



AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Pastor Rosemary Captain

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Something came up during our Bible Study a few weeks ago. I think I've heard it before, but now I would like to address this concern that bothers me.

As any good pastor would do, I have encouraged you to share the good news of the Gospel with others. I understand the hesitancy. Many of us were taught not to "wear our religion on our sleeves", I believe was how my father said it. "It's nobody's business where or how often you go to church". "Never talk about politics or religion in conversation with your friends". Does that sound about right?

Besides those things we were taught from childhood, there is another reason some people don't want to mention their beliefs to others. They are afraid they will be "attacked" by people who can spew out Bible verses they have memorized. It appears that some people some churches feel that memorization is a very important part of being a Christian and if you don't know the Bible front to back, you are not a "real" Christian.



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I decided to do a little checking on that. I want to verify if that is true so I went to the "first" person who was called "Christ". Did Jesus REALLY say we can't be Christians if we don't know the Bible and have verses memorized?

I'll let you in on a not-so-secret short cut. Type in biblegateway.com and put in whatever you're looking for. If it's just an idea or theme, put it in and select what Bible translation you prefer and Bible Gateway will do the work. All the places in the Bible where that word can be found will pop up; in the New and Old Testaments plus which book of the Bible its in. Who needs to memorize any Bible verses when, with a few clicks, you can find the inspirational or encouraging words of Jesus.

In the Gospel of Matthew 22:36-40 I found these words which I believe are fundamental to our definition of what is a Christian; “Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ He replied, “*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.*” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: *You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.* ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

In the Gospel of John we can read in chapter 8; “²⁹ He who sent me is with me. He doesn’t leave me by myself, because I always do what makes him (God) happy.” ³⁰ While Jesus was saying these things, many people came to believe in him. ³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teaching. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” And in Romans Chapter 10; “¹⁷ So, faith comes from listening, but it’s listening by means of Christ’s message.”

Search as I might, I could not find anywhere in the Bible that says verses must be memorized. However, it is true that Jesus quoted from the Old (First) Testament and he also read from the scroll in the synagogue. Ancient people did not have Bibles on their coffee tables. The only sacred words written down were in the Torah scrolls which only the synagogues had. As a child, Jesus learned scripture and memorized some, since he had no books or computers to use. The Psalms were actually hymns that were sung making it easier for people to remember.

What do present day pastors say makes a person a Christian? Rev. Alistair Begg, a Baptist wrote; “To be a Christian,” he says, “is to declare that Jesus is Lord. His Lordship affects both our minds, teaching us what to believe, and our morals, changing the way we live.” While each follower of Christ is uniquely called, all Christians share the same fixed features of genuine faith. Belief in **God** the Father, **Jesus** Christ as the Son of **God**, and the Holy Spirit. The death, descent into hell, resurrection and ascension of Christ.”

Pastor Thomas Nelson from the Brunstad Christian Church wrote, “the word “Christian” means “like Christ,” or “to be like Christ.” Being a Christian means to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ and to be as He was in this world. The emphasis here is on doing, and not being hypocritical. Jesus said, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*” Matthew 7:21. Here we see that we do not enter the kingdom of God solely on the grounds that Jesus Christ, the Just One, died for us. Faith in Him must also result in doing righteousness in our personal lives. (2 Timothy 2:19,22).

What does the United Church of Christ state, concerning what is a Christian? I looked at the UCC Book of Worship to find the vows we take at confirmation, affirmation of baptism, and for church membership. Each time the candidate is asked, “Do you believe in God? Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?” There are a few more questions such as “Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?” No where does it say you must memorize so many verses to be a member of the church. So, I believe we can say that myth has been found to be false.



You might be thinking, “but Pastor, why do you keep asking us to join Bible Studies or Adult Sunday School. Why do you preach from the Bible all the time?”

If we say we are following the teachings of Jesus, we need to know what exactly he taught. Would you agree? No one should be fearful of the Bible, as large and as confusing as it can be. That’s why getting together in groups to discuss and study the words is a wonderful place to begin to enhance our understanding.



Basic knowledge of the book is helpful such as the two testaments. The Old Testament tells how the ancient people responded to God, plus it has the two stories of creation, Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, and all those stories we heard about. Plus, the Psalms and Prophets are also in the Old Testament. It was all before the time of Jesus. The New Testament contains the Four Gospels which tell the stories of Jesus from different viewpoints. Acts is the story of the Disciples/Apostles after the Ascension of Jesus and the beginnings of the church of people who follow Jesus. The Apostle Paul has seven letters we can read. These letters went out to churches he had founded and some he hoped to visit. There are also writings from people called “the interpreters” of Paul. Lastly is the book of Revelation recalling a dream that John of Patmos had concerning the end of time.

And that’s it. IF ANY PERSON STARTS SPEWING BIBLE VERSES AT YOU, PROUDLY SAY, “I FOLLOW JESUS. I LOVE GOD AND I LOVE MY NEIGHBORS.” Those are the best words any challenged Christian should need.



Peace and blessing on your journey. Pastor Rosemary

August Birthdays:

8/3 Jeanette Brown
8/4 Bill Underwood
8/5 Eric Moayer
8/7 Brad Eisenhauer

8/9 Mike Stidham
8/13 Don Krieg
8/23 Cindy Harris
8/23 Amanda Hamilton



August Anniversaries:

8/6 Gene & Sue Ganschinetz #43
8/26 Gary & Carla Warning #42



Remember our Shut-ins:

Ardella Morris
1201 Hartman Lane Apt. 235
Belleville, IL 6222

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Darlene Bax
220 Fieldcrossing Drive Apt. 40
Highland, IL 62249

Don Krieg
200 Spivey Lane
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Terry Kissel
429 South Main Street Room 228
Shiloh, IL 62269

NEW ADDRESS

Wayne Schlosser
PO BOX 3404
South Padre Island, TX 78597
Cell # 618-540-8390 Home # 956-299-4147

FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION We will be collecting food for the food pantry in the parking lot by Sue Ganschinetz's van on the **second** Sunday this month. That will be **August 9**, which will also be communion.

ST. JOHN PRAYER LIST:

Tom Miller, Matt Brown, Rich Schmitt, Nelson Libell, Dave Seneczyn, Eric White, Lori Riess, Charles Chamberlin, Donna Isselhard, Mitch Nallie, Candy Pearce, Greg Talley, Carol Meyer, Leah Williams, Pat Holtgrave, Jane Riess, Shari Hamilton, Charlotte Watson, Tom Petroff, Becky Ballard.



Condolences to the family and friends of

Barbara Moran, who transitioned to life eternal on July 29, 2020. Visitation will be Friday August 7 from 4-8 pm and Saturday August 8 from 10-11 am. Service at 11 am on Saturday August 8, with grave side service to follow. All at Lake View Funeral Home at 5000 North Illinois Street.

Cards may be sent to Larry & Becky Riess and Family at 304 Turnbridge Drive, Swansea, IL 62226.

EVENING CIRCLE

We had a meeting on July 12th after church. Members voted for the officers to disburse \$750.00 to different mission projects. The monies were divided as follows: Parking Lot Fund \$150.00, Kindercottage \$400.00, Hoyleton \$100.00, DuBois \$100.00.

I think we can do some projects even if we do not meet every month. More details will be available in next month's newsletter.

Quote from Woman's World magazine:

"Even a flutter of hope in our sails can move us forward."

Take care and stay safe, Eileen Gammon, Co-Chair

August

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2 Worship at 10 am	3	4 Boy Scout meeting Bible Study at 7 pm	5	6 AA Meeting	7	8
9 Service of Word & Sacrament 10 am	10	11 Boy Scout meeting Bible Study at 7 pm	12 Church Council 7 pm Via Zoom	13 AA Meeting	14	15
16 Worship at 10 am	17	18 Boy Scout meeting Bible Study at 7 pm	19	20 AA Meeting	21	22
23 Worship at 10 am	24	25 Boy Scout meeting Bible Study at 7 pm	26	27 AA Meeting	28	29
30 Worship at 10 am	31					