

LIGHT MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PATHS SEPTEMBER EDITION

From the Pastor's



⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. ⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?"
(John 6:56-60)

Most pastors are not famous, nor are most geniuses. Most pastors are nobodies trying to tell everybody about somebody named Jesus. In John's Gospel, Jesus isn't famous as much as he is notorious. Be that as it may, Jesus had the same trouble that many pastors have with teaching. How do we share what we have come to understand & to trust (albeit imperfectly) about God & the inward life so that others may also trust in it? Spiritual leaders try to offer hope in distress, share comfort in hardship, & inspire action when action is helpful. The trouble is the "good news" of God's love as revealed in Jesus Christ is just so strange compared to everything else we experience in life. Jesus' "body & blood" teaching was difficult for the ancients to accept. Some didn't accept it & some still don't.

When something is hard to accept, humans have at least 4 choices. We may, a) ignore it & continue on as usual; b) walk away & dismiss the people & issue that is hard; c) attempt to play it safe while waiting to see what happens; d) engage the difficulty. There are opportunities, challenges, gains & losses, associated with each choice. Each one of us has a preferred strategy, & most of us aren't very happy or flexible if asked to try a new one.

Jesus is trying to accomplish a real transformation in the focus, purpose, & quality of people's lives. He's trying to do so when people recognize where life is pinching them, but not why they are being pinched, or how the pinch is mediated...He's trying to accomplish a real transformation when some people like things as they are. He's trying to accomplish real transformation when some people are scared to fail, with resources from investment disappointed, or without resources, people are scared of going broke. Jesus is clearly gifted. Jesus is also "out there", perhaps so much so that we are reminded of Mark 3:21, "*When his friends heard it, they went out to seize him, for they said "He is beside himself."* Jesus said, "Those who eat my flesh & drink my blood abide in me, & I in them."

People left. Jesus feels the losses & mourns them, but he continues in abiding love. It isn't a warm fuzzy sentimental love. It is a strenuous, sweaty, bloody love. Jesus pokes the disciples to see who loves him back when he says "The bread of me comes from heaven, this bread is not like the manna in the wilderness, which your ancestors ate, & they died (v.59)." A difficult teaching indeed, because Jesus' hearers knew very well that those who had fled Egypt in the Exodus were starving in the desert when God provided for them in an amazing way. The ancestors ate manna & lived! Yes, over 40 years' time they all did die, but what should mere mortals expect? They have an agenda to achieve too, so they pushed back. Many immediately rejected Jesus declaring himself manna from heaven, & left.

In the Exodus story, the response to God's salvation is mixed. Israel celebrates God's actions in the Exodus (Ex 15:1-16:2), even as it immediately "grumbles" & "complains" against God & Moses in the wilderness. At root, the text says 2 things: 1) Israel did not trust God to take physical care of them & 2) God's care is boring. Likewise, the group following Jesus receives the miraculous food of John 6:1-15 & heralds Jesus as a prophet, but they too "grumble" against Jesus. This reaction to Jesus is ironic: as the disciples reject the idea that Jesus is manna, they reveal that Jesus is manna by responding to him exactly as the Israelites had responded to God.

In both stories, at issue is not the people's grumbling but the lack of trust in God that it represents. Jesus names it: "some of you do not believe" (John 6:64).

The Greek word *pisteuo* is a common word in John that is usually translated "believe." However, its more common meaning is to trust or rely upon someone. To receive Jesus as manna involves a long reliance on God. Jesus invites all would-be disciples of every age to "take in" his words, passion, commitment, & love to not only eat them, but to gnaw on them & to chew on them as a cow on grass. Over & over, we are to abide with holiness, passion, commitment, & love.

Staying with Jesus & learning from him is a long process. For many a quick fix, external mission, & entertaining worship would be more attractive. This crowd was initially attracted to Jesus when they saw him as a Moses figure -- one who could work miracles & provide political victories for them. As they continue with him, they learn that Jesus is not offering an easy victory but the long road. On this road, we learn about holiness, passion, commitment, & love. On this road, we learn to make miracles & feed the hungry. When we finish the journey, we know that we have been known for who we are, & for who we are not. We have learned to love, & to be loved. And we go home together. May we make it so.

Pastor Mary Jo

If you are hospitalized or are in need of pastoral care, please call Pastor Mary Jo at 443-359-9553, Leslie at 249-0557 or the church office at 254-5675. To start the prayer chain call Judy Pohl at 254-2254 or Bill Rush at 254-4717.

CHOIR/BELLS

Choir practice will resume on Wednesday, Sept. 5 at 7:30pm at the church.

Bells are going to meet at 6:30pm on Sept. 5th before choir.

New members are Welcome!!!!

It's the 1st Annual Cabbage Burger Fundraiser & Raffle

FELLOWSHIP AND EVANGELISM EVENTS

September 2018

Cabbage Burger Feed Fundraiser!

When: Sunday, Sept. 16th/ 11:00 am-1:30 pm

Where: Light Memorial Presbyterian Church

What: Individually wrapped cabbage burgers will be sold.



Chips/drinks/cookies will be available for purchase also. A raffle using donated items will also take place. Tickets can be purchased towards winning the raffle items in a drawing. Patrons can come in and buy tickets for individual cabbage burgers and/or sides and drinks. Meals will be served as take out food, but patrons can sit and eat at tables in the Fellowship Hall as seating is available. Tickets for food and the raffle items will be sold ahead of the event, at Sonny's, or at the door.

We need your help please!

- Cabbage burger bakers/ donations toward ingredients**-helpers that would make and bake the cabbage burgers, and then wrap them up for sale!
- food donations**-donations toward chips, drinks, cookies. Drinks would include: ice tea and lemonade packets, bottled water. Chips will be individual bags. Cookies will be either chocolate chip or oatmeal. Please no nuts.
- ticket sellers**- selling tickets for the cabbage burger feed and/or the raffle items
- set-up/take down before and after the event** (in Fellowship Hall)
- cashiers/ticket vendors**
- dining room hosts/hostesses**

September 30, 2018- 5th Sunday Pot Luck after worship.

Christian Education

We will have a Sunday School get together on Sunday, Sept. 9th, at 9:30am.

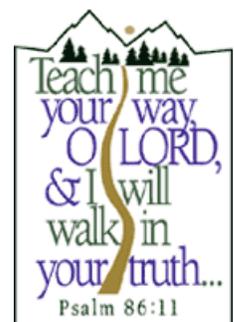
All children, parents, adults, teachers, and anyone else interested,

please meet in the fellowship hall. We will also have an adult study this fall.

We need some times that will be agreeable with everyone.

If you are interested teaching the children, please let me know.

Thank you, hope to see you there. Leslie





Birthdays

- 4 Don Benisek
- 11 Elizabeth Gill
- 15 Carol Christjans
- 17 Jennifer Holtz
- 17 Lauren Jones
- 26 Cheryl Nelson
- 27 Tessa Janssen



Anniversaries

- 10 Carl & Jan Farmer
- 19 Duane & Shirley Nightingale

If I have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let me know.
Thanks, Leslie

Good Luck to Callie and Jennifer as they walk in Philadelphia the 28th, 29th, & 30th.

September



Serving in September

lay readers
 Sept. 2 & 9 Bret Whartman
 Sept. 16 & 23 Cindy Payne
 Sept. 30-Dominick Russ

greeter

usher

communion servers (Sept. 9th)
 Cindy Payne Bret Whartman
 Leslie Richards

local church committee

*Duane & Shirley Nightingale
 * Bill & Jean Struckmeyer
 Cindy Payne Amber Talich
 Marilyn Nightingale

If you would like to fill in as usher or greeter please let me know. Leslie

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. Isaiah 32: 17

