

Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2012



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

THE CAREGIVER'S NEWSLETTER

Spiritual Practices for Caregivers: ~ Recognizing the "Right" Time

You may have noticed that the February issue of the Newsletter was not written and published as of the first of February. In fact, the Newsletters which are delivered to area assisted living and nursing/rehab facilities were not delivered until February 29th!

In the land of caregiving, that's called *gettin' it done when I get it done!* I'm sure those of you who are reading this article and are caregivers know exactly what I mean. In beginning a new job this year, I have found my time and commitments are having to be rearranged and reallocated. This is not to say that I am going to stop writing these articles for the newsletter; however, it does mean that I need to live into a new "flow."

In caregiving, we are up against these sorts of decisions daily. How do we fit everything we have to do into our 24-hour day? Well, we don't...do we? Expectations abound as to what we *should* be accomplishing each day. As experienced caregivers, we know in our hearts the tasks which really *should* be done throughout our day, and those tasks get done.

In our spiritual journeys, we are sometimes up against the same sort of decisions. Are any of our expectations unreasonable? Do any of us allow the *shoulds* of other people influence how we travel our path? Experience is relative and whether we feel experienced in our spiritual lives or not, we do *know* in our hearts the choices we face, and the tasks we are asked by God to complete. We know these things because of our connection to God.

Finding and living into the flow in our spiritual lives that feeds us, feels natural, and brings us joy is surely a gift from God. Each of us will find a unique flow and can trust that gift. As we give of ourselves until we are parched and empty, we learn the importance of being in the flow of God's abundant provision. In *learning, accepting, and valuing the uniqueness* of how we each relate to and receive God's sustenance, we are less judgmental of our own journeys, our own paths, as well as those of others. My most joyful discovery? *God sustains even in the midst of our doubt.*

Find your flow and be well!

~ Rev. Daphne C. Reiley

CAREGIVER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

2nd Tuesday of Each Month; 7pm

Upcoming Meeting: March 13th
Focus: What it means to be a caregiver.

First Christian Church of Decatur
601 W. Ponce de Leon Avenue, Decatur, Georgia 30030

All caregivers are welcomed, appreciated, and supported!
Questions? Call 404-378-3621.

EXQUISITE SELF-CARE: ~ Lalah Manly

I looove jigsaw puzzles. I experience them as pure play, joyful by virtue of their colors, the snap of the fit, the act of creation, even the smell of a fresh box . I also suspect my brain aligns in interesting ways when I've given it time with a puzzle. After 20-30 minutes at the puzzle table for a couple of days running, I become aware of taking in information differently. I stop thinking about where to find a particular piece and instead let my hand find and place it without effort. This utilization of my subconscious – which, by the way, has vastly greater resources than the conscious mind – then begins to slip over into daily life. Intuitively, I just know (and am later confirmed as correct) why my son is upset over something he can't articulate, or I crave a particularly healthy meal for which I have all ingredients. Self-confidence and self-trust go up. Truly, life is often easier for me when I allow playtime at the puzzle table.

But I usually don't.

Puzzles take the dining room table out of commission for a while. The cats send pieces scuttling off to hide in black holes, leaving those snaggle-toothed gaps that make me mad in the end. Puzzles in progress make it hard for me to get to bed in a timely way, or pay the bills, or plan ahead for anything at all. For these and other rational reasons, I'll go a year or more between slitting open a new box. You know that puzzle aisle in Richard's Variety Store? Off limits.

So, to review: there's something in this world I adore doing for its own sake, and which happens to also enrich my life in ways that make me a better parent and partner. I have the power to bring this activity into my life at any point, and yet I consciously deny myself this opportunity *most* of the time. What the *what?*

Sadly, I think many of us do this with play.

When I began coaching parents, I thought I was doing it for the children. Lately, I've been working (playing) through Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way* exercises. Because play puts us in touch with an Other part of what we know about ourselves, I now know I coach not for the children in the home, but for the children in the parents. As adults, we are flat-out better parents when we are feeling safe, connected, and growing ourselves. In play, we connect to stronger, deeper aspects of ourselves, and then to each other.

Also, when we consistently deny ourselves the experience of available joy, the resentment is real, and it escapes directly as anger, sideways as depression, globally as a loss of joy for life, and disillusioning as an inability to see things as clearly as we might. There is an impact to denying ourselves play.

So, do it! Take a moment now: make a list of twenty things you would do this week if money, time or energy were not at issue. (My first list of this sort included puzzles, bird watching, swimming, contra dancing, and writing short stories.) Next, commit to slipping something (or one aspect of one something) from your list into this week. If what you want is to play racquetball, start by bringing out your rackets and buying a fresh can of balls. Take one step – any step -- now. Something small is enough. Make time for yourself in this way. And then, more importantly, get curious: what's the impact? How does it feel? Is it worth doing again?

Me? I'm headed to Richard's.

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.

EXQUISITE SELF-CARE...PLAY TIME LIST

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1)_____ | 11)_____ |
| 2)_____ | 12)_____ |
| 3)_____ | 13)_____ |
| 4)_____ | 14)_____ |
| 5)_____ | 15)_____ |
| 6)_____ | 16)_____ |
| 7)_____ | 17)_____ |
| 8)_____ | 18)_____ |
| 9)_____ | 19)_____ |
| 10)_____ | 20)_____ |
-

Caregiver's Lenten Commitment

Do you have an **action plan** to help you set goals for self-care? Putting goals down in writing can actually solidify your will to take time to care for yourself. When writing an **action plan**, be sure it includes:

1. **What** you are going to do.
2. **How much** you are going to do.
3. **When** you are going to do it (e.g., what time of day).
4. **How often** you are going to do it.

Example: This week I will read a favorite book (**what**) for a half hour (**how much**) in the mid-afternoon when my spouse sleeps (**when**), three times: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (**how often**). SO...

This week I will _____ [what]
_____ [how much]
_____ [when]
_____ [how often]

How confident are you that you will complete your entire Action Plan during the week? [1...10]_____

Circle each day you accomplish your plan:

Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday / Saturday / Sunday

First Christian Church of Decatur
(Disciples of Christ)

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

www.DecaturDisciples.org



Resolve to Love
Agree to Differ
Unite to Serve
Break Bread Together

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

PRAYER WORDS

Peace.
Be still and know that I am God.
Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Jesu.
Mercy.
Love.
Joy.

PRAYER IMAGES

Open hands.
Healing light.
Comforting arms.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE:

- Mar. 13th; 7:00pm **Caregiver Educational Group (Decatur)**
First Christian Church of Decatur
404-378-3621 for directions
770-366-1206 for questions/details
- Mar. 14th; 4:30pm **Caregiver Spiritual Support Ministry Meeting**
First Christian Church of Decatur
Needs Assessment/Information Gathering
Open Meeting
- Mar. 20st; 7:00pm **Caregiver Support Group (Lilburn)**
770-822-8832 for directions/details
- Mar. 21st; 10:00am **Caregiver Spiritual Support Ministry Meeting**
First Christian Church of Decatur
Needs Assessment/Information Gathering
Open Meeting
- Mar. 31st; 9:00am **Disciples Women Spring Spa Day**
"Finding the Balance"
First Christian Church of Decatur
Registration due March 26th
Information and online registration:
<http://www.gadisciples.org>

WHERE TO FIND HELP:

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
