



## U-Turns Allowed

*Thoughts from Pastor Scott*

During the week, I work in Lincoln on O Street at the Eastmont Foundation near Gateway Shopping Center. When it's time for lunch or at the end of the work day, I sometimes need to run errands before heading home. But, there's one particular corner that bothers me – it's at 56<sup>th</sup> and O Streets. You can't turn left and head south there if you're heading toward downtown. It's not permitted. Yet, there are businesses that are just across the street that could be easily accessed if a U-turn was allowed.

We live in a world where U-turns are difficult at the times we need them the most, reserving them only for unusual circumstances (for safety reasons, of course). But living our spiritual lives before God is different. Living authentically *with* God, and *for* God, in this world requires many U-turns.

The good news of the Bible is that we *can* take U-turns. In fact, God loves them. In God's world, U-turns are not only allowed—they are required, encouraged, commanded and welcomed.

*There was a man in the Old Testament named Jonah who refused to believe this; he didn't embrace God's heart for all people who have lost their way. Jews like him deserved a second chance (or third, or fourth), but the sinful people of Ninevah did not. So, when God commanded Jonah to go to the pagan city of Ninevah and preach the message of repentance, Jonah refused. He defiantly went in the opposite direction. But God intervened. He whipped up a storm and had Jonah thrown into the raging sea in order to have him picked up by a large fish to spend some alone-time with God. At the end of Jonah chapter 2 we find that the fish has vomited Jonah onto the beach and he is ready to preach.*

*In the third chapter of the Biblical book of Jonah, Jonah preached God's message to the people of Ninevah and they repented. This biblical example reveals what our repentance should look like. So, what does it mean to repent? What does a spiritual U-turn look like?*

Biblical repentance is linked to faith. It's not merely an exercise of our will – like having enough “will power” to change. The person who is repenting—in the biblical sense—recognizes that he or she can't make the necessary changes without God's help.

Jonah preached the message and God granted the repentance—a repentance which included faith. This is essential to our understanding of repentance because many confuse repentance with *penance*, a form of self-punishment, or an attempt to make oneself acceptable to God. But biblical repentance is different. Repentance is a spiritual

U-turn; that is, we realize we're heading in the wrong direction, STOP, and turn back to God with a heart of faith.

Ninevah responded with a grief that led to repentance, symbolized by them all putting on sackcloth, a course fabric (think old, nasty burlap), which was a sign of grieving and deep humiliation.

But is grief repentance? Does feeling badly or being sorry for our sin *equal* being repentant? No, but it's a part of repentance. In Second Corinthians 7:8-10, notice that there are two kinds of sorrow. There is *worldly sorrow*, which leads to death (a sorrow that does not lead to life change or transformation) and there is *godly sorrow*, which leads to repentance (a spiritual U-turn), that shifts the direction of your life. If our sin does not produce grief in our hearts, which then leads to repentance, then we should ask ourselves if our hearts have become calloused toward God or too comfortable with sin. To repent means to turn to God with a godly grief.

When the king of Ninevah repented, he commanded his people to turn from evil (Jonah 3:8-10). If repentance is a spiritual U-turn of faith and life then two directions are in focus:

- What you are turning *toward*.
- And the evil way that you are turning *from*

Another way to say it is this: There is no turning to God without a turning away from sin. Repentance is essentially a change of mind but, like faith, it involves the heart of man in its entirety: intellect, emotion, and will. Biblical repentance is more than sorrow or regret over failing to meet God's standard; rather, it includes a decision to turn from our sin toward a life of righteousness.

Is your life driving away from total dedication to God? What sinful ways or unhealthy habits do you need to turn away from in order to follow God with all your heart? Remember this: In God's world, there are no signs saying, "No U-turns Allowed." Instead it's the very opposite. God says, "Turn around anytime. Come back to me. Leave behind your burdens. Give them to me. I will carry them for you." Jesus says to you, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Thank God for U-turns in our spiritual life and that they remind us to turn toward God daily and that God longs for us to let our neighbors know that He cares deeply for them, too.

God is with us... Pastor Scott

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## OUR NEXT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS) PLANNING MEETINGS ARE 'WORKING' MEETINGS AT IMMANUEL.

**JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> & 21<sup>ST</sup> AT 7:00 P.M.**

Registration materials were distributed to over 250 families of pre-schoolers through children going into sixth grade in the Raymond Central school district last month. Our church is already receiving completed registration forms from families who want to participate in this year's Vacation Bible School.

We will be meeting in person at Immanuel on the evenings of Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> to work on putting crafts and decorations together for this year's Vacation Bible School theme of "In the Wild". Please plan to show up and help as we get ready for an exciting four days of Vacation Bible School on July 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> at Immanuel. Vacation Bible School is open to all children of pre-school age through those going into sixth grade this Fall.

Questions? Contact Pastor Scott (402.499.4444) or Hailey Drahota (402.499.8222)

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### ANNUAL YOUTH BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE TRIP... WAS COLD BUT FUN!



Twelve of us set out for five days and four nights in northern Minnesota. Despite the wind gusts of 40 to 50 mph and cold nights below freezing, we had a good time in God's great outdoors. Pictured just before we headed into the Boundary Waters left to right

are: (front row): Crystal Haake, Kory Ball, Ashlyn Sykes and Kevin Kreikemeier; (back row): Jamie Fredrickson, Conner Kreikemeier, Owen Kreikemeier, Mason Kreikemeier, Isaak Fredrickson, Kyle Peterson, Wyatt Hanson and Pastor Scott.

To the right is a photo of our group as we wait for the outfitter vans to pick us up after portaging out of the Boundary Waters. We plan to return to the Boundary Waters in August 2022. Friends of Immanuel's youth will be welcome on next year's trip.





**CERESCO DAYS FLOAT DECORATING PARTY – WEDNESDAY, JULY 7 AT 6:30 P.M. AT IMMANUEL**

Come join the fun at Immanuel as we decorate this year's church float with our Vacation Bible School theme of "In The Wild". We'll need help on July 7th setting up the palm trees, stuffed animals and other "wild" things to promote this year's Ceresco Community Vacation Bible School during the Ceresco Days parade.

Plan to join the float the evening of Friday, July 9<sup>th</sup> as we hand out VBS flyers and other things to parade attendees.



**Please remember Immanuel's homebound members in your prayers:**

**John Christiansen**

1509 County Rd. B – Ceresco, NE 68017  
402.429.6475

**Marie Johnson**

2425 Folkways Blvd, #336 – Lincoln NE 68521  
402.438.5618 (home) 402.417.9537 (cell)

**Dale Rexilius**

c/o Tabitha GracePointe  
4620 Randolph St, #203 – Lincoln NE 68510 402.484.9318

# June 2021 Immanuel Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 8 am – Church Council breakfast meeting at Immanuel
6 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time	7 7 pm Vacation Bible School working session at Immanuel	8	9	10	11	12
13 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time	21 7 pm Vacation Bible School working session at Immanuel	22	23	24	25	26
27 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time	28	29	30	July 1	July 2	July 3
July 4 <b>INDEPENDENCE DAY</b>  9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time	<b>REMEMBER... THE CRESCO AREA COMMUNITY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS THIS SUMMER ON JULY 19<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH 23<sup>RD</sup> AT IMMANUEL</b>					



**Save the date for Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup> for photos to be taken at Immanuel.** The Huskers have an “away” football game with Michigan State that weekend so mark these dates on your calendar and

watch for more information as we get ready to have a new church directory for Immanuel. Universal Church Directories will be working with us on this project. We had to postpone the directory photography last year due to the pandemic.



## Prayer List

Christie Bevington (Health – member)  
Matthew Weaver (Health – member)  
Renos Kunz (Health - Dave's Father)  
Bill Bohling (Cancer – Crystal Haake's Father)  
Nancy Lind-Olson (Pneumonia – Olson)  
Connie Hansen (Cancer – Kent & Teresa)  
Elaine Groathouse (Alzheimer Memory Care - Teresa's Mother)  
Gary & Rhonda Westendorf (Health – Wischhof)  
Amanda Ray (Cancer – Hedges)  
Larry Russel (Health – Freeman)  
Lora Robinson (Health – Fran's sister)  
Mike Hnizda (Health – Fran's brother)  
Jo Ann Koepke (Health & Safety – Janis' sister)  
Judy Nord (Cancer – Christensen)  
Andrea Christensen (Health – Christensen)  
Belinda Basel (Cancer – Otto)  
Rob Bonow (Throat Cancer – Otto)  
Heather Lucht (Health – Hanson)  
Ron Weltruski (Bone cancer – Hedges)  
Lani Swanson (Covid – L Pearson)  
Kim Pearson (Health – L Pearson)  
Makena Garrison (17 yrs old – Neurofibromatosis – Bevington)  
Sydney Kenning & Family (Strength & comfort)  
Health & Protection of Everyone

### **JUNE USHERS**

June 7 - Ray & Jane Otto  
June 14 - Fran Freeman  
June 21 - Jon & Janis Bible  
June 28 - Doug & Shawn Rudeen

### **JUNE LECTORS**

June 7 - Ray Otto  
June 14 - Fran Freeman  
June 21 - Janis Bible  
June 28 - Shawn Rudeen

## **JUNE**

Food Pantry  
Canned Fruits