

Volume 2, Issue 10

October 2011



A Publication of First Christian Church of Decatur (Disciples of Christ)

## THE CAREGIVER'S NEWSLETTER

# Spiritual Practices for Caregivers

## HOW'S YOUR LOVE LIFE?

### ~ Welcoming God into Your Life

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We are so fortunate. Period. I know, life is hard sometimes, scary sometimes, worrisome and anxiety-producing sometimes. Yet, we have God. We have God, through Jesus Christ, in our hearts and in our lives 24/7/365.

What does that mean? How do we access that terrific, nourishing, freeing love that only comes from God?

I'm not sure how you do it, but I know what works for me. I constantly think about God, opening my mind and my heart to God's presence. By doing so, my frame of mind, my inner voice is changed. When my inner voice is changed, my choices change. Period. I make choices which are influenced by God.

So, what exactly does this mean for my life as a whole? It means that I am aware of my intentions, my motivations, the consequences of my actions, and I consider all of those before starting. So how's my love life? Great! I know God loves me! I feel God's loving presence in my life each day, without really thinking about it; God's love is simply there.

How do I know that? I feel it; I experience it; I have faith in God's promises to humanity, brought to fruition through Jesus Christ.

What is a sign of the presence of God's love? Joy! I'm not talking about happy joy. I'm talking about a deep, abiding, sustaining joy that remains in our hearts through the "for better or for worse, in sickness and in health"...you get the idea.

So, I know God is present when I feel that deep joy bubble up...regardless of the circumstance. When we take time away from life's hubbub and worries and make time for re-creation, joy abounds. God is with us when we play as well as when we pray!

Finding time within a caregiver's busy day to play is sometimes difficult; yet, there are ways to play when doing the most mundane, dreary tasks. How about dancing to favorite music while dusting, vacuuming, or cooking? Does your care-receiver like to play cards? Listening to a comedy routine...laughter lightens the load.

So, again, how's your love life? How can you invite God into your heart all day, every day? What works for you?

My prayer for you is that you experience the deep, abiding joy of having God surround you in warmth and love every day.

~ The Rev. Daphne Reiley

## EXQUISITE SELF-CARE ~ Lalah Manly

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Lately I've been in a transition of sorts. Might be a growth spurt. My inner child and my adult self are more immediately distinguishable from one another, and that is really handy for discerning what I need in any given moment. Sometimes the child needs protection, and the adult can make that happen when she knows what the need is. Sometimes the adult needs space in which to let go, and the child can cover that like a homemade fort. When the boundary between the two is blurred, though, it's a lot harder to know what would really help. [Insert sermon regarding the importance of self-work here.]

Earlier this year, Little Lalah spoke up loudly, popping out with "Silly String War! Mess of color... Mess of people... MESS! Joy and laughter! Do it! Make it happen!" So we did. With neighbors and friends and 200 cans of silly string.

If you could see the photos of what went down that day, you'd see joy made manifest, and not just from the kids (usually a given). Honestly, I don't even look for it there. I want to see it on the adult faces. That, to me, is often the miracle. (Though I should say, the adults at this particular event were prone to expressions of exuberance anyway, thus their showing up at a silly string war in the first place.)

What I love about seeing joy on an adult's face is the *safety* my inner child feels in that presence. When vitality, excitement, and aliveness are glowing through adult pores, I know something young and lovely is likely the lamp there, something a little simpler and probably vulnerable, something through which connection can more easily be made.

Which all just makes me wonder... if my inner child feels that way, how does my actual gene-carrier child feel about it? Is this one reason he loves to make us laugh, draws us into his games, lights up when we fully join him? When our joy becomes obvious, is it the same sense of safety and security he experiences as the veil between adult and child lives thins? I think there's the possibility of easier transport between the two worlds in those moments, and those moments are both precious and sacred.

So. You see where this is going. I think the joy your inner child can bring your adult self is reason enough to pursue whatever it is that takes you there (full stop). I'm also suggesting that doing so in front of your bio-kids brings them the possibility of a different connection with you. And, by all means, do it in front of other adults – their inner kids need to see it, too.

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*If you find yourself with a question about how to develop a plan of exquisite self-care so that your parenting and caregiving can be the best it can be, feel free to check out Lalah Manly's website, [www.BestSelfParentCoaching.com](http://www.BestSelfParentCoaching.com).*

# FUNNIES...AFTER ALL LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE!

Telling jokes, watching a comedy, reading a funny book, writing or singing a silly song... all of these activities bring light and laughter into a day that is sometimes stressful.

Have you ever just stood in the middle of a room and laughed at a joke you heard last week? It is so fun when that happens...a redo!



Got any good one-liners you'll share? If so, send them in to First Christian Church of Decatur, to the attention of The Caregiver's Newsletter, and we'll put them in an upcoming issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE:

First Christian Church of Decatur  
(Disciples of Christ)

601 West Ponce de Leon Avenue  
Decatur, Georgia 30030  
(404) 378-3621

[www.DecaturDisciples.org](http://www.DecaturDisciples.org)



Resolve to Love

Agree to Differ

Unite to Serve

Break Bread Together

Questions or comments concerning  
the content of  
this Newsletter may be directed to  
Rev. Daphne Reiley,  
Director of Caregiver Spiritual Support

October 2nd; 4:30pm **Vespers Worship Service**  
Northlake Gardens Assisted Living  
1300 Montreal Road, Tucker, Georgia  
770-934-0034

October 11th; 7:00pm **Caregiver Support Group (Decatur)**  
First Christian Church of Decatur  
404-378-3621 for directions  
770-366-1206 for questions/details

October 13th; 6:30pm **Kelly Murray of StreetGrace**  
Speaking on human trafficking in Atlanta  
Lawrenceville First Christian Church  
404-378-3621 for information on carpooling

October 18th; 7:00pm **Caregiver Support Group (Lilburn)**  
770-822-8832 for directions/details

November 5th, 9:00am **Family Caregiver's Conference**  
First United Methodist Church of Lawrenceville  
Keynote Speaker: Denise M. Brown  
"Secret Stress Buster—Embracing Limits"  
Registration due by 10/28/11  
678-377-6721 for more information

November 7th; 6:00pm **Teepa Snow, Dementia Care Specialist**  
"Understanding the Condition, What Is Dementia,  
Why Do They Do That?" Presentation  
Meet & Greet/Reception follows with Decatur  
Area organizations and resources  
404-378-3621 for more information

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:

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Sign up now for upcoming Mental Health First Aid courses—a great training opportunity for clergy, Christian educators, church staff, and church members to help promote mental and emotional well being in your congregations. Mental Health First Aid is a 12-hour training course designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Just as CPR training helps a layperson assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a layperson assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis. The cost is \$125 per person (\$95 for students). Each participant receives certification in Mental Health First Aid (valid for 3 years), a training manual, other resources, and a boxed lunch each day. Fall courses will be held on *Oct. 11 and 13*, and *Oct. 27 and 28*, and *Nov. 8 and 10* from 9am to 3:30pm at Kirkwood United Church of Christ. For more information or to register, go to [www.hoperesourcesonline.com](http://www.hoperesourcesonline.com) or contact Kathryn Bryan at [Kathryn@hoperesourcesonline.com](mailto:Kathryn@hoperesourcesonline.com) or 404-919-5179.

## WHERE TO FIND HELP:

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**Area Agency on Aging, Atlanta Regional Commission: 404-463-3524**

**Alzheimer's Association Helpline: 1-800-272-3900, Available 24 hours a day/7 days a week**

**First Christian Church of Decatur (Disciples of Christ): 404-378-3621 or 770-366-1206**

**Trinity Baptist Church, Conyers: 770-922-8944**

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