



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*a Christian congregation that tends to the spiritual growth of its members
and reaches out to the community, the nation and world in Christian love.*

The Greeting

FEBRUARY 2012

VOLUME 81 No. 1



FROM THE PASTOR...

“What Are You Savoring?”

Call me a coward, but even though we’ve had a mild winter thus far, I’m soon escaping to a few days of warmth and sunshine! As far as I’m concerned, cartoonist and ‘social critic’ Bill Watterson had it right when he has Calvin of “Calvin & Hobbes” saying: “I like these cold, gray winter days. Days like these let you savor a bad mood.”

The last thing we should want to ‘savor’ is a bad mood, don’t you think? But sometimes it sure seems easy to do so, whether it’s savoring a grudge, hurt feelings, or just some downright cussedness within. Just as February is a good time to clean out the closets or sort through ‘the junk drawer’ in the kitchen, it’s also a great time to de-clutter any ill will that may have been silently simmering within. I Corinthians 13:6, reminds us that love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but instead rejoices in the truth.

So, if you’re feeling entrenched in winter weather and harboring the frustrations of cabin fever in February—maybe it’s time for an honest inventory of emotions? Is there someone with whom you need to speak the truth in a loving way lest some simmering thoughts heat up in less productive ways? Have you stuffed a sense of self-pity that you dare not savor? Or, is there someone you care about who needs you to be a good listener to help them out of a funk?

“God, help me not ‘savor a bad mood.’ May Your Spirit mingle with my spirit and may Your persistent love pervade my thoughts and actions, so that the ‘real’ me might shine forth; overcoming anything within me in need of cleansing or de-cluttering. Free me up, O God, to share my best with others. But even when I’ve been less than my best, keep on loving me. I know You aren’t finished with me yet!”

See you in church!

—Rev. Bill

February Worship Opportunities

Each day of their week at last summer's Chautauqua Institute, the Hoglunds were privileged to hear some fine preaching by either William D. Watley or his equally talented son, Matthew. This month, Rev. Bill shares a sermon series based on some personal homiletical consultation with renowned author and preacher, Dr. William Watley, called: "You Have to Face It To Fix It."

Sunday, February 5 **8:30 & 10:00am**
"Facing Demons, Dis-ease, and Difficulty"
Communion & WAFER Sunday

The Gospel for the morning is Mark 1:29-39, where Jesus heals many, and then heads off to a deserted place, with his disciples hunting for him. Today's message challenges us to face up to what's wrong with our world, while also encouraging us to seek renewed strength through prayer so that we can be the servant God has called us to be.

Sunday, February 12 **10:00am only**
Rev. Debby Jarvis Preaches!
"How Difficult Must it Be?"

Naaman, needed help – the solution to his problem seemed so simple that he was sure it was a hoax! The whole idea of the suggested solution just made him angry. BUT he found out he actually DIDN'T know better than God how to do God's job! Hmm... what can you and I learn from this delightful story? Is it possible that what is most important in life is really a lot simpler than we think? Join us to explore together the idea of God's *simple* solutions for our lives. (Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14, Psalm 30, Mark 1:40-45)

Sunday, February 19 **8:30 & 10:00am**

The Gospel for the morning is Mark 9:2-9, the story of Jesus' Transfiguration and Rev. Bill's message encourages us to "**Face Up to Life When the Glory's Gone.**" As mundane moments bleed into the splendor and magnificence of 'mountaintop moments,' we must still face up to the mission God has in mind for us.

Ash Wednesday, February 22 **7:00pm**

We begin the season of Lent this evening with a Simple Supper at 6:00pm (nominal cost) and Rev. Bill's message, "**Facing Up To Your Mirror,**" focuses on Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. As ever, the traditional imposition of ashes, along with a piece of sackcloth, is open to you as a means of confessing a desire to change your ways. But, of course, it is not necessary to receive sackcloth and ashes to truly repent unto God. (*continued next pg.*)

Ash Wednesday, February 22 (cont.)

7:00pm

Lent is a period of introspection and has historically been a time when the 'catechumoi' are intentional in their studies, which lead to joining the church. So, in anticipation of their confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, we will formally introduce this year's Confirmation Class this evening.

Sunday, February 26

8:30 & 10:00am

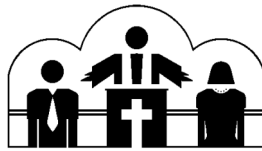
"Facing Up to Temptation" is today's Lenten Theme as Rev. Bill encourages us to explore what it is to be beloved by God, and yet tempted. Use Psalm 25:1-10 as preparation for the morning, and read Mark 1:9-15 to consider how Jesus faced up to temptation.

Wednesday, February 29

12:00pm

Community Noon Worship & Lunch

You are invited to Wesley United Methodist Church, 721 King St., La Crosse, for the first Wednesday Worship of this Lenten Season. A brief service begins at noon, with our own Rev. Bill preaching. A free-will offering will be taken on behalf of the Salvation Army, and a simple lunch will be served for \$3.50. Let's continue to support this ecumenical endeavor this Lent! A complete schedule will follow in the March issue of *The Greeting*, **but our church will host people at noon on Wednesday, March 7.**



New Member Reception
Sunday, March 4th, 10:00 a.m.

Interested in joining the Church? We are going to invite people to JOIN on the first Sunday in March at the 10 a.m. worship service, but we will have a BRIEF INFORMATIONAL SESSION in the Chapel after the 10 a.m. service on February 19th (probably from about 11:15-11:45 a.m. with people staying longer as they wish...). If you would like to join us or if you have any questions, please contact the church office or Pastor Bill at 784-8137.



And Your Prayers . . .

—Those who are grieving the loss of a loved one:

† Brian and Kay Schumacher (and family) at the loss of Kay's mother, Dorothy 'Dottie' (Bayly) Short, 81, who passed away peacefully at her home in Blue Island, IL, on November 26th. Her memorial service was held at Morgan Park Baptist Church, IL, on December 3rd.

† Former First Congregational UCC members—Pat and Rita Schwartz and Chris and Erica (Dukerschein) Schwartz (and their families), at the loss of Chris and Pat's mother, Caroline Ann Schwartz, 76, who passed away at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center on November 29th. Her funeral mass was held at St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral on December 2nd.

† Randy and Diane Breeser (and family) at the loss of Randy's brother, Gerald 'Jerry' Breeser, 72, of Waukon, IA, who passed away at Good Samaritan Center in Waukon on December 14th. His funeral service was held on December 17th. Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery, Prairie du Chien.

† Mike and Jill Blokhuis (and family) at the loss of Jill's only aunt (her mom's twin sister), Margery 'Jean' Jokipii, 71, who passed away on December 14th at Christian Park Village in Escanaba, MI, where she resided. Her funeral service was held at the Central United Methodist Church in Escanaba on December 19th.

† John and Kathy Storlie and Chuck and Cheryl Hanson (and families) at the loss of Kathy and Chuck's father, Ernest O. 'Ernie' Hanson, 95, who passed away at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center on December 16th. His funeral service was held at English Lutheran Church, La Crosse, on December 27th.

† Wes and Helen Bolterman (and family) at the loss of Wes's brother, Harold F. Bolterman, 96, who passed away at Onalaska Care Center on December 24th. His funeral service was held at Fossum Funeral Home, Onalaska, on December 28th.

—Those who have been baptized:

† Ryan Li Titcomb, who was baptized at First Congregational Church on December 18. He was born in Stevens Point, WI, on December 31, 2004, to Tienju and the late John Titcomb. His sponsors are Brad and Julie Heineck of Holmen, WI. Ryan is the grandson of Janet Titcomb and the nephew of Ellen and David Gordon, Jane and Joe Rivera, Nancy and George Schmidt, Julie and Brad Heineck, Ken and Karen Titcomb and Steve and Catalina Titcomb.

(Prayers cont. next pg.)

Prayers Continued . . .

—Those celebrating milestone birthdays in February:

- † Ann Van Atta, who will celebrate her 81st birthday on February 3rd.
- † Sara Bean, who will celebrate her 97th birthday on February 7th.
- † Phyllis Norman, who will celebrate her 94th birthday on February 7th.
- † Solveig Sedlet, who will celebrate her 87th birthday on February 25th.

***If you or someone you know will be celebrating a milestone birthday (80 yrs. or older), please contact the church office and we will be happy to include it an upcoming issue of The Greeting.*

—Those who have been blessed with a new baby:

- † Joel and Kristin Hirschboeck who welcomed a baby boy, Noah Riley, born in La Crosse on December 18th. Noah joins a big brother, Joseph (5), and sister, Layla (4).

If you have concerns or joys for which you'd like prayers, contact Pastor Bill or put a note in the Prayer Box on the stone shelf in the narthex. Rev. Hoglund will include them in the Sunday morning Pastoral Prayer—silently or publicly, as you wish.



Altar Flowers

February 5 ~ The flowers are in honor of Sara Bean's 97th Birthday, given by Her Family.

February 12 ~ The flowers are in memory of Don P. Rundle, given by Ardys Rundle and Family.

February 19 ~ The flowers are in memory of Loved Ones, given by Dean and Kay Morton.

February 26 ~ The flowers are in memory of Clair Ledbetter, our father and grandfather, given by Julie Shelby, Emma Ledbetter, and Emma and Robbie Shelby.

Openings for Altar Flowers

If you would like to help beautify the sanctuary with flowers, the following dates are available for 2012: April 29; July 22 & 29; August 26; Sept. 23; Oct. 21 & 28; Dec. 30. To reserve a date, contact Sue Heuer at 526-9397, fredsueret@charter.net or Kristi in the church office (784-8137). Thank you to all who have already reserved a date.



Caring Corner
by Audrey Kader

Those of you who read this column regularly know that I have an affinity for adages. As I pondered this month’s message, the one “A Family that Prays Together Stays Together” came to mind but with a little twist – A family that **PLAYS** together stays together! Not only is the opportunity to pray together a significant part of Church life, it is impor-

tant to build up a sense of belonging and support and what better way do so than to “play” together?

In the past this Church has offered a variety of social activities, such as: dinner, card, singles, couples, and even outdoor activity groups. It seems that we all are so busy these days that we may not take time out for relaxation and friendship building. That is why I encourage you to join some of us to go to Winona for the “Kid Chocolate” Brown concert, which also features some of the best Jazz musicians in the region—our own Greg Balfany and Karyn Quinn, as well as Larry Price and Rich MacDonald—on Saturday, January 28. See full details elsewhere in this issue and call to make your reservation: 784-8137!

Mark Your Calendars for our “Spring Fling” worship service, lunch and program on **Tuesday, April 17th**. Looking forward to seeing you there!

**Healing Through Grief Group:
Winter 2012 Series at Franciscan Skemp**

A free and confidential Healing Through Grief Group Series is offered Mondays, from 5:30-6:30pm, in the Rose Conference Room on the second floor of the La Crosse Campus Hospital (St. Francis Building). You are invited to attend any part of the series at any time. Each session includes an educational topic and a time to share with others also experiencing grief. Please call (608) 785-0940, ext. 22218, for additional information. One-on-one free and confidential support is also available from a Franciscan Health-care chaplain with specialized training in grief.

January 30	Helping Children and Teens Cope with Grief
February 13	Creative Memory—Making Ideas
February 27	Creative Expression Through Art
March 12	Praying Through Grief
March 26	From Surviving to Growing



A Message from the Ministry of Stewardship

The work of this church is alive and thriving, thanks to the grace of God and each of us who has committed to regular giving. Many of our neighbors are struggling in this economy, and it's clear those struggles have affected our church family as well. With the Stewardship Campaign drawing to a close, the Council anticipates having less offering money to work with in 2012 than the year before.

Speaking of 2011, in the end we only used about \$20,000 of Mary Jane Skaff funds to help the budget, not the \$60,000 that was made available for use by vote of the congregation last year, a trend we would like to continue. No need to deplete that gift any faster than necessary.

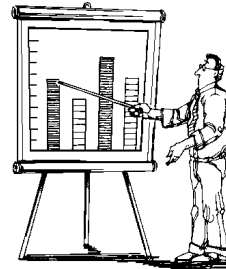
Here's what we all can do: anytime you are able to throw a little something additional in the offering plate, please do. Whether you have \$10 or \$20 you can add, or you pass up a treat from a coffee shop so you can toss in an additional dollar or two, it all adds up. You'll feel good knowing that the money is doing God's work through this church!

A Special Need: As many of you know, the Hansen family had a house fire on November 30th. As a result of being displaced for an extended period of time, Erica, who does in-home Day Care, lost 2 children/clients whose families needed them to continue receiving immediate care. This financial burden has been very hard to overcome. If anyone is in need of temporary Day Care, please contact Erica @ 787-6963. There are 2 full-time openings. A 'Special Fund' has been set up at the Franciscan Skemp Credit Union for anyone who would like to make a monetary donation. Please keep Erica, Jeremy, and their four little ones in your thoughts and prayers. —Thank you, Rev. Bill

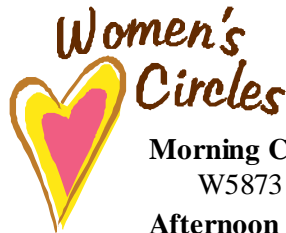
Congregational Annual Budget Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 2010
(Immediately following 10am worship)

Plan to attend the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29th, immediately following the 10am worship service. The primary agenda item is the presentation and adoption of the 2012 Church Budget. There will also be an update on the Mary Jane Skaff monies and projects. We hope you will attend—your input matters!



ATTENTION LADIES ~ MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Women's Circles will meet on **Thursday, March 1, at the following:**

Morning Circle: 9:30 a.m., at the home of Dorothy Wetterlin,
W5873 Rochelt Road, R.R. 1, Stoddard, (608) 788-3941

Afternoon Circle: 1:30 p.m., at Church

CWU "World Day of Prayer" 2012

The Christian women of Malaysia and Church Women United invite you to celebrate "World Day of Prayer" at English Lutheran Church, 1509 King Street, La Crosse, on Friday, March 2, beginning with brunch at 9:30 a.m. (cost \$5). This year's theme is "Let Justice Prevail." This is a great opportunity to reach out to women of different faiths in friendship and understanding. For reservations, call Sharon Norris at 788-1229.



The KB Cloths Are Going Fast! Women's Fellowship is selling streak-free, spot free and lint free microfiber dust cloths. These washable and reusable cloths are only \$3 each. You will never have to buy cleaning supplies again, use only water! They can be purchased from the church office during the week, or look for Mary Hosler or Shirley Anderson on Sunday mornings. Talk with others who have used them and we're sure you will want more than one.

Advent Workshop 2011

THANK YOU to all of the helpers for the Advent Workshop and to all who attended! And, thanks to Doris Witmer for all of her e-mail help in rounding up our volunteers this year. If you enjoy making a candle holder centerpiece, please consider saving the wooden block to recycle next year. This will cut down on our costs. Special thanks to Chuck Hosler for his wonderful wood-working skills. He made all of the candle holders and drilled holes for all of the birch log bird feeders. We also thank him for taking pictures of the event (see next page). Our thanks to Katie Webster and all of the kitchen angels who provided the wonderful lunch. Finally, our thanks to all who took part - we hope that your participation in the Advent Workshop enriched your holiday!

—Mary Hosler, Ginny Iverson, Kristi Koch and Bette Stiers, Coordinators

Advent Workshop 2011



Thanks
for All You Do

Special Thanks to Mary Hosler, Ginny Iverson, Kristi Koch and Bette Stiers, our Advent Workshop Coordinators, for their hard work and unending dedication to this event which has become such an important “tradition” to so many families in our church. The joy and wonder of Christmas that this activity brings can be seen in the happy faces of the kids (big and little) pictured above.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

Women's Journey Fights the Mid-Winter Blahs!

Saturday, February 4th, 10am-2pm



All women are invited to Emma Ledbetter's country home to snowshoe, cross-country ski, swim (yes indoor pool), soak in the hot tub, have lunch and do our thing. Snow or no snow, it will be a blast! Contact Emma (eledbetter@centurytel.net) for directions and join us for food, fellowship and fun!
(Carpooling is suggested as it is 26 miles from the church.)

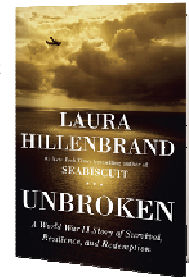
Please join us for a Women's Journey Book Discussion

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand

(A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience & Redemption)

Saturday, February 25th, 9:30am

Hosted by Kathy Storlie & Laurie Strand



The true story of Louis Zamperini, an Olympic athlete who endured incredible hardships serving his country during World War II. It tells an unforgettable story of a man's journey into extremity. *Unbroken* is a testament to the resilience of the human mind, body and spirit. Read this book and then join us at the home of Laurie Strand (617 22nd Street N., La Crosse) to discuss it! All women of the church – and their friends – are invited!

Further evidence that Women's Journey offers something for everyone:

In January, we made and served breakfast at the Salvation Army, took a tour and learned a lot about the circumstances surrounding homelessness in our area. Many thanks to Patty Leach and Julie Nelson for coordinating this event!

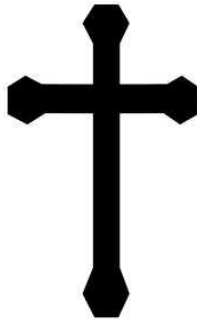
Senior Book Group

Tuesday, January 24th, 10:30 a.m.

The Book Group has two choices to read in January: 1) *Jan's Story* – a true story by Barry Petersen; and 2) *The Killer Angels* – a novel of the Civil War by Michael Shaara. Read one or both of these books and then join Solveig Sedlet and others for coffee and discussion in the Community Room. Watch your bulletin announcements for the book titles that we will read for our next meeting on February 28th.



Christians and Islam



At our 9/11 observance, interest was expressed in further study of Islam and present day efforts to encourage peace and reconciliation between our two faith groups. In response to that request, the Ministry of Christian Education is sponsoring a study on *Christians and Islam*. The hour-long sessions will be held at 4:30pm on the following Sundays:

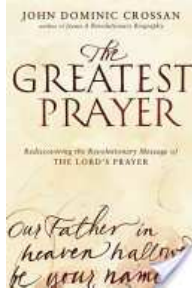
January 22 – *A History Together*
January 29 – *Understanding Islam*
February 12 – *Islam's American Face*
February 19 – *The Real Success Stories*

A sign-up sheet is posted in the narthex so we can provide the reading materials to all participants in advance of the discussion sessions. There will be an average of about 12 pages to read as the foundation for each session. The cost for a full set of materials is \$3.00.

This four-week study is designed to spark discussion and thought about how to live out God's call for justice in our world. For centuries, Christians and Muslims have lived in peace as neighbors. But religious differences are always fertile ground for fanning the fires for political and economic gain -- and both Christians and Muslims have waged "holy wars." In our own times, both Muslims and Christians are dealing with extremists in our midst who distort the true character of belief. Significant, intelligent dialogue and the development of authentic friendships across religious lines are key to deepening our mutual faith.

There are important theological differences between Christianity and Islam, as well as a faith foundation that we share. This discussion series, based on articles from *Sojourners Magazine*, will lead participants through a study of the important stories of shared history, theological similarities and differences, and aspirations for social justice that both Christians and Muslims share as communities of faith. Please join us for this special exploration of Christians and Islam.





Mid-Day Lenten Study

Tuesdays, February 28 – March 27, 12:15 p.m.

Jesus said, “When you pray, say: *Our Father...*” Thus begins the oh-so familiar prayer we call, “*The Lord’s Prayer.*”

In his book, *The Greatest Prayer, Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of The Lord’s Prayer*, John Dominic Crossan notes: “**The Lord’s Prayer is Christianity’s greatest prayer. It is also Christianity’s strangest prayer.**”

Huh! Is that how **you** would describe the prayer that is prayed every Sunday in Christian churches around the globe?

When and from whom did you learn The Lord’s Prayer? What are your most memorable moments around this prayer? Have you ever wondered what some of the words meant or why some of us are debtors, others are trespassers and then there are the out and out sinners?

The Adult Education Committee invites you to attend a **Lenten Study led by Debby Jarvis** that explores this beloved prayer, and how it teaches us to pray, understand God’s world, and to live our lives. Using Crossan’s book, *The Greatest Prayer*,” as the springboard for discussion, **we will ponder both Crossan’s sometimes startling premise, along with our own personal reflections on the prayer.** In addition, we will consider how this prayer that is the basis of our faith teaches us to pray all prayers.

The group will meet for **one hour** sessions on **Tuesdays, February 28 – March 27** at **12:15 p.m.**

Bring a sack lunch if you like and join us for this conversation.

Copies of Crossan’s **books will be available for purchase** very soon. (It is not necessary, however, to read the book to participate!)



Renowned Bible scholar and author of “The Greatest Prayer,”
John Dominic Crossan



News from the Ministry of Missions Regarding our Nation and World . . .

Monday Meals

Many thanks to all those who participated in the January 9th Monday Meal event. Special thanks to David Hecht, Keely Raasch and her friend who volunteered during their time off from school. We served 90 people and had many compliments on how good the meal was. **The next scheduled Monday Meal is March 5th, 2012.** Please mark it on your calendar now to enjoy the fun at a Church event that we share with the community.

One of the most important tasks of the Monday Meal event is planning and purchasing the food for the meal. John Schmeckpeper has volunteered this year to be the lead worker for this task and Sherry Sawle as the back-up individual. Many thanks to you, John and Sherry, for taking on this important role! Keeping the food cost to a minimum amount is an important key since there are limited dollars that the Church has to feed approximately 90 people at each event. John did a great job this Monday Meal at a cost of \$158.26!

If you would like to take the lead for one of the future Monday Meal events and put your cooking skills in place, please contact Pamela, Mission Chair, at 608-386-0446.

Mitten Tree Update

There were 168 pieces of clothing that were donated by Church members to the Mitten Tree. The mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and coats were given to The Salvation Army and Family's Children Center. Thank you so very much, your donation is greatly appreciated. It's a comfort to know that some of our neighbors will be warmer this winter due to your generosity.



Many thanks to those gave to The Christmas Fund –
(formerly Veterans of the Cross) on December 11. A total of \$722.00 was sent to the UCC National Office to assist retired and disabled Ministers.



Just a reminder . . .

**The First Sunday of Every Month
is WAFER Sunday!**

The Salvation Army Bell Ringers Church Day Event

The joys and experiences of the bell ringers who participated on Church Day (Dec. 22) are expressed by Church members. The Ministry of Missions hopes to have this as an annual event, and next year have bell ringers at several locations on Church Day. Here is what the volunteers said:

“I had a great time! One woman stopped to donate, but she was limping on an obvious bad ankle. She said she had broken it 6 weeks ago, but this was her best Christmas ever!! In my questioning, she said she woke up at 11:30 two nights ago and heard noises in her home. Turns out her four sons - all serving in the Armed Forces—from Afghanistan, Germany and several bases in the USA—came home to surprise her!!!! They had not all been together for 10 years! She said she needed to give to the Salvation Army so others could be as happy as she!” —Dorothy Wetterlin



“I shared time with Heather Rabe and her children. Anna wore an angel robe and had a gold halo in her hair. Her ‘charm’ as an angel certainly was a major reason the pot was filling as I rang with Heather and Rabe.” —Rev. Bill

“Definitely one of the highlights of my Christmas season. Happy New Year!”
—Heather

“This was my first time ringing bells for the Salvation Army and I loved it! Greeting people and wishing them Merry Christmas really put me in the holiday spirit. I particularly liked doing it as part of ‘Church Day.’ It sends a message to everyone that our churches care.” —Emma Ledbetter

“It was a very enjoyable time, and the time went fast. People were very friendly, and most gave something. The ones who gave most seemed to us the ones who might need the help themselves. Maybe it’s because they know the needs of others.” —Mary & Chuck Hosler

“It was fun ringing the bells with someone else, which was Emma Ledbetter. I did it once before by myself and it was not as enjoyable. Also, I was surprised that so many people donated a lot of dollar bills. I had guessed (incorrectly) that people would donate more change. It also felt good to think that we were doing something positive for the community, so that was satisfying also.”

—Kurt Schuldes

The Salvation Army Emergency Shelter Needs Pillow Cases/Towels!

Please look through your linen closets and bring them to church or drop them off at the Shelter directly (223 N. 8th Street, La Crosse). ***They can be used or***

Jail “Shower” Needs

HEBREWS 13:3 – *Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners.*

The Ministry of Missions would like to extend an invitation to all members, friends and visitors of First Congregational Church. We invite you to participate in a come-as-you-are ‘shower’ to benefit those who are in the La Crosse County Jail. Please continue reading to find out what the residents need during their stay in the jail. Let us show the love of Jesus to our fellow brothers and sisters by remembering them and showing God’s compassion toward them. Look for the Ministry of Missions Jail Shower display in the narthex through the month of February. Please start bringing your donated items to church beginning Sunday, February 5th.

ROMANS 12:10 – *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourself.*

The mission of La Crosse Jail Ministry is *To provide an opportunity and create an environment for inmates that awakens, renews and stimulates their spiritual life, thereby promoting behavioral change, social reintegration and personal well-being.* Taking care of some of their basic human needs, helping communicate with family outside of jail and providing outlets for the extremely stressful environment they must live in are some of the ways we help. You can help by donating from the list below, or cash donations to:

Chaplain Tom Skemp
Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center
333 Vine Street
La Crosse WI 54601
(608) 785-9772



Specific needs include:

- ⇒ Pencils
- ⇒ Pads of lined paper
- ⇒ Stamps
- ⇒ Legal and letter-size envelopes
- ⇒ Playing cards
- ⇒ Blank greeting cards (thanks to your earlier kindness we have plenty of Christmas cards)
- ⇒ Recent magazines – all types, although we would like more automotive and outdoors types.
- ⇒ Paperback books (no romance novels or hardcover of any kind, please)

Thank you for your continued generosity.



- ⇒ **First Congregational UCC – Community Room**
- ⇒ **Monday, January 23, 2012**
- ⇒ **1:00PM–6:00PM**

Every 3 seconds someone needs blood; and you never know when it might be you or someone you love. The BloodCenter of Wisconsin is the sole supplier of blood to La Crosse hospitals. To donate blood, you must:

1) be in good health, 2) be at least 17 years old (16 yr. olds are eligible to donate with signed parental consent form), 3) weigh at least 110 pounds, 4) have a photo I.D. Giving blood takes only about an hour from start to finish.



For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Dorothy Wetterlin at 788-3941.

Coulee Region CROP Walk Congrats!

We recently received results of the 2011 CROP Walk and it was heartening to see that after expenses, \$9,813 dollars was raised by seventeen different congregations and other unidentified online donations. Our church had the top spot for donating \$1,970 to help fight hunger! Thanks, everybody! Mark your calendars for October 14, 2012, for the next CROP Walk. With God's help, we should easily break the \$2,000 mark and help our community worship centers bring in a total over \$10,000 for the Coulee Region!

New Horizons Training for Volunteers/Interns

If you are interested in volunteering, sessions take place very soon. They will be held Monday-Wednesday, February 6-8, from 5-9pm at First Baptist Church, 1209 Main (back parking lot entrance). **Contact Sharon at 791-2610, ext. 301, by January 30th to reserve a seat.** Training packets, beverages, and a snack will be provided. Domestic violence happens in 1 out of 4 households. By becoming a volunteer, you can make a difference in many other lives. Volunteer positions range from on-call night time hours, fundraising, or assisting the Crisis Line staff. Thank you!



To our dedicated volunteers who serve as worship participants throughout the year and to those who served at this year's Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day worship services; **and to Randy Breeser, Steve Webster and Joanie Smith** who were head ushers at these services. We couldn't get along without you!

To those who baked and donated Christmas cookies for the Nativity Presentation and Christmas Eve after worship socials.

To those who helped hang the greens during the Advent Workshop, **and those who helped set up and take down the Nativity Presentation Set.**

To the Sanctuary Choir and Director Nancy Allen, the Bell Choirs, Youth Chimes and Director Suellen Retzlaff, and Substitute Organist Kristi Koch for providing all the extra special Christmas music during the month of December, and for all the beautiful music you provide throughout the year! Thanks, too, to all of the wonderfully talented people who provided "special music" for services throughout the year!



From the Church Staff

The staff has been blessed by the acts of kindness and generosity of *a whole bunch of church members* over the holiday season! From filling our stockings, to special treats, to monetary gifts and kind letters. Your generosity has certainly added to our joy. We appreciate and sincerely thank all of you.

Rev. Bill Away

The hope is that immediately following worship on Sunday, February 5, Rev. Bill will be headed down to Chicago's O'Hare Airport as the Hoglunds help his sister celebrate her 65th birthday in grand style! Rev. Bill will be back at church on Tuesday, February 14. Plans for emergency pastoral coverage are still being determined as of this printing, but do call the office or Parish Visitor Audrey Kader with your needs and a clergyperson will be available for emergencies.

Good News! We may be eligible for a little more than \$4,000 in rebates from Focus on Energy. Many thanks to Mike Schultz for filling out the necessary paper work—way to go, Mike!!

New Exhibit in the Glass Display Case . . .

Mia's Piggies

Mia Rabe Oeltjen was pig lover! Her grandparents raised free range piggies on a farm South of Lake City, Minnesota. They would bring piglets into the house for Mia to hold and play with...and just like Fern in Charlotte's Web, Mia used to push piglets around in a stroller. *Pictured right: Mia at age 3, bonding with "Piggy."*



When it was nice out, Mia enjoy chasing pigs and feeding them snacks, but what she enjoyed most was pulling their tails! After Mia's onset of Metachromaticleukodystrophy, she still loved to visit the pigs and pig sounds always made her laugh. *Pictured left: Mia at age 6, enjoying the pigs with Grandpa (Dennis Rabe, now retired from the pig business).*

Feel free to talk to us about Mia. Even though she has moved on to "The Next Place," she is still our child and a sister to Anna and Rabe....and we love her so very, very much. It is ok if there are tears sometimes. ~ Heather Rabe and Neal Oeltjen



Mia's Piggies will be in the glass case in the Community Room throughout the month of February.

Rabbi Jesus Prints on Display

The Arts Committee has invited La Crosse area artist Clara Maria Goldstein to display prints of her Rabbi Jesus exhibit. Our display contains more than 35 pieces, many of which depict events and rituals in which Jesus, a practicing Jew, would have likely taken part. A gallery talk about the work is being scheduled for later in February (TBA).

Do You Have Something to Display?

We are currently looking for new displays to schedule for the upcoming church year. If you have a hobby, collection, or special interest items or artifacts that you would like to share by displaying them in the glass case in the Community Room, or even a wall hanging exhibit for the Community Room walls, please contact the church office (784-8137). Thanks!

What's New in the Library?

Information about our library materials is now organized on Library Thing at <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/firstcongolax>. Library Thing is a social site that provides people with an opportunity to discuss the books they have or the books they have read.



With this site, you can see **which materials** we have in the library and **where** they are located on the shelves. You may **search** the library by title, author, or subject.



You may also **read comments** about the book by clicking on the word balloon over on the right.

Feel free to give it a try!
-The Library Committee

FOR KIDS and THEIR PARENTS



Nativity Presentation Wrap Up

Thank you to all who participated and volunteered for the 2011 Nativity Presentation. There were approximately 75 participants this year!

Pictured above (left to right): Madeline Lund, Angel; Tim, Julie & Melanie Halbach, Holy Family; Camdan Nolop, Donkey & Tessa Edge, Reader

Special thanks to Diane Breeser, Director and Kristi Koch, Musical Director. And we could not have done it without the help from these folks...Suellen Retzlaff, Cherub Choir Director; Joan Waniger, High School Ensemble Director; Suzanne Nolop, Dance Choreographer/Teacher; and Ron Stoffregen, Set Design.



Pictured above (left to right): Wise Men—Bryce Nolop, Gavin Rees and Clay Rauch. Picture by Suzanne Nolop.



Dancing Angels Picture by Jerilyn Dinsmoor (left to right): Bria Nolop, Sammi Gotz, Sophie McGaff, Kayla Weisbrod, Ainsley Byom, and Emmarie Byom.



Thank you for the STRONG work from the biggest set crew ever: T.J. Helming; Trish Kattchee; Neal Oeltjen; Mike and Karen Schultz; Brad Seebach; Matt, Rhonda, and Marissa Davis and friend; and Dan Ottow. Huge thanks to Neal Oeltjen and his brothers and nephews who put away the crèche on New Years Day!

Pictured above: "Cherub Choir" by Grandma Nancy Burgett



Learn to Play Hand Chimes! For grades 2-8!

You do NOT need to be able to read music to participate.

Practice will start January 22 at 9:25am in the chapel, and will be held weekly for five weeks. We will plan to play in worship February 19th. Sign up in the narthex.

Questions: Sue Retzlaff 526-9095, sretzlaff@charter.net.

Preschool-Grade 1...Mark your calendars for March 5th, Cherub Choir will be singing camp songs during worship.



Big thanks to Grandma Nancy Burgett for word processing, copying and cutting all the Bible Bookmarks for Winter/Spring Sunday School lessons for Preschool-Grade 1!

Kongo Kids Zany Valentine Making Party (for Gr. 2-5)

Saturday, February 11, 1:00-2:30pm.

Sign up in the narthex! Friends welcome!

Parents, please let me know if you can help out with this event, thanks!

Heather Rabe 784-8137, heather@firstcongolax.org.



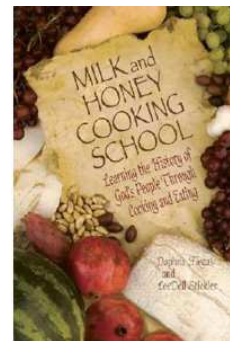
You are invited! Middle School Students to Present: Milk and Honey Cook School!

The Cooking School begins with Adam's first bite of the forbidden fruit and shows how foods, seasonings, and preparation methods changed as the Hebrew people came in contact with the outside world.

Join us February 12, 11:30am-1:00pm


RSVP by January 29! Sign up in the narthex.

Suggested donation TBA. Students wish for the proceeds to go to a charity, or possibly a Middle School Mission trip!



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Want to Hear Some Great Jazz
and enjoy the fellowship of Church Members and Friends? Then you won't want to miss joining us to hear "Kid Chocolate" Brown (trumpet), Greg Balfany (sax/flute), Karyn Quinn (bass), Larry Price (piano) and Rich MacDonald (percussion) on Saturday, January 28, at Somsen Auditorium on the Winona State Campus. Concert time is 8.30pm and tickets are only \$15.



We will carpool, and for those who would like to dine in Winona before the concert we can arrange that too. It worked well last time so come along, singles or couples. Just call Audrey before the January 23rd reservation deadline and she will put you on the list!

The Church Staff

All the Members.....Ministers
Rev. Bill Hoglund.....Senior Minister
Audrey Kader.....Parish Visitor
Nancy Allen.....Music Director
Kristi Wolf.....Office Manager
Pamela Kendall.....Financial Secretary
Bill Butterfield.....Custodian
Heather Rabe....Children's Ministry Director
OpenCo-Director of Christian Education

Office Phone: (608) 784-8137
Office Hours: 8am - 4pm, Monday-Thursday
Office E-mail: office@firstcongolax.org
Website: www.firstcongolax.org

The Church Office will be closed in honor of President's Day on Monday, February 20.

Use Caution and please use the stairs when the driveway is wet or icy. Also, on Sunday mornings, please leave the entire parking area in the front of the church open for those with limited mobility and for drop off and pick up. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

The Deadline for the March issue of *The Greeting* is Ash Wednesday, February 22.