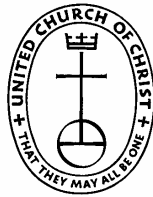


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



THE OPEN DOOR

APRIL 11, 2007

Issue 8 Volume 07

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Jake Close, Interim Senior Pastor
Siri K. Witt, Church Administrator
Lyssa Fish, Director for Teen Ministries
Deb Burich, Director for Volunteer Ministries

Jane B. Anderson, Co-Pastor

Kevin P. Gregory, Co-Pastor
Kara J. Woodford, Director for Children's Ministries
Phillip A. Swan, Interim Director for Music Ministries
Maynard E. Beemer, Pastor Emeritus

SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 2007

8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Sermon..... Reverend Jake Close

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2007

8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Sermon..... Reverend Jake Close

The 8:45 a.m. worship service is broadcast over radio station WECB 104.3 FM.

MOON BEACH CAMP

Celebrating 50 years of Ministry!

In 1957, a fishing resort on Moon Lake in northern Wisconsin was for sale. It included 16 cabins on the lake, a lodge and a few other buildings. Thanks to the vision and persistence of many, the resort was purchased by the North Wisconsin Synod of the Evangelical & Reformed Church and housed its first campers the spring of 1958. Those original 16 cabins still are "home" for many of the 2,000 campers of all generations that attend Moon Beach Camp each year.

Partridge cabin was built in the early 60's with funds and materials that could be pieced together by then Managing Director Vern Bernardo.

Seymour cabin was built in the mid 70's with funds graciously provided from the Seymour UCC church when it closed its doors. Pat Streur's mother, Alice Hein (a long time member of the Seymour UCC church) was involved with the gift of Seymour cabin and Pat has provided us with a

picture of her mom at the dedication!

More recently a new lodge was constructed in 1996 using With One Accord funds and two year round cabins were built in 2004 using Forward in Faith funds as well as other donations.

Your help is needed as we join together with other congregations from all over Wisconsin in giving Moon Beach cabins an "Extreme Makeover". We have volunteers from First Congo to help renovate Partridge & Seymour, but still need the funds for the materials to do the needed renovations.

Consider donating the cost of a window or one room of carpet in honor of your mother for Mother's Day, a bunk bed in honor of your child's birthday or the cost of a ceiling fan, patio door or another room of carpet in honor of your father for Father's Day!

Your donations will double with matching funds. Checks can be written to First Congregational with Moon Beach in the memo area. Thank you for your support and generous gifts!

Deb Burich

WISCONSIN CONFERENCE UCC

45th Annual Meeting

June 8-10, 2007

Green Lake Conference Center

The Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity UCC, Chicago, will lead worship Friday evening along with a choir from our newest church, Grace UCC in Milwaukee. Exhibitors will share resources and workshops will offer new ideas as well as inspire participants. If you are interested in representing First Congregational as a delegate at the annual meeting, contact Deb Burich.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE:



Dear Friends,

I am writing this message at the beginning of Holy Week, a week in which we re-tell, remember, and try to re-live in our hearts and minds the events of Jesus' life in his last days here on earth. As you read this, however, we will have celebrated with great joy the mystery of the Resurrection and the promise of Life's triumph over sin and death. In the life of the church, at least as we often observe it today, we leave the story, the mystery, and the power of resurrection with Easter morning celebrations. It is amazing to me that once Lent and Easter services and celebrations are "over" that people take a leave from the story and what happens next. And they take a leave from church as we move into "ordinary time," but not in the way that the church intended ordinary time to be observed.

Over the years I've noticed how attendance at church after Easter often drops off, as does our intention to give attention to the faith story that follows. Folks, the faith story does not end with Easter, the faith story begins with Easter. This is where we are invited into the story to hear how the resurrection transformed ordinary lives. It is a time when we are called to witness to the risen Christ in our lives and to be witnesses of the risen Christ for others. Yet, I believe we can miss encountering the risen Christ right in our midst, if we are not giving our attention to him.

Paying attention is not easy. Life in our culture is constantly begging us for attentions and intentions. This was illustrated again for me this past summer when I had a week of vacation in Door County. I spent much of the week praying, journaling, reading a stack of past issues of the *Christian Century* that I had set aside, and enjoying the beauty of the great outdoors. I came across an article by Barbara Brown Taylor in the *Christian Century* under a column simply entitled "Faith Matters". In it she confesses that she does not watch television at all (which is an incredible feat in this day and age). She did say that she listens to the radio and in particular, National Public Radio. But she turns it off during the news broadcasts, allowing herself to listen to only one news broadcast a day. As someone who reads several different newspapers a day—all online, and regularly tunes in to NPR

either on my radio or by podcasting, I find this amazing. Some would say, I'm addicted. Others would say, it's being a responsible citizen to stay abreast of what's going on in the world and helps one to make informed decisions. In an age when we have 24 hour broadcasts, on both television and radio, some of which is actually newsworthy, are many of us addicted to news? Are we addicted to story, and in particular, the kind of story that makes the news today—tragedy, sensational and outrageous behavior, extreme feats, and even political rises and falls. In her article, Barbara Brown Taylor shares that she cannot listen more often, because it disturbs her ability to cope and respond appropriately to the needs being expressed through both prayer and action and to be faithful to the call that Jesus places before her each and every day.

When folks have challenged her that she was "ignoring the tragedy" by silencing the reports, Barbara's response was: "There is always tragedy somewhere, as the news reminds us so well." But there is not always tragedy everywhere. The good news, also known as the gospel, is that where ferries are going down, brave people are diving into the water to lift thrashing children to safety. Where crops are failing, generous people are providing relief for farmers and migrant workers, and where a young girl is kidnapped from her bed, an entire community is turning out to hunt for clues, post flyers, cook food and keep watch with her family. Meanwhile, there are entire towns where nothing terrible is happening, for an hour or two, where parents are caring for their children with remarkable tenderness, where nurses are tending patients, mail carriers are delivering packages, and at least one man who owns a small business is taking off early to coach a girl's soccer team."

What I realized, after reading this was I am addicted to story, but it's not always the kind of story that Jesus calls me and all of us to pay attention to. The story, the Easter Story, is a story of hope—hope lived out in life-giving ways for others. We are called to pay attention to the risen Christ in our midst, to see the signs of hope and be hope for others, by being Christ's disciples in the world. The story of the Christian faith does not end with Easter celebrations, it begins there and it is up to us to be the story going forward. May Easter continue with your life-giving witness to the risen Lord.

Peace, and blessings,

**MESSAGE FROM:
THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE**

“How is the pastor search going?” What a great question!

This is the single most frequent question the pastor search committee is asked and we love talking to the congregation about it! The simple response is that we are following the process and working diligently to bring it to conclusion. But what is this ‘process’? There seems to be quite a bit of mystery surrounding the process of calling a pastor to a church. In an effort to keep the congregation informed, we’d like to attempt to remove some of the unknowns.

The process for calling a pastor is a well-established, successful system developed by the national UCC organization. It was created to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all applicants. Rev. David Moyer, the UCC Wisconsin Conference Minister, has been assisting the committee and answering many of our questions surrounding the process. The committee confers with David regularly. He assures us that we are on track and moving through the process smoothly.

The first part of a pastor search is the preparation of the church profile. A well prepared church profile shows how a church understands itself. The document provides membership data, describes the needs and opportunities now facing the church, describes the kinds of leadership abilities the church needs and wants in its next pastor, outlines the vision of the church, and depicts a picture of the surrounding community.

If you are interested in viewing First Congregational Appleton’s church profile, it is posted on the church website. The link to the church profile is on the right side of the web page, about midway down. It is a PDF file and you will need ADOBE Reader in order to view it. If you don’t have access to the internet, you can request a copy from the church office.

The Pastor Search Committee spent many months creating the church profile. Not only did we research much of the local data regarding the Fox Cities, we also engaged the congregation in helping identify the desired leadership characteristics. In April, 2006, the committee asked the congregation to complete a Leadership Characteristics survey. From this survey, the top 15 characteristics were identified. These characteristics are used as part of the evaluation process for each candidate.

The committee has reviewed close to 100

ministerial profiles so far. Each profile is between 18-25 pages. Every committee member individually reads and evaluates every profile. The committee then gets together as a group and discusses each candidate’s skill set and whether it fits with the needs of the church. All committee members must be in agreement about a candidate’s potential before they are moved to the next step.

We are continuing to read ministerial profiles, check references, listen to sermons, and visit candidates at their home churches all in an effort to determine candidates’ suitability for our church. We are using input from the survey, listening sessions, members, ministry teams and the Church’s vision and goals identified in 2004 to assist us in identifying candidates. We expect to start face-to-face interviews soon.

We greatly appreciate all members who took the time to fill out the leadership characteristics survey, attend one of the listening sessions or stop a member of the committee to ask questions and/or offer input. The committee has received input from various members and ministry teams. We are truly blessed as a congregation to have so many members who care so deeply for their church.

The role of the search committee in the process is discernment. Discernment, when practiced well, entails thoughtful prayer and listening for the presence of the Holy Spirit as it moves among us; but most of all, discernment takes patience and faith. The Holy Spirit has its own agenda and our committee is not going to rush the workings of such a powerful force.

The search committee has faith in the process. We are committed to the search process and to finding the best qualified candidate. If we are not able to identify a candidate during our first attempt, we are committed to staying with the process and starting over until we do find a candidate; however, at this point we do not expect that we will need to do that. We would like to thank the congregation for their patience and ask for their continued prayers and support as we work diligently to identify a candidate to present to the congregation.

Soon the congregation’s role in the search process will begin. During the coming weeks we will continue publishing articles in *The Open Door* describing these next important steps in the process. Stay tuned!

Thank you for your support and may you enjoy God’s blessing and be filled with His peace.

Senior Pastor Search Committee

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

If you have particular joys or concerns that you would like lifted up please call Pastor Jane Anderson.

Those who need our prayers:

Katie Behl
Myrtle Bellis
Florence Bender
Esther Bruyette
Janice Carroll's father, Sylvester Sawicki
Ruby Cotter
Arlene Danz
Trudy Dunham, sister of Pat Streur
Arlene Emrich
Elaine Foth
Darlene Fritz, wife of Rev. Tom Fritz
Andrew Goelher, friend of Mary Verhyen
Connor Hardy
Jean Harkins
Carol Huebner
Mark Kessler's father
Glenn Knaack
Glen Lemmert's mother, Kathy
Richard Miller's son-in-law, Rick Kramer
Sandy Nichols, mother
Sarah Paul
Mike Ross
Carol Smits
Joyce Spurlock
David Strom
Beth Vercouteren's mother
Helen Wright

WOMEN BUILD/MEN COOK

Mark your Calendars

This year, First Congregational will be participating in the first weekend of the Habitat for Humanity Women Build. We have committed to the early shift (8:00 am to 2:00 pm) for Saturday, June 16. If we get enough interest, we may be able to get the afternoon shift as well. The men of the congregation are not left out; we will provide the noon meal that day. Sign-up sheets will be available within a few weeks. More information on this and other service opportunities with our mission partner Habitat for Humanity and ReStore will be available soon.

Benji Benzschawel

GREATER FOX CITIES HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AMAZING STATISTICS!

- 83 Homes have been built in the greater Fox Cities area
- There are approximately 225 total volunteer slots on each home
- It takes 1800 volunteer hours to build one home
- Since Sept. 2005 (when it opened) the Habitat ReStore had over \$ 500,000 in sales
- Since Sept. 2005, the ReStore has been able to divert 650,000 pounds (or 325 tons) of materials from our local landfills
- It takes 1500-1700 volunteer hours each month to operate the ReStore
- Nearly 1.1 million was contributed to the affiliate in the last fiscal year
- \$ 161,265 was paid into the "Revolving Fund for Humanity" by HFH homeowners (these were monthly payments that HFH homeowners make on their mortgages)

Many thanks to our volunteers and donors!

Deb Burich

DE-CONSTRUCTION OPPORTUNITIES

The Re-Store has increased their 'de-construction' days to 3 per week – Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. There are numerous buildings to de-construct. They usually need 6-8 volunteers per day. Some work is inside and some outside. Invite your friends and co-workers! Habitat Restore will provide beverages, snacks and a lunch. You provide the muscle! Contact Diane at the Restore to volunteer 830-8400 restore@gwicc.org

Deb Burich

EMERGENCY SHELTER

STILL NEEDS SMALL TOILETRIES

The Emergency Shelter still needs 'motel' shampoos, conditioners & lotions as well as socks, deodorants, finger nail clippers and laundry detergents. A basket is provided in the narthex for donations. Thanks for your continued support and generosity!

Deb Burich

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE OPEN DOOR IS 9:00 A.M. ON
MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2007.**

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP SALAD SUPPER

Thursday, April 26, 2007, 5:45 p.m.

The Women's Supper is right around the corner. Bring a friend to enjoy food and fellowship. Call the church office or look for the sheets in the narthex to reserve your spot. Please bring a salad, bread, cheese tray or dessert. *Sue Detienne*

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

"I feel the strength of prayer immediately when I put it around me." "Thank you for making shawls that allow us to give hugs to people we love and care for." "When I place the shawl on my shoulders, I feel Peace." "It has been my constant companion, comforting and warm." "I feel surrounded by love, by you, God, and our wonderful faith community."

These are samples of the notes that have been written by recipients of the shawls that have been made—over 170 shawls since we began our ministry in the fall of 2005. The shawls have been given to celebrate joy, to provide comfort in times of loss, illness, or "just because" we believe someone we know needs to know we care. They have been given to members of our congregation as well as to those who are not. Reaching far and wide beyond our church community they have been given to family members, friends or acquaintances.

We meet monthly on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. and the second Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in the Youth Lounge. We have been meeting throughout the year. Our groups include members of our congregation and some who are not. We begin most meetings with prayer and "stories" of shawls that have been given. We spend the "middle" part of our time just visiting, laughing, talking about yarn and sharing ideas. But the last of our meeting time is when we all touch and bless/pray over the completed shawls.

If you know how to knit or crochet, please join us. There are three other ways to participate in this ministry. First, and most important, we appreciate being informed about anyone that might need a shawl—either tell us about it or fill out one of the forms in the narthex on the Mission and Outreach table. And remember the shawls can be given to those who are not members of our church. You can also contribute to the fund that has been established to cover some of the costs of yarn, or perhaps you would like to deliver a shawl. Talk to either Deb Burich or me if you need more information.

Helen McKean

CAN AND JAM



Have you ever wanted to learn how to can or preserve fruits and vegetables? Did you once preserve foods every summer, but now that the kids have grown and your household is smaller, it doesn't seem worth the bother? Do you love to put up foods but find it more fun working with other people? Maybe you would love to can, but it's difficult to manage the canning kettle? Maybe you have always wanted to pull out a jar of homemade jam, but never knew how to get started? If there is interest, let's Can and Jam together this summer using the great facilities in the church kitchen. Sign up in the narthex or call Hope Karth 920-830-4014 if you are interested and what you may be interested in so we can plan canning dates according to the growing periods.

Hope Karth

LABYRINTH GARDEN SPRING CLEAN-UP

Join us for a few hours of community service. On Saturday, April 21, our beautiful Labyrinth Garden will be prepared for the new season of welcoming all who enjoy its tranquility for meditation and renewal. People like Walter, a wheelchair-bound resident from across the street who enjoys the Labyrinth often. He joined us last year for muffins, coffee and tea after we had raked away the leaves, spread mulch and cut down the grasses. If you enjoy gardening this is an opportunity to learn about varieties and care of ornamental grasses. The garden was designed for low maintenance and the only care it requires is this once-yearly clean-up and a little weeding during the summer. Call Master Gardener Gayle Brygger at 558-4988 for additional information. Saturday, 9:00 a.m., April 2. Refreshments provided. Wear garden gloves!

Gayle Brygger

GUEST CHOIR CONCERT

Please mark your calendar for an opportunity to spend a wonderful evening listening to the Stillwater High School Concert Choir from Stillwater, Minnesota. They will be performing at First Congregational on Thursday, April 19, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Free will donation. Stillwater High School has long been known for its excellence in music. The school, which provides opportunities for students in orchestra, band, choir, jazz, and percussion ensembles has won several awards in all of their music programs.

Phillip Swan

JOIN OTHER WOMEN IN FELLOWSHIP

Wild Women gatherings are a great way to meet and talk to other women of all ages. It is a hassle free gathering—no reading to complete, no special attire, no food to make. There is no sign-up or RSVP. Everyone is invited so come one month or every month. We meet at Cheyenne's in downtown Appleton at 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. If you would like to receive a monthly email reminder contact the church and they will send your information to Gayle Brygger or Barb Uehling.



Dates through December 2007

May 1, June 5, July 10 (2nd Tuesday-NOT July 3), August 7, September 11 (not September 4), October 2, November 6, December 4

E.S.T.H.E.R.

EVENTS in APRIL

(Empowerment, Solidarity, Truth, Hope, Equality, Reform)

“Universal Health Care In Wisconsin”

Come and hear about 3 proposals to create a universal health care system for our state.

Sponsored by: E.S.T.H.E.R., Wisconsin Council of Churches,

Fox Valley Parish Nurse Network, UW Oshkosh College of Nursing, Area Ecumenical Network

Saturday, April 21, 2007

9:00-11:00 a.m. Christ the King Lutheran, 601 S. Washington, **Combined Locks**

12:30 - 2:30 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 200 Church St., **Neenah**

3:30-5:30 p.m. All Saints Lutheran, 1072 Honey Creek Rd., **Oshkosh**

For information Call 920- 725-2828

Festival of Unity

“God and Allah Need to Talk”

a film for healing and reconciliation

Featuring Los Angeles-based Film Director Ruth Broyde-Sharone showing her award-winning film. The presentation will include music, dance, film and interactive dialogue, ethnic food reception.

Sunday, April 22, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Notre Dame Academy, 610 Maryhill Dr., Green Bay

Sponsored by: JOSHUA (ESTHER Partner), Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Baylake Bank, Fox Valley Islamic Society, the Multicultural Center of Green Bay, Cnesses Israel Congregation, the Salvation Army and the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

For information Call 920-362-1511

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