

SHALOM

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

VOLUME XXVIII, ISSUE 11, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 2009

FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER

A committee met last week to set OCWM goals for 2010. During the meeting Dave Moyer handed out a paper prepared by the Lake Institute on Faith and giving entitled, "Religious giving in Uncertain Times." I thought you might be interested in a few of the bullet points:

- * Recessions have little effect on religious giving.
- * Even in times of recession, religious congregations remain the number one recipient of all household dollars given to charity. Over 50% of all household charitable giving goes to religion, mainly congregations.
- * In times of recession the decline in giving to religion when adjusted for inflation has been -0.1% compared to an average growth in non-recession years of 2.8%.
- * Giving to religion fell in 6 of the 12 recession years and did not fall in any year that was not a recession year.
- * The Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS) has found that donors with incomes under \$50,000 may stop giving when their personal economic circumstances worsen.
- * A 2003 study by the Independent Sector indicates that households worried about money may decrease their overall giving to religion from 20% to 50%.

Suggestions for Religious Congregations and Faith-based Nonprofits

- * Prepare a flat budget as you move from calendar year 2009 to 2010. At best do not plan for an increase in giving and/or pledging beyond 2%. It would also be wise to prepare a worst case scenario of a 5% loss in contributions in 2010.
- * Carefully analyze the demographics of your organization and your major donors. Congregations with large constituencies of retired people or unemployed people are likely to be more seriously affected by the uncertain economic climate.
- * Many congregations conduct their annual fundraising – stewardship – event in the late fall. Carefully analyze the pledging of the first wave of your stewardship program to discern your congregation's giving trend for 2010 as those who pledge early tend to be the larger and more faithful donors.
- * Pay close attention to your fourth quarter receipts – December in particular – as this may be a predictor for the coming year.
- * If your congregation is significantly dependent on a church endowment for support, serious thought must be given to the percent of draw to be made from the endowment in 2010. Bleeding your endowment to survive next year will not serve you well in subsequent years.
- * Monitor carefully your cash flow during the first six months of 2010. Do not allow your expenditures to exceed your income.

Bob

DISTRICT MEETINGS TO RESUME

Clergy District Meetings begin again in September. We'll discuss the gospel lesson from the lectionary for the upcoming week and discuss a theological paper. This month we'll be sending you a paper by Dale Bishop that he presented at the General Synod in Grand Rapids on race and religion.

We meet:

District IV	Evansville	9 a.m.	Sept. 15
District I	Dodgeville	8 a.m.	Sept. 16
District III	Portage	12:30 p.m.	Sept. 16
District II	Madison	8 a.m.	Sept. 23 (Plymouth UCC)

WOMEN AUTHORS STUDY GROUP (Formerly Feminist Study Group) BEGINS NEW BOOK

You are invited, both lay and clergy, to participate in a book study on "A BIG ENOUGH GOD" by Sara Maitland. We'll be meeting at the Association Office on Sept. 10 at 3 p.m. Let us know if you have interest. We will get a book for you.

THE GERMANS ARE COMING

Our partner church from the Moers Church District (near Dusseldorf) will send a delegation to visit the Southwest Association October 10-20. During that time folk from Germany will spend 10-14 in Mineral Point and 14-20 in the Madison area. On 16 and 17 the group (and anyone else who might have interest) will be on retreat at Pilgrim Center studying the Book of Acts under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Mark Yurs of Verona. We continue to see hosts for our partners. If you have interest, contact the Association Office.

ALSO – KEEP THE DATE OF October 15, following the Development Group meeting in Verona (at 12 noon). We'd like to have lunch and meet with Rev. Ferdinand Isigkeit, the Superintendent of the Kirchenkreis Moers. Just let us know if you can be with us to welcome him.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOHN!!

It's the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, so to honor one of the fathers of our Reformed Faith, there will be a lecture by Dr. Mark Burrows, Professor of the History of Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School. This will happen at Pilgrim Center on November 2nd. Keep the date – more info to follow.

IN OUR PRAYERS

For Julia Weaver as she is Ordained and Installed as a Chaplain
For the Search Committees at Fitchburg and New Glarus.
For the Son-in-law of Bonnie & John VanOverbeie who is hospitalized
For Ashley Graber of Monticello Washington Reformation and
For Laura Yurs of Verona Salem, both who were taken “In-Care” by the
Division on Church & Ministry
For our Congregations at:
Milton – Herb Saunders, Pastor
Mineral Point – Todd Smith Lippert, Pastor
Monroe – Mike Heath & Gretchen Sylvester, Pastors

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT GROUPS TO RESUME

The Development Groups will begin again in September. The groups meet twice a month and deal with a variety of pastoral issues. Those who have participated have felt supported in many ways by their colleagues. Any of the groups would be delighted to have you participate. We meet from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at:

Salem UCC in Verona on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays
Lake Edge UCC in Madison on the 1st and 3rd Fridays
Evansville Cong. UCC on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays

BOUNDARY TRAINING AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER

The Division on Church & Ministry will provide Boundary Training on September 24th at Salem UCC in Verona. The gathering begins at 9:30 and goes until 2:30. All those authorized by the Association are requested to take a boundary training course every 3 years. Contact the Association Office to reserve a place.

INTERIM TRAINING TO HAPPEN IN WAUSAU

The Commission on Church & Ministry is planning a day-long interim training event with Rev. Linda Kuhn. This will happen in Wausau on the 26th of September. Contact the Association Office for more information.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Fitchburg Memorial – seeking ½ time Associate
New Glarus Swiss – seeking a Senior Pastor

CONGREGATIONS TO BE SEEKING

Madison Lake Edge – Lisa Schoenwetter, Interim
Whitewater Congregational – Craig Jan-McMahon, Interim

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER CALENDAR FOR 2009

28-29 Conference Staff Retreat

30 Ordination of Julia Weaver, Community of Hope UCC, 2 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Church Development & Renewal, DeForest, 11:30 a.m.**
- 2 Periodic Support Consultation Committee, Association Office, 12 Noon**
- 3 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Verona, 9:30 a.m.**
- 3 Contemporary Theology Study Group, Association Office, 2 p.m.**
- 4 MDG, Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.**
- 8 Lay Life & Leadership Division, Association Office, 5:30 p.m.**
- 10 MDG, Evansville, 9:30 a.m.**
- 10 Social Concerns Committee, Association Office, 12:30 p.m.**
- 10 Feminist Study Group, Association Office, 3 p.m.**
- 10 Church & Ministry Division, Association Office, 5 p.m.**
- 14 Staff Meeting, DeForest, 9 a.m.**
- 15 District IV, Evansville, 9 a.m.**
- 16 District I – Dodgeville 8 a.m.**
- 16 District III, Portage, 12:30 p.m.**
- 17 MDG, Verona, 9:30 a.m.**
- 18 MDG, Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.**
- 23 District II, Madison Plymouth, 8 a.m.**
- 23 Authorized Lay Person Committee, Association Office, 2:30 p.m.**
- 24 MDG, Evansville, 9:30 a.m.**
- 24 Boundary Training, Verona Salem, 9:30 a.m.**
- 26 Interim Workshop, Wausau**
- 28-30 Great Lakes Staff Meeting**