

The Spirit

of Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church

January 21, 2014

Ephesians 2:11-22

"How can God allow that?" or, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" or, "Why doesn't God do something about that?"

These are questions we all ask and hear. There are no satisfactory answers that I know of, and I feel the "God moves in mysterious ways" or "God has a plan which we can't see" platitudes are rather hollow and unsatisfactory approaches to a real dilemma.

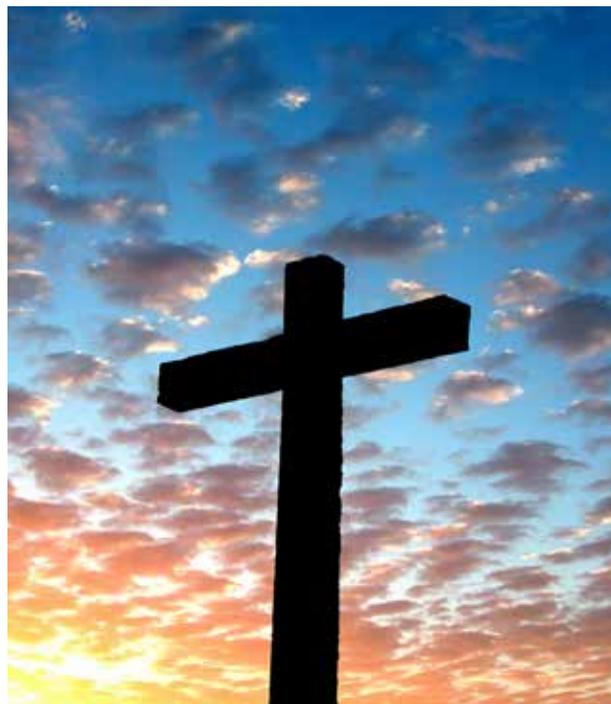
Often overlooked, however, is the underlying hostility within the questions. There is often a sense of entitlement, and wishing bad upon another is hardly "love your neighbor." I recoil at the implication that God should allow bad things to happen to some people. It seems to presume that there are those who deserve to suffer. Admittedly, we will pay for our actions and choices, but does anyone deserve fatal and painful illness or random violence?

Believing this is how providence, or fate, or God operates leads easily into an attitude that "they" do not deserve God's love or my love. It leads to erecting those very "walls of hostility" that Ephesians tells us not to build, creating a "them" and "us" mentality which destroys community.

Jesus totally rejects this approach and this concept of God's actions and intent. He proves there is only one divide...that between humanity and God. We are all in this together, God is wholly other and yet loves, forgives, cries with us over every pain, and wishes nothing but graceful good on all of humanity.

The cross of Christ is where all the bad happened to the only good One. It was where the guilt of all was shouldered by the only truly innocent One. Rather than building a wall of hostility, Christ's sacrifice smashed all divisions and He died for all. Including me, including you and including "them".

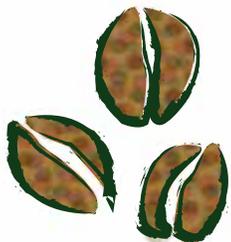
Good and glorious things happen to good and bad people by the actions of Christ. That is the meaning of Savior. That is the Good News.



Coffee, anyone?

Did you know coffee is the second most heavily traded commodity in the world after oil? The small farmers who grow our coffee often struggle just to make a simple living. Many live in the poorest countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, isolated from markets and without affordable credit.

If you drink coffee or tea, or enjoy chocolate, you can make a difference. These fair trade products are available for purchase in Fellowship Hall. Stop by the Coffee Cart and see what's there this week. We also brew



fair trade coffee in the pots for Fellowship Hour. Grocery stores are beginning to offer fair trade products, as well. Just look for fair trade certification on the package.

Fair trade purchases ensure that farmers are paid a fair price, offered affordable credit, and supported in sustainable agriculture practices. Help support small farmers as they build better lives for themselves and their families.

- Mission Outreach Ministry

Someone you should meet...

"General Specialist" is how David Palmer describes himself. He has a keen mind that loves absorbing all kinds of information and discussing it with others. Be careful, though, because David was on the debate team in high school and college, and he can usually best you in a discussion! I enjoyed sharing breakfast with David recently, and it was great to meet one of our RCLPC members in a casual setting rather than a hurried "hello" on Sunday morning. I learned that he grew up in an Air Force family and did quite a bit of traveling, and now works in the field of computers. I enjoyed watching him light up when he talked about his three children and wife Pam. He loves reading, usually more than one book at a time, and science fiction is one of his favorite genres. David and I covered a variety of topics, and though we did not always agree on every viewpoint, it was engaging and fun and a learning experience. Hope you enjoy getting to know David too!

- Kathy Rabe

Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies Overture

An overture to divest as a denomination from investments in fossil fuel companies has been proposed for consideration at the 221st General Assembly in Detroit, Michigan, in June 2014. The overture has been gathering support in Presbyteries across the country. RCLPC's Session approved the overture in November, and Blackhawk Presbytery's Mission Strategies Resource Board sent it on to the full Presbytery for the February 11 meeting, with recommendation for concurrence.

For more information or to read the overture, go to rclpc.org and select the Earth Care Team button. Members of the RCLPC Compassion, Peace, and Justice Team or Earth Care Team welcome your questions or requests for further information.

Changes in the Office

Thanks to Kim for all her wonderful work! (Not that it's over, as she will continue to work for us as an independent contractor.) However, we all need to make sure we express our heartfelt thanks to her for all her efforts. Kim's departure means that, going forward, most requests and inquiries should go to Amy (office@rclpc.org).

To help the office deal with things more effectively, please note the following:

- 1) Any meetings or events need to be reported in advance so that the church calendar is accurate. That helps us avoid overbooking rooms, ensure the doors are open for the Wednesday Warriors, and make sure the heat is on.
- 2) Any request sent to the office for publication has to be specific. "Just put something in announcing X,Y or Z" will not work. YOU need to write it out exactly as you want it, specify if it is for the Spirit or the Bulletin, and how many weeks it should run.
- 3) Sarah Metivier Schadt has agreed to act as interim editor of The Spirit. Yay, Sarah! Please send all Spirit articles to the office before the deadline on the church calendar, and Amy will forward them to Sarah for publication.
- 4) Did you know we have a Prayer Chain? We have some wonderful people who intentionally pray for specific, named people and situations. Please contact Pastor John if you would like to be one of them. Send prayer requests to the office, and again, please be specific about whether it is just for the Prayer Chain or if it is also to go in the Prayer Concerns in the Bulletin. We want to respect privacy, so check to make sure it's okay with the person before we publish. Finally, while everyone needs prayer all the time, it also helps a lot if you tell us when to remove a name or situation from the list.

People in Need Forum at MCC

The People in Need Forum will take place on Saturday, January 25th from 8am-12:30 PM at McHenry County College. A free event, the Forum is a unique opportunity to connect consumers and caregivers with social service and governmental agencies providing necessary resources for those in need. With the terrible winter we have experienced so far, many families have fallen over the edge and are in dire need of life-saving assistance. With more than 45 exhibit booths and 16 educational sessions, attendees will receive a copy of the 2014 People in Need Resource Directory, the only printed one of its kind in the county, and a flash drive which has even more resources available. Help us to help you and those you serve by registering today at www.mchenry.edu/peopleinneed. Please contact Bev Thomas at 815-479-7792 or bthomas@mchenry.edu for further information.



Saturday

January 25, 2014

8:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Registration & Continental Breakfast: 8:00 a.m.

What will you find at the forum?

Information about:

- ◆ Mental Health, Spirituality & Recovery
- ◆ Bullying & Technology
- ◆ Healthy, Affordable Eating
- ◆ Employment & Disability Services for Veterans
- ◆ Foreclosure Prevention
- ◆ Understanding the ACA
- ◆ Where to go in McHenry County
- ◆ State & Federal Benefits
- ◆ Connection between Physical & Mental Health
- ◆ Identity Theft & Fraud Prevention
- ◆ Employability Services
- ◆ Creating Veteran Friendly Communities

*The forum will wrap up with
"Laugh for the Health of it"!*

People Need FORUM

Who Should Attend?

- ◆ Human Service Agencies
- ◆ Faith-Based Organizations
- ◆ Civic Group Members
- ◆ County, Township, Municipal elected officials & employees
- ◆ Individuals interested in resources to help people in need

CEU's will be available!

Register online at

www.mchenry.edu/peopleinneed

Presenting Sponsors

THE
McHENRY COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

AN AFFILIATE OF
THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST



Where is the forum?

McHenry County College
8900 Rt. US Hwy 14
Crystal Lake, IL

Who do I contact for information?

Bev Thomas
815-479-7792

bthomas@mchenry.edu

Community Sponsors

Ace Coffee Bar
Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital
Friends of McHenry County
College Foundation
League of Women Voters
McHenry County College
Northwest Herald