



# Vestry Voices

## The Church Family Newsletter

First Congregational  
Church of Clinton

October 2024

Editor  
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### Our Daily Bread

Give us this day our daily bread

Matthew 6:11 (KJV)



Rev. Gary Kiontke



The first petition of the second half of the prayer Jesus taught His apostles asks the Father to give to them their daily bread: all that is necessary to have energy to do God's will for them that day. In the first half of the prayer, Jesus' disciples are petitioning His Father and theirs in order to have a right relationship with Father God. All who have been adopted into God's family, because they have received by grace Jesus' work of dying on the Cross to pay the penalty for their sins and rising from the dead to give them new life in faithful obedience to His Father God, may ask God to do three things in them. First, that Father God would move them to set Him apart as holy in their hearts and minds. Second, that His Kingdom would come, and He would use them to play their part in its coming. Third, that Father God's will is always done: as in heaven, also on earth.

In the second half of the prayer, Jesus' disciples are praying for themselves and their needs. In the first petition, Jesus wants His disciples to petition that their daily need for sustenance to do their part in fulfilling the first three petitions will be met by God. The implied subject of the verb is God: (Thou must) give. The pronouns for both the direct and indirect object are plural: (to) us ... our daily bread. It would seem that Jesus wanted people to pray this petition with alert hearts and minds and ask two questions. Does this mean that each and every member in a local church will be given enough "daily bread" (sustenance)? Does this mean each and every local church around the world will be given enough "daily bread" (sustenance)?

Both common sense and careful observation reveal that the answers to these questions are: no and no.

This leads to two corollary prayers that must flow from the general words Jesus gave in His model outline prayer. A corollary is something which flows from what has al-

ready been established. In order to have the petition Jesus asked all His disciples to pray fulfilled for each and every member of each and every church around the world, two more petitions are needed. First, we should add: (Thou must) teach us to share with each other. I have been trying to pray this corollary prayer often when I pray Jesus' prayer alone. Second, we should also add: (Thou must) teach us (in turn) to be both generous and vulnerable.

For this to happen, people in a local church must meet together in person and talk to one another both honestly and openly. Further, churches in a region must communicate with each other by God-ordained means.

An example of the latter comes from the apostle Paul's constant communication with churches in major cities where he planted or built up churches. The churches in Macedonia (northern Greece) and Achaia (southern Greece) pooled their financial resources to help the churches in Jerusalem in Judea who were suffering due to a famine (2 Corinthians 8; Acts 11:28-30). Their motivation for this was to reciprocate the churches in Judea, because they had shared with them from the spiritual riches they had received from God after they came to acknowledge Jesus was indeed their promised Messiah (Romans 15:25-27). What each church lacked was in abundance in the other church. So across nine hundred miles, because each church was vulnerably honest with God and His apostle, and whole-heartedly generous through God and His apostle, neither church suffered from its lack, and both were blessed for their generosity.

The early church in Jerusalem illustrates members of local churches meeting often personally with both vulnerability and generosity. After Peter's Pentecost sermon the Lord added three thousand people to His Church in Jerusalem. Immediately following, Luke tells us that they devoted themselves to learning from the apostles and meeting together twice a day for worship and prayer; and, they held all possessions in common so there were no needy among them

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## Our Daily Bread ( ... continued from page #1 )

(Acts 2:41-45). Soon after this the church grew by another two thousand (Acts 4:4). Under the leadership of the apostles, the multitude of believers had one heart and mind and no one lacked anything because those with possessions voluntarily sold their possessions and created a common purse. As a result, all had access to whatever was needed to respond to the grace given them by the resurrected Jesus (Acts 4:32-35).

In the fifth chapter of a document from the late second century called "The Letter to Diognetus" we see evidence that the spirit of generosity and vulnerable communication of needs consistent with the petition to "give us this day our daily bread" had grown as a result of the church continuing to pray the prayer Jesus taught. Here is an excerpt:

*For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the cus-*

*toms which they observe ... They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners ... They love all men, and are persecuted by all ... They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all*

So, whenever we pray "give us this day our daily bread" let us also pray that we will be in closer communication with other Christians in our town. And may we pray we will let down our guard enough to share with each other both our abundance and our need. Finally, may we pray that Father God will enable and empower us all to both cheerfully give to one another and gratefully receive from one another! ~v~

## Sundays in October

We will have Communion on October 6 and 20.

Here are the details on the sermon texts and themes for each of the worship services on the Lord's Day:

Sunday	Readings	Theme
October 6	Genesis 4:1-16; Joshua 22:1-8	Sins against brothers may be overcome by obedient faith
October 13	Genesis 11:1-9; Joshua 23:9-13	We must not be concerned with making a name for ourselves
October 20	Genesis 14:1-20; Joshua 5:13-15	The king of righteousness and the commander of Yahweh's army
October 27	TBA	Guest preacher: Walter Mutti

Pastor Gary will be on vacation from October 26 through November 1. See the vacation article on page 4.

## It Just Happens\*... "A Time to Listen"

By Petros

In the past month, God's World was highlighted. His Word was presented in many ways to help us slow down and "smell the coffee." Our lives accelerate past the "ordinary" beauty of the broken Paradise of Adam and Eve. There is a rest and hope to relish, even while modern man continues to diminish our Creator's gift (to the broken man). Rather than realizing what we need, we pursue the desires of our hearts. Our lives never have enough, we burn out, are left empty, and just can't seem to catch up. I got a better sense of why only one like a child can enter the gates of heaven. God prevents the wise to understand. After all, the wisest can't explain the Cross.

"It Just Happens\*..." Pastor Gary summed up our good fortune as heirs to the Kingdom of God when "...we all real-

ize and thank God that when we are IN Jesus by faith, we will share in the inheritance of His Saints in His Light." But Jesus proclaimed He brought the Kingdom of Heaven (God) to earth for all who believe. A big part of living in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth is knowing if God is before us, who or what should we fear.

I had a few days, when I was in fear, that taught me the fear of God is more to fear than any situation on earth. I'm a novice with a chainsaw, even though I have three. I bought one years ago, and two were given to me by ex-neighbors. National Grid took out a couple of big trees that needed to be removed for power line preservation and "It Just Happens\*..." for the Barn's solar power panels efficiency. Thanks be to God! Before the excava- (cont. on page 3 ...)

## ***It Just Happens\*...*** ( ... continued from page #2 )

tion for the Barn's foundation, some more large trees were removed to prevent future concerns. The property line trees that were removed opened up the barn side yard immensely. But there were some more trees that I started to cut on the steep banking down to my neighbors. I know I had God's grace and mercy upon me as I cut and dropped small trees and saplings all around. Then, two of the taller trees caught tangled and didn't fall to the ground. And another, I couldn't get good footing and slipped, and caught my balance by palming the cutting blade, which was stopped. I was glad to run out of gas, and left the precarious situation. For the next few days, I felt fear of getting hurt while "learning on the job." In the interim, praying for safety and direction was when the fear of God overrode any fear of things. When I felt God's grace (and as I got the chainsaw prepped with gas and oil), I was calm enough to envision how the blade cut through the wood and realized some errors I needed to correct in my techniques. Without fear, I finished clearing the side of the barn and impressed the professional excavator/tree cutter on cutting down the remaining trees and clearing the banking.

It has been an unbelievable experience for the Barn's foundation to materialize during August. Only with God's intervention could it become a solid foundation in the legalities of all the concerns. Knowing God's hand is on this made me more anxious on making decisions and planning, hoping to stay in the middle of the road with God's plan. "It Just Happens\*..." I had a dream that was unlike any dream I've remembered. I dreamed about a Host who was providing hospitality and comfort in a home with many people in a time of need. I realized I search for commonality to engage versus speaking words of encouragement or sharing of God. I was talking (not speaking) to Host but I couldn't hear Host because I didn't have my "listening device." The Host showed me; it was three silver pieces strung together with flexible wire. And I lost it. As the Host was leaving to get coffee for

everyone, I panicked and shouted, "I can't hear you!" I didn't want to miss any directives.

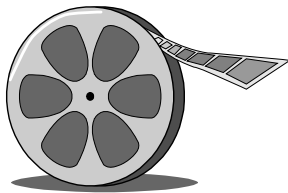
I went over the details, which I put down on paper as soon as I awoke. The Host was providing for our comfort and needs, while we are lost following the desires of our hearts instead of appreciating the beauty in the world He has created for us. Instead of seeking what we need. We are not listening or following the Word because we are hearing our thoughts. The "listening device" is to stay neutral when hearing, which leads to listening. Hearing what is said ... like a child hears ... lets Life come instead of chasing it. Listening develops a flexible child who absorbs nature, bends with challenges, believes in help. Like Peter Pan, "I never want to grow up!" Life in Never Land. The Word paints the plan. I need to find my "listening device." A bracelet, like a personal device; keep it with your body all the time. The larger middle silver piece represents God, the Father, with the Holy Spirit and Jesus. No buttons. It is ON all the time. "Be still and know that I am God." "I am the God that wants to be your God." Don't be pursuing desires of our heart. We take control of our life when we are immersed in God's Kingdom. Don't leave home without it!

***"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor uselessly." Psalm 127:1***

**Author's note:** This article's title "It Just Happens\*..." counters the cliché ... things just don't happen. "It" will stand for the world view one chooses to abide in. "Just" is the character of the God who wants to be our God. He has made us in His image – righteous; by faith in God. "Happens" will be the events and experiences God uses to grow our faith. All things work for the glory of God. When we turn from our ways and we look to God and live His Word – His plan for us unfolds. ~v~

## **Movie Night**

**Special Night: Friday, October 18 at 7:00 PM**



We show a movie once each month, in Fellowship Hall, usually on the fourth Friday (third Friday, this month). The movies shown in the past have covered a range of genres, and were usually thought provoking.

We are able to show these movies based on the church's CVLI® license. However, this license does not allow us to advertise or publicize the names of these movies to the general public, and they are always free of charge.

We usually have free snacks available, and you are also welcome to bring your own meal, if you wish. So, please join us for a night out at the movies!



## ***FCC Annual Meeting Sunday, October 20 at Noon***



Per the church bylaws, the Annual meeting will be in the downstairs fellowship hall after morning worship on Sunday, October 20 (the third Sunday of the month) at noon.

Those who have annual reports to submit should have them on the table in the copier room by Friday, October 18.

## ***November “Vestry Voices” Articles Due Monday, October 21***

Due to Pastor Gary’s upcoming family vacation (see article below), all articles for the November issue of the “Vestry Voices” newsletter are due on Monday, October 21. The newsletters will be copied and assembled on Tuesday, October 22. They will then be held for mailing right after October 27’s Sunday service, ensuring that they are received before the November 3 Sunday service.

## ***Pastor Gary’s Vacation October 26 through November 1***



Pastor Gary and his family will vacation in Maine from Saturday, October 26 through Friday, November 1.

Walter Mutti will lead worship and preach on October 27. This will be the second time he has filled our pulpit this calendar year.





# OCTOBER 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	1	2 (††)	3 (**)	4	5
6 Communion Sunday (Note #1)	7	8	9 (††)	10 (**)	11	12
13 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #2)	14	15	16 (††)	17 (**)	18 Annual Meeting Reports Due; Movie Night (Note #3)	19
20 Communion Sunday; <b>ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING</b> (Note #4)	21 November "Vestry Voices" Articles Due (Note #5)	22	23 (††)	24 (**)	25	26 Pastor Gary's vacation begins (Note #6)
27 Guest Preacher; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #7)	28	29	30	31	1 Last day of Pastor Gary's vacation (Note #8)	2

**Calendar Notes:**

- #1) 10/6 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM.**
  - #2) 10/13 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour after Worship.
  - #3) 10/18 — Annual Meeting reports are due (place on the table in the copier room).  
**ALSO:** Movie Night — in Fellowship Hall: **7:00 PM.**
  - #4) 10/20 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM. ALSO: Annual Church Meeting: Noon.**
  - #5) 10/21 — Articles are due for the November issue of "Vestry Voices" (based on Pastor Gary's upcoming vacation week).
  - #6) 10/26 — Pastor Gary's vacation begins.
  - #7) 10/27 — FCC Worship with Guest Preacher Walter Mutti: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour after Worship.
  - #8) 11/1 — Last day of Pastor Gary's vacation.
- (††)** Wednesday Bible Study: **11:00 AM (but not on 10/30)** (in FCC Parlor).  
**(\*\*)** Thursday Prayer: **3:00 PM (but not on 10/31)** (in FCC Parlor).

