

March 2008

BETHEL MESSENGER

Bethel UCC, W4225 County Line Road, Elkhart Lake, WI 53020
www.bethelucc-ada.org (920) 565-2977



Morse Code

It seems as though we have not had much of a Lent. Who knew that we would be canceling Ash Wednesday and the first two Sundays of Lent because of the weather? Perhaps God thought Lent was too early this year as well. All jokes aside our absence at church feels like a wilderness excursion.

Being misplaced during the season of Lent, however, is not such a bad place to be. Questions arise that typically would not have been addressed. Can we really have Lent without Ash Wednesday? Furthermore, (using a question that one of the confirmands asked me on their worship evaluation) why do we have Lent in the first place?

From my perspective, the preparation for Lent is fast and furious. Once the season comes I find myself on automatic pilot; but this year has caused me to stop in my tracks. I find it amazing looking at something that has always been there with fresh eyes. I find it amazing to be on a wilderness excursion and finding myself at ease (for once) with how to get where I need to be by not doing exactly what is planned. For those of us who are planners, this can be incredibly uncomfortable. But I cannot do anything about snowstorms and forty-five below wind chills. Perhaps this is what this Lenten season is about being non-anxious with what makes us most anxious.

To go back to our confirmand's question: why do we have Lent? The quick and generic answer: Lent is a season during the church

year to focus on confession, repentance, and reconciliation. Lent has proven to be more this year. Lent is a time to participate willingly (or unwillingly) in a journey that makes us stop, listen, confront, love, vision, and begin anew. Lent has turned into a season of asking the obvious question and finding that there may not be an obvious answer.

I will admit that when the winter doldrums seep in this clergy woman (much like teachers) will wish for a snow day. This year, however, the snow days did not come out of wishful thinking. I am not one for thinking that things happen for a reason, but this year I have certainly thought long and hard about the significance of Lent and perhaps these snow days were a part of the scheduled Lenten experience. If only God could communicate that to me in advance next year...

Blessings to you during this season of stopping, listening, confronting, loving, visioning, and beginning anew.

Rev. Sara

Sunday School

December - May

The students Christmas Eve program was very entertaining and we hope everyone enjoyed it. Thank you to all who helped with our production.

We had a few Sundays without classes in January and February, caused by too much snow or cold and our annual meeting.

On Palm Sunday, March 16th, we will have our Easter celebration. All kinds of activities are being planned by the teachers. Our eighth graders, Alicia Meyer, Jacob Philipps and Amy Milz will be confirmed that day.

There will not be any Sunday school classes on Easter Sunday, March 23rd.

We also have some special events scheduled for the students for the rest of the school year. Our final day of Sunday school will be Sunday, May 18th.

Please mark on your calendars the last week of July for our Vacation Bible school program. It will be held-----Sunday, July 27th - Thursday, July 31st. We will gather from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. each evening and present our V.B.S. program on SATURDAY, August 2nd, in church along with the church picnic.

The next teacher's meeting will be held, Sunday, March 9th, right after church.

Mardell Blohm
Sunday School Superintendent

Newsletter Update: If you would like to put something in the April edition of the newsletter please submit items to Cindy Meyer (churchsecretary@bethelucc-ada.org) by March 15th. Thank you!



Bethel UCC Raffle

It was approved at the Annual Meeting to do a raffle again this spring as a fundraiser.

Prize donation forms are available in the Narthex of Church. Forms should be turned in to Carol Roethel or Reverend Sara by March 9. If you have any

questions, please talk to Carol, Reverend Sara, or any consistory member.



Church Cancellation Protocol

When there is a threat of snowy/icy conditions, the consistory president and pastor will check weather forecasts & other cancellations via various media (TV, radio, internet). They will call one another with this information. If the conditions are deemed unsafe and other churches in the area are also canceling, they will make a decision by 6:30 a.m. Sunday morning whether to cancel Christian education and worship. The consistory president will call the other consistory members to inform them of the decision. If church is cancelled, it shall be posted on WHBL (1330 AM) & WLKN (98.1 FM) radio stations; WBAY (Green Bay) & WTMJ (Milwaukee) TV channels; and the church's website. Consistory members will create a phone tree to contact families within the church.

Kiel Community Pantry is in need of the following items:

- Salt/Pepper
- Flour
- Sugar Free Items (e.g. Jell-o)
- Toothbrushes
- Feminine Products

Lenten Services begin at 7:30 p.m. and will be offered Wednesday, March 5 and Wednesday, March 12.

Holy Week Schedule:

- Sunday, March 16, 2008: Palm Sunday/ Confirmation Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- Thursday, March 20, 2008: Maundy Thursday Service 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, March 21, 2008: Ecumenical Good Friday Service 7:00 p.m. Bethel is hosting this event.
- Saturday, March 22, 2008: Youth Fellowship Easter Caroling. Meet at church by 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, March 23, 2008: Easter Sunrise 7:00 a.m. Potluck Breakfast 8:15 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m.



One Great Hour of Sharing, one of the special offerings of the United Church of Christ will be received on Sunday, March 16th. (It was originally set to be collected on Sunday, March 2nd, but due to inclement weather the date has been moved). One Great Hour of Sharing is part of the “big five” in the United Church of Christ – the five sources of critical funding for our conference and national ministries. More than 1000 UCC churches are “Five for Five” congregations, fully supporting all five components of Our Church’s Wider Mission. These five components are: 1) OCWM Basic Support, which is the goal that we set each year to support our conference and national ministries. Our goal for this year is set at \$2000.00. 2) Strengthen the Church supports The Still speaking Initiative, leadership in new and revitalizing congregations, programs for youth and young adults, and leadership development for the whole church. 3) Neighbors in Need supports domestic ministries of justice and

compassion, including the Council for American Indian Ministries, justice and advocacy, and direct service projects support by Justice and Witness Ministries, one of the four covenanted ministries of the United Church of Christ. 4) The Christmas Fund supports pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy families in need and Christmas checks to hundreds of annuitants. 5) One Great Hour of Sharing supports international programs in health, education, agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee and immigration ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. This offering is administered by Wider Church Ministries one of the four covenanted ministries of the United Church of Christ and by Global Sharing of Resources. Last year, Bethel contributed \$990.15 to this special offering. Let’s see if we can match this amount or even go a little bit beyond. It is amazing what our gifts can do. It is also worth noting that Bethel is one of the 1000 UCC churches that claim to be “Five for Five.” Thank you for your generous support to all of these offerings. As we share our resources with others, we know without a doubt that lives are being impacted and changed for the better.

A Wednesday Book Study will be offered beginning March 26th at 9:30 a.m. We will be reading the book: *To Begin at the Beginning: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* by Martin B. Copenhaver. This book is written by a local church pastor with the intent of it being an overview of the Christian faith or to put it another way it is Christianity 101. No prerequisites required other than the willingness to engage each other in conversation. If you are interested in purchasing a book and/or being a part of the conversation there is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex or contact Rev. Sara.

The Division on Local Church of the Northeast Association is sponsoring A Calling For Your Life's Work: A Workshop on Vocation and Leadership on Saturday, April 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Lakeland College. Do you feel God's call to service – but not as a pastor, preacher, chaplain, or other role that ordained persons play? Do you desire to find ministry in administrative work or other roles not ordinary seen as “the church's work?” Do you wish you could do worthwhile labor for the cause of Christ's church? Do you find yourself afraid of doing this alone? Do you wish you could meet a national church leader who finds joy in ministry as a layperson, who has dealt effectively with these questions, and speaks of her experience with eloquence, wit, and compassion? Explore these questions of *Leadership and Vocation* with Edith Guffey, Associate General Minister of the United Church of Christ and other sojourners who wrestle with questions like the ones you are asking. For more information on this event contact Rev. Sara.

You are cordially invited to attend the 46th Annual Meeting of the Northeast Association on Saturday, April 19, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Peace UCC in Shawano. The program will consider what the challenges and opportunities for ministry will be, and how the UCC's distinctive voice can help us continue to be a place of hope and healing for all creation. Join our Wisconsin Conference Minister, the Rev. David Moyer, as we think together about the next 50 years and beyond. In addition to the program, we will consider the business of the association including the annual reports of our divisions and committees, the proposed budget for 2009, and the election of new officers and committee members. If you are interested in attending this event, contact Rev. Sara.

Spring Training

Information, Formation, Transformation
 Can the good news really change lives?
 Is theology something only pastors can do?
 What does it mean to be a “Christian in the making?”
 How does the faith of the church relate to our daily lives?

The Wisconsin Conference Christian Education Commission is hosting a spring education event just for you!

This event will be Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Fond du Lac.

This event is for pastors, education directors, teachers, Boards of Christian Education and anyone who is interested in the teaching ministry of the church.

The cost is \$25 per person before March 7 and \$30 per person after March 7. Registration deadline is March 28, 2008. If you are interested in attending, please see Rev. Sara for a registration form.

A Calling for Your Life's Work

Explore questions of Vocation and Leadership with Edith Guffey and other sojourners who wrestle with questions like the ones you're asking. A workshop will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Lakeland College, W3718 South Drive, Plymouth, Wisconsin. The cost is \$12.00 (lunch included). Please register by Tuesday, April 8, 2008. If you are interested in attending, please see Rev. Sara for the registration form.

Parenting With Love And Logic

Presented By Paul Gasser

This session will be held April 3, 2008 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Zielanis Elementary School in the Music Classroom. The cost for this event is Free!

Daycare will be provided for children ages 18 months through 2nd grade. Space is limited. Please contact Zielanis Elementary School office by Friday, March 28, to reserve a spot for your children.

Love and Logic resources will be available as door prizes for those parents in attendance.

If you have any questions, please Call Dawn Mueller at 920-894-5118.

New Members

John and Beverly Ambroso
N9379 Franklin Road
Elkhart Lake WI 53020
920-565-5355

Letter from the Conference Minister

Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity in giving to OCWM (“Our Church’s Wider Mission”) through the Wisconsin Conference. You were extraordinarily generous in mission giving in 2007.

- Our 229 churches gave 98.47% of their accepted goal to OCWM, a remarkable achievement.
- OCWM giving by Conference churches was \$2,243,215, the highest OCWM total in the past 4 years
- Your generosity allowed the Conference to distribute additional gifts

to mission partners.

Additional gifts included:

- \$25,000 to the national United Church of Christ for 2007
- \$20,000 to the national United Church of Christ for 2008
- \$15,000 for CUE, Midwestern seminaries (Chicago, United, Eden)
- \$8,000 to Higher Education and Campus Ministry partners
- \$10,000 to Health and Human Service Ministries
- \$9,000 to our Camping program (UCCI)
- \$4,500 to the Wisconsin Council of Churches

We were also able to return about \$25,000 to reserves, including those that provide gifts to flood relief and in support of a new prison ministry.

Thank you. The words of the Apostle Paul express my gratitude to you: *I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him.*

Sincerely,
David S. Moyer
Conference Minister

Thank You

Thank you so much for all your help and support through out the year.

Deanna Schricker, Secretary
Kiel Community Pantry

