

# The Crusader - AUGUST, 2021

## Christ United Methodist Church

1503 N. Summit Ave., Decatur, IL 62526

217-423-4962

**Website:** christchurchhome.com

**Facebook:** facebook.com/groups/decaturchrist

**Instagram:** cumcdecatur

**Rev. Braden Parks**

707-382-8038

braden.parks18@gmail.com



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### **Rev. Braden Parks has words of Love to share with us**

**A Call to Love God** has called us to be a community that loves, uplifts, and encourages one another, in Christ. We are people called to joyfully welcome all people into the loving, merciful, and graceful arms of Jesus.

This Decatur church family has called me and continues to call me to welcome everyone and help grow the church. Talking or discussing either privately or publicly regarding another individual's vaccination status is going against the growth of our church. Confronting an individual attending service that is wearing a mask is also going against the growth of our church.

Gossip or other ways of making an individual feel unwelcome needs to not happen. We need to understand that our words and actions have consequences.

I challenge us to, with humility and love, hold each other and ourselves accountable. Also, I will continue to challenge us to acknowledge that we are all flawed and be willing to extend grace to each other.

Let us reflect the love of God in our interactions with each other. We are all together on this journey through life, let's seek to build each other up as we seek to proclaim the Kingdom of God: Father, Son and Spirit]. May love abound in our hearts and our interactions with one another. AMEN.

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## CHOICES WE MAKE CONCERNING

### KINDNESS

by Jenny Garver

I want to remind everyone to try to be kind to those around you. You do not see the whole picture of someone's life at any given time. Sometimes it helps to see a picture from a different light.

Masks are still a hot topic. Illinois reopened in June. Some people continue to wear masks, others do not. I believe at this current point (unless an organization, facility, store, medical establishment has something posted or designated otherwise), that each person and family should choose what is best for them. If you want to wear a mask, go for it. If you don't want to wear a mask, go for it. At the current moment, under the current regulations, everyone needs to decide what is best for themselves.

In this, we need to practice kindness and patience. You do not know what is behind someone's decision to wear or not wear a mask. Don't treat a person like they are a leper. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all and move on. Teach your kids to be tolerant. It boils down to the fact that we are all different. We all have free will. We all are entitled to our own choice. If I am outdoors, most likely I

will not have a mask on. If I am indoors, even though I am fully vaccinated, I most likely will be wearing my mask in a public area.

What you don't see is that I am a cancer survivor. What you don't see is that I don't have a strong immune system. What you don't see is that I have lots of allergies that make me very hesitant to take many common medicines that you might take when you are sick. What you don't see is that I have a family member that is terminally ill.

This fall my kids' school is starting off with masks being optional. That is fine. Once again everyone needs to decide what is best for them. I have talked with my kids and told them that it will be a choice that they need to decide for themselves. But . . . they have to be respectful of the choices of the classmates and teachers around them. If you have kiddos in this position this fall, talk to them.

Once again, you don't know what is behind one person or family's decision to wear or not wear masks. Be respectful. Someone wearing a mask is not about you. Someone not wearing a mask is not about you. Only worry about your-

self. You do you and I will do me. Do not try to shame someone wearing a mask or not wearing a mask. That is not kindness, it is just selfishness.

The only person you can control is yourself, so strive to be tolerant, kind, and patient while we continue to navigate through the hurdles of covid. One day, I hope, that this period of history will all be a distant memory and the hurts caused by insensitive tongues will be healed.

Until then, take time to look at the world through a different perspective. We are all in this together.

*Written by Jenny Garver*



#### RULES FOR A HAPPY LIFE

Copied from the internet

- Think of others more than yourself.
- Laugh every day.
- Spend less money than you make.
- Be an encourager NOT a critic.
- Pray when you feel like worrying.
- Give thanks when you feel like complaining.
- Keep going when you feel like quitting.

#### **Words of Encouragement written by Char Morse**

Several weeks ago, Pastor Braden asked me to be your liturgist today. I told him, I'd be happy to do so!

Some time had passed and I heard about the comments being made about those who aren't vaccinated, which by the way is a very personal choice! I was surprised to hear that Bonnie was hurt to the point where she and her family left the church. I reached out to Pastor Braden and told him that I've had strangers make comments to me about not being vaccinated and how I was hesitant on being your liturgist because I didn't want to be put in an uncomfortable position and have comments made to me or my family. He was so kind and supported my decision.

I was thinking about our conversation and then got a whisper in my ear telling me to go ahead and be the liturgist for all of you today. That all people, vaccinated or not, are welcome in God's house and it should be a safe place for His people!  
So, here I am!

COVID changed all of our lives without a doubt. We've been thrown on a learning curve that none of us ever saw coming. From people losing their lives, their jobs, their businesses, school children being forced out of their classrooms and learning remotely. To our loved ones in nursing homes or otherwise not being able to

have visits, with more and more people feeling isolated causing depression and on and on!

Through all of this, we must stay safe and respect each other's decisions at the same time!

We need to show more love than ever before!  
All of this has inspired me to write the following.

Being Fed, Speaking Freely, Being One

As I sit on my porch each morning, watching God's creatures come to my garden and yard, to feed on the food that we provide for them, it reminds me of how God's people should be. We have all kinds of birds, squirrels and bunnies who come to the table together to share the same feast, a United celebration, each morning. To be "fed!" It made me think of the following questions.

How are you fed when you come to God's house, whether in person or online?

How does the Holy Spirit speak to you? Is it through the Gospel, the sermon, in song or maybe it's through fellowship of those around you.

Speaking freely.  
The little creatures are so happy each day when I go out to feed them. When they gather together, they sing, chirp and chatter, you can just feel the thankfulness through watching them.  
It's their way of speaking freely,

sharing a feast, showing love and thankfulness in their own language!

It had me thinking, we are better when we are "United!"

What If people as a whole behaved in the same way as God's creatures and even viewed the world through the lens of a child's eye?

Everyone wants to be fed, to be accepted, wants to speak freely and we can be better together, United as one like Our Father wants us to be.

I am honored and humbled to be your liturgist today, (July 18, 2021)

I want to thank Pastor Braden and I'm thankful for the little whisper in my ear inviting me to do so. I hope and pray that my words encourage and inspire each of you, to share more love and hope in Jesus!  
May God Bless all of you!  
Amen!

## UMW NEWS

by Lea Carls

The United Methodist Women are collecting things for our annual rummage sale on **September. 10 and 11**. Contact Lea (217-454-0903) if you need help getting things to church. No TVs and no exercise equipment, please.

# Happy 101st Birthday!

**LORAINE OSBORNE, CHARTER MEMBER OF DECATUR CHRIST UMC, CELEBRATED HER 101st BIRTHDAY ON JULY 24, 2021. Members of the congregation brought cards to church, and Lea Carls, Mary Ferguson, and Rev. Braden Parks took the cards and a bouquet of flowers to her on July 22. Karen Rivera visited a little later in the day. Photo by Rev. Parks**



## Prayer List

Raymond King  
(Char's dad)

George and Mila

Malvia Sherwood

Savannah (Jacquie's  
daughter)

Erma Lewis

Lorraine Osborne

Donovan Lewis

Matthews and Sisson Families

Pastor Miley Palmer

Audrey Maurice

Bob Patterson

Karen Rivera

Joanne Austin

Don Wall

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Written by Karen Rivera

"When Christians began wearing bracelets with the acronym for "What would Jesus do?" in the 1990s, the phrase was a reminder for them to attempt to act in a way that personifies Jesus' teachings from the Gospels.

"While most know the WWJD movement as a recent development, the wording has been around for more than 100 years as Charles M. Sheldon, a Topeka minister and evangelical Christian writer, used it in his 1897 novel, "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?"

"The idea of imitating Jesus and trying to be like Jesus is something that's been around forever," said Tim Miller, a University of Kansas professor of religious studies and expert on Sheldon's life.

"What he did was create the phrase" (Source:news.ku.edu/2015/04/24)

I have been thinking about this phrase a lot lately. I am still in a self discovery phase of my life, and I dis-

cussed this in the July Crusader. I realized that I need people, and they need me. I am passionate about contacting people in our congregation who may be isolated from their church friends because they are no longer able to attend church because of health issues or because they do not live close enough to participate in church activities. It is important to take the time to visit them, send cards, or call them. These contacts mean so much to our church members and other friends.

Can you think of a time in Jesus' three year ministry when he was too busy or too far away from someone who needed Him? I can't. We are striving to be the kindest and most considerate Christians that we can be, so take the time to contact someone today.

We have a hospitality committee who contacts people who are ill, grieving, or visitors to our congregation. **These activities are not limited to this group.** Everyone is a part of making people feel loved and welcome to Christ UMC. If you look around our congregation, you will notice that the majority of those in worship service are age 50 or

above. We have lost many members in the past five years because they have passed. Those of us who are still here are not going to get any younger, and the pews are no longer full. If we love this church and expect it to continue, we must reach out to our community and friends.

**We cannot expect our pastor to do all the outreach and recruiting of new members or to be the only one who visits people.**

All of us should make people feel like we really want them to be a part of our fellowship. We need to make everyone feel welcome and to realize that things don't have to be the way they have always been. New ideas and new ways of doing things are the way to make any organization grow. As the saying goes, "Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, and the other gold."

Make a concerted effort to contact our members who need a phone call or visit, and think about **What Would Jesus Do?**

## The Breath Prayer

written by Sheridan Voysey

Lord God, fill me with your Holy Spirit

I receive your love & release my insecurity

I receive your joy & release my unhappiness

I receive your peace & release my anxiety

I receive your patience & release my impulsiveness

I receive your kindness & release my indifference

I receive your goodness & release my ungodliness

I receive your faithfulness & release my disloyalty

I receive your gentleness & release my severity

I receive your self-control & release my self-indulgence

Artwork by @jodie888

I liked Jenny Garver's idea of including a recipe in the Crusader. Marilyn Shroyer gave permission to share her recipe for **FRESH GARDEN SALSA**. This was printed in the last cookbook, Family Favorites, published by the women and men of Christ UMC.

- 4 Cups of peeled and chopped tomatoes
- 1/4 Cup finely chopped onion
- 1 to 4 jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Let stand for at least one hour. Serve at room temperature. Store leftovers in the refrigerator.

I was at the grocery store this morning and heard a loud crash and something shattering. Being nosy, I walked towards the sound and saw some people whispering and looking back to the end of the next aisle. When I walked down that aisle, I saw an older lady had hit a shelf and many things had fallen to the ground and broke. She was kneeling on the floor embarrassed, frantically trying to clean up.

I felt so bad for her, and everyone was just standing there staring at her. So I went and knelt beside her and told her not to worry and started helping her pick up the broken pieces. After about a minute, the store manager came and knelt beside us and said, "Leave it, we will clean this up." The lady, totally embarrassed said, "I need to pay for all this first." The manager smiled, helped her to her feet and said, "No ma'am, we have insurance for this, you do not have to pay anything!"

If you have read this far, I would like for you to give me a minute. Wherever you are, close your eyes, and imagine God doing the same for you!

Collecting the pieces of your broken heart from all the blows life has thrown at you. The bill for your faults, sin and folly has already been paid through the precious blood of Christ. God will heal all your wounds. He wants to gently lift you to your feet again, clean up your mess, and pick up all the broken pieces. He wants to heal you! He wants to take care of your soul!

We can have that same insurance and it's called GRACE!

Somebody say AMEN! Copied from the internet Source Simon Peter

### **August Birthdays**

<b>4</b> Paula Carr	<b>13</b> Mike Epperson	<b>21</b> Joanne Austin
<b>5</b> Tyson Sisson	<b>17</b> Sherri Gilmour	<b>22</b> Amy Denton
<b>13</b> Bill Walker	<b>21</b> John Morse	<b>28</b> Linda Thornton

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

**August 6th**

Dan and Amy Denton

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Lynn Dixon has posted a sign up sheet for people who can help at the 2021  
FARM PROGRESS SHOW.**

**Dates: August 31—September 2**

**The event is held at Progress City, north of Richland Community College.**

**It is a great fund raiser for our church.**

**Lynn Dixon will give details to the volunteers.**

The Soup Supper will be held on September 25, from 4—6 PM.

Lynn Dixon will be signing up cooks who have a special soup to serve at this much anticipated supper.

Since we could not schedule it last year due to the pandemic, all of us are really looking forward to this year.

Get out your recipes and spread the word that the Soup Supper is back!

A Dessert Auction will also be a part of the evening.

A sign up sheet will be posted in the near future.

