



NEA Reporter

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A UCC Missionary's Memories of 9-11 in Turkey

September 11 2001 is a date that marks history, something like BC / AD. The entire world shifted on that day. The world has not been the same since. Today my Turkish and Arab friends still are "randomly" selected for security searches. They are treated as potential threats. No one really acknowledges that many of them also experienced pain and sorrow due to that fateful day.

Two small snippets occurred in my life in Istanbul, Turkey on September 12th 2001.

9/11 occurred for us in Istanbul, during the evening hours of that day. I learned about the first plane crash when I was buying a ticket to see a movie. The woman at the ticket counter, upon learning I was an American, asked if I knew about the plane crash. I rushed home after the movie, not truly able to comprehend what was happening.



Alison Stendahl

As events continued to unfold, I experienced a totally surreal disconnected feeling, that I have no need to describe. You all know what I mean. The following day at school, many of our faculty members were gathered in the Faculty Room listening as one of our American teachers shared her anxieties and fears for her brother and sister-in-law who lived adjacent to the WTC. She was crying. In fact many of us were crying, Turkish faculty and foreign faculty. We surrounded her and comforted her. Then one of our Turkish teachers expressed what many of our Muslim teachers were feeling, "This is not the Islam I

believe in." All of our teachers, whether they were Muslim, Christian or Jew, were full of deep, deep sorrow. They all shared an intimate moment of profound pain and grief. This was not just an American tragedy. This was a world tragedy.

That afternoon I went to my Turkish dentist. He told me that he had been frantically calling a dental school classmate who worked in New York City. She was a Greek. I asked if I could help him with the telephone number. He took out his address book where I immediately spotted "WTC 2" by her address. My heart sank as I shared with him the meaning of these initials and the reason her phone was "disconnected". We cried together.

As we near the end of the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting from sunrise to sunset in the Islamic tradition, let us embrace one another in the full spectrum of our differences. We share a common humanity and this is what we embrace with love and compassion.

Selam/Shalom
Alison Stendahl
August 31, 2011

Alison Stendahl, a member of University United Church of Christ, Seattle, Washington, serves the Near East Mission in Istanbul. She works as academic dean and math teacher at Uskudar American Academy. This article was published on the *Missionary Stories* page of the Global Ministries website (www.globalministries.com) on August 31, 2011

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September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p>Art Wille, Associate Conference Minister 920-585-0185 Bill Clyma, Ministries Coordinator 715-735-6483</p> </div>						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 9:00 A.M. Clergy Cluster II Church of Peace Fond du Lac	14 9:30-11:30 A.M. Clergy Cluster ! St. John UCC Black Creek	15 9:00 A.M. Executive Committee, St. John UCC, Appleton	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Fox Valley Teenagers Make Camp Special for Autistic Kids

By Bill Clyma

Last May, Glenn Svetnicka, the Managing Director at Moon Beach Camp, returned a call to Kristin Underwood at Congregational United Church of Christ in Neenah-Menasha.

“You can adopt a cabin and work on it if you really want to,” said Glenn. “But I have a better idea for you.”

Came AweSum, a camp at Moon Beach for autistic children and their parents, would really benefit from some teenager volunteers on staff to help with the young campers.

Congregational UCC already has several special needs children among its member families. None of them have autism, but the teenagers there are accustomed to special needs children in their midst.

The teens said yes with enthusiasm, and spent the week of August 21-27 at Moon Beach Camp near St. Germain. Each morning, from 9:15 to 12:15, they escorted the kids as they went from music to nature walks to arts and crafts, as well as the 45 minutes of sensory stimulation therapy so vital to the healthy development of these children. The six volunteers became a consistent group of helpers with consistent faces with whom the children could relate. Parents got three hours to relax while their children enjoyed a summer camp experience. The parents knew their children were in good hands as they went shopping in Eagle River, read a book while sitting on the beach, or making baskets with a skilled basket weaver.

During the afternoon, the six teenagers and their three adult chaperones would paint the upstairs rooms in Dragonfly cabin.

Camp AweSum (Autism Spectrum Family Camp) is not a “church camp” in the way most people picture such events. Camp AweSum, a private, non-profit group that organizes camping experiences for autistic kids, finds hospitality and a terrific setting for its program at Moon Beach Camp. Glenis Benson, an

autism specialist and consultant, directs the camp, and other professionals and students in autism education form her staff. A group of good volunteers help to make the week even more special for the kids and their families.

Each of the Neenah-Menasha’s teenagers who took part in the experience paid a \$25.00 commitment fee. The rest of the trip was financed with funds from and Outreach and Mission Fund at the church. As Kristin Underwood, the church’s Director of Christian Education, organized the event, she required two things of the young travelers:

☺ Participate in a *Shed Build* with Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity, to spruce up their basic skills in building; and

☺ Attend a two hour training session to learn about autism spectrum from Peggy Bartman of the Menasha School District.

The session with Peggy Bartman prepared them

so well that the six volunteers already had a very good understanding of the things Glenis Benson taught them during their orientation at Moon Beach Camp.

The week started like many other weeks of Family Camp at Moon Beach. On Sunday night, children, parents, staff and volunteers sang tentatively and approached all these new people cautiously. By Friday night, they all new they were in a safe place among good friends. The singing was enthusiastic, the table talk was relaxed and loud, and the group overflowed with camaraderie and sharing.

The extraordinarily quiet nap time after lunch (kids with autism spectrum disorder need very quiet rest times) also made a big impression on the six teenage volunteers.

So far, Kris Underwood has received one letter of thanks since they all got home. The young woman shared her joy and enthusiasm about her week volunteering at Moon Beach Camp with three critical words: *life changing experience*.



Teenage Volunteers help out with the Thursday Night Dance at Autism Spectrum Family Camp, held August 21-27 at Moon Beach Camp in St. Germain



Around the NEA

By Arlan and Sharon Schlundt

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, De Pere. Pastor: James Pfefferkorn. WHOLLY HOSPITALITY. Michelle Pieper will be leading a hospitality workshop this fall. The event will be held following worship. It is a workshop for greeters, ushers, and all others wanting to continue our fine tradition of offering a warm and comfortable welcome. Consider this announcement to be an open invitation to all! Snacks will be provided. (From *First UCC Church Newsletter*)

OUR SHEPHERD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Howard's Grove. Interim Pastor: Ernie Huntzinger. YOGA SESSION EXPANDS. The Fall Session of yoga will begin on Monday, September 12th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Also to be offered this fall on September 12th is a class for those who would like to experience the benefits of yoga but can't get on and off the floor. Rhonda Mesanovic has graciously agreed to offer a chair yoga class on Mondays from 11:00 to 12:00, at Our Shepherd. This program is for males and females. Please invite friends to this positive opportunity. The class will run in six week sessions with the cost of \$30 per person. (From *Our Shepherd's Newsletter*)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Plymouth. Pastor: Bill Rishel. FAITH PRACTICE. On Rally Day (Sunday, September 11) we will be implementing Faith Practices, a program developed by the UCC for integrating all ministries of the church into one comprehensive plan. Faith Practices is an on-line total church program for all ages. The theme for the first four weeks is "Forming Community: Giving and Receiving Hospitality" which concedes with public advertising of our Open and Affirming status. (From *The Joyline*)

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Black Creek. Interim Pastor: Gail Irwin. RECIPE FOR SWEET AND SOUR CHOIR.

1. Good voices are kneaded. Mix in the sweet and sift out the sour. Blend well until they stick together.

2. Count measures carefully and follow the beat.
3. Whip up the parts and rise for an anthem that will stir the parishioners.
4. Combine yourself with the choir mixture, starting on Wednesday, September 7, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.
5. Continue stirring the choir mix Wednesdays until well versed.
6. Finally top off with a glaze of God's Praise.

Any questions?

(From *St. John's Newsletter*)

PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Marinette. Pastor: William Clyma. LA MALFA SCULPTURE INSTALLED ON PEACE CHURCH'S WEST LAWN. Longtime Peace Church member Jim La Malfa, Professor of Art History at the University of Wisconsin, Marinette, has presented Peace Church with a gift sculpture. The sculpture, two years in planning and creating, was installed recently next to the church's Tenth Street door. The sculpture is stainless steel mounted on treated wood. It depicts the risen Christ holding the bread and wine of Holy Communion. The star above and to the right of the figure points to the star of the East at Christ's birth, God's creation of the stars in Psalm 8, and Jesus Christ the Light of the World. (From *Tidings of Peace*)

FROM THE BACK OF THE UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN FOR AUGUST 28, 2011. "A Loaves-And-Fishes Sort of Thing" was the title. Imagine walking down the cereal aisle at the supermarket and overhearing the conversation on the other side of the shelf: "Say, you're the pastor with the clothes, aren't you?" Pastor Moira has been known to field that inquiry on a trip to the grocery store in tiny Cecil, Wisconsin (population, about 400). Moira Finley is pastor of St. John's UCC in Cecil and Trinity UCC in Shioc-ton, 22 miles away, and oversees the hugely successful Cecil Community Clothes operation at St. John's. The bulletin article continues to tell the story of the closet that first opened its door in the summer of 2008.

NEA-NWA Clergy Retreat Planned for October 2-4

Abundant Ministry in an Age of Scarcity shapes the learning and conversation for this year's Northeast-Northwest Association UCC Clergy Retreat. The retreat will be held at Moon Beach Camp in St. Germain, beginning at 4:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 2 and lunchtime on Tuesday, October 4. The fee is \$135.00 and registrations (with a \$50.00 deposit) are due at Moon Beach (7250 Birchwood Drive, St. Germain, WI, 54558-9178) by September 15.

Dr. Bruce Epperly, a teacher, spiritual guide, reiki teacher, UCC pastor and author of seventeen books will lead the retreat. Epperly will help participants reflect on the current state of ministry and congregational life. Further con-



Bruce Epperly

versation will explore spiritual resources for vocational and personal transformation in ministry. Scriptural reflection from I Kings 17:8-16 and Luke 5:1-11 will study the interplay of abundance and scarcity in ministry.

The retreat schedule will include worship and time for rest and renewal. Retired clergy are invited to attend as guests of the Association. Scholarship assistance for clergy in need is available; call Sue Taylor at the Wisconsin Conference Office (608-846-7880).

More information on the retreat, complete with a brochure and registration form, can be found by clicking the retreat links at the

NEA website (www.neaucc.org).



Ordination Anniversaries

James Hoppert	25 Years	September 21
L. Gail Irwin	23 Years	September 18
Rebecca Johnston	22 Years	September 17
Kathryn Kuhn	14 Years	September 14



Churches In Transition

First Congregational UCC—Appleton: Rev. Nicholas Hatch began serving as Associate Pastor on August 29.

St. John UCC—Black Creek: Rev. L. Gail Irwin Interim Pastor.

Ebenezer UCC—Chilton: Rev. Kathy Rust, Interim Pastor.

St. John's UCC—Elkhart Lake: Rev. Virginia Pych, Interim Pastor.

Our Shepherd UCC—Howards Grove: Rev. Ernie Huntzinger, Interim. Search committee reading profiles.

Immanuel UCC—Plymouth: Rev. Margaret Richardson Zedan (Presbyterian), Interim Pastor

First Congregational UCC—Ripon: Rev. Jack Kraaz retired on July 3, 2011. Rev. Greg Smith, Interim Pastor



Church Anniversaries

45 Years

Bethany UCC, Oshkosh

115 Years

St. Paul's UCC, Oshkosh
Salem UCC, Plymouth

120 Years

St. John UCC, Manitowoc
Emmanuel UCC, Oshkosh

125 Years

Bethel UCC, Fond du Lac

130 Years

Hope UCC, Sturgeon Bay

140 Years

St. John's UCC, Black Creek
Hancock UCC, Hancock

145 Years

First Congregational UCC, DePere

155 Years

St. Mark's UCC, Cleveland

160 Years

Congregational UCC, Neenah
Grace Congregational UCC, Two Rivers

165 Years

St. Paul UCC, Malone

175 Years

Union Congregational UCC, Green Bay

ALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP BANQUET
FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN WITH
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Dr. Clyde J. Steckel, Guest Speaker

Dr. Steckel taught theology for 25 years at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minnesota.

Dr. Steckel authored *New Ecclesiology and Polity* in 2009, in which he explores the present and the future of the UCC's organization, traditions and governance and the effectiveness of its future ministries.

Come and learn from his deep knowledge of the United Church of Christ (and his dry sense of humor).

October 9, 2011

**David and Valerie Black Room
Lakeland College Student Center**

3:00-6:30 P.M.

(yes, you *can* listen to the Packers' game on the way home!)

Please sign up by Monday, September 26

\$12.00 per person

Name: _____

Please sign up by September 26.

Address: _____

_____ \$12.00/ person = \$_____

City, State, Zip: _____

TOTAL: \$_____

Church: _____

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