

The Clerical Caller

A monthly publication of Covenant Congregational Church of West Hartford

JUNE 2015

“If You Want To Find Happiness—Don’t Pursue It”

It seems counter-intuitive. You would think that if you want to be happy you should seek happiness wherever you can find it. But modern research is showing that the single-minded pursuit of happiness is leaving people less happy.

I read this in a recent edition of *Readers Digest* (April 2015): *In a study published in the “Journal of Positive Psychology,” psychological scientists asked nearly 400 Americans whether they thought their lives were meaningful and/or happy. The researchers found that happy people get joy from receiving: people leading meaningful lives get joy from giving to others. “Happiness without meaning characterizes a relatively shallow, self-absorbed, or even selfish life, in which things go well, needs and desire are easily satisfied, and difficult or taxing entanglements are avoided,” the authors wrote.*

Specifically, the researchers discovered that people who are happy tend to think that life is easy, are in good physical health, and are able to buy the things that they want and need. The happy life is defined by lack of stress or worry. Humans, then, are not the only ones who can feel happy. Animals also feel happy when their needs and drives are satisfied, the researchers pointed out. What sets human beings apart from animals is not the pursuit of happiness but the pursuit of meaning, according to Roy Baumeister, the study’s lead researcher.

Victor Frankl came to a similar conclusion through his own experience. Frankl was a prominent Jewish psychiatrist who was arrested in 1942 and transported to a Nazi concentration camp with his wife and parents. Three years later he was liberated, but most of his family, including his pregnant wife, had perished in the death camps. He wrote about his experiences in his bestselling book, Man’s Search for Meaning. Frankl concluded that the difference between those who lived and those who died in the camps came down to one thing: meaning.

Frankl observed that those who found meaning in even the most horrible circumstances were far more resilient to suffering than those who did not. He wrote, *“A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He who knows the ‘why’ for his existence will be able to bear almost any ‘how.’”*

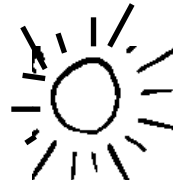
Jesus shared that truth with us thousands of years ago. He says in Matthew 16:24 & 25, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”*

Our Lord makes it very clear that if we want to find true life, we must first lose it. We lose it by denying our selfish human desires (including the pursuit of happiness) and living for God’s purposes. We lose it by picking up our cross of obedience and doing what God wants us to do. We lose it in service and sacrifice to God, not the idols of this world.

When we lose our life to God we find the greatest possible purpose and meaning. Our God made us. Only He knows how we should live to find the best possible life. When we align our lives with His will, we will find a quality of life we never dreamed possible.

And the great paradox is this: when we stop looking for happiness and instead seek God’s will—happiness will come flooding into our lives. So if you want to be happy, don’t look for happiness. Instead seek the Kingdom of God and He promises that everything else will be added to your life.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tom



All-Church Barbecue
Sunday, June 14th, 3 pm



The Kingdom of God is a family full of diversity. God has brought two congregations to us who share our facility. We want to build some relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ and feel this is a good beginning.

Please bring a dish to share and join our Brazilian and Korean churches for an all-church barbecue. We will provide hamburgers and hot dogs. This is a great opportunity to strengthen the bond of Christian love that unites us—and also to enjoy some good Korean and Brazilian food!

Men's Breakfast and Fellowship
Saturday, June 13th, 8 am

All men are invited to join us for breakfast, fellowship, and a devotion.

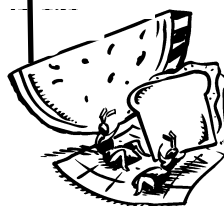
Please let Pastor Tom know if you can come for a food count.



Sunday Brunch

Sunday, June 28th, after worship

Join us for good food and fellowship after the service. Please bring a dish to share and feel free to invite a friend!



Summer Schedule

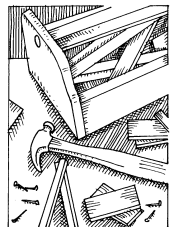
We will begin our summer schedule on Sunday, June 28th. We have no Sunday School during the summer months and worship will be held a little earlier—10 AM (not 9:30 am as in years past).



Young-Adult Meetings

Thursday, June 10th and 24th, 7 pm

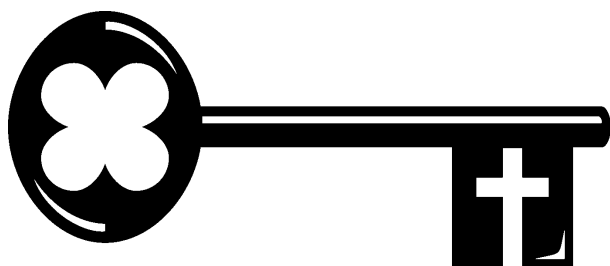
All young adults are invited to join us for our meetings at church where we discuss the Christian response to current events.



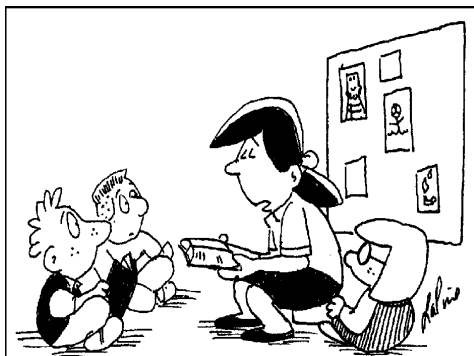
Renovation Project

Church Maintenance Update

Brewer Paving will be installing a new parking lot at our church on or about Monday, June 8th. Expect some disruption in parking, but we are assured it will be minimal.



THE KINGDOM



"No, Henry. 'The Feeding of the Five Thousand' is not another one of the pastor's fish stories."

10
18
19
25



June

Rodney Sundman
David Peterson
Joyce Berman
Ethel Ogden
Jade Neason



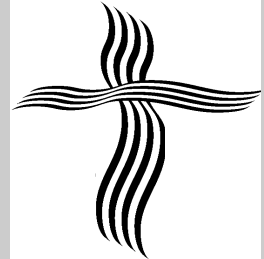
**Food
Pantry
Needs**

Items can be placed in the wicker basket near the back entrance or on the table in the narthex. The following are suggested for June though any donations are appreciated.

- Sun June 7 Cereal
- Sun June 14 Fruit Juice
- Sun June 21 Canned Fruit
- Sun June 28 Tea and Coffee



June 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 Exec. Board Mtg.	8 Parking Lot Paving Begins	9	10 Young-Adult Bible Study 7:00 PM	11	12	13 Second Saturday Men's Breakfast & Fellowship 8:00 AM
14 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 All-Church Barbecue!	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 	22	23	24 Young-Adult Bible Study 7:00 PM	25	26	27
28 Worship 10:00 Brunch!	29	30				