



The Pastor's Post

*The
Messenger*
November
2024

YELLOW HAT

During her career, my mother was a 1st grade teacher, teaching her classes (coincidentally) in the same classroom in which she attended 1st grade. While she was there, she worked down the hall from and became best friends with one of the Kindergarten teachers, Cindy. Now, Cindy is a very unique individual. I've known her by proxy of my mother for as long as I can remember, and I've never not seen her smile. I've never seen her get angry or cry. I've never heard her say a bad thing about anyone or anything ever. You could be having the worst possible day, and Cindy would somehow be able to show you "the sun beyond the storm clouds." In my opinion, Cindy, for all intents and purposes, should have her picture in the dictionary under "optimist," because she is able to see the positive in anyone and anything. For this very reason, she epitomizes what "yellow hat thinking" is.

Now, unlike the Black Hat (last month's topic), which comes very natural to most persons, the Yellow Hat is something that requires far more intentionality from most of us. This is because it's much easier for us to see the negatives to an idea (whether good or bad) than to see the posi-

Six Hats, Pt. 5

tives of an idea we might see as a "bad idea" or to see the good in a person we've otherwise judged as being "bad news." However, there is a purpose and a strength to being optimistic and seeing what we might call "silver linings." Just as no one person is "all bad" or "all good," neither is any idea "all bad" or "all good." Every person and idea, even those we judge as "bad," have redeemable parts, and wearing the Yellow Hat allows us to look for and draw out those redeemable parts. Let's look at an example.

A given church has four entrances to the sanctuary. Three entrances are from the narthex in the back; two down the sides of the pews and one down the middle with aisles behind the back pews. The fourth is in front of the pews, coming in via the sacristy. In that sanctuary, the baptismal font sits up front and off to the side; visible but not centrally located. At present, the congregation is meeting to discuss a proposal brought forth by one individual (be it the minister, a member of the governing board, or a congregant) that would

(Hats continued on page 3)

Governing Board

Monday
November 18
6:00 p.m.

F.I.T.

Thursday
November 7
1:30 p.m.

Fellowship Committee

Monday
November 4
10:30 a.m.
109 S. Hametown Rd.
(Nancy W.'s)

Finance Committee

Tuesday,
November 12
11:00 a.m.

Mission Committee

Tuesday
November 19
1:30 p.m.

Worship Committee

Monday
November 4
4:30 p.m.
Via Zoom



From the President's Pen

GIVE THANKS

Give thanks with a grateful heart;
Give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong."
Let the poor say, "I am rich."
Because of what the Lord
has done for us.

We will begin singing this hymn at the end of Sunday services during the month of November in place of "Surely the Presence." The hymn conjures up a special meaning for us all this year. Not only do we give thanks for God's bounty we have received, but we also give special thanks for our close-knit congregation whose members have done so much to assist our church families in their times of grief. We realize that our people need love, thoughtfulness, and care especially as darkness settles in earlier and the days get colder and seem longer.

Our church family has stepped up in their commitment to mission outreach, to bringing goodies for Coffee Hour, to increasing pledges, to bringing food to families in times of grief and illness, to supporting the Northwest Collaborative in their various activities, to garden work, and finally to those who stepped up and said "yes" to being on the Governing Board for the next three years and to serving on the Nominating Committee for two years. Of course, we give thanks to Pastor Brad and to Katie for their joyful presence in moving our congregation forward.

We certainly have reason to "Give thanks with a grateful heart."
A blessed Thanksgiving to all.
Nancy W.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING After Sunday Service

On November 4, we will meet after service for the Nominating Committee to recommend the following:
Governing Board Nominees
- Tim Meyer and
- Jaci Chetalet.

Nominating Committee Nominees
- Cathy King and
- Ken Williams.

Prayer At the Time of an Election

Under your law we live,
great God, and by your
will we govern ourselves.
Help us as good citizens
to respect neighbors
whose views differ from
ours, so that without
partisan anger, we may
work out issues that
divide us, and elect
candidates to serve the
common welfare; through
Jesus Christ the Lord.
Amen.

-Book of Common
Worship, 817-

(Hats continued from page 1)

- A) close all but one set of doors to the sanctuary before service begins, and
- B) move the baptismal fount to being near that door.

As might be expected, this two-part idea is getting some resistance. Comments like “To move that baptismal fount requires four people,” “I like seeing the fount up front as I’m worshipping,” “I don’t want to have to be restricted by what door I use,” and the classic “We’ve always done things this way” are being made and echoed by many people there. In these comments, there’s quite a bit of White, Red, and Black Hats being worn. Regardless, things don’t seem to look good for this proposal. Enter, then, the Yellow Hat.

A person steps forward and says, “If we close one set of doors, this would make it easier for the pastor to greet people both as they enter and exit the service.” The optimism starts from one person, and that optimism catches on. Another person steps up and says, “By putting the baptismal fount by the door, it’s more prominently located and people are more likely to be reminded of their baptism.” A third person steps up: “We could even put some water in it to allow people to touch the water, splash some on themselves, and better remember their being signed and sealed.” Pretty soon, the optimism starts to build off of those ideas that were already there, and what seemed a hopeless cause or a “bad idea” doesn’t seem as hopeless or like so bad an idea after all.

Now, mind you, the point of the Yellow Hat isn’t to overpower the caution of the Black Hat with optimism, to replace with euphoria the wide spectrum of valid emotions Red Hat brings up, or to deny what facts the White Hat brings forward. Those other

thoughts, concerns, and ideas are still just as valid and integral to the thought process. The Yellow Hat is just another piece of the puzzle, another lens through which we are able to look at a person or an idea to see the good in them/it, and this is integral for us as Christians.

How many of you would like to be deemed “bad” simply because of a mistake you made at some point in your life? How many of you would like an idea you have be outright rejected because the idea itself is still in the “rough draft” phase? As we approach Election Day and the Transition of Power, we could talk at length about the various candidates, their policies, their hopes, and what’s “good” or “bad” about any one of them. Heck, we’ve been seeing plenty of ads and news reports that have done just that for a few months now. However, the fact of the matter is that (with only a handful of exceptions) no person is “all bad” and no idea/policy is “irredeemable.” Good people make bad choices, and bad ideas have redeemable qualities. Having this ability to see things this way actually allows us to see others as God sees us. Does God see our sinfulness? Yes, more than we know, but do they see us as “bad children” for that sinfulness? No, not in the slightest. They see the good in us, the “best of intentions” we had in what we said/did, and therefore see that we are not defined by the sins we commit. In the same way, the Yellow Hat invites us to see all our neighbors in this new light. So, I ask: where has the “good” been in your life lately?

Pastor Brad

FALL FEST FUN

F.I.T.'s last activity of the year allowed us to help children and adults have fun at the Northwest Family Recreation Center. Eleven NCCC volunteers helped with games, concessions, crafts, and distributing "trick-or-treat" candy at Fall Fest. Our congregation donated 32 pounds of candy so that we could sponsor a "trick-or-treat" stand. The Northwest Family Recreation Center needs and appreciates our help.

When FIT started in the summer of 2022, with guidance from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, we didn't know where it would take us. Thanks to our generous congregation and willing volunteers, we are helping community groups serve families and children in our neighborhood. During 2024, our congregation donated:

- ♦ Toilet paper and cleaning supplies for the Christ Woodland Food Pantry
- ♦ Easter candy for the NWFRC's Hop Along The Bunny Trail in April
- ♦ Halloween candy during Fall Fest in October
- ♦ We are currently collecting gift cards for a Case CLC family in need.

Our volunteers worked the:

- ♦ Race for Case CLC Carnival,
- ♦ NWFRC's Hop Along the Bunny Trail,
- ♦ NWFRC's Dance Recital at Firestone CLC,
- ♦ Night Out Against Crime and
- ♦ NWFRC's Fall Fest.

Many thanks to all who donated to the projects and to our faithful volunteers:



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING FIT

- ♥ Bev Cinovec
- ♥ Jaci Chetelat
- ♥ Nancy Clem
- ♥ Betsy Davis
- ♥ Ken and Heidi Heischman
- ♥ Tom and Shelley Koutnik
- ♥ Joan Lannoch
- ♥ John and Betty Miller
- ♥ Pastor Brad and Katie Rito
- ♥ Susie Stevenor
- ♥ Jim Strandberg
- ♥ Ken and Nancy Williams.



MISSION SPOTLIGHT NOVEMBER 2024 CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Only 52 Shopping Days
Until Christmas!

ONLY 43 Days Until the Annual
NCCC Christmas Basket Project

The Community Room at Acme Fresh Market in Montrose is already reserved for Saturday, December 14. We will begin packing the baskets at 9:00 a.m. and loading the delivery cars at the dock at 9:45 a.m. The grocery list consists of an 8 lb. spiral sliced ham, canned fruits and vegetables, potatoes, milk, eggs, and bread. Please plan to help pack, deliver, or both! A sign-up sheet will be available in mid-November.

But First, we need to raise \$1,500 to purchase the groceries for the baskets. Every year, the congregation of NCCC has generously donated the funds to prepare 30 Christmas food baskets valued at \$50 each. Please consider donating to fund one or two baskets. Of course donations of any amount are appreciated. Please mark your checks "Christmas Baskets" on the memo line and give it to John Sezna or place it into the collection plate.

Thank you to all who have helped with this worthy mission project in the past and to all who will help again this year!

*Thank You for your
support!
The Mission Committee*

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 4

10:30 A.M.

109 S. HAMETOWN RD.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Fellowship Committee will work on plans for the **Men's Brunch**. That event is set for November 10th, following Sunday Service. Volunteers will set up for that event on Friday, November 8. At that time the election equipment should be out of the way. Ken Williams will contact those involved. Those who are contributing food, please be at church with your item by 10:00 a.m.

The committee will also work on plans for the **Christmas party**, which will be Thursday, December 5, and the **Soup Lunch**, which will include the Governing Board yearly transition.

Set up for the first Sunday of Advent and partial set up for the Christmas Party will occur on Monday, November 25 at 10:00 a.m. Worship Committee sets up in Sanctuary, and those facility members contacted by Ken Williams will set up the other Christmas decorations.



PLEA FOR PEACE LETTER

It has now been a year since the events of October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched a major attack on Israel, killing 1,195 and taking 251 hostage, escalating the long-standing conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. As of October 2024, around 97 hostages from that attack are still believed to be held in Gaza, including both civilians and military personnel. Tragically, the Israeli government has confirmed that 33 of these individuals are presumed dead. Meanwhile, upwards of 40,000 Palestinians have lost their lives in Gaza. In the West Bank, more than 680 Palestinians have also been killed, including a significant number of women and children. Now, the dying has begun in Lebanon.

The impact of this conflict is not confined to distant lands. Here at home, in Akron, we feel its ripple effects, as it fractures the fabric of our own community. Anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hate have surged, seeping into national politics and even into the local gatherings that once brought our Jewish and Muslim neighbors together. Relationships that were once built on trust and dialogue are strained, and the divisions between us feel deeper than ever.

But we cannot lose hope. We must stand firm in our commitment to end this cycle of violence, retaliation, and hatred. Rather than placing more conditions or demands before sitting at the negotiating table, we must seek peace that goes beyond temporary ceasefires. Both sides must release the burdens of past disappointments and take a genuine step toward lasting peace. This peace is not just for today, but for the children and grandchildren of all communities. The divine figures we pray to—whether in mosques, synagogues,

churches, or temples—are not gods of vengeance, but of compassion and hope. Our shared humanity calls us to build a future where love and reconciliation prevail, so that future generations may live free from fear and division.

This journey toward peace begins with dialogue. In the Middle East, there are leaders who are ready to step forward and put an end to the violence. They must be supported, and we must remember that for centuries, Jews and Muslims lived side by side in the Holy Land. This shared history proves that coexistence is not only possible but has been the foundation of these lands before. Now, we need leaders and communities to reclaim that spirit of unity, to rebuild the bridges of trust, and to lead us toward a future where peace is not merely hoped for but realized.

Here in Akron, we must take up the mantle and lead by example. We need to revive the evenings of interfaith dialogue that once served as the cornerstone of relationships built over the years. Our Jewish and Muslim communities have shared love, understanding, and respect in the past. If we cannot find peace here in our own neighborhoods, how can we expect those abroad to do the same? The member communities of the Akron Area Interfaith Council have the power to heal these divides and show the world what love, forgiveness, and reconciliation look like. Before we call for peace in the Middle East, we must first put our own house in order. The time is now. Let us come together once more, as friends and neighbors, take up our dialogue and shared events again, and walk the path of love that leads us all toward peace.

- Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Bodie
Akron Area Interfaith Council