

**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



THE OPEN DOOR

AUGUST 12, 2009

Issue 15 Volume 09

724 E. South River Street
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Jane B. Anderson, Co-Pastor
Maynard E. Beemer, Pastor Emeritus
Gene Sinner, Church Administrator

Kara J. Woodford, Director for Children's Ministries
Deb Burich, Director for Volunteer Ministries
John M. Albrecht, Director for Music Ministries
Jon D. Riehle, Organist

SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2009

9:30 a.m.

Sermon Rev. Steve Savides
Music... Tami Johnson, Kris and Shannon Glenn
guitar and vocalists
Meg Hietpas, *violin*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2009

9:30 a.m.

Sermon Rev. Steve Savides
Music.....Hillary Reynolds
piano and vocal soloist

**SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP IS
BROADCAST OVER RADIO STATION WECB
104.3 FM AT 8:45 A.M. ON A ONE WEEK
DELAY DURING SUMMER.**

DISASTER RESPONSE TRIP TO IOWA OCTOBER 16-19, 2009

(Please notice the date change).

No experience necessary – learn some new skills and have a great time! Contact Mary Haller for information (hallerm@sbcbglobal.net or 730-0586).

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE OPEN DOOR IS 9:00 A.M. ON
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2009.**

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

With the help of many volunteers, St. Joseph Food Program distributes food to 1100 families weekly! Donating your time one morning a week will make a difference in many lives. Opportunities include:

- Organizing & shelving staples
- Distributing food to clients
- Interviewing clients to determine eligibility
- Driving or helping on the trucks to pick up donations
- General administrative help

Call Shari Waldron, Volunteer Coordinator 734-9461 to request a volunteer application or apply online at www.stjoesfoodprogram.org

LUNCH-TIME ORGAN SERIES

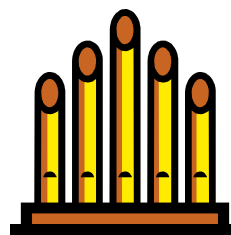
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19TH

12:15 – 12:45 P.M.

FEATURING

OUR ORGANIST,

JON RIEHLE





FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:

BEER SUMMIT AFTERMATH: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY WHEN IT ISN'T YOUR FAULT

As I write this the “Beer Summit” has passed. President Obama and Vice-President Biden have had their sit-down with Cambridge Police Sgt. James Crowley and Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The summit was occasioned by the arrest of Professor Gates on a charge of disorderly conduct (which was consequently dropped), by President Obama’s press conference statement (which he subsequently retracted) that the Cambridge Police had “acted stupidly” in the case, and, more than anything else, by the media firestorm that followed in which charges of racial profiling were pitted against charges of “race baiting.” Now that the summit has ended with thoughtful statements from both Sgt. Crowley and Prof. Gates, the media has no more use for the story and it has largely been dropped.

In an interesting way, this story parallels the charges and countercharges flung across the aisle in the Senate’s debate over the confirmation of Judge Sonia Sotomayor for Supreme Court Justice. In the judge’s “wise latina” remarks, some have seen a kind of racial or gender preference. In the opposition to the judge, some have seen racial or gender prejudice. Again, now that the vote has been held and the judge confirmed, the media will fold its tent and move on.

But long afterward, the charges and countercharges will hang there unresolved, like a ghost, ready to be called into service once again in a new incident, a new case, a new occasion. And so it seems to me that in each of these cases an opportunity has presented itself for us to witness to this shallow, media-saturated culture with a deeper message about the nature of evil and the necessity of faithful, persistent resistance.

Years ago I was walking home from a late night rehearsal at the University of Minnesota. Anxious to get back to my apartment, I walked quickly. Because the hour was so late, the streets were nearly deserted. As I walked, however, I noticed a person

up ahead by nearly two blocks. And apparently we held a relatively common destination because we took similar turns in the roads. As I said, I was walking quickly, more quickly than my late-night companion for the gap between us soon shrank to a block and a half, then one block, then one-half block. At that point the person ahead of me cast an anxious glance over the shoulder and took off at a dead run away from me. It was then that I realized the walker up ahead was female, and that she had been terrified of me. I stopped walking, wanting nothing more than to run after her to reassure her that she was safe, that I meant no harm, which, of course, would have made things even worse. So I turned and walked away in the opposite direction, taking the long way home.

I’ve reflected on that experience many times over the years. Here was a situation in which I did nothing wrong and certainly the other walker did nothing wrong and yet two people ended up harmed by the encounter. The only way to account for this harm was to be honest about the third presence lurking those streets that night; a ghostly, terrifying presence formed by the long history of sexual violence of men against women.

When considering the Cambridge neighborhood encounter between Sgt. Crowley and Prof. Gates, you and I might differ on how to assign blame to one or another of these men. We could also come to the conclusion that it was a third presence that caused the most harm that night; the ghostly presence formed by the long history of racism in this country, specifically in the relationship between white police officers and men of color.

I know that when one begins to talk about the legacy of racism or sexism or heterosexism, there is a temptation for some to roll their eyes in helplessness or shrug their shoulders in powerlessness. I didn’t cause it, we think. I didn’t do anything wrong. So what can I do about it?

That’s when our faith tradition can speak helpfully to our culture. In our faith tradition we have these very interesting (and often problematic) texts about Jesus exorcising demons. These texts bring us a victim possessed by a demon through no fault of their own. Jesus doesn’t ask the one possessed to

take responsibility for their possession or confess their sin or come to some kind of repentance. Instead, Jesus directly addresses the demon, invoking God's power over the entrenched, demonic forces of this world to bring about exorcism, deliverance and new life.

In one amazing story of exorcism (Mark 9:14-29), the disciples find themselves powerless in the face of a young boy's possession. Jesus chides the disciples ("You faithless generation, how much longer must I put up with you?") and then casts out the demon himself, restoring the boy to health and freedom. Later, when the disciples take Jesus aside privately to ask why they couldn't cast out the demon, Jesus tells them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."

There is a temptation, when encountering the ghostly terrors of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and all the demonic evils that continue to possess our systems and situations, to declare ourselves personally innocent and simply walk away. The example of the disciples instructs that this kind of behavior accomplishes nothing. It is the nature of systemic evil to continue to exist whether or not you or I are blameless. Doing nothing to add to that evil isn't enough. The example of Jesus instructs that we have a personal moral obligation to take positive action against these evils even if we have not contributed to their creation. Blameless or not, we have a duty to resist such evils.

I found it a hopeful sign that while neither Prof. Gates nor Sgt. Crowley apologized to one another at the "Beer Summit," both pledged to continue their dialogue. Whether or not they were personally to blame for what occurred in Cambridge and the inflamed emotions that erupted around the country, it is wonderful and appropriate that they are taking personal responsibility to address the ghostly, demonic presence of racism that continues to lurk among us. Perhaps we too can search for ways to take part in this exorcising work. We could seek to de-escalate difficult situations that threaten to spin out of control by controlling our own emotions. In times of conflict, we could look less for blame than for the signs of shared struggles with two sides of a common enemy. And in our relationships with others, we could bend to the needs of the other, like

deciding, on a late night walk, to take the long way home.

Your friend and fellow exorcist,
Pastor Steve

CELEBRATE RALLY SUNDAY!

SEPTEMBER 13, 9:30 a.m.

**One service of worship only
with fellowship and brunch to follow**

Join with other church members for a continental breakfast featuring coffee cakes, bagels, fruit, and beverages downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. We'll have a "bouncy" outside on the lawn for the children. Help in preparing for this event is needed both Saturday and Sunday morning. Please look for the sign up sheets located in the Narthex. If you'd like to, wear the Still Speaking colors—red and black—on Rally Sunday.



"TRINA'S FUND"

Hillary Reynolds will be performing at the Harmony Café on Saturday, August 22, at 6:00 p.m. She is raising money for her mother's fund for breast cancer treatment. When you support Trina's Fund you are giving women hope; helping women with breast cancer to receive a second or third opinion about treatment—women who could never afford this by themselves.

More information about the can be found at www.harmonycafe.org.

Please look in this issue for a personally written explanation from Trina about her illness and the experiences which led her to establish this Fund.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Members of our church family benefit from our prayers, continuing support, and words of encouragement as they celebrate special times or struggle with difficult times in their lives. Please keep these people in your prayers. Greet them with a loving word when you see them.

Cheryl Benzschawel's father
Judy Bowman
Linda Breitzman's mother
Paul Grube's sister-in-law, Connie
Greg Heinz's mother, Carol
Kathy Kennedy's father
John Masaros
Pat Nelson
Donald Phillips, father of Rick Phillips
Ann Sanderson
Ruth Reineck
Trina Reynolds
Patti Trochil
Phyllis Trunk
For those who have lost their jobs

CONTINUING PRAYERS:

Dee Abts' mother
Katie Behl
David Easty serving in Afghanistan
Evelyn Gelbke
Heather Genke Bogacz
Ingrid Fields
Steve Furstenberg
Ken Geiger
Tony Grade's father
Sue Hasz's nephew
Barry Helms
Jean Harkins
Carol Huebner
Ethel Jesse
Sam Johnson
Judy Kaddatz
Tammy Nelson's mother, Jacki Krause
Richard Miller's son-in-law, Rick Kramer
James Marsh, father of Mae Van Driest
Carla and Dennis Oudenhoven
Bette Schmidt
Joyce Spurlock
Mya Wardle, daughter of Brian and Lecia Wardle
Melba Webster, grandmother of Rhonda Vanden Boogaard
Helen Wright

MUSIC NOTES

From Director For Music Ministries, John Albrecht

Is this your year to get involved in the music ministry of our church? Check the music portion of our church website for upcoming events and information for the 2009-10 music ministry program year. You are welcome here!

The summer lunch-time organ series continues each Wednesday from 12:15 – 12:45 p.m. Our organist, Jon Riehle, will perform on Wednesday, August 19th.

ESTHER CORE TEAM MEETING AUGUST 19—7:00 P.M.

ESTHER draws members of First Congregational together with other faith groups in the Fox Valley to build community and work on issues of justice for the common good of all. Nineteen churches and religious fellowships in the Fox Valley are currently members of ESTHER. Issues currently before ESTHER are health care reform, immigration reform, treatment instead of prison for non-violent addiction-related offenses, and expanding availability of workforce housing.

ESTHER also works to build relationships within and between faith communities. To develop our skills, ESTHER will be sponsoring One-on-One Training at First Congregational in September.

To find out more about issues and upcoming activities from ESTHER, come to our core team meeting on Wednesday, August 19, at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church. You may also want to take a look at ESTHER's website at <http://www.esther-foxvalley.org/>.

CHURCH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL REGISTRATION

To register please go to:

<http://firstcongothways.org/register.html> (for church school)

or

<http://www.middle-school.firstcongothways.org> (for Middle School)

You can register online or print the forms and send them to the church.

FAMILY PROFILE OF YANG/NOU FAMILY FUTURE HOMEOWNERS OF THE JOINT HABITAT BUILD HOUSE

My name is Yeng Yang, my wife Nou and I have five children. Their names are David, Kao Yee, Thomas, Andy, and Sarah. David is a fifth grader and he likes to play games; Kao Yee is a fourth grader and she likes to write, read and watch movies; Thomas is a second grader and he likes to play games and stay active; and Andy is a kindergartner and Sarah who is not in school yet and both girls like everything that every little girls like to do. I am working at Jack's Maintenance and my wife works at Aramark Uniforms.



Owning a Habitat home to us would mean having in a large enough house that enables our children to sleep in their own bedrooms and a backyard of their own so our children can play in.

We are looking forward for a home of our own and having a larger kitchen and living room, as well as enough bedrooms for our entire family.

Aside from the new home, something I've gained or learned from this experience is how to clean better around the house such as cleaning the sinks, bathrooms and toilets more than I ever did before. Also I learned how to become more organized.

Since we've came to the United States, we've had to overcome many obstacles in our journey to become a new homeowner. Both my wife and I have never had any schooling in our lives, so you can imagine our difficulty learning a new language. It was very hard at first to learn how to speak a new language and learning to read and write was even harder for us. However, we were not afraid to try and speak English to the best of our ability. At our work, the people there were very helpful and understanding when explaining a task to us to perform. Another obstacle that we've had to overcome is finding an affordable home for our family.

You're invited to help with the build on the following date: August 27th and September 29th.

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE CHURCH FLOORS?

We want to give a BIG thank you to members of our Building and Grounds Committee for helping

our maintenance custodian, Bert Poi, with stripping and waxing the entire sanctuary and narthex floors. Don't they look great? They did a superb job and saved our church over \$1,000 in the process. That's the cost of having an outside company do it. This was lay involvement in action! Specifically, we want to thank Jim Park, Bob Gresens, and Van Smith for their volunteer work. We truly appreciate it! Bert did a fine job of helping and overseeing the entire job. Well done! Our part-time custodian helpers, Greg Heinz and David Van Dera, as well as volunteers Pat Hauser and Rick Hilsabeck gave a helping hand moving everything in and out of these areas too. A special thank you to all of you!

JULY MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

WEDDINGS

Rachel Mullins and Zachary Olsen, July 18, 2009



BAPTISMS

Leah Kathryn Kons, July 19, 2009



DEATHS

Mrs. Clarence (Helen) Doberstein, July 18, 2009

Mrs. Scott (Corinne) Brammer, July 28, 2009

CAN YOU TAKE THE TIME?

"Thank you for the beautiful flowers. They brought a smile to my face during a difficult time. I am in awe that a group of strangers would show such caring and generosity to me. I am extremely grateful."

These words were written in a note sent to the church from a woman who received flowers from the floral arrangement one Sunday morning. It took so little time for one or two volunteers to brighten the life of a fellow church member.



The Flower Committee is still in need of people to deliver flowers. Following the worship service on Sunday, the arrangement is divided into three bouquets to be taken to members or friends of the church who need a "floral lift". Please call the church office or Van Smith, 731-1839, if you would like to help or for more information

SUMMARY, CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING, JULY 28, 2009

The By-Laws of First Congregational United Church of Christ authorize the Church Council to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the congregation. Council would like to keep members informed about its work, so we offer in *The Open Door* each month a brief summary of our decisions and discussion. Readers who are interested in knowing more or providing feedback are encouraged to contact the Moderator, John Hoft-March.

Decisions made:

- Council approved an appropriation from special gift funds and operating funds, as requested by the Worship and Music Ministry Team, for a piano bench for the choir room.
- Reviewing a proposal to create a directory of businesses owned and operated by church members, a number of benefits and concerns were identified. Council asked for a written proposal that will address the issues raised in the discussion.

Other topics discussed:

- We received an update on the search for a Youth Ministry Coordinator, which is on-going.
- The FLOW task force has identified the process on which it will begin work and has scheduled meetings to launch the effort.
- The Treasurer's Report continues to show overall revenue ahead of budget and expenses slightly ahead of budget, though revenue in the month of June was below budget. We are proceeding cautiously because there are many uncertainties ahead.
- The Stewardship Ministry Team reported on what it learned from its mid-June listening sessions about member engagement and described plans for three more sessions in coming weeks.
- Council reviewed the results of the survey conducted about *The Open Door*. A summary will be included in the next issue of *The Open Door* for the congregation's information.
- In addition to the Treasurer's Report, a report on worship attendance will be part of the Council's agenda from now on.
- Pastor Jane Anderson reported on continuing discussion about a parish nurse for our congregation, and Council agreed to consider this possibility in more detail at its September meeting.
- Church Administrator Gene Sinner noted that the City of Appleton is revising the planned route for a water main tunnel under the Fox River based on soil studies, so our west parking lot may not be affected.
- Pastor Steve Savides gave an update on the 2009 youth mission trip, then under way, and thanked everyone for the help provided during his recent illness and recovery.

For more information on any of these topics or to provide input about them, please contact the Moderator, John Hoft-March.

Steve Hirby
Council Secretary

TRINA'S FUND

December 17, 2008: "I will not die from this. I'm going to MD Anderson!" These were my exact words upon hearing my *former* oncologist inform me that not only do I have breast cancer, but there is also a tumor in my liver. As he spoke of "comfort care" in front of my brother and sister, all I could think about was how this was all surreal. I am only 46 years old. I am the mother of Hillary and Nick. I want to grow old and live happily ever after. I want to become a grandma. This cancer is not how I'm going to die! Especially now when I feel I've just begun to live. "Do you hear me God?" That was the beginning of my search for another opinion about how I might fight and win the battle against my breast cancer.

I am one of the fortunate ones. I have strength to fight this and I am blessed with family and friends who love and support me way beyond what I ever could have anticipated. Because of them, I am determined to win this battle. As I listened to the doctor's pessimistic words, I knew I had to seek another opinion.

I was able to take on the financial burden to find a different approach for treatment, but what about the women who cannot afford the cost of travel for a second opinion? There has to be some way to help women with breast cancer to receive a second or third opinion about treatment-women who could never afford this by themselves.

When you support the "Trina's Fund," you are giving hope to women who want to make sure they are receiving the best possible treatment for their breast cancer. Your contributions will assist with the out-of-pocket expenses of travel for a second opinion. You can help them win their fight against this disease. This is my vision for every woman who hears the same words I heard: "You have breast cancer."

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

2009 Operating Budget				
As of June 30, 2009				
		Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
		Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
<u>Income</u>				
Pledge Revenue	\$	410,930	\$ 325,000	\$ 85,930
Operating Income	\$	61,714	\$ 85,163	\$ (23,449)
Other Offerings	\$	20,524	\$ 15,650	\$ 4,874
Other Income	\$	10,708	\$ 8,750	\$ 1,958
	Total	\$ 503,876	\$ 434,563	\$ 69,313
<u>Expenses</u>				
Ministries	\$	104,375	\$ 105,990	\$ (1,615)
Administration	\$	83,633	\$ 73,749	\$ 9,884
Salaries & Benefits	\$	356,126	\$ 347,101	\$ 9,025
Other	\$	9,213	\$ 12,345	\$ (3,132)
	Total	\$ 553,347	\$ 539,185	\$ 14,162
DIFFERENCE		\$ (49,471)	\$ (104,622)	\$ 55,151
NOTES: Pledge revenue includes additional contributions.				
Operating income includes special gifts.				
Administration cost higher due to snow removal & utilities.				
Salaries & benefits higher due to quarterly insurance payments.				

