

The Good Word

CONSTRUCTING THE HOPE/ ADVENT/ MCC STORY AT FORTY

“Church stories...are the most accessible carriers of history...The stories live because they show us what is authentic in the congregation...Stories help us incorporate outsiders who want to join the church, as we invite them to listen and to add a story of their own. Stories may be used for discipline and guidance, recalling the past to affirm or challenge the beliefs or behavior of the present.” Carl S. Dudley, *Basic Steps Toward Community Ministry*.

Your Story, My Story, OUR Story will be the topic of discussion during the education hour on the four Sundays of February. These sessions are designed so that every participant will share their story as it relates to Madison Christian Community with its forty years of history. We will have the privilege of listening to stories that are different from our own from others. It will be to our advantage to pool our stories, note the themes, discern our emerging mission and discuss our dreams for the future.

Our focus on February 4 and 11 will be upon The MCC at 40: Two Congregations/ Two Denominations and a 40-year Shared Ministry. The first Sunday we will divide into groups by decade of affiliation and reflect up this question: What was “going on” in the decade when you began your relationship with Hope/Advent/MCC in the world, in Madison, in “the Church” (global, national, local), and in you (spiritually, personally, vocationally)? Every person is encouraged to answer these questions individually and one person will record sum-

mary statements on newsprint sheets that will be shared and discussed among the large group on Sunday, February 11.

My Personal Hope/Advent/MCC Story will form the basis of our discussion on the third and fourth Sundays of February. The questions we will explore are as follows: when did you “join” Hope/Advent/MCC? What attracted you? What has kept you? What changes (for better or worse) have you experienced during your time here? How have you experienced the MCC relationship (strengths, weaknesses, possibilities for the future)? What are the “stories” that you tell friends or neighbors about your congregation and the MCC? What possibilities do you see for the future?

Obviously, the effectiveness of these sessions depends upon broad participation of MCC members. Every person will be making a valuable contribution to these conversations and every person will receive from others by listening to their stories and as a whole this community will be strengthened. Please plan to share your story, hear others’ stories and celebrate our story. Jeff

February 2009

Of Special Interest:

- Gift of Paging System; Pastor Tisha to Haiti—p.2
- POP Cans; JAVA for Justice; Recycle Styrofoam; - p.4
- Hot Off the Press— p.5
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MCC News

Winter Farmers Market and Brunch a Success!

from Roger Williams

MCC members and others from the Madison area turned out in large numbers for our January 17 Winter Farmers' Market and Brunch. We served over 200 people and ran out of food about the time people stopped coming! Feedback has been very positive—people enjoyed the farmers market and the brunch created by Barbara Wright (owner of The Dardanelles Restaurant) and a host of volunteers.

Thanks so much to all MCC members who attended. Thanks also to the following persons who contributed so much to make this event a success:

Set Up Crew: Dave Dueholm, Brian Kuhn, John Szalkowski, Jen Streit and the MCC YOUTH GROUP

Food Preparation: Mike Collentine, Kristi Holden, Chris Hoag, Ellen Lindgren, Linda Pils, Aly VanDerWeide and Kristi Williams

Food Serving: John Brugge, Candi and Phill Bloedow, Avis Elson, Debra Greene, Kris Knoepke, Mary Schmelzer and John Szalkowski

Clean Up Crew: Dave Dueholm, Howard Kanetzke, Brian Kuhn and Mary Nack

In addition, Debra Greene printed tickets, Howard Kanetzke sold tickets, Jeff Greene took photos, plus Tom Matthews and Sonja Keesey-Berg provided incredible behind the scenes support for the event. Thanks much!

Barbara Wright contributed considerable time and energy in helping us plan for, prepare and serve the food for this brunch. If you enjoyed the food, please patronize the Dardanelles Restaurant and thank Barbara for her amazing gift!

The event generated over \$450 in monies for the Harvest of Hope Fund. This will be helpful in responding to the growing number of farmer applications for financial assistance due to falling commodity prices (milk prices have plummeted 50 percent since early 2008) and rising input costs (fertilizer and seed costs have skyrocketed in the past two years).

Pastor Tisha Traveling to Haiti - A Mission of Mutual Exchange February 9-17, 2009

Tisha Brown and Roger Williams along with Bryan Sirchio will represent the Madison Christian Community on this trip sponsored jointly by the Southeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference, UCC Haiti Partnership team and The Haiti Partners Ministry of the Madison Christian Community.

While in Haiti they will visit our partners in ministry at St. Thomas School and the SPARE Program. They will also visit a seminary for Protestant pastors supported by the Southeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference; be a caring presence with orphans and also with people in a home for the destitute and dying. They will learn about Haiti's history and people. A total of twelve people from Wisconsin and around the U.S. are participating in this trip. Prayers for this Mission of Mutual Exchange and for the people of Haiti are

Need Help with Snow Removal, etc. – call Bemis

If you are in need of extra hands to rake leaves and clean snow contact me whenever possible.

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Fellowship Groups & Activities

Grace (Eventually): Thoughts on Faith by Anne Lamott, February book selected by Theological Discussion Group

“Grace is that extra bit of help when you think you are really doomed; also, not coincidentally, when you have finally run out of good ideas on how to proceed, and on how better to control the people or circumstances that are frustrating or defeating you. I experience Grace as a cool ribbon of fresh air when I feel spiritually claustrophobic. I know that Grace meets us wherever we are, but does not leave us where it found us. Oh, well. Grace is not something I DO, or can chase down; but it is something I can receive, when I stop trying to be in charge.” (Lamott interview from Amazon)

Does Grace confuse you? Do you have the Januaries? Do you recall your last belly laugh? Join the Theological Discussion Group on Wednesday, February 18, MCC at 7 p. Reading and discussing Lamott’s new book in a “safe” setting will be good for your winter whatever.

ACTIVITIES FOR MCC COMMUNITY GROUP

February 28

9:15 a. donuts and coffee and attend the Michael Feldman “WDYK” radio show at Monona Terrace. The cost is \$7. You must pay Rita Spencer by Sunday, February 22 to attend. Sooner is better!

MCC Film Group

Friday, February 20, the film group meets at the MCC in the Youth Room and will watch the film *The Bicycle Thieves*. Hope you can join us.

Contact Lois Komai if you would like to be on the email reminder list for the Film Group.

MaD KÜT !

Why MAD KÜT (mad cute)? Because Kids Under Three generally are! This is a new playgroup at the MCC for Mommies And Daddies, Kids Under Three. We will meet the **1st Sunday of every month from 3:00 -4:30p @ MCC**. Drop in when you can!

There are so many MAD KÜT kids at the MCC right now – let’s get together & play!

Contact Jen Streit with questions.

Come and Play! Sunday, February 22, 3:30 – 5:00 p.

(Beat Box Intro)...
God loves play
So come have some fun
Games at the church
Fun for everyone.

Sunday, February twenty-two
Is certainly something you could do
From 3:30 until 5:00
Come to play and feel alive

Bring a snack, enough to share
Food you could eat – anywhere

We all know this rap is a little lame
But never mind that
Come play some Games.

No Cost – There will be games and fun for all ages.

Hosted by the Community of Hope Confirmation Class, Mentors and families.

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 -

POP Cans for TOL

Please discontinue bringing your pop cans to MCC for Treasury of Love. Fred reports that the price per pound is now half of what it has been. It is no longer a worthwhile endeavor. Thanks for your support.

JAVA FOR JUSTICE: Order by February 1 to be picked up on February 8. Place your check made out to the **Mt. Meru Coffee Project** in the envelop by the order sheet on the Coffee Table in the Shalom Room. Order regular or decaf, bean, drip or perk in 12 oz (\$9) or 4 lb (\$40) bags. Remember that most of the processing is done by volunteers so more money goes back to the coffee growers in Tanzania. This allows them to send their children to school and receive health care and be more sustainable. Thank you for your support of this coffee project. Coffee/justice never tasted so good.

Recycle Styrofoam

The owner of Home Concept was concerned about all of the Styrofoam that he was putting in garbage, so he purchased or devised a machine to break up the large chunks of Styrofoam to be reused for packaging items they sell in the store. So you can take them large pieces of Styrofoam as well as smaller pieces.

You drive around to the back of the building to the stairs and door. Knock on the door and someone will come to receive your Styrofoam.

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.

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Newsletter Preparer: Sonja Keesey-Berg

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MCC News

DROP-IN SHELTER

The date is Thursday, February 5. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Shalom Room. Four people are needed from 7:30 - 9:30 p. and two people are needed from 5:00 - 8:00 a.m. If you have any questions, please call Ken Johnson.

40th Anniversary Lenten

Soup Suppers

March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1

Beginning Wednesday, March 4 and continuing throughout the season of Lent, we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary at the Lenten Soup Suppers. Come to the MCC for supper on these Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p. and enjoy discussion of some important elements of our first 40 years including our efforts with the Sanctuary Movement and resettling refugees; our commitment to social justice; our Christian Education efforts through the years; our care of the environment and worship. More detailed information will be available in the March newsletter and in coming weeks.

Small Group Prayer Opportunities During Lent

The MCC Spiritual Growth and Development working group continues its efforts to provide members of the MCC with opportunities for spiritual growth by offering prayer groups during Lent.

All who are interested, are invited to sign up for one of three prayer group times: Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:00 p.; Fridays, 7:00 to 8:00 a. and Saturdays, 9:00 to 10:00 a..

Prayer groups will meet for the six weeks of Lent beginning the week of March 4 and ending the week of April 1. The structure for the groups will be introduced in worship in Community of Hope on Sunday, January 25 and in Advent on Sunday, February 22. Please contact Tisha Brown with questions. Sign-up sheets will be available in the Shalom Room in February or you can sign up for a group by contacting Sonja in the office. If you are interested in a prayer group but cannot make the times above, please let Tisha know. If there's enough interest in alternate times the group will do its best to form another group.

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Coming Events

February 8	Indoor Labyrinth is open to the public, 1-2:30 p.
February 11	Indoor Labyrinth is open to the public, 9a-6p.
February 15	Laughter Yoga
February 22	MCC Game Night, 3:30-5:00 p.
February 25	Ash Wednesday Service

MCC News —

Laughter Yoga!

Laughter Yoga is a wellness ministry that combines laughter and yoga breathing exercises. Some benefits of Laughter Yoga reported by medical experts are: It helps to reduce high blood pressure, stress, anxiety, and depression. It also helps to strengthen the immune system, increase blood circulation, and oxygen levels. The amazing benefits are too many to list. Come experience the benefits for yourself and enjoy the fun and fellowship created through the gift of laughter!

We will meet in the Covenant Room right after our morning church services. **We will meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Our February meeting will be on the 15th.**

For more information contact Michelle Erschen or Nancy Greenwald.

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.

Art from Haiti

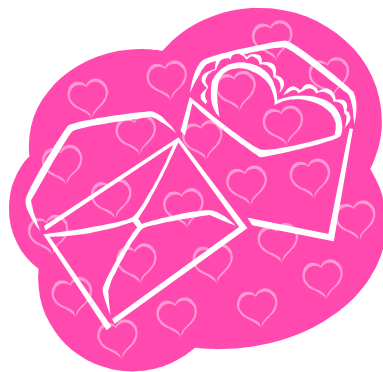
Because we have a group going to Haiti in February, the Haiti Partners group would like to support artists there by purchasing and bringing back locally produced art work. For about \$30/piece, we can have art work for display at the MCC which could also be purchased by individuals. If you would like to support this effort, put a check to Haiti Partners with memo line Art in either the offering plate or Treasury of Love basket by February 1st. This is one more way to help the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere by providing a market for their work.

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MCC News

Pfeifer Offers a Seminar on Hope

Do you wish you could live with more purpose and meaning and less encumbered by daily minutia? If so, you are invited to participate in a seminar on Hope. The seminar explores the source from which our innate abilities for love and compassion flow. It encourages participants to engage their own life situations, beliefs and experiences.

The life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth structures the exploration. The seminar focuses not on the Christ of Christianity, but on this man, and asks how his life and teachings might inform the way we engage our own lives.

The seminar uses dialogue and the insights of Jungian depth psychology, complemented by art, sculpture, dance and journaling, to engage this man's story and the issues it presents. Past participants state that the process 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.

(Dates: February 14, 21 & March 7, 14 from 8:30 a. to 4:30 p. @ Holy Wisdom Monastery. Questions and Registration -contact ChuckPfeifer. Cost: \$200 -scholarships available.)

HOLDEN VILLAGE Info and Planning Meeting—February 22, 11:30 a. in the Blessing Room.

Since there is not a slot for Jeff and Peter this summer, 2009, I enquired about summer 2010. They can certainly be considered but there are no guarantees. Of course she encouraged us to come summer 2009 as a group anyway. So the ball is back in our park as to whether we will go this summer or wait to see what develops for summer 2010. I have received brochures and a video. Sonja

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

Wexford

Officer Cynthia Thiesenhusen

Toy Give Away 2008 was a big success!! This year, as in past years, I collaborated with the **Gialamas Company** to purchase toys for the children of Wexford Ridge. The employees of the Gialamas Company purchased, packaged, and delivered the toys that I was able to distribute on December 18th. With their generosity, we were able to give over 200 toys to neighborhood children. This is the 3rd year in our partnership with this event and I am grateful for their continued support. **Meridian Inc.** donated the space I used to distribute the toys. The space used this year is the former space used by the Wexford Neighborhood Center. This offered enough room for parents and kids to be inside while they waited their turn. While the families waited, they were treated to pizza donated by **Rosati's Pizza**. This event would not happen without the generosity of the Gialamas Company, Meridian Inc. and the new participant, Rosati's Pizza. Businesses such as these are taking a stake in our vulnerable neighborhoods, which proves to be extremely important and valuable. Earlier in December, while visiting a senior resident on a cold afternoon, I noted that the resident had come to the door in socks. I hatched an idea of trying to provide slippers to as many senior residents as I could. I talked with a local faith community, **Madison Christian Community**, about my idea. The idea was received with great enthusiasm. On December 16th and 17th, I was able to distribute over 35 pairs of slippers to the seniors of Wexford Ridge. Captain Lengfeld recommended that I also hand out blankets to these residents. The slippers were both store bought and hand made and **Lands End** donated the blankets. The residents were delighted and extremely grateful for the extra warmth during the cold spells that Madison was experiencing. This is another example of the community coming together to help in our vulnerable neighborhoods.

Madison Christian Community also works with the Wexford Ridge children on summer gardening projects. The above collective projects, I believe, go to the wider vision of a collective community taking care of each other. In times like these, this is exciting.

THANKS Cindy for all you do and giving us the opportunity to help.

2009 PHENOLOGY CALENDAR

Phenology is the study of timing of plant and animal cycles. Plants, animals, and other organisms respond to the seasons, coordinating their life stages with light levels or temperature. Changes that depend on light levels come on roughly the same date every year; changes that depend on temperature or moisture levels will vary based on the weather each year. Each month has a list of phenological events expected for that period. The 2009 Phenology Calendar features full-color and photographs by local photographers. It also includes natural history notes, and sunrise and sunset data for each month. **Pick up your new and colorful calendar on the Coffee Table in the Shalom Room. MCC members can purchase it for the special price of \$10.** Make your checks out to the Friends of Pheasant Branch and place it in the envelope marked *Calendar*. Profits from the sale of the calendar will benefit the Pheasant Branch Conservancy, a special place right here in our area. For more information, contact Susan Gruber.

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Children's Ministry

By Heather Putnam

Lenten Conversations with Your Family

Parents, can you relate to the following scenario?

Your days are jam-packed with school, homework, sports practices and games, music lessons, scouting events, and play dates. By the time you get through all these things, you are exhausted. But then the laundry and the dirty dishes are calling you. You somehow make it through, but then you collapse, hope for a good night's sleep and brace yourself to repeat the performance the next day.

You believe faith is important. This is why you belong to a church and this is why you had your kid(s) baptized. You do your best to get your kid(s) to Sunday School and Worship on Sunday. As for faith at home, you pray before you eat. You try hard to set a good example for your kid(s). Most days, you have no energy or creativity left after everything else to figure out new and different ways to strengthen your family's faith practices at home. You have good intentions, but it is easy for life to intervene.

Lent is a time for introspection and conscious additional attention to our faith lives. How is *that* supposed to fit into our already crazy lives? MCC to the rescue. We are preparing a family resource booklet for you, to provide a way for your family to grow your faith at home without adding another burden to your schedule. The booklet has one page dedicated to each of the 40 days in Lent. The pages explore a wide range of topics about Lent, Jesus and various faith practices.

Keep this booklet on your kitchen table. Use it as a guide to help your family pray and talk about faith together while you eat together throughout Lent. We hope

the booklet will help your family bridge connections between church and home, bring faith conversations and practices into your everyday life, facilitate your family to set faith goals for the upcoming year, and build strong faith and strong families.

Look for a copy in your mailbox or at church sometime before Ash Wednesday.

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MCC News continued

A Variety of New Study Bibles Now Available

In the past few months I have become aware of three new study bibles all published within the last couple of years. If you're looking for a fresh perspective on the biblical text or wondering about which version of the Bible to purchase for your own study and reading, check out these options. You might find something here that will be of interest to you. All of these Bibles are available on Amazon.com. You could also order them by calling or visiting Madison Church Supply, 820 S. Park St., 256-1214. Enjoy! Tisha

The Green Bible

This Bible uses the New Revised Standard translation. All the words in scripture from the more than 1000 passages in the Bible that have to do with creation and nature, plants and animals are printed in green ink. *The Green Bible* invites us notice God's vision for creation and encourages us to engage in the work of healing and sustaining it.

The Green Bible includes Contributions by Brian McLaren, Matthew Sleeth, N. T. Wright, Desmond Tutu, and many others. It also contains a green Bible index and personal study guide. It is printed on recycled paper, using soy-based ink with a cotton/linen cover. Visit www.greenletterbible.com for more information.

The New Interpreter's Study Bible

The *New Interpreter's Study Bible* offers outstanding biblical scholarship in a concise and accessible format to help contemporary readers better understand Scripture. The contributors are theologically diverse biblical scholars representing Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, Jewish, and evangelical faith traditions.

The NISB's most significant feature is its emphasis on the theological meaning of the text, emphasizing the significance of the biblical text for the life and faith of both ancient communities and contemporary individuals and congregations.

Other key features of the *New Interpreter's Study Bible* include the full New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) text of the Bible and the Apocrypha, six general articles on interpreting the Bible, extensive commentary for each book of the Bible including the Apocrypha, special notes and excurses that provide additional information above and beyond the commentary, nineteen maps, chronologies of events in biblical history, and a glossary. (quoted from the website - <http://newinterpreters.com/products/studybible.aspx>)

The Peoples' Bible

The Peoples' Bible highlights the role of cultures in shaping the Bible and the way people read the Bible today. Relying on the best insights of current scholars and biblical scholarship, this Bible is unique in its aim to engage culture then and now. *The Peoples' Bible* includes introductory essays highlighting profound issues of culture, ethnicity, and identity; boxes that reveal insights from African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American perspectives; and a sixteen-page gallery of culturally diverse four-color art.

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Advent News

Advent Relational Committee ARC Report, by Linda Pils

We first met, on a cold February evening, with Matt Morland Gross who discussed with us the difference between the cultures of assumed relationships, in which members of a congregation assume they get to know each other by serving on committees and relational meetings, the purpose of which is to initiate public relationships. Instead of discussing agendas, we share our stories. Much of this already happens in small groups such as the community group or the women's breakfast group, but the goal of this committee was to be more purposeful in our conversations.

I would like to thank the twelve who volunteered to be part of this group. Julie Ambrecht, Kathy and Doug Johnson, Kathy and Dave Mack, Fred Loichinger, Alice and Ted Kalkwarf, Gretchen Wahl, Myrna McNatt, Solvieg Carlson, Steve Young, Joanne Streit, and Emily Wixson. They have given time, energy and grace to this project.

Parker Palmer wrote in an address to educators, "The Courage to Lead with the Soul," that "collegial communities cannot be built around work alone—they must also be built around honoring the selfhood of the people who do the work... How can we do this? There are a thousand ways, and here's a simple example: invite more storytelling about people's lives." These are the kind of conversations that were our goal.

But, as I sat over a cup of tea with Joanna McDonald, listening to her story of working with people in Hospice care and thinking what an amazing person she is, I also wondered if the one-on-one visits were the best model? I got to know Joanna better, but did you? There were soon two that had to drop

out due to changes in their other commitments, and none of us have completed our lists of twelve member visits. It is interesting to me that the folks who worked together visited the most members. It may be because there are two to remind each other or the visit is less daunting when there are two visiting. But, in every case, the ARC members said that they thought the time together getting to know a fellow member of Advent was beneficial and sharing the stories such a valuable part of our congregational growth.

Many of us were discouraged by the lack of time due to our and our visitors' busy schedules. I feel we spent much more time trying to schedule the visits than actually doing the visits. And, as we are Lutheran, there was much guilt created from people who already are so generous with time invested in the community.

My recommendation would be to go back to the small group cottage meetings, perhaps with a focus, so that all members can benefit from the stories of this incredibly caring, thoughtful congregation that together makes Advent Lutheran Church. There are members who, despite attending church, being part of Sunday School or council, are not imbedded in the social life of our community. This is our challenge, especially members with young children and single members, where is their place in our congregation?

Treasury of Love 2009

Beg. Bal & Love Offerings	648.00
Rent & Eviction Prevention	451.00
Greyhound Bus Tickets	167.00
Expenditure	\$618.00
Balance as of 01/26/2009	30.00
(postage for packages to soldiers)	

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Advent News continued

Advent Elizabeth Circle

Elizabeth Circle will meet on February 12 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 Phyllis Ermer with questions.

GEMS – The Grumpy Elderly Men!

The Grumpy Elderly Men meet at 10:30a. on Tuesdays at the MCC. Join the men and enjoy their relationships, food, time, sharing and study.

Advent Giving Goal

Historically, the financial giving in January has been one of the higher giving months of the year and this holds true for January, 2009. The reason for this is that some Advent members fulfill their annual pledge at the beginning of the year. However, because our spending plan for mission increased by \$20,000 for the year we fell short of the giving goal for the month. Members of Advent generously gave \$29,666 and the giving goal for the month of January was \$34,000.

OPALS Book Discussion Group

OPALS meetings are held once a month in the afternoon at MCC. On Tuesday, February 24, will meet at 1:30 p.

The book is *The Whistling Season* by Ivan Doig. Jean Loichinger & Myrna McNatt will be the study leaders.

Call Mary Maxwell if you have questions or need a ride.

New members always welcome.

Several Advent members have experienced the death of a parent during the past six weeks.

Kathy Stone's mother died on Christmas Day. Bob Schneider's father died on Wednesday, January 14 and Ellen Lindgren's mother died on Wednesday, January 21. The loss of a parent is a major loss at any age. Please keep these families in your prayers as they grieve their losses.

Judith Circle

Judith Circle will meet on Tuesday, February 10, 9:30 a. at Hildy McGown's. All are welcome for fellowship and study.

If you need a ride or have any questions please call Jean Loichinger.

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

Thank you... From Madison-Area Urban Ministry

"On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Madison-area Urban Ministry, thank you for your most recent gift... Your donation will be used to continue the important advocacy work of MUM..."

Since 2006 we have worked with over 2,000 people returning to our community from prison, assisting them with employment and housing, while advocating for common sense reform of our criminal justice system. We have established an emergency food pantry on site through Second Harvest to insure that someone newly released from jail or prison has something to eat. We also created a micro loan program to help with work clothes, school supplies for children, rent or security deposit for those individuals participating in our Journey Home and Circles of Support programs. This year we will be announcing the creation of our Restorative Justice Scholarship Fund for ex-offenders who desire to further their education. In February 2009 our Just Bakery program will begin its first classes, teaching bread making to those on probation and parole who have an interest in culinary arts.

All of this work is made possible by your support and the support of our other partners in this ministry. We are deeply thankful for your support and your commitment to social justice."

Linda Ketcham
Executive Director

Thank You from a Special Fund Recipient

"Thank you and the congregation so much for the help paying my medical bill. I am deeply grateful for the help. I hope 2009 brings more peace and hope to us all."

The Nonviolent Atonement

On February 27-28, 2009, the Wisconsin Council of Churches will host a conference at Edgewood College, Madison, call *The Nonviolent Atonement*, with Dr. J. Denny Weaver.

If you enjoy the teaching of people like Douglas John Hall or Rita Nakashima Brock, you will enjoy the teaching of J. Denny Weaver.

Flyers are posted on the bulletin board and in the Shalom Room.

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! This is a practice. It was easier to start in the summer, when it was already light by 6:30 a. Now you will say, "I don't care how deep the snow will be, I'm going!"

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

Pray Daily

Worship Regularly

Study God's Word

Respond as Stewards

Cultivate Spiritual

Friendship

Serve at MCC &

Beyond

Community of Hope News

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 the next 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 Ardie Manser
- All military personnel and their families all over the world but especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Our college students – Jamie Custer, Ian Jarvis, Hannah Hunter-Johnson, Rose Gear, Quinn Clark, Josh Ryan; Tristan Breedlove (graduate studies); Sarah Hunter-Johnson (graduate studies).
- These people and their families as we pray our way through the church directory:

Jan. 27-Feb. 3 Barbara/David Dueholm;
Tina Eder; Pat Eddings

Feb. 3-10 Avis Elson; Michelle Erschen;
Sandie Esrael/Peter Williams

Feb. 10-17 Warren/Susan Exo;
Thomas Ferguson; Freddie Feeny

Feb. 17-24 Harry/Donna Fisker;
Mark Geistlinger/Kristin Meyer

Feb. 24-March 3 Nancy Greenwald;
Theresa/Steve Haffner Stearns;
Christine Hartelt

Important Dates to Remember!



Birthdays

Kevin Clark	2/04
Colin Jarvis	2/09
Arthur Dodd	2/11
Lois Komai	2/11
Bonnie Spindler	2/11
Nathan Powell	2/13
Cole Bougie	2/13
Betty Custer	2/15
Stephanie Williams	2/15
Rajai Atalla	2/21
Petra Streiff	2/24
Howard Kanetzke	2/25
Nick Hartelt	2/28

Anniversaries

Art & Mary Nack	2/18
Bill Rettig	2/25

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

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Stewardship Message

Keeping What Matters

Then the king responded, 'Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother.' (1 Kings 3: 27, full story 1 Kings 3: 16-28)

It was close to Valentine's Day and the confirmation class was tittering. To cut through the silliness I invited them to go around the circle and share a scripture about *love* to the best of their memory. I was impressed by how many "love passages" they knew, more than – love one another ... neighbor ... stranger.

Andy's unique choice was the story usually called Solomon's choice. Two women with newborns shared lodging. One infant died in the night and both claimed the living child. They screamed at each other. Solomon suggested the baby boy be bisected and each woman be given half. One woman said, "Fine." (*Can you hear the teenaged boy say it?*) The other said, "Give her the baby – don't kill him." Solomon gave this woman the child. Whatever the biological truth was – this was the mother!

"So, how is this a love story?" I asked.

"Well, if you really love something or someone, you know that cutting it in half will kill it." said Andy. A young woman (soon to get her driver's license) picked up the thought. "Also, if you really love something, you're willing to let it go."

These wise confirmands suggest some Solomon-stewardship for our churches. In a difficult budget time – cut, cut, cut is frequent advice-but there is much precious and vulnerable programming that won't survive the knife. Keeping what matters in our faith communities alive often requires personally sacrificial gifts – gifts without strings, ownership or naming rights – gifts of love.

Maren C. Tirabassi is Pastor of Union Congregational UCC of Madbury, NH. Her most recent book is God in My Life: How and Why We Share Faith Stories.

February 2009

God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



This resource is a free service and is made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

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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*

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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sonja@madisonchristiancommunity.org

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MCC Custodians**

**Community of Hope
Steering Committee**

Diane Bougie
Bill Long
Donna Leet, Moderator
Betty Custer
Tina Eder
Sandie Esrael
Roger Williams

Advent Council

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

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:**

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



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