

# SHALOM

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## **FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER**

The lectionary text for the 25<sup>th</sup> of January was from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1, verses 14-20. As you might guess in the Gospel of Mark, the call story is brief. It begins, “Now after John was arrested...and Jesus comes up to these fishermen and says, “follow me, and I’ll make you fish for people.” We discussed this text at 3 of the clergy district meetings last week and the consensus was that “all” can be dangerous (John was arrested) and often vague (follow me, you’ll be catching people). That led me to think about this process we have when people in the Association begin to sense a Call for God to be a Pastor or a Commissioned Minister. We ask them to constitute a discernment committee, members from their local church to help them think through this sense of call. We provide them with questions and have people whom they know and trust press them a bit about what this call is, what gifts they have to respond, what gifts folk see in them. It helps them see if this is truly a call from God (maybe dangerous to your current plans and possibly vague, exactly what am I to do?) or not. Most of the time it is a wonderful process in that it often surfaces insights into people that they themselves are unaware and it often encourages people to take the next step.

So I thought, shouldn’t we all be in the midst of a discernment committee, aren’t all Baptized Christians called? Maybe we all need a discernment committee to help us see our gifts and find out where they can best be used. My experience is that being encouraged and supported and honestly challenged by those around you provides the courage to take the leap. So don’t be reluctant to call out those gifts from those in your congregation. Help them see what they can do. But, be careful, it could be dangerous!

With Great Hope,

Bob

***SPRING TRAINING EVENT FOR EDUCATORS***

“It takes a Church to Raise a Christian” training event will happen Saturday, March 28 at First Congregational UCC in Fort Atkinson. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Leah Gunning Francis, Associate Professor at Eden Theological Seminary. Workshops will include:

The Teaching Ministry in the Life of the Congregation  
Super Duper Super  
The Hidden Curriculum  
Embedded Curriculum  
Adult Education Enneagrams  
Cattail and Cottonwood Curriculum

Cost: \$25.00 before March 6 and \$30.00 after

**CONTACT THE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE, UCC at [www.wcucc.org](http://www.wcucc.org) or [cmaretell@wcucc.org](mailto:cmaretell@wcucc.org) or 608-846-7880**

### ***A DATE TO KEEP IN MIND AND PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR***

**SPRING MEETING THEME:  
LIVING IN GOD’S CREATION; REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**

We’ll gather at St. John’s UCC in Monroe on May 2. Here is the agenda:

9:00 a.m.	Registration and Refreshments
9:30 a.m.	Welcome
	Roll Call of Churches
	About this local church
	Hymn Sing
10:00 a.m.	Presentation by Ryan Schryver
12:15 p.m.	Stories from Congregations
12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1: 45 p.m.	Business Meeting
	Election of Officers
	Acceptance of 2010 Budget
	Introduction of New Clergy
	Partnership Updates
	Announcements & Other Business
2:15 p.m.	Worship
3:00 p.m.	Adournment

You will receive registration materials in the mail in the coming months.

***UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SUPPORT STAFF EVENT***

The Annual Meeting of the United Church of Christ Support Staff will happen in Wisconsin, April 16-19, 2009. United Church of Christ support staffs from local congregations, Associations, Conference and National Office are invited. Contact the Conference Office for more information. [cmartel@wcucc.org](mailto:cmartel@wcucc.org) or 608-846-7880. Also see the Wisconsin Conference Web site: [www.wcucc.org](http://www.wcucc.org)

### **HOLY LAND TRIP AUGUST 2009**

In August the Southwest Association Bethlehem Partnership Committee is offering another opportunity to travel to the Holy Land. The trip will have three segments and participants can choose to participate in one, two or all of them.

People will leave on August 19 for the first segment which will focus on visiting the traditional holy sites and learning about the life, culture and issues in Israel/Palestine. The second segment will be at our partner church, Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. We will attend an international conference on "Land, People, and Identities" from August 23-August 29. Following the conference, there will be an opportunity to extend the trip and spend some time at the Dead Sea, Qumran, Eilat, and Petra in Jordan.

Leaders for this trip have traveled to the Holy Land several times. If you are interested in signing up for or learning more about this trip, contact group leaders Bonnie Van Overbeke at [bonnievano@aol.com](mailto:bonnievano@aol.com) or Nancy Baumgardner at (608) 274-6211. We would like to have all those who are interested express their interest by March 10<sup>th</sup>. Please indicate if you would like to participate in one or all three of the options. We will organize the trip accordingly. Plane and conference reservations and down payments will need to be made in April so we are asking for firm decisions by April 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **AN INVITATION FROM THE SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

During the past year, the Social Concerns Committee funded grants for the following mission programs in 2008.

Madison Orchard Ridge – mission project	\$ 500.00
Sharon Remer – Human Rights Torch tee shirts	125.00
Madison Lake Edge – Mission Trip	1,000.00
Madison Plymouth Laura Stalder – UEK Young Ambassadors	1,000.00
Madison Community of Hope – Madison Urban Ministry	1,000.00
Madison First Congregational – UCC Ad	2,000.00
Darlington Immanuel- Grant County – Habitat for Humanity	2,000.00
Wisconsin Conference – Donation	<u>100.00</u>
	\$7,725.00

### **Two upcoming events that might be of interest:**

"Finding Renewal Energy Through Shared Ministries" (28<sup>th</sup> Annual Rural Ministries Conference)  
March 1-3, 2009, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA

"People of Faith United for Justice" - Advocacy Day at the Capital with Dr. Michael Kinnamon,  
General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. March 10, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Madison.

## **IN OUR PRAYERS**

For Cathy Carlson and family in the loss of granddaughter, Natalie Ann

For Our Students “In-Care” preparing for Ordained Ministry:

Carla Babiarz

Patricia Campbell

Craig Jan-McMahon

Twink Jan-McMahon

Carolyn Kennedy

Kerry Parker

Gayle Tucker

Dennis Ureche

Julia Weaver

Sara Wilcox

For Our Congregations at:

Fox Lake, Vivian Meier, Pastor

Grand Marsh, Barb Merwin, Pastor

Janesville, Wes Bixby, Pastor

## **DISTRICT MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY**

Clergy gather for bible study, prayer and theological discussion of a paper. This month we'll be discussing a paper by Dr. Eugene Wehrli, who taught New Testament at Eden Seminary. The paper is entitled, “Scripture Alone: The Bible and the Church. We'll be e-mailing the paper out soon. We meet:

District IV	February 17	Evansville	9 a.m.
District I	February 18	Dodgeville	8 a.m.
District III	February 18	Portage	12:30 p.m.
District II	February 25	Madison	8 a.m.

## **THEOLOGICAL STUDY GROUP TO BEGIN NEW BOOK**

The Contemporary Theology Study Group will begin a new book in February – a good time to join the group. We'll be reading a new book by Douglas John Hall, “Why Christian?” Some words from the back cover...”in these dialogues with doubt, Hall enters into an earnest search with a young inquirer – a composite of undergraduates, graduates, clergy working people, his own children, who is on the edge of Christian faith.” Contact the Association Office if you have interest.

## **SERVE ON THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE?**

The Southwest Association Nominating Committee will be forming in January to consider the roster for elections that take place at the Spring Association Meeting. Anyone who would like to serve on the Nominating Committee should contact Bob Mutton at the Association Office or Nancy Potter at 608-206-0731.

## **CONGREGATIONS SEEKING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP**

Madison Orchard Ridge – seeking ½ time Associate (clergy or laity encouraged to apply)

## **CONGREGATIONS TO BE SEEKING**

New Glarus Swiss – Interims, John Jewell & Petra Streiff

Whitewater Cong. – Interim, Craig Jan-McMahon

## **FROM THE CONFERENCE YOUTH COORDINATOR, LISA HART**

Online registration for General Synod opened on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Registration for youth and chaperones who are going to General Synod as part of the Youth Trip (Service Experience) need to follow special instructions for registering. The youth trip is open to anyone who will be entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the Fall of 2009 to those who graduate in the Spring of 2009.

**DO NOT REGISTER ON THE MAIN REGISTRATION PAGE.** You need to contact me to find out how to register as part of the Wisconsin Conference Group.

The cost is \$515 for chaperones and \$465 for youth. The difference in cost is due to the higher registration fee for adults at General Synod (adults are \$175 and youth are \$115). The rest of the cost covers your lodging at Aquinas College from Wednesday afternoon (June 24) through Wednesday morning (July 1). It also covers the cost of thirteen (13) meals (Wed. dinner, daily breakfast, plus lunch and dinner on the three service project days). Other meals will be extra.

Cost for transportation is still being determined. For more information please email or call Lisa Hart **CLERGY RETREAT TOPIC IS STEWARDSHIP IN DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES**

The Southeast and Southwest Clergy Retreat will happen at Pilgrim Center February 8-10, 2009. The topic will be “Stewardship in Difficult Economic Times” – a rather timely topic. This will include a look at stewardship in the congregation, as well as personal stewardship. Steve Clapp, president of Christian Community will be the keynote speaker. Steve has authored or co-authored over 30 books on religious faith and congregational life including “The Desires of Your Heart: Financial Giving and the Spiritual Life.” A quote from Loren Mead of the Alban Institute, “The Christian community’s stewardship resources offer a very practical approach which should produce excellent results for congregations which are facing stewardship challenges realistically. These resources push beyond the financial to the spiritual dimensions of financial health.”

We will begin the retreat with dinner on Sunday, the 8<sup>th</sup>, and end with lunch on the 10<sup>th</sup>. You can register by calling or e-mailing the Association Office. The cost of the retreat will be \$100.00. Partial scholarships are available upon request.

### **FEBRUARY 2009**

- 3**      **Formula Agreement Conference, DeForest, 10 a.m.**
- 4**      **Periodic Support Consultations, Assoc. Office, 12 Noon**
- 5**      **Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Verona, 9:30 a.m.**
- 6**      **Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.**
- 8**      **Southeast/Southwest Clergy Retreat, Pilgrim Center ‘til 10<sup>th</sup>**
- 10**     **Lay Life & Leadership Division, Assoc. Office, 5:30 p.m.**
- 11**     **Congregational Development and Renewal Committee, DeForest, 11:30 a.m.**
- 12**     **Christian Education Division, Assoc. Office, 5:30 p.m.**

- 12 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Evansville, 9:30 a.m.
- 12 Feminist Study Group, Association Office, 3 p.m.
- 12 Division on Church & Ministry, Assoc. Office, 5 p.m.
- 15 Installation of Phil Haslanger, Fitchburg, 10 a.m.
- 17 District IV, Evansville, 9 a.m.
- 17 Barth Study Group, Assoc. Office, 12 Noon
- 18 District I, Dodgeville, 8 a.m.
- 18 District III, Portage, 12:30 p.m.
- 19 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 19 UEK Working Group, Mutton/Ames, 12:15 p.m.
- 20 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.
- 22 Wisconsin Conference Staff Retreat, Pilgrim Center 'til 24
- 25 Ash Wednesday
- 25 District II, Madison, 8 a.m.
- 26 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Evansville, 9:30 a.m.
- 26 Social Concerns Committee, Assoc. Office, 12 Noon

**MARCH**

- 2 Bd. of Directors, WI Conference, DeForest, 10 a.m.
- 4 Periodic Support Consultations, 12 Noon
- 5 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 5 Executive Committee of the Association, 5 p.m.
- 6 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.