

# The Messenger



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May 11, 2022

## Moment's Reflection

*"Wait there for the promise of the Father." -Acts 1:4*



We were talking as a group of Christians about all the other times and places we'd heard the passage. Many of us remembered sermons, Sunday school lessons. Some of even remembered experiences outside the Church where we'd be invited to learn about the passage, the gospel story, about the disciples along the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13ff).

And yet, when it came to thinking whether or not we truly had in us the wisdom embedded in the Gospel account—that God finds us where we are and abides with us until we know him—some of us paused. One in the group said that she believed it was

possible to have lots of information about something and not really understand the meaning of it. That night, we made a distinction between knowledge and wisdom, information and lived experience.

I've told enough stories from the pulpit for you to know that among other things, I highly value continuing education. I know a thing or two about Scripture. And yet, I've learned there's a difference between knowing a thing or two about Scripture and having the wisdom, born of faithful experience, to rightly understand the Living Christ about whom the Scriptures testify.

In his book on *The Lord's Supper (Remembrance, Communion, Hope)*, J. Todd Billings begins by making a wager. We were created to be in relationship with God, he says. This is our inborn desire. To satiate this inborn desire, we engage in what Billings calls "thick practices" of spiritual discipline such as Bible reading, preaching, prayer, the sacraments. And yet, none of these "thick practices" alone guarantees that we'll experience the living God. Something more than our inborn desire and effort is needed.

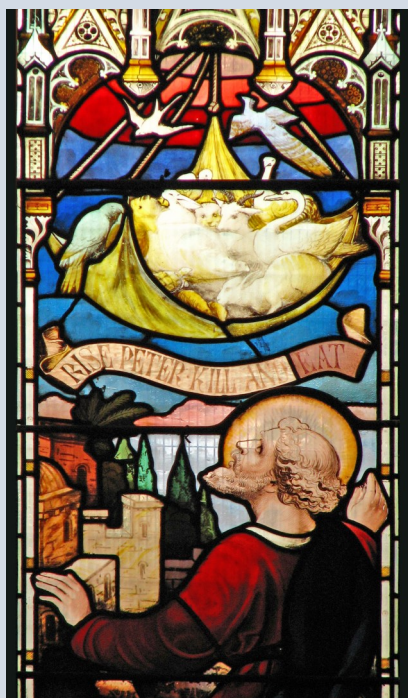
Billings quotes Jonathan Edwards in his *A Treatise Concerning Spiritual Affections*, to say any wisdom we own, any deeply spiritual, life-changing experience we have of God is dependent upon the Holy Spirit's giving of a "sixth sense"—a capacity beyond our own ability to perceive the enlivening presence of God. As Edwards argues, and Billings contends, we are compelled to draw near to the presence of God in spiritual practice. But those practices cannot bring us fully into God's presence without the gift of perception which only the Spirit gives. In practice, this means that while we come to the Table each Sunday to be in Communion with Christ, it is only by the work of the Spirit that our coming to the Table becomes actual experience of the Living Christ. Otherwise, we'd simply gather to eat wafers and drink juice.

In a few weeks, June 5th, we'll celebrate Pentecost Sunday—the day the Holy Spirit descends upon us. With humility we'll wait expectantly for this gift knowing truth that Nicodemus once learned: that it's possible to be theologian, a rabbi, and still not know God. -Dan, Pentecost 2022

## Sermon Preview—Sunday May 15, 2022

Sermon: "Lesson from a Church Scandal"

Scripture: Acts 11: 1-18



Synopsis: Peter did something unheard of. In fact, I think he shocked his own sensibility! He fellowshiped with and offered salvation to a household of pagans. Peter held the keys of the kingdom. He, of all people, should've known better. He might've been entitled to his own private opinions. But when you hold a position of prominence, and you use the power of your office to make large, sweeping statements of huge consequence, then you better plan to give account to the Church's Elders. And this he did. But he doesn't offer a retraction. Instead, he stands up to the Church's interrogation with an unexpected word. To paraphrase, Peter declares to a room full of scandalized church folk: "We've had it wrong. Make fun of my trance and the vision of the sheet from heaven. The truth is inescapable. The Spirit of God has something new in mind." Standing there still in awe himself, Peter says, "Who was I that I could hinder God?" Good question. Amazingly, the Church moves from skepticism to praise! I've served the Church for years. I'm an admitted traditionalist. I like things the way they used be. I used to love to sing the hymn, "Old Time Religion." "If he was good enough for Paul and Silas," then it ought to be good enough for you and me. But this passage gives me pause. Maybe there are times when what seems like scandal is the creative design of the Holy Spirit. We should test the Spirit, of course. But maybe we should also be concerned not to hinder it.

### UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

#### Youth Group Meetings

4:00-5:30pm

May 15

May 22

May 29

#### Youth End of Year Event

June 5th

End of Year Event

Cici's Pizza & Urban Air

### VOLUNTEER

We are looking for some people who may be interested in helping with sound and/or projection during the worship service on Sunday mornings. Prior experience is preferred but not required. We hope to get a good rotation in place for both. If you're interested please contact Rev. Shaun.

[shaun@fccgarland.org](mailto:shaun@fccgarland.org)



# Spiritual Development Offerings

Looking for a way to stay connected to your church? Log on to some of our spiritual development courses. Have questions? Confused about how to get the Zoom link to work? Contact the church office at 972-272-5423.

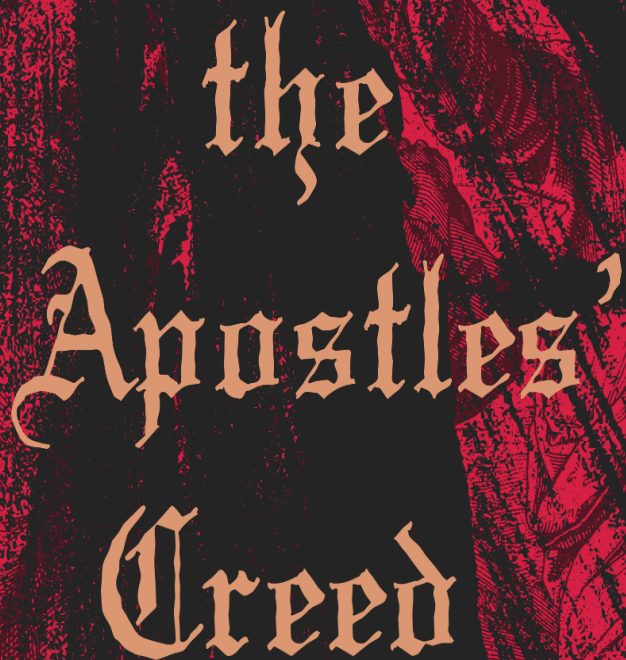
## Study the Gospel of Mark - Thursdays at 12pm

Rev. Dr. Douglas Skinner invites you to join his continuing bible study. The course will continue an ongoing in-depth study of the Gospel of Mark.

The class will meet weekly, Thursdays at noon. Check your email each week for the link to the Zoom meeting.



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
MARK



the  
Apostles'  
Creed

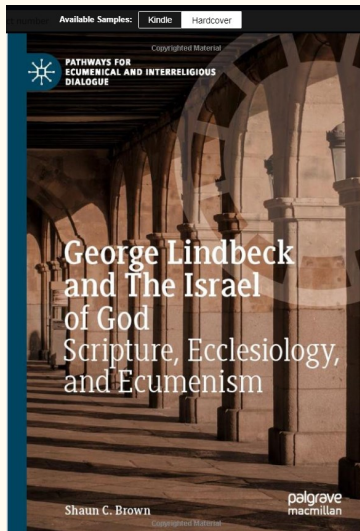
CONTINUES  
through May

Mondays  
7:00pm via Zoom

Led by  
Dr. Shaun Brown

## DR. SHAUN BROWN'S NEW BOOK

Our very own Dr. Shaun Brown has a new book out now: *George Lindbeck and The Israel of God: Scripture, Ecclesiology, and Ecumenism* is [currently available for purchase on Amazon](#).



George Lindbeck was a twentieth century Lutheran theologian who taught for many years at Yale. Unfortunately, many read his book, *The Nature of Doctrine*, apart from his commitment to Christian unity. In *George Lindbeck and the Israel of God*, Shaun Brown seeks to provide a corrective to misreadings of Lindbeck's work by focusing upon his "Israelology"—his emphasis upon the church and Israel as one elect people of God.

Lindbeck notes that early Christians, who were initially all Jews, understood themselves, in their faithfulness and sinfulness, "in the mirror of Old Testament Israel in the light of Jesus Christ." Even Gentiles who came to faith understood that they were grafted into Israel (Rom 11:17–34). Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, refers to Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness as "our ancestors," and tells us that stories of their idolatry and immorality were written down for us as "examples" (NRSV) or "warnings" (RSV) in order to instruct us. While Lindbeck argues that the church did not replace the Jews as God's chosen people, he argues that understanding the church as Israel can help the church's quest for visible unity.

## ELDERS MEETING

**Sunday, May 22, 2022—Sunday School Hour In the Sanctuary**

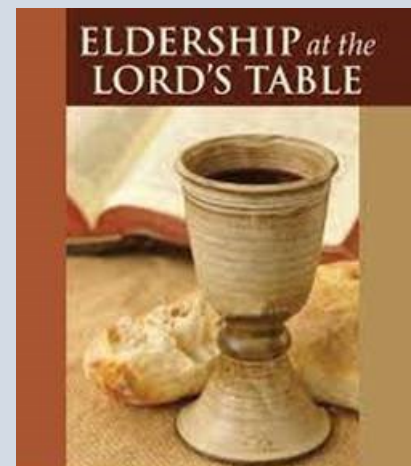
Rev. Dr. Doug Skinner, long-time preacher, member of the congregation and author of the book, *At the Lord's Table: Prayers for All Seasons*, will speak to our Elders about the ministry at the Table. The Elders will meet in the Sanctuary during the Sunday School hour.

Doug's presentation follows Dr. Dan's previous study with the Elders in January on "Elder as Shepherd."

The following is one of the prayers Dr. Doug wrote on the Presence of Christ at the Table.

*"Hidden God, most of the time we grope in the darkness hoping to make contact with you. We follow our best hunches and guesses, deciphering the clues that you leave for us in creation and conscience. We are accustomed to seeing in the mirror dimly at best, but then there come those blessed moments of absolute clarity. This morning we thank you for the way that we know you through the breaking of this bread. And so as we sit again at your table this morning, as the bread is taken, blessed, broken, and given, open our eyes and let us recognize you as the companion who journeys with us. And please send your Spirit afresh into our hearts in this moment of communion so that we might know that we are never alone. Amen."*

Doug will also preach at Morning Worship on, "Getting More Out of Communion," drawing from I Corinthians 11:17-32.







*"Thank you all, church friends and staff, who have prayed and uplifted me. I appreciate the cards, calls, visits and special needs and treats. It means a lot. One more pneumonia hump and maybe I can go "home" to experience what I can do alone. Perhaps home health care. Most of all I treasure your prayers there and here. Blessings."*  
*- Nancy Worden*

*"John and I appreciate, so very much, all the letters and expressions of sympathy after the loss of my brothers. When our grief was sharp, your kindness and love gave us encouragement and comfort. Thank you for your support."*

*- Judy Grasham*

*"Jenny and I wish to thank you for your many cards and kind words upon the loss of Jenny's mother, Joan Mills. We appreciate each of them. We will leave for Idaho on Tuesday to attend the service at Joan's home church (Jenny's childhood church), Central Christian Church, Pocatello, Idaho, May 19. We will return late Saturday evening. I've asked my brother-in-law, Rev. Dr. Doug Skinner, to preach for me Sunday, May 22nd. Shaun and I will both have leadership portions in the service. Yet, because my mind will be with family in Idaho the week leading to Sunday, I thought it a good Sunday to have a guest preacher. I had planned for Doug to preach June 12th. Doug is simply moving up his schedule. While I'm away, please remember to call Dr. Shaun for pastoral concerns. Also pray for Sherri and Shaun and girls, as they anticipate the arrival of a baby boy! You are a gracious church. We have loved your regard for us through the years. This trip to Idaho will be a little sad. I remember the Thanksgiving many years ago when Jenny and I went home to Idaho to announce our engagement. Pocatello has become a kind of cherished place. We go home this time to write an ending chapter."* *- Dan & Jenny Jones*

## prayer REQUESTS

### Circle of Fellowship

Marilyn Fowler  
Cindy Kyle

### Fishers of Families

Blake Collins

### God's Messengers

Shirley Miller

### Hands of Faith

Glenda Lee  
Nancy Worden

### Shepherds

Helen Smith

Livestream our  
worship services  
on YouTube



Click here

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVGPNXkThBvrfgMHsEOsHbg>



Please welcome our new member, **Evelyn Everett**. Evelyn met FCCG member Marty Rogers at their apartments. When Marty was down in health, Evelyn took care of her, checked in on her. The two developed a friendship.

Evelyn grew up in Dayton, TN where she later moved with her family to Michigan, when dad took a job at a papermill. I think I recall that her dad (whom she much loved) was a coal miner.

Evelyn is 1 of 8 children. Growing up in TN, she and family attended the Unity Baptist Church. She says our church reminds her of that beloved church which she attends when she goes "home." She states that she's been baptized four times! One of those times, she was baptized by her uncle in a river at age 10. I told her that I thought 4 baptisms would do it.

## Summer Fun Papercrafting Class

Ages 13+ are invited to participate in our group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. No previous experience is required. If you are a newbie to cardmaking, scrapbooking or papercrafts, you may obtain a list of supplies by contacting Linda Harrison, 972-533-4016, email [StamPenLady@aol.com](mailto:StamPenLady@aol.com).

The class meets in the Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. (flexible.) Bring a sack lunch and drink.

The only cost for the class is the supplies that you need.

