

narthex

SUMMER
2021

I've been
meaning
to ask...

a series for curiosity,
courage, & connection

Special Worship & Study Series JULY 11 – LABOR DAY

This summer, the Worship Staff has chosen a series created by *A Sanctified Art* to guide our worship and study for July and August. Following fifteen months of pandemic separation, We are excited to welcome the congregation back to full worship in the sanctuary. This series offers us a wonderful path for conversation, study, and connection.

How can we listen to one another? How do we find connection despite distance? How do we create space for compassionate dialogue and seeking the Holy in one another?

While the challenges of becoming beloved community to one another are endless, these questions are simple. All courageous conversations begin with simple questions and the curiosity to truly listen. May this series help us to behold each other as images of the divine. May it help us strengthen our capacity for empathy and compassion. May it remind us of the power of asking unassuming questions. May it show us that courage is rooted in the heart. Through vulnerability and authenticity, may our courageous conversations lead us to glimpse hope, joy, and beauty—and to become the community God created us to be.

-From A Sanctified Art

Bring along your curiosity and courage in the weeks to come together as we connect on the journey to become God's community!

The following pages include more information on the series and a calendar of worship and events.

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The Art of Conversation

Pastor Julie Van Til

Have you ever run into an old friend you haven't seen in ages, perhaps in the middle of a random restaurant parking lot or grocery aisle? "Oh my goodness, how are you?" You give each other hugs or pats on the back. So many questions trip out of your mouth: "What have you been doing? Where do you live now? Whatever happened to so and so?" You hardly know what information to prioritize in this brief encounter, but you feel the urge to connect in some way that matters.

Our regathering in the flesh may feel like this at times, with urges for handshakes and hugs, an odd welling up of emotion, or a desire to connect in more than a superficial way. For some of us, it's felt like forever since we've connected, because we just couldn't tolerate Zoom. For others, we feel like seeing faces on the screen and sharing in small groups helped us get to know each other better than ever before. No matter which it is for you, running into each other "in person" is a bit of a jolt to the system!

We chose the Sanctified Art series "I've been meaning to ask" for July & August to help us walk across this relational bridge from isolation and distance to connection and community. We hope to harness some of the intimacy we found in virtual spaces, where we shared real life, thoughts, questions, struggles, and stories. We hope to re-teach ourselves to connect in ways that matter, recognizing that we may be out of practice (or never felt comfortable) after a long season alone.

The stories of Scripture will show us how we have so much humanity in common to share. The after-worship conversations will draw out our interesting life experiences. And our Wednesday nights will offer a chance to go deeper into the themes.

So, join us in person in July & August, because "I've been meaning to ask..." Let's practice the art of conversation again, where sharing our thoughts, stories, and experiences help us feel seen and known by each other and God; and in sharing, we create a space where neighbors, visitors and those hungry for a place to call home can feel at home.

I've been meaning to ask...

FOUR QUESTIONS

In this worship series, we will reflect and connect on four big questions, each for two consecutive weeks. Liturgy, conversation starters, videos, music, artwork, and prayers will assist us in creating dynamic worship, study, and connection opportunities.

Weeks 1 & 2 ...where are you from?

In order to build connection and trust, we need to listen to each other's stories and experiences to learn who and what has shaped us. We also need to feel seen and known for who we are.

July 11: Genesis 2:4b-15 *Humanity is formed from the dust in the garden of Eden*

July 18: John 1:35-51 *Jesus calls the disciples*

Weeks 3 & 4 ...where does it hurt?

This question implies that all of us have known pain and suffering. In order to cultivate connection, we must first get curious about the pain others carry and the pain we carry ourselves. Before we can act, we must first acknowledge and believe the pain is real, for bearing witness to each other's pain helps us cultivate compassion.

July 24: 1 Samuel 1:1-18 *Hannah's pain*

August 1: Mark 5:21-43 *The healing of Jarius' daughter, hemorrhaging woman*

Weeks 5 & 6 ... what do you need?

This question recognizes that we all have needs and that we need each other. It reminds us that we have unique needs; we can't assume to know what is best for others. It also prompts us to reflect on our own needs, priorities, and desires, which can sometimes be difficult to discern from one situation to the next.

August 8: Job 2:11-13 *Job's friends come to comfort him*

August 15: 2 Timothy 4:9-18 *Paul's final instructions to Timothy*

Weeks 7 & 8 ...where do we go from here?

The final question is not meant to be the end of our journey; instead, it creates openness to explore together what is next. It is contextual, designed for individuals, families, churches, and communities to discern how to move forward into something new. Our hope is that we keep cultivating curiosity, asking questions, having conversations, and seeking connection in order to humanize and care for each other. Ultimately, this final question invites us to foster hope and imagination.

August 22: Ruth 1:1-22 *Ruth and Naomi become chosen family*

August 29: Acts 10 *Peter, Cornelius, & the Gentiles*

Study & Connection Opportunities

Gathering for worship will introduce and explore the themes/questions, but it does not offer us the opportunity to discuss and connect with one another. Recognizing it is challenging to ask questions but not provide space for sharing answers, we have designed opportunities for conversation throughout the series! Please plan to join us for any and all of the Sunday Conversations or Deeper Dives offered throughout July & August!

Sunday Conversations after worship on weeks 1, 3, 5 & 7

Following worship, there will be a brief break for fellowship and refreshments. Everyone is then invited to return to the building to gather with others in small groups to reflect on questions related to our theme. The conversations are designed to be easy to enter, helping us to know one another a little better, form new connections, and help us re-establish old connections. Our goal is to create safe spaces. While we encourage sharing and active listening, no one will be required to share, and all conversations will be held in confidence.

Wednesday Deep Dives 7 pm on Zoom on weeks 2, 4, 6 & 8

Pastor Julie & Betsy Hanzelin will lead four Wednesday night sessions designed to go a little deeper into the questions/themes and scripture. These one hour sessions will utilize artwork, poetry, videos and other resources from *A Sanctified Art* to enrich our discussion and connection. By offering these sessions on Zoom, everyone can attend; even those who are uncomfortable gathering in our building! Zoom links will be in the eblast and fccfaithful.org/adult-ed.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in relationships.
We believe in asking hard questions,
in showing up for one another,
and in sitting together through the pain.
We believe in listening with grace,
learning with curiosity,
and apologizing with sincerity.

We believe in asking for help,
saying what we need,
and trusting that no degree of vulnerability
could strip us of God's love.
We believe in trying our best
and offering grace
when our best is not enough.

And we believe that God is in all relationships—
modeling for us the value of community
through the relationships of the Trinity.
So we love today,
and we strive to love
even more tomorrow.

Let it be so. Amen.

~Rev. Sarah Are~

CALENDAR at a glance

...WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

SUN 7.11 10 am Worship in the Sanctuary / online
11:10 am Sunday Conversations in the building

SUN 7.18 Worship at 10 am in the Sanctuary / online

WED 7.21 Deeper Dive at 7 pm on Zoom

...WHERE DOES IT HURT?

SUN 7.25 10 am Worship in the Sanctuary / online
11:10 am Sunday Conversations in the building

SUN 8.01 Worship at 10 am in the Sanctuary/online
Guest Preacher: Rev. Randall Tate

WED 8.04 Deeper Dive at 7 pm on Zoom

...WHAT DO YOU NEED?

SUN 8.08 10 am Worship in the Sanctuary / online
11:10 am Sunday Conversations in the building

SUN 8.15 Worship at 10 am in the Sanctuary/online

WED 8.18 Deeper Dive at 7 pm on Zoom

SUN 8.22 10 am Worship in the Sanctuary / online
11:10 am Sunday Conversations in the building

...WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

SUN 8.29 Worship at 10 am in the Sanctuary/online

WED 9.01 Deeper Dive at 7 pm on Zoom

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, September 5 Creative Worship & Fellowship Event

We will conclude our series with a special worship and fellowship event for all ages on Labor Day Weekend! Stay tuned for more details, but please mark your calendar!



Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School

July 19 - 22, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Registration is open for this four-evening VBS exploring compassion and sharing loving kindness - with ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and the world. You can register online at fccfaithful.org/VBS or by contacting Leslie Maxie directly at lmxie@fccfaithful.org.

Children must be masked, and camp will be held outside if weather allows. (Should we need to move inside, campers will be appropriately spaced.)

We'd love to make this a multi-generational effort and have help from junior high and high school students and adults who find themselves with the energy and time to give this gift to our youngest and their parents. Please check your e-blast for volunteer sign up!



FCC Weekday Preschool



Registration for the 2021-2022 school year is now open! We can't wait to fill our halls with the sound of laughter again!

Visit our website at fccweekdaypreschool.com for more information or contact Dallas Collins at dcollins@fccfaithful.org.

You Matter 2

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

July 5 - 29 in the Gathering Space & Youth Room

Please bring school supplies to the donation bin located in the Gathering Space during July to benefit students in the H-F and surrounding communities.

Supplies will be distributed to children during You Matter 2's Back-to-School bash on Saturday, July 31. All are welcome - no questions asked! You Matter 2 is supported by FCC's Board of Faith In Action.

- Backpacks
- Pencil cases
- No. 2 Pencils & Pens
- Crayons & Markers
- Colored Pencils
- Dry Erase Markers & Erasers
- Folders
- Notebook paper
- Liquid Glue & Glue Sticks
- Safety Scissors
- Clorox Wipes



FCC HAPPENINGS

Leadership Staff On Break June 29 - July 5

As you know, we've gotten through this year because the Leadership Staff have gone above and beyond all year long. They've done it with such grace and good will, that it would be easy for us to forget just how costly that effort has been.

In recognition of that, we've asked that the Leadership Staff take a week off to have some time to breathe. The support staff will still be here and the phones will still be answered, but the Leadership Staff will be gone from Tuesday, June 29 through Monday, July 5.

The worship service on Sunday, July 4, will be online only and pre-recorded.

We are so grateful to give our Leadership Staff this chance to breathe, and expect they will come back to us July 6 charged up and ready to take on the next year!

Thank you,

Anna Carvalho, Governing Board Chair & Sharon Dobben, Personnel Chair



What's Going On at the Community House?

You may have noticed some recent changes at the FCC Community House – specifically with changes to the landscaping and the addition (resurrection) of basketball hoops.

Overgrown, dying, and unsightly evergreen brush have recently been removed from around the parking lot area. This offers us the opportunity to enhance our landscaping with more attractive options while improving lot visibility.

Additionally, FCC Youth Ministries has installed two basketball hoops in the parking lot to be used by our Youth as well as our neighbors. All are welcome! While not regulation specs, we're thrilled to offer this gift (paid for by a Youth Ministries reserve fund) for practice and pick-up games in a town where hoops are scarce. Already, we've been visited by neighborhood kids who've thanked us for providing a safe spot away from busy roads for them to practice and play. As always, we continue to welcome games of pick-up wiffle ball, kick ball and tag on our front lawns.

We're delighted to bring this gift to the community. Thank you, Youth Ministries!

FCC HAPPENINGS



FCC was proud to sponsor and participate in Homewood-Flossmoor's first-ever Juneteenth Festival, Organized by You Matter 2. At our booth, we invited festival goers to participate in a community art project by showing us what is in and on their hearts. We so enjoyed the hospitality of the day and the opportunity to engage in such meaningful conversations with our community. Thank you to the 19 FCC volunteers who also helped organizers with sanitizing children's games, directing parking, and running the lost and found. We can't wait to help again next year!



SIGNS OF REGATHERING



“As we emerge from the shared trauma of this pandemic, we’ll want to be gentle and compassionate with each other, sharing hospitality that helps each other heal.

As we emerge from required distancing, we’ll want to actively seek opportunities to show up, cultivating connection with each other, with ourselves, and with God.

As we emerge from collective hardship, we’ll want to stay awake to our neighbors’ suffering, knowing that pain and isolation, depression and oppression, often exist behind a smile.

As we emerge from a year of interrupted plans, we’ll want to stay committed to interrupting the cycles in our lives and society that do us and others harm.”

~ Pastor Julie





Flossmoor Community Church
Where Christ is Central and Diversity is Cherished

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