

The Tower

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin

LXVIII

February 26, 2012

No. 8

Places of Grace on the Journey: A Lenten Worship Series

Sometimes it can be helpful to think of our lives as spiritual pilgrimages or journeys, and to think of the events of our lives as possible sources of learning and growth on our journeys. We have control over some parts of our journey, other parts are completely beyond our control, and still other parts a mixture of what happens to us and what we decide to do or think or feel. For a Christian, Lent can also be a journey. The starting place on the map of the Lenten journey is Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. The end is the Crucifixion. In between there may be many places of particularity: places of growth and learning, places of pain and struggle; but seen from the right perspective, all can be places of grace. During this season of Lent, we are asking you to journey with Jesus through the Lectionary Biblical texts and see the events of your lives as places of grace on the journey of faith.

February 26 – Genesis 9:8-17; Mark 1:9-15. Beginning (or re-beginning) the journey. All journeys have beginnings, new beginnings and re-beginnings. Here are some things we need to know as we think about our Lenten and life journeys. The context of our journey is the covenant God has made with us and with all creation (Genesis). We need to continually be aware of, and reassess, our relationship with God, and to turn or repent (Mark) when we are moving in the wrong direction.

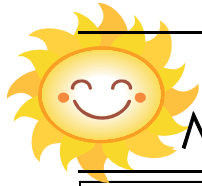
March 4 – I Corinthians 1:18-25. The Cross of Christ is the goal, the guidepost, and the empowerment for our journeys. All other standards are partial and incomplete, and they stand under the judgment and evaluation of the Cross of Christ.

March 11 – Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22. As Christians, there are some things we simply must do, some stands we simply must take, some things which are simply non-negotiable. The Ten Commandments in Exodus and Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple as told in the Gospel of John remind us that while there are many, many ways to follow Jesus, there are some things we simply must stand for as we make this journey.

March 18 – John 3:14-21; Ephesians 2:1-10. Faith and works – how are they related? Are we really saved simply if we believe the correct thing? Or was the Reformation wrong and we are saved by what we do? And what does it mean to be saved, anyway? John 3:16 will help us begin our reflections: *For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but may have eternal life.*

March 25 – Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33. There is a disjunction, an opposition between the world and the Realm of God. As good as some things are (a Beethoven symphony would be one example I would hold up), this opposition must be recognized. It doesn't mean that everything in the world is bad; far from it. It means that nothing in the world yet fully partakes of the Realm of God. There is always some kind of conflict or disjunction between heaven and earth, between God and humankind; but there is also always hope. When we pray, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, we are realizing this disjunction and conflict, but we are also affirming our hope that it can be overcome.

April 1 – Palm Sunday. The Lectionary texts are related to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and to the Crucifixion. Sometimes our journeys seem to have moments of triumph (Palm Sunday), but then we discover a cross at their end. At other times the journey seems to end in failure and disaster (Crucifixion), but then we discover there is hope for Resurrection and new life. Knowing that Christ accompanies us throughout our journeys enables us to see more clearly and to live more faithfully.



JOIN US FOR MORNING SERVICE

Sunday, February 26, 2012
Worship at 10am in the Sanctuary
First Sunday of Lent
Scripture Readings:
Genesis 9:8-17, Mark 1:9-15

The first reading is the end of the story of Noah. In this section, God tells Noah that God is establishing an everlasting covenant between God and all living beings, all flesh. God tells Noah that the rainbow ... *is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all the flesh that is on the earth.* The content of the covenant is that ... *never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.* The church has always read that to mean that God has promised a world which is amenable to the flourishing of life.

The Mark reading is the beginning of Jesus ministry, and as is typical in the Gospel of Mark, it is told with extreme brevity. In 6 verses, we have Jesus baptized by John, Jesus driven into the wilderness and tempted by Satan, and then Jesus coming back after John's arrest with his first words of definition for his ministry: *The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.*

Ash Wednesday February 22 marks the beginning of Lent. There will be a Gathering Dinner in the Dining Room at 5:30pm, followed at 7:00pm with an Ash Wednesday Service in the Chapel. Imposition of Ashes will be offered and Communion will be celebrated.



Easter Flowers

Easter flowers may be ordered through the church office for \$14. per plant until Tuesday, March 13, 2012. A listing will appear in the Easter Sunday order of worship. Flowers will be taken to homebound members after the service. Please complete and return this form with your payment to the church office, or mail to: First Congregational UCC, 1609 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726

Name: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone: _____

Message: _____

Given by: _____

Please write "Easter Flowers" on the memo line of your check. Include payment with order form.

Save the Date - June 3 To celebrate Curt Anderson's forty years in the ministry, we will have a special worship service on June 3, followed by a catered lunch in the dining room. Please plan to come; details will be announced later.
~Phil Certain, Moderator

Change of Address? If you have a change of address, PLEASE let the office know asap. *Especially* if you receive the paper Tower. It takes months for the post office to notify us, and in the meantime the Tower is going out weekly to the wrong address. (We get charged each time for a change of address form.)

Chancel flowers There are a LOT of open slots for donating the flowers we enjoy in service every Sunday. Simply sign your name on the chart in the back of the Sanctuary, watch for your letter from Jill a couple of weeks ahead of time, return it with your \$40 check and the wording you'd like in the bulletin. That's it! *Surely* someone has something to celebrate in March! And speaking of flowers....



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Adult Worship Service The Prison Ministry Project is starting an Adult Worship Service for the Madison Community. For a variety of reasons, some people would prefer or should only attend a worship service when children are not present. This service is being offered to meet those needs. Children will not be present in the service or in the church building during this worship. It will begin on Thursday, February 23, and meet every other Thursday for 10 times (with some adjustment for Holy Week). This is also an opportunity for members of this church to come to the chapel, sit in the pews and be part of a ministry of presence to people who may have felt excluded from other worship services.

Take the Communication Survey The Electronic Communication Committee would like to know how you like to get information about happenings at First Congregational. Do you like to get information via e-mail, Face Book, the FCC website, or hard mail? Tell us your preferences for receiving First Congo news. Take the short survey at <http://svy.mk/FirstCong1>

Do you have a parent, grandparent, friend or neighbor that you feel may need help staying safe in their home? Home Health United's new program, *S.A.F.E.* a Home-Safety Assessment for the Elderly, is currently looking for participants to receive a free in-home safety assessment. The complimentary program, which includes the assessment, recommendations, and safety aids including pill boxes and night lights, is available to any Dane County resident 65 and older. Volunteers are also needed to perform the assessments. If you would like more information, or know of someone in need of the program, please contact Amanda Hefty, 223-7970, or ahefty@hhuvns.org.



God Loves Science Fair Saturday, March 3

God Loves Science is intended to explore how Science helps us reveal the mysteries and wonders of God's Creation,

and to help open dialogue for families. It was fear that forced the Church to chastise Galileo for his beliefs of solar-based system. It was respect and wonder that gave us the unimaginable, faith-inspiring pictures from the Hubble telescope, revealing said system and beyond. This event will begin at 1:00pm with a short worship service and follow with a Science Fair.

Movie Night Rerun! Our January Movie Night was a success so we're scheduling another. Please join your church friends of all ages for a screening of the animated feature, *WALL-E* at 6:00pm on Fri., March 9 in the Fellowship Room. This G-rated movie will be preceded by a simple meal starting at 5:30. We'll provide pizza and drinks, you bring a salad or dessert (store bought or home made will be received with equal pleasure by the group). The Board has yet more fun and fellowship to break forth! Questions? Call Anne Karch (819-8306) or contact the Board of Community Life at community_life@firstcongmadison.org



Feeling like Softball? We'd like to get our church co-ed softball team back on the field this summer to play in a Friday evening slow-pitch league. We are recruiting players of all ages (16 and up) and both genders to make up the mighty Pew Warmers and play in the Madison co-ed summer leagues. Friends of First Cong are also welcome to play. We've got a co-captain in Linda Ketcham, and she'd like a Co-manager, if you're a good organizer or a great motivator. We'll have sign up sheets at the back of the sanctuary. A team roster will need to be turned in **mid March**. If you have questions, contact the Board of Community Life at community_life@firstcongmadison.org

The NEWLYWED GAME! Golden Addition

Mark Sunday, March 25 on your calendars for a special presentation of this First Cong favorite annual event! This year's contestant-couples have all been married nearly 50 years or more! The game will be preceded by a delicious lunch, all held in the dining room following worship.



Church Women United of Madison will meet Friday, March 2 at 1:30pm at Oakwood West in the 2nd floor lounge of the Tower building. The theme *Let Justice Prevail* will be presented by the Christian Women of Malaysia developed from their experience of life with a multicultural, multi-religious society.

Church Calendar February 26-March 4, 2012

Sunday February 26

8:30am Men's Book Study ~ FR
 10:00am Sunday Worship ~ S
 10:15am Sunday School
 10:15am GAS ~ YR
 11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Room 301
 12noon Youth Nursing Home Tour

Monday February 27

5:30pm Table Tennis Clubs ~ DR
 6:00pm Confirmation ~ YR
 8:00pm SA ~ Room 301

Tuesday February 28

12noon Bible Conversations ~ SL
 5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301
 6:30pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR
 7:00pm NA ~ Room 301
 8:30pm UW Table Tennis Club ~ DR

Wednesday February 29

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS
 10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS
 5:30pm Gathering Dinner ~ DR
 6:20pm Gathering Class ~ FR
 6:30pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301
 7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ Chapel

Thursday, March 1

Community Meals Day

7:00pm Mad Area Jugglers ~ DR
 8:00pm AA ~ Room 301

Friday, March 2

Saturday, March 3

1:00pm God Loves Science ~ DR

Sunday, March 4

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ S
 10:15am Wee Worship ~ C
 11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Rm 301
 12noon BOUNCE ~ YR



BBQ ~ Mid High Bible Study
 Big K ~ Big Kitchen
 BOUNCE ~ Mid High Youth Group
 C ~ Chapel
 DR ~ Dining Room
 FIGS ~ Families Including God and Stuff
 FR ~ Fellowship Room
 GAS ~ Sr. High Bible Study
 LRC ~ Learning Resource Center
 MS ~ Minister's Study
 S ~ Sanctuary
 SAGE ~ Sr. High Youth Group
 SL ~ Student Lounge
 SR ~ Salad Room
 YR ~ Youth Room

**Worship attendance on
 Sunday, February 19, 2012 was 240.**

Staff:

Curt Anderson, Senior Minister
 Eldonna Hazen, Associate Minister
 Jerry Hancock, Director of Prison Ministry Project
 Donald J. DeBruin, Director of Music Ministries
 Jeff Rabe, Director of Christian Education for
 Children & Youth
 Rob Eagle, Bookkeeper
 Jill Farnsworth, Church Secretary
 Bob Zeier, Building Manager

Office Hours: 8am-12:30pm, 1:00pm-4:00pm,
 Monday -Thursday; 8am-noon Friday.

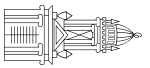
Phone: 608-233-9751

Fax: 608-233-7180

E-mail: office@firstcongmadison.org

Web Page: www.firstcongmadison.org
 Facebook.com/firstcongo

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES: Curt Anderson's phone is 836-1321, Eldonna Hazen's phone number is 241-8117 and Jerry Hancock's phone is 658-6630.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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