

Devotions for the Week of June 3, 2018
LARGE-PRINT
North East United Methodist Church
By Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

Sunday, June 3, 2018

Read Ephesians 6: 11-18; I John 2: 15-17; and Romans 3:23-28.

This morning, we had several young men and women who were baptized, confirmed and brought into membership in the church. They were asked a series of questions. This week, we will look at each one of those questions in detail. For those who might consider joining the church in the future, this will be an opportunity to learn a bit about what that commitment entails. For those who are members of North East United Methodist Church, this will be a review of the commitment each of you have made to Christ and His church.

The first question asked of one entering the faith and joining the church is: **“On behalf of the whole church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?”**

These scriptures for today speak of the evil in the spiritual realm, the evil in the world, and the evil within us. The first question one is asked when confirming their faith or joining the church is if they “*renounce*” that which is evil in the spiritual realm, in the world, and in themselves. We must reject that which is ungodly around us and in us, allowing God to come in and be the leader and forgiver of our lives.

Evil is a real force. We see it on the news every night and we see it in ourselves when we do things God would not want us to do or refuse to do what God is asking us to do. We are called to renounce this and work toward, with Christ's help, overcoming evil, becoming Godly men and women.

Take time in your prayer time tonight to stand firm against evil spirits that might be fighting for your attention, to stand against injustice and hatred in the world and that in yourself that flares up in anger and hatred against others. Ask God for help to combat that, which would pull you away from Him.

Monday, June 4, 2018

Read Romans 6: 17-23 and I Peter 2: 16.

The second question asked is: **“Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?”**

When one gives their lives to Christ, they are no longer slaves to sin. You can never say, “The devil made me do it,” or “That’s just the way I am.” No. You are no longer a slave to sin or to your own shortcomings. You have the freedom and power to choose to live Godly lives, to choose to change, to choose to make choices that will please God and lead to a life more fulfilled. Jesus said, *“The Lord has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed...”* You have been released from anything that has power over you; you must simply choose, and ask Christ for His help, in overcoming whatever is oppressing you or your neighbor in the world.

We have been given power in Christ to stand up against that, which is hurtful, hateful, and harmful. In your life, what do you need to be freed from? What are you carrying around with you? Guilt? Anger? Hurt? Bad Habits? Addictions? Recognize the Christ has given you power over these evils and with His help you can change and grow. Ask God in prayer to help you with the areas of your life that bind you.

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Read Romans 10:9-11, I John 1:9, and Colossians 3: 10-11.

The third question asked is: **“Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races?”**

Without opening our hearts to a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is no reason to join the church. We join the church for it is the place we are called to “live out our faith” in Jesus Christ. We are asked to commit our lives to Him, to publicly confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, to trust that we are indeed saved and our sins forgiven, and to remember that in the church, in the life of faith, there is no color, no race, no age; there is just people whom God loves and whom love Jesus.

If you have not given your heart to Christ, don't wait any longer. If you have, recommit now. Promise to serve Christ. As someone once said, “Ask not what God can do for you but what you can do for God.” Promise to serve Him as your Lord. Take time to talk with Him today.

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

Read I Thessalonians 1:2, Hebrews 10:25, I Peter 4:10, and Philippians 2:3-4, 7.

People joining the church are asked three questions. First, they are asked to remain faithful members to the church universal, lifting up other Christians, and recognizing that as they go into the world they represent Christ to others. Secondly, they are asked to be loyal to Jesus Christ through the ministries of the United Methodist Church.

The third question is the one I want you to focus on. They are asked, **“As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?”**

When you joined the church, or perhaps when some of you join in the future, you are asked to support the church by your prayers. We must be in prayer for the church and one another. Each one of us is asked to be present in the body of Christ, to discover and use our gifts to touch the lives of others. We are asked to use what God has given us to build up the church and impact the world. We are asked to serve our neighbor. We are asked to witness to our faith, in our community, through our speech and action. When we join a church we are committing to trying to live a life that does these things, recognizing that we will fall, but recognizing that we have each other to help us get back up.

Pray that God will show you ways you can help our church impact the world and where you can use your gifts to serve and touch someone's life.

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Baptism & Confirmation remind us that in Christ...we are a New Creation...the old has gone and the new has come.

Romans 6: 3-4 says, “*O have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus we died with him? For we died [the old self] and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives [a new creation].*”

In the early church, the season of Easter was the time for baptisms in the church. Candidates for baptism and the congregation would gather the night before for a vigil service and prayer. At daybreak, the candidates went down into the water renouncing Satan and professing Christ. They were asked questions which later formed *The Apostle's Creed* and answered “I Believe.” The candidate was baptized, usually immersed, underwater. Upon coming out of the water, they were anointed with oil and were given a fresh, white garment to wear...and rejoined the congregation. They joined the congregation in Holy Communion and returned to the church each day for the following week to learn more about the baptism they had experienced. They wore their white clothes throughout the week as a symbol of their New Life in Christ.

How are you living your New Life in Christ?

Friday, June 8, 2018

Read & Meditate on *The Apostle's Creed*, part of the baptism and confirmation liturgy, spoken by the congregation each Sunday.

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 the Creator of heaven and earth,
 and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
 Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried.
 He descended into hell.
 The third day He arose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
 whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and life everlasting. Amen.

This is what we believe...our profession of faith as Christians.
 Look up a few scriptures that support the main tenets of *The
 Apostle's Creed* such as:

God the Creator- Genesis 1:1; Psalm 90; Isaiah 40: 26-28

Jesus Christ...God's Son-

Matthew 1: 21-23; John 20:31; I Cor 1:9

Jesus Christ...Crucified- Romans 5: 6-8; John 19:18

Jesus Christ...Resurrected-

Matthew 28: 6; Acts 2: 32; Romans 1: 4

Jesus Christ...Will Return-

Romans 19:11-16; I Timothy 6: 14

The Holy Spirit- Titus 3: 5-6; Acts 1:8; Romans 8: 15-16

Forgiveness of Sins- Romans 10: 9; Colossians 2: 13-14

Resurrection of the Body-

I Thes 4: 15-17; I Corinthians 15: 35-57

Saturday, June 9, 2018

Read Romans 13: 8-14

“Wake up...for the coming of our salvation is nearer...”

Unlike baptism, confirmation is a repeatable rite.

The Christian life does not end with confirmation in adolescence. We believe in one baptism, but we also understand that we continue to grow in knowledge, experience, and faith. We have new experiences – college, work, military, service, marriage, children, and on and on. Experience of loss, temptation, success and failure also help us to see the need for new commitments of faith as we find our way along the journey. New experiences bring new challenges and the need for new commitments.

Therefore, individuals may decide to reaffirm their faith at the altar or before a congregation (with the *Reaffirmation of Baptism* or *Reaffirmation of Faith* service) when transferring to a congregation, when renewing participation in the church after a lapse of time, or when taking further steps in their personal faith journey.

Recommit your life. And invite someone to church tomorrow.

Congratulations to Our Confirmands!!!

Chloe Benjamin
Cheyenne Deecki
Walter Deecki
Macsen Evans
Robert Laird

Confirmed in Christ



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