

## **Kevin's Korner**

*We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.*

We are Disciples of Jesus Christ. That means we are followers of Jesus' teachings and his ministry of including all people into the family of God. We are a movement. That means that we are not yet there. We have not yet reached our destination. But we are moving in the right direction, toward wholeness, toward including all people into the family of God.

We do live in a fragmented world. The divisions seem to grow bigger and more numerous by the day. In fact, as Disciples, we represent many of the divisions and factions in our society. But every Sunday we gather around the same Lord's Table, where all are welcome and all are included. Our movement (Christ's movement) begins right here, at the Table.

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday. Lent is a 40-day journey toward the cross, reminding us of our sinfulness and the separation from God, the death and destruction that we deserve because of that sinfulness, but that Jesus took for us. Wearing those ashes reminded us that on our own we would simply be a movement toward death and destruction. It would be a dark and depressing journey if we did not know how the journey ends. Fortunately, we do know how the journey ends. Sin is not the end. Death is not the end. Nothing can destroy God's Love. And by joining in relationship with God through Jesus our journey is also assured. Our lives are now free from the fear of death even today. And the love of God will conquer every other danger and fear, if we let it.

We are Disciples. But are we really a movement? During this season of Lent, we should consider how much movement we are actually making. I am pleased with the effort we are making to bring wholeness into this fragmented world and neighborhood, through the Street Ministry that Bruce and the Outreach Ministry continue to implement. With all the problems of the world, it is hard to imagine making an impact on the world stage. But surely, we are making an impact closer to home.

At First Christian Church we focus a great amount of time and effort toward building relationships. We offer time after worship to fellowship and greet one another. In worship, we offer a spirit of unity around the Lord's Table each week to remind us that what brings us together is much greater than what might divide us. We offer smaller group opportunities to build relationships: Bible studies, Disciple Women, Fellowship Dinners, Praise Team, the new Small Group ministry, and Guitar Club. Each of these offers a specific purpose for ministry. But each of these offers an opportunity to build stronger relationships.

When the Disciples movement began over 200 years ago it was very clear that connecting people with God was the main purpose of the church. The best way to achieve that purpose is to build a relationship with a person and then to share your own relationship with God. Building a relationship of trust must come first. No one will be interested in your story unless you prove that you care about them. Then sharing how much God cares about you will open the door for them to believe that God could care about them as well.

First Christian Church offers relationship-building opportunities to make it easier for you to invite people to participate with other Disciples, where we can work together toward building strong relationships. During Lent we also offer Bible studies to learn about the Bible and also Jesus' teachings of The Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. Please consider the people that you know, or can get to know, who might be interested in an invitation to these, or any of the other church activities.

I invite you to consider, during the season of Lent, how you are part of the Disciple's movement toward wholeness in this fragmented world. Let's keep this movement going and serving God's purposes right here next to Sherwood Park.

God bless you!

*Pastor Kevin*