

The Tower

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin

LXVIII

January 29, 2012

No. 4

ONA – Why it's still important today!

This last Sunday I was privileged to be part of a panel at a conference titled *Interfaith Dialog on Sexuality*. The program began with a keynote address from the Rev. Scott Anderson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Scott shared his personal story of serving in a Presbyterian church in California, being 'outed' by members of his congregation, losing his credentials and being re-ordained this last October in the Presbyterian church. He now holds standing again. Rich Fluechtling introduced Scott.

Others serving on the panel were Rabbi Jonathan Biatch (Temple Beth El), Rev. Cindy Crane (founder of Seekardia, a bullying program), Chris Reynolds (Trinity UMC) and Rev. Darrel Richey (James Reeb Unitarian). Rev. Lin Grace Rohr facilitated the discussion.

The discussion focused on what made a congregation open and affirming, how our faith traditions informed our decisions and how interfaith coordination might continue in Madison following this conference. There was also concern that as faith communities we are not doing enough to support youth as they process their sexual identity.

However what became clear through the table discussions and the Q & A session was the pain that is still felt by the LGBTQ community. Even though First Congregational voted 20 years ago this May to become an ONA congregation, the work continues. It is no less important today to make ALL of our brothers and sisters feel welcome, affirmed and included into full participation in the church than it was 20 years ago. There is additional work to be done to understand and educate ourselves not only about sexual orientation, but gender identity and gender expression.

Unfortunately, some of the loud voices in the faith community still say, "you are not worthy." We just need to be louder when we express our love and affirmation of all of God's children. First Congregational has been on the cutting edge of this work, we just can't become complacent.

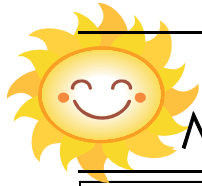
Eldonna

Lay Ministry

First Congregational has a wonderful program of Lay Ministry. Members volunteer their time to visit and stay in touch with members of the church. Previously the program has been offered only to those designated as homebound. Homebound refers to members who are not able to physically come to the worship services. As people are physically able to stay active longer in their lives, I think it is important to expand our program to those who just have difficulty making worship on a regular basis. I will be visiting members who are challenged to attend regularly and invite them to be part of this Lay Ministry program. I hope people will look at this as an opportunity to better stay connected with the church.

This is also the perfect time to join the Lay Ministry team if you like visiting people. The Lay Minister makes monthly visits or calls to their assigned members and keeps the staff up-to-date on any changes with the member. This is wonderful way to get to know members better and hear about their lives. I hope you might consider becoming a Lay Minister. If you are interested in joining the team or just have questions, please call or email Eldonna. I will be planning a training session in March after I have identified all of the members who will be needing visitors.

Eldonna



JOIN US FOR MORNING SERVICE

Sunday, January 29, 2012

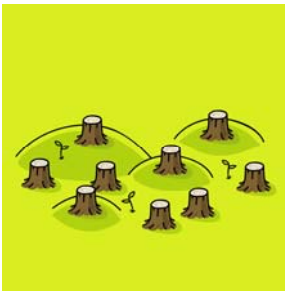
Worship at 10am in the Sanctuary

Scripture Readings: Psalm 111, Mark 1:21-28

Psalm 111 is a hymn of praise to God: for God's majesty, God's wonderful deeds, and God's holiness and righteousness which endures forever. This Psalm shows very clearly that the Psalms were the hymns and the unison and responsive readings that Israel used in its various times of worship and celebration. Psalm 111 is not mainly meant to be a rational or scientific description of God's attributes and characteristics (though of course those things are part of the Psalm); instead, it is meant to evoke Israel's prayerful and grateful worship and to call forth the people's praise. It is like a poetic and powerful call to worship.

The passage in Mark is a story that begins with the people's affirmation that Jesus "teaches as one having authority and not as the scribes." It then goes on to describe a confrontation in the synagogue on the Sabbath between Jesus and an unclean spirit that was harming a man. We moderns struggle with gospel stories of Jesus confronting demons and unclean spirits, yet we see those manifestations of evil throughout our world – in alcoholism, acute loneliness, cancer, mental illness, cruel indifference to a person desperate for even a human touch, and in the deliberate and willful intention to enact revenge or to harm another. O yes, unclean spirits abound. What we should struggle with is the apparent unwillingness of so many Christians to pick up the mantle Jesus gave and to say, with him (in the many ways we could say it): "Be silent, and come out."

Would you like to save some trees, copier toner, and staff time, with the advantage of receiving the Tower promptly and in **full color**, anywhere in the world? Just email Jill Farnsworth at office@firstcongmadison.org (Separate copies can go to multiple email addresses in the same household.)



FIRST CONG YOUTH

All Youth Bowling & Lock-In!

February 4 – 5, 7pm to 10am. \$5/Person. You can bring one friend! Must be signed up in the Youth Room by February 1.



GOD LOVES SCIENCE FAIR!

Saturday, March 3

God Loves Science is intended to explore how Science has helped 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. To date, we have experts in the fields of Chemistry, Physics, Veterinary Medicine, Neurology, Optometry, Micro Biology, Anthropology, Theology and Dinosaurs!



ALL CHURCH

ALL CHURCH ICE SKATING PARTY!

All members of First Cong are invited to lace up their skates and head to the ice at Tenney Park on Sunday, January 29 from 1 – 3pm. Skates can also be rented at the new shelter. Kristin Kanitz will be hosting the party with snacks and hot cocoa rink-side along Marston Ave. (look for the church sign).



Donations are needed for bus tickets and McDonald's or other food coupons for the office to distribute to the needy. Designated funds or the coupons themselves are welcomed.

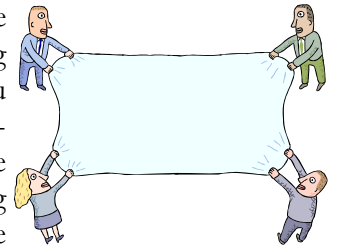
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Meals Day is Thursday, February 2. Please have your donated items in the pink kitchen by 10:00am on that day. Thank you for your participation in this greatly needed program.

Men's Book Discussion The Men's Fellowship will host a discussion of the book *Speaking of Jesus: the art of not-evangelism*, by Carl Medearis. While light in tone, Medearis is challenging in content, and occasionally offensive in his conservative viewpoint. Those able to forgive his occasional offensiveness should be rewarded with a wealth of discussion points. Interested men are invited to gather in the Fellowship Room from 8:30am to 9:45am on the Sundays of Feb 12, 26 and March 11. Please register in advance with Tom Syring, tjsyring@tds.net, 843-2234.

Break up the winter blahs and get together with others in our congregation for a **Movie Night, Friday, January 27**. We'll be screening "Up" at around 6:00 PM. The movie will be preceded by a simple meal starting at 5:30. We'll provide the pizza, and you bring a salad or dessert (store bought or homemade received with equal delight). Brought to you by the Board of Community Life. Questions? Call or e-mail Anne Karch, 819-8306, or community_life@firstcongmadison.org

20th Annual Recycle the Warmth blanket and bedding drive will take place January 27-29. This drive helps provide free blankets, pillows, sheets and other bedding throughout the year to those who seek help from St. Vincent de Paul. To participate you may purchase new or donate your gently used bedding in the bins at the back of the sanctuary or at local Shopko stores. Shopko will be offering new, quality bedding at attractive prices. Another way to help is to contribute toward the purchase of additional bedding (new sheets, pillows, and mattress covers). There are envelopes and donation slips at the back of the sanctuary.



Women's Book Study Women! Mark your calendars now to attend a morning of coffee (or juice), treats, and great conversation after reading *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. In this astonishing true story, award-winning journalist Sonia Nazario recounts the unforgettable odyssey of a Honduran boy who braves unimaginable hardship and peril to reach his mother in the United States. The class will meet on Saturday mornings February 4, 18 and March 10 and 24, from 8:00-9:30am in the Student Lounge and will be facilitated by Eldonna Hazen. Books will be available in the office for \$12. Please let Eldonna know if you plan to attend.

Begin your Super Bowl pre-game festivities with "Mid-Winter Romance," a concert of beautiful chamber music from con vivo! The program includes music for strings, winds, piano and organ by Brahms and composers he influenced: Zemlinsky and Reger. Sunday, February 5, 2012 at 2:30 in the sanctuary. Tickets are available at the door: \$12/\$10 seniors and students.



Scholarship Applications Due February 15 Members of First Cong are invited to apply for college scholarships for 2012-13 from the Frank E. Page Scholarship Fund. Applicants should be planning to begin or continue education at any accredited 2 or 4-year college or university and should have a record of academic achievement and service to church and community, as well as demonstrated financial need. **IMPORTANT:** This year all applications must be filed electronically, so if you have an application form from a previous year, contact scholarships@firstcongmadison.org for a revised application form. The deadline is February 15, 2012.

Church Calendar January 29-Feb. 5, 2012

Sunday January 29

9:00am New member class~ SL
 10:00am Worship ~ S
 10:15am Sunday School
 11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Rm 301
 11:15am Confirmation Parent/Student meeting. ~ YR
 1:00pm All Church Ice Skating party ~ Tenney park
 1:00pm con vivo! Rehearsal ~ S

Monday January 30

5:30pm Madison Table Tennis Club ~ DR
 8:00pm SA ~ Room 301

Tuesday January 31

12noon Bible Conversations ~ SL
 5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 301
 6:00pm Youth Musical Rehearsal ~ S
 6:30pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR
 7:00pm NA ~ Room 301
 7:00pm con vivo! Rehearsal ~ S

Wednesday, February 1

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS
 10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS
 6:30pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301
 7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ Chapel

Thursday, February 2

Community Meals Day
 7:00pm Mad Area Jugglers ~ DR
 7:30pm AA ~ Room 303

Friday, February 3

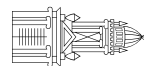
Saturday, February 4

Youth Lock In/Bowling
 8:00am Women's Book Study ~ SL
 10:00am MOSES ~ LRC

Sunday, February 5

8:30am Men's Fellowship ~ FR
 10:00am Sunday Worship ~ S
 10:15am Wee Worship ~ Chapel
 12:00pm BOUNCE ~ YR
 2:30pm con vivo! Concert ~ S

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



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1609 University Avenue
 Madison, Wisconsin 53726
 608-233-9751 (phone)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Worship attendance on
 Sunday, January 22, 2012 was 190.**

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.

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