

September 2010

Pastoral Thoughts—Your Backup Choir

A couple of weeks ago, the lectionary passage from Hebrews included the verse that says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us....” I shared the following in a sermon:

When I was a child, I thought that cloud of witnesses was there to tell God when I did something wrong. But the Greek word for witnesses is “martyr.” Someone who tells the truth, and doesn’t shrink back. The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that all those who went before us did not live, or die, in vain. Not only that, they are not lost to us. The Apostles Creed talks about the communion of saints. In that is the idea that those who went before are cheering us on. We are not alone.

When I was in seminary, the African-American students hosted a chapel service one week, and they invited me to sing a solo, with all of them as backup. I’d had a little training in singing Black gospel-style, but I was pretty unsure. I found that part of their tradition is not only to sing backup, but to speak words of encouragement the whole time the soloist is singing. I could hear them saying, “Come on, sister, Amen!” and things like that. It really made a difference. I sang in a way that I could never do on my own.

Wouldn’t it be great if we had a backup choir saying, “Come on, sister! Come on, brother, Amen! Sing it! Press on!” for everything we do? **The writer of Hebrews is saying that we actually do.** Don’t give up now! Look at all the faithful who went before! And! You are already the backup choir to a lot of people you’ve never met, through your prayers and the money you share. Thanks be to God!

Blessings,
Anne

Come and Worship

Chancel Choir: 8:00 am - September through May

Sunday School: 1st Sunday after Labor Day until last Sunday before Memorial Day

Gathering: 9:15 am-Sunday School Classes:9:30 am

Worship Service 10:30 am

Handchime Rehearsal: 4:00 pm - September through May

Men's Breakfast: 2nd Sunday September-2nd Sunday of June: 7:30 am

There is no Men's Breakfast in May, July or August

Fellowship: Immediately after worship

Worship Attendance and Offering

	Att.	Offering	S.S. Offering
7/25	44	807.95	No Sunday school
8/01	34	1,238.57	No Sunday school
8/08	37	872.60	No Sunday school
8/15	48	979.77	No Sunday school

Christmas Offering: \$ 25.00

Week of Compassion: \$ 20.00

Pentecost: \$ 20.00

Mission Statement

Elkhart Christian Church is a family of faithful Christians actively caring for the needs of others; sharing our faith through worship, education, and outreach; and providing fellowship that represents Christ's love and presence in our community and our world. Our mission is to nurture and prepare everyone God entrusts to us to become mature and dedicated Disciples for the glory of God.

If you have information for the weekly church bulletin or monthly newsletter, or if you would like to have your birthday printed and it is not already on the list, please place it in the secretary's mailbox, email it to eccsecretary@iowatelecom.net or contact Mary Jo at the church office. (515) 367-5125.

Note: Elkhart Christian Church has a Website:

<http://elkhart-christianchurch.com>

MaryAnn Mathis – Volunteer of the Year (and member of Elkhart Christian Church)

The following came from the summer 2010 issue of Polk County Conservation's *Nature News*:

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet took place in March at Jester Park Lodge. This banquet honors volunteers who have put in a minimum of 10 hours of service individually, and 25 hours collectively as a group. Throughout the course of 2009, over 1000 volunteers gave more than 9600 hours of service to Polk County Conservation. This year's theme was "Renewing Your Vision," and encouraged volunteers to renew their vision for 2010. Ron Andrews, Iowa DNR Biologist, was the special speaker....

MaryAnn Mathis has worked with the therapeutic riding program at the Jester Park Equestrian Center for over seven years. In 2009 she volunteered nearly 154 hours to help with weekly lessons as well as groups that come to the barn for grooming, riding, making horse treats, and more. She is a great promoter of the program and informs people she meets about what the therapeutic riding program is all about.

Thank You Note from the family of John L. Mihalovich

To the Elkhart CWF—

The luncheon yesterday was so, so appreciated. My family was so happy that you worked so hard to give us a meal and give us time to visit after the funeral service.

Many, many thanks,
The Mihalovich family

Transitions

We've been asked, for the sake of those who don't always get our news, to record in our newsletter the names of those members or active participants who have died. If you have a name you would like included, please let the church office know.

Robert Frederick
John L. Mihalovich

January 17, 1934—August 14, 2010
March 13, 1947—July 25, 2010

Save the Date!

ECC Fall Bazaar and Dinner - Saturday, October 16, 2010
More info to come!

Disciples Network Gathering: October 9, 2010 **(formerly known as Regional Assembly 2010)**

The Regional Assembly will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2010 at the **Christian Conference Center** located just outside Newton, with the theme of **Disciples Network**.

In the Spirit of Disciples Together, a day of interesting and fun activities has been planned, such as:

- Food booths hosted by various congregations around the Region
- Workshops & demonstrations
- Horse-drawn wagon rides
- Tours of the Christian Conference Center grounds
- Outdoor games & activities for adults, youth & children
- Live music all day
- Team Competitions (get your team together!) such as these races:
 - Communion cup filling
 - Setting up & taking down chairs & tables
 - Lawn mower
- Worship in the Outdoor Chapel
- The annual Region-wide business meeting

To see a great recruiting video for the gathering, go to:

<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org/2010/05/11/regional-assembly-food-booths-needed/>

It Is Time! The Upper Midwest Christian Church Transition

19 months ago we entered into a time of transition for the Region. As per normal, when we use words like "Transition," "Transformation," or other words that suggest some sort of promised change or more enthusiastic future, people often enter in one of three ways. First, there are those who get extremely excited about something new, no matter what it might be. Second, there are those

who react out of fear and trembling with the belief that what we have might not be working but at least we know what it is. Third, there are those who don't really react at all. These people have lived through too many promises of change that never came to be and are convinced that nothing new will really happen.

We can imagine all three reactions in the people Moses led into the wilderness. Perhaps there is a little of these three reactions in each of us. Part of us rejoices in the promise and potential of what might be; but the unknowns of the wilderness and what remains to be done could easily scare any of us to point of being willing to stay right where we were. And in most of us there is that part that wants to, and even needs to, be skeptical about promised change. It is that part that says, "I believe, but it would help to see some signs that things are really changing before I will let myself be fully invested in this change."

Well, it's time to lift up some signs:

19 months ago we began the transition with an accumulated line of credit debt of \$190,000 and a previous spending pattern that had added about 60,000 to that debt each year.

By July 31, 2010, the Region, we as "Disciples Together," have not only paid off that line of credit debt, but we stopped over-spending our budget, thereby eliminating our need to borrow more money.

Now that would be enough to celebrate a sign that we are in a time of positive change. But wait, there is more: we accomplished all this during an economic down-turn and we absorbed the total cost of starting a new church (about \$40,000, much of which will be reimbursed to the Region from the Rochester fund later this year); and we had to purchase two vehicles that were not budgeted. It was a time that, in some way, felt like the wilderness. And God walked with us all the way.

Since we have accomplished our first priority of regaining financial stability, this article serves as the official announcement that **IT IS TIME** for the next stage of the journey to begin. The members of the vision task group are: Randy Ehrhardt, Dave Clark, Tim Diebel, Lynda Carlson, Earlin Shanno, Jim Wakelin and John Claussen. We will be attending every clergy cluster meeting in September and October, setting up several town-hall meetings across the region, and

looking for feedback. We will be bringing some ideas and gathered wisdom to these meetings, but your input is critical to where we are headed. It is time to look for signs for our further journey together!

Your partner in ministry,

Bill Spangler-Dunning

BSD

Lead Transitional Regional Minister and President

A Story of Changed Perspectives

Author: Terri Holmgren

In December, just a few days before Christmas, an 84 year old man from our church was a victim of an attempted carjacking. He was knocked down, from behind, on his way out of a local grocery store. He refused to get in the car with the attacker. His attacker drove off, went a couple of miles, pulled over, and shot himself in the chest, committing suicide.

The attacker was 37 years old and left a wife and a couple of small children. Our church member immediately opened up a fund to help his attacker's family. Less than a week later, he was in church, making a request for our members to help fill the fund for this man's family. He started the fund with \$500.00 out of his own pocket. That is a lot of money for someone who is 84 years old. Our fund resulted in nearly \$6000 for his family.

Our church member said, "I feel sorry for him. He must have had reasons for going through all of this. My line of thought is that he probably was a decent person and he needed some money, fast."

This man is a perfect example of our church's ministry philosophy. If someone needs help and we can help them, we do. We endeavor to find a way to love them the way Jesus told us to.

A Note from Adam Frieberg, Editor of www.uppermidwestcc.com: This story comes from a member of First Christian Church in Des Moines, IA. It was shared through the "Come Sample Simply Stories" event on March 20, 2010. Look for more stories from that event to show up on <http://www.uppermidwestcc.com/category/sharedspirit/>

Christian Women's Fall Retreat - October 1-3, 2010

Koronis Ministries Conference & Retreat Center
Paynesville, MN

Sanctuary in the Stories

****Telling stories of women throughout the Bible****

****Telling stories of women throughout our lives****

Women of all ages are invited to gather in a beautiful retreat setting to explore and experience ways in which extending a sense of sanctuary can be an intentional part of how we relate to each other, and to God's world around us.

Cost: \$100 – \$150 (double occupancy)
Includes 2 nights lodging, program, 5 meals
Registration deadline: September 17

Full & partial scholarships (at Retreat Center rate) are available through the Beth MacWhorter Fund.

* * *

Retreat Leader: Marti Stuessy

She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and MacAllister-Petticrew Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, where she has been teaching—and storytelling!—since 1988.

Retreat Chaplain: Deborah Lewis

Retreat Coordinators: Alison Phillips Robuck and Tammy Rottschaefer

More information:

<http://www.uppermidwestcc.org/2010/07/09/christian-women's-fall-retreat-october-1---3-2010/>

Iowa Floods 2010: Week of Compassion

A Note from Bill Spangler-Dunning

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Flood zones in particular,

Week of Compassion, that part of our church that we normally give money to for disasters in other parts of the world, is standing

ready to assist churches to help their members who may have suffered damage from the flood.

If you have members in your churches who have received damage due to the flood, please pass it along to your pastor, and pastor to me, at bsdumw@gmail.com

Week of Compassion is standing by to help.

—BSD

Week of Compassion Update: The Worst Natural Disaster in Pakistan's History

How much more can the people of Pakistan handle? I can practically hear them crying out, "How long, O Lord, how long?" The flooding in Pakistan has been absolutely devastating; beyond what anyone anticipated. The scope of the flooding is incredible, and the damage done by the rising waters will take years—if not decades—from which to recover. Our hearts ache for our sisters and brothers in Pakistan.

As always, Week of Compassion is there—thanks to you. Your gifts are already at work in Pakistan, channeled through our ecumenical partner organizations, Church World Service and the member agencies of the ACT Alliance, doing all we can to respond to this overwhelming disaster. And we will continue to work non-stop to provide aid to those in need.

We invite you to continue to help us make a difference in the lives of the people of Pakistan. Please partner with us to make a difference. 100% of your designated gift to Pakistan flood relief will be immediately directed to relief efforts there.

Pakistan faces a desperate situation. Your partnership, your faith, your Courageous Compassion go a long way in helping the healing begin.

Thank you so much for your support!

--Rev. Amy Gopp
Executive Director

Week of Compassion is sharing resources and changing lives. Thank you for sharing your resources and helping to change lives.

"For I am sure that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus"

ROMANS 8:38, 39

This Kairos Moment

The Palestinian Christian community, with roots dating back to earliest Christianity, now numbers less than two percent of the population in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. But the community prominently offers a non-violent witness for justice and peace. Last December in Bethlehem, Palestinian Christians launched "A Moment of Truth." They called it a "Kairos" document, the word in early Greek meaning "opportunity" or critical moment in time, and meant to allude to the crucial South African Kairos document which in 1985 prompted debate about Apartheid worldwide. The Kairos document states that "... Love is seeing the face of God in every human being. Every person is my brother or my sister. However, seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather, this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression."

The believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. Palestinian Christians write, "Our hope remains strong" based on the expectation in faith of a better future. "In the absence of hope, we cry out our cry of hope... We believe in God, good and just [and that God's goodness] will finally triumph.... We will see here 'a new land' and 'a new human being,' capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters."

We pray, for hope, patience, and steadfastness and a time for repentance. Though their numbers are few, their message is great and important, in a land in urgent need of love.

Peter Makari is Global Ministries Area Executive for the Middle East and Europe.

You will find the Kairos document, action resources and updates at:
<http://globalministries.org/mee/kairos/>



You make the difference...

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

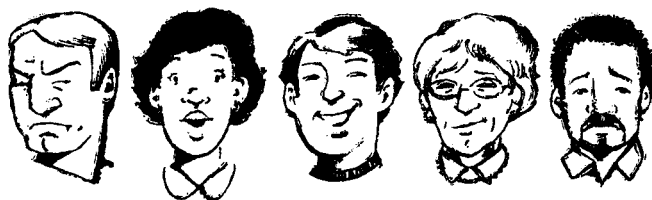
WWW.GLOBALMINISTRIES.ORG

Join us at Sunday School



Men's Breakfast Begins on Sept. 12

Sunday School Begins on Sept. 12!



Deacon-Elder Update Meeting:

Sunday, Sept. 12, 7:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.



Chancel Choir Begins on
Sunday, Sept. 19, 8 a.m.



**HANDBELL
CHOIR**

Handchimes Begin on
Sunday, Sept. 26, 4:00 pm

September Birthdays

01 Tom Albaugh
02 Jill Dobson
03 Judy Franzen
04 Wilma Scott
 Douglas Praska
 Johnathan Ralls
 Shanda Owen
05 Connie Carney
06 Mattison Hill
08 Sue Owen
 Chris Scott
09 Gary Cory
11 Kelsey Caswell
 Bob Reinertson
12 Stephanie Ault
Reynolds
 Alice Struthers
 Steve Romick
13 Brody Batson
14 Matt Elmore
 Taber Jamison
15 Joyce Romick
 Jan Wilson
16 Diane McHone
 Dennis Miller
17 Roger Cory
20 Mark Parmenter
 Brent Sorenson
 Justin Voshell
21 Barb O'Neel
 Dan Higginbottom
 Logan Albaugh
 Norman Higginbottom
22 Bill Mason
23 Craig Ellyson
24 Mary Cory
25 Marti Birchmier
 Marci Long
 Kyle Cory
 Ginger Swenson
29 Dick Hudson

October Birthdays

02 Mable Conley
 Alan Brazelton
 Scott Durrell
 Julie Owen
03 Kathy Warrington
05 Nancy Owen
 Nathan Dobson
 Linda Brazelton
07 Jim Elmore
 Don Swartout
08 Steve Albaugh
09 Galen Freel
 Jay Mathis
 Renee Lamfers
 Dustin Bussanmas
 Kalven Owen
10 Tony Thompson
 Ronald Cory
11 Jill Reinke
12 Gavin Cory
13 Brandon Cory
 Kristina Smith
14 Jacob Van Gorp
15 David Spratt
 Eric Bean
16 Andy Hall
18 Lane Hill
20 Gloria Elmore
22 Bill McLean
 Donna Spratt
 Brent Bean
 Sharon Reinertson
24 Mike Olesen
25 Barb Angstead
26 Ashley Owen
27 Richard Higginbottom
29 Maxine Owen

**Elkhart Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
124 S. Washington
P.O. Box 97
Elkhart, IA 50073
(515) 367-5125**



"Sharing Our Faith and God's Love"

Church Staff:
Ministers: The Congregation
Pastor: Rev. Anne E. Gregory
Board Chair: Tim Butler
Church Secretary: Mary Jo Ward
Pianists:
Brenda Dobson
Robin Luke
Organist:
Sharon Payne

"Address Service Requested"
Dated Material - Do Not Delay

**NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #1
ELKHART, IA 50073**