

March 2009

BETHEL MESSENGER

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Letter From Your President

As I stand in the narthex of our church, with the sun shining in, do you know what I see? Do you know what I am looking at? I am simply looking at "just another Sunday" at our country church. I have to say that I am continually amazed at what happens in our church on "just another Sunday". Have you ever stood back to recognize what happens on just another Sunday? I see people "doing their jobs" that are not designated, but they simply just do them for the love of the church (making sure the sound system is working, checking the heat so it is at an appropriate temperature, getting the powerpoint ready for the rest of the congregation to enjoy are just a few). I see the bible study class meeting and partaking in serious faith discussions. I see people bringing a plethora of food for the fellowship after service. I see the joy in the children's faces as they learn about God and sing with joy to our congregation. I see how spectacular our church facility looks with the candles lit and the bells ringing and the clean environment that we can worship in. I see people taking charge and help out to make sure all that needs to get done is done simply because it is something that they can do; it is something that they can give. As I observe the happenings on "just another Sunday" I am standing in a silent awe and appreciation for the gifts of this church and the people within. Truth be told, I was nervous about becoming your President, but after I sat back and observed the life of this church in full swing, I am confident that with the grace of God we will be fine. Many times we take for granted all that is done on "just another Sunday" but I invite you to sit back and take in these sights, as I have, and you will see the love of God surround you. I just have to say, Thank you Bethel UCC for being you, because you make it a great day; not just on Sunday, but everyday.

As we celebrate in that joy together, I am ecstatic to tell you that starting today, February 15th, we are blessed to have Pastor Greg Smith as our Interim pastor. Pastor Greg will share in our joys and passions, and guide us as we begin the search for a new minister. As some of you may know, Pastor Greg was born in Pennsylvania, and has lived in various parts of the eastern United States, including northern Ohio, Virginia Beach, Va., southern Ohio, south Florida, St. Louis, Mo., West Haven, Ct., and Iowa. Two years ago he moved to Neenah to be with his wife, Lynne Spencer-Smith, who was called as the Pastor of the Congregational United Church of Christ of Neenah/Menasha.

Pastor Greg is a graduate of Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO where he received his Master of Divinity degree.

He is married and has two children, Katie and Mike, two step-children, Jessie and Angie, and two granddaughters Ella and Kayla. While Pastor Greg is 'semi-retired' he enjoys the opportunity to serve God and the church as an interim.

His hobbies are reading, golf, and creating web sites on his Macintosh computer (let it be noted that I am typing this on my PC but have no fear, it sometimes takes a while to see the light so I will continue to work on him in that regard).

Please take some time to welcome Pastor Greg to our church and help show him the vibrant spirit that is so strong in our church. This is an exciting time and I wish you nothing but God's blessings as we continue on the journey together. We are Bethel UCC and I cannot thank you enough for being you.

Jr.





Greetings to All!!

It is my pleasure to have been called as your part time interim minister. So I'd like to offer you my thoughts and perceptions about this journey we are about to begin together.

The interim time can be one of mixed emotions... some might feel great sadness at the loss of your previous pastor, while some might feel that the time was right for new pastoral leadership. Some might be casting longing looks backward at the 'way things used to be', while others might be looking to the future with cautious optimism.

Some would focus on problems, whether past or present. Some will focus on potentialities and how we can do better serving God, congregation and community.

My sense has always been that we should have a 'windshield' point of view. What, you might ask, do I mean by that? Simply that when driving a car it's important to occasionally glance at the mirror to see where we've been. Yet our vision should always be primarily forward, looking to the future, continually asking ourselves how we are being faithful to God's call to be the church, the Body of Christ.

If I might be so bold, I'd like to offer some suggestions as to how Bethel UCC might keep that 'windshield' viewpoint in the months to come.

- Pray for our church. Not only on Sunday, but every day. I'd offer this simple suggestion:

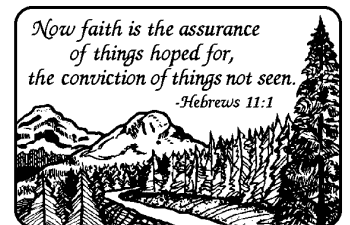
"Please God, continue to watch over, strengthen and guide our church."

- Support our church financially. This might seem crass and tactless, but your church needs your dollars as well as your prayers to survive and thrive in the world.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to church.

Every member of this church should consider themselves as part of the Evangelism Team. That doesn't mean that you all have to attend another meeting, just that the true definition of Evangelism is "spreading the good news of God's love for us". When you bring a neighbor, friend or work-mate to church you are doing exactly that.

- Support the Search Committee. The Search Committee is just beginning the process of finding just the right clergyperson to share in the ministry of Bethel UCC. The work of the Search Committee can be exciting, frustrating, energizing and exasperating all at the same time. They all need your prayers and support as they begin their important work.
- And finally... SHOW UP! I admit to a level of frustration over the years when I hear some of the excuses people come up with for not participating in worship on Sunday morning. Certainly some are valid, yet we are gifted with 168 hours each week... surely we can utilize one or two to give thanks to God for all that we have and all that we are.

My friends, my sense is that this church has an exciting future before it. Certainly all will not be easy for the road to faithful service isn't always straight and smooth. Yet with God's help and guidance, I believe our best years are ahead of us and not behind us. They might be in a different shape or form than what we are familiar with, but they will be faith-filled and awe inspiring as we continue to be the church, the Body of Christ.



Grace and peace,

Pastor Greg

Bethel UCC Minutes

January 6, 2009

Members present: Cary Johannes, Judy Zimmermann, Charles Grubisic, Faye Spindler, Eric Raquet, and Scott Huber.

1. After reviewing the minutes Faye made a motion to accept the minutes, Eric seconded the motion, motion carried.
2. After reviewing the report of receipts Chuck made a motion to accept the report, Cary seconded the motion, motion carried.
3. After reviewing the expense report, Eric made a motion to accept the report, Judy seconded the motion, motion carried.
4. After reviewing the memorial fund report, Scott made a motion to accept the report, Chuck seconded the motion, motion carried.
5. After reviewing the building fund report Judy made a motion to accept the report, Cary seconded the motion, motion carried.
6. Audrey Ertel has been visiting some of the shut-ins and also has sent some Christmas Cards to others who can't make it to church.
7. The Sunshine team has given us a written report on what they have been doing this past year and what some of their ideas for this year are.
8. We will announce in church that if someone doesn't want their birthday in the messenger that they should contact the church secretary and let her know of their decision.
9. We are going to ask the Pastoral Relations Committee to come to the March

meeting with an idea of what they want to start with in their processes of ministries.

10. We have an interim Pastor update: we are going to be meeting with Rev. Greg Smith from Neenah to see if he is someone we would like to call as our interim pastor. We discussed some of the duties that an interim would need to do for us.

11. We reviewed the annual reports to make sure we had everything and that everything was correct to the best of our knowledge.

12. Eric made a motion to adjourn; Faye seconded the motion, adjournment

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Scott Huber, secretary



Lenten Services

Soup Supper at 6:30 in the fellowship hall

Devotions at 7:00 in the fellowship hall

March 4 – Simply Faithful

An introduction, Worship Team

March 11 – Simply Faithful

Mission work, Jim and Pam Raquet

March 18 – Simply Faithful

Work and Family, Kim Rietbrock

March 25 – Simply Faithful

Living off the land, Fred and Sandy Kraemer

April 1 – Simply Faithful

Inspiration by the church choir

Corrections to the February Messenger

The cemetery across the road and to the east of the Spindler Farm is called the St. Paulus Cemetery. It is just a little cemetery. The cemetery was organized in 1851, there are 54 graves there – 30 adults and 24 children. The records show the last person buried there was Corporal Philip Burkhardt – buried on June 7, 1913. The last meeting was held June 27, 1926, after that the records were turned over to the Town of Herman, they keep the grass cut. After the settlers boarded the ship at Hanover, Germany, instead of New York, they were put off in Quebec, Canada, they traveled the St. Lawrence River by boat, then a steamer, through the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, their destination was Iowa, but they spent more money already and land was more in Iowa. The land agent told of cheap land in Sheboygan County.

On February 10, 2002, we celebrated our 140th anniversary with a 10:00 a.m. church service and fellowship time following the service.

These are a few corrections to the February Messenger, sorry for the inconvenience.
Audrey Ertel

Restaurant Fundraiser

The Weissgerber's Seabird Restaurant (229 S. Pier Drive, Sheboygan / 453-4000) is offering a fundraiser for local churches.

Lent Fish Special – Friday March 6th through Friday April 10th, you will receive a 15% discount off Seabird's Friday Fish Fry dinners and our church, Bethel, will receive a 10% donation of the total food purchased. You must provide a copy of the church (Bethel) newsletter or bulletin to their wait staff when you dine.

First Friday of the Month May 1st through December 4th (Friday's only) the Seabird Restaurant will continue to donate 10% of the food purchased by congregational members. You must provide a copy of the church (Bethel) bulletin or newsletter to their wait staff when you dine.

Salvation Army

We received the following letter from the Salvation Army:

The Salvation Army of Sheboygan would like to thank you and your staff for your generous support through the holiday season.

Community members rang the bells and dropped money into the red kettles. Businesses and organizations sponsored food and toy barrels, and adopted families for Christmas. Other businesses sponsored small counter kettles that assisted in generating extra revenue. Businesses and churches sponsored coat drives, put up hat and mitten trees while others gathered the troops and volunteered to help on the coat distribution day or the Christmas Castle day. Private donors and businesses remembered us and sent in money donations so that we can continue to offer services to the low income people of Sheboygan.

Please know that every can of food, every hat and coat, every toy, and everyone who helped, families, churches, businesses and individuals did so because of their great spirit of giving.

Thank you for sharing in our Salvation Army creed, Heart to God, Hand to man, Efforts like these are why Sheboygan is a wonderful place to work and live. May all of you and your family have a happy and blessed New Year.

The Salvation Army Staff