

# SHALOM

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER

The Executive Committee met in November, and with the assistance of Rev. Tisha Brown as our consultant, we began to talk about what the Association will look like in the future. If you attended any of the listening sessions or if you took a look at the current proposal for restructuring, you'll see that things will be changing. So we decided we needed to begin to talk about what we'd like to keep in place and what we'll need to let go. The entire process is difficult, but too, it opens up new possibilities for a different future.

At our last District meeting, we read a chapter from Walt Brueggemann's book, "The Word Militant...Preaching a Decentering Word." It was the chapter entitled, *Preaching as Reimagination* and I thank he is sharing a word to us in these days. Listen, "Very few people make important changes in their description of the world abruptly. Most of us linger in wistfulness, notice dissonance between our experience and the old text, and wonder if there is a dimension to it all that has been missed. Most of us will not quickly embrace an alternative that is given us in a coercive way. Such coercion more likely makes us defend the old and, in general, become defensive.

Victor Turner noted that there is an in-between time and place in social transformation and relocation, which he termed "liminality." Liminality is a time when the old configurations of social reality are increasingly seen to be in jeopardy, but new alternatives are not yet at hand.

What we need for such liminality is a safe place in which to host such ambiguity, to notice the tension and the unresolved without pressure, but with freedom, to see and test alternative textings of reality."

So, we are in the middle of the testing, and we are hunting for that safe place to live with the ambiguity of the in-between times. Join us.

With the Greatest of Hope,

Bob

## NO DISTRICT MEETINGS IN DECEMBER – will resume in January

## CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY READING GROUP STARTS NEW BOOK

"The First Paul... Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon" by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan is the book the Contemporary Theology Reading Group will begin in December. We meet on December 10 at 2 p.m. and will discuss the first two chapters. We'd be delighted to have you participate.

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

Our Students "In-Care" preparing for Ordination:

Carla Babiarz, Madison Lake Edge  
Patricia Campbell, Madison First Congregational  
Ashley Graber, Monticello Washington Reformation  
Craig Jan-McMahon, Madison Lake Edge  
Twink Jan-McMahon, Madison Lake Edge  
Carolyn Kennedy, Mazomanie  
Kerri Parker, Janesville  
Gayle Tucker, Janesville  
Dennis Ureche, McFarland  
Laura Yurs, Verona

Our Congregations at:

New Glarus, John Jewell & Petra Streiff, Pastors  
Paoli, Sara Theissen, Pastor  
Platteville First Congregational, Cathy Carlson, Pastor

**SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST CLERGY RETREAT TO HAPPEN IN FEBRUARY**

Nurturing Your Soul: Reconnecting with Your Seed of True Self is the theme. Rev. Winton Boyd and Barbara Hummel will be our leaders. The event will be at Pilgrim Center February 7-9, 2010. More information is included in the brochure in this newsletter.

**FAMILY SYSTEMS EVENT OFFERED**

Every church family has a story to tell.,

Why does Martha volunteer to be on every committee?

Why does George e-mail and copy everyone when he disagrees with the pastor?

Why doesn't anyone call Gladys on her rude behavior at committee meetings?

How do you talk with volunteers who are not able to do the jobs for which they have signed up?

Family and personal dynamics are always at work in the church; for good and for ill. Every member brings their stories, secrets, longings and loves to their relationships with both family and friends.

The church, as a family of God's children works in many of the same ways. Understanding some of the key dynamics can help us navigate meetings, transitions; even critical moments in the life of the faith community.

Cathy Wille is a Licensed Professional Counselor with the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Fox Valley and has worked with family systems throughout her career. She will bring valuable information, experience and expertise to this day; helping us explore our own inner workings and enabling us to understand others.

**FAMILY SYSTEMS WORKSHOP**

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

10:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

WISCONSIN CONFERENCE CENTER

DEFOREST

Registration Deadline: March 5

Fee: \$40.00

**LONSBURY TO BEGIN AT FITCHBURG**

Rev. Leah Lonsbury will be starting as the half-time associate pastor at Memorial UCC in Fitchburg on January 4. For the past 3 years Leah has been Minister of Discipleship at First Baptist Church in Madison, an American Baptist congregation. She has Privilege of Call from our Division on Church and Ministry to serve a UCC congregation.

Leah grew up near Kansas City and earned her BA in English with a minor in religion from Drake University in Des Moines. She taught school for a few years in Kansas City before entering Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, where she earned her Master of Divinity degree. She did her Clinical Pastoral Education work with the homeless in Atlanta. She is married to Justin Lonsbury and they have two children; a four-year old son, and a daughter approaching her first birthday.

In Madison, Leah has been deeply involved in community groups like Dane County United, the Greater Isthmus Group and Madison-area Urban Ministry. She is on the national board of the Alliance of Baptists, an ecumenical and progressive fellowship of faith community that has a partnership with the UCC and the Disciples of Christ.

The Installation Service for Leah will be on Sunday, January 31, at 2 p.m. at Memorial UCC, 5705 Lacy Rd. in Fitchburg.

**DECEMBER 2009**

- 1 Barth Study Group, Association Office, 1 p.m.
- 2 Periodic Support Consultations, Association Office, 12 Noon
- 3 Ministerial Development Group (MDG) Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 4 MDG, Madison Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.
- 7 Wisconsin Conference Board of Directors, DeForest, 10 a.m.
- 8 Wisconsin Conference Staff Meeting, DeForest, 9 a.m.
- 9 Congregational Development & Renewal Committee, DeForest, 11:30 a.m.
- 9 Authorized Lay Pastor Committee, Association Office, 2:30 p.m.
- 10 MDG, Evansville, 9:30 a.m.
- 10 Contemporary Theology Reading Group, Association Office, 2 p.m.
- 17 MDG, Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 17 Social Concerns, Association Office, 12:30 p.m.
- 18 MDG, Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 25 Christmas Day

**JANUARY 2010**

- 3 Epiphany Party for Clergy and families, Mutton/Ames home, 5-8 p.m.
- 6 Epiphany
- 7 MDG, Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 7 Women Authors Study Group, Association Office, 2:30 p.m.
- 7 Executive Committee of the Association, 5 p.m.
- 8 MDG, Madison Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.

**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
Madison Lake Edge – Mission Trip	1,000.00
Madison Plymouth – UEK Young Ambassadors	1,000.00
Madison Community of Hope – Madison Urban Ministry	1,000.00
Madison First Congregational – Prison Ministry	2,000.00
New Glarus Swiss – Green County Habitat for Humanity	<u>2,000.00</u>
	\$7,500.00

Additional information regarding these projects may be obtained from the sponsoring churches.

**TO APPLY FOR A GRANT, YOUR PROPOSAL MUST INCLUDE:**

- 1) What is the nature of the mission project and how will it be conducted?
- 2) What is the timeline for the project?
- 3) What are the anticipated outcomes?
- 4) What are the anticipated expenses?
- 5) What is the amount requested?
- 6) What other sources of funding, if any, are being pursued?
- 7) Is this a one-time or an ongoing project?
- 8) What does your local church contribute to the project?

Send your proposal to the Social Concerns Committee in care of the Association Office. Requests are to be made in writing and come from the local church leadership.

