

Our Mission: Bringing together an ecumenical coalition of Quad City area churches to help feed the hungry, offer emergency assistance to those in crisis, and provide a transitional housing program for women and children who are victims of domestic violence or human trafficking.

Lay Aside the Weight of Discouragement



Discouragement often feels circumstantially determined, something we can't help feeling because powerful forces beyond our control are causing it. That's why our response to discouragement is often passive — we sit, weighed down with a heavy, spiritual listlessness looking at the world through the grey, bleak lenses of fear.

Yes, discouragement is a species of fear. It is a loss of courage. We don't always recognize discouragement as fear because it can feel like hopelessness with a side of cynicism. We might even call it depression because we have an accumulation of fears that are intermingled and seem somewhat undefined. And, of course, if we're discouraged, we feel depressed. We feel like giving up.

And when we feel like giving up, we are vulnerable to a whole range of temptations. When we give in to those temptations, our sin just confirms our discouragement, and we easily slip into a cycle in which fear drives us into hiding, hiding opens us to sins of selfishness and self-indulgence, and caving in increases our sense of helplessness and self-pity. So we sit, weighed down by fear and condemnation...feeling stuck.

But God doesn't want us feeling stuck. Jesus didn't endure crucifixion so we would live defeated. He has purchased our forgiveness of sins, our freedom from the weight of fear, and our power to overcome the world, our flesh, and the devil. Discouragement is not as powerful as it feels. We can defeat it if we confront it.

Discouragement Defeated

A famous biblical example of discouragement is when the twelve spies returned after scoping out the Promised Land. They reported the land indeed "[flowed] with milk and honey," but the inhabitants were "strong," some were giants, and the cities "fortified and very large" (Numbers 13:27-28). Ten of the twelve spies said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are" (Numbers 13:31). This so discouraged the people that they refused to trust in God's promises and power. As a result, they wandered in the wilderness forty more years. Only Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, lived to see those fears defeated.

Another famous example was the discouragement Saul and his army felt over Goliath's challenges and taunts (1 Samuel 17). Fear immobilized all the warriors until a teenage shepherd named David arrived with faith in a huge God. He stood up to the giant, and dropped Goliath face down with one stone (1 Samuel 17:49). Then suddenly full of courage, Israel decimated the Philistines.

A New Testament example is found in Acts 4, after the same council that had facilitated Jesus's death threatened Peter, John, and the rest of the Christians. When the apostles reported these threats, everyone felt the seriousness. But the church responded very differently than the ancient Israelites or Saul's army. When tempted with discouragement, instead of being immobilized by fear, they responded with faith, asked God for help, and as a result "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

Strengthen Your Weak Knees

While we are not facing fortified Canaanite cities, or giants with javelins, or councils with crosses, we face a number of things in life that tempt us to lose courage.

One morning recently, discouragement settled over me like a thick, grey fog. I didn't even recognize what it was at first. I just felt fear creeping over me that all my hope in God would end up disappointed. My courage started draining out of me, and suddenly I didn't have energy to read my Bible or pray or do anything spiritually meaningful.

Then I caught myself and said, "Why am I fearing that God won't be faithful?"

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Then I recalled numerous times when God had been wonderfully faithful to me, as well as numerous times I had felt needlessly discouraged — just like this time. I began to talk back to my fears and to the devil: “No! I’m not falling for this again!” I prayed for God’s help. Then I took up my Bible and in my scheduled readings read this wonderful text:

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:12–14)

Faith-fueled courage poured in and revived me. The gray, depressing outlook changed into a color-filled world of hope in God. And my spirit, which just minutes before had covered in discouragement, was full of the bold energy of the Holy Spirit.

Confront Discouragement

Satan loves to tempt us with discouragement because he knows we are easily intimidated by what is or looks dangerous and overwhelming. He casts God as the bad guy for bringing us to this hopeless place, and then encourages us to feel justified in feeling discouraged. The way out of this demonic deception is to confront the discouragement head on. How do we do this?

- First, we ask, “Why are you cast down, O my soul?” (Psalm 42:5). Press for an answer.
- Second, we preach to our souls to “hope in God” (Psalm 42:5). Don’t listen to discouraging self-talk; preach courage-building promises.
- Third, we lift our drooping hands and strengthen our weak knees (Hebrews 12:12). Pick up our Bibles and get on our praying knees and pursue the strength that God supplies (1 Peter 4:11).
- Fourth, we make straight paths for our feet (Hebrews 12:13). Get out of the mental or physical place that is making us stumble in discouragement.
- Fifth, we strive for holiness (Hebrews 12:14). We are made holy through faith in the justifying work of Christ, and we walk in holiness through the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5). Walking by faith in Christ is not easy. It is a striving (Hebrews 4:11); it is a fight (1 Timothy 6:12). It’s meant to be hard. God has all sorts of sanctifying good for us in all the fighting he requires of us.

When we’re discouraged, remember the Canaanites, remember Goliath, remember the council, and remember your own stories — when God showed up to deliver you from discouragement. What discourages us is not as powerful as it feels in the moment. We overcome our fear by confronting our discouragement and exercising faith in God’s promises. Those are precious moments in which we will see the power of God.

Blessings!

Mel

Thank You!



Thank you, WQAD and Erikson Chevrolet. Churches United was the recipient of the Three Degree Guarantee in March.

Welcome Destiny Baptist Church

Our newest member church is Destiny Baptist Church of Christ, located at 226 - 17th St in Rock Island, Illinois, inside of the Holiday Inn Hotel, Suite 9. Rev. Donald William Johnson has been the pastor of the church since it was founded in 1993.



Rev. Donald William Johnson and his wife, Rhonda.



Support Churches United of the Quad City Area by donating to Birdies for Charity at: <https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate> Our bird number is 572.



All final pledges are due by July 1, 2022.

Birdies for Charity

Chip in to support Churches United of the Quad City Area by donating to us through Birdies for Charity. The 2022 Birdies for Charity program has officially kicked-off and you can donate today by clicking the link:

<https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate>

Once again, participating charities are guaranteed a 5% bonus on their collected pledges.

The John Deere Classic has moved up a week to June 29 - July 3, which means that pledges are due by July 1, 2022.

Food Pantry Coordinators Needed

We have openings for food pantry coordinators. This is a part-time, volunteer position.

Responsibilities: Managing a food pantry, including organizing and recruiting volunteers, ordering food, and coordinating the distribution of food to those in need.

Requirements:

- ServSafe certified.
 - Fully vaccinated against COVID.
 - Follow CDC protocols.
 - Must be at least 18 years old.
- Training will be provided.

For more information or to submit a resume, contact Betsy Vanausdeln at 563-332-5002 or by email at bvanausdeln@cuqca.org.



Thanksgiving in July Sponsors Needed



Our annual food collection drive and fundraiser to support our hunger ministries needs sponsors. We encourage churches and area businesses to participate. There is no fee for sponsorship. Sponsors are asked to host a collection box during the month of July. Sponsor logos will be featured prominently on collection boxes, in our newsletter, and on social media. All proceeds from the food drive will remain in the Quad Cities area.

For more information, contact Betsy Vanausdeln at 563-332-5002 or by email at bvanausdeln@cuqca.org.



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For newsletter submissions, contact Susan Schwartz, our communications director at shstennis08@gmail.com



Give Today to Churches United

Online at <http://www.cuqca.org/donate.php>

Call us at (563) 332-5002

Mail or drop off your gift:
Churches United of the Quad City Area
2535 Tech Drive, Suite 205
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Thank You!

Donate, keep up-to-date, and check out daily reflections by following us on Facebook at:



<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchesUnitedoftheQuadCityArea/>



Support CUQCA by designating us as your charity and by purchasing items from our Wish List.

https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/19QO2R6L5908/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_4?_encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist



Do you have a group that would like to help feed those in need in our community?

Our meal site at Zion Lutheran Church in Davenport needs groups to provide and serve meals.

For more information, contact our associate director, Betsy Vanausdeln at 563-332-5002 or by email at bvanausdeln@cuqca.org.



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