

Lay Coordinator ♦ January 2008

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Snow, snow, snow everywhere! We can sure tell winter is here! The Library Committee at **Madison Plymouth UCC** is recommending *How Starbucks Saved My Life* by Michael Gates Gill that I must admit is an intriguing title. Sounds tempting to me, a good book in front of a nice fire and a fair trade cup of coffee nearby!



Christmas cookie season is behind us and we are heading towards soup time! **Fort Atkinson Friedens** is holding their annual Chili Lunch 11:30 to 1:00 on Sunday, Feb 10th complete with raffle and door prizes. There will be a Jambalaya Supper at **Monroe St Johns** Jan 11th hosted by their Biloxi work trip members. Feb 3rd is Souper Bowl Sunday and the youth at **Evansville Congregational** will be raising money that day for the Evansville Ecumenical Care Closet. **Columbus Olivet** is encouraging everyone to stock up for the Super Bowl by buying the pizzas and garlic bread they are selling to raise money for youth to go to summer camp. Summer camp sounds far away right now but it will be here before we know it!

Thumbs up to **Madison First Congregational** and **Paoli Zwingli** who raised \$3,200 for the Food Resource Bank that will go to feed hungry people in Cambodia. Last year when this joint project of raising soybeans began, they estimated that they would raise around \$1,000 and they surprised even themselves with their fantastic results! In addition to raising money to feed the hungry, one of the many by-products of this joint project was a new sense of understanding between a small rural church and a large urban one.

And thumbs up to **Monroe St Johns** who collected over a thousand pounds of food during their Thanksgiving Food Drive. Speaking of St John's, they will celebrate the burning of their mortgage Feb 3rd since they made enough money at Farm Technology Days to pay off their remaining construction debt. Congratulations St Johns!

Fort Atkinson First Congregational will be staffing their local food pantry for five weeks beginning Jan 10th.

Snow can't keep us from fellowship time! **Madison Community of Hope** is holding a women and girls event. January 26th, 7:00-9:00 they will gather for a cozy evening of story telling with professional storyteller, Sue Black. Ecumenical Lenten lunches begin on Wednesday February 13th in Whitewater and **Whitewater Congregational** will be hosting February 27th. **Monroe St Johns** is hosting a beading class Jan 27th 2:00-4:00 and their Men's Euchre Fun Nights return starting Jan 24th. I just learned how to play Euchre over Thanksgiving from my son Pete. Does this mean I am officially Swiss now!

The quilting group at **Madison Orchard Ridge** meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month 9:30 am until noon in their Friendship Hall and they welcome newcomers, all are invited to join them.

The Women's Book Group at **Madison Orchard Ridge** will meet Jan 10th to discuss *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See. For February they will be reading *Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton. The Theological Discussion Group at **Madison Community of Hope** have chosen *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver for their winter read. I have heard so much about this book; a theological discussion about local food would be fascinating!

Madison Community of Hope is also hosting four adult forum sessions on death and dying beginning Jan 13th. The discussions will be based on Bill Moyer's four-part series "On Our Own Terms: Moyers on Dying. Originally produced for PBS, these programs will help participants think about the many issues and concerns around end of life care.

Madison First Congregational is beginning another Unwrapping Our Gifts series beginning Jan 15th. This popular series last eight weeks and gives participants the chance to explore their faith through Bible study, discussion and prayer.

The Prison Ministry Project is an outreach ministry of the UCC here in the Southwest. Rev. Jerry Hancock will be preaching at **Monroe St. Johns** Jan 13th about the work of the Prison Ministry Project and the difference it is making in inmates lives. As part of this ministry, I had the privilege of being part of a group who attended Christmas Eve service at Fox Lake Correctional Facility. It was a moving experience; I hope everyone gets the chance to learn more about this important work.

Through contributions, shrimp boils and work camps, the churches of the Southwest Association have supported Back Bay Mission of Biloxi Mississippi for many years. August 10-16th **Sauk City First UCC** will be taking a group down to Back Bay for a workweek of putting their faith in action.

Besides my Lay Coordinator hat, I also serve as Coordinator for the Wisconsin Council of Health and Human Service Ministries. The Council is made up of 11 agencies that serve troubled youth, the elderly, the poor, the developmentally disabled and families in crisis. Back Bay Mission is one of these of these agencies. On behalf of these agencies, I want to thank you all for your support of this important work. Please consider setting aside some time during your services on Sunday Jan 27th to celebrate WCHHSM Sunday. Worship resources are available on the Conference web site.



Today's parting words come from **Sauk City First UCC**. As mom was preparing breakfast her two young sons were fighting over who got pancakes first. Seeing the situation as an opportunity to teach a moral lesson she said, "If Jesus was sitting here he would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'" Johnny quickly turned to his younger brother and said, "Okay Alex, you be Jesus!"

Happy Winter! Go and Serve.

