

This Sunday @ OPCC

August 29, 2010



The ABC's of Prayer

The words of Christ are clear: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..."

Love must reach over to both sides and draw them together.

We cannot love ourselves unless we love others,
and we cannot love others unless we love ourselves.

- Thomas Merton, from *No Man Is an Island*

Greeting:

I hope your week has been wonderful to this point, and that you have prayed every day, all day... and from time to time used words. We will conclude our meditations on prayer this week with a look at prayer's sacred heart. I hope you will join us. This August series, *The ABC's of Prayer*, will be available in booklet form on September 12.

Emerson Hartzler and I will leave after worship on Sunday for a week of trail riding in Wisconsin. Peggy and Ed will, of course, be available to meet any need that may arise, and Peggy will officiate and preach in worship on September 5. I look forward to our return and the preparations for the 2010 Block Party on September 11, and the beginning of the new church year on September 12. It's not too early to invite friends, neighbors, and family to these wonderful events.

Bo

Sunday, August 29, beginning at 8:00 am:

- 8:00 Coffee Fellowship in the Fireside Room
- 8:30 Worship Gathering, sermon by Bo: *The ABC's of Prayer, Week Three: Prayer's Sacred Center*
- 9:20 Congregational Meeting (Information: update on budget)
- 9:30 Spiritual Growth groups for all ages
- 10:30 Coffee Fellowship in the Fireside Room
- 10:45 Worship Gathering, sermon by Bo: *The ABC's of Prayer, Week Three: Prayer's Sacred Center*
- 11:45 Congregational Meeting (Information: update on budget)

Preparation for Worship:

Please read Matthew 6.5-8 (The Message)

"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? ⁶Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace. ⁷The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. ⁸Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.

And reflect on the following:

It rarely seems that prayer is simple as Jesus suggests in Matthew 6. We're never sure whom to pray for, what to ask for and how much, and frequently question our worthiness to come into God's presence. When we arrive at prayer's sacred center, however, we find that Jesus is right; prayer is simple. When we find that quiet, secluded place – is it really a place? – and slow down long enough to listen to God, we find that we don't have to pick and choose whom and what to pray for – me or my neighbor, my success or yours – because the center is a circle that includes me and you, neighbor and stranger, God and us... all of us. We simply have to draw our prayer circle broadly enough to draw both sides together. Perhaps Edwin Markham, a Disciples poet, said it best in a short poem called *Outwitted*:

He drew a circle that shut me out –
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win
And we drew a circle that took him in!

Please Note:



- 1, Our Board will hold an information meeting following each worship gathering this Sunday, to update us on our financial situation as we look toward the end of this fiscal year and the creation of a new budget.
- 2, There will be no Worship Preparation next week