

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
May 18, 2011

The

Congregator

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Youth Led Worship Service

May 22, 2011

10:30 AM

Jake says . . . “Every journey begins with a single step.”

Here we are, in June, at the exciting cap and gown season: a time for great dreams, great plans., and St. John’s Wort to help manage graduation anxiety. The future begins with a single step.

Welcome to the big, wide, wonderful, REAL world!

There are all sorts of myths and truisms about achievement. Authorities and interviewers look for our weaknesses. I prefer to say we have opportunities for growth. We use a lot of energy trying to grow in so many areas. Would we be wiser to put more energy into one or two God-given talents?

Too many folks with many skills bog down in confusion, trying to choose which skill to pursue. The deep tragedy of life is not being limited to one skill, but it is failing to use one’s sole skill effectively.

Just as important as putting aside negative talk about weakness, also we can put aside vanity talk about strength. Instead of idolizing “gifted” people, we can encourage everyone to “gift” the world with their own specialness.

Let’s take our cue from our Master. The most gifted One the world ever has known is remembered and revered as the world’s greatest Gifter! In gifting others, we also gift ourselves – a miracle!

Here we are, also in June, at the exciting Festival of Christian Parenting celebration: a time to think about our parents, parenting, and role models. OK, Hallmark thinks it’s Father’s Day. Can’t help that!

Being a role model is in *every* step I take!

Fathers often are described as absent, distracted, preoccupied, workaholic, . . . No doubt I played that role more often than I care to admit. Diane Loomans (OK, so I’m about to quote a lady for Father’s Day—hang on!) wrote and insightful item. Here goes.

If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I’d finger paint more, and point the finger less.
I’d do less correcting, and more connecting.
I’d take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less, and know to care more.
I’d take more hikes and fly more kites.
I’d stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I’d run through more fields, and gaze at more stars.
I’d do more hugging, and less tugging.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I’d build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I’d teach less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.



This applies to parenting, grandparenting, uncleing, aunting, and neighboring.

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES

The Steinway piano has been the instrument of choice by masters of the keyboard for many years. Pianists such as Rubinstein, Cliburn, Horowitz, Rachmaninoff and Liszt knew that a skillfully crafted instrument such as the Steinway produces a rich, wonderful sound.

Steinway pianos are built today, the same way they were when Henry Steinway started the company in 1845. Two hundred craftsmen and 12,000 parts are required to produce one of these instruments. Most crucial is the rim-bending process where 18 layers of maple are bent around an iron press to create the shape of a Steinway grand. Five coats of lacquer are applied and hand-rubbed to give the piano its outer glow. Each key is tested 10,000 times to ensure quality and durability.

In a similar manner, Christians are being “handcrafted.” We are pressed, formed and shaped to make us more and more like Him. We are polished until we “glow.” We are tested in the laboratory of human experience to ensure quality and durability.



One of the ways in which we are made in Christ’s image concerns our giving, 1 John 3:17 (why not take time to look it up in your Bible?), says that we demonstrate God’s love when we see our brother/sister in need and give to meet that need. In fact, the Lord Jesus said that we are to love our neighbor just as we love ourselves, and the illustration He provided was that of the Good

Samaritan.

Yes, we are to give to the Lord’s work here at First Congregational United Church of Christ. Yes, we are to place a priority in our lives on supporting this ministry financially. But let’s not limit ourselves and our service for Christ to the walls of our church. Instead, let’s be alert to opportunities to demonstrate God’s love to fellow-travelers on the road of life. When we do that, we are demonstrating to ourselves and to all who observe that we have been “handcrafted” in the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reminder -
Copies of the proposed
changes to the
Constitution and Bylaws
can be picked up in the
Church office or viewed on
the church website.**

MCGRATH SCHOOL BACKPACK PROGRAM

The Outreach Team would like to give thanks to the congregation for sponsoring the Backpack Program for this school year. The Backpack Program is a project that attempts to reduce child hunger. Approximately 50 percent of the students at McGrath are enrolled in the free-lunch program and do not have adequate supplies of food at home. The program provides an at-risk child with a backpack of nutritious food every weekend throughout the entire school year. The church will be sponsoring 24 McGrath Elementary School Students in Grand Blanc again next school year, and will take donations beginning in September.

DID YOU REALLY HEAR ME?

Our first experience with God is listening to Him. Our first act of friendship is to listen. So when we listen, we do God’s work. Join us on the first two Sundays in June (June 5th & 12th) at 9:15 AM in the Gathering Room, to explore listening habits as a main aspect of communication. Please RSVP to Lee Hockstad at 694-8847 or email rch@mindless.com.

Celebrate With the Zones

June 12th following worship at 11:30 the Spiritual growth team will be hosting a pot luck luncheon. Please bring your favorite dish to share and your own table service. As we move into summer we are celebrating the end of the Sunday School year. There will be a bounce-house for the kids and hot dogs on the grill. Everyone is welcome to join in the fellowship.



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Constitution

Dates of discussion meetings:

Sunday, May 22nd, following wor-
ship

Thursday, May 19th, 6:30 PM

Tuesday, May 24th, 6:00 PM

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Congregational Ratification of
Constitution**

**Meeting - Sunday June 5th
following worship at 11:30**

**CHURCH FAMILY CAMPING WEEKEND
JULY 29-31ST**



It's official! The date for the church family camping weekend is July 29 through 31st at Myers Lake in Byron. The site accommodates campers and tents and has electricity hook up. It is adjacent to a ball field and a skip away from the playground. The beach is big, and there is a nice gazebo for picnics. If you haven't been on a family camping weekend with your church family before, you **MUST COME**. A great time is had by all! For more information, please contact Kristin Ragsdale at kristinragsdale@hotmail.com. Please RSVP with Kristin as soon as possible.

Church Rummage Sale

Thank you to everyone who donated, set-up, sorted, organized, sold or cleaned up from this year's rummage sale. The SHARE Group and the other volunteers worked very diligently to ensure its success. We raised \$2,340.00 this year and the funds will be used to further God's work.



**Thank You to Everyone
Who Participated
in the 2011
Church Rummage Sale!**