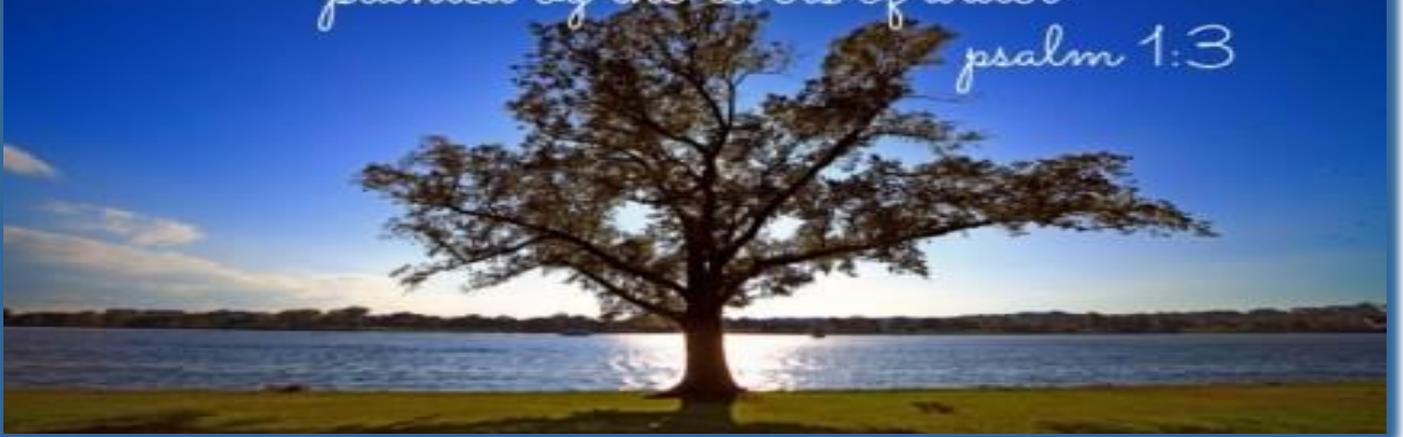


he shall be like a tree
planted by the rivers of water
psalm 1:3



Down by the River

News from the River of Life Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

From the desk of Pastor Betsy:

What Special Memorial Service?

On October 31, 2021 during our regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship, we will be honoring the individuals in our congregation who passed away during the pandemic. Because of Covid-19, we were unable to attend funerals, serve bereavement meals, or gather in fellowship to mourn our losses. We were unable to tell the family members of the deceased what their loved ones meant to our congregation. We could not offer our presence, our stories, or our support.

During the long months we battled the pandemic and met online, several important members of our congregation ended their earthly journey, including...

Dee Hiatt
Bill Hipsher
Wayne Logan
Pat Shipp
Ron Stigers
Allen Parrett
Shirley Horn
(continued)

(Continued)

We will be contacting the families of these members and inviting them to attend this special service. Afterwards we will hold a simple reception and give people an opportunity to visit with one another

How can you help?

- + Contact the office if you can think of any other church members who passed away between March 15, 2020 and June 1, 2021.
- + Offer to assist with contacting the families by phone, email, and letters of invitation.
- + Volunteer to help Marsha Iles with food and beverage planning, preparation, and/or serving.
- + Plan to attend worship on October 31, 2021.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and support in honoring our church members and their families.

Called to Be Holy

I focused on the holiness of God in a recent sermon, and I want to follow up on the topic of holiness in this newsletter article as well.

You may recall that holiness refers to moral purity and excellence. Holiness denotes being set apart. God, of course, is holy. As God's children, we, too, are called to be holy.

¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV)

Being *called* to be holy and actually *being* holy are two different things. As imperfect humans, we can never attain holiness on our own.

Fortunately, we are not on our own, and we do not have to become holy in and of ourselves. God uses the process of sanctification to increase our holiness.

(continued)

(continued)

Mangum et al., 2014 states:

Sanctification refers to being sanctified or holy. Objects and animals are holy or sanctified when they are set apart for God's purposes. God's people are to progressively grow in holiness until the Day of the Lord, at which point all believers will be completely sanctified.¹

What does it mean to “progressively grow into holiness?”

Sanctification is an ongoing process mediated by the Holy Spirit and plays out as an ongoing battle between our sinful fleshly desires and God's righteous desires for us.

The battle is real because our fleshly desires are real. Satan does not want us to be sanctified so he attacks us with temptations and spiritual warfare to wear us down.

The key is to remember that as God's children we are set apart from the world. Our thoughts and actions should draw us closer to God and further from the trappings and desires of the fallen world in which we live.

I encourage you to pray and reflect on your “progressive growth.” Are you maturing in your faith? Do you worry less and trust God more? Are you more sensitive to sin in your life?

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, and by spending time in prayer and reading our Bible, we will grow closer to God and to the holiness to which we are called.

Cary

Litwak, K. D. (2014). [Sanctification](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

The Only Type of Tree I Ever Want to Be

By Brian Fourman (Luke 14:28)

I can't imagine a world without trees. I love the spring when trees come budding back to life. It's a beautiful scene when your winter world goes from browns to greens in the span of a couple weeks.

Of course trees have been around forever and figured prominently in some Bible passages. They served as places of refuge and places of worship. They marked territory or direction and provided fruits of all kinds. Absalom's long hair got him caught in one, Solomon used them to build his magnificent temple and the vertically challenged Zacchaeus climbed one in order to see Jesus.

There are all kinds of trees listed in the Bible from terebinth to tamarisk trees, to poplar, almond, chestnut, palm, cedar, olive, fig, pomegranate, mulberry, cypress, sycamore, fir, apple, and oak.

And of course the two most famous trees planted in the [Garden of Eden](#) – the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Of them all though, I want to be the tree mentioned in Psalm 1:3. This one is fascinating because it describes the life I, and I think most people want to lead. The author uses a simile to compare a certain type of man to a tree. He writes:

*“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.”*

The Ultimate Picture of a Healthy Tree

I love the imagery associated with this tree. If your mind’s eye can’t you just picture it? A grassy meadow blowing in the wind, bordered on one side by a river. And near the water’s edge stands a giant, perfectly shaped tree.

It’s solid. Unmoving. Growing. Healthy.

People seek out its shade for comfort from the heat of the day. Birds flock to it. People and animals alike share in the abundance of fruit it produces.

There are no chinks in its bark. Its branches are strong. It can withstand the heat of the day and the strong winds that blow across the meadow.

Of course the tree is like this because it has a nearby source of nourishment on which to draw. Each day its roots suck up the life giving water from the nearby river and channel it upward. Its system is continually fed with good things – in fact the very thing it needs to thrive.

So what type of man would be like this tree? After all it was a description of prior information mentioned in the verses above as the “*He shall be like...*” phrase implies.

How to Be Like This Tree

If this tree sounds like one you want to become there is good news – a simple formula will get you there. The formula is found in the prior two verses. They read:

*“Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree...”*

As you can see the formula to become a sturdy, growing and prosperous man/woman-tree contains three don’ts and two dos.

1. Don’t take unwise and immoral advice
2. Don’t walk with evildoers
3. Don’t get comfy with mockers

But...

1. Do take pleasure in the words of God and...
2. Do dwell on them every day.

The person who will commit to this formula will be like that tree by the river.

The winds may blow really hard and the heat may come.

There might even be a fire to endure.

But the words of God you are soaking in every day will sustain you. They will cause you to grow and be prosperous.

You'll be able to stand and not wither.

And your vibrant life will be a blessing to others.

That's the type of tree I want to be.

Questions: What has caused you to grow the most in your life? How difficult do you find it to avoid the "Don't" listed above? For those who read the Bible daily, how have you seen it impact your life?

August 2021

BIBLE STUDY: Tuesdays @ 10:00 a.m. led by Cary Green at the Church and on Zoom
(Information for Zoom will be sent out to join)

CONVERSATION & COLORING: Thursday, at 11:00 a.m. at the Church and on Zoom
(Information for Zoom will be sent out to join)

CHOIR PRACTICE will resume on September 2nd at 6:00 p.m.

We Are Still Collecting Food for the Emmaus Food Mission, please bring your donations on Sundays....We will set up a date to deliver to Emmaus.

The Church is planning a Memorial Service for those that passed away during Covid on October 31st. If you are aware of a member passing, will you please let Betsy or Martha know.

Serving in July

Praying at the Table:

- 1 Connie Kiesling
- 8 Dennis Kollmar
- 15 Jane Kollmar
- 22 Jim Brown
- 29 Martha Brown

Worship Leader:

- 1 Ken Uchida
- 8 Connie Kiesling
- 15 Ted Jones
- 22 Jason Crittendon
- 29 Bonnie Minglin



JOYS:

Dennis, Alice, Ingrid and John are healing and doing much better

CONCERNS:

Prayers for Shirley Horn family as they travel to make arrangements

John Minglin

Ben Ashby

Josiah Moore

Lyndsey Kremer

Carol Long and Bill Gerding

Jay P Carlson

Marsha Iles

Ron Flickinger

Bob Rihel

Danny Balderson

Drew Moyle

Bonnie Uchida

Paige Smith

Alice Snider

Iris Ashby

David & Pam Herd

Kamryn Kollmar

Matt Hughes

James Drake and his wife, Pam

Neil Myers

Joe and Janny Ewing

SHUT-INS:

Joan Hipster (Woodbridge)

Marge Ingmire (Woodbridge Rm 302)

Cyndy Gentry (McKinney Place)

Norma Harris (Millers 203)

BIRTHDAYS



Cary Green

August 1

Tia Denny

August 2

Tim Kiesling

August 2

Deb Richards

August 6

Iris Ashby

August 10

Brent Kollmar

August 16

Ben Ashby

August 31

ANNIVERSARIES



John & Alicia Iles

August 5

Frank & Alice Hibbard

August 12

Chris & Kelly Kollmar

August 15

Max & Winnie Landes

August 31