



R E A C H I N G   O U T  
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# Reaching Out

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKSHIRE, NY

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**Mt 28.19-20:** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...  
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

## FROM THE PASTOR: ARE YOU A "CASUAL" CHRISTIAN?

**Matthew 7.21:** Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

I don't know that many pastors preach on this verse, but they should. No other verse is so directly targeted at people who assume they are saved but are actually living a lie!

But wait, you say: I believe in Jesus and the Bible says I'm saved. Yes and no. Part of the problem comes with a shallow understanding of the word "belief." There are two false meanings of this word that snare many casual Christians. The first is simply that belief means intellectual assent. I believe that Jesus did walk the earth and now is in heaven. I believe that He died for the forgiveness of sins. James has an answer for this kind of belief: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder." (James 2.19-22)

Then there is false belief #2. This one is normally linked to adult baptism. A person says "I believe" and has a *wonderful* experience when he or she is baptized. Others say they "feel" the presence of the Holy Spirit and that feeling proves they were saved. Sadly, they are wrong again. It is not "I'm baptized, I'm done."; rather, it should be "I'm baptized, I've just begun." You may have felt a spirit, but that doesn't mean it was the Holy Spirit. As John warns us: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4.1) Remember, Satan was called the "angel of light" and he did not lose his looks when he fell from heaven. Indeed, imitating God with a poisonous twist is his specialty.

Which brings us to the correct definition of belief: it is a *life-changing* faith in Jesus as God. Here we start with Hebrews 11.1: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." The basis for this faith is the Bible. Without the Bible as the Word of God, then your "belief" becomes only your own ideas of what is right and wrong. (If you don't believe the Bible is God's Word, then check out II Timothy 3.16-17.)

If you do believe the Bible is God's Word, then the next question is this: when is the last time you read it (at least the New Testament)? Here we see how this life-changing faith comes into play. People who see faith as thinking or feeling can skip the doing. But a life-changing faith means your actions change. Here we come back to James 2.16-18: "... one of you says to him, Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do."

Having Jesus as Savior is not enough: we must obey Him as Lord. As God, He gave us the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions. As God, He tells us to make disciples (not just believers). As God, He tells us to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10.24-25)

Now Jesus puts this idea of a life-changing relationship with Him another way: "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15) True love is life-changing. Has your life changed?

In Him, Pastor Chuck

**PREACHING ON I PETER**

Starting in August, I'm going to go after a book from "cover to cover." That book is I Peter. So here are the sermons to come. PC

The Chosen	I Peter 1.1-2
A Living Hope	I Peter 1.3-12
Therefore	I Peter 1.13-2.2.3
Getting Stoned	I Peter 2.4-10
Free to Slave	I Peter 2.11-25
The Marriage Triangle	I Peter 3.1-7
Lawyers for the Defense	I Peter 3.8-22
The End is Near! So What?	I Peter 4.1-19
The Middlemen	I Peter 5.1-5
Demons Within & Without	I Peter 5.6 - 14

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

Take a walk on the WILD side at VBS this summer during **PandaMania!**

Sunday August 7th thru Friday August 12th from 6:00-8:30pm we'll gather together to explore Psalm 139 and learn that: God is Listening to us, God is Watching over us, He made us, He gives us good gifts, and He loves us no matter what!

There are classes for all ages (2 yrs - Adult). During our fun we'll meet some new jungle

**BECOMING ONE:****What God Meant Marriage to Be****INTRODUCTION:**

"Haven't you read," [Jesus] replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will **become one** flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Mt 19.4-6)

Ever have a problem with these verses? Does "becoming one" seem an impossible ideal? Over this weekend, we'll come to understand what God means when He says marriage is "becoming one." We'll use both psychology and the Bible to understand marriage more realistically and to find ways to grow more towards God's ideal.

We start with a full Saturday to look at how our personalities differ. You'll complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and discuss how your personality matches up with your spouse. We'll look at how God made us different so that He could create a couple that is more than the sum of its

**MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE**

This one is not often on your Sunday school list, but it really challenges us to think about what God wants of His people:

**Romans 12.2:** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**CONTACT US:** You can reach our church by sending an email to [BCC\\_Secretary@yahoo.com](mailto:BCC_Secretary@yahoo.com) or calling us at 657-2677. For Pastor Chuck, call 657-8058 or email him at [BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com](mailto:BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com).

friends like Boomer the Panda & Lulu the Monkey who will help us remember that God is WILD about each of us! We hope you'll join us for awesome music, great crafts, yummy snacks, fun games, and life-changing lessons.

If you are interested in helping us during VBS please contact **Jenn Willard (VBS Director) 657-2578**; you may also preregister your child for VBS if you'd like. We're looking forward to having a bamboo blast with everyone!!

parts. Oh, for this long day, we'll have snacks, lunch, and baby-sitting if you need somewhere to put your kids.

From there, we'll meet for six Tuesday nights to see how God gives us answers to our major marriage problems. Here are the Tuesday topics:

1. What is "Love"?
2. Marriage and submission
3. Finances & marriage
4. How marriage forces us to grow... or quit.
5. Working through conflicts.
6. Baggage (living like our parents)

This will cost each couple \$25 for the supplies we use. A small price to pay for 25 years and more of being happy together!

So, here are the dates to mark on your calendar:

**Saturday, September 17** from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (with a mini-breakfast at 8:30)  
**Tuesdays**, (from September 20 through October 25) from 7 - 8 p.m.

This course will be limited to ten couples.

**THANK YOU EMILY**

Even as we take this Newsletter in a new direction, we want to thank Emily for her years of service.

**WOMENS' FELLOWSHIP IN AUGUST**

Each Sunday for the month of August the Women's Fellowship is sponsoring a collection of school supplies donated by our church community.

Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> – pens, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, washable markers

Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> – erasers, rulers, Elmer's glue, glue sticks

Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> – spiral notebooks, loose leaf paper, folders

Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> – calculators, protractors, compasses, pencil cases

The above items are suggested for each week, but feel free to donate any additional school supplies on any week.

If you know of a child or family in need of school supplies, please contact Amanda and we will see that they receive some of our donated supplies.

**Greeters:**

Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> - Paul Kunik  
Bob Wait

Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> - Sandy Kasmarcik  
Kit Michaud

Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> - Mike Kunik  
Sheryl Kunik

Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> - Jim Willard  
Jenn Willard

**Ushers:**

Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> - John Adams  
Mike Wells

Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> - Bob Wait  
Dave Michaud

Aug 21<sup>st</sup> - Mark Friebel  
Paul Kunik

Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> - Mike Kunik  
Bob Maynard

**Junior Church:**

August - Joan Stoughton

**Nursery:****THOUGHTS ABOUT CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS** by Jackie Morris

These are only my thoughts as I look back and at the present while serving on the Constitution and By-Laws team.

Back in the winter of 2010 I was asked if I would like to join the Constitution and By-Laws team. Hmm, sounds like it would be a fun challenge. I started out by trying to update myself on the current by-laws. I was a bit confused when I started to read them. It had been several years since I got them out to even look at. Okay, let's get this set in my head so I know what I'm trying to do and where we might be able to improve and revise our current by-laws.

Our first meeting was December 12, 2010 (my anniversary). The team was introduced to the CCCC's example constitution and its layout. I thought it was very easy to read and follow along. What was the biggest difference about the CCCC's constitution?

The answer is "Elders". The CCCC's recommended having Elders instead of a cabinet. Once everyone on the CB team was in agreement of the change, we all worked on the 'wording' of the proposed change. Okay. Let's try it and see what the congregation thinks. Well, the Bible indicates we should have elders, so I would think the congregation would be accepting this proposition.

We had to have a lot of things explained to us and Bible verses to refer to and people's feelings about this and that. Our main goal was to be Biblically correct. NOT politically correct. Remember, Jesus is the head of our church family, not the government.

We continued to go through both current and CCCC's constitutions and by-laws samples that were in front of us. Wow, what the heck does this phrase mean? Do you think Congregation would do or agree to do this particular thing? Well, we will try to present it in the simplest form and hope they understand what we are trying to say here. It isn't just one person making these decisions; it is everyone on the CB team, trying to work together.

Well, here it is the end of July and we're still working on it. I am in constant prayer that our CB team does and submits the best constitution and by-laws and that the congregation will eventually be in agreement with.

In some of the explanations of the by-laws it says we know we are not perfect, but we will always do the best we can do. I know the congregation was in the same boat as we were. It seemed like we were all rowing, but in different directions. We will get this done. And it WILL be the best constitution and by-laws we ever had.

## CCCC CONFERENCE NOTES

The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference held its Annual Meeting this last week of July. The theme was "Christ-like Community." The speakers stressed how we should imitate Christ by showing His love for one another. If you want to hear these messages for yourself, go to the website at [cccusa.com](http://cccusa.com) and you'll find them on the cover page. Just look for the "**Download Plenary Messages**" and you'll be all set. As you'll see there, the CCCC takes this idea seriously!

What you won't find on the web-site are the seminars that were offered on Tuesday and Wednesday. I can only speak to a couple that I attended. One was a discussion of "Church Redevelopment." This is a major emphasis of the CCCC, and it centers on building relationships with the congregation and with the community. It was encouraging to hear the speakers talk about how God has blessed so many churches. What was really exciting is that they worked on many of the same things we have here in Berkshire. To give you an idea of these issues, here is a paragraph I've lifted from the denomination website:

While some local congregations are doing an incredible job, most churches need help to refocus on what has been called the "irreducible core" of Christianity: Love God, Love Others, and Make Disciples. Church Redevelopment (or Revitalization) is the process -- unique to each congregation -- that leads a church and her ministry back to New Testament wholeness based upon these principles.

For those of you reading this who attend our services regularly, you can recall the sermon series such as "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" and "Getting to the Heart of the Matter." Even now the Transition Team is working on a vision to share with candidates for our settled pastor.

Another session was led by CCCC missionaries to North Africa. They spoke on the "Arab spring" that we've heard discussed in the news. It was interesting to talk with people who saw this unfolding and had many Arab friends who were living it firsthand. Pray for the Christians in these countries. Even as the people talk about wanting freedom and democracy, they still do not include *religious* freedom in their thinking.

I went to a Chaplain's seminar where we talked about how the military is changing with the open recognition of homosexuals.

The final seminar was the one I led on "Preparing Your Congregation for an Interim

Pastor." This was geared towards pastors and elders *before* they need an interim. It showed the benefits and costs of an interim so that congregations would know what to expect before an interim comes. It is quite a shock when people expect to spend 3 months finding the right person only to discover that it will take a year or more to reexamine *themselves* to get ready for this new shepherd. (We've experienced some of that shock right here in Berkshire!) You might be interested to know that our acting Conference Minister is looking over this material to pass on to the Area Representatives so they can use it when a church starts its transition with the leaving of a pastor. Talk about timely: the CCCC has just published a book called "Transitioning Your Church: How to Bridge a Pastoral Change." They even mention IPM as a good place to find a trained interim. (Yes, I got a copy of this book for our Transition Team.)

The fellowship in our Conference is wonderful. I got to see a number of old friends and share some meals with them. These conferences are a wonderful time to be renewed and refreshed. I also came home with about \$50 of new books to read. (Don't tell Becky.) In Him, Pastor Chuck

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

### **Anniversaries:**

Bob & Darlene Wait	8/05
Phillip & Joan Coffin	8/08
Frank & Carol Kunik	8/10
Mike & Vicki Kemmerer	8/11
James & Karen Willard	8/26
David & Charlotte Alexander	8/27

### **Birthdays:**

Vicki Kemmerer	8/04
Phillip Coffin	8/05
Chuck Horvath	8/10
Cassandra Willard	8/20
Darcy Friebel	8/24
Carl Akins	8/25
Mike Kemmerer	8/25
Laura Friebel	8/30
Barbara Miller	8/30
John Knieriem	8/31

(We are trying to get all of our birthday and anniversary information in one place. If you see an error or omission, please let our church secretary know. Thank you.

# Congregational Church Events - August 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> 7:00 PM-Ladies Bible Study  7:00 PM-Trustees Meeting	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 6:30 PM-Deacons Meeting  7:30 PM-Transition Team Meeting	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 8:30 AM-Sunday School 10:00 AM-Worship/Communion  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>8</b>  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>9</b>  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>10</b>  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>11</b>  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>12</b>  6:00– 8:30 PM-VBS	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 8:30 AM-Sunday School 10:00 AM-Worship/Coffee Hour  6:00 – 7:30 PM- Chess Club 7:30 PM-Christian Basics	<b>15</b> 7:00 PM-Ladies Bible Study  7:00 PM-Men in Ministry	<b>16</b>  7:00 PM-Youth Group Band	<b>17</b>  7:30 PM-Choir Practice	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 10:00 AM-Senior Pantry
<b>21</b> 8:30 AM-Sunday School 10:00 AM-Worship  7:30 PM-Christian Basics	<b>22</b> 7:00 PM-Ladies Bible Study  7:00 PM-Men in Ministry	<b>23</b>  7:00 PM-Youth Group Band	<b>24</b>  7:30 PM-Choir Practice	<b>25</b>  7:00 PM-Transition Team Meeting	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 8:30 AM-Sunday School 10:00 AM-Worship	<b>29</b> 7:00 PM-Ladies Bible Study  7:00 PM-Men in Ministry	<b>30</b>  7:00 PM-Youth Group Band	<b>31</b>  7:30 PM-Choir Practice			

