

The Pastor's
Post



Six Hats,
Pt. 4

BLACK HAT

When you think of the color “black,” what comes to mind? The night sky? Death? If you’re like most US citizens, the color “black” elicits thoughts of evil, or as they’re so aptly referred to in many comic books, “the forces of darkness.” This sentiment is then backed by multiple different usages of “black” to describe those things that are dangerous or evil. For example, Black Metal is a style of rock music whose lyrics speak not just of death and/or acts of vengeance but even Devil worship, lyrics and images many believe pose a danger to impressionable minds. Also, in an age of technology, a major concern of governments around the world is the threat posed by “black hat hackers,” those persons with technological savvy to overtake systems, hold whole countries hostage at a keystroke, and cause other widespread damage. So, with such poor connotations of this color flooding our media and collective mindset, it’s no wonder many might be apprehensive about a thought process referred to as “black hat thinking.” However, I would invite you all, for the sake of better understanding this type of thinking, to set aside such

collective apprehension (if that’s the case) and think instead about the ever-popular question “What would Jesus do?”

Now, I realize that this invitation might sound a little backwards. We collectively attribute “black” with everything that is evil in the world whereas Jesus is Good personified. So, attributing “black hat” thinking with someone so pure and good as Jesus seems wrong, and maybe there’s some resistance within us to see or hear about any connection between these two things. However, once we understand what “black hat” thinking actually is, such a connection becomes far easier, even natural. First, though, we must understand just what “black hat” thinking is before we can take that next step.

Fortunately for us, “black hat” thinking isn’t nearly as terrible as one might think simply because it has “black” as its describing word. In fact, “black hat” thinking is a very good thing. “Black hat” thinking is best described as the hat of caution. While it may come across as a

(Hats continued on page 2)

Governing Board

Monday
October 28
6:00 p.m.

FIT

Thursday
October 3
1:30 p.m.

**Fellowship
Committee**

Monday
October 7
10:30 a.m.

**Finance
Committee**

Tuesday,
October 22
11:00 a.m.

**Mission
Committee**

Tuesday
October 22
1:30 p.m.

**Nominating
Committee**

Sunday after
Service

(Hats continued from page 1) “pessimistic” hat, looking potentially at all of the things that could go wrong in any given situation or with any given idea, this is the “hat of survival,” one that keeps a person or organization from doing or saying something that is dangerous, unprofitable, damaging, or even illegal. For that very reason, “black hat” thinking becomes the easiest hat for us to wear and potentially the hardest for us to take off. It’s so easy to see the negatives of an idea rather than the positives, and anyone who has sat through a meeting can pinpoint who the “naysayer,” “negative Nancy,” or similarly-labelled person is in the group. That’s the person who is frequently wearing (potentially even abusing) the “black hat.” Nonetheless, despite their potentially abusing this hat, that person (and this thought process) serves a valuable purpose to the group.

Those who implement “black hat” thinking ideally keep a person or group grounded, looking at an idea realistically and not just in terms of ideals. When used correctly, “black hat” thinkers can be “the voice of reason” or even the “conscience” of the group. This person and the thought process they use can keep a person or group from doing something too hastily or that would later be regretted. Put another way, this hat keeps us looking not just at words and actions we want to take but at the consequences of those desired words or actions. Therefore, in considering this hat as “the hat of our conscience,” we find a deeply theological element to it.

As Christians, we confess in various creeds and confessions that Jesus is not just our Savior but our Lord, more specifically understood as the “Lord of our conscience.” In other words, Jesus not only saves us, but has governance over our lives through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a great “black hat” question becomes “What would Jesus do?” If we know what Jesus would say or do in a particular situation, we know what Jesus would have us say or do in that situation,

and if we know what Jesus would have us say or do, we can therein separate those ideas, words, and actions that are good/righteous from those that are evil/wicked. In other words, “black hat” thinking in and of itself is not bad, but it serves as a means by which bad thoughts/deeds are discovered and (ideally) prevented.

In short, then, despite our culture’s attributing this color with evil, it is critical that we as Jesus’ followers not shy away from wearing this hat or think it a bad thing. Those who wear this hat all the time and abuse it may make it seem like this thought process is nothing but trouble, but it is in fact this thought process that helps us to plan for if there is trouble. While “black hat” thinking might “rain on our parade,” it’s this thought process that convinces us to nonetheless “pack an umbrella” and take necessary steps to plan for all possibilities. More importantly, it is the thought process that helps us to not just look at the actions we want to take or the words we want to say, but as I said, the consequences of those words and/or actions. Therefore, this thought process is really good for keeping us on the path of righteousness, doing as Jesus would have us do, rather than a path of sinfulness, therein doing whatever our hearts may desire. So, I would invite you all to think about how you’ve implemented “black hat” thinking lately and how this type of thinking has served not just you or those around you, but ultimately our Lord.

Pastor Brad



*Remembering
Dr. John & Mary
Norval*

Sunday, September 29th, we will take a moment to remember and recognize the ways the Norvals touched our lives. John passed away earlier this year, but his service was held this summer. Mary died in 2020, during the pandemic, and we did not get a chance to have a service for her. At the beginning of service Rev. Phil Smith will lead an In Memorium moment. During that time, he will invite you to share a memory.



MISSION SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER 2024

Gennesaret



Many years ago, Phil Smith participated in the Leadership Akron Program. He learned about many organizations in Akron that provide services for our community and he introduced a number of mission opportunities to the NCCC congregation.

The relationship he started between NCCC and Gennesaret continues today. On the second Saturday of every month, our volunteers assist with the food pantry operations by packing hot boxed lunches for needy families and individuals in the community

Gennesaret was founded in October of 1986. It is an innovative all-volunteer nonprofit corporation operating under the direction of a board of directors. They provide long term housing for homeless two-parent families in Summit County and operate the Family Nutritional Center, which provides free hot meals every

Tuesday and Saturday. The food is either donated from many generous merchants in the community or obtained from the Akron Regional Food Bank.

Recently, our volunteers reported serving between 70 and 100 meals each time they volunteer.

Your mission dollars provided \$1,000 towards the food pantry operations in 2024.

*Thank You
for your
support of
Gennesaret!*



**THIS IS
THE LAST
SUNDAY
FOR**

***SUDSY
SEPTEMBER***

***FOR CHRIST WOODLAND
FOOD PANTRY***

ITEMS NEEDED:

LAUNDRY DETERGENT

DISHWASHING LIQUID

**ALL-PURPOSE
SPRAY CLEANERS**

FLOOR CLEANER

& TP

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY
OCTOBER 7
10:30 A.M.
FELLOWSHIP HALL

ICCC REGIONAL CONFERENCE Saturday, October 12 8:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Fellowship will assist with setting up and providing coffee and tea plus a morning snack of baked goods. Sandwiches for lunch plus possibly potato salad to be purchased by Phil Smith. Fellowship is providing chips and grapes (as a fruit component). Heidi and Nancy W. will be there at 8:00 to make coffee and set up breakfast items. We are asking for possible volunteers (2 each) to be here from 10:00-12:00 and 12:00-2:00. Registration is from 9:00-10:00 with the conference beginning at 10:00 with a brief worship service.



International Council of Community Churches

MEN'S SUNDAY BRUNCH

Ken Williams is in charge of coordinating an after church Sunday brunch for November 10. The MEN will do the cooking (or buying) .

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Fellowship Committee is starting to plan this year's Christmas party. So far, they've picked out a date. Mark your calendar. This year's party will be Thursday, December 5.

FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT

NW FAMILY RECREATION

CENTER FALL FEST

October 24, 2024

5:00 - 7:00 PM

Let's celebrate the fall season together with crafts, games, inflatables, and other fun activities!

The Northwest Family Recreation Center is looking for volunteers to help with games and "Trick or Treat" stands. In the past, University of Akron students have volunteered to help with this event. This situation has changed and NWFRC needs volunteers to help with the Trick-or-Treat, Storybook Walk, scavenger hunt, pumpkin decorating, games, and serving refreshments. Volunteers are encouraged to come in costume!

If you are able and want to have a good time, please sign up for this fun event on the sheet in the lobby.

NCCC would also like to sponsor a "Trick or Treat" stand. FIT is requesting donations of "snack" or "fun" size candy and candy bars. The local grocery stores have 10 ounce bags at \$3.99 - \$4.99. Please consider donating one or two bags.

Thanks for serving our neighborhood!

FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT FIT

AAIC MEETING AT CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR



You are all invited to a meeting and a meal with the Akron Area Interfaith Council on Tuesday, October 7, 5:30 p.m., at Church of our Savior, 471 Crosby St. Because of the time for supper and socializing, the meeting will not be available on Zoom.

We are there.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering affirms that the peace of God, which is central to the gospel, starts with us. We are there to sow seeds of peace by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and around the world.

25%

of this Offering stays with our congregation to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community.

25%

of this Offering goes to our mid council to join with other congregations to support peacemaking work in our region.

50%

of this Offering supports the work being done by Presbyterians across the globe.



Please give what you can.

IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT.

Combined Choir for World Communion Sunday, October 6

United Presbyterian
Church
2819 Hudson Dr.
Cuyahoga Falls, OH

Let Brad Rito or Matt Skitzki know if you are interested in joining, accompanying, or directing the choir.

Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, October 3,
2024
7:30 - 8:30 p.m., UPC

Sunday, October 6

Warm up: 9:30 a.m.

UPC Choir Room

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Dress: Please bring your
choir robe

Music: One World,
One Communion

www.hopepublishing.com

W4107 ONE WORLD
ONE COMMUNION/

Please purchase and
bring your copy.

If you need help
or have questions, please
contact

Matt Skitzki, CAGO
216-832-1378

matt.skitzki@gmail.com

Choir Director /

Organist,

United Presbyterian
Church

West Area Collaborative Churches

**Celebrate
World Communion
Sunday**

October 6, 2024

at

United Presbyterian Church

2819 Hudson Drive

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221

10:30 a.m. Worship

11:40 a.m. Light Refreshments and Fellowship

Offering to benefit:

Welcome Home

An outreach ministry to help newcomers acclimate to Northeastern Ohio

Allenside Presbyterian
Firestone Park Presbyterian
First Presbyterian of Barberton
First Presbyterian of Hudson
Goodyear Heights Presbyterian
New Covenant Community

North Springfield Presbyterian
Northminster Presbyterian
Oak Hill Presbyterian
The Vine Fellowship
United Presbyterian
Westminster Presbyterian

WORLD DAY AGAINST DEATH PENALTY



October 10, 2024 is World Day Against the Death Penalty. The Akron Interfaith Advocates Against the Death Penalty, in collaboration with Akron Area Interfaith Council, Akron NAACP, Catholic Commission of Summit County, and Ohioans To Stop Executions (OTSE), plan to mark the day with a peaceful demonstration.

People of faith and social justice advocates will gather **at noon on Thursday, October 10, in front of the Oliver Ocasek Building, 161 S. High Street,** in downtown Akron, to demonstrate our commitment to ending Ohio's death penalty. Please join us. Together we can end the death penalty in Ohio.

2024 GOVERNING BOARD

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