

The Good Word

This newsletter is scheduled to arrive in your mailbox before the first Sunday of Advent which is November 29. Personally, I am not quite ready to shift the focus from the season of Pentecost to Advent and Christmas. Advent and Christmas are accompanied by winter weather, and I am writing this epistle on a sunny and warm Friday afternoon. Furthermore, we have yet to celebrate Thanksgiving!

Advent is about the comings of God in the past, present and future. Advent is also the beginning of a new year according to the church calendar. This Advent we will begin with Cycle C. The Gospel readings for Cycle C will be from Luke. I wish to set forth a modest goal for all of us during the Advent season. Please join with me in reading the Gospel of Luke.

Let us read the entire Gospel to better grasp and understand the continuity between the fragments we hear read during worship on Sunday mornings. When was the last time you read this beautifully written narrative? And if you have studied Luke in depth in the past and know that the story hasn't changed since the last time you read it, wouldn't you agree that the discovery of fresh insights kindle your spirit? I have been studying texts and preaching sermons for three decades now. When I begin my sermon preparations at the beginning of a week I am unenthusiastic because the text sounds so repetitious. I ask, "Haven't I already milked this text for all its worth?" Yet, at some time during the week, at an unexpected moment, or while immersed in prayer or meditation, there is a moment of inspiration, a fresh insight stirs a fire in my belly upon the discovery of a new insight.

Advent is a good time for you to do some work and devote ourselves to the reading of the Gospel. It is time to let our minds and

spirits be stirred by the Holy Spirit. Do you watch the news, read the paper, surf the net? I promise, we will be more enriched by a slow, serious and attentive reading of Luke than we are enriched by everything that diverts our attention.

I offer three suggestions for reading Luke during Advent. First, the Gospel of Luke can be outlined into four sections making it perfect to read one section each week of Advent. You could also read a section a day and read the entire Gospel four times during Advent. The four sections are:

Beginning, mainly in Jerusalem

(1:1-2:52)

Teaching, mainly in Galilee (3:1-9:50)

Last journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:28)

Dying, rising, and ascending; return to the temple (19:29-24:53)

Second, Luke consists of twenty four chapters. If we read a chapter a day beginning on Monday, November 30 we will conclude reading the Gospel on Wednesday, December 23. I think it will be a pleasure to worship on Christmas Eve and hear the beginning of the Gospel again. Read the words slowly. Choose a meaningful verse and commit it to memory. Read a chapter to another person.

Third, read Luke using a different translation of Scripture than the translation you are familiar with. You might dislike King James, but reading it will slow you down. I am planning to read Luke from the St. John's Bible that I received as a gift from a friend. The script is written in calligraphy and is accompanied by beautiful artwork. Read the Inclusive Bible and discover how jarring inclusive language can sound.

This Advent let us prepare for God's coming by dwelling in the Gospel of Luke.
Jeff Wild

December, 2009

Of Special Interest:

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- Java for Justice; Homeless Shelter, new shelters opening -p.4
- Big Questions Seminar; The Road Home –p.5
- Larger Community - p.6
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Fellowship Groups & Activities

MCC COMMUNITY GROUP

Sunday, **December 13**, 7:00 p. - "White Elephant" gift exchange at Loichingers, 6642 Maywood Ave., Middleton. Start looking in your home for something you "can live without" and wrap it up for the MCC Community Group "White Elephant Gift Exchange" Christmas party. It is always a fun evening. Bring a treat to share if you wish.

Watch for a sign-up for the **MCC New Year's Eve Progressive Dinner**, a tradition for more than 30 years at the MCC! Appetizers will be at McNatt's in Middleton at 6:30 p.m., we still need a home for the main meal.

MCC FILM GROUP — Fall 2009 Lois Komai, coordinator

We meet on the third Friday of the month at 7:00 pm. Let the host know if you are going to come/or can't come. Bring a treat to share and the host will provide the beverage. The **MCC Film Group will not meet in December.**

DATE

Friday, January 15 Movie: *Strangers in Good Company*, host still needed.

Friday, February 19 Movie: *Spirited Away*, an animated Japanese film, Lois Komai hosts.

Friday, March 19 Movie: *The Castle*, an Australian Comedy, McNatts host.

Friday, April 16—Wisconsin Film Festival

Friday, May 21 Movie in a theater and out for dinner.

Will the Real Apostle Paul Please Stand Up?

The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan is the next selection for the **MCC Theological Discussion Group**.

"Paul is second only to Jesus as the most important person in the birth of Christianity, and yet he continues to be controversial, even among Christians. How could the letters of Paul be used both to inspire radical grace and to endorse systems of oppression—condoning slavery, subordinating women, condemning homosexual behavior? Borg and Crossan use the best of biblical and historical scholarship to explain the reasons for Paul's mixed reputation and to reveal to us what scholars have known for decades: that the later letters of Paul were created by the early church to dilute Paul's egalitarian message and transform him into something more "acceptable." They argue there are actually "Three Pauls" in the New Testament: "The Radical Paul" (of the seven genuine letters), "The Conservative Paul" (of the three disputed epistles), and "The Reactionary Paul" (of the three inauthentic letters)." (Front flap description)

Come for the discussion of the "Three Pauls". We are an informal group interested in each other's reading perspectives. **Beginning Wednesday, December 16, 7 p., at MCC** we will discuss the first three chapters. For questions, contact Fran Grugel.

MCC Women's Lunch Bunch

Every Wednesday at 11:30 a. at the Prairie Cafe in Middleton, across from Copps Grocery Store. Good fellowship and no agenda.

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MCC News

Deck the church!

On **Thursday, December 3 from 6-9:30 p.** we will be preparing the Blessing and Shalom Rooms for the Advent season. Many hands are welcome because there is much to do: re-set the chairs, iron and hang yards and yards of blue fabric, wrap thousands of lights onto trees, hang evergreen roping, vacuum up needles, etc. etc. It is joyful chaos! If you have some time that evening, come and lend a hand! There will be hot cider, and donations of snacks to share are always welcome and appreciated. This event is usually very festive, enjoyed by all who join in. If you have questions, call Candice and Paul Schneider. Fa la la la la, la la, la, LA.

MCC Choir Rehearses For Sunday-After-Christmas Service

All interested MCC singers are invited to attend choir practices in the Covenant Room beginning **promptly** at 11:30 on Sundays following services during the Advent Season: **Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13 and 20.** There will be a final rehearsal on **Saturday, Dec.26 at 9:30 a.**

There will be music for choir, instrumentalists and congregational participation. Plan to join us in celebrating the birth of Jesus with music in worship. Questions? Contact Howard Kanetzke.

SERRV Sale

Once again we will be offering an alternative to the Malls. SERRV is a fair trade store and network for 95 co-ops in 35 countries including the USA. All items are fair trade meaning that fair wages and prices for goods are given. This is helping people fish, rather than giving them a fish. Sales at the MCC will be held November 30th and December 7th and 14th. Because we are working with the store on Monroe Street this year, we will also accept credit cards for the first time. Cash and Checks will also be accepted for payment. Look for the table in the Shalom Room.

Sunday Morning Adult Education in the Covenant Room

The Adult Education Class will be gathering for only two more sessions, Sunday December 6 and 13, before the end of the year. This means there will be no session on Thanksgiving weekend or the Sunday before and after Christmas.

Sunday, December 6 This will be the second session led by John Mix and Julia Weaver, both chaplains and members of MCC, on the Dane County Jail Ministry.

Sunday, December 13 Arden Mahlberg will be leading the session on the importance of boundaries in the church. Arden will be drawing from his experience as a psychologist and valued resource to the congregations of the ELCA. Arden is currently working on a book on this topic.

Thank you, MCC, for “Feeding My Sheep”

Your generous donations for the lamb and sheep ornaments this year will purchase quilt batting and fund overseas shipping through Lutheran World Relief for next year. Your contributions continue the creation of these quilts, giving a gift of hope to people in need. You help to turn quilts into shelters, beds, room dividers, backpacks and home. Thank you from the MCC Quilters.

Recycle your non-working strings of Christmas lights instead of throwing them away!

If you bring your non-working strings to church, Doug Johnson will see that they get recycled. For comparison, visit Holiday LEDs at <http://www.holidayleds.com>. They accept strings by mail and offer a discount as well when you buy lights from them. (Go to the very bottom of the page and click on "Free Light Recycling" for instructions.)

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MCC News & Activities

JAVA FOR JUSTICE: Order your Mt Meru Coffee, Sunday, December 6.

Place your order on the form in the Shalom Room. The order is faxed to Milwaukee on the first Sunday of every month and will be ready for pick-up on the coffee cart by the second Sunday of every month. You can order 12oz bags (\$9.00) or 4# bags (\$40) in regular or decaf, bean, drip or perk. **Remember to order extra coffee for holiday gifts and entertaining.** Building relationships and sustainability is what this project is all about. Justice never tasted so good.

Bring Your Recyclable Light Bulbs and Batteries to MCC

The place to deposit your recyclables is to the left of the library counter and Sonja's basket. There is a sign posted letting you know the cost of recycling the items. Please put your donation in the small container labeled *Donations*. There is a list of places in the Madison area that also accepts these items.

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.

Homeless Shelter – Your Help Is Needed – December 3

We're in need of a couple volunteers to help serve dinner at the men's homeless shelter at Grace Episcopal from **7:30 pm to 9:00 pm Thursday, December 3.** I have a conflict and can't make it this time, but there will be others there to work with you. We also need a couple of volunteers to help serve breakfast from 5:00 am to 8:00 am the next morning. If you can serve, please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room, so we know if we have enough volunteers to meet's MCC's commitment.

The shelter is opening a couple of new facilities in the next two months.

These buildings are both for single individuals and one will be for veterans. They are in great need of twin sheets and blankets for these buildings and can take all donations you can make for these items. (Please note, queen and king sets are too large for these beds.) If you are able to make a donation, please contact Ruth at the shelter warehouse, 258-4840. Thank you.

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MCC News

Big Questions **A seminar offered by** **Jean and Charles Pfeifer** **Saturdays February 20 and 27,** **March 6 and 13, 2010**

“One sticks one's finger into the soil to tell by the smell in what land one is: I stick my finger in existence—it smells of nothing.”

“Where am I? Who am I? How came I here? What is this thing called the world? What does this world mean? Who is it that has lured me into the world? Why was I not consulted, why not made acquainted with its manners and customs instead of throwing me into the ranks, as if I had been bought by a kidnapper, a dealer in souls? How did I obtain an interest in this big enterprise they call reality?”

Why should I have an interest in it? Is it not a voluntary concern? And if I am to be compelled to take part in it, where is the director? I should like to make a remark to him.”

Big Questions by Soren Kierkegaard

Whether you are one seeking personal life direction or an activist seeking renewal, this seminar, **Big Questions**, offers a unique opportunity to engage the questions raised by Kierkegaard. The seminar focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus as portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It incorporates dialogue and the insights of Jungian depth psychology complemented by art, sculpture, dance, and journaling. This is not a study of the Christ of Christianity. Rather it explores the humanity of Jesus as a means of exploring our own humanity and potential. Past participants state that the process is transformative. It provides a safe environment in which people from a variety of belief systems can struggle with profound personal and social issues while honoring the humanity and integrity of all present.

The seminar is offered on four Saturdays at Holy Wisdom Monastery. It's open to interested people from any religious tradition or from none. No previous psychological, Biblical, or religious knowledge is required. Noon meals are provided. Total Cost is \$225. To participate, send a registration fee of \$50 to Charles D. Pfeifer, 2154 West Lawn Avenue, Madison WI, 53711. For further information call 608.251.3125 or email <cdpfeifer@tds.net>.

Scholarship help is available.

The Road Home / Interfaith Hospitality Network –

We are seeking **volunteers to help serve homeless families on December 7, 9 and 11**. Our volunteers will cook and serve dinner, host activities with the kids and spend the night at Orchard Ridge UCC. This provides a valuable, direct service to families in need and is a great way to get to know folks at MCC. A sign-up board is in the Shalom Room or you may contact Mark Gestlinger or Aaron Anding if you have any questions.

Story Telling Worship **with Don Falkos**

Sunday, December 13, 6:00 p
Location: St Luke Lutheran, 7337 Hubbard Ave in Middleton

Don Falkos will be telling the Nativity Story in an evening worship service. Come and hear the amazing story of Jesus birth and the events surrounding it. Special music will also be included in this Advent Service.

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MCC News

Coming Events

Dec 5	Middle High Candy Making, 1-5p.
Dec 6	Kids Music Rehearsal, 9:15-10:00a. & 11:30a.-12:00p. in the Blessing Room
Dec 9	Indoor Labyrinth is open to the public, 9a-6p.
Dec 12	High School Christmas party, 6-10p.
Dec 13	Indoor Labyrinth is open to the public, 1-2:30 p.
Dec 17	MCC Executive Committee, 7:00 p.
Dec 19	Christmas Program Rehearsal, 10:00 a.
Dec 20	Food Pantry Donation Sunday
Dec 20	Christmas Program, No Sunday School at 9:00 a. –Program participants please arrive at 9:45 a.
Dec 20	Kids Musician Rehearsal, 9:00-10:00a.
Dec 21	Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk, 6-8p.
Dec 27	No Sunday School
Dec 27	MCC Service of Hymns and Carols
Dec 31	MCC Community Group sponsored New Year's Eve Progressive Dinner
Jan 1	New Year's Day Labyrinth Walk, 1:00-4:00 p.

December 14: National Health Care Reform—Acting nationally, impacting locally: What will it mean for you?

As part of the Forward Thinking speaker series, American Family and The Wisconsin School of Business will bring together a panel of hospital and medical professionals to discuss the impact of national health care reform on local health care in your community.

**Monday, December 14, 7:00-8:30 p.
in the Memorial Union Theater**

Our Website: www.madisonchristiancommunity.org.

- *Read or Listen* to Pastor Jeff and Pastor Tisha's **Sunday sermons** on the web!
- **Sunday texts** are on the monthly calendar.
- **COH and Advent** members find **Worship Assistant's Schedule** and Task Descriptions.



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.

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MCC News

Shalom Room Planning – MCC Visioning Part III

This is the third in a series of articles being published in this newsletter to inform Madison Christian Community (MCC) members of work previously done by a Shalom Room Taskforce and the need for visioning the future of the MCC. Two meetings will be scheduled in early 2010 to discuss short-term improvements to the Shalom Room, as well as long-term planning for the future of the MCC.

The previous articles have provided an overview and chronology of the formation and work of the Shalom Room Taskforce. We've also discussed how this has led the MCC Leadership Team to recommend that we hold two MCC meetings (to allow for maximum participation), for members to help us decide what should be included in the basic upgrades to the Shalom room.

Based on the outcome of the Shalom Room Taskforce experience, the Leadership Team has also recommended that we enter into an MCC-wide conversation to discuss and discern our long-term vision of our mission and ministries. This vision should be used as the basis to drive any future structural changes to the MCC building and provide a roadmap to our future.

The MCC Leadership Team looks forward to this visioning process in 2010.

Chaplain John Mix's Letter to congregations

"The Lord put me in jail so I don't die of alcoholism like my father did."

The son, now 52, has outlived his attorney father and is now ready to let God and alcoholism be his teachers. The daily paper gives a perspective on the ongoing consequences of people caught up in addictions. How our community resources should be allocated to deal with this issue and its many far-reaching consequences is part of our civic conversation. For those who are in jail the opportunity is to ask if they need and want help, as well as where they turn for it. There are many levels of treatment if you can get it. The AA and NA representatives come to the jail weekly for meetings to assist the journey. It is certainly a spiritual question at its root. For those whose pain has made them ready, Julia and I are grateful to be there to guide when we can and refer when it's needed. For some, mental illness is a factor as well. Do some turn to religion out of fear of a heavy sentence in court? Sure. Who knows when a heart is truly ready to surrender in their powerlessness over addiction or other dysfunction? Wheat and weeds grow together. We let God be God in all the mercy and outrageous grace shown to us in Christ crucified and risen. God's life-giving Word sustains us all and does not return empty.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and donations to our ministry of presence among 940 neighbors in jail and hundreds of Sheriff's staff. Chaplain Julia and I welcome opportunities to share with you what God is doing in our midst and hear from you likewise. Her office number is 261-9755 and mine is 266-4573.

Peace be with you all, Chaplain John and Chaplain Julia

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MCC News

Food Drive for Food Pantry—Sunday, December 20

Please make a special effort to bring food for the Lussier Food Pantry on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Suggested items include canned goods (fruit, vegetables, tuna, beef stew, fruit juice, etc.) peanut 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 Lussier Community Education Center and designated for the pantry.

Dobbin McNatt, Coordinator

Winter Solstice Worship: A Service of Song, Scripture and Prayer on the Longest Night Monday December 21, 5:30 p.m.

All are invited to a Winter Solstice Worship service on Monday, December 21 at 5:30 p.m. This will be a time for prayerful reflection, an alternative to the hustle and bustle of the Christmas Season and an opportunity to acknowledge the grief, stress, and loneliness as well as the joy, light, hope and love of this time of year. As the longest night gives way to growing light let us gather to sing, hear the word of God and to pray. The labyrinth will also be open on this night from 6:00 to 8:00 all are welcome to worship and then walk the labyrinth.

Winter Farmers Market and Brunch

The Harvest of Hope Fund is celebrating its 24th anniversary with a Winter Farmers Market and Brunch on January 16, 2010. The Winter Farmers Market will run from 10 AM to 2 PM and the Brunch will be held from 11 AM to 1 PM. Both events are at the MCC. Advance ticket prices are \$8 for adults and \$4 for kids 12 and over (kids under 12 are free); ticket prices at the door are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids 12 and over.

The Harvest of Hope Fund began with a Pick and Glean Project (hand-picking corn for farmers who couldn't get into their fields due to deep snow) over the Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend in January, 1986. This Winter Farmers Market and Brunch is scheduled for MLK, Jr. weekend to celebrate our 24 years of providing financial help and hope to Wisconsin farm families. Over this period of time, we've given more than 1420 gifts totaling over \$850,000 to Wisconsin farm families in distress (97 gifts totaling \$67,662 in the first 10 months of 2009).

This is the third year we are hosting a market and brunch. The market will feature grass fed meats, farm fresh eggs, several varieties of cheese, yogurt, honey, sorghum, maple syrup, apples and apple cider, wool and wool products...all grown or produced on family farms in southern Wisconsin. The brunch will feature local farm products. Barbara Wright, owner of the Dardanelles Restaurant, will work with MCC volunteers to create this scrumptious brunch.

Funds from this event will support the work of the co-sponsoring organizations: Harvest of Hope Fund and Churches Center for Land and People. We'll need help with set-up, cooking, serving, and clean-up...watch for sign-up opportunities over the next few weeks. Come—enjoy the event—and support two good causes!

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MCC News

SPECIAL GROCERY LIST

Louise Redden, a poorly dressed lady with a look of defeat on her face, walked into a grocery store. She approached the owner of the store in a most humble manner and asked if he would let her charge a few groceries. She softly explained that her husband was very ill and unable to work, they had seven children and they needed food.

John Longhouse, the grocer, scoffed at her and requested that she leave his store at once.

Visualizing the family needs, she said: "Please, sir! I will bring you the money just as soon as I can."

John told her he could not give her credit, since she did not have a charge account at his store.

Standing beside the counter was a customer who overheard the conversation between the two. The customer walked forward and told the grocer that he would stand good for whatever she needed for her family. The grocer said in a very reluctant voice, "Do you have a grocery list?"

Louise replied, "Yes sir." "Okay," he said, "Put your grocery list on the scales and whatever your grocery list weighs, I will give you that amount in groceries."

Louise hesitated a moment with a bowed head, then she reached into her purse and took out a piece of paper and scribbled something on it. She then laid the piece of paper on the scale carefully with her head still bowed.

The eyes of the grocer and the customer showed amazement when the scales went down and stayed down.

The grocer, staring at the scales, turned slowly to the customer and said begrudgingly, "I can't believe it."

The customer smiled and the grocer started putting the groceries on the other side of the scales. The scale did not balance so he continued to put more and more groceries on them until the scales

would hold no more. The grocer stood there in utter disgust. Finally, he grabbed the piece of paper from the scales and looked at it with greater amazement. It was not a grocery list; it was a prayer, which said: "Dear God, you know my needs and I am leaving this in your hands."

The grocer gave her the groceries that he had gathered and stood in stunned silence. Louise thanked him and left the store.

The other customer handed a fifty-dollar bill to the grocer and said; "It was worth every penny. Only God Knows how much a prayer weighs."

Dane County United Delegate's Assembly Celebrating Victories and Charting the Course Ahead Thursday December 3, 7 to 8:30 p. Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 2019 Fisher St.

If you care about social justice issues in our community and want to become a more engaged citizen you won't want to miss this assembly. We will be celebrating what we've been able to accomplish in advancing **a collaborative, play-based four-year-old kindergarten program** and **culturally relevant education** in the Madison public schools. We will also be introducing a plan for **building the power of Dane County United and its member organizations** to take effective action for the common good.

Sign up in the Shalom Room if you are planning to come. Call, email or talk to Tisha Brown or Bill Rettig for more information.

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Advent Season Gifts from God: Hope Peace, Joy, Love

By Heather Putnam, Children's Ministry

Growing Faith at Home

As MCC members, we yearn to find greater meaning in the Advent Season. To provide MCC families with a simple and meaningful way to observe the Advent Season at home, we have created another booklet in the Growing Faith at Home series. This booklet is designed as a tool to help your family to explore God's gifts of hope, peace, joy and love during the Advent Season.

The booklet offers instructions for how to make an Advent wreath, suggests a simple candle lighting ritual, and provides lots of additional resources to help you customize a deeper exploration of the Advent Season gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. It also includes scripture, hymns, prayers, your stories, others' stories.

It is our hope that in the sharing of these resources that your understanding of hope, peace, joy, and love will grow and that as a result your faith will grow and that the wonder and mystery of the Advent season will grow for you as well.

Advent Season

Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas describes the Advent Season as follows: "Though Advent (literally "arrival") has been observed for centuries as a time to contemplate Christ's birth, most people today acknowledge it only with a blank look. For the vast majority of us, December flies by in a flurry of activities, and what is called 'the holiday season' turns out to be the most stressful time of the year. It is also a time of contrasting emotions. We are eager, yet frazzled; sentimental, yet indifferent. One minute we glow at the thought of getting together with our family and friends; the next we feel utterly lonely. Our hope is mingled with dread, our anticipation with despair. We sense the deeper meanings of the season but grasp at them in vain; and in the end, all the bustle leaves us frustrated and drained."

At the MCC, we want to help your family move beyond this blank-look frazzled state. We invite you to incorporate this booklet into your family traditions this Advent season. There is no one right way to use the booklet. Pick and choose various elements as you feel moved. One family might really be into doing an Advent candle lighting ritual, whereas another family might be more drawn to sharing and talking about the stories about hope, peace, joy and love. Whatever you choose to do, we hope the resources in this booklet help your family experience wonder and meaning during the Advent season.

Pick up your copy of the *Advent Season Gifts from God* at the MCC. If you have questions, call Heather Putnam.

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MCC Youth News

Wednesday nights: **Middle School Guitar Club** - 6:15 - 7p.
Advent Confirmation - 7p.

Sat, December 5 **Candy Making** - MS 1-5p

Come dip pretzels, crack our famous peppermint bark, snap some English Toffee, and package it all up to sell! We will sell all Sundays in December and donate the proceeds to the Lussier Center Food Pantry.

Sat, December 12 **Christmas Party** - HS 6-10p

Deck the Halls with pieces of pizza...Fa la la la la...Hang out time and yummy junk food...Fa la la la la...Yankee Swap - so bring a present...Fa la la la la la la la...Celebrate with all your church buds...Fa la la la la... Presents should be found or cost <\$5 and wrapped. Please also bring food to share and a non-perishable food item for the Lussier Center Food Pantry. Location: TBA

Fri, December 18 @ 7p, Sat, December 19 @ 2p, or
 Sun, December 20 @ 2p

Anyone want to go to see *The Nutcracker*? Marcella VanKan is Clara. We need 15 for the group discount. Call or email Jen ASAP if you are interested.

Jen Streit, Youth Director
 Madison Christian Community:
 Advent Lutheran, ELCA
 Community of Hope, UCC

Note: Scholarships are always available, and friends are always welcome! Jen & Dan can help co-ordinate rides, too. Call or email if you need anything!

Confirmation Service Projects - for BOTH Community of Hope and Advent Confirmation students. Please save the following dates!

- #2 Sunday, February 14: 11:30 - 3:30p, Valentine's Project, TBD by YOU
- #3 Saturday, April 24: 9a - noon, Earth Day Project

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From Habitat for Humanity & the Apostles Build Program

Thank you for your payment of \$5,500 sponsorship commitment and additional \$4,500 donation to the 2009 Apostles Build for Habitat for Humanity of Dane County. Your commitment to our community and to our work is humbling and very exciting.

Since Habitat for Humanity of Dane County was established in 1987, we have partnered with over 154 families. Because of supporters like you, we are now providing homeownership opportunities to 15 new homeowners and their children each year. These families must meet stringent requirements including income within 30%-60% of county median income, a commendable job history, a demonstrated need, 300-350 hours of sweat equity building their home, and the capability of handling the rigors of homeownership.

Thank you again for your support of the Habitat model of affordable housing. You are truly making a difference. For an update on our program and activities, please visit www.habitatdane.org.

Sincerely yours,
Perry L Ecton, CEO

Women of Advent

Do to the growing demand of our food pantries, we have decided to collect items on **Sundays during Advent** to help fill the need. There will be a box in the Shalom Room marked **Advent Women Donations**. Please bring your nonperishable food items, toiletries (shampoo, soaps, lotions, etc.) toilet paper, tissues to church on Sundays during Advent.

Thank you for your generosity,

Yvonne Gern and Jean Loichinger

Simply Giving Program is Ending

Simply Giving was started several years ago and offered to Lutheran Congregations as a free service by Thrivent, through its agent, VANCO Services. We were recently notified that the program is changing in 2010 in two significant ways. Participating congregations will now be charged certain fees for each member using the service and more of the administrative burden is being placed on the individual churches. As a result of these changes and the relatively small participation by our membership, **we have decided to no longer offer this giving option after the beginning of 2010.**

Simply Giving will continue through December for those currently participating.

Next year, participants will have to make other arrangements for their offerings. Direct gifts by check or cash, of course, are cheerfully accepted. If you do 'on-line' banking, you may also want to use this alternative with one-time or repeating periodic offerings, as desired. Thanks for your support.

Pray Daily
Worship Regularly
Study God's Word

Respond as

Stewards

Cultivate Spiritual
Friendship
Serve at MCC &
Beyond

Advent News continued

New Members Were Welcomed on Sunday, November 8

We welcomed a wonderful group of new members to the congregation on Sunday, November 8. These people bring their enthusiasm, gifts, talents and experiences to share and enrich the life of this community.

Lynne Schultz
John Goltermann
Jerry & Barbara Larsen
Kim & John Eighmy
Ann Ward & Jean Einerson
Regina Dunst

Thank you from the South Central Synod of Wisconsin—*God's Work, Our Hands*

Thank you to those who contributed to the synod appeal for the ELCA. Advent contributed \$1033.00 to the appeal. Twenty congregations from the synod have contributed over \$9,000 to date. This comes with the news that in mid-November the ELCA reduced its 2009 budget by 10% translating into a loss of 42 positions.

Guidelines for Announcements at Advent

Advent's Mission Statement and the Word About our Partnership statement found in our newsletter and in our bulletin reminds us that we are a sanctuary for all. Be mindful not to offend anyone present or not present.

Be respectful of time considerations by keeping announcements specific and brief.

Where appropriate, utilize the printed means available for making announcements through the Bulletin or Newsletter. Attempt not to be overly repetitive in terms of the numbers of weeks an announcement is made.

Announcements of a partisan political or "for profit" business nature are not appropriate for our worship setting.

Members listening to announcements are asked to do so with patient respect of the speaker, putting the best possible construction on the motives of the speaker, as Martin Luther advises us.

Anyone with concerns about announcements is encouraged to visit with our church council president or with Pastor Jeff.

Advent Giving Goal

We have good news to celebrate this month. The giving goal for November was \$27,200 and members of Advent support its mission by giving \$30,951. It appears that members are bringing their financial pledges up to date. Meeting our goal of \$340,000 for the 2009 spending plan will be very close. Thank you for your constant support and generosity.

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Advent News continued

Advent Elizabeth Circle

Elizabeth Circle will meet on Thursday, December 10 at 7:00 p. in the **Tower Apartments- Party/Meeting Room** on the third floor at Oakwood west campus.

We are a group of women who meet two hours each month at Oakwood to read and discuss a Bible study, as well as exchange friendship and support one another. We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p. You are very welcome to visit us. Call Margaret Smith for directions.

Treasury of Love 2009

Beg. Bal & Love Offerings	\$8,734.71
Rent & Eviction Prevention	5,013.00
Utility Assistance	1,007.00
Security Deposit	1,180.00
Postage-Box for Soldiers	189.04
Items for Boxes for Soldiers	20.97
Greyhound Bus Tickets	167.00
Gas Voucher	40.01
Clothing	80.86
Auto Repair	200.00
Lussier Food Pantry	151.00
Prescription	39.00
LSS Washer & Dryer	10.00
Badger Care Application	60.00
Registration Fee Trust	75.00
Haiti Partners	150.00
Soccer Balls	130.00
Groceries	50.00
Vets Memorial	125.00
Expenditure	\$8,687.88
Balance as of 10/20/2009	\$46.83

Judith Circle

Judith Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 8, 9:30 a. at Jean Loichinger's, 6642 Maywood Avenue. Jeannette Krahn will be a co-hostess and Myrna McNatt will be the study leader. All are welcome for fellowship and study. If you need a ride or have any questions please call Jean Loichinger.

G.E.M.S meets every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a. in the lower level of the church.

We are continuing a lively, informative conversation based on the book **The Reformation for Armchair Theologians**. G.E.M.S has stood for "Grumpy Elderly Men." But, since some in the group don't fit the grumpy description, we are opening up to those who may be good-looking, good-hearted, good-humored, good-natured, or good-for-nothing. Try us, you'll like us.

OPALS Book Discussion Group

OPALS meetings are held once a month in the afternoon at MCC. On Tuesday, December 15, we will meet at 1:30 p. to discuss the book *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis, an old classic.

Call Mary Maxwell if you have questions or need a ride. New members always welcome.

Advent Women Thursday Breakfast Gathering

Advent women are invited for coffee each Thursday at **7 AM at PASQUAL'S in Hilldale Shopping Center**, directly across from Metcalfe's Sentry. 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 when your schedule allows!

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Community of Hope News

The Christmas Fund Offering December 13, 2009

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund, one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ (UCC), is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

Amidst the depressed economic climate which continues to drag on, your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. The requests for Ministerial Assistance provided by the Christmas Fund are greater than at any point in recent history.

This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care. Please give generously in worship on December 13 to the annual appeal for The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund.

Holy Communion – Some Changes for the Flu Season

In light of concerns over transmission of the H1N1 flu virus the Worship Team and Steering Team of Community of Hope have agreed on the following change to how we will serve Holy Communion: Communion preparers will slice or tear the communion bread into pieces. During Communion, the server will hand you a piece of bread. We will continue to offer the common cup but will add an additional tray of individual cups so that those who would rather choose an individual cup have that option.

Please, if you or any member of your family is feeling ill or has the flu, remain at home.

Dear Community of Hope Family,

You have made my ordination possible in so many ways. The beautiful stole will always embody this gift as well as the inclusive, loving, image of this community. I know you are praying for me as I deepen into my call to Jail Ministry.

Peace and Love,
Julia

Dear friends,

Thank you for attending our open house on November 7 and filling our home with such warmth, love and laughter. We look forward to this event every year and are so grateful for your presence in our home. If you couldn't make it this year, we missed you and hope you will be able to attend in the future.

Tisha & Cindy

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Community of Hope News

Praying for our Community

Community of Hope is an ever more caring community that values prayer as a way of connecting to God, growing in faith and caring for one another. This month we pray for the following people and their families.

- 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 Ardie Manser
- All military personnel and their families all over the world, and especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- College students in our community – Jamie Custer, Ian Jarvis, Rose Gear, Colin Jarvis, Hannah Hunter-Johnson, Quinn Kirkland-Clark, Sarah Hunter-Johnson (graduate studies) and Tristan Breedlove (graduate studies)
- Bill Rettig as he recovers from knee surgery
- Petra Streiff and Larry Stuessy as they celebrate the birth of their granddaughter Charlotte Elise, born on October 11.
- These people and their families as we pray our way through the church directory:

Nov. 24-Dec. 1 Petra Streiff & Larry Stuessy; Jan Summers; Bonnie Trudell

Dec. 1-8 Mary Beth & Steve Udvari; Steve & Aly Van Der Weide, Jack & Henry; Julia Weaver

Dec. 8-15 Roger & Kristi Williams; Nancy Zabel

Dec. 15-22 Kathy & Robin Alexander; Rajai & Chickee Atalla

Dec. 22-29 Barb Bickford, Aralee Derflinger; Rose Gear; Phill & Candi Bloedow

Dec. 29-Jan. 5 Mary Bowman; Diane Eddings

Important Dates to Remember!



Birthdays

Ben Bougie	12/13
Rose Gear	12/18
Mary Schmelzer	12/22
Marcus Murphy	12/26
Erika Ono	12/29
Zoe Meyer	12/31

Anniversaries

Kathy Alexander (Robin)	12/26
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Please let us know if we have missed your special day.

Calling all NAGs*, NABs**, NAWs***, or Chic Chats, etc.,

The No Agenda Women's Breakfast Group for Community of Hope begins Wednesday Dec. 2, 2009. We will meet the first and third Wednesday of every month starting at 7:00 am. First meeting at Hubbard Avenue Diner, 7445 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, 831-6800. No agenda ever, except to choose a name, regular spot to meet and starting time. All are welcome; please come. *The No Agenda Gals, **No Agenda Babes, ***No Agenda Women, or simply the Women's Breakfast Group. Call Sandra Esrael if you have questions.

Hope Men: Pancakes, Puns, Proverbs and Politics

- Those are just a few of the things you will miss if you don't get to the Hope men's breakfast at the Original Pancake House on University Avenue, at 6:30 a. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month. You have promised yourself for a long time now. Mark your calendar, set your alarm, and make it!

The group is called "Hope Men," but we welcome visitors. Just ask Tisha.

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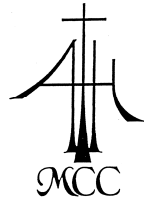
Beyond

Madison Christian Community
7118 Old Sauk Road
Madison WI 53717-1099

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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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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Roger Williams

Advent Council

Bob Schneider
Julie M. Walsh,
President
Brian Kuhn
Edd Hellmer
John Malecki
Marilyn Crews-Nelson
Gretchen Wahl

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Phone: 608-836-1455

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:

Brian Kuhn, Chair
Donna Leet
Roger Williams,
Chair Elect
Julie M. Walsh
Tisha Brown
Jeff Wild