



CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Weekly Newsletter

April 26, 2021

Sunday, May 2nd @ 10:30am: Pastor Jack's message is "Get It? Got It? Good?"

From your computer or smartphone, watch at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/live or at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/events.

Dear Friends,

I watched a couple interviews these past couple of days with the Attorney General of Minnesota, Keith Ellison. He was the lead prosecutor of Derek Chauvin, who was found guilty of George Floyd's murder this past Tuesday. While the prosecution team was obviously skilled in presenting their case, Ellison said he never took the verdict of "guilty" for granted. Ellison also said that he "felt a little bad for the defendant."

Upon hearing this, the 60 Minutes correspondent Scott Pelley, said, "You're the last person from whom I expect to hear a note of compassion for Derek Chauvin."

Ellison mentioned that all defendants in the judicial system are human beings and that George Floyd was a human being. That didn't mean that Keith Ellison doesn't believe that Derek Chauvin shouldn't have been convicted. It means, like George Floyd, Derek Chauvin has people who care about him.

Keith Ellison is a new hero for me. While I believe him to possess great emotions concerning the death of George Floyd and the trial of Derek Chauvin, his emotions do not drive his convictions. He demonstrated wisdom in speaking about a situation in which there are really no winners. Ellison's measured words and sincerity were admirable.

African American singer and songwriter, Nina Simone (1933-2003) is quoted as saying "I'll tell you what freedom is to me; no fear." I believe fear to be a powerful motivator for accepting injustice in the face of overwhelming evidence and using violence rather than seeking understanding. Fear is at the crux of many ills in our society.

The author of I John wrote, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love." (I John 4:18) Before offering any opinion, before engaging in any disagreement, before taking action against another, make an internal inquiry about your motivation. Limit that motivation to two possibilities—fear or love. I believe most would choose a path of love over fear.

But we must also have grace when judging whether a person has acted out of love or out of fear. While I realize that we don't always have a lot of time to decide between love and fear, when in doubt choose love. Love is at the core of Christ's mission on earth and love is the foundation of our community of faith. I look forward to "seeing" you in online worship on Sunday. Be blessed and be safe.

Because of Christ,

-Pastor Jack

Celebration of Calling Virtual Event

Join churches engaging in living out our callings at a C3 virtual conference on Thursday, April 29th from 7-9:30 pm. "A Calling Spirituality: Following God into New Callings" is a time to reflect on where God is calling you in your life and to hear from Rick Steves. Rick is a travel guidebook author, TV and radio show host, and Lutheran. Rick's callings to travel changed dramatically as the pandemic shut down the globe. Come hear Rick's reflections about calling and take time to reflect on your own. Register today at hopin.com/events/a-celebration-of-calling.

Calling All Graduates!

We will be celebrating your accomplishment during worship on Sunday, June 13th. Please share your plans and a photo with us. Use the form found at [WaterfordCUMC.org/grad2021/](https://forms.gle/hv94LLq422GuDCGW8) to submit your information. **Please have your information to us by May 31st.** Thank you!

Family Fun This Summer

Parents and Caregivers of preschool and elementary-aged children, we are looking for your input on summer programs to help us create a plan that best serves our community. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey found at: <https://forms.gle/hv94LLq422GuDCGW8>. We're thankful for your input and hope to find safe and fun ways to connect this summer.

Blessings,

-Rev. Cora, Director of Life-long Faith Formation

It's Softball Season!

Central's men's softball team is gearing up for their first game on Monday, May 3rd at 7pm at New Hope Church, 8643 Sashabaw Road in Clarkston. Come by and support the team!

Central's Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone who has been so generous in helping keep our food pantry stocked during this time of community need. We have helped many families as we work our way through this pandemic. Just a reminder, however, **please do not donate perishables like produce, milk, meat, eggs, cheese, etc.** While our food pantry provides families with perishable items, these are purchased as needed; we have no way to store and distribute other perishables. Thank you.

Knit for Kids

A big thank you to Steve and Sandy Krupa for the recent donation of yarn for Knit for Kids. For 16 years we have been providing hand-knitted sweaters, and more recently kid's hats, mittens, baby hats and baby blankets to World Vision. Donations of full or almost full skeins of yarn help Central's crafters create these items so World Vision can send them to needy children in the US and around the world. To date, we have mailed in 1,578 sweaters and many, many of the other items. If you would like to help, patterns and yarn may be found at the table in the hallway beyond the Narthex. The major expense for this project is the mailing costs to World Vision in PA. If you are able to help with these costs, please make your check out to Central UMC and put Knit for Kids on the memo line. Thank you for your continued support of this important mission of Central Church.

-Diana Carter

Thank You

Thank you for your generous Easter donation of \$455 to support our client families. You are truly the hands and feet of our Risen Savior.

-Everyone at Jail Outreach Ministry

Scholarship Application Deadline is Approaching!

May 3rd is the deadline for scholarship applications for high school, continuing college, and skilled trade students. The application can be found online at [WaterfordCUMC.org/forms/](https://forms.gle/hv94LLq422GuDCGW8). If you have questions, please contact the church office at info@waterfordcumc.org or (248) 681-0040.

Camp Scholarship Applications are Available

Because of the past generosity of this congregation and the cancellation of the 2020 summer camping season, we do not need to take a special camp offering this year. To apply for a scholarship to attend camp during the 2021 season, please complete the form found at [WaterfordCUMC.org/forms/](https://forms.gle/hv94LLq422GuDCGW8).

Sympathies

Our condolences are with Margie England on the passing of her grandniece, Sarah England. Our prayers are with the family.



Easter baskets assembled by Jail Outreach Ministry using funds donated by Central members. Thank you.

Song of the Week

I hope you are all safe and your week was filled with both the care of yourselves and others. I want to jump right into continuing on the topic of expanding empathy that I introduced last week. We all exercise empathy in our lives, but sometimes I don't think we realize how many times we make a choice to use that skill or not. It seems almost intuitive to be empathetic with our families, and I think that's exactly why we don't think about how we utilize this skill. It is natural to be empathetic with those whom we love, and this is why the idea of expanding our empathy is tied directly to expanding our hearts, expanding our love in the world, and choosing to walk the path that we are called to.

When we look at someone and see ourselves in them, we are naturally sympathetic to their difficulties and encouraged by their triumphs because we can see our own struggles and achievements in them. So the challenge then becomes a simple exercise of imagination...how can we more easily see ourselves in others who are different in some way? Sometimes, because of connections we've had in the past, or our predisposition, some of these are easier than others. But seeing a piece of ourselves in others and picturing ourselves in their personal struggles is the easiest way to find connections beyond those we currently enjoy. And here we see the choice. We choose whether to take that extra moment to imagine ourselves in their shoes...isn't that what the old saying is all about?

I wanted to spend this week speaking about people with disabilities in their many forms. Some are mild and some are severe, but they all provide for a difficult empathetic problem for us able-bodied individuals. That is that seeing ourselves in someone who is disabled is uncomfortable, for the simple fact that we don't like to imagine those struggles for ourselves. However, understanding that instinct and taking a moment to understand how you might respond to such a struggle in your life can change everything at that moment.

I am lucky in this respect to have grown up around several people with minor disabilities. Then, in school, I had some friends who had some major ones until, in college, I found some remarkable people who had overcome severe disabilities to be pursuing their degrees and enjoying campus life with the rest of us. Being a kid who was exposed to disabilities early was important in learning a simple lesson: people who overcome physical and mental challenges are whole on their own. They are smart, kind, beautiful, and spiritual in the same ways all of us are. And it is easy to be friends with them if you understand one thing. They need our patience. In a fast-paced world where we rush from one thing to the next, who has time for someone who struggles with crutches or a wheelchair? When we expect immediate responses to our inquiries, who has time for someone who stutters, or has to do mental gymnastics to understand if they grasped all the social cues in how to respond? And who of us ever takes the time to adapt our world to make it accessible for someone whose mind is brilliant, but whose speech is slurred, or who is beautiful and athletic, but doesn't have a traditionally developed limb. I have a specific individual from my past in mind for each of these struggles that I have mentioned, and they've all shown me one thing, they don't view their circumstances as being as big a problem as our inability to have patience and make space for them.

There are two ways in which disabled people are presented in stories that I find problematic because they highlight the disability over the person. One is the tragic figure on whom a disability has fallen, and we are inclined to pity them in this light. Pity diminishes both the individual and our ability to understand them because it is an emotion separating our circumstances. The other is the feel-good achievement story which portrays someone as overcoming their disability to achieve one thing or another. Though we often feel inspired by these stories, they also highlight the person as equal with the disability and emphasize our differing circumstances, creating a separation in our minds. Empathizing with someone means encountering and recognizing a person fully for who and what they are. And each of us, regardless of our background, ethnicity, social status, or level of ability, just wants to be seen and appreciated for who we are. All we really want is some empathy from those we meet. And through the simple act of patience, we can all take a step towards that goal.

To highlight this, I wanted to share a song by a musician who had his own challenge to overcome, but what I liked particularly about this video is both how it highlights the gaze of the able-bodied individuals as well as how the disability isn't highlighted, but just a fact about who he is while he sings the refrain, 'We are the same'. You will see how he is comfortable in his element, joyously engaged in the music, and has no need of anything from us other than our understanding. And I think choosing to embrace his call is a profound and transformative process if we let it take hold of us.

[We Are the Same - Mark Goffeney - \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOTXk3Ba7aY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOTXk3Ba7aY)

With Love,
-Kevin