

SHALOM

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER

One of our Theological study Groups is reading an interesting book by Elizabeth Johnson entitled, "Quest for the Living God...Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God." She starts out by saying that we are living in "a golden age of discovery," we are witnessing nothing less than "a revolution in the theology of God. Aspects long forgotten are brought into new relationship with current events with the result that the depths of divine compassion are appreciated in ways not previously imagined." This is indeed a hopeful word for us.

She then goes on to present an analysis of work by Karl Rahner. He uses the metaphor of "a wintery season" when referring to the situation of faith in the modern world. Listen to a few quotes:

"a person can no longer be a Christian out of social convention or inherited custom. To be a Christian now requires a personal decision, the kind of decision that brings about a change of heart and sustains long-term commitment."

"When people come to church, they do not leave their complex inner and outer worlds at the door, but bring the ambiguities right up to the altar. Since mature spirituality requires integrating the basic experiences of one's life into a wholeness before God, modernity forms a critical element in the act of faith."

"much of what people hear in the preaching and teaching of the church draws on a primitive idea of God, unworthy of belief, rather than communicating the reality, beauty, wonder, and the strange generosity of the mystery of God"

Continuing the metaphor of winter – "all these leaves and fruits that unfurled in the season when Christianity was dominant in the culture, have fallen away. The trees are left bare and the cold wind blows. In such a season, belief must get back to basics."

But then too, a word of hope... "When there are no leaves on the trees you can look deeper in the forest in the winter."

Enjoy the summer.

Bob

SEARCH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS PENNINGS FOR ASSOCIATE

On June 7th, the congregation at Orchard Ridge UCC in Madison will vote on the recommendation of their Search Committee to call Rev. Ken Pennings to be their Associate for Congregational Ministries. Ken has served as a youth pastor for five years, minister of evangelism, discipleship and assimilation for five years and as a church planting missionary for seven years. Currently Ken holds a half-time position with the Wisconsin Council of Churches.

SOUTHEAST ASSOCIATION SELECTS ACTING ASSOCIATION MINISTER

The Rev. Dr. Karen Elizabeth King, who has served as an Area Conference Minister on the Staff of the Penn. Central Conference, will begin her duties as Acting Association Minister of the Southeast Association on July 1st. She has served in the position in Penn Central since 1993. She was educated at Boston University, received a M. Div from Andover Newton Theological School and a D. Min from Eden Theological Seminary. Please welcome her to the Wisconsin Conference.

IN OUR PRAYERS (Please add these petitions to your daily prayers)

For Ken Pennings and our congregation at Orchard Ridge, Madison
For Karen Elizabeth King as she begins in the Southeast Association
For the Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Conference
For Our Congregations at:

Mazomanie – Carolyn Kennedy, Pastor

McFarland – Wayne Shannon, Pastor

Middleton – Jim Iliff, Pastor

GERMAN PARTNERSHIP SEEKING HOSTS

The UEK (German Partnership with the Moers Church District) Working Group is seeking host families for the 13 German Guests who will arrive October 10 and be with us for 10 days. The expectation is that a host will have the guest or guests for about 4 to 5 of the 10 day stay. Early in the fall, hosts will gather to coordinate activities. One of the activities will be a retreat at Pilgrim Center on October 16 and 17 to discuss the Book of Acts. Rev. Dr. Mark Yurs will facilitate. If you have interest in hosting or participating in the retreat, contact the Association Office.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Fitchburg Memorial Seeking ½ time Associate

CONGREGATIONS TO BE SEEKING

New Glarus Swiss – Interims, John Jewell & Petra Streiff

Whitewater Congregational – interim, Craig Jan-McMahon

DARLINGTON IMMANUEL TO CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

On July 12, 2009 at 12:30 p. Immanuel UCC in Darlington will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of this historic event and the rich heritage that has been nurtured over the years, both by the founding families and the new families that have become vital part of Immanuel. For more information, call the church at (608) 776-4110.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATION – CHIAPAS, MEXICO

The Wisconsin Conference is offering Lay/Clergy Schools in Chiapas, Mexico July 6-18, 2009. We have brochures available or check out the Wisconsin Conference Webpage.

YOUNG AMBASSADORS EXCHANGE GROUP NEEDS YOUR HELP

This summer the Wisconsin youth and young adults who traveled to Germany last year will host 15 folk in return. We'll be working at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi for one of our three weeks together. As trip costs have increased, we are finding it hard to meet the anticipated expenses of this exchange. We're continuing with fundraising efforts, but would also like to appeal to individuals and churches in the Association who might be able to contribute to our cause. Perhaps there is a congregation that does not have a youth group of their own, but would like to support the mission work of the young. Well, that sounds like us! Any contribution would be appreciated and may be sent to the Association Office to the attention of Sally Iverson.

BECOME A STORYTELLER THIS SUMMER!

Midge Miles is conducting a workshop/retreat, **Ministry in Story**, July 30 –August 2nd. It will provide teaching on the role of storytelling in the Judeo-Christian tradition; skills on how select, learn and tell sacred stories; processes for incorporating stories and storytelling into various ministry settings; ways to design worship and celebration through story and symbol; and retreat sessions that explore our own personal sacred stories. The program is held at Shalom House in West Bend beginning with dinner and opening session on Thursday and sessions on Friday & Saturday, 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. through Sunday 9:30 – 12:30 p.m. This is a great summer opportunity to immerse yourself in the world of sacred storytelling, animate your life and ministry and have fun! To receive a PDF version of a flyer, contact Midge at midge.miles@att.net or call (262) 306-7988.

WILCOX TO BE ORDAINED

Sara Wilcox will be Ordained on June 21 at First Congregational UCC in Madison. Sara is a graduate of Chicago Theological Seminary and is a member of First Congregational UCC in Madison. She currently resides in Asheville, North Carolina where she will be one of the pastors in a new church start.

GENERAL WHAT? It's coming up soon!

WHAT: General Synod 27
WHEN: June 26-30, 2009
WHERE: Grand Rapids, Michigan

OK, so you find yourself asking again...General What??? General Synod 27!

Every two years, the governing body of the UCC meets to celebrate the life of the denomination through worship, workshops, and dialogues focusing on topics important in the life of the church. Each of the 38 UCC Conferences sends delegates to General Synod. I will be one of the delegates representing the Wisconsin Conference UCC in Grand Rapids. This year's theme is "Immerse Yourself!"

I am beginning to make plans for my trip to General Synod in June, and wanted to share my experience with you along the way. At the end of April, I participated in an orientation session with the delegates from the Southwest Association. The meeting helped prepare us for plenary sessions, including discussions on resolutions, election of national officers, and the proposed budget for the UCC.

A few of the things that I am looking forward to at General Synod include:

River City Saturday – Wow! The possibilities are endless! River City Saturday will be a day of worship, workshops, music, and inspirational speakers (Eugene Robinson from the Washington Post, Ray Suarez from PBS, The News Hour with Jim Lehrer, Barbara Brown Taylor, author of "Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith," and many more. I am excited!

Resolutions – I am quite curious to hear the debates. The resolutions that have been submitted for General Synod 27 include topics such as global food concerns, the prevention of HIV, climate change, and physician assisted dying. As a delegate, I will not know which resolution I will be assigned until I reach Grand Rapids. I will read through each of the proposed resolutions before my trip in anticipation of the discussions.

Want to learn more about General Synod? Check out the UCC's website at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/>. Immerse yourself! Peace!

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE AND FUN

High School Youth and Graduating Seniors: A trip to Back Bay Mission – Biloxi, Mississippi with Youth from the Association and youth from our German Partners. July 11-19. Transportation (BUS) FOOD, LODGING, ALONG WITH SIDE TRIPS TO THE St. Louis Arch, Graceland and Cape Girardeau, MO. Total Cost \$400. Contact the Association Office ((608) 244-3350 or Rev. Bill Kapp at (608) 643-8387 or Bill_Kapp@saukcity.org

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

(We have brochures & additional info at the SWWA Office)

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO GLOBALIZATION

A 2009 Theological Colloquy at Lakeland College June 9-11. The event will include participants from the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, Germany and the Evangelical & Reformed Synod of Honduras.

2009 WASHINGTON ISLAND FORUM – June 22-29 – “Encountering Jesus”

with the Rev. John Bell from the Iona Community and Dr. Marlene Kropf, of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

EMBRACING AGING IN THE CHURCH – May 29-30 – with Dr. Susan McFadden of UW Oshkosh and Rev. John McFadden, former Senior Pastor of First Congregational UCC in Appleton, WI.

GERMAN GUESTS TO BE IN SWWA

We have lots of lead-time – our ecumenical partners from the Moers Church District in Germany will be with us October 10-20. October 14 and 15 we will be together at Pilgrim Center to do a study on the Book of Acts. There will be 13 folk from Germany with us. If you have interest in hosting or being part of the retreat, contact the Association Office.

LAY ACADEMY YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

A wonderful team has crafted yet another year of Lay Academy to focus on Youth Ministry Skills. Dates and topics are:

- * Faith Foundations – September 25-26, 2009
- * Theory of Youth Ministry – November 13-14, 2009
- * Leadership Development – January 29-30, 2010
- * Management Matters – March 5-6, 2010
- * How to Program for Success – April 23-24, 2010

Excellent instructors in the field will teach each weekend (Friday 7-10, Saturday 9-3) at the Conference Center in DeForest. For registration information, visit our website at

www.wcucc.org

JUNE/JULY 2009 CALENDAR

- 3** Periodic Support Consultation Committee, Association Office, 12 Noon
- 4** Barth Study Group, Association Office, 2 p.m.
- 4** Executive Committee, Association Office, 5 p.m.
- 9** Lay Life & Leadership Division, Assoc. Office, 5:30 p.m.
- 10** Social Concerns Committee, Association Office, 12 Noon
- 11** Music & Worship Workshop, Green Lake
- 11** Board of Directors, Wisc. Conference, Pilgrim Center, 6 p.m.
- 12** Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting, Green Lake ‘til 14th
- 18** Feminist Study Group, Association Office, 3 p.m.

- 18 Division on Church & Ministry, Association Office, 5 p.m.
- 21 Ordination of Sara Wilcox, Madison First Cong., 3 p.m.
- 26 General Synod of the UCC, Grand Rapids, MI until 30th

JULY

- 4 Young Ambassadors arrive from German, here 'til 24th
- 12 100th Anniversary Celebration, Darlington Immanuel, 12:30 p.m.
- 14 Contemporary Reading Group, Association Office, 1:30 p.m.