

The Tower

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin

LXVIII

February 13, 2011

No. 6

Updates on Members in Discernment

Clare Gromoll is a Member in Discernment from our church and the Southwest Wisconsin Association, UCC. She is a first year student at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, Minnesota, outside of the twin cities. Susan Shands is a Member in Discernment from our church and the Southwest Wisconsin Association, UCC. She is a first year student at Yale Theological Seminary in New Haven, Connecticut. Clare and Susan will be sending occasional updates to us about how their studies are going and how they are thinking and feeling about their preparation for ministry.

During the fall and winter terms at UTS I studied Foundations of Christian Education, Orientation to the Older Testament, Historical Theology, New Testament Greek, and Theological Interpretation: God, Community, and Transformation. I enjoyed the mix of church history, biblical interpretation, and practical ministry applications that those classes offered. I live close enough to campus to arrive by bicycle in good weather and I have found a welcoming and engaging worshipping community at UCC of New Brighton.

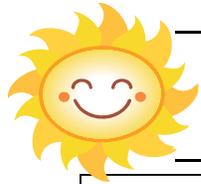
This week, I dove into a new semester and four new classes: New Testament Texts in Context, Introduction to Pastoral Care, American Religious Histories, and Integration of Ministry and Local Theologies. I have eagerly anticipated Introduction to Pastoral Care as I lean toward a concentration in pastoral care and counseling within the Master of Divinity degree; this will be my first opportunity to engage in this area of study. During the spring and summer terms, several classes will help me explore how my bilingualism might play a role in my call to ministry. Thank you for your continued prayers and notes of encouragement!

Clare

My first semester at Yale Divinity School (YDS) was a whirlwind of activity. My biggest challenge was simply settling into my new city, but getting back into the routine of being a full-time student again proved difficult in its own right. The amount of reading assigned seems more than humanly possible to complete. I took four classes last semester (Old Testament Interpretation; Transitional Moments in Western Christian History through the Reformation; Intro to Pastoral Care; and In the Face of Death: Ritual, Music and Art). Faculty must find a balance between teaching practical tools for those going into the ministry alongside theory and scholarship designed to help students get into PhD programs--and often, the balance tips in favor of theory.

One way students gain practical experience outside of the classroom is through daily worship in the YDS Chapel. Chapel is very well-attended and the ecumenical liturgy is consistently superb, being primarily student planned and led. I helped plan a UCC-related service, assisted with the annual LGBTQ service, and wrote and led a pastoral prayer in another service. While I haven't yet found a church home in New Haven (I'm incredibly homesick for First Congregational!), these daily worship experiences help feed me spiritually as I immerse myself in the heady academic world of seminary. My strength is sustained in knowing that I am surrounded by the prayers and support of all of you back home, and I am so grateful to God for that.

Susan



JOIN US FOR MORNING SERVICE

Sunday Morning, February 13, 2011
Worship at 10am in the Sanctuary
Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:21-48

The Higher Righteousness. That is what these six sayings are sometimes called. They are all in the same form. *You have heard this it was said ... But I say unto you....* The first part gives a statement from the Old Testament law, and the last part gives Jesus expansion of the meaning of the original statement. It is important to note that the last one is a little more complicated. It begins thus: *You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."* Nowhere in the Old Testament does it say exactly that. In Leviticus 19:18 it says: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* In Psalm 139:21-22, it says: *Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? ... I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.* Perhaps, in Jesus' time, some of the Rabbis had put those two ideas together; although we have no surviving evidence of that.

The point of these antitheses is that the first statements are what are normally expected of people. They are statements of normal morality or ethics: *You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.* But Jesus takes those statements of normal, expected morality and extends them almost beyond recognition: *But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you shall be liable to judgment.... But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* Jesus takes them far beyond the confines of normal morality and seems to be asking so much of his followers that it is impossible to comply. What is Jesus doing here? Why does he seem to be asking for so much? Can't we just go along with normal morality and "fit in" as part of this world?

A Congregational Meeting to Approve the Budget will be held on February 20, 2011, immediately after our regular Sunday Morning Worship. This year we will forego the usual informational session the week before that meeting, because this budget is very much like last year's. There are only a few differences, which will be explained at the Congregational Meeting. Since we are skipping the information session, copies of the budget, for folks to take home and look over, are available.

A CALL TO

Action!

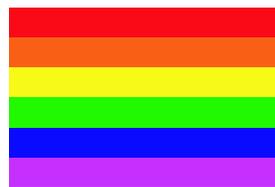
TO ALL PEOPLE OF FAITH
TO END THE 100 TO 1 RACIAL DISPARITY IN THE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In Dane County, a black man is 100 times more likely to go to prison than a white man.

This is unjust and a stain on our community. It must be stopped.

Communities of faith must be part of the solution.

Join us February 22, at 7:00 at First Congregational United Church of Christ
to find out how you can help.



Rainbow People will meet on Sunday February 20 in the Fellowship Room. All are welcome to stay for this potluck meal and fellowship time after worship and

the budget meeting. Our speaker will be Scott Anderson, an openly gay man in a committed relationship, who will give an update on his journey to be ordained. Anderson is a former Presbyterian minister who voluntarily gave up his ordination in 1990 after parishioners at the church he was serving in California outed him as gay. He currently is executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches. In October, the mid-western governing body of the Presbyterian Church upheld a decision by area church leaders to allow his ordination, and that decision has been appealed to the national church and is expected to be decided this spring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women's Book Study Women! Mark your calendars now to attend a morning of coffee (or juice), treats, and great conversation after reading *Shadowfever* by Karen Marie Moning. Moning is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Fever series. This fictional book is a change of pace for the study. It features the character MacKayla Lane. In this book Mac returns to Ireland to hunt her sister's murderer. Mac is plunged into a secret history: an ancient conflict between humans and immortals who have lived concealed among us for thousands of years. The class meets on Saturday mornings from 8:00-9:30am in the Student Lounge. We started February 5, and continue the 19th, and March 5 and 19. Books are available in the office for \$15. Please let Eldonna know if you plan to attend.



Another House Dinner--Sign Up Now! Our second House Dinner of 2011 will be on Friday, February 25 at Melinda and Phil Certain's house. They'll provide all the food and beverages; guests need only come for a pleasant evening of fellowship. A sign-up sheet is at the back of the church. This event is brought to you by the Board of Community Life. Questions? Contact Joanne Lenburg at lenburgs@yahoo.com

All Church Ice Skating Party A group of First Cong Folk braved the elements for a spin on the ice at Tenney Park recently for the All-Church Ice Skating party. Thanks to Kristin Kanitz for hosting the party! Here are a few pictures.



The NEWLYWED GAME!

*Sunday, February 13
Dining Room*

*Lunch followed by
the GAME*



*Proceeds benefit
Youth Mission Projects
Lunch followed by the Game!*

Church Calendar February 13-20, 2011

Sunday February 13

9:00am New member class ~ SL
 10:00am Worship ~ S
 10:15am Sunday School
 10:15am BBQ ~ YR
 11:30am Newlywed Game ~ DR

Monday February 14

5:30pm Table Tennis Club ~ DR
 5:30pm Confirmation ~ YR
 8:00pm SA ~ Room 303

Tuesday February 15

Spring Primary Elections ~ SL
 12noon Bible Conversations ~ FR
 2:00pm Worship at Oakwood
 5:15pm NA Women's ~ Room 303
 6:30pm Boy Scouts ~ DR, YR
 7:00pm NA ~ Room 303

Wednesday February 16

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

Thursday February 17

5:30pm Women's NA ~ Room 303
 7:00pm Madison Area Jugglers ~ DR
 8:00pm AA ~ Room 303

Friday February 18

5:30pm Table Tennis Club ~ DR

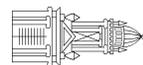
Saturday February 19

8:00am Women's Book Study ~ SL
 12:30pm Youth Musical Rehearsal ~ S
 2:30pm Schacht Memorial
 Service ~ C, SL

Sunday February 20

10:00am Worship ~ S
 10:15am Youth Musical Rehearsal ~ DR
 11:15am Congregational Budget
 Meeting ~ S
 11:30am Rainbow People ~ FR
 5:00pm Celebration Ringers ~ Room 301

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, February 6, 2011 was 157.**

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

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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