

# The Messenger

## NEW COVENANT

# COMMUNITY CHURCH

A WEST AKRON NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH

October  
2023

### BLESSING SERVICE FOR REV. BRAD RITO

On Sunday, October 1, Eastminster Presbytery, the International Council of Community Churches, along

with family and friends, helped NCCC celebrate the installation of Rev. Bradley Rito. His parents, Bill and Kathi Rito, traveled from Grosse Ile, Michigan to take part in the ceremony.

Rev. Phil Tom came in from Elizabeth, New Jersey. Other Members of the Administrative Commission included: TE Paul Anderson (Moderator of Presbytery), TE Barry Chance (General Presbyter & Stated Clerk), RE John Sezna (NCCC), TE Francie Fischer (Allenside & Firestone Park), and RE Patti Scott (COM Liaison).

During the planning stages, there was some discussion as to whether this would be called an Installation Service or a Blessing Service. The change was made to "Blessing" in an effort to be more inclusive of NCCC's union with ICC, and

*(Blessing continued on page 5)*



## *The President's Post*

Greetings,

You will all remember 13 or 14 years ago we started our Mission Garden. A sturdy group of gardeners endeavored to grow vegetables in the area fenced in behind our shed under our magnificent oak tree. We started with eight raised beds, later adding two more. The weekly harvests of tomatoes, peppers, collard greens, squash, cucumbers, green beans, beets, and potatoes were delivered Saturday mornings to Genneserat to be given to those coming for a meal.

Bev Cinovec has been the driving organizer for the garden all these years, funded by our Mission Committee's budget. Each week, we report the amount of the various vegetables produced with the help of support staff, Betsy Davis, Marty Pastor, Betty Miller, Tim Myers, and me. Other volunteers have helped us. Bev, alone, does the lion's share of the preparation, planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting.

We struggle to keep the animal and insect invaders at bay. Brad reports seeing most mornings a well-fed groundhog scurrying about looking for his next meal. We negotiate with the owner of the fence and land behind it to keep her jungle-like weeds on her side and we are always pulling weeds growing between the beds. Many thanks go out to Ken Williams, Tim Meyers, Ken Heischman, and Tom Koutnik who built the fences around the garden, painted the back fence, and buried chicken wire to keep the critters out.

We are glad for the produce we grow and give to those who have little access to fresh

produce. I am thinking here, "Feed my sheep."

My friends, things have changed. Those sturdy gardeners I mentioned in my opening paragraph who were not spring chickens those many years ago are now dealing with bad backs, faulty knees and the other ravages of aging and are no longer able to do the vigorous tasks needed to keep the garden going. With sadness, I must tell you that this year will be our last garden. We do not have the staff to continue. If you want to take over this project, please tell me.

At last month's Mission Committee meeting, we discussed this issue and tried to brainstorm other ways we might use this section of our property. Some ideas bantered about were offering it to another responsible group, make it a meditation retreat area, or offer it to a beekeeper. We are just beginning the conversations as to what our next step might be. Any ideas you might have would be most welcome.

All the best,

*Nancy Clem*

Governing Board President





## *The Pastor's Page*

*A man was out on his boat when he got caught in a nasty storm. The boat got wrecked by the storm, and he washed up on the shore of a deserted island. He prayed feverishly day and night day after day to be saved, but no one came. After a few days, the man built himself a hut on the beach out of some of the driftwood that had washed up on shore with him to both protect himself and what few possessions he had left. Then, the next day, when he came back from scavenging for food, he found his small hut ablaze, smoke billowing up into the sky. He had lost everything but his life. "God, how could you do this to me?!" he screamed up towards the heavens. That next morning, he was awoken by the sound of a ship heading his way. He asked them how they knew where to find him. They told him that they saw his smoke signal.*

Have you ever wondered why your prayers aren't answered, or when they are, they aren't answered in the way you wanted? You prayed for the winning numbers to the lottery but did not get them. You prayed for patience, but only find yourself growing more impatient with life and the people in it. You prayed to be more forgiving, but only find you have more people to forgive and see more things wrong with yourself to forgive. This is a strange occurrence that leaves many (myself included) frustrated. We pray for something, and when we don't get it right away, we get frustrated. Similarly, when we pray for something and it's not answered according to our plans, we also get frustrated. However, there are a few things worth clearing up about how we view prayer.

In our day of mass consumerism, we are used to getting things almost instantaneously. When I was a kid, if you wanted to download

something off the internet, you needed to make sure no one used the phone, hoped the file wasn't too big, and that there wasn't a power outage. Even then, the bar that told you how long it would take to download might tell you it would take hours, days, even years (my record was over 143 years for a single game). Now, we can get any show or song we want instantly, watch it on our devices anywhere, and have anything we want shipped to our door in two days or less. Unfortunately, this mentality of "what I want when I want it" has rubbed off onto much of how we pray. We pray for something and expect that same "two-day shipping" or "instant download." When it doesn't happen, that same frustration we feel when a package gets delayed or we're told to "try later" to download something boils up within us against God. However, there are a couple valid reasons for why this is the case.

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*(Pastor's Page continued from pg. 3)*

One reason we don't always get what we want is because it's not part of God's plan. Our plan might be to win the lottery and live on a mega yacht the rest of our days, but that's not in God's plan for us. We plan to be doctors, lawyers, Nobel Prize winners, to achieve these many great things, but we never get that far. So, that "wish list" many of us (myself included) sometimes lift up to God in prayer, hoping and praying that God will be convinced that our plan is better, those will never get answered simply because those are not things we need. Additionally, God's plan is absolute, and as much as we might try, nothing we do or say will be able to change God's mind to "see things our way." This however is not all there is to why our prayers are seemingly "unanswered."

Another possibility is that our prayers are in fact being answered, but not in the way we think or expect. Just as was the case of the man in the parable above, so is this also the case with us. We pray for something, having in mind how we imagine it will go down, how that answer will look, etc. However, this vision of "how it will be answered" gives us a tunnel vision of sorts whereby our view is obstructed. The truth is we need to have wider scopes. God may never provide us with the monetary wealth that comes with a winning lottery ticket, but we nonetheless will be made wealthy in friendships, love, experiences, wisdom and/or knowledge, etc. To limit our prayers of "wealth" to just money is to not allow ourselves to see all that God can do or see those answers elsewhere in our lives, places where that "wealth" might be better suited. This however is not the only reason we don't get the answers we want.

The other half of the answer as to why we don't get the "two-day" prayer answer is because it's not the right time. I can recall praying when I was in college that I would find a sweetheart that I could marry right out

of college, settle down with, have children with, and with whom to grow old (essentially what my parents and both of my brothers did). Had that prayer been answered at that time, I would have never been able to avoid student loans for seminary, never done a year as a Young Adult Volunteer, never met Katie, never thought of adoption out of the foster care system, any of these things and more. By the same token, I prayed in seminary to pass my written ordination exams on the first go only to graduate having not passed all of them. Had that not happened, though, I wouldn't have done a year as a Young Adult Volunteer in New Orleans, never met Katie or my host family, never learned more about my enneagram or White privilege, any of that. As you can see, I passed those exams, I'm happily married (coming up on 6 years married, a little over 8 years together), but at the time of my prayers, they weren't the right time. Again, God has a plan. It's possible that, while our plan *is* God's plan, God's plan has those answers coming at a later time.

In conclusion, I would invite you, the next time you don't get the answer you want when you want it, to consider three things:

Is your prayer a "want" or a "need"?

Is God answering your prayer, just in a different way?

If not, might there be a better time for it to be answered?

It's true, God may not give "two-day delivery" when we hit our internal "pray now" button, but God's service and timing is impeccable in the grand scheme of things and has a 100% satisfaction rate. Can you really beat that?

*- Pastor Brad*

*(Blessing continued from page 1)*  
made the effort to steer away from creating a solely Presbyterian-style event.

Inclusion can only be done from more than one angle, with point of views from more than one person.



Because it took so many to bring this ceremony together, let us take the time to thank those like Ken Williams, who is always willing to capture the moment with photographs, and the Fellowship Committee for seeing the importance of celebration.



### MISSION GARDEN UPDATE

Thank you Mission Garden Committee for all your hard work, and the continual support you have given to Gennesaret.

Above is a picture of the last harvest of September 2023, which included:

- 6 Beets
- 1 Yellow Squash
- 1 Patty Pan Squash
- 7 Tomatoes
- 4 Hot Peppers

## HUNGER WALK



In 2024, New Initiatives will get ready for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Hunger Walk, sponsored by AAIC, which will be on May 5. Cathy King and Nancy Williams can give you information about this.

Please, plan to come to the AAIC meeting on Tuesday, March 5 from 12:00-1:15. The meeting will be in our Fellowship Hall, and Dan Flowers, CEO of the Akron-Canton

Regional Foodbank will be the guest speaker. You are invited to attend in



person or on Zoom. You may recall, last year, Dan participated in the Hunger Walk.

On September 22, three of us from the AAIC Hunger Walk Committee attended the Major Partner Luncheon and program at the foodbank's new Canton location. We learned that for 2023, there has been



a 36% increase in food demand, and officials expect that number to continue to rise. Since

opening two years ago, the Canton location has served 148,000 people.

The foodbank's major contributing partners have donated \$6.2 million. Let's help keep the tradition going with our Hunger Walk contributions for next May.

## NEW INITIATIVES

Everyone is invited to be a part of the upcoming Trunk-or-Treat. The annual event will be October 28 from 5:00—6:00 p.m. As in the past, participants provide their own candy to pass out from the trunk of their car. People can decorate cars and come in costume. New this year, Brad and Katie are designing a wheel on which little prowess will be hung. Kids will spin the wheel and get a small prize.

In addition to our usual Trunk or Treat sign out on the lawn, there will also be a sign that says “Prizes.”

When Trunk or Treat ends, those who can will adjourn to Highland Square Mustard Seed for supper.

Please, sign up on the sheet in the lobby, if you plan to participate. If you would like to leave candy to be passed out, or prizes for the new game, please call the office.



Happy  
Fall to all !

As the months fly by so fast, it is not too early to start preparing for our “once again” Christmas basket delivery in December. The Mission Committee has set the date of Saturday, December 16 for delivering the baskets. We are hoping to return to our pre-COVID tradition of meeting at the Montrose Acme at 9AM for packing and 10AM for delivering. Although sign-up won't be til mid-November, we are asking you to consider if you plan to sign up and if you might need some help with delivery. We have a commitment from BSA Troop #380 to send some scouts to help us. If you feel you could use help from the boy scouts, please let Lev Anderson know asap. It should be a joyous time for us to gather once again for this tradition.

*Minute for  
Mission*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

At the August meeting, the fellowship team discussed several possible upcoming events. Along with the Installation Service, the other event for this year will be a Christmas party, which Heidi Heischman is offering to chair. The date will be Thursday, December 7.

### *2024 Events*

- A. Sunday, January 21 we'll have a soup lunch. This will be a transition lunch for outgoing and incoming Governing Board members.
- B. A February 14, Valentine's Day lunch was discussed. Since the 14th is also Ash Wednesday, the lunch would be held before the Ash Wednesday Service.
- C. No date has been set, but there was talk about a possible game event. Instead of the evening, this may occur during the day sometime.
- D. An Easter Sunday Continental breakfast is set for March 31. Nancy W. is offering to lead that event.

The next meeting is Wednesday, November 1 at 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



**AKRON INTERFAITH**

**IMMIGRATION ADVOCATES**

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS  
COLLECTION**

**For North Hill**

**Immigrant Families**

Help us supply their essentials by giving

1. Long-grain white rice (large bag)
2. Black and/or Pinto Beans (large bag)  
*no cans please*
3. Toothpaste
4. Bars of soap

or

**\$25 gift cards to:**

**Dollar General, Aldi, or Walmart**

Please, put the items into the box on the back pew.  
Gift cards should be left in the large envelope in the  
church office.

The donations will be collected starting Sunday, October 8,  
and running through December 3.

## FAITH INNOVATION TEAM

FIT Meeting  
October 24 at 1:00 PM

Please Join Us!

Your Faith Innovation Team will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, October 24. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss what we learned this past year and discern how to use this information to enhance our relationship with the neighborhood.

We want to hear from you! Please plan to attend and help us envision New Covenant Community Church at work in our neighborhood in 2024.

*FIT is an innovative program conducted by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to help churches determine needs and potential ministries in their neighborhoods. With the blessing of our Governing Board and Presbytery, NCCC has joined several other local Presbyterian Churches to explore new ways of being "the church". FIT members are Nancy Clem, Betsy Davis, Hal Horton, Nancy Williams, and Tom and Shelley Koutnik*

## CONSTRUCTION

The Kenmore Construction Company said they were going to start tearing up Avondale Dr. Monday, October 9th. But, as you can see from the big whole in the ground, construction has already begun. KCC will be replacing a waterline on Avondale Dr. from Sheldon Dr. to W. Exchange St., so the road is already closed.



## YOUR CHURCH MISSION DOLLARS AT WORK

As a reminder of where our mission dollars go, in addition to our 2 school book fairs, periodic food collections (ie, Harvest Home and Lenten Super Six), Christmas baskets, Hunger Walk, and collections for victims of natural disasters, we also give throughout the year to various mission organizations which comprise most of our 10% tithing. We contribute locally, nationally and internationally.

In addition to our church "dues" which go to the Presbyterian and ICCC churches, we give to

- ♦ [CAMO](#) (Central American Medical Outreach) and
- ♦ [Mission:Hope](#) ( used to be ROW). These organizations represent our international giving.
- ♦ [Solar Under the Sun](#) represents national and international charitable work while
- ♦ [Valor Home](#),
- ♦ [Gennesaret](#),
- ♦ OFUG and
- ♦ the Hunger Walk represent local charitable giving.

We will be sharing more information about these charities soon or check out their websites.

- Margie Frlich

## NCCC DIRECTORY

The office sent the 2023 Directory by e-mail, but if you need a printed copy, there are a few in the office.



# WANT TO VOTE NOVEMBER 7?

MAKE SURE YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION IS UP TO DATE!

CHECK IF YOU'RE REGISTERED  
IN SUMMIT COUNTY



NOT REGISTERED? MOVED?  
CHANGED YOUR NAME?



**REGISTER BY  
OCTOBER 10**

REGISTER ONLINE HERE  
IT'S QUICK AND EASY!

OR GO TO [OLVR.OHIOSOS.GOV](http://OLVR.OHIOSOS.GOV)

QUESTIONS? CALL 330-643-5200

MORE VOTING INFO AT [SUMMITCOUNTYBOE.GOV](http://SUMMITCOUNTYBOE.GOV) AND [VOTEOHIO.GOV](http://VOTEOHIO.GOV)