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FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER

As you may know, we try to do Bible Study at all the gatherings of the Association. Normally, we study the Gospel lesson from the lectionary for the upcoming Sunday. This often prepares lay folk for the sermon on Sunday and may even give a bit of help to clergy.

Last week we had an interesting text from Luke. "I came to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled." This came from the mouth of Jesus. Bringing fire, wanting that fire now. I was stumped. Well, that is the advantage of having these studies. Meg suggested that maybe this fire was a symbol for some other kind of passion, some other kind of energy, something like a burning bush? Or someone burning for justice, burning for mercy. Then Kathleen asked, since this is from Luke, could that fire Jesus wants kindled have anything to do with the fire in Acts 2 – the tongues of fire. Could it be that Jesus wants that kind of fire kindled – the fire of the Spirit? Now we're getting somewhere. A little passion for Justice and Mercy, a little kindling by the Spirit.

Well, the conversation continued and took a number of different directions. It reminded me that I want to again encourage you to being your meetings with Bible Study. I am sure that the study we had led us to be kindled in ways we would not have been without it. Bible Study does set the tone for whatever meeting you're having. Take the time. It is our Book and we do need to keep it in front of us. It just might heat us up.

With the Greatest of Hope,

Bob

FALL ASSOCIATION MEETING THEME FOLLOWS 50TH

"Let it Shine... the UCC at 50" is the theme of the Fall Meeting of the Southwest Association. We are fortunate to have Rev. Dr. John Thomas, General Minister and President of the UCC as our keynote speaker. In addition, we'll get a peek at Windsor UCC's expanded facilities. The meeting will take place on

September 16 at Windsor UCC with registration beginning at 1:30 p.m. Registration materials will arrive soon. Here is a look at the tentative agenda:

1:30 p.m. Registration

2-4:00 p.m. Keynote presentation by Dr. Thomas with breakout groups

4-4:15 p.m. Break

4:15-4:30 p.m. Roll Call, Hymn Sing

4:30-5:30 p.m. 50th Anniversary Programs with UCC Video

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:15 p.m. Short Business Meeting (08 Budget and Announcements)

6:30 p.m. Closing Worship

7:00 p.m. Homebound

SAD NEWS – DEATH OF R.C. HAGEN

One of our colleagues, the Rev. Robert "R.C." Hagen, was killed on August 10, in a traffic accident near Johannesburg, South Africa. At the time of his death, R.C. was living in Berlin, Germany. He was a pastor in Standing in the Southwest Association of our Wisconsin Conference. Born on December 23, 1963, he was 43 years old.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with a BA in International Relations (1986), he went on to study at the Goethe Institute at Schwaebisch Hall and then continued graduate education at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, MN where he received his M. Div. Degree in 1990.

He served as vicar at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Buffalo, NY and then was pastor of Staples and Aldrich Congregational Churches, UCC, in Staples and Aldrich, MN. In November of 1994 he was called to serve Washington Reformation UCC in Monticello, WI. He later served as Interim Pastor at Hope United Church of Christ in Sturgeon Bay. He was a delegate from the Wisconsin Conference to General Synod in Providence, RI in 1999.

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Following his pastorates, R.C. pursued his love of the German language and culture by teaching English and working in Berlin, Germany. He was on vacation in South Africa when he died.

Rev. Hagen's mother lives in Jefferson. The funeral was held on August 21 at St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jefferson.

DISTRICT MEETINGS TO BEGIN AGAIN

Clergy will again meeting in districts for Bible Study, theological discussion and prayer. Here are the dates:

District I
Dodgeville Sept. 19 - 8 a.m. (they meet on the 3rd Wed.)

District II
Madison Sept. 12 - 8 a.m. (**NOTE: they normally meet on the 4th Wed., but for Sept. only they'll meeting on 2nd Wednesday.**)

District III
Portage Sept. 25 – 10 a.m. (they meet on the 4th Tuesday)

District IV
Evansville Sept. 18 – 9 a.m. (they meet on the 3rd Tuesday)

We will send out the paper for discussion: "Authority in the Church" by Brueggemann.

CLERGY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS BEGIN AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER

All pastors are invited to participate in the clergy development groups that meet twice a month in three different locations. The groups discuss practical pastoral issues, give counsel, or just listen. These groups can be very helpful. Ask someone who has been a part of them – they'll give you their take on it. It is probably best to choose one and continue with it throughout the year. They meet at:

Verona Salem UCC - on the first and third Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.
Madison Lake Edge UCC - on the first and third Fridays at 9:30 a.m.
Evansville Cong. UCC – on the second and fourth Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

ASSOCIATION TO GATHER TO EXAMINE CANDIDATE

If all goes well at the meeting of the Division on Church & Ministry on September 4th, the Association will gather as an Ecclesiastical Council at Madison Lake Edge on September 23 at 2 p.m. for the purpose of examining Phil Haslanger for fitness for ordained ministry. (Yes, this did happen at the same location with a different candidate in August). Following the Division meeting on Sept. 4, Phil's paper will be available on line and will be sent to all congregations in District II. If you would like a paper, but are not in District II, contact the Association Office. As is our tradition, all congregations are invited and encouraged to attend. Congregations in the district are expected to attend.

UEK WORKING GROUP

The Working Group wishes to keep you posted:

Adult trip to Germany and Russia (to Pskow near St. Petersburg) June 16-30, 2008

Young Ambassadors (16-25) will travel to Germany June 28-July 19, 2008 and will host German Youth July 4-25, 2009, with a possible work camp in Honduras.

Contact the Association Office or Rev. Bill Kapp at bill_kapp@ucc-saukcity.org or (608 643-8387 if you have interest in either of these ventures.

SHUPE TO BE INSTALLED

The Rev. Paul Shupe will be installed at Madison Lake Edge UCC on Sunday, October 7 at 2 p.m. You are invited to participate in the promises made for the sake of the Church and the Association.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Marlea Waber in her continuing recovery
The family of Robert "R.C." Hagen
The 120th Anniversary of Browntown Peace
The 150th Anniversary of Liberty Ridge

Our Congregations at:

Madison First Congregational – Curt Anderson, Eldonna Hazen & Jerry Hancock, pastors
Madison Lake Edge – Paul Shupe & Deborah Dean-Ware, pastors
Madison Orchard Ridge – Winton Boyd, Tammy Martens, & Ree Hale, pastors

LIBERTY RIDGE TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS

On September 16, our congregation at Liberty Ridge, just outside of Lancaster, will celebrate its 150th anniversary. As one might guess, there are some who suggest the date of its founding was nearer 1854; however others suggest 1857 when Rev. Augustus Gottlob Hafenbrack came and built St. Paul's and fostered congregations at Lancaster, Fennimore, Marion, Hickory Grove and Cassville. Congratulations to our folk at Liberty Ridge.

SOME RESOURCES:

Copies of The Parish Paper with the following topics:

Five Stewardship Programs:
Which one should we use?
Are we making a place for the next generation?
Attracting new people, are we building the bridges?
How does our church accomplish care giving?
Do we help people grow spiritually?

Brochures for:
Middleton School Retreat at Pilgrim Center, November 16-18
Youth and young adult trip to Chiapas, Mexico, Aug 3-13, 2008
Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators event, In Indiana – October 16-18, 2008

BOUNDARY TRAINING DATES SET

There will be two Boundary Training Events for anyone authorized for ministry by the Association on November 13 at Windsor UCC and November 17 at Verona Salem UCC. Both events begin at 9:30 a.m. and go until 3 p.m. The cost is \$10.00 to cover lunch. A Boundary Training event is required every 4 years for authorization in the Association. You need to register at the Association Office.

Lay Coordinator ♦ September 2007

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We survived dry and then we survived wet, now that this crazy summer is almost to an end, could school be far behind?

Hats off to many of our Association churches that are collecting book bags and school supplies for disadvantaged youth in their communities so that these children can start out the year in a good way. Thank you also to **Belleville First UCC** who has been collecting supplies and donations for children in war torn Kosovo.

First Congregational in Janesville has invited their school children to bring their backpacks to church to receive a blessing. This is to remind their youth that as they go through their school day, their church sends their prayers with them.

A number of our area churches are going to a new format this fall and separating the Sunday School hour from church service hour so that families will spend two hours at church on Sunday morning. AS CE Director of **Lake Edge UCC**, Mary Hoffman, reminds us, "A two-hour per Sunday investment in our children and ourselves will have the long-term payoff of growing disciples."

Trinity UCC in Portage is beginning their adult education this fall by reading and studying the book *Oil and Water* by *Amir Hussain* to introduce their members to the Islamic faith and culture.



Folks may be busy getting ready for the beginning of Sunday School, but not so busy they forget mission work! **McFarland UCC** is collecting personal care items, drink mixes and snack items to send to our troops in Iraq. Many of our churches are also participating in the effort to purchase a mobile medical unit that will minister to the needs of injured Iraqi civilians. **Zwingli UCC** in Monticello is pledging \$4,000 to the project!

Paoli Zwingli and **First Congregational Madison** have been involved jointly in a project through the Food Resource Bank to grow a field of soybeans and then donate the proceeds of selling them to fund sustainable agricultural projects in Cambodia. They are having a Harvest Day Celebration on October 6 with worship, a potluck and of course, harvesting! If you know a little about harvesting, or even if you don't, feel free to join

Paoli and First Cong in their special day of celebration! **Congregational UCC in Mineral Point** is also starting its own Food Resource Bank project by growing a steer and donating the proceeds from selling it at maturity. If you have cattle feed to donate it would be appreciated!

Fort Atkinson First has put together "Birthday Cake Kits" for their local food pantry. They include an aluminum cake pan, frosting mix, cake mix and candles so that the children of local food pantry recipients can have a special birthday too.

Mt Vernon Zwingli will host a watermelon party in their church parking lot 6-7 Friday, September 8 followed by a concert featuring True North.

In addition to watermelon, we more good food to look forward to! **Swiss UCC** in New Glarus will host their annual Kilby Supper Saturday, September 29. Don't miss this chance to try Swiss meatballs and homemade desserts! **St Stephen's UCC in Juneau** will host their annual BBQ Chicken Dinner 4-7 on Saturday, September 15.

Congratulations to **Peace Church in Browntown** on celebrating their 120th anniversary! They will have a gospel concert at 7:00 pm October 6th and on Sunday, the 7th, they will have a special worship service followed by a luncheon.

Trinity UCC in Portage recently participated in a community wide ecumenical progressive dinner! Appetizers were at the Episcopal Church, salads at Trinity, main course at one Lutheran church and dessert at another. Proceeds benefited ABC Construction, a volunteer program that connects people in need with people who care.



It is never too early to plan! **Lake Edge UCC** in Madison recently held their first meeting to organize their December cookie sale! They have raised thousands of dollars over the years for local charities. They even have an apple pie baking day before the sale to make pies for the big event! Have you started planning your cookie walk yet? Support charity and acquire homemade treats at the same time, who can resist!

I leave you with these words from the newsletter of **Zwingli UCC in Monticello**. *Joe was asked by a neighbor to drive her son to a hospital. Although he had other things planned, Joe didn't know how to say no. So he put the child in the car and started on the 50-mile journey. Suddenly the boy turned to him and shyly asked, "Are you God?" Startled Joe said no. The boy continued, "I heard Mom asking God for some way to get me to the doctor. If you are not God, do you work for him?" "I guess so," said Joe.*

Happy Fall! Go and Serve.