

The VOICE

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Writings From The Rev—September 2009

Have you ever played “Biblical Serendipity”? I’m not sure anymore where I first learned about this or even who taught it to me. It’s a neat little exercise, and I’m pretty sure I didn’t come up with it on my own. What I do know is that I started playing this interesting little pastime back in my Chi Rho days (grades 6-8), so maybe it started at Camp Christian. You may have used this approach to Bible reading, but you called it something else.

Whatever the case, there are two ways that it can be done. One way is to set your Bible on it’s binding, on a desk or chair, or even the floor, and then let it fall open to a page. The next thing you do is look down and read the first verse of scripture that your eye focuses on. Obviously, this works best with a Bible that has been well used, and the thicker it is, the better it seems to work.

Actually, I prefer the second way better, it involves a little more personal activity. It’s different because you hold the Bible in one hand and fan the pages with the thumb of your other hand. Then you stick your index finger in the place you want to stop. The best way to do this is by closing your eyes, or at least turning your head away. So, without looking, open to the page and still without looking, slide your finger to any point on the page, then stop. Begin reading at the start of the closest sentence.

Okay, let me show you what I mean: I’m fanning, I’m picking a page, I’m sliding my finger, I’m stopping. (*Honestly, I did have my eyes closed.*) Here is my serendipitous scripture: Ephesians 3:1-4. This is what the Apostle Paul is writing to the Christians at the church in Ephesus:

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.

Now in most cases, this is just the beginning of your reading experience. For it’s always helpful to look at what is going on before and after your selection, especially if you find yourself in the middle paragraph or a thought or a story. Sometimes it’s good to read the whole page or chapter in order to get a real sense of what the passage is saying.

I’m sure that whatever inspiration is gained by doing the exercise is dependent upon each person. Actually, I believe that anytime anyone opens the Bible and begins to read, they are opening themselves up to the inspiration of God’s word.

You see, the wisdom, and truth, and guidance of God are right at your fingertips. All you need to do is open your eyes, your mind, and your heart.



Who knows, maybe a bit of serendipitous Bible reading will help us through this time of Transition, as we move forward in the calling of a new pastor for North Eaton Christian Church. Through God’s word and by our prayers, may we seek to grow stronger in our understanding and our faith in God and Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit as we share in the mission and ministry of this Congregation.

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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

Some Questions About Transition at North Eaton Christian Church

The following Q&A offers an update on the transition work now underway:

1. Why do we need a “Transition Team” instead of just a Search Committee?

The Transition Team was formed as the beginning of the overall search process. With the congregation’s help, the Transition Team will begin to develop what our goals and objectives are for the future, which will give the Search Committee a better idea of what our new Minister will look like.

2. What was the process to assemble the Transition Team?

The Elders gave prayerful thought on who should serve on the Team. Names were lifted up and each person was asked to prayerfully consider accepting the long-term commitment. The team was formed by those people who agree to this challenge.

3. How is the Church Board involved?

Very soon after Dr. Paul Durbin’s retirement announcement the Elders met with our Regional Minister, Dr. Bill Edwards, who filled us in on current search procedures. Elders then began to address the transition process, and called Rev. Ralph S. Wearstler, as our Interim Minister. At this point, the Elders and the Church Board will monitor the Transition Team’s progress.

4. What is the purpose of the Transition Team?

The Transition Team will guide the congregation’s discernment process in defining "Who are we" and "What does God want us to be," leading to a Congregation Profile as well as a Minister Profile. The purpose is to engage the congregation around the five stated focus areas of transition: heritage, leadership, connections, mission and future

5. What is the Transition Team’s first steps?

The Team will participate in an Orientation and Planning Session, facilitated by Rev. Ralph S. Wearstler, our Intentional Interim Ministry. Plans and dates for future congregational and team meetings will be discussed.

6. How will the Transition Team communicate?

Ways the Transition Team will communicate include: hosting a series of small group gatherings; providing written communication in a variety of church publications; visiting with groups within the church; posting updated information on the church website; being available to receive individual member’s input anytime (phone calls, emails, chats).

7. What is the role of the congregation?

The congregation is a partner with the Transition Team in this Interim Ministry process.

8. Who can answer my questions?

Feel free to contact anyone on the Transition Team with your questions. A list of team members will be printed in The Voice newsletter, in Sunday bulletins, and posted on our website.

More questions and answers will be lifted up in the October issue of “The Voice.”

World Communion Sunday — October 4th

On October 4th congregations from the three streams of the Stone-Campbell movement, from which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was formed, will gather to celebrate their common heritage in observance of the 200th anniversary of founder Thomas Campbell’s “Declaration and Address” in which he wrote that, “the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one.” This statement is the clarion call for unity that has been the hallmark of the stone-Campbell movement, and his 1809 document essentially formed the constitution for our movement.



While the **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**, the **Churches of Christ**, and the **Christian Church/Church of Christ** recognize our differences, we share common ground in our heritage but, most important, in celebrating the Lord’s Supper, and we hope to observe this sacred feast together in a Great Communion Service as an affirmation of this basic—and most important—commonality.

The organizers of this national and international event are hopeful that on this one day, with communion being shared by Stone-Campbell believers all around the world, that a true beginning will be found to complete Christ’s desire for all humanity: **THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE.**

We’ll keep you posted as NECC plans its participation in this Great Communion.
For more information, visit www.greatcommunion.org

Dear God,

Sometimes what we see is not what it really is. This happened to me twice this past month.

Over the years we have tried to make a typical English garden with flowers that reminded us of being in the UK. A new plant appeared in our garden that we did not plant. Neighbors and family came to look but no one knew what it was until a friend saw it. He suggested I go online and check out what he thought was something that "no one would plant except to make a profit." I checked the internet, and the leaves surely looked like something we should pull out before being arrested.

I left it for a few days, hoping I was wrong. Besides, how did it get there? Did someone throw seeds out a car window in fear of being caught?

When I went out to pull the plant, it had the most beautiful purple flowers I had ever seen. They were wispy and delicate, a beauty to see. Neighbors gathered and they all told me it was a Spider Plant, and not to pull it out. It has been a delight to all who see it, but where it came from is still unknown.

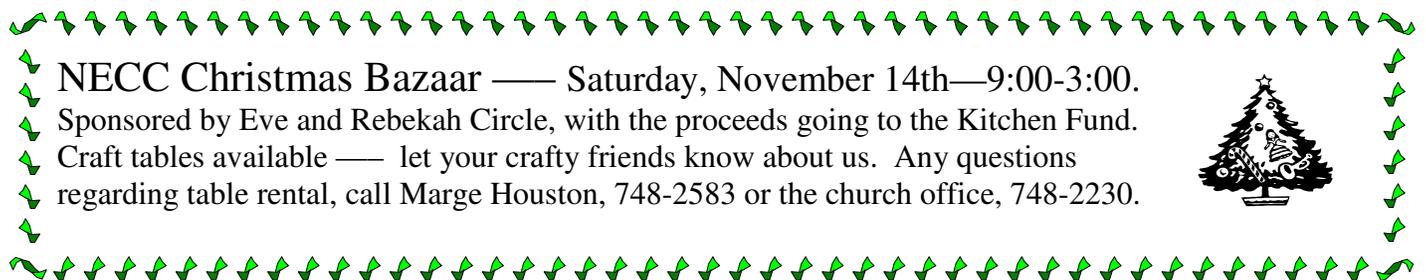
At the same time I was dealing with the "unknown" plant I noticed a bunch of leaves in the flower box on the porch. We have had mice before so thinking it was to be their new home, I cleaned it out. The next day the crumbled leaves were back, even more than before. When I reached in to get them, I saw a very tiny speckled egg. I had almost destroyed the home of a Carolina Wren. She laid five eggs and began her 12 day sitting on them.

After her 12 days, the babies hatched and it has been a learning experience for everyone who has come to the front door. Two days ago I opened the door only to see all five baby birds fly into the trees. I had become a "Grandma" to five more kids.

I had almost destroyed two of Your beautiful gifts, and I give You thanks for bring them to my life.

Isaiah 44: 18 " They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so they cannot see, and their minds as well, so they cannot understand."

Love, Judy

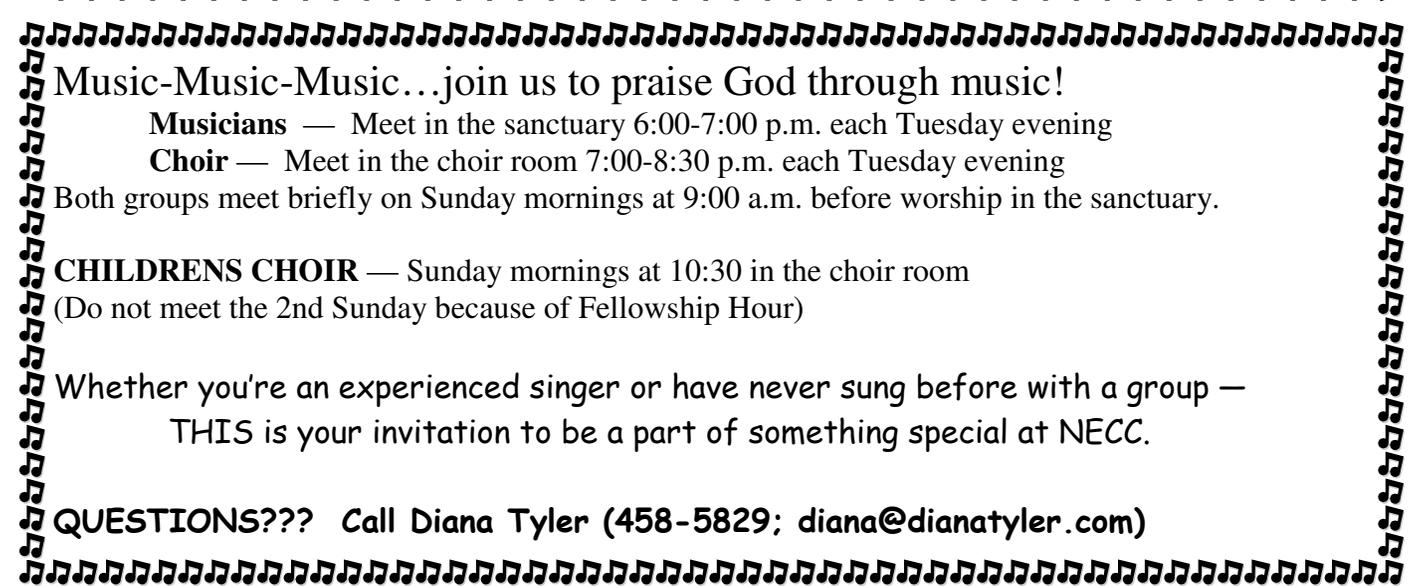


NECC Christmas Bazaar — Saturday, November 14th—9:00-3:00.

Sponsored by Eve and Rebekah Circle, with the proceeds going to the Kitchen Fund.

Craft tables available — let your crafty friends know about us. Any questions

regarding table rental, call Marge Houston, 748-2583 or the church office, 748-2230.



Music-Music-Music...join us to praise God through music!

Musicians — Meet in the sanctuary 6:00-7:00 p.m. each Tuesday evening

Choir — Meet in the choir room 7:00-8:30 p.m. each Tuesday evening

Both groups meet briefly on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. before worship in the sanctuary.

CHILDRENS CHOIR — Sunday mornings at 10:30 in the choir room

(Do not meet the 2nd Sunday because of Fellowship Hour)

Whether you're an experienced singer or have never sung before with a group —

THIS is your invitation to be a part of something special at NECC.

QUESTIONS??? Call Diana Tyler (458-5829; diana@dianatyler.com)

Youth Kick-off Cookout — Sunday, September 27th, 12 to 2 PM

Polly Tallos' House: 34365 Brokaw Rd. Columbia Station

All Jr. Youth Fellowship, Chi Rho, Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) and their families are invited to Polly's house on Sunday, September 27 from 12 to 2 PM. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided. Please bring a drink, side dish or dessert to share. We will eat, play some games and discuss upcoming events. If you have any questions please contact Polly Tallos, 748-2246.

Jr Youth Fellowship (JYF) is all children in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.

Chi Rho is for all youth in 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) is for youth in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

Bicycle Adventure Camp

I decided to attend Adventure Camp this summer because I wanted to have a great camp experience like my kids always seem to have. I have always been an active person so Adventure Camp sounded like it was "right up my alley."

I managed to drag my son, Tyler, along for the first 3 days and to his surprise, he actually enjoyed himself (even though he was with a bunch of "old" people). We drove to Xenia, OH on Sunday afternoon and arrived with plenty of time to pitch our tent and socialize with the other campers that evening. It was interesting to discover the diversity of people that were attending the camp.

Each day we pedaled to a different location to keep things interesting. The goal was to increase our miles traveled throughout the week with the longest trip occurring on the final day. The first day we traveled to Young's Dairy where we enjoyed lunch, ice cream and a game of miniature golf. Then we biked to a beautiful park and hiked along a river gorge. Then we pedaled back to our base camp for dinner. The next day we rode to the Air Force Museum, spent a few hours inside and then headed back to camp. The week continued in this manner. In the evenings we participated in a vespers service and were permitted to use the local YMCA for swimming and a shower to refresh our tired bodies. On a few evenings, the YMCA proved to be an adventure as well!

The week's experience was obviously great exercise, but also full of good fellowship and LOTS of laughter! I hope we can get more North Eaton members to join us for next year's adventure.

Carol Bokman

What can I say about my week as a camp counselor at Portahoga Chi Rho this summer? Well, imagine sharing a cabin with six bunk beds and eight middle school girls. Sound like fun yet? Now imagine sharing a bathroom with these girls as well as a neighboring cabin. Shower time was a luxury, assuming you got a stall with hot water. Keep in mind that not only are you spending the night with these girls, but your entire day you are surrounded with middle schoolers: meals together in dining hall, teaching Quest groups, helping supervise afternoon activities, Vespers and other evening activities, playing games and working on projects with your cabin group. You get to hear all about who likes who, who is cute, what they think is cool, etc. There were talent shows, commercials, hoe-downs, skit night, and Consecration Service. We were up by 7:30am and lights out at 11pm. It was a long and tiring week...BUT WORTH EVERY MOMENT!! Just for a chance to impact the faith of these kids, to think that God might use me to help guide them on their journey, was awesome! I definitely plan to return next summer.

Beth Ann Wilson

One fantastic week at Camp Christian, again!

This summer, I attended **Wilmington Conference** at Camp Christian for the third year. As usual, it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Every year I meet so many new people and constantly make new friends. I normally have difficulty meeting and socializing with people I'm not familiar with, but at Camp Christian I know that there is nothing to worry about. Everyone is always so friendly. This year, the topics for the two daily classes were "Power and Prejudice" (dealing with issues like discrimination and racism) and "The Holy Spirit." I can honestly say that, this year in particular, I have never felt closer to God than I did at camp. It's such an amazing place, and the only place that I've truly felt the Holy Spirit with me. I'll be looking forward to next summer's camp all year!

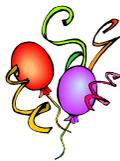
Tyler Bokman

NECC "167th" Anniversary Celebration...

Mark your calendar for October 18th and join us for a day of celebration. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Amy Gopp, Executive Director of "Week of Compassion." She is a awesome speaker you will not want to miss. We will have lunch together and rejoice in the 167 years of Christian unity at North Eaton.

SEPTEMBER Birthdays & Anniv.

- 1 Don Nash
Doug Busche
Fran Houston
- 2 Chester Nowak
- 3 Carol Swartz
- 5 Jo Walsh
Grace Hayward
Stephanie & Rob Szuch
- 6 Eddie & Trina Karban
Alicia Petersen
- 7 Sharon Mullins
Jeff & Janice Brunger
- 8 Mary Scott
- 9 Brandon Baughman
Bill Chapman
Dick & Londa Blaine
- 10 Don & Ruth Nash
- 11 Royce & Leslie Klein
- 12 Patty Meldrum
- 14 Allison Mott, Amanda Mott,
Jim & Sue Smith
Josh Blaine
- 15 Brooklyn Daniels
Debra Blackburn
Kim Blaine
- 17 Bob Browne
- 18 Chris Adair
Dick & Shirley Edwards
Chester & Sandy Nowak
- 19 Polly Tallos
Paul & Jennifer Hayward
- 20 J. J. Haumschild
- 22 Jerry Mullins
Samantha Hensley
- 23 Roger & Lisa Woodby
- 24 Lee Daniels
- 26 Claire Kauf
Dennis Folk
- 27 Thelma Hurley
Mark & Patty Meldrum
- 28 Dean Galvin
Taylor Baughman
Randy & Laura Kuhn
- 29 Cindy Hicks



Update on Judy Ponting...

Judy was back in the pulpit preaching at North Eaton on Sunday, Sept. 6 while Rev. Ralph was on vacation. "Things went very well" she said, "but I did get home and rest in the afternoon."

We are pleased that she is back in worship with us and writing her monthly news article.

Thank You . . .

"My thanks to the ladies who make the beautiful shawls. I am very pleased with the one presented to me. My thanks to all of you for your many cards, phone calls, and prayers for my healing." Del Ott

Our thanks to Mel & Marie Ternes for having the church family picnic at their home. It was a wonderful place to be. The food was delicious, wonderful shade trees, fun water games for the little ones and lots of families enjoying each others company. The children were thrilled at catching fish in the pond and being able to touch it, (before it was thrown back in the water). And where else could you get your burgers cooked by the Chef from Bucci's!

Our thanks to Vern & Marlene Black for treating us to pizza at their home after the setup night before the Fair. We had 16 people working very hard to get everything put together.

"Our thanks to all of you who sent cards, called and held us in prayer. We appreciate it very much. Chet has been in and out of the hospital but was able to celebrate his birthday! Please continue to keep him in your prayers. He does get discouraged at times and the cards are always welcome.

With much love, Sandy Nowak

CONGRATULATIONS to: Josh and Stephanie Brunger on the birth of their son, Brayden on August 8th. The proud grandparents are Jeff and Janice Brunger.

OUR SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

Dan Benton and family on the death of his father.

Dick Blaine and Carol Busche on the death of their aunt last week.

The family and friends of MARGARET BOKAR. Margaret was a faithful member until her health did not allow her to attend.

CANS FOR CODY: Thank you for recycling your cans for our "Cans For Cody" project. The metal bin will remain at the church all year for your convenience. We averaged \$70-\$100 per month this summer. You can also drop them off at the home of Dick Blaine, 9700 Island Rd.

Prayers for strength and healing:

We have many in our church family who are dealing with health problems and could use your prayers:

Howard Naylor, Tom Kohler, Jan Mitchell, Chet Nowak, Carlene Beres, Marie Ternes, Randy Kuhn, Bill Nowagarski, Del Ott

Our thanks to all who worked at the FAIR. Attendance was down for the week but we were able to fill our work schedule with great workers and keep those fed who came to the fair. During the slow times we got to talk and get to know each other better. Thanks for a job well done!