



The Good Word

January 2007

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Dear Friends,

We greet or bid farewell to one another saying, "Happy New Year," as an expression of hope. We also express our desire for others' happiness on other special days throughout the year; Valentine's Day, Mother and Father's Day, Birthdays and Thanksgiving. It's realistic that a person can enjoy happiness on a special day, but it's quite a stretch, maybe too much to hope for, that anyone could be happy every day of the year. I think happiness is a lot like the weather. Some days are sunny and cloudless, others are dark and dreary, and most days are a mix of both. I sincerely hope that the year ahead will be filled with happiness for you, but to be honest, my hopes reach deeper. I suggest we consider happiness as it relates to our calling, God's covenant, and Christmas joy.

Calling

The 1776 United States Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, famously asserts: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men." I agree that all humans are created and are endowed with life and liberty as unalienable rights, but I am not so sure about the pursuit of happiness. Is it really an unalienable right from the Creator. I hope someone reading this article and knows more about the constitution than I do will set me straight. My hunch is that Thomas Jefferson did not understand the pursuit of happiness so much as the selfish en-

deavor it often appears to be in our culture, but as every person having freedom to pursue happiness.

I am inclined to encourage the pursuit of one's calling, rather than pursuing happiness. God claims us in baptism and calls us by the Gospel to live Christ-centered lives. Christ-centered living includes giving and receiving. We receive unsearchable riches through Christ and are beneficiaries of an endless flow of grace into our lives. We give by serving others in the private and public arenas of our lives. Orienting our lives toward receiving and giving is to live out our inalienable calling in relation to God. Fredrick Buechner describes a person's calling as the place "where our deepest happiness and the world's needs meet." I hope that 2007 will be a year that we pursue our calling by discerning the life-giving connection between our deep happiness and the world's needs.

Covenant

I finished reading Walter Brueggemann's most recent book a few days ago. It is entitled, *Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah*. The book ends with an interview with Brueggemann. One of the questions posed to him is, "How can people adequately speak out against consumerism?" Notice how his response relates to happiness.

"We must hold up covenant over and against commodity. We live in a society where everything and everybody is turned into a commodity. Our neighbor becomes a commodity to be bought and sold and discarded. Now from the ground up, what
Continued on the next page.

MCC News

biblical faith wants to argue is that you're never going to have enough commodities to be either safe or happy. You're going to have to look for your safety and your happiness somewhere else, namely in covenantal relationships.

A youth minister in a parish, for example, can raise the question, 'Why do you kids go to the mall all the time? What are you looking for? Let me tell you something, what you're looking for ain't out there.' It all boils down to baptism. We have been baptized, or initiated into a countercultural, a counter set of desires. What we say in baptism is that we renounce the vainglories of the world. We still may have a lust for them, but we have committed this public act of renunciation. We need to talk about what it means to have made such a renunciation. We need to talk about what it means to have made such a renunciation. The church has available to it the freedom of imagination that is nowhere else permissible in our society. These conversations must be held because if they're not, our humanity is going to disappear."

Christmas

The message of Christmas, once it sinks in deeply, is a message that evokes deep joy. The angel appeared to the shepherds as they were keeping watch over their flock by night and said, "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who

is the Messiah, the Lord." The shepherds went to Bethlehem, found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them." Turn to the end of Luke's Gospel and notice that the women who visit Jesus' empty tomb and the disciples behind closed doors are freed from fear and filled with joy when Jesus appears before them as the Risen One.

Joy, is the steady pulse of faith. Sometimes joy surges to a level that cannot be contained, sometimes the pulse is weak, but there is always a pulse. Joy of faith in Christ is always deeper than happiness. Whereas happiness is like the weather, sometimes sunny and sometimes cloudy, joy is confidence that the sun is shining behind the darkest clouds.

Conclusion

I notice that the Old Testament reading assigned to be read on January 1, 2007 is the blessing God told Moses to give to Aaron and the Israelites. As much as I hope that you will have a happy new year, my deepest desire is that you will hear, receive and respond to God's blessings. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." (Numbers 6:22-27)
Jeff

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The Good Word

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Fellowship Groups & Activities

The Theological Discussion Group

The Theological Discussion Group selects *Blue like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* by Donald Miller for the January and February reading.

This book seems to have traveled by reader-to-reader recommendation over the last three years. *Christianity Today* on the back cover states, "Think of Donald Miller as...Anne Lamott with testosterone, and this fresh memoir-like collection of essays as his version of *Traveling Mercies*. Miller's words will resonate with any believer who has ever grappled with the paradoxes of faith."

"For me, the beginning of sharing my faith with people began by throwing out Christianity and embracing Christian spirituality, a nonpolitical mysterious system that can be experienced but not explained. Christianity, unlike Christian spirituality, was not a term that excited me. And I could not in good conscious tell a friend about a faith that didn't excite me. I couldn't share something I wasn't experiencing. And I wasn't experiencing Christianity. It didn't do anything for me at all. It felt like math, like a system of rights and wrongs and political beliefs, but it wasn't mysterious; it wasn't God reaching out of heaven to do wonderful things in my life. And if I would have shared Christianity with somebody, it should have felt mostly like I was trying to get somebody to agree with me rather than meet God. I could no longer share anything about Christianity, but I loved talking about Jesus and the spirituality that goes along with a relationship with Him." (Miller, p.115 - 116)

The Theo Group will gather Wednesday, January 17 and February 21, 7 p.m. at MCC. Everyone is welcome. Come one. Come all. You will not want to miss this readers' discussion.

Attention Young Singles, Couples and Families —

Friday, January 19-Progressive Dinner 6:00-10:00 p. The location will be announced. If you are interested in hosting for appetizer, salad/entrée, or dessert, contact Kris Knoepke. Three homes are needed. Who: Adults only (get your babysitters now, if needed.)

MCC Film Group 2007 Schedule

Our next gathering will be at 7:00 pm on January 26, 2007, at McNatt's, to view *World's Fastest Indian*.

January 26, 2007

World's Fastest Indian

Myrna and Dobbin McNatt

February 23, 2007

Babe

Ann Bolger

March 23, 2007

Water (from trilogy)

Bill and Freddie Feeny

April, May & June: TBD

Films under consideration: *Syriana*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Field of Dreams*, *Walk on Waters*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Waking Ned Divine*, plus your suggestions??

MCC Community Group Events

Monday, January 8, 11:30 lunch followed by a 1:00 p. tour of the Overture Center. Let Myrna McNatt know by Sunday, January 7 if you want to go. There will be carpooling from MCC.

GEMS

will resume meeting on January 9th at 10:30 in the lower level of MCC. They will begin a new book, [Losing Moses on the Freeway](#) by Chris Hedges. The group enjoys fellowship, learning and discussion and a variety of books. Stan Klyve. A short book review is on the bottom of page 4.

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MCC News—Coming Events

Jan 1	New Year's Day Labyrinth Walk from 1:00-4:00 p.
Jan 5-7	Senior High Retreat Weekend
Jan 7	Order your Mt Meru Coffee TODAY
Jan 10	Indoor Labyrinth open to the public from 9:00 a. - 6:00 p.
Jan 13	Rule of Life, 9:00—11:30 a.
Jan 14	Indoor labyrinth open to the public from 1:00-3:00 p.
Jan 14	German Exchange Information Meeting at 11:30 a.
Jan 12	MCC Girls' Night at MCC, 6:00-10:00 p.
Jan 20	February newsletter information is due
Jan 20	Sunday School teacher retreat at Middleton Community, UCC, 8:30 a.
Jan 21	Wexford Food Pantry Donation Day
Jan 21	Youth Cinnamon Roll Sale
Jan 21	Sugar Creek Bible Camp Informational Meeting on summer camp
Jan. 27	Global Connections <i>from Italy, to Egypt, to Senegal, to Gambia</i> with Beth Wild & J.D. Stier at 7:00 p.
Jan 28	Annual Meeting Sunday
Jan 28-Feb 4	IHN Week
Feb 3	MCC Nurturing Faith in the home, 9:00 a.—12:00 p.
Feb 10	Rule of Life, 9:00—11:30 a.

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GEMs next book is [Losing Moses on the Freeway](#) by Chris Hedges

The following Editorial Review of this book is from Amazon.com.

Why should all Americans --not just Christians and Jews -- care about the Ten Commandments? Chris Hedges, a former foreign correspondent for the New York Times and Harvard Divinity School graduate, believes that the commandments keep us from committing evil. They hold our communities together. "They lead us to love, the essence of life," he writes.

Adapted from his series of articles for the New York Times comes these thoughtful essays on why we need these ancient laws -- and what happens when we abandon them. A Phish band groupie provides a springboard for a discussion of idolatry. A Long Island whiskey bar becomes a laboratory for understanding "You shall not bear false witness." Honoring the Sabbath, he shows through the observances of one busy family, may be the antidote to popular

culture. The story of the havoc wreaked on one child's life vividly illustrates the reason for the commandment, "You shall not commit adultery." Throughout his essays, he deftly weaves his own experiences into the narrative, as well as references from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's classic book on good and evil, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Hedges believes that the commandments hold out to us the possibility of love -- and love means living for others. The commandments are guideposts that bring us back to the right path, he writes. They call us to sacrifice. Compellingly, he urges us to abandon the culture of self; to live "not by exalting our life but by being willing to lose it." --Cindy Crosby

MCC News —

Parish Protection Training – Tuesday January 23, 7:00 p.m.

All Adults who are working with children and youth at the Madison Christian Community and have not yet been trained in the Parish Protection program are encouraged to attend this training on January 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. Anyone else who is interested in learning more about the MCC's Parish Protection Program is also invited. We will meet in the Shalom Room for approximately one hour. This training is required by our Parish Protection Program Policies for all adults who work with children and youth. Contact Tisha Brown, Martha Nack or Katrin Wuest with questions.

Planning for the Youth Raffle

Contact Marcus Murphy if you have items you would like to donate for the raffle, to take place later this year, to benefit MCC Youth Ministry. And, does anyone know a generous travel agent whom Marcus might ask to donate two round-trip tickets to anywhere in the U.S. as the grand prize?

Global Connections: From ITALY, to EGYPT, to SENEGAL, to GAMBIA! Jan. 27, 7:00

Beth Wild and J. D. Stier will share their experiences, photos, and reflections on their trip during the summer of 2006. Their adventure began in Milano, where they visited the third largest church in the world, which can comfortably seat 40,000 parishioners. From Italia they were off to Egypt for the Great Pyramids, Mosques, and the Nile. It was then time for West Africa. They arrived in the wild city of Dakar, Senegal with all of its music, colors, rhythms, and commotion. Then a laborious overland trip into The Gambia where the experiences were too many to recount in brief. Please join Beth and J.D. to hear all about this experience. Thank You.

Jamie Custer has Lead Roll

Jamie Custer will be featured in a lead role in the upcoming Memorial High School production of *Camelot*. He will be playing Pellinore. Performances run over two weekends: February 2-3 and February 9-10, all at 7:30. Tickets are \$ 8.00 and available at the door or from the Custers.

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When the cold and dark winter days seem to be endless, it's time for THE

"GIRLS NIGHT – Winter Dream"

January 12, 2007

6-10 pm at MCC

Mark your calendars for a night full of everything to enjoy the warm, cozy, relaxing, energizing side of winter!

GIRLS and WOMEN of the MCC come for fellowship, hot choc/ tea, games, spiritual activities, relaxation, massage and more!!!

Please respond by Sunday, January 4th if you like to come!
For more information or questions please call Beth Falkos or Katrin.

MCC News and Activities

CREATING A RULE OF LIFE

A four-session adult education opportunity (Saturdays, 9 – 1:30 a.m., Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar 10, Apr 21)

I have talked with a number of MCC members who, like me, yearn for more balance, a greater sense of community, and more vitality in their lives. Yet my/our schedules are so full that it seems impossible to add anything else that would satisfy this yearning.

This dilemma is not new. In fact, Benedict of Nursia dealt with this same yearning. In the year 500 Benedict left his home near Rome to address this need. He, with his twin sister, Scholastica, established communities of men and women giving birth to the Christian Benedictine monastic movement which continues to this day.

Although most of us can't join a monastery and don't wish to follow the Rule of Benedict explicitly, it may be possible to become more conscious of practices in our lives that promote community, balance and vitality. This then is what I propose we explore in the four sessions listed above. We will list aspects of our lives that already promote this greater wholeness. These aspects are our "unconscious rule." We will then explore ways that we can intentionally promote these patterns in our lives.

The sessions will be held in the Covenant Room of the MCC. They will involve personal reflection, sharing, and reflective exercises such as journaling, walking the labyrinth, and active imagination. We will use Joan Chittister's book, Wisdom distilled from the Daily as a resource. If you are interested in participating in these sessions, please contact me by phone (824-1762) or email (hope@madisonchristiancommunity.org). Chuck Pfeifer has agreed to work with me in facilitating these sessions.

Tisha Brown

Nurturing Faith in Your Home: A Spiritual (Re)-treat for the Whole Family February 3, 2007, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

You've heard it said that parents are a child's first and perhaps most important teacher. This is true, not only for learning to read and write but also when it comes to learning to be a faithful Christian. One of our greatest responsibilities and greatest joys is sharing our faith with our children. It is for these reasons that we are offering "Nurturing Faith in Your Home" to all families in the MCC. For the first hour, Rev. Deborah Payden, author, retreat leader and Associate Pastor for Faith formation at First Congregational, UCC in South Milwaukee will lead adults in exploring ways of nurturing faith at home while the children participate in learning stations on prayer. In the second hour, families will work together to create a Christ candle that can be used for family rituals and spiritual time at home. Our morning will end with a special closing ritual. Refreshments will be provided.

The cost for the retreat is \$20.00 per family and registration is due by January 21, 2007. Registration forms are available at the MCC. Feel free to invite friends, neighbors or family members who are not MCC members. This retreat is open to all who are interested. If you have questions, contact Katrin Wuest.

Meeting Minutes are available in the book on the library counter in the Shalom Room.

If you are interested in minutes from Community of Hope, Advent and MCC meetings, you can find them in the large black book on the library counter in the Shalom Room.

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MCC News continued—

JAVA FOR JUSTICE—

Start the new year off by placing your coffee order for Mt Meru Coffee. If you are new to ordering, follow the steps on the order form in the Shalom Room. Place your order by the first Sunday of each month (Jan. 7th) and pick it up on the second Sunday of each month (Jan. 14th). Your check should be made out to Mt. Meru Coffee Project at the time of ordering. Coffee can be ordered regular or decaf: 12 oz bags for \$8.00 and 4 pound bags for \$38.00. Consider ordering a bag for the troops in Iraq. The proceeds for this project go to helping the coffee farmers in Tanzania become sustainable. They now get health care, send their children to schools and even the teachers are getting paid.

Thanks for your ongoing support.

My Respects to GEMs

They might sometimes be a challenge for God...

though I doubt it,
But they definitely challenge the dark side.

They are a serious bunch
that will laugh their tails off.

They're fearless in..
What they say
Looking at life
Looking at death
Handing out jabs
Fending off blows,

Because they know life is a level field...
Both "in here" and
"out there".

They are indeed GEMs,
or shall I say
Grumpy Elderly Men.

Happy & Blessed Holidays!
Wayne Nelson

Community Support Network (CSN) Volunteers Fold our Bulletins

As you may have noted in the bulletin acknowledgments on Sunday, folks from the Community Support Network come each Friday afternoon to fold our bulletins. Joanne McDonald works for this organization and made Sonja aware that they would be very happy to come. It offers their clients another opportunity for work experience.

Several women from the organization supervise the project. Their names are Joanne McDonald, Erin, Shell and Julie.

One of the volunteers just brought us their winter newsletter. It is posted on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room at MCC.

Two St Olaf music ensembles will be in the Madison area in January:

St Olaf Band

The St. Olaf Band will be performing on Saturday, January 20, 2007 at the De-Forest, WI high school at 7:30 pm. This will be their only performance in Wisconsin before their Winter Tour out to the states of Washington and Oregon. Krista Billerbeck, a sophomore at St. Olaf College, is a member of the clarinet section. Please contact Janet Billerbeck if you have questions about the concert or tickets.

St Olaf Choir

Saturday, January 27, 8:00 p.m.
Luther Memorial Church, Madison
For tickets by phone call 608-258-3166

Rachel Wixson is a member of the chamber ensemble that will tour with the St. Olaf Choir.

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MCC News continued

List of Items you can donate for Iraq:
Hard candy, coffee, microwave popcorn,
DVD movies, razors, toiletries, cup style
ramen soups - personal items that provide
some comfort or ease.

Food Drive for Wexford Ridge Food Pantry—Sunday, November 19

Again we are asking that members of Ad-
vent and Hope make a special effort to
bring food for the pantry on the 3rd Sun-
day of November (the 19th). Suggested
items include canned goods (fruit, vegeta-
bles, tuna, beef stew, fruit juice, etc.) pea-
nut butter, jelly, cereal. We can
especially use any large grocery bags.

We do not have facilities to handle fresh
produce. For those who prefer to donate
money, checks can be made out to the
Wexford Ridge Neighborhood Center and
designated for the pantry.

Dobbin McNatt, Coordinator

**St. Vincent de Paul's 15th Annual
Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive**
MCC will have an opportunity to help
in this effort. St. Vincent de Paul is an
organization committed to helping our
neighbors in need without regard to
religion, race, or ethnic background.
This drive helps us provide blankets,
pillows, and sheets to all those seeking
help when they come to our Service Cen-
ter. We need your help in making this
possible.

Our drive will take place the weekend
of **January 26-28**. To participate, you
may purchase new blankets or donate
your gently-used blankets and/or bed-
ding to any one of the four Shopko
stores in the Madison area or in a col-
lection bin available at MCC.

There will also be envelopes for dona-
tions to buy blankets and bedding
(your donation of \$5.00 or more
makes a blanket purchase possible) -
the weekend of the drive.

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Invitation to nominate Candidates for Bishop

The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
will elect a bishop at the May 3-5, 2007
Synod Assembly to serve a six-year term
beginning July 1, 2007. You are invited
into this prayerful process by nominating
eligible candidates for the office. Any
member of a South-Central Synod of Wis-
consin congregation may nominate a
candidate for the office of bishop. Any
ordained minister of the ELCA in good
standing is eligible to be nominated. A
working time line has been established
for the bishop's election process 2007.
"Pre-assembly process" nominations will



be received until January 31, 2007. All
forms and documents relating to the
bishop's election process are available
on the website: www.bishop-election-scsw-elca.org. The synod will also be
celebrating the 100th anniversary of Lu-
theran Campus Ministry at this Assem-
bly. If you have an interest in serving as
one of two voting members from Advent
let me know and I will fill you in on the
details. Jeff

Advent News

Bread for the World News

An Ounce of Prevention....

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Plenty of old sayings advise us to take care of problems while they are still manageable, but it's all too easy to put things off instead. Maybe the situation isn't really going to get worse. Maybe it will just go away.

Famine is sometimes called a "slow-onset emergency." We know the warning signs -- droughts or armed conflict, followed by steep increases in local food prices, more children showing signs of malnutrition, and people selling livestock for less than its value. Hunger "crises" don't just arise overnight to show up on the news. If we pay attention to the warning signals, national and international efforts can make a big difference by responding promptly with effective emergency measures.

In Ethiopia, approximately three million people are at risk of famine following a cycle of droughts and floods. The suffering is compounded by inadequate public health services and escalating prices for staple food. So far, relief efforts have been unable to reach the neediest people effectively. In Zimbabwe, poor infrastructure has made it difficult to transport surplus corn to areas in need. The UN World Food Program had planned to provide food assistance to 900,000 Zimbabweans this October, but has had to scale down to 330,000 people due to a funding shortfall.

Most of the world's 852 million hungry people suffer from chronic malnutrition caused by poverty. This means that they are vulnerable to crisis--whether drought such as in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, vio-

lence as in western Sudan, or another natural or man-made disaster. Bread for the World works to address the root causes of hunger--the kind of poverty which means that Zimbabwe doesn't have enough vehicles to transport surplus food to famine areas and that Ethiopia doesn't have basic health facilities to treat children's hunger-related diseases.

It's clear that hungry people need more emergency assistance; more than half a million Zimbabweans are now going without relief supplies due to funding shortfalls. But it's also clear that hungry people need long-term solutions to poverty. There may always be natural disasters, but the "ounces of prevention" that reduce people's vulnerability can substantially reduce suffering and death. The U.S. congress can help by increasing the amount of poverty-focused development assistance available for preventative measures.

ACTION OF THE MONTH: Urge your senators to support an increase of \$5 billion in poverty-focused development assistance for fiscal year 2007.

Happy Holiday from Jay, Dana & Beth Kemp

A special thank you to Katrin for your lovely note. It arrived the day we moved in! Thanks to Mitch Bradt for his visit. It was so nice to spend time with a friend.

Hello to our friends at MCC!
We are settling in here in Minneapolis. We live a block away from the Mississippi River and the lovely parkway trail. So far, no snow (or even flurries) in the cities! We are still in the process of "church shopping". There are a lot of Lutheran Churches here! Of course we miss Madison and all of you!

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Advent News Continued

Judith Circle

Judith Circle will meet for coffee, fellowship and bible study at Dotty Brugge's home on January 9th. Please come, all are welcome! Jean Loichinger is the contact person.

Advent Elizabeth Circle

Would you like to mingle with a great church circle without having to house clean? Elizabeth Circle meets every second Thursday of the month at Tabor Oaks at Oakwood Village West at 7:00 p. We share our prayer needs, discuss a Bible lesson from the now very well-written *Lutheran Woman*, and truly enjoy each other's company. We'd be happy to welcome you, too. Call Margaret Smith if you want more information.

Treasury of Love December 27, 2006

Love Offerings	11,615.39
Rent & Eviction Prevention	4,542.00
Security Deposit	1,400.00
Utility Assistance	1,587.00
Iraq Postage /Coffee	1,179.50
Car payment	624.03
Court Mandated payment	100.00
Wexford Women's Program	45.00
Haiti Partners	769.00
Advent Member's Rent	350.00
Storage Rent	89.00
UW Freshman Student's Books	265.00
Mental Health Appt.	100.00
IHN	50.00
Wexford Food Pantry	150.00
Winter Clothing for family	100.00
Greyhound Bus ticket	64.00
Registration Fee Trust	<u>65.00</u>
Expenditure	11,479.53
Balance as of 12/27/2006	\$135.86

Thank you Linda!

It is time to thank Linda Pils for serving as president of Women of the Advent for two years and Nan Wild for serving as co-president for a year. We appreciate their leadership. Now we look forward to another good year of women's activities led by Marily Crews-Nelson. Welcome Marily.

OPALS Book Discussion Group

OPALS meets the third Thursdays of the month all year. We meet at 7:00 p. on the lower level of the church. New members are welcome. Please join us at our meeting on January 18 in the youth room-lower level of the church. The book for January is *Bookseller of Kabul* by Ashe Seierstad (NF). A Norwegian woman lives with a Afghan family for several months in 2002. A portrait of a nation recovering from war, undergoing flux, mixed in misogyny and poverty.

You are invited to join us.

Advent Women:

Come for Thursday Coffee!

A lively group of "church ladies" meets on Thursday mornings at 7:00 a.m. at Victor Allen's, 2623 Monroe St.

The only agenda is sharing friendship, and there is always laughter. We do service projects several times a year, pray for one another's concerns, and celebrate joys. If you can be an early bird at least once a week, please drop by!



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Community of Hope New Members

Letitia Moore

As a daughter of a former foreign service officer, I was brought up in many third world countries. This experience increased my interest in humanitarian causes and well as traveling to new countries. This was also a reason why I joined the Peace Corps in 1982 and lived in Costa Rica for two years. Prior to that I was a VISTA volunteer in Chicago as I felt that it was important for me to see how the other half live in the United States.

I am a special education teacher at Mazomanie Elementary School where I have taught since 1989. I currently live in the Crestwood area. I also volunteer once a month at Oakwood Village at the coffee/gift shop.

This is my first time joining a church and looking forward to being a part of this community.

Heather and Bill Putnam Josephine & Heidi

The Putnams found their way to Hope through the labyrinth. They are excited to have found a congregation that is inclusive and welcoming, embraces a broad view of God, encourages on-going spiritual growth, values environmental stewardship and supports creative worship services.

Bill works for the City of Madison Parking Utility and Traffic Engineering. He enjoys riding and fixing bikes, working on and racing old MGs, listening to 50s music, and playing bass and piano.

Heather helps out in the kids' classrooms, is a labyrinth facilitator, and is involved in all production stages to create DVDs for Kanopy Dance Company. She enjoys bicycling, reading, writing, gardening, nature walks, origami, and playing flute.

Heidi is in 3rd grade at Van Hise Elementary School. She loves to go to school, read, dance, swim, draw, write poetry, and catch frogs.

Josephine is in 1st grade at Van Hise Ele-

mentary School. She loves her purple blanket and her family, especially her sister. She also loves to go to school, dance, play games, do puzzles, sing, do homework, explore nature, and give people hugs.

Bill Rettig

Bill Rettig works as a school librarian at Huegel Elementary School on Madison's Southwest side. He has been married to Jean Gilbertson for almost thirty years. For their 20th Anniversary they got courtside seats to watch Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls. They have a 25-year-old daughter named KC who lives in Madison.

Bill enjoys being outdoors. The sensations of heat, cold, rain, snow, wind make him feel alive and happy. Many of Bill's spiritual moments have been connected to Nature. He is a life-long Chicago Cubs baseball fan and hopes they will win the World Series before he dies. He likes reading books by John Irving, Toni Morrison, Barbara Kingsolver, and others. He also enjoys writing and has written short stories and poetry. Bill believes the spiritual life is not a theory, we have to live it.

Bob Sessions

A biography of my religious life has lots of variety in it. One early influence was the dedicated Sunday school teachers in my neighborhood Methodist church. In high school, a high point was earning the Boy Scouts' God & Country award--this included a year of service to my church. Working on church activities became an expected thing for me. Church activities there led me to meet my wife of 37 years. As a librarian at a small college in Iowa, I participated in their intense social and teaching life. A Jewish professor taught the comparative religion courses, through which I got to meet practitioners of world religions. Land & Man in East Asia was a graduate course I took for that college,

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Community of Hope News

and it included reading dozens of books detailing Buddhism, Taoism, nature religions and others; these books have been a source of long term interest and research.

The other big influence on my recent spiritual life is my friendship with Lois Komai. She has been a working colleague for many years, and I loved events she sponsored and led. The use of the Labyrinth as a meditative and mindful device was particularly moving. We share these interests with others in our Community of Hope & Advent congregations. Many of my friends are part of this community, and I want to be here too.

Praying for our Community

Please pray for the people and situations listed below as well as our entire community in the coming month. If you have prayer requests you'd like to be included in next month's newsletter please contact Tisha at the church office.

- Those who are unable, for health reasons, to join us in worship on a regular basis but whom we love: Mary Beth and Steve Udvari, Kathy Alexander and Wilma Sanks
- All military personnel and their families. Especially those involved in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Michelle & Lori, Jeremy and Josh as they work through various challenges in their lives.

These people and their families as we pray our way through the church directory:

Dec. 26-Jan. 2	the Bairds; the Bloedows
Jan. 2-9	Mary Bowman; Ann Bolger
Jan. 9-16	Lynn Breedlove and Evelyn Mazack; Tisha Brown and Cindy Thiesenhusen; Roger Buffett
Jan. 16-23	Kevin Clark and Joanne Kirkland; the Custers

Important Dates to Remember!



Birthdays

Isaac Powell	1/06
Landon Williams	1/07
Jean Pfeifer	1/13
Genevieve Custer	1/14
Tyler Spindler	1/14
Phill Bloedow	1/16
Diana Murphy	1/16
Bruce Jarvis	1/22
Kristin Meyer	1/22
Sandie Esrael	1/27

Anniversaries

No Anniversaries for January

Please let us know if we have missed your special day.

Hope Men's Breakfast News: The men of Hope meet for breakfast together on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Where? The Original Pancake House, 5518 University Ave. What time? 6:30 AM. Why? To enjoy good fellowship, good eats and good conversation. At our December get-togethers we talked about hitchhiking experiences, horny waitpersons* and Skipper Rolf Killingstad's sailboat trip from Dubuque, IA to Moline, AL. Our January breakfasts will be on the 3rd and the 17th, (*Our waitress was wearing reindeer antlers for Christmas).

Pastor Tisha taking a week off for Continuing Education

Tisha will be gone from January 15 through January 21 for a week of continuing education. She will be spending time at Holy Wisdom Monastery reading and reflecting for the coming year. Pastoral care concerns can be directed to either Katrin Wuest or Jeff Wild during that week. Tisha will return to the office on Tuesday, January 23.

Pray Daily
Worship Regularly
Study God's Word
Respond as Stewards
Serve at MCC &
Beyond
Cultivate Spiritual
Friendship

Our Larger Community

The ABC's of Alzheimer's and Dementia

This is a three-part education series for families of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. The next series takes place on Saturdays, January 20, January 27, and February 3, 2007, 9:30-11:45 a.m., at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 326 S. Segoe Rd., in Madison. The series is designed to enhance understanding of the disease and provides information on how to effectively care for a family member. There is no fee, but donations are appreciated. Call 608-232-3400 or 800-272-3900 to register. There is a flyer on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room at MCC.

The OutReach Review

The OutReach Review is the newsletter of the organization for LGBT community of south central Wisconsin. The newsletter is posted on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room at MCC.

In October, OutReach sponsored the Family Diversity Projects exhibit *Love Makes a Family: Portraits of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people and their Families*. This exhibit was displayed at the Capitol Rotunda for two weeks. Highlights of this powerful display and much more is in the newsletter on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room at MCC.

Crossing Bridges

This is an eight week education and support group for people with mild memory impairment and their families. The next program takes place Wednesdays and Fridays, January 31 - February 23, 2007, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., at the Alzheimer's Association, 517 N. Segoe Rd., Suite 301, in Madison. The overall focus of the program is to promote positive well-being while living with cognitive change and to offer a safe place to discuss issues and learn new information. There is no fee. Pre-registration is required: contact Mary Reines at 608-232-3404 or 800-272-3900. There is a flyer on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room at MCC.

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute and Ceremony Monday, January 15, 2007, 12 Noon, Capitol Rotunda

The theme for 2007 is "The Road Less Traveled." Roland S. Martin, author, newspaper editor, and Chicago radio host is the guest speaker. He's a rising media star with profound social insights. Don't miss his message themed on "The Road Less Traveled". Other guests include Highway to Heaven big band, Yawo Attivon, a West African musician and recording artist, the All Saints Gospel Choir and many others.

Pray Daily

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Friendship

Our Website: www.madisonchristiancommunity.org.

Read Pastor Jeff and Pastor Tisha's Sunday sermons on the web!
Sunday texts are on the monthly calendar.

On the Home Page find **Weekly Announcements** and the **Newsletter**. If you decide that you no longer need the newsletter delivered in the mail, please call the church office to let us know.



Please let the Website Committee know if you are not finding what you need or have other suggestions. The Website Committee: Tom Matthews, Edd Hellmer, John Brugge, Carrie McGinley, Jeff Greene and Sonja Keesey-Berg. Contact the Website Committee at office@madisonchristiancommunity.org.

A Word About Our Partnership— *Madison Christian Community*

Advent Lutheran (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and Community of Hope (United Church of Christ) are partners in Christ. Together we are the *Madison Christian Community* (MCC). We share education for all ages, youth activities, building space, fellowship groups and efforts to preserve the land. We worship together about 8–12 times a year. Community of Hope is an Open and Affirming congregation and Advent is a Reconciled in Christ congregation. We welcome people of all ages, denominational backgrounds, races, gender and sexual orientation. May our church be a sanctuary for all!

The Good Word

Monthly Newsletter of the
Madison Christian Community
*An Ecumenical Partnership of
Advent Lutheran Church – ELCA
and Community of Hope – UCC*

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Petra Streiff
Ann Bolger
Barbara Dueholm,
Moderator
Marcus Murphy
Corkey Custer
Bruce Jarvis

Advent Council
Doug Johnson
Jack Benjamin
David Canon, President
Sarah Zutz
Jim Muehl
Joanna McDonald
JoAnne Streit

MCC Logo Design by
Lucetta Kanetzke

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

If you call our office and there is no answer, please leave a message. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Are you still interested in receiving our newsletter?

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact the church office and let us know.

MCC Executive Committee:
Petra Streiff, Chair
Doug Johnson
Barbara Dueholm
David Canon
Tisha Brown
Jeff Wild

MCC Mission Statement

We affirm our unity through Christ and commit to share a journey grounded in faith practices and to serve as part of Christ's presence in our world.

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