



Feeling Alone

All my memories of High School gym class are painful memories so I have tried to blot them out. This one persists despite my efforts to forget. We were playing basketball, a sport in which my distaste for the game and my lack of talent are in perfect correlation.

It was gym class. Playing was compulsory. So, I kept my head down and tried to avoid causing excessive damage to my team through my lack of athleticism.

Assuming a standard bell-curve distribution of basketball talent, I would have been at the left end of the curve. Way out on the right end of the curve was one of my classmates whose frustration was matched only by his competitiveness. Despite my presence, the team was probably not much worse than the average randomly assigned team in the gym class, but this was not good enough for our talented and competitive captain. Eventually he blurted out what he had, no doubt, been thinking throughout the game: "I can't do this all by myself!"

Nope, he couldn't. But he had been making the mistake of trying to do it all by himself anyway.

He had assessed the talent and motivation of the team and (correctly) determined that he was at the top of both the talent and motivation scoreboards. He was not suffering from poor judgement or an inflated ego. He was the best of us. He cared the most.

But he wasn't enough by himself.

Granted, he would have been foolish to pass the ball to me, but the other guys on the team were good enough to utilize more than he did. By taking the burden on himself alone, he guaranteed not only that the other team would win but that he would be more frustrated and resentful.

Whenever I read Psalm 12:1, I think of my frustrated classmate: "Help me, LORD, for there is no godly one left; the faithful have vanished from among us."

Often when we care deeply about something and commit ourselves fully to it, we can imagine that no one else matches our level of passion. Maybe. But that doesn't mean that no one else cares at all.

The prophet Elijah thought he was the last person standing faithfully before God and he felt resentful of all the slackers who had succumbed to idolatry. What he didn't know was that there were 5000 others just like him who had stayed true to the God of Israel.

Sometimes you feel like the only one who cares. This is almost never true. And even if you are surrounded by the half-hearted and indifferent, complaining about the burden you're carrying is hardly likely to inspire them.

Instead, pass them the ball and hope for the best.

Prayer: *Lord, remind us that we are in this together. Let enthusiasm and hope be contagious among us because none of us can do it alone. Amen.*



Worship returns to regular hours on
Sunday, September 11

10:00-11:00 am Service

September at a Glance

Sunday, September 4:
9:30am Worship; Coffee Hour

Sunday, September 11:
10:00am Worship

Tuesday, Sept. 13:
7:00pm Church Council

Wednesday, Sept. 14:
7:00pm St. Matthew's Book Club

Sunday, Sept. 18:
10:00am Worship, Children's
Sunday School; Coffee Hour

Wednesday, Sept. 21:
7:00pm St. Matthew's Book Club

Saturday, Sept. 24:
10a-3pm Craft Fair & Basket Raffle

Sunday, Sept. 25:
10:00am Worship Service



Happy Birthday!

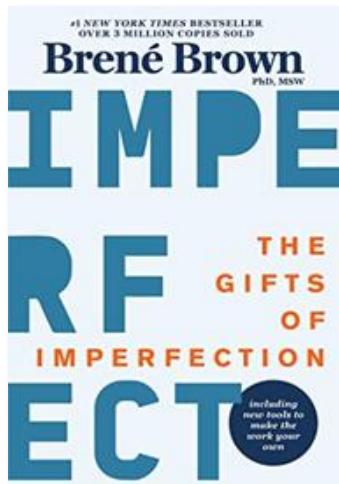
David Kaznica (9/1), Kathee Simon (9/8),
Brenda Carver (9/14),
Conner Wilson and Ryan Wilson (9/14), Molly Hamm (9/15),
Tom Koch (9/17), Jacob Zdrojewski (9/17),
Pastor Lynn Morgan (9/20), Lola Donner (9/23),
Kerry Shearer (9/23), Arthur Hamm (9/24),
Rev. Richard Hemann (9/30)

Happy Anniversary!

David & Pamela Kaznica (9/13/1975)
Lynn & Sandy Morgan (9/20/1997)
Jacob & Lauren Zdrojewski (9/22/2007)
Chris & Dawn Goetz (9/24/1994)
Adam & Kim Hamm (July 21, 2007)
Ed & Kathee Simon (July 22, 1967)



Jeff Cotton; Sandi Davison; Eugene; Paul Hayes; Ron Heitman; John & Karen Kaitanowski; Ron Larson; Jewell McFarland; Molly; Pat Nagle; Jean Roth; Lisa S.; Scott; Kelly Thien; Helen Wilson; Alex Steinbroner and those deployed to serve



St. Matthew's Book Club

This fall we will be reading together "The Gifts of Imperfection" by Brené Brown. The books and lectures by Dr. Brown have encouraged people to live with more vulnerability and openness. Her books invite discussion and sharing of personal stories that relate to the topics she addresses.

We will be reading and discussing her book on [Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm in the church parlor September 14 – October 19](#). People are free to participate as their schedule allows – no commitments and no gold stars for perfect attendance.

If you want to be a part of the book club but want assistance with ordering, please contact Michelle in church office and she will place the order for you (\$13 hardcover; \$12 paperback; no tax or shipping charges). Call 716-649-1532.

*For over a decade, Brené Brown has found a special place in our hearts as a gifted mapmaker and a fellow traveler. She is both a social scientist and a kitchen-table friend whom you can always count on to tell the truth, make you laugh, and, on occasion, cry with you. And what's now become a movement all started with *The Gifts of Imperfection*, which has sold more than two million copies in thirty-five different languages across the globe.*

CHILDREN'S Sunday School

The Board of Christian Education is happy to announce the return of Children's Sunday School starting **September 18**.

Children will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, attending worship with their family and then going to class following Children's Time.

CRAFT FAIR & Basket Raffle

Saturday, September 24 10am-3pm

Come check out the 20 crafters and artisans selling their creations and take a chance on winning a basket! Also ... a quilt raffle!

Free Admission * * * Accepting food donations



No Détente with the Devil

Probably one of the most troublesome parts of the Bible are the (many) stories in which the Hebrew tribes take the promised land by conquest. It's not just a recitation of the brutal tactics of bronze-age battle that make us squirm. It's the repeated divine instructions to utterly destroy the places and people who are being conquered.

To be honest, I am inclined to read this as a white-washed retrospective on the success of these little tribes in shouldering their way into Canaan. Looking back, they say to themselves, 'surely this would have been impossible if God hadn't been with us.' I won't argue with that; I think we have all said the same thing after a time of struggle as we are dusting ourselves off, assessing the bruises and breathing a sigh of relief. But I think perhaps they attributed to God their own inclinations to excessive violence as a way of living with the price they paid to achieve the conquest. We know about self-justification too — as individuals and as a nation.

So, to be clear, I just can't buy the notion that God ordered the annihilation of the people who were

dispossessed of their land as Israel was expanding its borders.

But... that doesn't mean these texts have nothing to tell us. In Judges, chapter 2, the angel of the Lord prophesied to the people, telling them that because they made covenants with their neighbors and because they didn't destroy the temples of these foreign gods, they would suffer for it. The people with whom they made treaties would be adversaries within their borders and the gods would be a temptation to idolatry for the people.

As I read this, I thought how often I try to achieve peaceful coexistence with things in my life that really need to be eradicated completely. There's no way to make peace with negativity and selfishness; they need to go. Tearing down false gods of covetous envy is the only way to keep them from destroying the joy of the life you have.

Some enemies have to be utterly destroyed or they will destroy us.

Prayer: *I know these things are not my friends. Give me strength to cut them out of my life and enough hope to imagine a life without these familiar enemies. Amen.*

Every Sunday in September, we'll be collecting new undergarments and socks for those in need. At the end of September, our CIA reps David & Pamela Kaznica will join with other CIA member churches to sort and deliver the donations to various local missions for distribution.

If you need someone to pick up your donations, call the church office: 716-649-1532.



Time of coffee, snacks and fellowship starts back up on September 4th and continues on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month!

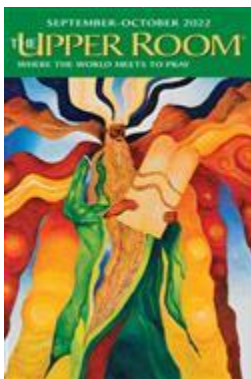


**SUNDAE
SUNDAY**

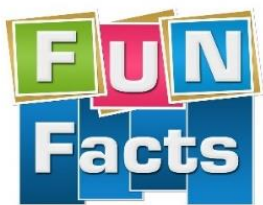
During Coffee Hour on
September 18



1. How long is New Zealand's Ninety Mile Beach?
2. What is measured in "Mickeys" ?
3. What animal can be seen on the Porsche logo?
4. What is the name given to Indian food cooked over charcoal in a clay oven?
5. Before the Beatles were formed, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison were originally members of which group?



The **September-October issue of The Upper Room devotional** can be found in the magazine rack in Narthex and on the small table in the Fellowship Hall. Help yourself and take one for a friend!



1. 55 miles
2. The speed of a computer mouse
3. Horse
4. Tandoori
5. The Quarrymen

-Trivia submitted by LaDonna Painter

Sunday Participants in September

Lay Readers

- Sept. 4:
- Sept. 11:
- Sept. 18:
- Sept. 25:

Coffee Fellowship (1st & 3rd Sundays)

- Sept. 4: Tammy & Ken Kruszka
- Sept. 18: **Sundae Sunday!**
LaDonna Painter & Brenda Carver

Ushers in September

- Jeff Rich, Devon Asboth,
Chris Goetz, Steve Jankowski,
Kurt Rich, Doug Stormer,
Chris Wilson, Debbie Zdrojewski

Thank you for your continued generous support of the day-to-day operations and ministries of St. Matthew's.



Email: office@stmattsucc.org
 Website: stmattsucc.org
 Pastor Email: pastorlynn@stmattsucc.org

5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY
 Phone: 716-649-1532
 Rev. Lynn Morgan Cell: 716-866-3085

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ
5289 McKinley Parkway
Hamburg, NY 14075
www.stmattsucc.org

