

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE MIDLANDS

Unapologetically Christian, Unapologetically Progressive

Pastor's Paragraphs

WHY YOUR CCM NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE IS LATE

We apologize for our June newsletter's being a bit tardy. As many of you know, our industrious fellow CCMer, Marti Fritz, plays a major role in the publication of our newsletters as well as our Sunday worship bulletins; and a number of you graciously have commented on the excellent job he always does.

However, as several of you already know, Marti received an unanticipated diagnosis of cancer and underwent three separate surgeries on May 25th. (His surgeon suddenly moved the date up from May 31st—a week earlier than previously scheduled.) Consequently, Marti has been unable to perform his usual duties on our behalf. He is recovering slowly from the ordeal but is still awaiting a biopsy laboratory report to determine whether the cancerous excision was contained and whether or not lymph nodes under his left arm were affected.

As if Marti's health issues were not enough, an additional weight has been added to his life. He just received a call informing him that his mother is dying—inoperable cancer in both lungs—and is now in hospice. I know you will want to remember Marti and his family during this difficult period.

All of this may be a surprise to you if you were not present in church on our last Sunday together. Marti's absence was particularly conspicuous because, with the exception of the week his father died, he has not missed a single Sunday at CCM during the 20 years since our fellowship began. That is truly an amazing record of faithfulness to God and to all of *us*. Marti definitely is a role model in following the biblical commandment to “keep the Sabbath

holy,” and he always arrives 45 minutes to an hour early to help me prepare our worship area for the event to follow. Moreover, after the service, he helps, along with some of the rest of us, to pack whatever needs to be transported to another location until we need it for our next gathering. On our most recent Sunday together, other faithful persons, as frequently is the case, did not leave the facility until all of the duties with which Marti usually helps were completed. (Perhaps we can call it “holy teamwork.” It’s a CCM tradition!)

Many of you have responded with numerous expressions of love and caring to Marti’s duress. So, Marti asked me to thank all of you for your prayers and other marvelous forms of support: cards, notes, multiple telephone calls, delicious home-cooked food delivered to his front door, extremely welcome help on how correctly to use electronic medical equipment and offers to be of help in many other ways: Even *more* “holy teamwork”—yet *another* CCM tradition!

Marti’s situation engendered a thoughtful, in-depth time of sharing at our last gathering, not only of concern and profound appreciation for Marti, but of the importance of our “being there” for each other in our fellowship in times of need. Any crisis can help us to realize how much we all need and value one another as well as the crucial importance of having the support of others who care about us. Consequently, the time together at our last gathering was wonderfully intimate and heartwarming. Understandably, our *planned* presentation and discussion for the day was simply “shelved.” We deemed it not to be so important at the moment as our incredibly deep caring for one another. God’s presence seems, at times, to be particularly palpable to each of us when we least expect it.

If you were not at church to share the aforementioned time of deeply meaningful togetherness, you definitely missed a very special experience. But, now, you at least know why our newsletter is a bit late arriving. However, what you *don’t* know (until you read this!) is that, in the absence of anyone else to fulfill Marti’s usual responsibility to computerize our newsletter copy, he, pajama-clad and covered in bandages, decided to try to do so himself. Moreover, he hopes to produce the worship bulletin and be

present in our first worship service this month. I'm sure you value his dedication and commitment to our fellowship as much as do I.

In light of Marti's determination (Pass the pain pills, please!), I intentionally have limited the length of our newsletter this month; but, it contains all of the important information of which you need to be aware to participate fully in our fellowship in June. So, note particularly the opportunities presented in the IT'S HAPPENING AT CCM section of this bulletin. We look forward eagerly to seeing you on those occasions.

Until then, God bless.

Your pastor and friend,

John

P.S.: If any of you has a health or other issue, large or small, please feel free to share it with us. There is a body of research that shows self-isolation tends to *retard* healing; but knowing that we're deeply valued and surrounded by love and caring actually *accelerates* healing. It appears that God has made us for *community*. Without it, we seem to pay a price. We all need one another *if*, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, we want truly to *flourish*. So, armed with that awareness, always remember: We at CCM are here for you!

IT'S HAPPENING AT CCM

June, 2018

Sunday, June 10 (2nd Sunday of the Month)

10:00 a.m. WORSHIP GATHERING: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY SUNDAY

Judging from your comments, one of the most meaningful experiences we have had as a fellowship is the opportunity to give our own spiritual journey and to hear that of others. Many of you indicated that you felt much closer to others in our spiritual community as a result of those experiences; and, after giving your own journey, numbers of you said that tracing your spiritual pilgrimage from childhood to the present (if you feel you had one) enabled you to realize how God may have been working in your life in ways of which you previously were unaware. Particularly important was the fact that some of you also said the experience helped you to begin taking your spiritual journey with greater seriousness than you had found time to do previously. And, hooray! A few of you said you *intentionally* began such a journey for the first time.

Almost everyone in our fellowship *already* has given his or her spiritual journey, but we want always to offer that opportunity to anyone in our fellowship who would like to take advantage of it. So, this Sunday, one of our newer friends, lovely Judy Richey, will be offering any ups and downs, ins and outs, and meaningful discoveries that she chooses to share.

After our worship gathering, we'll have an opportunity to engage in dialog with Judy, asking questions and making comments that we hope will be meaningful for us all. (Out by about 12 noon)

Sunday, June 24 (4th Sunday of the Month)

10:00 a.m. ENLIGHTENMENT: APPLYING SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES TO EVERYDAY LIFE

(Definition of Enlightenment: Enlightenment is gaining helpful insight or deeper understanding.)

One of the great tragedies of contemporary religion is the tendency of people in contemporary congregations to ignore the challenge of Jesus to make a *positive difference* in the world. His comment about letting the light within us shine *beyond* our own personal lives is a rejection of the limitations of insular, “privatized” religion.

But, of course, to follow the injunction to bring light to the world around us requires our knowing how to *apply* important spiritual principles to the major issues that all of us confront—in our personal relationships, in our political alliances, in our voting, our priorities, our use of time, our financial resources, and in all significant decision making.

That is why, in the past few months, we at CCM have had a golden opportunity to learn how to *actualize* our marvelous potential to make a positive difference in many of the aforementioned ways. No one can be *seriously* a follower of the teachings of Jesus who is not meaningfully engaged in that exciting “beyond *just* me-and-mine” endeavor.

So, today, we come to the *last* topic in our exciting series: “National Interest or Common Good?” Currently, our country seems to be focused primarily on our *own* national interest rather than on the interest of *all* of God’s people—the concerns of individuals in other countries as *well* as each person in our own. Understandably, that emphasis is popular with *many* people. But how many of us have examined that position in

light of the *spiritual principles* we claim to affirm? In fact, what *are* the spiritual principles that can help us to make our own decisions on the issue? We'll have an opportunity this Sunday to explore some of those questions. Our pastor will make a presentation to assist us in the almost-always-enlightening discussion that will follow. Join us for this opportunity to expand your awareness—and this chance to make your *own* positive difference in the world more fully!

BIRTHDAY TIME

Although our dear Jeannie Marvin looks as though she's getting *younger* each day, she nevertheless is celebrating a birthday on Monday, June 4th. Our love and best wishes are with you, Jeannie. Happy, happy birthday!

A NEW SERIES COMING? YES!

You can look forward to reading about a stimulating new series for CCMers that will begin in July. The details will be available in our next newsletter.

GUESS WHAT.
**YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH
MORE
THAN YOU THINK.**
**CCM
IS HERE FOR YOU!**

***WHEREVER YOU ARE, THE DIFFERENCE
IS WORTH ANY DISTANCE!***

Our Telephone:

Senior Pastor: (803) 331-9999. Our mobile cell phone is more reliable than our landline phone, because it is on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If no one answers, it usually means that our pastor is in a meeting, in a counseling session, doing regular spiritual mentoring, or is involved in some other form of ministry; but he will return your call as soon as possible, so please be sure to leave a message.

Our Websites:

CommunityChurchMidlands.com (Also .net, .info and .org)

or

CommunityChurchOfTheMidlands.com (Also .net, .info and .org)

***Our Mailing Address:* P.O. Box 6946, Columbia, S.C. 29260-6946**

Our Location: CCM usually gathers on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, and any changes will be noted in our monthly newsletter. Please join us at the gorgeous Seven Oaks Community Center in beautiful Seven Oaks Park, 200

Leisure Lane (between St. Andrews and Piney Grove roads, just off I-26 West). When you enter the spacious parking lot, you'll see the main entrance to our newly renovated building on your right. Once you are inside the Reception Area, our meeting locality is on your left. For updates on our programming, to verify meeting times, to learn about changes in scheduling, or for any pastoral need, please feel free to call 331-9999, night or day.

ALWAYS, WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!