

# Foresight

Looking to the Future

Christian Church of Villa Park

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Pastor: Rev. Laura Jennison Reed



**Tuesday, September 5, 2017**



“Let love be genuine,” says Paul in his Letter to the Romans. It seems so easy and ends up being so difficult. I think part of the difficulty comes because we struggle to understand what this love is. We say “I love you” to family and maybe some friends. We might even talk about loving our neighbors or the outsider or the other or our enemies. But are these the same love? Do we mean the word the same way? What all does love entail?

Often, love is “supposed” to mean a deep care that goes beyond and often discounts the flaws of the other person. Sometimes, however, we might actually mean “I love it when you act in the ways I find most acceptable” or “I am expected to say these words so here they are.” These last two meanings, I think, often end up being what we are really saying when we talk about loving people outside those closest to us: our neighbors, the stranger, the enemy. We say we love these people because Jesus told us we are supposed to and we want to follow Jesus.

The kind of love Christ calls us to is what Paul called genuine. In Romans, the description of this love is one of ever expanding circles. First, love each other: honor one another, serve together, rejoice in hope, hold through suffering, and pray together. Love requires being in community with other people and letting them be their full, Spirit-gifted selves. Second, love your sisters and brothers of faith who are not part of your immediate community: contribute to their needs and welcome strangers. So far, not too hard. These are people we often have a lot in common with. We have shared stories to build on and to buoy us through times of struggle.

But Paul doesn’t stop there. He goes right on to say, “Bless those who persecute you.” What? Extend love to those who clearly don’t love us? Yes, Paul says, them too. This goes out to everyone. Rejoice with each other, yes, but also rejoice with all who rejoice. Weep together, but also weep with anyone else sobbing in fear, hurt, despair. Don’t assume you’re better than anyone else in any way. If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they’re thirsty, give them something to drink. They might never understand why you don’t meet their hate with hate, but you’ll know. You’ll know you are firmly planted in the love of God, so firmly planted that nothing can keep you from passing that love on. Then again, maybe they will be changed by genuine love.

We live in a world of deep divisions. We participate in a culture that loves an “us v. them” narrative. We have entered a time when people are less likely to have real conversation with people holding different ideas even as our country grows daily more diverse. Into that Paul’s words of the love given by Jesus speak. Live with love, love which acknowledges each and every person’s humanity even as we speak against hate. Genuine love must reject the systemic evils in our culture and society. This does not mean rejecting the individual, rather rejecting hateful ideology, language and actions that deny the humanity and prevent others from living fully and freely as God intended.

Let us show God’s genuine love to the world.

*Laura*

**Fall, Winter, Spring Worship Time**

A reminder that worship begins at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays through May 2018.

### **August Food Pantry Stats**

199 Households Served

803 People Served

### **CCVP in 2020**

We are taking steps to live into our new Design, enhancing our relationships with God, one another, and the community around us. In the last month, CCVP in 2020 talked with the Elders, envisioning how we live into the details of our new design and sharing joys and concerns about what lies ahead. We continue to explore what this all looks like.

Now we enter the practical experimentation phase. Our Design became effective on September 1. We will be making decisions in new ways and begin living into new ways of doing ministry. On November 12, we will have our first Ministry Gathering.

You continue to be an integral part of living into our new Design. We cannot move without you. We ask that you continue to be in prayer with and for our congregation as we follow God's leadings. God is at the heart of all we do and your prayers help keep a sense of the Spirit's presence fresh. Thank you.

*Laura*

### **Spiritual Gifts Classes**

As part of our effort to follow the lead of the Spirit, we are offering a class called *Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts*.

Our first group will complete their study this month, with a Ministry Celebration held during and after worship on August 27. The course will be offered again in eight 1-hour sessions starting on Sunday, September 10 at 9:00am and as four 2-hour sessions beginning on Wednesday, October 4 at 1:00pm. There is a sign-up sheet at church for these classes. If there is another time that works better for you, please let us know.

As we move forward with our new structure, the Design of the Christian Church of Villa Park, this is a perfect time for each of us to discover our gifts and the ministry to which we are called.

*Laura Reed and Betty Prorak*

### **Help for Texas**

If you would like to donate to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, you can do so with a check written to the church designated to Week of Compassion or online at <https://docgeneralassembly.webconnex.com/weekofcompassion>

### **Online Course on Worship**

Here's a link to the Region's article about an online course on worship that begins on September 10. This is free! I've signed up for it, but this is for anyone else who may be interested.

<https://cciwdisciples.org/2017/07/the-gift-of-revitalization-6-week-interactive-online-worship-learning-with-dr-marcia-mcfree-free-to-you/>

*Laura*

## Reading Suggestions



“A book from a viewpoint you disagree with”

People of good faith can come to different opinions on how we as individuals and communities should live our lives. Below are pairs of books that look at big questions from variant viewpoints.

On what principles do we center our lives?

- *Sabbath as Resistance*, Walter Brueggemann  
Offers a transformative vision of the wholeness God intends, giving Christians a glimpse of a more fulfilling and simpler life through Sabbath observance.
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey  
Helps readers find solutions to their personal and professional problems and achieve a life characterized by fairness, integrity, honesty, and dignity.

What is the best way to alleviate poverty?

- *Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail*, Paul Polak  
Confronting the ideas that we can donate people out of poverty, national economic growth will end poverty, and Big Business will end poverty.
- *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, Jeffrey Sachs  
Distills more than thirty years of experience to offer a uniquely informed vision of the steps that can transform impoverished countries into prosperous ones.

Can war be just?

- *Just War Against Terror*, Jean Bethke Elshtain  
Advocating an ethic of responsibility, Elshtain forces us to ask tough questions not only about the nature of terrorism, but about ourselves.
- *The Politics of Jesus*, John Howard Yoder  
Examines the portrait of Jesus as an apolitical figure and attempt to clarify the true impact of Jesus' life, work, and teachings on his disciples' social behavior.

## Love Your Neighbor Day 2017 – Volunteers Needed!



Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Love Your Neighbor Day will take place on September 23, 2017. We have received over 24 applications from homeowners. If you have a friend who you think would be interested, the volunteer application is available at the CCVP website [www.ccvponline.net](http://www.ccvponline.net) or you can pick up a printed copy of the form at church. Please get these applications in as soon as possible so the committee knows how many homeowners can be helped.

If you have a cooler or two that can be used on September 23 for Love Your Neighbor Day, please let Ruth Martin know at [rcmartin7@comcast.net](mailto:rcmartin7@comcast.net) or 708-703-7107.

## Fund-raising with Gift Cards

The next order for Jewel gift cards will be placed at the end of this month. Please sign up or let Betty Prorak know of your order by September 24. The church receives 5% of the cost of any cards we order as a group.

The next Great Lakes Scrip gift card order is due on Sunday, November 5. There are many different gift cards available, each giving the church a portion of your purchase price. If this will be your first order from [www.shopwithscrip.com](http://www.shopwithscrip.com), please contact Betty Prorak ([BLProrak@yahoo.com](mailto:BLProrak@yahoo.com)) for the church's enrollment code.

## Last Report from the Board of Directors

At our meeting on August 26, the Board acknowledged that as of September 1, 2017 the group will be designated the Stewardship Council and will begin to function as described in the Design of the Christian Church of Villa Park. Decisions will be made by discernment.

Laura reported that she has been busy with activities outside the church, acting on our behalf:

- The community interfaith group put together a service in response to the events in Charlottesville. About 75 community members attended. An interfaith Thanksgiving service will be held at the Islamic Foundation in Villa Park on Sunday, November 19 at 3:00pm.
- CCVP is now responsible for a monthly worship service at Terra Vista of Oakbrook Terrace, a memory care center, at 1:30pm on the third Monday of the month. Laura and John Martin led the first service. Other local congregations will cover the other Mondays.
- Friday Night Connect is starting again with high school students planning events for 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders. The first evening will be October 6. Events will be planned for three Fridays each month, the first, second and third Fridays. All students will gather at one location, with the locations rotating among Calvary United Methodist of Villa Park, York Center Church of the Brethren, and Harvard Avenue Church. (If you would like to volunteer to help at one or more of these gatherings, please let Laura know.)
- Laura has been in contact with Julie Fleuriner Moore (new pastor at Calvary United Methodist) and Zach Wagner (pastor at St. Paul Lutheran) about opening community conversations between people who don't agree with one another. The three of them are working together to see this happen.

The Board updated notes on property projects to be done and approved vacation time for Laura, one day in September and four in October.

Laura, John Martin, and Betty Prorak will comprise the narrative budget committee for this fall, for the 2018 budget.

The Stewardship Council will have its first meeting on October 14 at 9:30am.

*Betty Prorak*

## August 31, 2017 Financial Summary

	August	Year to date
Income for budget items:	\$7,893.95	\$68,216.30
Budgeted expenses:	\$7,841.15	\$71,633.87



The local CROP Walk that benefits the Disciples Food Pantry and many other hunger relief efforts will be on Sunday, October 15, 2017 with registration at 1:00pm and step-off at 1:30pm from Lombard Commons Park.

You can register online to be a walker. You can also donate to one of our walkers or to the Christian Church of Villa Park Team at:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/lombardil/Team/View/43561/Christian-Church-of-Villa-Park> .

If you prefer to write a check to make a donation, please write the check to the Christian Church of Villa Park with a designation to "CROP Walk." The church treasurer (Chuck Bohl) or financial secretary (Betty Prorak) will see that your donation gets to CROP.

## Choir News



Choir practices will begin again soon. If you are interested in singing with the choir, please let Eric Hays know so that he will include you in the emails about rehearsals. (phone 630-577-7286, email [hayskeys@gmail.com](mailto:hayskeys@gmail.com))

## Joys and Concerns



Tina Marie Amodeo finally got her first dose of the new MS medication. She is already feeling more energetic!

Eric Hays' band Blood Red Boots was on tour August 18-21, and ended with playing at the Great American Eclipse near Carbondale. (Those in Facebook can check it out on the band's page.)

We give thanks for all the community members who gathered for an Interfaith Prayer Vigil for Peace and Justice in the face of extremism on August 17 at York Center Church of the Brethren.

Aurora Slinkman returned to college on Sunday, September 3.

Laura and Josh Reed are working on toilet training Amelia. Laura gives thanks for Josh's support in this endeavor and finds joy in their continued parenting partnership.

Chuck Bohl's wife, Diane, had surgery to insert a cochlear implant. Other than some temporary dizziness, Diane has been recovering well.

Carl Kagebein is recovering well from surgery to insert a pacemaker.

Jane Reid is gradually recovering from shingles and infections on her face.

Dwight Bailey asks for prayers for Allen Harper who has been in the hospital.

Joan Kagebein had a fall and is recovering.

James Schultz is in Japan for 3 weeks for work. He will return to the US this Saturday.

Deloris Yowell recently fell (her walker ran away from her) and broke her arm. She was hospitalized for a few days, but is back at home at the Springs.

Chuck Bohl asks for prayers for a friend Brooke who, a month away from her wedding, has learned she has aggressive breast cancer.

Cindy (Robbins) Carlander had a biopsy last week that confirmed she has breast cancer.

## Birthday & Anniversary



8 Jerry Robbins

17 Sue and Ray Severino



Aurora Slinkman's campus address this year is Pioneer Hall, #317, 1111 Sentry Drive, Waukesha, WI 53186.

Artemis Malos and Gary Smith have postponed their wedding to next year because of finances.

Heather Smith has been doing well with her face painting business, but has been having problems with hives and bronchitis.

Doug Reid has returned to Texas after being home to care for his mother (Jane) through the worst of her shingles.

Former member Bob Lawson is participating in a marathon on October 21 to raise money for World Vision. To learn more and/or to donate, go to:

<https://www.teamworldvision.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.participant&participantID=997966>



# RECONCILIATION MINISTRY

Special Offering Received on September 24 and October 1

## About the Special Offering

The Special Offering is used to fund our Church's mission imperative to become a pro-reconciling and anti-racist church utilizing experiential education, inclusive worship and intentional dialogue. Our efforts to promote healing, relationship and restoration in the whole family of God are enlivened by funds from this offering. Through it we are able to provide programs for leadership development, curriculum for dialogue and learning, and partnerships within the Church and our communities.

Recent events have reignited the conversation about human brokenness evidenced in the sin of racism and perpetuated in our institutional structures and systems. Your generous giving to Reconciliation Ministry is transforming lives and strengthening Christ's witness in the world showing that we love one another, even as Christ continues to love us!

## Why Have a Special Offering?

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has a history dating from the 1960s of sharing our resources to address the racism of our society and the racism within our own church. We have called this process the Reconciliation Ministry.

We receive this offering in the fall and use the funds throughout the year to give grants to the pro-reconciliation/anti-racism initiative to organize to dismantle systems and structures that perpetuate this sin of division within the Church.

The 2020 Vision adopted by our church names this work as one of the four priorities of our mission together as a whole church. This voluntary annual offering is the only source of funding for this ministry.

As the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) lives into its identity as a "movement for wholeness in a fragmented world" contributions to this offering facilitate camp and conference and leadership development opportunities as well as programs for dialogue across difference that promotes life-giving community within our beloved church and among the whole family of God.