

The Tower

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin

LXVIII

September 11, 2011

No. 29

9/11, 10 YEARS LATER

The following is part of an article by Cathleen Falsani, the religion reporter for the Chicago Sun Times 10 years ago, when the airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania.

As the paper's religion reporter, editors asked me to write something that would address the spiritual implications of the unthinkable disaster that was unfolding. The only thing I could think to do was to phone a number of religious leaders and ask them the question so many people were asking that Tuesday morning: Why would God allow this to happen? My favorite answer came from William Persell, the Episcopal bishop of Chicago. "I see God operating through all the courage, the love, and the support people are giving each other as they drag bodies from buildings and as they minister to the wounded and the bereaved across the nation. I ultimately believe that love is more powerful than the evil we have experienced, and it will prevail." In the end, yes, love wins. That is true.

But the truest answer I received came from the venerable scholar of American religion, Martin Marty, who told me, matter-of-factly, "I don't know, and nobody does." 10 years later, Marty's answer remains the best.

None of (the historical-political answers people give) truly get at the heart of the matter. None of them explain on a soul level why bad things happen to good people, why the innocent suffer, why there is hatred in a world that I believe was created and ordered by a loving God, a God who promises to be powerfully present in our suffering.

None of those responses satisfactorily answer the *why*...

If I have learned anything in the decade that has passed since terror became a visceral part of our daily reality, it is to be comfortable with not knowing. There are some things in this life that we never will understand. "I don't know," is sometimes the only true response. That uncertainty is not only okay, it's sacred.

In an effort to further our understanding of Islam and Muslims and the far-reaching effects of those events 10 years ago, we have invited Robany Nayan, a Muslim graduate student at the University and the Coordinator of Interfaith Dialogue at the Lubar Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions, to speak in our worship on September 11, the 10th anniversary of those events on the East Coast.

Curt Anderson



JOIN US FOR MORNING SERVICE

Sunday, September 11, 2011

The 10th anniversary of 9/11

Worship at 10am in the Sanctuary

Rohany Nayan, speaking

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 5:21-24

The passage from Genesis is God's call to Abram (Abraham) to leave his country and his parent's house and go to a land that God would show him. It includes the promise that Abraham would become a great nation and that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Before there was an historical Moses or Jesus of Nazareth or Mohamed, there was the story of Abraham, who was called to become, through his descendants, a great nation; and through him all the people of the earth would be blessed. The story of Abraham in the Torah, the Old Testament and the Qur'an, binds Judaism, Christianity and Islam together in ways we don't always admit. At times we are in conflict about the story; but in the end, I believe it is more like a family conflict than anything else.

The passage from Matthew, from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, tells us Christians how we are to deal with conflict. It contrasts one end of the scale, complete alienation and murder, with its opposite: conversation, dialogue, and eventual reconciliation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madison Area Crop Walk

First Cong will again be hosting this year's CROP walk on Sunday, Oct. 16. A crew of volunteers will be needed to make this event run smoothly. We will need help with bread donations, kitchen workers, route markers, crowd control, and various miscellaneous tasks. This would be great for individuals *and* families!! If interested, please contact Jeff Rabe at the church office or sign-up in the back of the Sanctuary. Last year's walk raised \$70,000, 25% of which stayed right here in Dane County!



Excitement for Small Group Ministries

Major discussions have occurred about the Membership Renewal Committee's recommendation to create some small group ministries and programs for First Congo as part of the REACH AND RENEW Capital Campaign. Some of these ideas are unveiled in the attached survey entitled "Small Group Ministries for Reach and Renewal". **It is critically important for strategic planning for you to register your concerns and interests on this survey.** You may return the survey to the church office or to a table at the rear of the church. **The deadline is Sunday, September 18th.** Copies will be available at the church office from Sept. 6-18 and in rear of the church on September 11 and 18. In addition, there will be an opportunity to complete the survey on the First Congo web site from 09/06 to 09/18. There may even be a TREAT after church on the 18th for those who complete and turn in the survey by the 09/18 deadline!

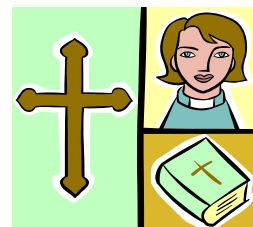
The survey purposes are to determine what programs and ministries would help the members (new and old) to get to know one another at a deeper level so that we might become more supportive of one another and so that the church might grow with meaning and focus as we listen for God Still Speaking. **This survey seeks congregational input on how these small groups might develop, when they might be offered, and the scope of possible interest in certain topics.** More information will follow in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!



Congratulations to the Bittner-Kissel family on the arrival of Alice Winifred Kissel Bittner. Alice was born August 25th and joins parents Jason Bittner and Sarah Kissel and siblings Emma and Charlotte at home.

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 and ask to join the other 193 people on the list for the e-Tower. (Separate copies can go to multiple email addresses in the same household.)



MUSICAL NOTES

The start of the fall music program is right around the corner. Choirs are open to everyone; church membership is not a requirement to participate in the music program. A brief description of the choirs with their start dates is listed.

CHANCEL CHOIR – open to all, high school age and older. The Chancel Choir meets on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 until 9:00 in the Chapel. They sing at most Sunday morning worship services and also participate in other worship services throughout the year. The ability to read music is helpful, but not necessary. Start Date: September 7.

COVENTRY RINGERS – open to all, high school age and older. The Coventry Ringers meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 until 7:30 in Room 301 (6:30 start time during The Gathering). They play at worship services throughout the year, and also participate in special events outside the church. At this time, there are no openings in the choir, but please let us know if you are interested in joining at a future date. Start Date: September 7



CHERUB CHOIR – open to all children age 5 through grade 5. The Cherub Choir meets immediately following worship on Sunday mornings until 11:45am in Room 301. They sing in worship on the second Sunday of the month. In addition, they sing at the Family Service on Christmas Eve. Start Date: September 11.

FIRST CONG YOUTH

Youth Groups (grades 7 – 12) will have an ALL YOUTH meeting on Sun., Sept. 25, at 6pm to kick off the coming year. Contact Jeff Rabe with questions.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Sunday School Update

No classes September 4. Classes (age 3 through grade 6) will resume on Sunday, September 11. If parents haven't sent in Student Registration Forms, please do so soon. Forms can be found at www.firstcongmadison.org or by contacting Jeff Rabe.

ALL CHURCH

September 18th FRB Celebration



Take a short trip to Belleville and meet our Foods Resource Bank partners at Zwingli UCC-Paoli.

Join us for all or part of the afternoon.

1 PM tour- Sunburst Dairy

1003 County Road PB

2 PM hayride- Zwingli UCC

1338 County Road PB

4:30 PM pot-luck & campfire

RSVP to Jessica Flowers by Sept 11th at 347-7716 or outreach@firstcongmadison.org

Inscribing the Divine: The St. John's Bible Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA), 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL August 20—October 23, 2011

Luma will be exhibiting ten bifolia from the St. John's Bible. Don't miss this great opportunity to see some of the original pages in a venue close to home. For more information, see the website http://http.www.luc.edu/luma/flash/saint_johns_bible_2011.html

Ride the Drive – A Car Free Event, September 25, 2011, 10a.m. – 3p.m.

www.cityofmadison.com/ridethedrive

Ride the Drive is a community event that turns a 5-mile loop of Madison's signature streets into a public promenade that is open to bikers, walkers, rollerbladers, and those out to share in the experience and fun atmosphere. This popular event has drawn over 20,000 families, friends, and recreation enthusiasts to each event. This popular route includes John Nolen Drive, East Washington Ave., the Capitol Square and State Street.



Church Calendar September 11-18, 2011

Sunday, September 11

9:00am Capital Campaign Awareness Meeting ~ Chapel
 10:00am Sunday Worship ~ Sanctuary
 10:15am Sunday School
 11:15am Cherub Choir ~ Room 301

Monday, September 12

5:30pm Stewardship Board ~ FR
 5:30pm Table Tennis Club ~ DR
 7:00pm All Boards ~ Chapel
 8:00pm SA ~ Room 303

Tuesday, September 13

12noon Bible Conversations ~ SL
 5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 303
 6:30pm CROP meeting ~ SL
 7:00pm NA ~ Room 303
 7-9:30pm Piano Tech Guild ~ FR

Wednesday, September 14

9:30am Worship Planning ~ MS
 10:30am Staff Meeting ~ MS
 6:00pm Coventry Ringers ~ Room 301
 7:30pm Chancel Choir ~ C

Thursday, September 15

5:30pm Table Tennis Club ~ DR
 5:30pm Eating Disorders Support ~ Room 303
 7:30pm AA ~ Room 303

Friday, September 16

4:30pm Circle of Support ~ LRC
 5:00pm Wedding Rehearsal ~ S

Saturday, September 17

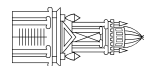
3:00pm Johnson/Matheny wedding ~ Sanctuary

Sunday, September 18

10:00am Sunday Worship ~ S
 10:15am Sunday School
 11:00am Capital Campaign Awareness meeting ~ Chapel
 1:00pm FRB Event ~ Paoli



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
 608-233-9751 (phone)

Madison, Wisconsin 53726

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship attendance on
 Sunday, August 28, 2011 was 171.

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
 David Krantz, 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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SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES FOR REACH AND RENEWAL

The Membership Renewal Committee's recommendation for the creation of more, small group ministries and opportunities is one priority for the **REACH and RENEW** Capital Campaign. Small group ministries help members connect at a deeper level, become more supportive of one another, and grow with meaning and focus as we listen together for the Still Speaking God. **This survey seeks congregational input on how more small groups might develop, when they might be offered, and the scope of possible interest in certain topics. Your participation in this survey is critical to developing the plans for these small groups.** We thank you in advance for completing this survey and encourage the addition of comments and suggestions. The deadline for submission is Sunday, September 18th.

Please check boxes for the types of small groups in which you would be most likely to participate:

(Groups may combine one or more elements). *Please check all that apply:*

- Social Educational Topical/Current Spiritual/Inspirational
Social Justice/Mission Related Support Groups/Various Concerns Crafts/Sports
I have no interest in participating in a small group at this time.

In the following, please use the scale of: 1= NO interest; 2=low interest; and 3=moderate or strong interest

Please indicate your level of interest in small group formats (again, groups may combine one or more formats):

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Discussion-based | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lecture- based w/ discussion | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DVD clips & discussion | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Book group | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spiritual practice-based (i.e. prayer or meditation) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Craft oriented activities | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outing/Activity related | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Peer, age, and/or interest- based | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intergenerational activities | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Movie night with discussion | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other suggestion: | _____ | | |

Please indicate your level of interest in small group topics:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bible studies | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Church history | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Theology | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Spiritual growth/ practices | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| Parenting | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Current events and Christian responses | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Missions | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Navigating life crises with support | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Ecumenical /Interfaith issues with dialog | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Morality & ethics in a new time | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Exploring spiritual gifts | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other suggestions: | _____ | | | |

(over)

The Adult Education Committee, as well as other boards and individuals have suggested the development of the topics and programs listed below. Please indicate any in which you have interest. Use the 1-3 scale as previously.

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| The Dead Sea Scrolls | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Visiting the Holy Land without traveling | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| The history and origins of our current Bible | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Theological controversies in churches | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Events that led to beliefs of the UCC | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Living the Questions and progressive Christianity | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Our faith/current events with "Faithlinks" topics | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Contemporary books about life or social issues | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| Living in new stages/challenges of life | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| Sessions exploring personal growth | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| Moral ethics in a new age | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Social justice issues in Madison. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| New mission projects for First Congo | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| New topics or projects/by individuals/ Boards | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |
| Book discussions -may occur at other times | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Suggestions: _____ |

Your level of interest in possible meeting frequency/ times (assuming childcare provided except breakfast and lunch):

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday morning before 10 a.m. worship | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Weekly evening times | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Select days: _____ |
| Monthly breakfast (before work -weekday) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | Select days: _____ |
| Monthly Sunday lunch group | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Gathering Classes on Wednesdays/Fall & Spring | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Are there any significant barriers to participation that we should know about? (i.e. childcare, transportation)

What is most important to you in participating (or not) in new small group ministries at First Congo?

PLEASE SHARE: ideas, comments, suggestions

Please use box to indicate your age group: under 20 ; 21-35 ; 36-50 ; 51-65 ; over 65

****Optional: Name _____**