

The FIFA World Cup is under way as I am writing this, and I love it. Let me clear, I don't care about the actual games. I 'm not that interested in soccer/football. It's not a sport that I grew up with and while I understand it is the most popular sport in the world, it just never grasped my attention.

What I love is the coverage of the World Cup. The story of fans coming from across the globe to America for the first time and experiencing the USA. I love the TikToks, Facebook posts, and YouTube videos of fans talking about their experiences. It is fascinating and actually quite eye opening. They're experiencing an America they didn't know existed.

Which is wild to say. One of America's biggest exports is our entertainment. The highest grossing movies of all time are from American studios. Radio stations around the world play our pop music. American books are translated and distributed around the globe. Go to a remote village in Southeast Asia or the Amazon and they're probably going to be able to name who is in the Avengers or have an opinion which Taylor Swift album is the best.

Our entertainment is everywhere and shares our country with everyone. People know American culture through our movies, books, TV shows, and songs. People know who we are.

Or at least, they thought they did. It's fascinating watching people from France walk into a Buccee's for the first time and be floored that a gas station can be so... everything? Japanese fans being awe struck by Texas BBQ. Then there's the Tartan Army (Scottish fans) and everything they're doing in Providence and Boston.

See, they might have thought they knew America, but they only knew what America wanted them to know. The American media presents a certain view. It highlights some parts, downplays others. It is just a version of who we are as a country, and it's usually not even that accurate.

But fans from around the world get to see the America we see every day. They get to experience things left out of movies and they get to talk to real people. They're learning things about us that we have taken for granted.

That got me thinking about the Church and our church. What is the image of the Church out in the world around us? What message are we sending out with our actions and words?

People out in the world around us, in our community, have a perception of what the church is. They have an idea of what we do and how we act. And sometimes it's pretty negative. You hear phrases like "hypocritical" or "self-righteous" be thrown around. Or they think we're dying or insular. They have all these ideas of who we are, but is it really us?

Do they know the good we do in our community? Do they see the fellowship we have? Do they know of the hope and joy we have in our lives? Do they feel the love we live with every day?

Friends, this is why building relationships with our neighbors is so important. For they can never know who we are just by looking at us and hearing about us. Just like soccer/football fans from around the world can't know our nation just by watching movies. They need to have that personal connection and see us with their own eyes. And the only way they can do that is if we are willing to be brave and build a relationship of agape love with them.

And when they do, they may discover something surprising. They may find that the Church is not just a building on a corner or a collection of assumptions and stereotypes. They may find people who care. People who pray. People who serve. People who are trying, however imperfectly, to follow Jesus.

That kind of discovery does not happen through advertisements, websites, or secondhand opinions. It happens over a cup of coffee, a shared meal, a conversation at the ball field, or a helping hand in a difficult moment. It happens through relationships.

The world around us may think it knows who we are. But just like those World Cup fans discovering an America they never expected, our neighbors may discover a Church that is very different from what they imagined. The question is whether we are willing to invite them close enough to see it for themselves. God Bless, Pastor Ed

*Disciples and Dragons Youth Group Is meeting every Sunday  
in June and July at 6 PM*

**VBS – Snowball Mountain Challenge – Tuesday, July 21 – Friday, July 24  
register at [lakevilleumc.org](http://lakevilleumc.org)**

**TOPS Club** meets at LUMC on Mondays, 4:00 PM, Room 206, use north east door.

Online giving is available for your convenience  
Scan the QR code for the direct link. Also, at [lakevilleumc.org](http://lakevilleumc.org)



**Food Pantry Needs:** pasta sauce, jam & jelly, soups (all kinds) Jiffy muffin mix, cake mix, frostings, Knorr Sides, Hamburger & Tuna Helper, toilet paper, canned fruit, pork & beans, canned pasta, yellow mustard, elbow macaroni, Jello & pudding boxes, taco stuff (shells, sauces) Thank you.

The Food Pantry is open to anyone in the Union North school district as well as to our church family on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month 3 – 6 PM



**Happy Birthday America**

**Birthday Cake Kits  
for the Food Pantry!**

Sign up to donate pans, cake mix, frosting, candles, decorations, or sodas  
Bring in by June 28th!

Help Put kits together  
Sunday July 5th!

**Sunday Fellowship Time  
Refreshments Schedule**

June 28 Jean L. July 5 \_\_\_\_ July 12 Jeanette  
Sign up at the bulletin board outside the  
kitchen door.

**Sunday Kids Church Schedule**

June 28 Grace July 5 Communion  
July 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Sign up at the bulletin board outside the  
kitchen door.

**Looking Ahead**

Disciples & Dragons Youth Group will meet every  
Sunday in June and July 6-8 PM

**VBS Meeting – Thursday, June 25, 6 PM**

**Turkey and Gravy Biscuit Brunch  
Saturday, June 27, 11 AM -1 PM**

Euchre/Game Night - Saturday, June 27, 6-8 PM

Missions/Evangelism Meeting – Tuesday, June 30, 6:30 PM

Decorate and prepare for the Town of Lakeville 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade – Friday, July 3, 6:30 PM  
Need volunteers please

4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade – Saturday, July 4, 10 AM  
Need volunteers please

Blood Drive – Tuesday, July 7, 2:30 – 6:30 PM  
at Palmer's Community Complex

Fellowship Committee Meeting – Monday, July 13, 6:30 PM

**Food Pantry – Tuesday, July 14, 3-6 PM**

**VBS: Snowball Mountain Challenge  
July 21 - 24 9AM – 11:45 AM  
register at lakevilleumc.org**

Euchre/Game Night – Saturday, July 25, 6 PM

**Food Pantry – Tuesday, July 28, 3-6 PM**

### ***A Note from Bill Root***

Please let everyone in my church family know how much I appreciate all of your cards and prayers and phone calls.

A big thank you to Pastor Ed for keeping in touch, with all his phone calls. I appreciate him very much. A big, big thank you to Carole Hicks for picking the two prayer blankets for me. I take them with me every time I have a procedure at the hospital (which has been 12 times so far) with more coming up. I think the blankets help a lot toward my healing.

Tell Tom I'm sorry I'm not there to help at the front door, and Sue for always having a Wisconsin cup of coffee waiting for me.

I do pray for the church, and everyone on the prayer list.

Thank you again and I love everyone, Bill Root.

PS Happy Father's Day to all you Dad's (Belated)