

SHALOM

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION MINISTER

The health care debate – if one can call it a debate – is difficult to watch. How can we come to any thoughtful resolution if all we do is yell catch phrases at each other? How can anything productive come out of the hostility shown at what have been called “town meetings?” I’d be embarrassed to be from some of those towns. The Christian Faith has much to bring to these issues. One bedrock and foundational understanding of the faith lies in how we treat our neighbor. To think of every human being, even those we do not value or heed as one to whom Jesus Christ is brother and who is beloved by God changes the playing field. Radical acceptance of others is the basis of the Christian ethic. This changes the game. We are judged by how we behave with the neighbor. Here’s a story and a little commentary about a Neighbor.

It comes from Linda Ketcham,

Director of the Madison-area Urban Ministry – it’s excerpted from their newsletter

“JUSTICE FOR SOME?”

“On June 16, 2009, Dwayne Benjamin Warren died on a bench outside the state Capital. I am writing this having just returned from a memorial service for Dwayne and, admittedly, my emotions are raw.

Dwayne died a few weeks shy of his 39th birthday. The official coroner’s report says Dwayne died of natural causes. In Dwayne’s case the “natural cause” was sepsis, an infection brought on by sores on his feet. Natural causes in Dwayne’s case was painful and preventable with what for many of us would be an antibiotic with a \$20 co-pay. However, for members of our community who are homeless, as Dwayne was, who have mental illness, as Dwayne may have had, who do not have health care, as Dwayne did not, finding and accepting the help you need is not so easy.

I didn’t know Dwayne Warren. However, not having known Dwayne is not an excuse for inaction. We are, as Dr. King wrote, ‘caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere...’

As individuals and as members of a larger community we must ask: Where is the justice in a healthcare system that leaves so many without medical care? Where is the justice in State, City and County budgets that cut human services just to be able to say, ‘we held taxes down?’

Homelessness and hunger are on the rise. With each new job loss, with each new foreclosure, with each new returnee from prison, existing resources are stretched even thinner. Budgets are moral documents. They will reflect what we as a community value.

It seems to me that when we as a community decide that we can live with our neighbors dying on the streets for lack of a home and healthcare, when we can accept the systematic dismemberment of our human services system and social safety net all to save a few dollars off of our tax bills, then we will, in the words of poet Alice Walker, all the beating of our heart to kill someone.” Bob

NO FALL MEETING IN 2009

The Executive Committee of the Association decided not to hold a Fall Meeting this year. It was felt that meeting one a year is adequate and that we could accomplish all the business we had, electing officers and approving a budget at one meeting. The other three associations in Wisconsin have one meeting in the Spring and now it will be all four.

BOUNDARY TRAINING AVAILABLE

Boundary Training will be offered by **the Northeast Association** on Thursday, October 29, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Ebenezer UCC in Sheboygan. Pastors from the other 3 Associations are welcome to attend. Contact the Association Office to register.

ALSO: The **Northwest Association** will offer Training on Jan. 30 at Peace UCC in Schofield.

DISTRICT MEETINGS IN OCTOBER

We meet to discuss the lectionary Gospel for the upcoming Sunday, to pray and to discuss a theological paper. This month we'll be looking at a few sermons by Frederick Buechner, Barbara Brown Taylor, Anna Carter Florence and Will Willimon. We'll send copies to you in early October. We'll meet:

District IV	Evansville	October 20	9 a.m.
District I	Dodgeville	October 21	8 a.m.
District III	Portage	October 21	12:20 p.m.
District II	Madison	October 28	8 a.m.

YOU ARE INVITED TO DISCUSS THE BOOK OF ACTS

On Friday, Oct. 16, we'll meet at Pilgrim Center at Noon to discuss passages from the Book of Acts with our German partners. We'll be at Pilgrim until noon on the 17th. If you would like to join us, please contact the Association Office for more details.

ALSO

We will gather on Oct. 15th at Salem UCC in Verona for lunch and to greet and talk with the Superintendent of the Moers Church District, Ferdinand Isigkeit. Ferdi, as he is called, asked for a time to meet and discuss the state of the Church in the US and in Europe. If you are interested, contact Carol at the Association Office.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH OF GREAT BRITAIN

Keep an eye out for our British Guest, Tim Richards – he'll be among us from October 22 until Oct. 27th. He will be under the care of Dr. Yurs, who represented us in the Southwest Province of the URC last year.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Our German Partners in their travel to the US
Tim Richards, the URC Guest, in his travels
Beryl Melcher, in his recovery
Carl & Terri Wolff, in the loss of Terri's father
Debbie & Dale Bauerkemper, in the loss of their daughter

CONGREGATIONS TO BE SEEKING

Madison Lake Edge – Lisa Schoenwetter, Interim
Whitewater Congregational – Craig Jan-McMahon, Interim

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Fitchburg Memorial – seeking ½ time Associate
New Glarus Swiss – seeking Senior Pastor

COLLOQUY – “To Seek, To Love, and to Serve”

Calvin as Contemplative, Poet, and Public Theologian for our times

Mark Burrows will lead us in a discussion on Calvin as contemplative, poet and public theologian for our times on **November 2, 2009 at Pilgrim Center. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. RSVP - \$25.00 (INCLUDES LUNCH)**
Mail your check to Wisconsin Conference UCC, PO Box 435, DeForest, WI 53532

In celebration of the 500 anniversary of Calvin's birth, we gather to consider depths of the reformer's thought – often overlooked – that promise to challenge and guide our Christian witness today.

This lecture explores dimensions of Calvin's theology often neglected: Calvin as contemplative, a spiritual teacher leading others to participate in the mystery and wonder of Christ: Calvin as poet, an artist for whom the “word” is always more than language alone, becoming “a new song” in and beyond our speaking: and finally, Calvin the “public theologian,” who insists that faith leads to a public “form” of life, not merely in the church, but in the “world.” The motif that holds these emphases together is that of “condescension” – that God “tempers” God's self to meet us in our human capacities, in the intimacy of our prayer, in the witness of our speaking, and in our public life.

The lecture will thus ask how Calvin already anticipates Bonhoeffer's insistence that “God is beyond in the midst of our life” and thus that the church must stand not “at the boundaries where human powers give out, but in the middle of the village.” With Bonhoeffer, Calvin presumes that faith is about living in this world and the church, the place where that life takes a form that is both intimate and public, personal and communal.

OCTOBER 2009

- 1 Ministerial Development Group (MDG), Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 1 Contemporary Theology Study Group, Assoc. Office, 2 p.m.
- 1 Executive Committee of the Association, 5 p.m.
- 2 MDG, Madison Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.
- 6 UEK Working Group, Mutton/Ames home, 12 Noon
- 7 Periodic Support Consultations, Assoc. Office, 12 Noon
- 8 MDG, Evansville, 9:30 a.m.
- 8 Social Concerns, Association Office, 12:30 p.m.
- 8 Women Authors Reading Group, Assoc. Office, 3 p.m.
- 8 Division on Church & Ministry, Assoc. Office, 5 p.m.
- 10 German Guests arrive – on to Mineral Point
- 12 Wisc. Conf. Staff Meeting, DeForest, 12 Noon
- 13 Commission on Church & Ministry, DeForest, 12 Noon
- 13 Division on Lay Life & Leadership, Assoc. Office, 5:30 p.m.
- 14 German Guests arrive in Madison Area
- 15 MDG, Verona, 9:30 a.m.
- 15 Lunch with Supt. Isigkeit, Verona, 12 Noon
- 16 MDG, Madison Lake Edge, 9:30 a.m.
- 16 Retreat on Book of Acts, Pilgrim Center, noon to 17th
- 20 District IV, Evansville, 9 a.m.
- 20 Barth Study Group, Assoc. Office, 1 p.m.
- 20 German Guests leave for NYC
- 21 District I, Dodgeville, 8 a.m.
- 21 District III, Portage, 12:30 pm.
- 22 MDG, Evansville, 9:30 a.m.
- 22 URC Guest, Tim Richards arrives in SWA
- 28 District II, Madison, 8 a.m.
- 29 Confirmation Retreat, Pilgrim Center until 30th

NOVEMBER

- 2 Calvin Colloquy, Pilgrim Center, 10 a.m.