

Arbor Covenant News



August 2016

A Parent's Love

Every time we talk about God we are limited by our imagination, limited by language, limited by experience. Each human life is constrained by finite reality. God, on the other hand, is not constrained or limited by anything. To ground God in our experience, we have to employ language and metaphor and imagery. We have to talk about God in ways that somehow appropriate God's infinity into our finite existence and understanding.

One metaphor that has historically been helpful is to refer to God as a loving parent. There are some biblical examples of God's people referencing God with distinctly maternal, motherly images (Isaiah 42:14, 49:15, 66:13; Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34). Scripture also references God as a loving father, using images of the relationship between a father and his children to explore the relationship between God and God's people. In fact the language of Father is one of the primary metaphors scripture uses to describe God.

It's important to acknowledge that this biblical imagery can be difficult for some people to relate to or accept. Those who have had troubled or non-existent relationships with a parent may actually find this sort of language a hindrance to their spiritual formation that preempts or hampers their relationship with God.

Respecting the difficulties some people encounter with God-as-parent imagery, I want to highlight one biblical instance where this metaphor has been employed in a way I've come to find very meaningful.

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ²The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols. ³Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them.
(Hosea 11:1-4)

Having recently become a parent, experiencing for the first time what it means to call a child "my son," taking him up in my arms, bending down to feed him, beginning to imagine what it will be like to teach him to walk and to see him take his first teetering steps; it's made my heart fuller than ever.

The tenderness and intimacy, the love and depth of feeling that the prophet's words express relate to my experience in a new way. What's described is an endeavoring and laboring love that wants nothing more than what is best for its beloved, a love that refuses to be distant or aloof but instead gets down on the floor to mix it up, laughing and playing, wiping away tears and the drying food that didn't quite make it into a child's mouth. It's love that isn't afraid to get its hands dirty or share whatever can be shared. It's love that crawls around with a crawling baby, wrapping its arms around he or she in an abiding embrace.

In recent months, I've become a parent on the floor; crawling, laughing, embracing a beloved child. When I see his joy or see the wonder in his eyes when he makes a new discovery, there's an extent to my delight I never knew possible. When I hear him cry or see him become frustrated, there is a desperate empathy that is new for me. I can't imagine loving anything or anyone more than those experiences or the one with whom I share them. That this a description of the way God loves all of God's people fills my heart even more.

God is, indeed, a loving parent, ready to guide and shape us, eager to delight in our joy, wholeheartedly desiring good things for each us. Ready even to crawl around on the floor with us and take us up into the warm embrace of God's inexhaustible love.

Pastor Peter Morris



In July Arbor hosted Vacation Bible School once again. Fountain of Life Covenant Church and Arbor have teamed up for the last several years. 10 neighborhood children attended but most of the children come from one of the two churches.

The program this year was on the Fruits of the Spirit.

Vacation Bible School



About 35 children enjoyed programs, games, and crafts as well as dinner Monday-Wednesday evening. On Thursday there was a celebration. A huge thunderstorm interrupted the festivities which were moved into the sanctuary.

Thanks to all the Arbor volunteers who gave generously of their time and talents. Special thanks to Joyce Boggess who works every year to continue to build a relationship with our fellow Covenanters at Fountain of Life.

Salter-Johnson Family Reunion

Arbor had the privilege of worshipping with the Salter-Johnson Family when they came to Madison for their 48th Family Reunion. One of Joyce's relatives gave a liturgical dance and Joyce Boggess preached. After the service everyone enjoyed a wonderful lunch in the fellowship room.



130 of Joyce's relatives came from across the country for this annual get together!



Joyce's cousin Lisa Williams offered a liturgical dance during the worship service

Mallards Game

A group of Arbor friends went to the Madison Mallards game

Lissa took pictures of her kids having fun at the game. Theo Morris and Will Wooffer went too- Hope they had as much fun as the Turner kids.



The Mallards won!



And a great time was had by all!



Tummy Time!

If you weren't in church on July 31 you missed a great session of "Tummy Time". You'll have to ask one of the kids what Pastor Peter was doing on the floor.



Parish Notes

Pastor's Vacation

From August 17th through Labor Day Weekend, Tamsin, Theodore and I will be away on a family vacation. We'll be visiting family and friends in both Seattle and British Columbia and taking in some sights along the way. I'll mostly be available by phone or email, but my access to cell phone coverage and the internet will be limited at some points along the way. If there is a pastoral emergency and you can't get a hold of me, please feel for to call Rev. Rod Johnson."

North Park Choir Concert

North Park University's Choir and Chamber Singers will be performing at Arbor on October 22.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this wonderful concert. We will be feeding the group dinner before the concert and they depart for their next stop in Racine after the concert. More details to follow.

This would also be a wonderful opportunity to invite friends who might enjoy the music and fellowship.

Prayer Requests

Peggy Kent is recovering from successful surgery. She and Paul appreciate your prayers and support.

Joyce Boggess' brother, Billy, is also appreciative of your prayers. He is without pain and resting.

Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry



Item of the Month

Toilet Paper

If you are able to donate, please leave items in the box in the front foyer at church. Thank you.

Arbor Covenant Canoe Trip
August 5 & 6, 2016



On August 5-6, anyone from Arbor is welcome to go along on a canoe trip along the Wisconsin River. Many in the group will be staying overnight but you have the choice to depart when you wish. If you have friends you would like to invite, please do so. Glenn Hanson is the contact for this fun event. His information is below. Please ask questions!! Everyone is welcome!!

Departure: From the Church at 11:00 am (or meet at Black Hawk Landing just south of Sauk City on County Highway J at Noon). Canoes, gear, and people will be unloaded. Some cars will be shuttled to the take out in Arena. If there are a few people that want to depart late (say 4 pm) and want to catch up with the group at the camp site, we may arrange for that.

Canoes launched: 1:30 pm

Camp set up on a sand bar: About 5 pm

Supper: About 6:30 pm

Campfire conversation and sleep

Breakfast: About 7:30 am

Lunch: About noon

Canoe take-out in Arena: About 4 pm

Back in Madison: About 6 pm (unless we stop for supper at a restaurant).

We are arranging for the canoes and paddles. Please bring your own life jackets, and children must have children's life jackets which will be worn at all times in the boats and swimming. In terms of other items:

Leader: Glenn Hanson

608-286-5772

mcgillhanson@gmail.com

Please contact Glenn with questions



August Birthdays

August 2	Tom Collins
August 8	Sue Engstrom
August 8	Dan Kessenich
August 9	Susan Corrado
August 13	Ruth Hallblade
August 20	Jim Stehley
August 22	Ulrika Swanson
August 26	Roger Springman
August 28	Paul Johnson

August Anniversaries

August 2	Deb and Dan Meyer
August 8	Carin and William Goettler
August 14	Lissa and Josh Turner
August 28	Lynda and Tom Collins



	Host	Lay Reader	Nursery	Children's Church	Projector
August 7	Marijo and Dan Kessenich	Mark Hanson	Susan Corrado	Ruth Hallblade	Chuck Gietzel
August 14	Tamsin Ford and Peter Morris	Joyce Boggess	Amanda Pecotte	Mark Hanson	Debby Meyer
August 21	Kris and Phil Brown	Debby Meyer	Ulrika Swanson	Fabio Mora	Mark Hanson
August 28	Ann-Britt Keillor and Rod Johnson	Rod Johnson	Deb Levin	Lissa Turner	Susan Corrado
September 4	Susan Corrado and Charlie Volk	Mike Johnson	Debby Meyer	Ruth Hallblade	Michelle Stachowiak

August 2016 Calendar

	1	2	3	4	5 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	6
7 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship COMMUNION Deacon Fund Offering	8	9	10	11 6:30 PM Leadership Team	12 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	13
14 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	15	16	17	18 10:30 AM Community Meals at Luke House 5:30-7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	19 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	20
21 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	22	23	24	25	26 4:30AM-7:00 AM Homeless Shelter at Grace Episcopal (Volunteers: Ken Lund and Doug Keillor) 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	27
28 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	29	30	31	1	2 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	3
4 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship COMMUNION Deacon Fund Offering						