



Christian Courier

First Christian Church of Minneapolis (Disciples of Christ)

July 4, 2009

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On the Web
fccminneapolis.org

Pastor Bob's NEW blog
[The Spiritual Journey](#)

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What are the marks of a Disciple??

What does it mean to be part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? What do we stand for? What are the "marks" of a Disciple?

- ❖ We're a "People of the Table," where communion and remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper is the foundation/centerpiece of our worship of God.
- ❖ We're a "People of the Book." The Bible is the Word of God, and we don't have doctrines or creeds that serve other churches as their basic proclamations of the faith.
- ❖ Christian Unity is our "Polar Star." We were founded on the American frontier, in a time of great doctrinal divisiveness, in an attempt to unite the body of Christ under New Testament guidance. Ecumenical leadership, mission, and cooperation have always been a part of our mission and ministry.
- ❖ We believe in the principle of "Rational Faith." Theology has to make sense and fit with reality as we know it (with the admission that life is frequently a mystery.) Disciples have had a strong commitment to education, founding over 400 colleges, universities, and seminaries over our history. We practice what's called "believer's baptism," meaning that a person is baptized when they can make their own intelligent, spiritual choice to accept Jesus as the Son of God.
- ❖ We practice the "Priesthood of All Believers." Disciples' practice of ministry is led by laity, not clergy. Ministers are there to help, to provide servant leadership, to increase understanding of Scripture and ministry, but the laity ARE the church.

Coming up:

July 25th (Saturday):
Amy Morton's HS
Graduation Party
4:30 pm - ????
3504 -32nd Ave NE
St Anthony Village

July 29-Aug. 2
DoC General Assembly

August 20-22
Grande Day Sale

BOOK GROUP UPDATE FOR THE SUMMER!!

We'll be meeting Wednesday, July 8 and Monday, August 10 for book group this summer. Our July book is **Sing Them Home**, by Stephanie Kallos. In August, we are reading **Away**, by Amy Bloom.

Sing Them Home is the Kallos' second book; we all so much enjoyed her first, **Broken For You**, a couple of years ago. Various reviews describe **Sing Them Home** as "a beautifully written novel," and "a magnificent tapestry of lives connected and undone by tragedy (and) poised for redemption."

Away is a "sweeping saga of endurance and rebirth," telling the story of a Russian Jewish woman's struggles to survive in America in the mid-1920's, with "an extraordinary range of characters, settings and emotions."

Disciples Practice Acceptance with Others

A Look at the Brite Side



Pastor Bob Brite

Being straight, I don't understand what it's like to be gay, just as, being male, I don't understand what it's like to be female. That doesn't stop me from working at such understanding, though, for, to me, that is one of the most important jobs in the Christian job-description: Practicing acceptance with others.

What defines a genuine Christian community? It seems to me that the first thing on the list is a quality of acceptance – the acceptance of each other who, on our individual journeys, are working through our status as sinners who need God's grace. I have the sense that First Christian Church is a community of acceptance. We're all God's children, no matter what our background, orientation, hurts, pains, or gifts.

Wandering through the "Gay Pride" block party at Loring Park on Sunday, I was impressed by how far we, as a culture, have come in terms of acceptance and, in reflection, how far we have yet to go. Thirty years ago a party like the one I walked through yesterday would have evoked protests similar to what happened to African Americans in the 50's and 60's. Yet, yesterday, matters of GLBT acceptance was demonstrated by people of all ages and orientations; families and youth of all apparent orientations were present in abundance; businesses such as Target and Best Buy were hawking their wares.

At the same time, a good chunk of the booths were promoting further human rights initiatives – a good thing which, at the same time, reminds us just how

difficult and prejudiced we as a human race can be, and are.

The Bible has very little to say about matters of sexual orientation. Fascinatingly enough, the primary passage from Romans 1, which Paul wrote as a condemnation of temple prostitution in Rome and whose interpretation has been grabbed onto as a prohibition of gay behavior by some, concludes with this wonderful verse in Chapter 2: "You have no excuse, whoever you, when you judge others, for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the same thing." Most extremist positions kind of leave off that passage, which properly concludes the discussion. (I wonder why.)

Being straight, I don't understand what it's like to be gay, just as, being male, I don't understand what it's like to be female. That doesn't stop me from working at such understanding, though, for, to me, that is one of the most important jobs in the Christian job-description: Practicing acceptance with others.

I'd like to see YOU on Sunday, Bob

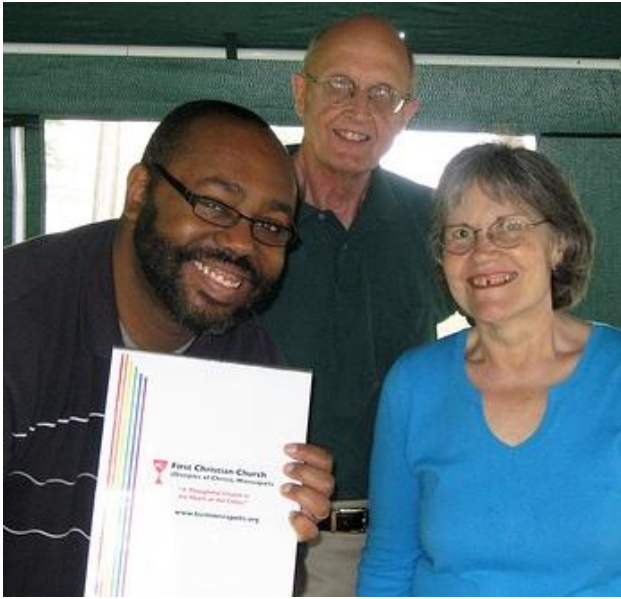
In our prayers

Gracious God, we lift up these persons in our prayers, asking the blessing of your Grace and outpouring of your Love upon them.

- James Merkel home and recovering from stroke
- Phyllis Dunlap at home recovering from parathyroid surgery
- David Pyles and family as he undergoes cancer therapy at Mayo's
- Jeanette Murphy, Deb's mom, with heart problems
- Anne Kinley-Miller recovering from reconstructive surgery on her neck
- continuing employment concerns for many in our congregation and beyond
- the congregation of First Christian Church and our future

FCC Presence Felt at Gay Pride Festival

--Dennis Sanders, Associate Pastor for Diversity and Mission



I remember attending the Regional Assembly in 2006. General Minister and President Sharon Watkins was the keynote speaker at that event and she said something that has stayed with me. She said that the business of the church is not to bring the world into the church, but to bring the church into the world.

On June 27, we saw an example of First Christian Church, Minneapolis, bring the church into the world.

For the first time, First Christian participated in the Twin Cities Gay Pride Festival. The Downtown congregations have a tradition of having a booth in Loring Park where they offer information of each church. First took part with a new brochure about the church as well as cookies!

Warren and Karen Westphal volunteered to staff the booth on Saturday, June 28. They did an amazing job, working for hours longer than they had signed up!

Will this bring more people into the doors of First? I don't know. But the important thing is that we were a presence at Gay Pride, a witness that followers of Jesus Christ can be welcoming to all of God's children. In short, we brought the church into the world.

I am thankful for the Westphals as well as for Ann Wolverton who bought the cookies, and for the hospitality of Phil Asigan an elder at Westminster Presbyterian in Minneapolis and the coordinator for the downtown churches' booth. May God bless our work of hospitality and welcome.

Board Notes from Tuesday, June 16

The official church board met Tuesday, June 16 to hear reports and updates; no motions were passed. Financial topics discussed were the following:

1. Skip Wolverton reported that shared financial issues with MIA are stabilizing.
2. Max Hurlocker is working on setting up a new contract with the boiler company.
3. The Hearthstone Room remodeling expenses will be approximately \$35,000.

With Kathy Hintz moving this summer, 2 were named to fill her roles: Bobbie Hall was named treasurer for Women's Ministries, and Tom Curry will serve as vice chair of the FCC Board for 6 months.

Note from Chris Morton

Dear FCC Family—

Thank you! For years of relationships, wonderful fellowship, deepening of faith, and fun. It was nice of Bob to recognize the adventure that lies ahead, and the transitions of today during worship on Sunday. I look forward to what I hear & see in future years about FCC.

Chris Morton

Bi-Weekly Calendar

Summer Sundays at First Christian Church

Prayer Time, 9:00, library
Worship at 9:30 am
Fellowship Hour, 10:45 am
Church School Classes, 11 am

This Week at FCC

Sunday, June 5

Bible Study, 11 am

Monday, July 6

Independence Day Holiday -- offices closed

Tuesday, July 7

Worship Committee 6 pm

Wednesday, July 8

Lectionary Bible Study 6 pm

Book Group @ Westphals 7 pm

Friday, July 10

Article deadline for next Courier

Next Week at FCC

Sunday, July 12

Bible Study 11 am

Tuesday, July 14

Property Committee 7 pm

Wednesday, July 15

Finance Committee 5:30 pm

Reflections on the Word

From Lectionary for 7/5/09

Mark 6:11: "If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them."

Reflection: Few churches today say they do not welcome everyone. But people know when they are welcome, and when they are not. Welcoming balances giving space and attention. "Welcome" has no "us" and "them," only "We."

Prayer: Welcoming Savior, your gifts to us are healing and an eternal welcome. Help us to welcome others as you welcome us. Amen.

--Chris Wogaman

*A Thoughtful Church in the
Heart of the City*

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by **Fri., July 10**, for next issue.

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