alliance Church before settling in here at First Christian. Deb now has six grandchildren-Mercedes (Sadie), Natalie, Kasey, Cole and Nathan, and Kensey. Deb has worn several different hats since she has been here-substitute secretary, logos teacher, served as logos table parent, and sang in the choir. She also joined CWF where she held the positions of vice president and president. Presently Deb plays in the Chimes Choir and teaches along with Linda Pitkin the junior/senior high Sunday School.

Our Mission is to be an open, just and loving Christian Community that welcomes, includes, and serves all children of God.

We welcome all people whatever their gender, race, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, economic circumstance, family configuration, or difference in ability into full participation in the life, leadership and employment of First Christian Church.

Recently, the Church Board and the Board of Elders, in order to be consistent with our church's Mission Statement (above), jointly agreed that our church will offer to do weddings to any couple that approaches us to do one for them as long as they are willing to abide by our current Wedding Policy. That policy states that the couple needs to desire a Christian wedding in a Christian setting and that they agree to meet with the pastor for pre-marital counseling (at least 4 times) prior to the wedding in order to effectively plan and prepare for their marriage.

First Christian News

Average number of service attendees for July: 39
Amount given in July: \$4820.11
Remember to like us on Facebook- "First Christian Church Findlay Ohio"

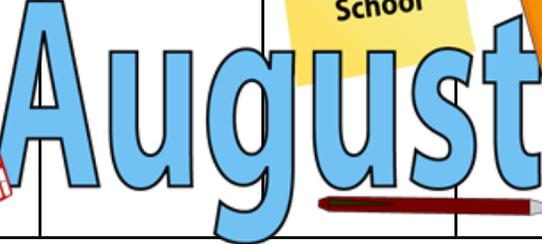
Directions to Read "The Lamplighter" Online!

To access "The Lamplighter" online; go to our website: <http://www.fccfindlay.org>. On the homepage of the website, please click on the page Current Lamplighter Newsletters. There you may choose from the list of the current newsletters. Earlier editions will be available on the home page in the archives list.



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August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
						1 9:30 a.m.-Truth Seekers Bible Study	
2 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship 12:00 Coffee Hour	3	4 Tina out of Office 	5 Tina out of Office 9:00 am- Taize Prayer 	6	7 11:00 am - Bible Study 	8 9:300 a.m.-Truth Seekers Bible Study 10:00 am - Board Meeting	
9 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship 12:00 Coffee Hour	10	11	12 9:00 am- Taize Prayer 	13	14 11:00 am - Bible Study 	15 9:300 a.m.-Truth Seekers Bible Study	
16 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship 12:00 pm -Coffee Hour 2:30 pm-Fox Run Worship	17	18	19 9:00 am- Taize Prayer 	20	21 11:00 am - Bible Study 	22 9:300 a.m.-Truth Seekers Bible Study	
23 8:45 am-Chimes 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship 12:00 pm -Coffee Hour	24	25	26 9:00 am- Taize Prayer	27 	28 11:00 am - Bible Study	29 9:300 a.m.-Truth Seekers Bible Study	
30 Worship and Picnic at Litzenburg West of Findlay on Route 224	31 						

August Serving Schedule

August 2		August 9	
Minister:	Rev. Rick Pulling	Guest Minister:	Rev. Patrice Fatig
Music Coordinator:	Patty Koehler	Music Coordinator:	Patty Koehler
Pianist/Organist	Becky Pulling	Pianist/Organist	Jane Snyder
Children's Sermon:	Robin Kretzinger	Children's Sermon:	Patty Koehler
Greeters:	Karol Smith, John Snyder, Barb England	Greeters:	David England, Tim Wolfe, Beth Reynolds, Martha Stoner
Scripture Reader:	Karol Smith	Scripture Reader:	Tara Miller
Elders:	Beth Reynolds	Elders:	Nancy Peters & Linda Pitkin
Deacons:	Charlotte Ballard, Tara Miller, John Snyder	Deacons:	Barb Brown, Tim Wolfe, Cindi Beltz
Coffee Hour:	Team #3 Bill & Nancy Peters, Karol Smith, Dale Yoder	Coffee Hour:	Team #4 Barb Brown, Patty Koehler, Lisa Wolfe
Counters:	Bill Peters & Robin Kretzinger	Counters:	Bill Peters & Andy Koehler
August 16		August 23	
Minister:	Rev. Rick Pulling	Minister:	Rev. Rick Pulling
Music Coordinator:	Patty Koehler	Music Coordinator:	Patty Koehler
Pianist/Organist	Becky Pulling	Pianist/Organist	Jane Snyder
Children's Sermon:	Robin Kretzinger	Children's Sermon:	Patty Koehler
Greeters:	Beth Reynolds, John Snyder	Greeters:	David England, Karol Smith, Martha Stoner
Scripture Reader:	Mercedes Williamson	Scripture Reader:	Sue Davies
Elders:	Nancy Peters	Elders:	Kathy Brinkman & Beth Reynolds
Deacons:	Bill Peters, David England, Sue Davies	Deacons:	Lisa Wolf, Deb Kirk, Karol Smith
Coffee Hour:	Team #5 Deb Kirk, Barb England, Kathleen Schaffer	Coffee Hour:	Team #1 Cindi Beltz, Beth Reynolds, Kathy Brinkman
Counters:	Bill Peters & Patty Koehler	Counters:	Bill Peters & Tara Miller
August 30-Worship at Litzenburg			
Minister:	Rev. Rick Pulling	<p>THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane</p>  <p>10-21 Copyright 1987 Crested Syndicate, Inc.</p>	
Music Coordinator:	Patty Koehler		
Children's Sermon:	Patty Koehler		
Greeters:	David England, Barb England, Tim Wolfe, Beth Reynolds		
Scripture Reader:	Sue Davies		
Elders:	Robin Kretzinger & Linda Pitkin		
Deacons:	Charlotte Ballard, Tara Miller, John Snyder		
Coffee Hour:	Team #2 Pat Sharninghouse, Linda Pitkin, Sue & Ed Davies		
Counters:	Bill Peters & Patty Koehler		

Sharing brings Joy

To Us. To Others. To God

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DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DELIVER

Sunday Schedule
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Worship Service
Followed by Fellowship-Coffee Hour

August

August 2 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost—Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Reader: Karol Smith

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16

Message: “Church With Integrity”

Theme: To be a whole, complete and undivided church, what specific actions are required?

August 9– Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost—Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Guest Preacher: Rev. Patrice Fatig

Scripture Reader: Tara Miller

Scripture: TBA

Message: “TBA”

Theme: TBA

August 16– Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost – Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Reader: Mercedes Williamson

Scripture: 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Message: “Am I Dying?”

Theme: If we are to be with the dying on their own terms, we may become a channel for God to bless them....and us.

August 23-Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost – Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture Reader: Steven Strayer

Scripture: John 6:56-69

Message: “No Turning Back”

Theme: Are we with Jesus? Bibs or aprons? Comfort or salvation?

August 30- Annual Worship Service and Picnic at Litzenberg State Park

Scripture Reader: Sue Davies

Scripture: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Message: “The Depravity Standard”

Theme: Giving our intentions to God’s service is an important part of discipleship.