

In The Beginning...



Weekly Connector

For Sunday, January 24, 2021



Trotwood Church of the Brethren
208 East Main Street, Trotwood, Ohio 45426
937-837-6604

For those of you that do not have access to the internet, we will print Pastor Jen's sermons in the *Weekly Connector*. They will a week behind the YouTube services, but at least you will be able to read her message.

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (*The Living Bible*)

¹O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ²You know when I sit or stand. When far away you know my every thought. ³You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. ⁴You know what I am going to say before I even say it. ⁵You both precede and follow me and place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶This is too glorious, too wonderful to believe!

¹³You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. ¹⁵You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! ¹⁶You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book! ¹⁷⁻¹⁸How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!

Sermon - "Creatings: Part Two"

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Trotwood Church of the Brethren, 1.17.2021

Pastor Jennifer Keeney Scarr



I heard bird song for the first time in weeks this past Thursday.

She started her song in my car port where the notes echoed back and forth between stone and metal, and then the song carried her from the car port to the bare tree out back where her solo joined a chorus. And I was forced to cease my activities to listen.

This is the song of creation.

After a few minutes, the bird song faded but I wasn't returned to the silence.
As her song faded, I was greeted by the sound of my heart beat.
Gently thudding along in my chest... setting its own rhythm, dancing to its own song.

I wonder how God felt when my heart took its first beat?

Last week, I wondered out loud where God is in the midst of this mess we're living in. So, we took a look at what God was up to in the beginning and before our beginning. I shared with you my belief that our God is a forever and always creator. This is a core part of who God is and what God does - God creates.

And God is still creating.

In fact, God created you. This is part of what our psalmist reflects upon today in Psalm 139.

In verse 13 from the NRSV, the Psalmist writes, "For it was you, God, who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

God created your body - your fingers and toes, your nervous system, your nose, and that mysterious mind which navigates us through the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of being.

God created you and then like the night and day, the land and ocean, the birds of the air and fish of the sea - God saw that you were good.

As the Psalmist says, you are a wonderful work of our Creator God.

And God knows you.

According to the Psalmist, God knows when you stand or sit, and is acquainted with all your ways.

God knows your words before they are on your tongue and can discern the thoughts of your heart from far away.

God knows you.

This is one of those truths that has the potential to be very comforting and/or wildly unsettling.

It's wildly unsettling because humans don't love being vulnerable.

And to be truly, and deeply, and completely known is to be vulnerable.

The one who knows you - knows your weaknesses and fears, knows the shadows of your life as well as that one knows what you're like at your best. And when that one who knows you is the still creating God of the universe, it might mean that at some point you will likely have a conversation about those shadow spaces and be asked to grow, expand, shift perspective, and even change.

Hebrews 4 puts it this way, “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joint from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before God no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render account.”

Jeepers... who else is sweating? It was kind of sweet when God was knitting me together in my mother’s womb... but this does not sound sweet. Being known by God sounds kinda sour, actually. And it sounds like work.

Nobody wants that. Especially when we’re so tired right now.

Nobody wants the word of God to be active and living, especially if that active and living word of God is gonna get personal with us and make us face the intentions of our thoughts and hearts.

Nope, I’m gonna pass... who’s with me?

So, to keep this still creating God at bay, we’ll need to set up some protections.

Let’s call them buffer zones. A buffer zone is a neutral area which separates various nations and forces. For Star Trek fans - think the “Neutral Zone” which separated the Romulans and the Federation... or for those history buffs, think “No-man’s land” that stretch of space which separated ground troops in World War One.

We need one of those between us and God.

It’s gonna be tricky... because as we’ve already noted, God knows us.

But maybe if we make certain things off-topic?

For example, God can no longer comment about our politics. But if God wants to talk about other people’s politics we’ll allow that... cause boy howdy those other folks really need some Jesus to help change their ways.

God cannot comment on how we treat our neighbors or how we talk about or experience racism and sexism... because that is uncomfortable to talk about with other humans, can you imagine what God has to say about it?

But God can talk to us about the things we already agree about, because that’s safe and nothing has to change. God can talk with us about things that make us feel good and reaffirm us... but nothing else. No thank you.

And we can go on and on and on like that. Casually and sometimes subconsciously separating God from each area of our life until we only recognize God’s presence in the safe and cozy places.

Why do we do that?

Why do we try to control our conversations with God?

Why do we try to keep ourselves safe from our every creating, ever living, ever active God?

As if we could.

As if that would actually control what God has to say.

As if we could actually stop the God who created us from knowing us.

All those buffer zones really do is stunt our own growth as disciples of Christ.

The buffer zones fool us into thinking God isn't interested in every part of our lives, and therefore we think we *can* separate God from certain parts of our lives. The result is that we divide and harm and destroy each other all the while pointing the finger of blame at someone, anyone else.

These buffer zones are no longer serving us, if they ever did.

And it's time for them to go.

It's time to allow God to speak into every area of our living, to guide us in examining the intentions of our hearts and minds as well as the actions which result from those intentions. It's time to allow God to create with in us space to grow more fully into the children of God that we are.

Imagine if each of us did that.

Imagine if each person of faith decided that nothing in our life was off limits to the creating power of God.

Imagine if we were brave enough to allow the God who created us to keep creating with in.

If we did that... God could create new perspective.

God could deepen our relationships through the process and resolution of conflict.

God could heal racism and sexism, aw heck - all the isms.

God could, at long last, bring heaven to earth as it is depicted in Revelation.

The city of God which descends from heaven to this earth, with permanently open gates and waters of life and a tree for the healing of the nations. A place where evil cannot enter, and there is no need of a building to hold our worship because God is finally our everything and in God's presence all of us release our crowns at the feet of Jesus.

That is God's Promised Day. That is what we are living for here and now.

I don't think these buffer zones come down all at once, and I certainly don't think all of humanity will do that at the same time. But that is why God is elbow deep in this with us because God wants to create with in us and alongside us in this world.

The Psalmist finishes our section of Psalm 139 by saying, "I come to the end, and I am with you."

This phrase, "The end" can also be translated as "awaken."

When I wake up, I am with you.

So, dear ones, as we dreamed our way through Advent - I am inviting you now to wake up.

What area of your life have you developed a buffer zone against God?

What might God be asking you to let go?

How might God be calling you more wholly into your identity as a Child of God?

These questions are written into the emails sent out this morning, use them and consider them. Journal them out.

And while you do, remember that the still creating, active, and living God knows you. And that God is with you. Right now and Always.

Grace&Peace,

Pastor Jen

Happy Anniversary

January 25
Norm & Judy Bassett



Happy Birthday

January 23 - Brendan Price
January 24 - Ken Gainey
January 30 - Jerry Bashor
January 30 - Debbie Millhouse
January 31 - Rich Sommer



Please Note: We are happy to publish news about our members when they win awards, make the Dean's list, get engaged etc.

We can't keep up with everyone so please feel free to send a digital photo (or a picture we can scan) and we would love to share your good news, joys and triumphs.



This week's virtual altar flowers are placed by Norm & Judy Bassett in honor of their 57th wedding anniversary!

WANTED

Scripture Readers

We have loved hearing the voice of our people read scripture the last few weeks!

Would you like to read scripture?

If so, you can call or text Gloria Landis at 937-430-9605.

If you're worried about the tech of it all - don't be. Pastor Jen's got ya covered.

Offering Envelopes



Offering Envelopes

At this time, because most church contributions are being mailed, many people are not using offering envelopes.

However, we have plenty left over from previous years so if you wish to use them, please notify the church office with the quantity that you need and they will be provided.

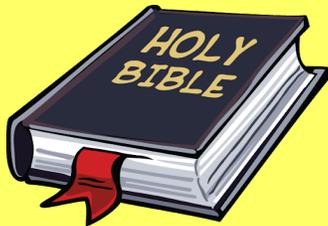


Although everyone isn't worshipping together in the sanctuary of the church on Sunday mornings, we are giving everyone the opportunity to place a bouquet of real flowers on the altar or virtual flowers in the Weekly Connector. They can be placed in memory of a loved one, in honor of an event, or to the glory of God.

There is no charge for the virtual altar flowers, but if you choose to have real flowers on the altar, make a check out to the church for \$25 with "altar flowers" written in the memo line. You will be able to take those flowers home with you after the worship service that Sunday.

Please contact Judy in the church office to sign up on the flower calendar.
937-837-6604 or office@trotwoodcob.com

Upcoming Scriptures for Worship:



January 24 - Luke 2:41-52

Guest Preacher Dave Shetler (Pastor Jen is on vacation)

January 31 - Mark 1:21-28

February 7 - Mark 1:29-39

February 14 - Mark 9:2-9



It's that time of the year again!

Time to print a new updated version of our church directory!

There is quite a bit of information in last year's directory that needs to be added, deleted or just plain updated (and a few mistakes Judy made that need to be fixed, too!)

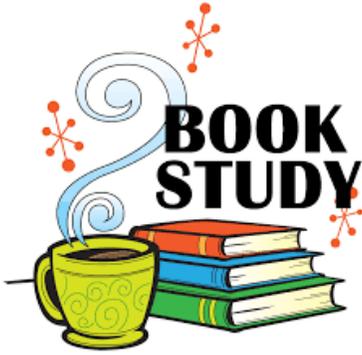
Please look over your information in the 2020 directory and make sure the following is correct:

*name	*address	*phone numbers
*email address	*birthday	*anniversary

If there is anything that needs to be changed, please contact the church office at office@trotwoodcob.com.

Also, if you have family members listed in the directory that no longer attend, check out their information as well to make sure it is correct.

Or if you want their information deleted, let us know that as well.



Please join us for a book discussion of *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo led by Dawn Wojcik and Roxie Ballard.

This book which challenges white society to understand the structural nature of racism and the resulting effects was one of the resources suggested after our Sermon Talk Back after the killing of George Floyd. We hope by discussing this book we can explore issues that are affecting our neighbors and help us to better engage in issues of race.

Saturday mornings
at 10:30 via Zoom

If by computer:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82501371536?
pwd=WnE2WUNQQ2IHMjZHOTNzd1YrTzBpZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82501371536?pwd=WnE2WUNQQ2IHMjZHOTNzd1YrTzBpZz09)

If by Phone: 1-646-558-8656
Meeting ID: 825 0137 1536
Password: 968698

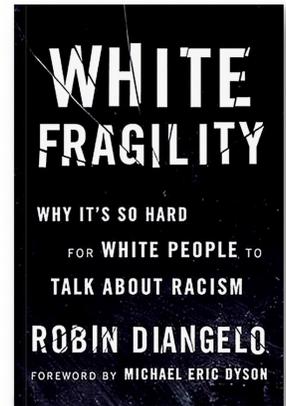
The book is available from the library and many other places including Brethren Press:

[https://www.brethrenpress.com/SearchResults.asp?
Search=White+Fragility&Submit=GO](https://www.brethrenpress.com/SearchResults.asp?Search=White+Fragility&Submit=GO)

The price for an individual book is \$12.60 plus shipping.

Choose USPS shipping for only \$8.70.

The price of the book with shipping is still a very fair price.



**You have *three* options to worship with us at
Trotwood Church of the Brethren**

1. You can view Pastor Jen's online YouTube service at your convenience.
(This link is emailed out on Sunday morning).
2. You can join a Zoom worship group at 10:45 on Sunday morning with Pastor Jen to watch the service together and discuss it afterwards.
(That link will also be emailed on Sunday morning).
3. Join us in the sanctuary for in-person worship which will include live music, shared joys and concerns, Pastor Jen's YouTube video presented on the large screen, etc. Masks and social distancing are required.

You can choose any option, any week, to match your comfort level!

Friends who would love to hear from you!

Eddie Morgan,
Friendship Village, Room 340
5790 Denlinger Road
Trotwood, Ohio 45426
937-469-0806



Stephanie Wright
Canterbury Gardens
1001 South Kingston Street, #56
Aurora, Colorado 80012
937-272-9451

Karleen King
(c/o Susie Rose)
3094 Louise Avenue
Grove City, Ohio 43123
937-681-5228

Carol Armstrong
507 Newport Drive
Lompoc, California 93436
530-592-5387

Johnny Perdue,
442 Waynoka Drive
Lake Waynoka, Ohio 45171
937-776-0758



Join us in a Zoom meeting!



Lunch Time Lectio! Tuesday mornings at 11:00

If by computer:

<https://zoom.us/j/957454887pwd=ZjNGU2RBLzFTby95Ri9RMmt6eWN4dz09>

If by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 957 454 887 Password: 912426

TCoB Social Hour via Zoom Every Wednesday evening at 6:30

If by computer:

<https://zoom.us/j/458797909?pwd=dHNLdmNKb25wbm5iVkhOTTRodm90UT09>

If by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 458 797 909 Password: 766312

TCoB Book Study via Zoom Saturday morning at 10:30

If by computer:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82501371536?pwd=WnE2WUNQQ2lHMjZlHOTNzd1YrTzBpZz09>

If by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 825 0137 1536 Password: 968698

TCoB Sunday Morning Worship via Zoom Every Sunday morning at 10:45

Pastor Jen will send out an email on Sunday morning around 8:00
with the link to join this Worship group.



**Every Friday afternoon from 2:30 to 5:30 pm,
the Homefull Mobile Grocery truck will be set up at
Trotwood Church of the Brethren parking lot.**

Stop by and say “Hi” and maybe pick up a few groceries.
Masks and social distancing is required.



Each week, cones need to be placed around the parking lot to help guide traffic and keep the parking lot safe for customers. The responsibility would be to set out the cones at the beginning of the event and pick them up afterwards.

The city will train us on where the cones will go and then the cones will be stored in our building between Fridays.

**If we get enough volunteers, each volunteer
may only be needed one Friday a month!**

What do you say?

Donate a few minutes of your time to help support this vital ministry?

Give Pam Jones a call at 937-854-1104 for more information.



Lord, Hear our Prayers



for the people that have been affected by Covid-19

- *Susan Wible
- *Anna Wible
- *Keith Smith (Dr. Bob’s son and Annette Sommer’s brother. He is doing much better!)
- *Gene Hunn (Gloria Landis’ brother)
- *Brittany Russell (friend of Tom and Paula Bowser’s daughter)
- *Sarah and Mike Reilly
- *D.D. and her family (relatives of Gloria Landis)
- *Amy See (Sally Frigo’s sister)

- *Doug Reiter (relative of Laura Phillips)
- *Ed Snyder (Laura Phillips’ brother-in-law)
- *Doug Snyder (Laura Phillips’ nephew)
- *Chip Baker (Laura Phillip’s great-nephew)
- *Chloe (Bob & Roxie’s grand-daughter)
- *Christopher Collins, Jr.
- *Clark Pleasant (Pam Jones’ brother)
- *Kathy Loveless (friend of Jim & Janet Shafer)
- *All those working to keep us well and healthy



Lord, Hear our Prayers



for the week of Sunday, January 24, 2021

Seeking health and hope:

- *Doug Medlar (Tom & Alice's son is having knee surgery on Thursday)
- *Shellie Miller (friend of Rich & Annette Sommer who is struggling with advanced breast cancer)
- *Donetta Clay (has pneumonia in one of her lungs)
- *Karen Burgess (suffering from shoulder pain)
- *Melanie (Marvin Erbaugh's ex-wife who fell and broke her ankle)
- *Ashley (Ken & Gloria Landis' grandson's wife who had an appendectomy)
- *Carol (Nancy Flory's sister who broke her thigh)
- *Tremon (Nancy Flory's brother-in-law who is in the hospital for dehydration)
- *Alexander (Nancy Flory's grandson who was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes)
- *Cynda Hayney (friend of Rex & Peggy Miller who has been diagnosed with breast cancer)
- *Mary Haldeman (Pastor Jen's grandmother who is recovering from a stroke)
- *Bill Denlinger (recovering from a broken hip)
- *Melissa Phillips (suffering from digestive issues)
- *Lynn Lawson (recently diagnosed with esophageal cancer)
- *Don Riegel (friend of the Shafer's and the Timmons' who will need heart surgery)
- *Frances (Marvin Erbaugh's cousin who suffered a mini stroke)
- *Mr. Phillips (Marisha Randolph's teacher's husband)
- *Terrilyn's mother (from Lower Miami CoB who is recovering from a recent stroke)
- *Miss Lacey (Jill Jackson's para who is recovering from a recent stroke)
- *Robin Bohannon (wife of former TCoB pastor, Ron Bohannon who has been diagnosed with Lymphoma)
- *Chris Parris (friend of Roxie Ballard)
- *Marge (Karen Burgess' mother)
- *Nathan Tincher (relative of Gloria Landis)
- *Phyllis Wood

Praising God for:

- *John Kinsel (Susan Fitze's brother, recovering from open heart surgery)

Trinity Church of the Brethren

is the congregation to pray for this week.

Condolences for the families of:

- *Adolphus "Woody" Wood (friend of Jill Jackson)
- *Uncle Bill (Jill Jackson's uncle)
- *Johnny (Clarence Howard's brother)
- *Dr. Judy Royer
- *Joe Humphrey (Betty James' brother)
- *Joy Zepp (friend of Paula Bowser)
- *Jim Shand (former organist at TCOB)
- *Gene Bashor
- *Murl Huffman
- *Jim King

Continuing prayers for:

- *Mike Gallon
- *Denise Hull
- *Sally Frigo
- *Bill Landis
- *Eddie Morgan
- *Lynne Brumbaugh (Jonathan Scarr's mom)
- *Chris Collins, Sr.
- *Stephanie Wright
- *Karleen King

Those serving our country:

- *Health Care workers
- *Christian Peacemaker Teams
- *Brethren Volunteer Service volunteers
- *Jared Bush, serving in the US Army
- *Everyone serving in the military

For Our Community:

- *Those who are hungry and lonely
- *Trotwood Neighborhood Transformation (TNT)
- *Neighborhood Watch groups
- *Our First Responders
- *City Council

If you have requested for a person to be placed on the prayer list, and their prayers have been answered, please let the church office know so they can be removed from the list.

Are you missing the message on the back of our bulletins? We thought so!

Well, you're in luck! It will now be in the Weekly Connector for you to enjoy!

Go Immediately

In the image on the front cover a familiar sight for you? Are the geese having difficulty getting into their usual formation? Who is doing the leading or honking? Which one decided to fly and called the others to join? Where might *you* be in this formation?

Today's scripture is the story of Jesus calling his first four disciples: Simon and Andrew and James and John, two sets of brothers. All four were fishermen, and all four left *immediately* after being called! Jesus simply invites them - "Follow me and I will make you fish for people" - and they drop everything and go.

So, how much did the disciples know about this man who called them? Matthew and Mark record the calling of these disciples the same, but Luke's version provides a little more background on the person they are going to follow (see Luke 5:1-11). Jesus called them after climbing into one of their boats and directing them to drop their nets into the deep water to catch a boatload of fish.

Have you ever said yes to an opportunity to serve without knowing the person calling you or having a detailed description of the arrangements? If so, how did you feel? Most of us are much more cautious than these men, who left *immediately* when called.

The proposed compelling vision statement includes three characteristics of disciples the Church of the Brethren will endeavor to call: innovative, adaptable, and fearless. We know the One who is calling us, and we trust that we'll be equipped for our journey. May we be willing to say yes and go *immediately* when called!

~ D. Miller Davis
Westminster, Maryland

Text for today: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the good news.' As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, '**Follow me** and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat ... and followed him" (Mark 1:14-20, *NRSV*).

Bible Readings for today: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20 (17)..

*Trotwood
Church of the Brethren*

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Trotwood, Ohio 45426
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pastor@trotwoodcob.com*



www.trotwoodcob.com

*We are a church,
celebrating diversity,
transformed by the Holy Spirit,
to serve and unify
in the name of Jesus.*

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