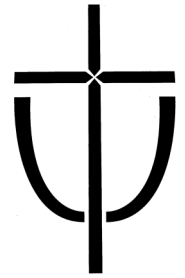


Still Speaking



Indeed, the word of God is living and active...
-Hebrews 4:12

April 2021

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter will be published
the week of **May 26, 2021.***

*The deadline for that newsletter is
Friday, **May 21, 2021.***

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“Today I Am A Witness to Change”

To begin Union’s Worship Ministry meeting this month, our chair, Betty Bienash, shared the poem, “Today I Am A Witness To Change.” Although overtly secular in nature, the poem powerfully and profoundly embodies the three core values named by the national United Church of Christ: Continuing Testament, Extravagant Welcome, and Changing Lives. “Today I Am A Witness To Change” was written collaboratively by listeners to NPR’s Morning Edition in response to anti-Asian racism.

Continuing Testament is a phrase we use to talk about the concept that God Is Still Speaking. All too often, Christians have tried to place an end-date on God’s revelation, tried to say that God’s action is wholly encapsulated in the scriptures. By embracing Continuing Testament, we’re acknowledging that the divine is still very much active in the world (a faith stance that is actually upheld by the scriptures).

“Today I Am A Witness To Change” is an example of Continuing Testament in that it tells of healing and hope and justice, and in that it calls for us to be witnesses. This is Continuing Testament in so much as inspires us in the ways of divine grace.

Extravagant Welcome is how our church talks about and continues Jesus’ message of profound inclusion as stated most succinctly in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.” The scriptures tell us that Jesus’ ministry consistently worked to show people God’s ways and priorities by dismantling systems that perpetuated oppression, whether based on race or class or gender.

“Today I Am A Witness To Change” is an example of Extravagant Welcome in that it gives voice to the ugliness of racism and calls us to be agents of a new way of being.

(continued on page 2)

Farewell for Jon Pahl*(continued from page 1)*

As you know, Dr. Jon Pahl will be departing from his ministry at Union on June 1. We'll celebrate his time with us, and bid him Farewell and Godspeed, on May 23, Pentecost Sunday. Jon will preach on the topic "Holding Onto One End of a Love."

Join us to thank him for his ministry, and to wish him well as he returns to full-time teaching at United Lutheran Seminary.

Changing Lives is how our national church reminds us that as followers of Jesus we are commissioned to change lives, to bring healing and reconciliation, to put flesh on the Good News. As the song goes, "Christ has no hands on earth but yours."

"Today I Am A Witness To Change" is an example of Changing Lives in that it "showcased fear, anger, empathy and motivation to make the world a better place."

Because "Today I Am A Witness To Change" intersects so concretely with our denomination's core values and with our local church's commitment to racial and social justice, we'll not only share substantial excerpts from the poem in worship on Sunday, April 25, I also encourage you to take some time in prayer and contemplation to compose your own stanza for the poem. How does your faith compel you to respond to the prompt, "Today I Am A Witness To Change?"

In Joyful Hope,
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels

Lectionary Readings**April 25****Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23
1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

May 2**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31
1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8

May 9**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98
1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

May 16**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1
1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19

May 23**Pentecost Sunday**

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 30**Trinity Sunday**

Isaiah 6:1-8 or Psalm 29
Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Our Church Family

•

The Generosity of Union

Our Outreach Ministry wants to say a huge" thank you" to all members of the congregation who gave so generously during the pandemic to help those in need. Your giving has been truly amazing, and so we thought we would share with you some of the numbers for the last 12 months.

Causes we gave to:

Blessing Box -----	\$4,700
George's Secret Elves -----	\$750
Giving Tree* -----	\$1,500
Heifer International -----	\$6,000
Love Life Diaper Drive -----	\$950
New Community Shelter -----	\$4,280
One Great Hour of Sharing ---	\$1,130
Souper Cooks -----	\$2,225
We All Rise -----	\$1,100
Other Offerings** -----	\$1,000

* estimated

** Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund and Strengthen the Church

This, of course, does not include the enormous amount of time that many volunteers spent in making all these events happen from stocking the Blessing Box, to buying and prepping meals, to creating the Giving Tree, to delivering diapers and gifts and so much more.

These non-pledge contributions totaled over \$23,600 which is a testament to the love this congregation has for others. The application of Matthew 25 is alive and well at Union. Thank you.

—Outreach Ministry

When Will We Resume Worshipping from the Sanctuary, and What Will It Be Like?

The days are getting longer, the temperature is starting to go up and the COVID-19 virus numbers are starting to go down! Who would have thought that the pandemic would so radically change our lives for more than a year? We all miss worshipping together, and are looking forward to the time when it is healthy to do so in person.

As the pandemic begins to slow, we are looking ahead to that time (hopefully not too far in the future) when we can once again gather. To prepare for that wonderful time, the In-Person Worship Task Force has been working hard to put a plan together to make that happen.

Included in this newsletter is information for you (see the green insert) to explain what to expect when In-Person Worship resumes, the Communal Responsibility Covenant which was previously shared during this year's Annual Meeting, and ways you can help.

Our Team

Please offer hearty thanks to the folks who have been meeting weekly and doing a tremendous amount of research as part of the Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force:

Betty Bienash (chair)	Jeff Gibson	Sherry Warren
Gail Carels	Steve Hartman	Bridget Flad Daniels
Heather Collins		



Welcome Christopher Nikolai

It is with great joy that we welcome Christopher Nikolai to the Union staff as our new Maintenance Technician. Christopher comes to us with an abundance of work in the field of buildings and grounds maintenance and has already been hard at work getting our beautiful building in order. Having worked in a nursing home setting most recently, he has strong knowledge of COVID mitigation and protocols. Please offer him a hearty Union welcome when you meet him.



Joseph and his brothers.
Pauline Baynes, illus. 2004

Your Church Library Children’s Picture Book Publishing

In our Sunday morning sessions on “Womanist Midrash,” author Wil Gafney pointed to many examples of biblical figures whose Blackness was glossed over. In that vein, I looked over a few of our library’s picture book biblical stories with an eye to skin color and portrayed ethnicity.

Children’s picture book publishing took off in the 1970s as full color printing established an attractive new norm, but individual bible stories did not immediately emerge as a genre.

British illustrator Warwick Hutton and Dutch-American Peter Spier produced some of the first full color works in the 1980s using pen, ink, and watercolor to capture the story’s depth and mood. However, neither artist was particularly concerned with skin tone.

In the 1990s more illustrators fully embraced realistic Black or Middle Eastern faces as representative in biblical stories. See the work of Ransome, Fisher and Runnerstrom. They were part of a second explosion in children’s publishing, in which five times as many Black authors and illustrators were published in 1995 as in 1985.

The heyday was brief. Amazon was making inroads into book store sales, and religious books lost much of their shelf presence after 2001 when children’s publishing contracted from 5,000 books per year to just over 3,000. Illustrators hedged the ethnicity of biblical characters. Faces were sketched and lightly browned, and the illustration’s authenticity derived mostly from architecture and clothing. See Baynes.

Since the early 2000s, Christian presses have dominated sales in this genre, with dozens of cartoony or Disneyfied picture books published each year. Hendrix’s portrait of Jesus elevates this style with his artistic skill, but ethnicity, again, is not an artistic concern.

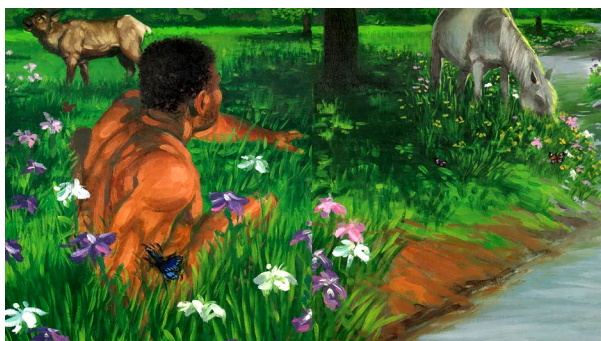
Still as a result of changes in children’s publishing – more than ten times as many BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) authors and artists were published in 2019 as in 2005—evangelical imprints have a hard time selling books without a nod to Black and brown faces except in the case of Jesus.

What’s the takeaway? While Black and brown illustrators and illustrations are common in books about prayer and church going, critiques of scholars like Gafney have not yet changed how mostly white editors and publishers view the biblical world. And in that they probably reflect the attitudes of many churchgoers like us.
—Cathy Putman

Diversity statistics cited herein come from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at UW-Madison.



Mary.
Bengt Arne Runnerstrom, illus. 1987



Adam. James E. Ransome, illus. 1994



David. Leonard Everett Fisher, illus. 1993



Jesus. Hendrix, 2016

Adult Education at Union

In the coming weeks, we have invited local activists to speak with us about the anti-racism work of their respective agency. See the schedule below.

We hope you can join us for these fascinating and important conversations. Check your Friday email blasts for the links to these sessions. All events take place at 9 a.m. on Sundays.

ADULT EDUCATION SCHEDULE

April 25: Wise Women Gathering Place, a Native American-based anti-violence empowerment agency joins us. Visit their website at www.wisewomengp.org.

May 2: H. James Smet, "What is Daily Life Like for Members of our Somali Community?" H. James Smet shares his experiences in his role as advocate, member of the COMSA (Community Services Agency) board, founder of the Green Bay Citizenship project, and co-coordinator of Migration Advocacy of Brown County. Learn more at www.facebook.com/MigrationAdvocacyBCWI.

May 9: Privilege Institute of Green Bay (invited). (www.theprivilegeinstitute.com.)

May 16: We All Rise: African American Resource Center. (www.weallriseaarc.org.)

May 23: Program Year Wrap-Up: What have we learned as a church, and where do we want to go from here?

Two Offering Invitations in May!

This congregation is generous. There's a widespread recognition that our gifts are meant to be shared. That Spirit has sustained this church since 1836!

In May, there are two opportunities to extend that generosity through special offerings. The first is our Housing Offering on May 9. This offering supports the work of the Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) and the ongoing maintenance at Jubilee House.

EPH brings together diverse Christians to partner in ways that provide some of the homeless or nearly homeless in Green Bay with solid, decent housing, along with the opportunity to gain skills to prevent falling into homelessness. Jubilee House, in Union's backyard, is part of EPH and it is Union's responsibility to maintain this property.

On May 23 Pentecost Sunday, we'll take up our Strengthen the Church offering. The funds collected support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

That's no small gift—to participate in the resurrection of Jesus! As we continue our Easter celebration of new life, let's continue Union's legacy of generosity through these two special offerings.

May Virtual Coffee Hour

Do you miss your church family?

One opportunity to connect is through our virtual coffee hours. For the near future, our plan is to offer this opportunity on holidays and Communion Sundays, which means our next session will be after worship on May 2.

Check your Friday email blast for the link, and please join us!

Informational Meeting

After Worship on April 25

All are encouraged to log on for a Zoom meeting following worship on Sunday, April 25 in which we will share an update on the church's finances to date, answer questions, and hear about some of the upcoming ministry opportunities. Check your Friday email blast for the link, and please join us!

Rummage Anyone?

Now that it is spring, many of us are doing some much-needed spring cleaning. The Outreach Ministry would like to ask you to consider delaying trips to Goodwill or to St. Vincent de Paul with possible valuable items in hopes that we can have a rummage sale in the fall at Union.

If COVID numbers reach a point where it is healthy to gather in person, we would like to bring back this annual tradition. Stay tuned!

—Outreach Ministry

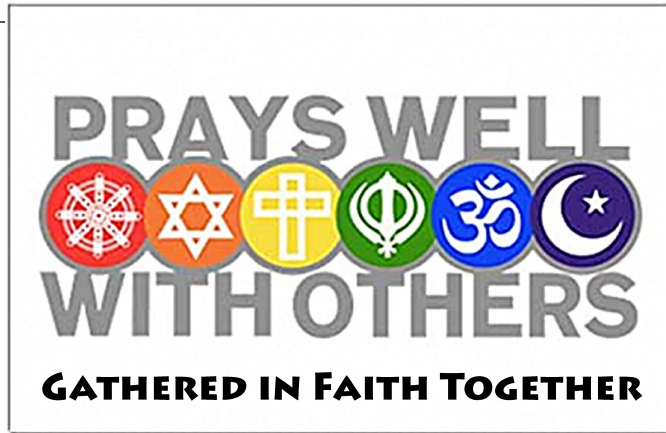
A Message from Gifts & Memorials Ministry

We are always thankful for the generosity and forethought of our members who have gone before us as they envisioned the future of Union Congregational United Church of Christ. Their legacies continue to grace us through gifts left in their wills which have helped us to remain a vital and vibrant congregation.

We, too, can invest in the future of vital ministries, enabling Union to reach out with Christ's love to future generations.

Please consider including Union Church in your will.

Thank You!



National Day of Prayer 7 p.m. Thursday, May 6, 2021

Grace Lutheran Church—ELCA—321 S. Madison St., Green Bay

Featuring a reflection by Union's own Michael Vinson

All are invited to gather in solidarity to pray for peace and justice, rooted in the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, at this service sponsored by a wide variety of faith communities.

This is an outdoor, socially-distanced gathering in the parking lot at the corner of Monroe and Stuart, masks required, bring your own chairs
OR

Remain in your cars and tune in via your FM radio (the frequency will be published at the service).

For more information, contact Pastor Bridget.

Who's Graduating?



We would like to recognize our 2021 graduates in our June newsletter. Please let the church office know (437-9266 or office@unionucc.com) if you will be a 2021 graduate (high school, college) and what type of degree (associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctorate, etc.) you have earned. We would like to say congratulations and give others a chance to do the same!

Memorial Garden News

Barbara Short donated a bench in memory of Jan Bilty on April 12.



Union Church Calendar

April 25, 2021—June 9, 2021

April 25 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: Reps from the
Wise Women Gathering
Place
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Informational Meeting

April 26 Monday

6:00 p.m. New Member Class

April 27 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

April 28 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

May 1 Saturday

9:00 a.m. Stock the Box Drive

May 2 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: H. James Smet,
COMSA
10:00 a.m. Worship
with Holy Communion
11:15 a.m. Virtual Coffee Hour

May 4 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry
6:30 p.m. Education Ministry
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

May 5 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

May 6 Thursday

7:00 p.m. National Day of Prayer
Grace Lutheran Church
321 S. Madison Street

May 9 New Member Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: (tentative)
Privilege Institute of
Green Bay
10:00 a.m. Worship

May 11 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

May 12 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

May 13 Thursday

5:00 p.m. Membership and Inreach
Ministry
6:00 p.m. Common Ministry

May 16 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: We All Rise
10:00 a.m. Worship

May 18 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
3:00 p.m. Bell Choir
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

March 19 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

May 23 Sunday

Farewell to Dr. Jon Pahl
Strengthen the Church Offering
9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Ed: Program Year
Wrap-Up
10:00 a.m. Worship

May 25 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

May 29 Saturday

8:00 a.m. Saturday Snippers

May 30 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship

May 31 Monday

Memorial Day
Church Office Closed

June 1 Tuesday

4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry
6:30 p.m. Education Ministry

June 2 Wednesday

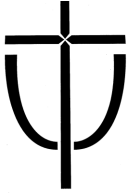
8:00 a.m. Wednesday Weeders

June 5 Saturday

8:00 a.m. Saturday Snippers
9:00 a.m. Stock the Box Drive

June 6 Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy
Communion



Union Congregational
United Church of Christ
716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301

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Second New Member Inquiry Session Spring 2021

Interested in learning more about Union Congregational United Church of Christ and discerning whether this is the right church home for you? Our Membership and Inreach Ministry will be hosting the second Zoom session to help people get to know Union Church, our community, and each other on Monday, April 26 at 6 p.m.

We will record a Zoom Reception of New Members with those who would like to join the church, which will be part of our Sunday, May 9 worship.

Contact the church office at office@unionucc.com
or 920-437-9266 to register.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301
e-mail: office@unionucc.com
(920) 437-9266

Rev. Bridget M. Flad Daniels

Senior Minister

Dr. Jon Pahl

Minister of Faith Formation
and Community Engagement

Tim Harder, M.D.

Moderator

Church Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For more information about us,
visit our web page
at <http://www.unionucc.com>