

## *The Reverend's Ruminations*

The blessings and responsibilities of being a Christian have been on my mind recently. As I write this, we're in the midst of a busy week preparing for our annual Fall Festival Ham Loaf Dinner (at a new date and time). It takes a lot of work—and no small bit of organization—to bring together an event like this, but when I see Heritage Hall filled with church and community members enjoying a great meal and supporting our church financially, I am reminded of the blessing of leading an active and vibrant church. Members of our church, both young and old, diligently carry out the responsibilities of advertising, preparation, serving, and cleanup—and deserve our heartfelt thanks for making it a welcoming and delicious dinner. Their efforts help our church continue to put its best foot forward in our community. If you didn't have a chance to be involved this time around, please plan to volunteer next time! Blessings and responsibilities go hand in hand.

As I visited and shared communion with our members at Ingleside, Goldfinch Estates, Woodland Manor, and Lakeview Care Center (as well as a home visit) over the last few weeks, I was again reminded of the blessings of being a Christian (and specifically United Church of Christ). It was evident in the camaraderie we enjoyed, as well as our common belief in the importance of the sacraments.

In many of these locations, we sit together around a table or even a comfortable living room setting and share “communion” in two senses: we take part in the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but we also spend time catching up on ideas, opinions, and feelings about our own lives and the life of the church. Many times our members long to be able to visit the church building again, but more often they wish they could see their old friends from the congregation. Do you notice the implied responsibility that accompanies the blessing of our many devoted older church members?

At the beginning of last month (amidst the normal busy-ness of church and community activities) several of the ladies of our congregation volunteered to support the family of Bill Norman as both they and we grieved his passing. The funeral and reception were held at Lakeview Care Center in this case, but our members stepped forward to share the church's love by serving the coffee and bars—and of course many hugs and kind words with Bev and the rest of the family. What more poignant illustration of the awesome blessing and important responsibility of being a Christian, than to gather around the loved ones of one of our own members as they encounter the reality of death?

Jesus spoke many times of both the blessing and the responsibility of being a Christian. In the Gospel of Mark he says: “...*but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (10:43-44). Our dual responsibility is to serve both Christ and those who are in need; but the blessing we know as Christians is that our Savior Jesus died for us, rose in glory, and continues to serve at the right hand of God for all eternity.

As you reflect on the blessings and responsibilities of being a Christian, would you prayerfully consider serving in a more active role at First Congregational United Church of Christ for a time? We are in the process of seeking board and council members for a new term, but always need short-term help in the way of kitchen workers, singers, Christmas decorators, or scripture readers as well. It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes an entire congregation to keep a church functional and vibrant!

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*

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