



NEA Reporter

Volume 46, Issue 12

December 2011

A Message from the Division on Church and Ministry

Greetings in the Spirit of Christ!

How does a person get approved for ordination?

If a pastor has violated the trust of his/her congregation, to whom does the congregational turn?

How does our church offer pastoral care toward retired clergy?

How does the United Church of Christ monitor the ministry of local church pastors?

If our pastor tenders her resignation, to whom does a local church turn?

The Church and Ministry Committee of the Northeast Association provides vital support to local churches and pastors as we strive to fulfill the purpose of Jesus Christ.

In Northeast Wisconsin, the Church and Ministry Committee has three sub-committees: Church and Pastor Ethics, Placement and Transition, and Periodic Support and Review.

About six months ago, your Church and Ministry Committee was approached by two local congregations and we were asked to respond to an identity issue of our church. Years ago, the majority of our members were born, raised, taught and groomed within one local church. That is no longer the case. In the church I serve in Two Rivers, we have members in our congregation who were formerly Jehovah Witnesses, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, American Baptists, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. To further the identity confusion we sometimes feel at a local church, some of our current members at Grace Congregational Church never attended Sunday School, they never worshiped God

as a child, and their families of origin never talked about faith or God at all.

On October 9th, your Church and Ministry provided a leadership event at Lakeland College. We listened to the concerns that local church leaders brought to us, and we responded by inviting Dr. Clyde Steckel into our midst. We invited him to respond to questions like:

- Who are we?
- What makes us different from other denominations?
- What does our history look like?
- How are decisions made in the United Church of Christ?
- What are overarching themes and concerns that regularly surface within our United Church of Christ?

We are grateful to report that a room full of leaders from our churches gathered to listen, ask questions, and converse with one another. At the conclusion of a marvelous afternoon with each other, we enjoyed a banquet meal that was served by the staff of Lakeland College.

As we think into the future, what concern do you have? What do you perceive is a weakness that your congregation could use some help with? What needs do your leaders have?

Your Church and Ministry Committee in Northeast Wisconsin is grateful for the opportunity to serve you. Please let us know how we can serve you in the future. You can contact me at khennig@lakefield.net.

Keep the Faith.

Peace,

Kim Henning, Chair
Division on Church and
Ministry

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
Art Wille, Associate Conference Minister 608-630-3134 Bill Clyma, Ministries Coordinator 920-931-5862						
4	5 9:30 A.M. C-TEN, First Congregational Church, Oshkosh	6	7 10:00 A.M.—Noon Placement and Transition Committee, St John UCC, Appleton	8	9	10
11	12 8:00 A.M. Division on Wider Church Ministries, The Machine Shed Restaurant, Appleton	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Orion Group Homes Thanks NEA for School Supplies

Offering Part of July 30 Tailgate Party

Gorgeous art by children and teenagers was included in a huge packet of thank you notes written to the NEA by staff and residents at Orion Group Homes. The notes of gratitude responded to the gifts of several boxes of school supplies that NEA people gave to Orion as an offering at the July 30 TimberRattlers Tailgate Party at Fox Cities Stadium In Appleton. Two churches (Peace UCC in Shawano and First Congregational UCC in Ripon) gave cash gifts for School Supplies totaling \$240.00. Budgets for School Supplies at Orion were tight, and the offering from our churches made a big difference:

Dear Friends in the NEA,

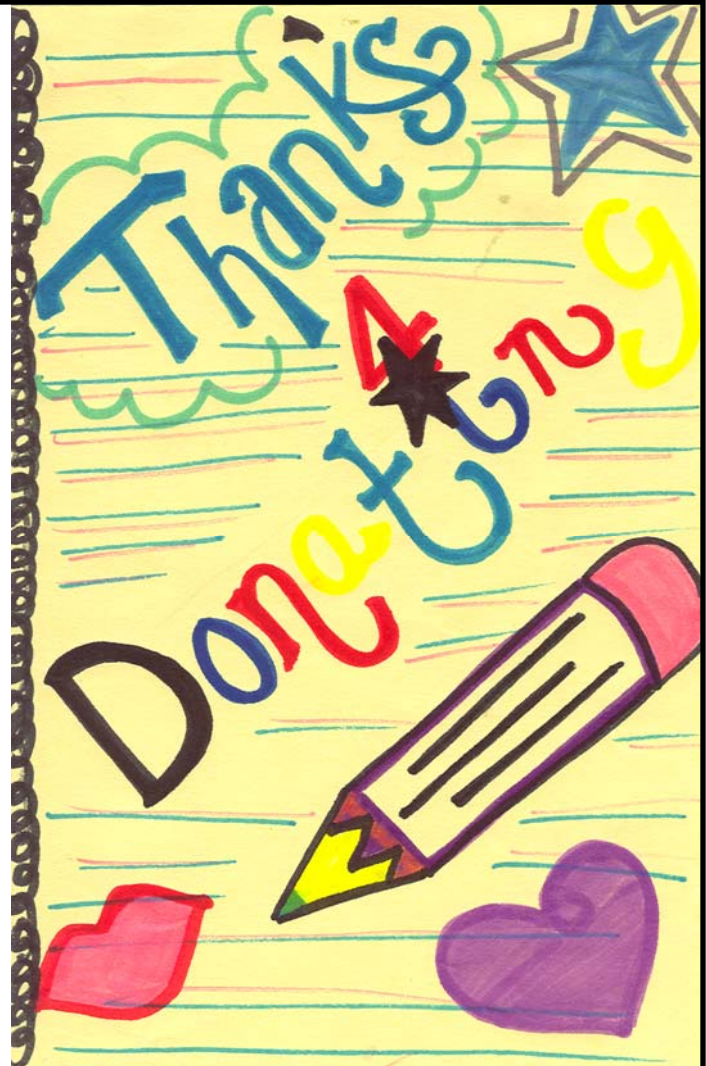
Sending you deepest thanks from the children and youth served by Orion Family Services. The bounty of school supplies and financial gifts you provided were shared among our three group homes (Madison, Monroe—Green County, Platteville—Grant County) as well as several families being served in our In-Home Therapy programs. Families in Richland, Columbia, Adams and Sauk Counties, as well as Lafayette County, all benefitted from your kindness. Your generosity and thoughtfulness has been spread across the southern part of our state . . . you have left your mark on all our hearts.

Blessings to you all!

Best Wishes,



Stacey Parke,
Clinical Director of In-
Home and Outpatient
Services



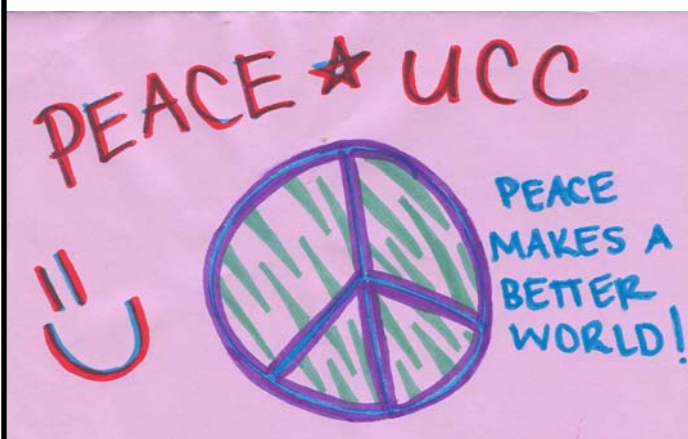
Dear NEA Friends,

Thank you all so much for the thoughtful donations towards school supplies. Our girls were very excited to pick through the new supplies and get them all organized before their first day of school. It really helped them start the school year off with the right attitude!

Monroe Group Home

Residents and staff at the Madison and Platteville Group Homes also sent notes of thanks.

The two pieces of art on this page were the covers of thank you cards created by a 16 year old girl at the Monroe Group Home. The envelope from Orion family services included half a dozen homemade cards, and the Division on Wider Church Ministries is grateful for these gifts of gratitude and beauty.





Around the NEA

By Arlan and Sharon Schlundt

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, New London. Pastor: Greg Watling. TEMPORARY USE OF LOT FOR GREEN SPACE PLAY AREA. In the near future you will see a small change in our open lawn area off of Washington Street. The New London School District will be installing a fence along the sidewalk on Washington Street that extends onto our property. The joint use of the property is to provide green space for children to play but limiting the possibility of toys of children running onto Washington Street. Our Church Council and Management team members were consulted when making the decision to set up the temporary agreement. (From *Good News*)

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEENAH/MENASHA. Pastor: Lynne Spencer-Smith. "LOVE" AS A MOTTO FOR THE CHURCH? "Love." It's a pretty powerful word and when understood at its deepest, can be life shaping and life changing. Certainly, there's no shortage of the use of the word in scripture—both old and new testaments. Just turn to the Psalms and it's everywhere. We hear how the early followers of Jesus remembered him talking about important commandments . . . Love God . . . Love neighbor. He even blessed his disciples with a new commandment before being turned over for trial and crucifixion . . . "Love one another as I have loved you." And Paul even gets into it with that great phrase that is heard at so many weddings, "Faith, hope, and love abide, these three. And the greatest of these is "love". I think love is a fitting motto for the church. (From *Glad Tidings*)

ST. MARK'S AND ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCHES OF CHRIST, Cleveland and Newton. Pastor: William Kesting. UNITED CHURCHMEN AND WOMEN BANQUET. This annual event was attended by several people of our churches. The scholarships of \$900 each were awarded to Lucas Williams of Saron UCC, Sheboygan Falls, who is a second year student at Lakeland College and Nathan Athorp of Ebenezer UCC, Sheboygan who is a second year student at Chicago Theological Seminary. An important part of this banquet was

the naming of the seminary scholarships in honor of the late Don Lorfeld of St. James who served on the scholarship selection committee for at least 35 years. The other scholarship was named in honor of Delmar Meyer of St. John's, Schwarzwald who served as the treasurer for many years.

(From *The Country Church Herald*)

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Kiel. Pastor: Ashley Nolte. LET'S SAVE PAPER! In order to help the church reduce the amount of paper we go through—please sign up to receive THE SPIRIT electronically. You can do it by signing up in the fellowship hall or emailing Bryan Jeanty. We currently use over 70,000 sheets of paper every year—most of which is just thrown away. Help us think of ways to better conserve our resources and pass your ideas along to a consistory member. This is purely voluntary. If you don't sign up, you will still keep getting the printed copy of The Spirit. In our first month, twelve families signed up saving Bethlehem about 60 sheets of paper.

(From *The Spirit of Bethlehem*)

OUR SHEPHEAD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Howards Grove. Pastor: Ernie Huntzinger. OUR SHEPHERD UCC 25th ANNIVERSARY. On November 13, Rev. Art Wille, Associate Minister of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ was the guest preacher at the morning service. The 25th Anniversary Banner with the words, "Jesus said, Come, follow me." was created by Kathy Schaetz. After worship a community luncheon was served. At a special dedication service in the afternoon the "Welcoming Cross" on the front lawn was dedicated. The cross was designed, erected, and given by Hoyt Heinemann. The tapered cross-beam symbolizes a beckoning welcome to all who approach it. (From *Our Shepherd UCC Newsletter*)

Stewardship Moments: Christ has no body now on earth, but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He is to go about doing good; yours are the hands with which He is to bless people now. Theresa of Avila

Oshkosh Church Pioneers Interfaith Service Event

By Bill Clyma

Sometimes, when Christ's followers talk about their faith with a person of another faith, it's easier to share freely when they're doing something else together. Something like enjoying breakfast together, or cooking a meal for hungry people at a soup kitchen.

That's what one couple discovered when they took part in *Servapalooza* at First Congregational Church of Oshkosh. Their group was assembling folders of materials given to new clients at a domestic abuse shelter near the church. When they sat across the table from a Muslim woman, they felt free to share, and they learned so much about her faith and what it meant to her, including the covering she wore over her head. They wouldn't have shared these stories in the checkout line at the supermarket or sitting in the grandstand at a Brewers' game. After breakfast, at a table full of papers that needed assembling so that families in need could find shelter and safety, the words came so much more easily.

On October 30, First Congregational Church of Oshkosh held its second annual *Servapalooza*, which they subtitled "putting hands and feet on your faith." This time, they invited three other faith communities to take part in the service and fellowship—Congregation B'nai Israel Synagogue, Emmaus Ecumenical Catholic Community, Al Madiyya Muslim Community and Zen River Sangha, a community of Buddhists. 130 people from the four religious bodies took part in the event. The group ranged in age from four years old up through one in her early eighties.

At 9:00, the combined group met for prayers at First Congregational, and then enjoyed breakfast together. At 9:45, they scattered to various places of service, some in the church and others at Oshkosh social service agencies. Some people cleaned several rooms at a shelter for victims of domestic abuse near the church. Another group went to an Assisted Living facility to sing "pumpkin carols" to residents. Other small groups went to rake leaves at the homes of older or disabled people who could not do this for

themselves. Still others prepared and served a meal at the Salvation Army in Oshkosh.

Groups at the church did a variety of tasks in different rooms at First Congregational Church. Some assembled hygiene kits that were shipped to the Church World Service Warehouse in Maryland. Others assembled "birthday party bags" for the Oshkosh Area Food pantry, so that kids from hungry families could celebrate a birthday with their families. Some people assembled trick or treat bags for the Boys and Girls Club of Oshkosh with healthy treats, while some created cards and notes that the Salvation Army will send to both veterans and active duty service members.



Three people of varying ages prepare dinner at the Salvation Army in Oshkosh as part of *Servapalooza* at First Congregational Church.

Carol DiBiasio-Snyder, one of First Congregational Church's co-pastors, and Sandie Miller-Schreiter, the congregation's Christian Education Director,

coordinated the event. They worked hard to find service opportunities for people of every age and ability. Each agency that welcomed the volunteers had different guidelines on a minimum age for volunteers. They faced another big challenge in persuading social agencies to host one-time volunteers on a Sunday morning. They needed to purchase supplies for the hygiene kits, quilt squares, treat bags and other items.

The coordinators found other ways to help make the day work more effectively. The brief service of prayer included petitions from all four faith communities taking part in it. All the participants wore nametags that included a note sharing the faith community of which they were part. This was the first year in which First Congregational Church invited other faith communities to join them for *Servapalooza*. Next year's planning committee for *Servapalooza* will include members of the other three religious bodies.

Servapalooza was held on Sunday morning, during First Church's Christian Education and worship hours. First Church's people found this attractive, yet it also attracted members of the two faith bodies who worship on other days. They were pleased that the event required no changes in their worship life.

Important Telephone Numbers For Northeast Association

The Northeast Association has obtained a cell-phone for use by Bill Clyma in his duties as Ministries Coordinator. We are still experimenting with the best way to keep Bill in contact with others, so we have chosen to purchase a short term phone with minutes purchased in advance. He will carry this phone with him most of the time. The phone for Bill Clyma (and the NEA) is:

920-931-5862

Art Wille, the Associate Conference Minister for Support of Pastors and Care of churches in both the Northeast and Northwest Associations, now has a new cell phone and number. The Conference asks you to do all your cell phone communication with Art using this number:

608-630-3134

This telephone number for Art, provided by the Wisconsin Conference as part of his new call, will be posted in all NEA publications and websites from now on. Calls to Sue Taylor, the Administrative Assistant for Art and for Kent Ulrey, can be directed to 608-846-7880.

The website has been updated with these numbers, and they will be published in the calendar of each month's edition of the *NEA Reporter*.



Churches In Transition

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. Robert Hamilton, 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. Greg Smith, Interim Pastor



Special Events in NEA Churches

“Starry, Starry, Night”
St. Peter's UCC, Kiel
(424 Fremont Street)

**INVITES THE NEA CHURCHES TO:
A Celebration of Epiphany,
Friday, January 6, 2012
MEAL AND A MOVIE AT 6PM**

An Italian dinner will be served in Fellowship Hall (free will offering) followed by an amazing video in the sanctuary, *The Star of Bethlehem*. The video unlocks the mystery of the world's most famous star. This presentation is absolutely fascinating and meticulously researched (the hair on your arms will stand up).

More Thank You Notes

Chili Lunch HUGE Success!!!!

Thank you to all who donated towards and participated in our Chili Luncheon/Basket Raffle. We are excited to announce we are in the process of purchasing the meat from 1/2 of a cow. Depending upon the size of the cow, this should produce approximately 300 one pound packages of meat for the Weymont Food Pantry! Thank you to all the Christian Education youth who helped set up, make the Chili, serve the meal and clean up following the meal!

Kelly Mathwig

Christian Education
Coordinator
Hope UCC, Fremont

Check out the thank you notes from Orion Family Services on Page 3 of this newsletter.



Ordination Anniversaries

Kris Lyn Borns..... 13 YearsDecember 5
Richard Manny.....31 YearsDecember 5
Roger Mealiff.....36 YearsDecember 28

Lakeland College Hosting Colloquy on Faith January 17

The Mission House of Lakeland College is hosting an evening colloquy on January 17, 2012. A light buffet supper will be served starting at 5:15 P.M., and the program will run from 6:00-8:30 P.M. The event will be held in the David and Valerie Black Room of the Laun Center at Lakeland College.

The program's theme, "Living the Faith: Being Christian in a Challenging World" will continue Lakeland's series "Knowing the Faith, Living the Faith, Sharing the Faith" that began last year. The colloquy will engage a "collection of witnesses," who sought to live out the faith of the Church in challenging times, as a means of inspiring participants to do the same today. Guest panelists include Rev. Dr. Richard L. Christiansen, Rev. James Gorman, Rev. Dr. Frederick Trost, and Rev. Bonnie Van Overbeke. After engaging these brief vignettes of inspiring service, participants will be invited to consider and discuss the ways in which our churches may offer a faithful witness to the gospel in our own times of challenge. Rev. Dr. Karl Kuhn will moderate the conversation following the four brief presentations.

The cost is \$10.00 and the RSVP deadline is January 11, 2012. Please make checks payable to "Lakeland College" and mail them Mission House Center, Lakeland College, Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53082 or register online at www.Lakeland.edu/missionhouse.



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

