

The VOICE

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Writings From The Rev—July 2009

It's hard to believe that I have been with you over 6 months now as your Interim Minister. And yet, I'm still learning new things just about everyday. Sometime it's about the history of this congregation or its dreams for the future. At other times it's about one of its members or groups. Sometimes it's learning things about the community and how North Eaton Christian Church fits into it.

I've been slowly learning where people live as I'm out and about making visits. When you're not familiar with the area it's hard to know where things are or which way to go. And because I don't live around here, and I don't always bring a lunch with me, I'm also learning about where there are places to eat.

Most of the time I have three options for a quick lunch: 1) the Circle K gas station (good hot dogs and waffle fries), 2) the Dairy Queen (good meal deals), and 3) the small Café across from DQ (good fish sandwiches). But let me tell you, after a few months these options are getting old.

I have found other places; the McDonald's in Grafton, the one in Wal-Mart, and the one on Broad St. on the way to EMH. But I'm really not a big McD fan, except for the sundaes. I did find a Wendy's way up by the Mall, but that's a bit far for a quick lunch.

I do a bit of exploring, from time to time, as I make my way back to the Church from a visit or when I just get misdirected. Should I turn left or right, or go straight. Sometimes you have to just take a chance, risk going into the unknown for the sake of finding your way home.

I think that's what it's like for many of us in our faith journey. There are times when we must take a chance or risk going in a new or different direction in order to get to the place we know we want to be, or need to be.

What's the famous poem by Robert Frost? The one about making a journey, it ends with these words:

***Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.***

In Matthew 4:17, we are told that the first thing Jesus shares after his baptism by John is: ***“Turn to God and change the way you think and act, because the kingdom of heaven is near!”*** (GWT)

In the beginning of chapter 12 of Paul's letter to the Romans he says, ***“Brothers and sisters, in view of all we have just shared about God's compassion, I encourage you to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, dedicated to God and pleasing to him. This kind of worship is appropriate for you. Don't become like the people of this world. Instead, change the way you think. Then you will always be able to determine what God really wants—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.”*** (GWT)

This is always risky business when we choose to turn or change direction. But, when that direction is toward God (often the one less traveled), we will be blessed in our efforts.

(By the way, a few weeks ago, I was at a familiar intersection in town, and having never made a left turn there, I took a chance. To my delight just down the road was a Wendy's, much closer to the Church.)

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Grafton, OH 44044
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Interim Minister: Rev. Ralph S. Wearstler
Licensed Minister: Judy Ponting
Christian Ed. And Youth Director: Polly Tallos
Secretary: Londa Blaine
Interim Worship & Music Director: Diana Tyler
Pianist/Organist: Bernadette Hisey
Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

JULY Birthdays and Anniversaries 2009

- 1 Jeff Ickes
Jessica Brunger
Trina Karban
- 3 Sandy Hales
Tyler Bokman
- 8 Beth & John Wilson
- 9 Sandy Nowak
- 11 Blake Kyle
Ruth & John Haupt
- 12 Josh Meldrum
Mike & Sandy Gross
- 13 Dick Edwards
- 16 John Hartness
- 17 Phyllis Chapman
Dede Prunty
Hope Humphrey
- 18 Robin Bricker
Fred & Renee Carpenter
- 20 Barb Mott
Wil Morrison
- 21 Nancy & Gene Yost
Shari & Brian Insley
- 22 Jennifer Hicks
Tom Hartness
Mark & Stacy Slack
- 23 Audrey Lyons
Maureen Cromling
- 24 CJ Mott
Stu Hicks IV
Del & Sylvia Ott
- 25 Bob & Ruby Burdick
- 27 Paul Durbin
Skyler Baughman
- 28 Samantha Galvin
Josh Brunger
- 29 John Vilevac
Phyllis & Floyd Chapman
- 30 Larry Weber
Shari Insley
Fred Carpenter



Surprise! Surprise! We did it!

Tom really was surprised when Rev. Ralph announced that we had a special recognition at the 8:00 service on June 28th. Then he asked Tom Kohler to come forward. It was met with a round of applause. Tom was recognized for his faithful service as Deacon and his dedication to being here every Sunday morning before the 8:00 service, ready and willing to do whatever is needed. He was presented with a certificate, words of thanks and appreciation and another round of applause.

After the service, we were all treated to a delicious brunch with homemade nut rolls, sweet rolls, coffee cake, lots of fresh fruit and egg casserole. Ralph Thompson read from scripture, Luke 2:41-50. As Jesus said, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And we all know for sure that on Sunday morning before 8:00 a.m. Tom will be at NECC greeting us with a big smile, a hand shake and asking about our family and how our week went. Tom is a single guy always keeping an eye open for that perfect partner. Paula Krasnevich said her first encounter with Tom was when he gave her a welcoming hand shake and asked if she was married and did she have a girlfriend? He was looking for one that was rich and one to take care of him.

Diana Tyler wrote a song for this special occasion with words that expressed how we all felt.

THANK YOU By Diana Tyler

*I don't have deep pockets or unlimited funds
To pay you for all the things you've done;
Buy you a motorcycle or flying machine;
There's only one way to say what I mean, so*

*Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much!
You really are swell, you're unbelievable!
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much!
You mean all the world to me.*

*You're dependable, faithful, trustworthy, and true—
With your servant heart, we can learn from you.
You never seek recognition, or a cash reward—
Just giving your best from your love for the Lord.
So*

*Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much
You really are swell, you're unbelievable.
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much.
You mean all the world to us.*

Our thanks to all who took part in the recognition, provided food for the brunch and helped cleanup afterwards.

Father's Day...Our thanks to all the fathers who expressed their views on being a Father: Jim Ickes, Jeff Hensley, Randy Kuhn, Ralph Thompson, Stu Hicks and Jim Galvin. All fathers present were presented a chocolate bar in honor of Father's Day. Our thanks to all who brought pictures of their fathers so they could be displayed and also seen on Power Point before worship. (Great job on the pics, Carol Busche, Ralph Thompson & Rev. Ralph!)

Sunday School "Beginning of Summer" Party!!

The summer kick-off party on June 7th was a huge success with everyone. The children had fun playing games, winning prizes, making crafts, blowing bubbles, playing on the playground and having snacks. A lot of thought and preparation went into making this party fun for the kids. A big thank you to all who made it possible. Your time and talents were appreciated. Thank you to the Christian Education Team for the generous prizes and great snacks! Thank you, Melissa Folk, for being a great C.E. Team Chairperson!!

Lorain County Fair —August 24-30

Save a VACATION DAY and work with us at the FAIR in our CHURCH FOOD BOOTH. It's a fun place to be!

Vacation Bible School

Rome: Paul and the Underground Church

Monday, July 27 - Friday, July 31

5:30 PM Light Dinner 6:00 - 8:30 PM VBS Program

Rome: Paul and the Underground Church. It's the Family Vacation of a Lifetime! Bring your entire family to the ancient city of Rome! You'll travel back into Bible Times without setting foot outside our community. Experience this fun, hands-on Bible-times empire right here at North Eaton Christian Church.

Each day, your family members can become part of history as they see, hear, touch, and even taste what it was like to live in Rome during Bible times! You'll explore authentic Marketplace shops; visit the Apostle Paul (who's under house arrest). Sneak to the cave where the Underground Church meets, take part in games, dance to lively Bible songs, and sample tasty tidbits as you discover more about the early church. These experiences make God's Word come alive with new meaning for all who participate!



So mark these dates on your calendar: Monday, July 27 thru Friday, July 31. The adventure starts at 5:30 PM with a light dinner and will end at 8:30 PM. To register your family for this awesome Bible adventure, call the church office at 440-748-2230 or visit our website, www.necedisciples.com.

Workcamp in Lexington, North Carolina

What a wonderful week! Our four person group met with 394 other youth and adults who came from 11 other states and 17 different church backgrounds in Lexington, NC for a week of worship, work and fun. We worked in 6 person crews spread over 65 worksites. The NECC youth and their crews did a lot of painting, inside and out. Other crews built porches, wheel chair ramps, and some roof repairs.

I personally had a wonderful time getting to know my crew. They were a joy to work with on our painting project. Each day we were encouraged to watch for and recognize "God Sightings". This is one of ours: On Thursday, our site coach, Alan, stopped in to check on our progress. He helped us to understand the next job on our list but repeatedly told us that we wouldn't be able to finish, as there were no ladders to be had. Alan also said he wouldn't be back to check on us again because we had a good handle on the projects. So we said goodbye and went on with our work. After Alan left I called home to Londa to check in and asked her to start the prayer chain for us. I asked for prayers to keep us moving, it was Thursday, we were all tired and hot and needed a boost to help us finish off our projects. Alan showed up again, shaking his head, restating that we wouldn't get our job finished because there were no ladders to be had. I told him that was OK. We would finish inside and do what we could outside. I would ask about ladders at the tool room when we got back to the school. Alan left only to return at lunchtime, with a ladder! I was able to get a ladder from the tool room that evening and one of my crewmembers asked for a ladder from the tool room as well. So after being assured several times that we wouldn't have any ladders to use to finish our project, we ended up with three! Only after I asked for prayers to help us finish off our week strong did the ladders start to show up. It might not seem like a big deal to you but to us it was something to cheer about.

Polly Tallos, Youth Director

Thank You

"Thank you to my church family for your cards, phone calls, visits, and to Rev. Ralph for his visits and calls. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue to heal and get stronger." Holly Hill

"Yes, I was totally surprised. It was a day I will never forget. Thank you for all your wonderful cards and gifts, the kind words that were said and sung, and the reception after worship. I appreciate seeing all of you who came to be a part of my morning." Tom Kohler

"I would like to thank all of you for your prayers and phone calls while my mom was in the hospital. Many thanks to you who helped with food donations, house sitting, and helped with the funeral lunch after my mom passed away. A special Thank You to Rev. Ralph for his prayers, visits and phone calls and to Judy Ponting whose support has meant a lot to me. It is so wonderful to have such caring and loving people from our church surround us at this time with their thoughts, prayers, love and support.

Joyce Johnson and family

My thanks and appreciation to all of you for your many prayers, cards, phone calls and thoughtfulness while I was in the hospital. The love you surrounded me and my family with during this time was very comforting.

Fran Early