

## Making the Best of It

John Wooden was an enormously successful basketball coach, leading UCLA to 10 championships in the 12 years he coached there. He was admired for his coaching prowess, but he was also respected as a coach who shaped the character of his players. Today I stumbled across a quote of his. It was new to me, but perhaps you are already familiar with it. Wooden said:

Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.

When I read that, I immediately thought about what Paul said in his letter to the Thessalonians:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)

It’s tempting to bristle at the words of Paul and Wooden. One is tempted to say, “Don’t tell me to make the best of things. Things are heart-breaking. Things are desperate. Things are falling apart.” Truthfully, that’s almost always true to some degree. Things are never perfect. Often, they do not lead us to blissfully rejoice or to give thanks spontaneously.

But do it any way.

Do it because there is grace in every moment. Even in the moments of desolation, Christ is present with you. He knew desolation too, feeling forsaken on the cross. In his desolation, Christ has made our desolation holy. God’s saving presence attends the whole of our human experience. God in Christ has joined us in our sorrow as well as our joy. Even our most terrifying circumstances do not take us out of God’s loving embrace.

But we can miss it if we see only the pain and not the One who stands beside us.

It is certainly not just the great tragedies that sap life of its joy. I have observed that people often courageously endure the worst that life has to offer, but we fall into rage and despair over frustrations and disappointments that are trivial in the greater scheme of things.

Cultivate an attitude of acceptance and thanksgiving. Look for the grace in every moment. We are made in the image and likeness of God, so let your God-given creativity flourish to make something beautiful of the mess that life sometimes serves up.

Rejoicing and giving thanks in all circumstances is not only what God asks of us, it is also the best way to live a fulfilled life under imperfect conditions.

**Prayer:** *Look, I’m not saying that I’m done complaining to you, but for now, I thank you for the goodness you have hidden in the middle of this bad day. Amen.*





Jamie, Adam & Ozzy Butcher; Jane Duewiger; Beth Hancock;  
John & Karen Kaitanowski; Frank Norwood; Bessie Nottis;  
Helen & Marvin Wilson

*If you would like to share a prayer request to be posted here, please contact Michelle in the church office or Pastor Lynn. We also have a text prayer chain of dedicated volunteers ready to pray for you and loved ones at any time. Please text/call Michelle at 245-1692 or Pastor Lynn at 866-3085; we will send out your request.*

# **Master's** **Chicken BBQ**

**Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>**

**12:00-6:00 pm (or until sold out)**

**St. Matthew's United Church of Christ**

**Drive Thru, Take Out Only**



Includes 1/2 Chicken  
salt potatoes  
coleslaw  
roll and butter

Pre-sale tickets: \$10 per dinner (sold Sundays at church, or call/text LaDonna Painter at 715-7310 by May 23rd)

\$12 per dinner on day of (cash only)



## **Meals on Wheels - THANK YOU!**

Thanks to Linda & Bob Ferraro, Devon Asboth and Marilyn Rich, Michelle Kemp, Tammy Kruszka, Barbara Middaugh, Kurt Rich, Bob & Linda Velazquez, and David & Pamela Kaznica for their participation in delivering meals this month.

The recipients of meals on route 850 appreciate your caring and time so they can remain in their own homes. God bless and we'll see you in July! -Pamela Kaznica

## The Way Home

There are things you can say within a family, or within a circle of close friends that you would never say in public, or to someone who was not initiated into your intimate circle. In the privacy of our home, Sandy can address me as, “my handsome man,” and I try to look demure and appreciative and humble. If she said it in public, people would take her hand and foot to the eye doctor, laughing all the way. We can say ridiculous, hyperbolic things to our lovers, but we would never say them out loud where others might hear. We know that our “insider talk” is not meant to be a factual description or a rational argument. It is an affirmation made in love, with all the prejudices and blindness that implies.

One of the most troubling passages in the New Testament is one of those bits of “insider talk” that transpires between Jesus and his disciples at the last supper as he is preparing them for his death. Jesus promises that when he goes away, he will come again to be reunited with his disciples; that there is room for them in his Father’s house. Jesus tells them that his disciples know the way to this dwelling place in God, but good old Thomas (my favorite disciple) pipes up to say that they know neither the destination nor the directions to get there. Jesus replies:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”  
(John 14:6)

That little verse has been used as a cudgel to beat down those of other faiths and as a statement of not just the superiority of Christianity, but also the exclusivity of the Christian way as the one that

alone leads to God. All this forgets that this was a dialogue of love between a rabbi and his disciples. Jesus tells them that they will not lose their way or their home with God. They need nothing more than what they already have – the truth and love embodied in Christ. He is saying, in effect, trust in the love and truth you have received. It is enough for you.

But what about, “no one comes to the Father except through me”? Here’s how I read that. Jesus embodies perfectly the out-reaching love of God. That out-reaching love is what saves. Therefore, however we might encounter God’s mercy and out-reaching love, and whatever name we might give it, the love is exactly what was revealed in Christ.

Jesus is not a magic name we say to get God’s mercy. Jesus reveals what is already true about God – that God loves us; that God is merciful and compassionate; that God forgives sinners and seeks to be in relationship with all people. Everyone who comes to the realization that they are held in a loving embrace by the God who made them has experienced what Jesus revealed.

Jesus reveals God as one who will not limit forgiveness, or compassion, or love. Jesus reveals that God spends love on those who want no part of it, who want to destroy it, who kill it. Jesus reveals that God’s love doesn’t die.

So, I believe that God’s love (which was perfectly revealed in Christ) is active in every life, drawing all the children of God to their rightful place – a dwelling place in the Father’s house.

***Prayer:** Thank you, Father, for making room for me; make me a better doorman as I invite others to find a home in you. Amen.*



**The UCC Strengthen the Church offering** supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

Special envelopes are enclosed with this newsletter. You may mail your donation to the church (5289 McKinley Pkwy). They will also be collected on Sundays, May 16 and 23.



### Birthdays:

Dawn Goetz (5/5), Anne Kanaley (5/7), Debbie Zdrojewski (5/7), Shirley Jones (5/9), Bob Velazquez (5/11), Denise Woodruff (5/29), Larry Wightman (5/30), Stan Kaznica (5/31)

*If you would like a copy of the newest directory, please contact Michelle in the church office.*

### May Anniversaries:

Bill & Mary Hamm (May 12, 1973) \* Jeff & Robynn Rich (May 18, 2002) \* Carl & Joann Ertel (May 22, 1992)

## Only One Mother

Hundreds of stars in the pretty sky,  
 Hundreds of shells on the shore together,  
 Hundreds of birds that go singing by,  
 Hundreds of lambs in the sunny weather.  
 Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the dawn,  
 Hundreds of bees in the purple clover,  
 Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn,  
 But only one mother the world wide over.



*How well do you know your fellow St. Matthew's members and friends?*

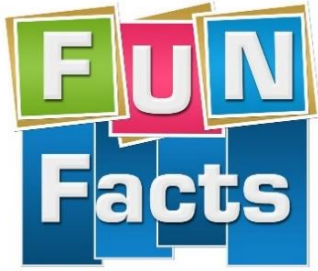


## Who Am I ?

1. This will be Mother's Day # 37 for me, and yet I have a child who is almost 40 years old. Who Am I ?
2. I had 2 pet roosters, one named " Festus" and the other named " Mr. Dillion". Who Am I?
3. I dressed up as nurse and was able to give Chad Everett from the TV show "Medical Center" a "little" kiss during his visit to Buffalo. Who Am I?

*(answers on next page)*

*Note: Do YOU have a funny or interesting fact about yourself to stump your friends in guessing who you are? Please call LaDonna Painter (715-7310) to let her know what it is.*



The Slinky was created by accident. Inventor Richard James, a naval engineer, was trying to create a spring that could help stabilize equipment on boats in choppy waters. However, his spring's ability to move seemingly on its own proved more interesting and became the prototype for the Slinky in 1943.



Milk wagons gave us roadway lines; considered the most important single traffic safety device. The painting of lines down the center of roads was devised by Edward Hines in 1911 when he saw the dotted drippings from a leaking milk wagon and struck on the concept.

Butterflies can't fly if they're cold. Butterflies need an ideal body temperature of about 85 degrees to fly. Since they are cold-blooded animals, they can't regulate their own body temperature. If the air temperature falls below 55 degrees they are rendered immobile and unable to flee from predators or feed. When temperatures are between 82 and 100 degrees, they fly with ease. Cooler days require a butterfly to warm up its flight muscles, either by shivering or basking in the sun.



The moniker 'Mom' comes from babies. The first thing a baby can vocalize is the 'ma' sound, which is why in almost every language the word for mother begins with the letter 'M' or is some iteration of the 'ma' sound.

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### Answers to Who Am I ?

1. Pam Kaznica, Kevin was 3 years old when he arrived in 1984, from South Korea. He was 3 1/2 years old on my first Mother's Day was in 1985.
2. Carl Ertel was the proud owner of his 2 pet roosters, "Festus" and "Mr. Dillion"
3. Joann Ertel was working at Trans Continent Records and Chad Everett from "Medical Center" had cut an album and they ask several girls to dress up as nurses and pose with him for the photo shoot to promote his album. In the pictures Joann is "the nurse" in the front row right side. The picture with Chad, Joann is pictured in the back by his left shoulder, looks like a tight squeeze, I'm sure she didn't mind. Joann did tell me she had a lot of fun.



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