



Pastor's Notes: February 2021

The vaccine roll out has begun. How great it will be to see reductions in hospitalization and death rates. I think wistfully about a time when enough people are vaccinated we can gather for in person worship again. It will be a great day. Let me know what music, ritual or prayers you would like to see included in worship on that day.

On February 17th we begin Lent with our Ash Wednesday service, still on Facebook Live and YouTube for this year. Lent is a time of preparation. It is a time of letting go so new life can come. As a church we are preparing for what life after a pandemic will be like. Maybe this year more than other year Lent will have special meaning.

My hope for this preparation time is that we identify what written processes and procedures for the business of church are working and which are not. Agree upon new ones if necessary and covenant together to follow these practices. My hope during this preparation time is that we learn to communicate directly with those with whom we have a question or a concern. Talking about others never solves problems. It might seem easy to say, "what did John mean at the meeting when he said this" but best practices tell us to ask John himself.

My hope during this preparation time is that we practice kindness with each other. As simple as that sounds, it can also feel messy. Mary Oliver describes this well in her poem:

*And anyway it's the same old story –
a few people just trying one way or another to survive.*

*Mostly, I want to be kind. And nobody of course, is kind
or mean
for a simple reason.*

*And nobody gets out of it, having to
swim through the fires to stay in this world.*

My hope when we gather again in worship we discover we are an authentic community, deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus with passion for mercy and justice.

Blessings!
Pastor Lori

FEBRUARY LITURGIST SCHEDULE

2/7 - EVAN/BECKY RILEY

2/14 - GEORGE LYNTS

2/21 - KIRSTEN ALMO

2/28 - JULIE NORLAND

**If you are unable to make your date, please find a substitute
and let the office know. Thank you all!**

FEBRUARY EVENT SCHEDULE

2/7 - WORSHIP 10:30 A.M.

2/8 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - 7 P.M.

2/14 - WORSHIP 10:30 A.M.

2/17 - ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP - 7 P.M.

2/21 - WORSHIP 10:30 A.M.

2/28 - WORSHIP 10:30 A.M.

**all worship services streamed on facebook live*

Christian Education for Children - More Packets Coming!

The Board of Christian Education is in the process of creating Lenten activities for families. In the meantime, Valentine's Day this year is on a Sunday followed quickly by Ash Wednesday on February 17th. **Be looking for the first packet to include activities to celebrate both Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday.**

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

February 17, 2021: 7:00

Facebook Live

Ash Wednesday services can feel awkward. We put ashes on our foreheads and are reminded from dust we came, to dust we shall return. Beyond these rituals are beautiful practices of self emptying. Lent is a time of letting go and making way for new life to come. When we "let go" during the Ash Wednesday service we make space for God in our lives and in future visioning. We accept that we have not been perfect and we will never be perfect but God loves us unconditionally. We do best, when we put the ways of God first. Join us for this virtual service. Imagine what you will make ashes out of.



Adult Book Study for Lent

This year for Lent we are reading Rev. Michael Curry's book, *Love is the Way*. Rev. Curry is the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. This book talks about what church means to him and also what it means to be black in America. We can learn from both perspectives. He says in his book, "When **love is the way**, the earth will be a sanctuary. When **love is the way**, we will lay our swords and shields down by the riverside to study war no more. When **love is the way**, there's plenty of room for all of God's children.

When **love is the way**, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actually family."

You can order the book from Amazon for Kindle at \$14.99, a hardcover for \$17.33 or Kirsten Almo promises to help you place a book on hold at the Edgerton Library.

Our study will begin on February 24th at 6:30 PM on Zoom.

Let the office know if you would like a link!

What Unites Us? Using Core Values to Navigate Conflict

A Conflict Transformation Team Workshop

Sunday, February 21, 3:00-5:00 pm, online

"Love God and your neighbor as yourself." Upon these commandments depend our mission and vision as covenant congregations in the 'United' Church of Christ. Since our unity isn't uniform, what holds us together? What essential, core values serve the church when times are tough?

Let's talk! Join the Wisconsin Conference Conflict Transformation Team for a Zoom workshop on **Sunday, February 21, from 3:00 – 5:00 pm** to discuss the role of core values when dealing with church conflict.

If you are interested in attending, please email the church office so we can register as a group!



Green Team Report

One of the new initiatives for this year is in the creation of a Green Team. This has to be approved by Council with a possible start date of Earth Day, April 22nd. There is already a core group with some passion around this issue. Let the office know if you would like to be involved in this effort. One of the suggestions by the Green Team of the Wisconsin Conference UCC is to begin by sharing important articles in the newsletter. One of the congregations that presented in the last webinar said that they researched the question, "is it better to drive your car into the ground or is it better to buy a new more efficient vehicle?" They discovered it is far better to drive the car you currently own into the ground.

Food for thought...

We are trying to go plastic free at our house. We have been purchasing our meat directly from a farmer to avoid the Styrofoam that most meats are packaged in. We have successfully and quite happily moved from laundry detergent to laundry sheets – no more heavy detergent bottles to carry around. Did you know that only 1 out of 7 get recycled? Now we are on to getting rid of shampoo and conditioner bottles. This week we are trying a bar of shampoo and conditioner and will let you know how it is going! What have you tried?



With Gratitude:

THANK YOU to Susan, Steven and Carol Porter who have sent a gift in honor of their grandmother, Grace Brenhaug, a peanut lady. They are aware that because of COVID we were unable to do peanuts this year. They offered a grant of \$1000 and said to use the money as needed. We are so grateful for their continuing care for the congregation!

The Hill We Climb (excerpt)

by National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman

"So, let us leave behind a country better than one we were left.
With every breath from my bronze-pounded chest, we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one. We will rise from the gold-limned hills of the West. We will rise from the wind-swept Northeast where our forefathers first realized revolution. We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the Midwestern states. We will rise from the sun-baked South. We will rebuild, reconcile and recover in every known nook of our nation, in every corner called our country our people diverse and beautiful will emerge battered and beautiful. When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

From all of us at ECUCC...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

2/2 - LOCHLAN ELLINGWORTH

2/7 - LOGAN CAMPBELL

2/14 - LYNN ST. JOHN

2/15 - GRACEY NINMER

2/21 - LIZZY GOULD





**Minutes from UCC Church Council
December 14, 2020**

1. People in attendance: Holly Gould, Connie Wiersma, Bruce Morris, Mary Lou Behring, Tracy Tronnes, Pastor Lori, Lynn Miller, Cal Wiersma
2. Prayer by Pastor Lori
3. Approval of the November 9, 2020 minutes, moved by Tracy Tronnes, seconded by Bruce Morris
4. A way Forward (“The Tracy and Connie Show”)
 - a. Connie shares that Lorraine from the association says we need to learn how to deal with conflict in order to move forward
 - b. Rev Ciceros proposes that we participate in a process working with people who are trained to be with our church. She believes we will benefit as individuals as well as a church body.
 - c. In her opinion our church needs a “Life-giving Way forward” out of the blowing out of the dust from the cracks that the church has had for a while.
 - d. The initial meeting will be free done by the Conflict Transformation Team, but if there is follow-up meetings we need, they will need to be paid for. Lombard Mennonite Peace Center sponsors it.
 - e. Tracy Tronnes moves, and seconded by Mary Lou that we make a connection with the Conflict Transformation Team
5. Pastor’s report:
 - a. Pastoral care:

Several connections made. Lori feels good about the conversations she’s had.

Weekly devotional

- b. Worship

- i. Thanksgiving Eve Service was well attended and watched later also
 - ii. Sunday Dec 20 will be our inaugural Traveling Nativity as a gift from Deacons.
 - iii. Monday Dec 21, Blue Sunday Service is on Facebook live 7:00 pm
 - iv. Parking lot service on Christmas eve is at 4:30 pm. Request is being made to bring your own candle.
 - v. Attendance better at regular services.
- c. Administrative:
- i. Pleased that Lorraine C. is still hanging with our church as a resource
 - ii. Asks 2 to 3 people to go through our processes and looking at the job descriptions of the committees and how decisions are made. Lori feels there are too many short-cuts in place that develop cracks in our communication process.
6. Old Business
- a. Stewardship drive is complete. Budget team is set: Bruce, Holly Tracy, and Todd Campbell have been meeting on email.
 - i. Bruce says most pledge forms and Time and Talent sheets are in. It isn't surprising we are down in pledges.
7. New Business:
- a. Annual Meeting: thoughts?
 - i. Mary Lou shares an idea that maybe share care teams (Deacons) could deliver the annual reports to members.
 - ii. Included in the reports delivery would have the minutes from last year as well as a ballot for people to mail back their votes for budget, new/old officers.
 - iii. Finalize the details at the January council meeting.
 - iv. Thinking to have the report together by January 12th, to be distributed to the church by the 23rd and the meeting to be held on January 31st, 2021 after church at 11:00 am via Zoom. There may a be limited number of people who will be allowed to attend that day if a member can't operate a Zoom call.
 - b. Budget committee is putting together a budget that divides the year 2021 into two halves where one half of the year will look differently financially in those two halves. Bruce would like the church to be aware of the projected loss in pledges and obvious absence of plate. By dividing the year like this, the plate should be better when we are in person again.
8. Team Reports
- a. Trustees:
 - i. All attendees were present
 - ii. Windows are on hold, due to lack of funding
 - iii. Electrical issue is resolved
 - iv. Will try to look into hot water issues in bathrooms

v. Lucas Jensen has resigned as a Trustee

b. Treasurer:

- i. We are in the red financially. If pledges come in for the end of the year, we will be right on budget for the year 2020.
- ii. Tracy shares that the PPP loan should be forgiven if paperwork is accepted.

c. Christian Ed:

- i. Children's packets are going out for Christmas
- ii. Lori planning a 4 week study on The Way is Love, TBD

d. Deacons:

- i. Traveling Live Nativity on December 20th will start at 4 pm
 1. 4 stops will be Everett Scarborough, Lynts, Elsie and Dave and Jane Nelson

9. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 after a motion by Connie Wiersma and seconded by Tracy Tronnes.