

SERENDIPITY

July, 2013

A PRAYER FOR ONE WHO WAITS IN DARKNESS

(Taken from Joyce Rupp's book Praying our Goodbyes)

Pray this prayer in darkness, either before dawn or after dusk. Find a room or a place where you can begin by just sitting in silence. As you sit, let the darkness you feel in your life be very present to you. After some time, light a candle or turn on a lamp. Read Psalm 27: "The Lord is my light and my salvation. . ."

Read John 1:1-5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Read Psalm 18:28-32: "It is you who light my lamp . . ."

After each reading, imagine yourself in darkness and then see God as the great light coming to light up all that is bleak and dark in you. Just rest in the goodness of that light. During the coming days, be aware of the natural and artificial light in your life (when you switch on a light, headlights on a car, street lights,

sunlight). Each time, let this awareness be a quiet prayer within you to God who is your light. Trust God to shine in your darkness.

Prayer: *God of light, hear my prayer. Listen to me and guide me in this deep darkness which is so predominant in my life. I feel as though an enemy is hounding me--trying to crush me. It presses against me until all of my world feels black and empty. You have been a source of light to me so many times in the past. I remember this with gratitude and I turn now to yearn for your light. Here I am, hands outstretched. Do not hide the radiance of inner light from me. I fear that I may be overpowered by discouragement or despair. May the dawn of each new day become a sign for me to trust in you. Help me to believe that your light is radiant within me. Light of my life, shine brightly and dispel this darkness. Amen.*



ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A family rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and living in love.

223 West College Avenue
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5641

GOD

BLESS

AMERICA



FOURTH OF JULY - 2013!

227 years ago—on July 4th, 1776, this great nation, the United States of America, in a struggle for what was right and free, was proudly born. May we celebrate that precious freedom for which our forebears fought so bravely . . . the freedom that is inherent in the stars and stripes, our revered flag, celebrate freedom this 4th of July!

I am the most famous icon on earth,
on display all over the world...
standing guard at majestic official buildings,
in courtrooms, churches,
and even on the moon.

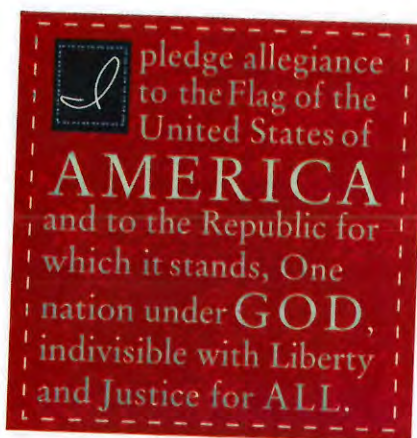
I fly from the houses
of families who revere America,
and snap in the breeze on parade.

I stand for freedom, honor, justice,
service, prosperity and power.
My stars and stripes—my red, white and blue,
evoke respect and admiration from the good,
apprehension and fear from the evil.

Sometimes soiled and tattered,
even bloodstained,
I survived the grinding toil of wars,
urging my weary warriors to fight on.
I lie precisely folded,
held by mothers of fallen soldiers
as their fingertips caress me
for comfort and strength.

I am invincible.
I have been burned, spat upon,
trampled and cursed,
but I overcome all
to unfurl, soar, and inspire again.
I am the Star Spangled Banner;
I am Old Glory;
I am the American Flag,
a symbol of freedom, forever.

By Joanna Fuchs



HATS OFF to the special folks who
have birthdays and anniversaries this
month!



July 1 *Duane and Deb Bollenbacher
July 2 Valli Burris
July 3 *Morris and Carol Groman
 Kathleen Mikkelsen
July 7 Jason Kindle
July 8 Ramona Hauenstein
July 14 Ron Badertscher
July 16 Mary Alice Dodge
July 18 *Blaine and Sue Bauman
July 19 Ann Nye
July 25 Dorothy Balmer
 *Randy and Becky Cox
July 27 Tom Benroth
July 31 Bob Everett
 Shirley Rock

Congratulations and best wishes to all!



**Ron and Sharlee
Badertscher are
pleased and proud to
announce the
following graduates in
their family:**

Tom Dillon graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts degree in pre-law. He will be attending Michigan State University where he has received a full tuition scholarship for law school.

Katherine Badertscher graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Findlay with a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work. She will be going to the University of Toledo for graduate studies.

John Dillon graduated from St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo. He will be attending Michigan State University in the fall.

Evangelism, Small Church Style

**By Rev. Wayne Chasney, Pastor
Congregational Community
Church, Monroeville**

One day, one of the youth of the church was at the local beauty shop getting her hair cut. The same woman had been cutting her for years, and they had grown a nice friendship. During the conversation the youth made mention of something happening at church.

The woman doing her hair said that she hadn't gone to church for years, but now that her kids were getting older she thought she should return. The youth quickly replied, "Well, you should come visit my church."

This is evangelism, small church style!

Most smaller churches don't rely on having a lot of programs to draw people. Nor do they hang their hats on splashy advertising or big publicity campaigns.

Evangelism in the smaller membership church happens through relationships; it happens through word of mouth; it happens when someone feels they have something to share and invites a friend.

The key for this type of evangelism to work, however, is a healthy sense of self-esteem. If the people feel good about their

church's ministry and are being nurtured spiritually, then they will naturally share their "good news" with others.

If, on the other hand, the youth getting her hair cut that day felt her church was a dying institution where nothing good ever happened, she likely would not have extended an invitation.

Healthy self-esteem can be tough for smaller churches. We live in a "bigger is better" world. We lament the fact that we don't have all those things going on like the "bigger" church down the street or across town. Somehow we think that if only a dozen people show up on Sunday morning, something must be wrong with us.

Not true! God can do wonderful ministry with a few just as well as with a few hundred! And if your smaller congregation wants to do the important work of evangelism – not just to put butts in the pews and money in the plates – but because it is what Jesus has commissioned us to do, then start with raising your self-esteem.

Begin by focusing on your strengths. Look at what you do well. Lift that up and celebrate it with vigor. Feel God's presence in your midst.

Next, build on your success. This is

what I call "clustering." We feel good about ourselves when something goes well, but then we do nothing to capitalize on those positive feelings.

Instead, create a series of small successes over a short period of time, and celebrate every one in some way.

Liven up your worship, host a community event, paint your walls, anything that says "we care enough to try." Even a crisis (a water pipe breaking) can become a success (look at how we worked together to clean up the mess). The key is to have a cluster of successes.

Finally, through it all, pray for God's blessing and guidance. One of the pluses of a smaller church is the ease with which we can pray for every single member by name. Make this ritual a part of your ongoing renewal.

That young hair dresser did start coming with her children and did join the church. Later, her parents began attending too. So did her three sisters. Today, that family is a strong core of the leadership of the church, all because of one simple invitation from someone who thought she had something good to share.

Now that's evangelism, small church style!



A Little Dirt

Matthew 7:5

"First take the log out of your eye, and then you'll see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's or sister's eye."

Jimmy R. Watson

It is springtime, which for me means, among other things, allergies and mowing. I actually enjoy mowing the grass because as an introvert, mowing the grass really gets my engines running!

But when I dug out my lawnmower from my undersized and overcrowded storage room the other day, the engine wasn't really up to the task. I could get it started but immediately it sputtered and died. After numerous attempts, I pushed the mower over to my neighbor who lives on the next block. He is an elderly, chain-smoking, profane, hard-of-hearing lawnmower repairman.

He smiled as he saw me, asked what was wrong, and upon hearing my explanation, immediately said, "It has a little dirt in the carburetor." I asked him how he knew that without first examining my lawnmower. He answered, "Because it always has a little dirt in the carburetor."

Just as my crusty old lawnmower repairman knows a thing or two about lawnmowers, I believe Jesus knew a thing or two about how to make the human engine run a little better. He knew that as long as we continue to focus on the little specks of dirt in other people, we would be unable to detect the large mounds of dirt in ourselves. The world will run a lot smoother when we accept the fact that everyone has a little dirt in their carburetors, including us.

Prayer

Loving God, may our lives move from sputtering to purring. May the dirt in our carburetors diminish in the wake of your grace-filled maintenance. Amen.

GRATITUDE . . .

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits," (Psalm 103:2). The story is told: When I was a child in the 30s, the drought swept into Iowa from the Dakotas. The winds became our enemy, peeling off the dry, rich, black soil and swirling it like drifting dunes into the gullies of our fields. We prayed for rain, but the rain never came. We walked around our farm with white towels over our faces to keep from suffocating in the driving dust. Then the harvest season came.

My father would normally harvest a hundred wagons-full of corn, but I remember the harvest that year. My father harvested a meager one-half wagon-load.

You know what happened? I'll never forget it. Seated at the dinner table with his callused hands holding ours, my father looked up and thanked God. He said, "I thank you, God, that I have lost nothing, for I have regained the seed I planted in the springtime!" He planted a half wagon-load of seed; he harvested

a half wagon-load in the fall!"

While the other farmers were lamenting their losses saying, "We lost 90 or 100 loads," my father told me, "Never count up the might-have-beens or you'll be defeated. Never look at what you have lost--look at what you have left!" The attitude of gratitude releases dynamic power in the person who is thankful.

I am looking at what I have, Lord. I am grateful for your blessings!

FUN PERSONALITY TEST

(ANSWERS ON NEXT PAGE)

This is a real test given by the Human Relations Department at many of the major corporations today. It helps them get a better insight concerning their employees and perspective employees. It's only 10 simple questions, so . . . grab a pencil and paper, and keep track of your letter answers—and *no cheating!* (BTW—Pastor Carol scored 41 points)! How accurate would this test in determining your personality? Remember : Answers are for who you are now, not who you were in the past. Have fun!

1. When do you feel your best?

- (a) in the morning
- (b) during the afternoon & early evening
- (c) late at night

2. You usually walk

- (a) fairly fast, with long steps
- (b) fairly fast, with short, quick steps
- (c) less fast head up, looking the world in the face
- (d) less fast, head down
- (e) very slowly

3. When talking to people you

- (a) stand with your arms folded
- (b) have your hands clasped
- (c) have one or both your hands on your hips
- (d) touch or push the person to whom you are talking
- (e) play with your ear, touch your chin, or smooth your hair

4. When relaxing, you sit with

- (a) your knees bent with your legs neatly side by side
- (b) your legs crossed
- (c) your legs stretched out and straight
- (d) one leg curled under you

5. When something really amuses you, you react with

- (a) a big, appreciative laugh
- (b) a laugh, but not a loud one
- (c) a quiet chuckle
- (d) a sheepish smile

6. When you go to a party or social gathering you...

- (a) make a loud entrance so everyone notices you
- (b) make a quiet entrance so everyone notices you
- (c) make the quietest entrance, trying to stay unnoticed

7. You're working very hard and you're interrupted. Do you...

- (a) welcome the break
- (b) feel extremely irritated
- (c) vary between these two extremes

8. Which of the following colors do you like the most?

- (a) red or orange
- (b) black
- (c) yellow or light blue
- (d) green
- (e) dark blue or purple
- (f) white
- (g) brown or gray

9. In those last few moments before going to sleep, you lie..

- (a) stretched out on your back
- (b) stretched out face down on your stomach
- (c) on your side, slightly curled
- (d) with your head on one arm
- (e) with your head under the covers

10. You often dream that you are...

- (a) falling
- (b) fighting or struggling
- (c) searching for something or somebody
- (d) flying or floating
- (e) you usually have dreamless sleep
- (f) your dreams are always pleasant

Use the Table Below to calculate your points.

QUESTION	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	2	4	6				
2	6	4	7	2	1		
3	4	2	5	7	6		
4	4	6	2	1			
5	6	4	3	5	2		
6	6	4	2				
7	6	2	4				
8	6	7	5	4	3	2	1
9	7	6	4	2	1		
10	4	2	3	5	6	1	

RESULTS

NOW ADD THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS:

Over 60 points: Others see you as somebody they should "handle with care" You're seen as vain, self-centered, and who is extremely dominant. Others may admire you, wishing they could be more like you, but don't always trust you, hesitating to become too deeply involved with you.

51 to 60 points: Others see you as an exciting, highly volatile, rather impulsive personality; a natural leader, who's quick to make decisions, though not always the right ones. They see you bold and adventuresome, someone who will try anything once; someone who takes chances and enjoys adventure. They enjoy being in your company because of the excitement you radiate.

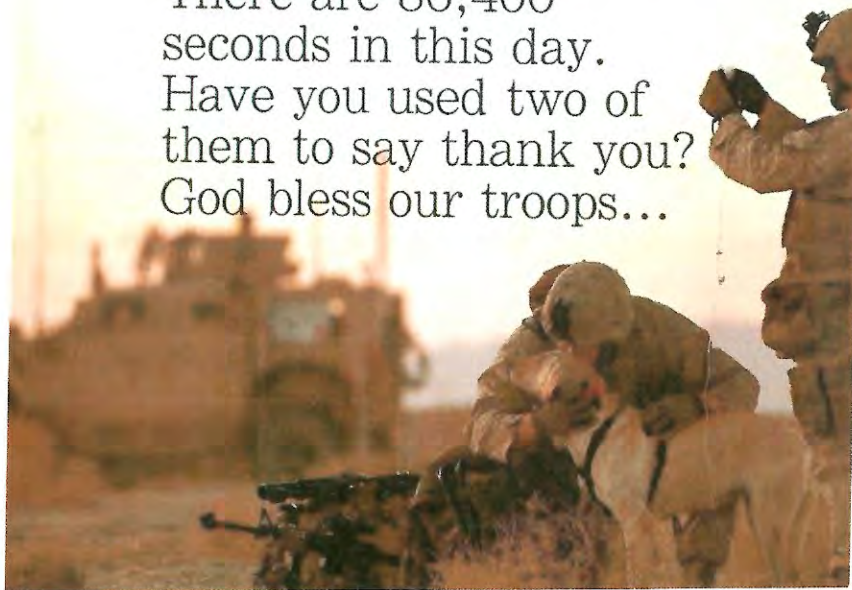
41 to 50 points: Others see you as fresh, lively, charming, amusing, and always interesting; someone who's constantly in the center of attention, but sufficiently well-balanced not to let it go to their head. They also see you as kind, considerate, and understanding; someone who'll always cheer them up and help them out.

31 to 40 points: Others see you as sensible, cautious, careful and practical. They see you as clever, gifted, or talented, but modest. Not a person who makes friends too quickly or easily, but someone who's extremely loyal to friends you do make and who expect the same loyalty in return. Those who really get to know you realize it takes a lot to shake your trust in your friends, but equally that it takes you a long time to get over it if that trust is ever broken.

21 to 30 points: Your friends see you as painstaking and fussy. They see you as very cautious, extremely careful... A slow and steady plodder. It'd really surprise them if you ever did something impulsively or on the spur of the moment, expecting you to examine everything carefully from every angle and then, usually decide against it. They think this reaction is caused partly by your careful nature.



Freedom is never free.
There are 86,400
seconds in this day.
Have you used two of
them to say thank you?
God bless our troops...



New Medical Dictionary

Artery – The study of fine paintings.

Barium – What you can do when C.P.R. fails.

Benign – What you are right after you be
eight.

Fester – Quicker.

G.I. Series – Baseball games between teams
of soldiers

Morbid – A higher offer.

Nitrate – Lower than the day rate.

Node: Was aware of.

Organic – A church musician.

Outpatient – A person who has fainted.

Tumor – An extra pair.

Urine -The opposite of "you're out!"

Varicose veins-Ones that are real close
together.

July Events . . .

TUESDAY (2)	LADIES MEET AT ARBY'S (9 A.M.) TOPS (6 P.M.)
WEDNESDAY (3)	MEN MEET AT ARBY'S (8:30 A.M.)
THURSDAY (4)	NO COMMUNITY MEAL AT SENIOR CENTER
SUNDAY (7)	COMMUNION SERVED DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE
TUESDAY (9)	WOMEN MEET AT ARBY'S (9 A.M.) TOPS (6:30 P.M.)
WEDNESDAY (10)	MEN MEET AT ARBY'S (8:30 A.M.)
THURSDAY (11)	CONSISTORY (7 P.M.)
TUESDAY (16)	WOMEN MEET AT ARBY'S (9 A.M.) TOPS (6:30 P.M.)
WEDNESDAY (17)	MEN MEET AT ARBY'S (8:30 A.M.)
THURSDAY (18)	COMMUNITY MEAL AT SENIOR CENTER (6 P.M.)
SUNDAY-THURSDAY (21-25)	VBS (6 P.M. – 8 P.M.)
TUESDAY (23)	LADIES MEET AT ARBY'S (9 A.M.) SOUP KITCHEN TOPS (6 P.M.)
WEDNESDAY (24)	MEN MEET AT ARBY'S (8:30 A.M.)
SUNDAY (28)	COMMUNITY WORSHIP SERVICE AT BLUFFTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (9 A.M.)
TUESDAY (30)	WOMEN MEET AT ARBY'S (9 A.M.) TOPS (6:30 P.M.)
WEDNESDAY (31)	MEN MEET AT ARBY'S (8:30 A.M.)



I'm just resting
my eyes...I'm not
sleeping!

danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

IF THE EARTH WERE A VILLAGE!

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with the entire existing human ratio remaining the same, the earth would look something like the following. There would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 from the Western Hemisphere (both north and south)
- 8 Africans
- 52 would be female
- 48 would be male
- 70 would be non-white
- 30 would be white
- 70 would be non-Christian
- 89 would be heterosexual
- 11 would be homosexual
- 6 people would possess 69% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be near birth
- 1 would have a college education (yes--only 1!)
- 1 would own a computer

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding, and education becomes glaringly apparent.

You need to ponder: If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than many others. If you have never experienced the

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare, even in the U.S. and Canada.

If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Psalm 133:1

*How very good it is
when kindred live
together in unity!*

RULES FROM GOD!

Wake up! Decide to have a good day. *"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."* (Psalm 118:24)

Dress up! The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks. *"The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."* (1 Samuel 16:7)

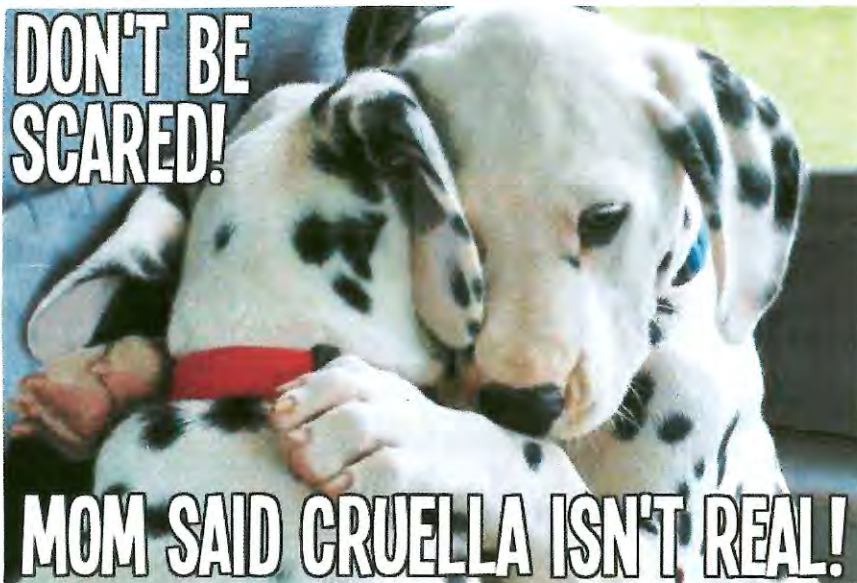
Shut up! Say nice things to people and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so God must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking. *"Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives; those who open wide their lips come to ruin."* (Proverbs 13:3)

Stand up! Have the strength of your convictions to stand up for what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. *"So let us not be weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up . . . let us work for the good of all."* (Galatians 6:9-10)

Look up! To the Lord. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13)

Reach up! For something higher. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Lift up! Your prayers. *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God."* (Philippians 4:6)

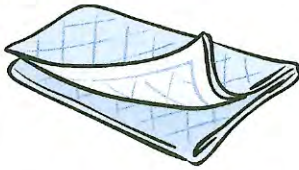


CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- The fasting and prayer conference includes meals.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- Next Thursday, there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Thank you . .

From Church World Service for our gift of \$400 to purchase blankets.



When you're tempted to lose patience with someone, think how patient God has been with you all the time!



Hellfire and Dalmatians

THE DEVIL'S BEATITUDES

Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians; they are my best workers!

Blessed are those Christians who wait to be asked—and expect to be thanked; I can use them.

Blessed are the touchy who stop going to church; they are my missionaries.

Blessed are the trouble makers; they shall be called my children.

Blessed are the complainers; I'm all ears to them.

Blessed are those who gossip; they shall cause strife and divisions that please me.

Blessed are those who are easily offended; they will soon get angry and quit.

Blessed are those who profess to love God but hate their brothers and sisters; they shall be with me forever.

Blessed are those who do not give their monetary gifts to carry on God's work; they are my helpers.

Blessed are you who, when you read this, think it is about other people and do not see yourself here. They are easy prey to me.



God won't ask how many friends you had, but God *will* ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, but God *will* ask how you treated your neighbors.

God won't ask about the color of your skin, but God *will* ask about the content of your character.



Make time for family

Now You Know about the how in the Order of Worship . . . Plus the many abbreviations of the UCC

Liturgical notes on the Scripture Readings

In ecumenical liturgical practice, there are normally three readings and one psalm at each Sunday service, in this order:

First Reading: Hebrew Scripture

Response: Psalm (or Canticle) from the Bible

Second Reading: Epistle (or Acts or Revelation)

Third Reading: Gospel

The first two lessons are normally read by laypeople, the Gospel by a Minister of the Word or a layperson. In Roman Catholic, Anglican and liturgical Protestant churches, it is uncommon for an ordained minister to read all of the lessons.

The psalm is not a reading but a congregational response following the lesson from Hebrew Scripture: it is normally sung with a refrain or recited by the congregation as poetry. Occasionally, a canticle is appointed in place of a psalm; it is sung or recited in the same way. The New Century Hymnal provides a complete liturgical psalter with refrains and music.

A hymn may be sung as an introduction to the proclamation of the Gospel.

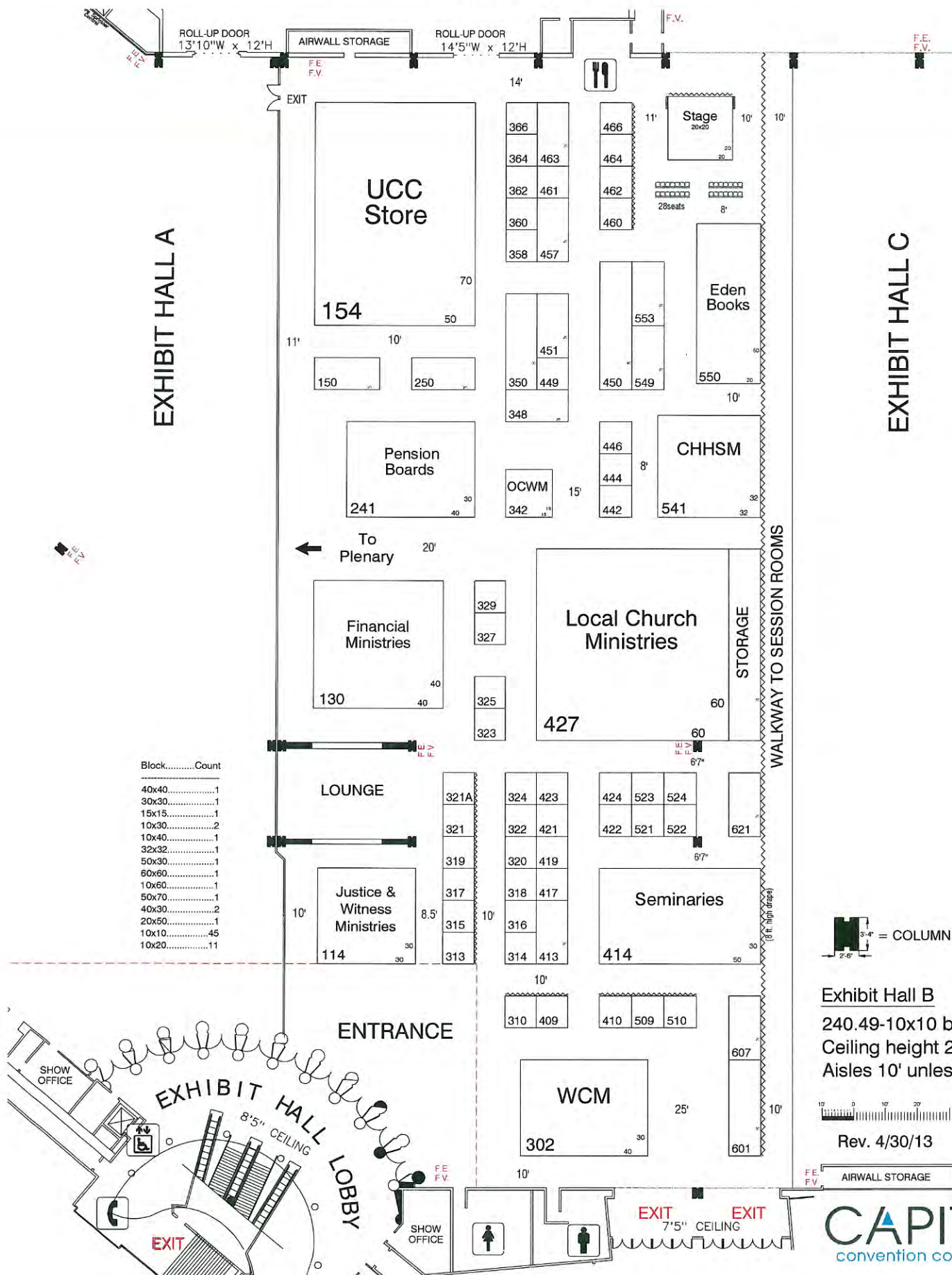
During Ordinary Time (seasons after Epiphany and Pentecost) two alternative sets of OT readings with responsorial psalms are provided. The first option is a semi-continuous reading through a book of Hebrew Scripture; the second is thematically related to the other readings. It is suggested that a congregation choose one option and follow it.

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United Church of Christ Abbreviations

AUCE	Association of United Church Educators
BWF	Biblical Witness Fellowship
CAIM	Council for American Indian Ministry
CCHS	Congregational Christian Historical Society
CCM	Council of Conference Ministers
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CHHSM	Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
CHM	Council for Hispanic Ministries
CR	Collegium Relationship Committee
CJA	Christians for Justice Action
COCU	Consultation on Church Union
COREM	Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries
CUCCIAB	Conferences of the United Church of Christ Insurance Advisory Board
CUE	Mid-America Seminaries, Chicago, United, and Eden
CYYAM	Council on Youth and Young Adult Ministry
EC	Executive Council
EP&P	Evaluation, Planning, and Policy Committee
ERHS	Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society
GS	General Synod
JWM	Justice and Witness Ministries
HC	Historical Council
LCM	Local Church Ministries
MRSEJ	Ministers for Racial, Social, and Economic Justice
NCCC	National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
OGM	Office of General Ministries
OL	Organizational Life Committee
PAAM	Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries
PB	The Pension Boards
PPC-29	Program and Planning Committee of the Twenty-ninth General Synod
TSM	The StillSpeaking Ministry
UBC	United Black Christians
UCCDM	UCC Disabilities Ministries
COALITION	Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns
UCF	United Church Funds
WCM	Wider Church Ministries
WCC	World Council of Churches

The United Church of Christ 29th General Synod
 June 28-July 3, 2013
 Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center
 Long Beach, California



Block	Count
40x40	1
30x30	1
15x15	1
10x30	2
10x40	1
32x32	1
50x30	1
60x60	1
10x60	1
50x70	1
40x30	2
20x50	1
10x10	45
10x20	11

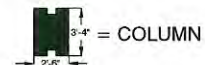


Exhibit Hall B
 240.49-10x10 booths
 Ceiling height 25'
 Aisles 10' unless noted



Rev. 4/30/13

