

Thoughts for the Journey – September/2013:

Hiding in the Cleft of the Rock

On the Gettysburg battlefield, there are two round top hills with a rocky area between known as the “Devil’s Den.” It became a place of refuge during the fierce battle. Following the battle, many bodies were retrieved of soldiers seeking refuge “in the cleft of the rock.” What was hoped to be protection became a vault by which they were entrapped.

Beloved, we have been promised refuge during times of threat and harm which cannot be penetrated by the most cunning enemy. David has found refuge in God’s protective custody many times about which he wrote with these words: *“I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer, my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the Lord who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies” (Ps. 18:1-3).* God’s glory is seen from the Rock as is expressed by the words in the old hymn, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.” I find comfort in the passage where God told his people of the Exodus that, *“There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock” (Ex. 23:21-23).*

There is a story of a little bird that was being chased by a much larger bird of prey. The little bird flew to save its life, darting about while being pursued by the larger bird. The little bird quickly flew into a crevice in a rock face, inside the cleft in the rock. The larger bird gave up. The little bird had found shelter in the rock, out of reach from fearsome claws. Its life was saved. How are we like this little bird?

Keep in mind that, *“he who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps. 9:1).* *“He will cover you with his pinions and under his wings you may seek refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and bulwark” (Ps. 91:1).*

Beloved, the wonderful and warm embrace of our heavenly Father is a place of refuge and is not a “Devil’s Den.” When we try to find comfort in the clutches, in the many cares of the world by which we are surrounded, they become a prison not a refuge. Let us take courage in knowing that our God is our protector and never a threat.

Blessings for the Journey,
Rev. Chuck

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DATE— September 2013

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Secretary: Londa Blaine

Music Director: Miki Saito

Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

NECC BIKING ON THE TOWPATH

On *Sunday, September 22nd*, the family and friends of the North Eaton Christian Church are invited to go for a bicycle ride on the Towpath Trail. We will start the bicycle ride at the Canal Visitor Center at about 2:30pm (it is about 12 miles from here) or from the Brecksville Station (about 8 miles) and pedal our way to the Winking Lizard restaurant in Peninsula. We will eat *dinner together at 4:00* and then ride back to our cars. If you would like to ride the train back to the starting station, you can do so for \$2.00 per person (if you have a bicycle). You can also drive to the Winking Lizard to meet us for dinner. Please let me know if you plan to attend so we can arrange the proper seating at the restaurant. If you have any questions you can contact me at bokmans@att.net or by calling 440-891-1819.

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2013 General Assembly in Orlando, Florida

I was privileged to be able to attend my 5th General Assembly for the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ this summer. The theme for was "Lord Teach Us To Pray." There were four different learning tracks available, and I chose "Arts and Media in Worship". After attending the panel on worship crafting, I was very grateful to be a part of a church like NECC. We do have a lot of thing to be grateful for, both as a denomination and as a local church.

I attended a seminar sponsored by Disney Institute entitled: Creativity and Innovation. I had never thought the church and Disney had a lot in common until now. After our time at General Assembly I saw more clearly how Disney's goal is to make every person who walks through their gates welcome, comfortable, full of memories, and most important, wanting to return as soon as possible. Every person with Disney is aware of why they are there, and who they serve. They refer to this as Collaborative Culture and the key components are: passion for the purpose, shared values, communication, trust and a variety of perspectives. Some things have stayed the same for years and some things have changed. Everyone is creative. God gives us all gifts to serve Him, and his Body, the church. If something is changed, and it doesn't work, it can be changed again. That takes the pressure off making something perfect and permanent. As a church what is our organizational identity? Vision, what do we aspire to be? Mission, what do we do? Role, for whom do we exist? Essence, What do we want the people to feel? Continue Improvement Process: Share, listen and learn, measure, act, re-measure, reorganize and celebrate. Walt Disney believed in being an innovator. What is an innovator? A person who introduces new methods, ideas, or products.

One of the highlights of going to a gathering like General Assembly is reconnecting with friends we have not seen for a while, and making new ones. We all have a story to tell as individuals and as churches. Many joys and challenges are ours daily, and together we can make a difference, both in our local church and the world.

While at General Assembly we enjoyed the evening worship sessions. We met a couple of the worship leaders who were from Woodmont Christian Church in Nashville. After leaving Florida, we went to Nashville for a few day. We were able to participated in the 70th anniversary celebration at Woodmont Christian Church, as well as their Sunday night contemporary service called The Bridge.

Carol Butcher

■ **TOWER OF TOWELS.....**On Saturday, November 9th, the NECC CHI RHO will be participating in a Regional Chi Rho Rally at Camp Christian. One of the things we will be doing that day is creating a Tower of Towels to benefit the Free Store at Camp Christian. We are asking the congregation to help us build that tower. While you are out doing your shopping over the next month and a half would you please consider picking up a new towel or two to add to our tower? (Gently used towels would be acceptable as well (no stains).

■ If you have any questions contact Polly Tallos 440-748-2246.



News Among the Pews

Our thanks to *Jim Ponting* for taking time to trim the bushes on the west side of the church. Our thanks also to *Roger Driver and Bob Weber* who continue to keep our lawn looking great for Sunday morning worship.

"I want to thank *Mike Krasnevich* for his help in fixing my front door that was in much need of repair and took two weekends to get the job done. Praise God for this devoted man for me and the church." Sandy Nowak

"My thanks to the *Christian Men In Action group (Mike and Paula Krasnevich)* for all their help in getting me moved to a new apartment and getting the old one cleaned for inspection." Holly Hill

"My thanks to *Polly Tallos and the youth* who came to my home and did some much needed outside painting. A BIG THANK YOU to *Glenn Swartz* for the fantastic job he did on my chimney repair. I am so very appreciative to my NECC family for their much needed help." Alberta Amos

CONGRATULATIONS to **Holly Hill and Clarence Tallhammer** on their recent engagement. No immediate wedding plans finalized yet.

CONGRATULATIONS to **Linda Rodak** on the birth of her first grandchild, Matthew Sterling Rodak, born August 25th, 2013 Great Grandma Mary Tite was there for the arrival.

CONGRATULATIONS to **Fran Early** on the birth of her 9th great-grand-child, Cameron Perry Ferguson, born August 21st, 2013.

Our sympathy is extended to Amy Stafford and Karen Vilevac on the death of their brother, Carl Shafstall. Rev. Chuck officiated at a memorial service for family on August 30th.

Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of **Don Binnie** who died on August 24, 2013. Don was an active member of this church for many years. He attended the 9:30 service and many of Rev. Chuck's weekly studies. He will be miss here at North Eaton church.

The 8:00 worship service congregation said good-bye to **Fran Houston** on Sunday, Sept. 1st. Fran will be moving to Virginia Beach to live with her son. She promised she would be back to visit us.

Barb and Tom Mott celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 31st. Many of their family was in worship with them on Sept. 1st.

