



Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | August 2022

QUESTIONS OF FAITH - PART THREE

This summer I have used this space to address some of the questions the Confirmation Class was asking about as each member wrote a personal statement of faith back in May. Each year I have found Confirmation Class inspiring and challenging to lead because Confirmands often ask some of the deepest questions. So, the last in this series will be the one that all of us ask at one point or another, **“Why do bad things happen to good people?”** It really gets to the root of the problems of the world in which we live and our expectations and faith in a loving God. If God is in control and made everything, why are there natural disasters that cause thousands of people to suffer? If God loves me, why do the people I love die? Why is there cancer? Why is there so much violence and innocent lives lost?

The simple answer is, “I don’t know.” There are many possible answers out there, some are better than others. For instance, I don’t believe that God moves us around like pieces on a chessboard. And if that is true, then there is quite a bit of freedom in the world—among us human beings and even in the larger creation. I don’t believe that God causes suffering. However, because of my experience of Jesus, and understanding of who Jesus is, I believe that God’s heart breaks as much as our hearts break when we experience pain. When we weep at the death of the ones we love, or experience despair for the loss of the dreams we have, or experience suffering ourselves, or suffering of the ones we love—God feels that pain, too. God’s own Son suffered and was executed by those in power. Jesus was abandoned even by his closest friends, the disciples, in their confusion and fear. In fact, Jesus made his life more difficult by following God’s path. By loving those who were outsiders, by challenging the religious authorities of his day, by offering an alternative vision of the way God wanted the world—the religious, political, economic and military forces of the world conspired to kill him and silence that vision.

God has given us free will, but God is with us always. We make our own choices and follow our own paths, but God, through the Bible and the life of faith, *...continued on the next page...*

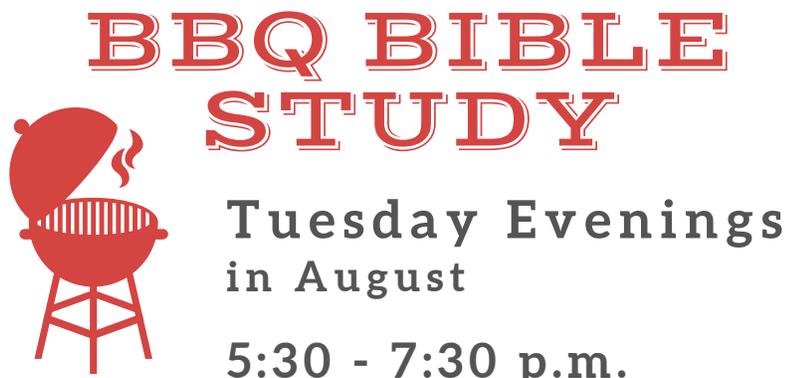
...QUESTIONS OF FAITH, continued...

has offered us guidance. We are shown a path that will help lead ourselves and others to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. As the Bible proclaims, God has shown us what is good—to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. Jesus used the Hebrew scriptures to highlight for his disciples ways to live in God's light: to love God with all our heart, mind and spirit, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Simply, to treat others the way you would like to be treated. But none of these is a guarantee that things will always go your way, or that you will never face hardship and pain. When bad things happen, God is with us and can help get us through.

Yours In Christ,
Pastor Scott

BBQ BIBLE STUDY ON TUESDAY EVENINGS THROUGH THE END OF THIS MONTH

Beginning last month, we have been having a cookout at church every Tuesday night at 5:30 followed by a little Bible study focusing on the Gospel of Luke. You are invited to join us! Pastor Scott will cook up some hotdogs, bratwurst, or cheeseburgers for everyone in attendance. All those who attend can participate in the meal by bringing something to share; chips, salads, desserts, etc. We've had some great feasts! After our dinner outside on the patio, or inside if its rainy, we discuss some of the things that make Luke's gospel so different from the others. The BBQ Bible Study is finished up by 7:30 and everyone is ready to head home. Come and join us for dinner and conversation!

A graphic for BBQ Bible Study. It features a red icon of a charcoal grill on the left. To the right of the grill, the text "BBQ BIBLE STUDY" is written in a large, red, outlined, serif font. Below this, "Tuesday Evenings in August" is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font, and "5:30 - 7:30 p.m." is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is enclosed in a rounded rectangular border with a light orange-to-brown gradient.

BBQ BIBLE STUDY
Tuesday Evenings
in August
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

WORSHIP WITH US - SUMMER SERVICES

We have one service at 9:00 during the summer months (sorry, no nursery care provided in the summer). Our program year will start on September 11th, with two services at 8:00 and 10:00.

CLICK AWAY

Remember to be on the lookout for orange text throughout this e-newsletter. The orange text is linked up to other documents or web pages that you might find helpful and interesting.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEXT E-NEWSLETTER

If you have any celebrations, concerns/prayer requests or other contributions that you would like us to include in a future e-newsletter, let us know. Please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.