

Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

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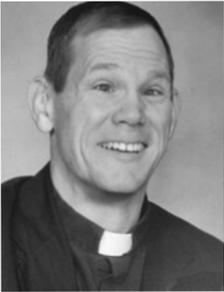
Jonathan Riedel, Pastor



The Churchmouse



June, 2020



Summer's God

"But every good endowment that we possess and every complete gift that we have received must come from above, from the God of all lights, with whom there is never the slightest variation or show of inconstancy." James 1: 17 Phillips Bible

The constancy of summer has never made me its biggest fan. I am truly a creature of Michigan; from snow to rain back to snow again, fluctuating temperatures, and spirals of transforming clouds suit my mood better. Perhaps that is why my favorite seasons are spring and autumn, seasons of transitions and unpredictability, troublesome for those obsessed with planning but delightful to those who do not mind surprises. Their variability suit my changing moods. When I feel like snuggling into a sweater, the temperature will provide a reason to pull one out of my drawers. And when I want to feel the warmth of the sun on my exposed arms, changes are the thermometer will edge upward so I will be able to do so.

My faith has its transitions as well. Some days I am certain of God's presence as I am sure of my hearing loss. Other days, God's silence is indeed intimidating and sometimes disheartening, particularly when my past solutions to my life's challenges prove useless and even destructive. I do not feel alone in this. The conversations and the e-mails I have exchanged with parishioners and strangers show many share this ebbing and waning, this searching for certainty and this willingness to live with doubt. We bask in the good days when we feel secure in God's love and we struggle through the day when we know nothing for certain, clinging to a scrap of memory of a holy love hidden among the tumult. It is no wonder that spring and fall seem such fitting seasons for the humanity of most people's face. From warmth to cold, from calm to tempest, we glide and stumble as we search for the depths of God.

But then comes summer in all its relative predictability. It will be hot. It will have moments of humidity increased and diminished by storms. Winds will rise to furious pace on occasion but most of the time, it will be warm and dry. You can safely put away your long-sleeved clothes and put out your shorts and t-shirts for tomorrow's wearing. You will, if you are so inclined, have the option of grouching about the heat because you will surely find a fellow complainer who is fanning him or herself as well.

In the midst of all the change in our lives, we need a glimmer of such a constant. It may not be the most comfortable for us. We are accustomed, after all, to our lives altering with every new person, every new

decision, every new gain, and every new loss. We may feel forced to redirect our lives and our plans because there are many things we cannot change. Our endless desire for self-improvement and social climbing will come up against those very intractables in our lives. We cannot rearrange our pasts, our genetics, our intelligence, and our social heritage. Sometimes that comforts us, sometimes it does not and we struggle against those barriers because we believe that change should always be at hand.

I struggle with those constancies as well just as I sometimes resent it when I sweat in my bed, trying to sleep as my fan blows back mercilessly hot air across my chest. There is, however, one unchanging aspect that makes all that I cannot change bearable. That is the love and care of God which is, as Phillips' translation of James spells out, has no variation or show of inconstancy. Just as light is there whether the sun or moon is in our sky. God's presence, even we cannot quite feel it, is there and, because of that, it is our greatest gift and our good endowment. It is the source of all the good in our lives, particularly when we are too sad or too frazzled to appreciate its presence.

Constant as the summer heat. Constant as the summer humidity. Constant as the dryness that turns the grass yellow and keeps the corn short. Even when we do not appreciate it, God's love remains.

So I suppose the trick is learning how to appreciate that constant love just as the trick is to treasure the constants of every season of our lives. The blooming flowers. The heat. The falling leaves. The snow that drifts. God's loving hands in shot through them all, constant and trustworthy. Even when we are not brave or strong enough to seek it. And that is the best constancy of all.

The Rev Jonathan D. Riedel-Pastor,
Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

NCUCC Scholarship



Samantha Toth

I come from a big hunting family that loves nature. I grew up on a small rural farm with cows and chickens. I have spent most of my life outdoors helping my dad plant crops and tending to my grandparents' livestock. A day on the farm strenghtens my patience, my problem-solving abilities, and my curiosity. As much as I love the work aspect of the farm, I love the science behind how life works even more. That is why I became interested in the world of science.

As I grew up, my love for science exploded. I became fascinated with biology and chemistry, and soon discovered what a pathologist was. It then became my dream job.

Samanatha will be attending Kalamazoo College.



Deadline for the July Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the **July Churchmouse** to the office by **Friday, June 26**.

You may e-mail information to:
Churchmouse @ newaygoucc.org
or leave a hard copy in the office.



Pick a Topic Sermons

Pastor would like to hear from you about which topics you would like Pastor Jon to feature during his *Pic a Topic* sermons. If you have a suggestion, you can call Pastor at 652-6624, or e-mail him at

revjdriedel@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report

April 16, 2020 to
May 15, 2020



Income		Total Exp.
April 18	\$2,455.00	
April 27	965.00	
May 6	2,410.00	
May 11	1,125.00	
Total	\$6,955.00	6,952.09
Difference	2.91	

Phillips Fund	\$149,637.24
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Family Fund	\$62,570.40
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Both funds are starting to recover. Good news for all. Thanks to everyone who is sending money to the church. As you can see, it covers our bills so far. We are all grateful for your generous support of the church and its missions.

Dawn Anderson, Treasurer



Mrs. Jones got a little too used to watching online worship from home.

June Noon Classes

The Major Prophets

We will continue to have our tele-conferencing class each noon this month. Just dial 978-990-5000 and then punch in 283560#. This month we will look at the Hebrew Scriptures' Major Projects. They are major mainly because they have some of the longest books in this part of the Scriptures and carry many of the important ideas that Jesus used to share the Good News. We will discuss each book and see what questions they have to offer us. Here is a schedule:

June 02-Isaiah

June 09-Second Isaiah

June 16-Jeremiah

June 23-Ezekiel

June 30-Daniel



Birthdays in June

5 - Deb Burton
18 - Donna Edighoffer
20 - Betty Bell
21 - Sandy Purcell

Anniversaries in June

3 - Dick & Gloria Winters
8 - Don & Joyce Mead
10 - Don & Miriam Strohpaul
25 - Klaus & Debi Walter

Phones for Church Services & Meetings

Sunday Services will continue to be on the phone also, at 3:00 pm at 978-990-5000, then 283560#.

June Worship Schedule

June 07 - Trinity Sunday

Communion

Jesus Asks the Questions - Longing

John 1:29, John 18:7

June 14 - Summer Series

Jesus Asks the Questions - Compassion

Luke 7:44

June 21 - Summer Series

Jesus Asks the Questions - Identity

Mark 5:9

June 28 - Summer Series

Jesus Asks the Questions -

Faith and Doubt

Luke 8:25, Luke 18:8 & Matthew 14:31

