

March
2016

Arbor Covenant Church Madison WI



Christ the Lord is Risen Today!!

Alleluia!

Lenten Supper and Services March 2, 9, 16



During Lent, we are exploring some of the implications of this kind of community. Each Wednesday as we gather for a simple supper, we'll have the opportunity to discuss together what it means for a congregation to embrace unity in a divisive world. These discussions will start with brief videos telling a part of the story from one congregation that has made this their vision. We will then discuss what we might be called towards as we seek to honor one another, embody God's love and reflect God's goodness to the world.

Each Wednesday (March 2-16) 6:00PM-7:30PM We will be watching a series called "Different but Not Divided: Practicing a Third Way" produced by theworkofthepeople.com

Holy Week

Sunday, March 20 Palm Sunday



Palm Sunday precedes the Jewish Passover. and commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The waving of palms was a common way to celebrate the victory of a great king or deliverer. They began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel. "

Thursday, March 23 – Maundy Thursday Service



Holy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is observed to commemorate the Last Supper, when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. During the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and wine and asked his Father to bless it. He broke the bread into pieces, giving it to his disciples saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Then he took the cup of wine, sharing it with his disciples and said, This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you, - an agreement sealed with the blood I pour out for you. During this solemn service we gather to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross while we share communion as he did.

Sunday, March 27 – Easter Sunday



At 9:00, everyone is invited to share in an Easter breakfast. The men of the church will be preparing a breakfast and you and your friends and family are invited to join together to celebrate the joy of Easter morning.

Sunday morning Study Group will not meet on Easter Sunday

Our worship service will begin with gathering music at 10:25 and the Call to Worship at 10:30.

Children are invited to Children's Church where they will have a lesson and then have an Easter Egg Hunt, courtesy of Ms Joyce Boggess and her family.

Lent is in some ways like a Zombie apocalypse movie

We begin Lent by recognizing our own limits, by remembering that we are created from dust and that it is to dust we shall return. It is a reminder that for all of us, our earthly existence will last only so long, that we are all born into a life that we can never fully control, that we are all fragile and finite, that we are vulnerable. With this reminder, we recognize that we can never be completely safe, never totally free from danger, never able to fully overcome the inevitability of our own physical decline and ultimately our death.

In their portrayals of lawless worlds, scourged by the brain-eating un-dead, movies and TV shows about the zombie apocalypse heighten the fears and insecurities associated with these sorts of realizations. In these stories, as institutions fail and survival becomes more ruthless, human vulnerability intensifies. Life is lived on the edge and the edge is crumbling. For viewers this can provoke questions and forced realizations about the precariousness of life.

Anytime we are forced to consider our own mortality and the reality of our own vulnerability, we have at least a handful of options. We can wallow in despair and constantly regret our fate. We can live naively, pretending that danger doesn't exist. We can curl up in a ball and try to limit our exposure to the reality of our vulnerability. We can construct for ourselves a facade of security based on the accumulation of wealth and status or personal virtue and perceived strength. Or we can give into fear and lash out on anyone and anything that threatens our survival.

In his interaction with the crowd in Luke, Chapter 13, Jesus recognizes some of these same human limitations, these same insecurities associated with human mortality. Commenting on the deaths of some Galileans who lost their lives because of politically motivated violence, and some Jerusalemites who died when a tower fell to the ground, Jesus notes that all of humanity is subject to forces beyond their control. Jesus recognizes that we are all one calamitous event away from our destruction and nothing, (not moral uprightness, karmic merit, social status, religious affiliation...the list could go on and on) can ever fully protect us. In this sobering encounter, however, Jesus does offer hope. Because even as the world around us remains dangerous, even as we remain vulnerable, Jesus' invitation is not to give into our fears or turn inward towards our own desperation or naivety. Instead it is a call to turn towards God and God's hopes for the world. It is, to echo the charge from the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, an invitation to repent and believe the gospel!

In Zombie movies, as they face their mortality, characters often give into fear. In the process they can become every bit as monstrous as the monsters that threaten their survival. They end up losing their humanity in their desperation to hold onto life. Facing our mortality in real life is usually not nearly as sensational or dramatic as it is in these movies, but it too can distance us from who we are truly called to be and from the God who calls us.

Jesus' invitation to repentance, is a call to remember who we are as God's beloved children and to reorient our lives away from fear or desperation and back towards God. It is an ongoing process that offers constant discovery of the things that God can make possible even in a broken world. Repentance is a way of life that anticipates resurrection not by denying life's fragility nor human vulnerability. It doesn't attempt to escape these realities or minimize their consequences. What it does, instead, is affirm the transformational power of God's creative love to heal brokenness, to establish peace, to make it possible for us to embrace God's hope and to encounter the life that is really life.

Pastor Peter Morris

Why Does the Date of Easter Change Every Year?

Easter is a moveable feast, which means that it does not occur on the same date every year. How is the date of Easter calculated? In AD 325, the Council of Nicaea set the date of Easter as the Sunday following the paschal full moon, which is the full moon that falls on or after the vernal (spring) equinox. In practice, that means that Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls on or after March 21. Easter can occur as early as March 22 and as late as April 25, depending on when the paschal full moon falls.

We know that Easter must always occur on a Sunday, because Sunday was the day of Christ's Resurrection. But why the paschal full moon? Because that was the date of Passover in the Jewish calendar, and the Last Supper (Holy Thursday) occurred on the Passover. Therefore Easter was the Sunday after Passover.

The Church does not use the exact date of the paschal full moon but an approximation because the paschal full moon can fall on different days in different time zones, which would mean that the date of Easter would be different depending on which time zone you live in. For calculation purposes, the full moon is always set at the 14th day of the lunar month (the lunar month begins with the new moon). Likewise the Church sets the date of the vernal equinox at March 21, even though it can occur on March 20. Both approximations allow the Church to set a universal date for Easter.

http://catholicism.about.com/od/holydaysandholidays/f/Calculate_Date.htm

Covenant Camping

Our church has always enthusiastically supported summer camping. The Central Conference has two amazing camp facilities – Covenant Harbor in Lake Geneva WI and Covenant Point in Iron River Michigan. There are many camps for all ages and interests. Mark Hanson is once again serving as our Camping Coordinator. Mark has put brochures in the narthex. He will also happily answer any and all questions. We have reserve funds to help with the costs of camping.

If you or your child or friends are interested, it is time to commit to dates for the summer. The Early Bird Discount ends on March 15. Please talk to Mark SOON so that you can get your requested dates

Church Improvements

Mark Hanson pulled together a crew of volunteers a few weeks ago to replace all of the toilets in the ladies' restroom.

Thanks to those who helped and extra thanks to Mark for spearheading the effort.

Sunday Morning Study Group

The group will meet the first three Sundays of March to discuss HOW CHRISTIANITY CAME TO AMERICA...a search for spiritual freedom...a search for the "Fountain of Youth"...a search for souls for Jesus?

Does this still color the mission and work of the church? What does "religious freedom" in the United States mean in the 21st century?

Please consider attending these important discussions at 9:15 on Sunday mornings March 6, 13, and 20.

Post Easter Family Leave

In April, Tamsin's maternity leave ends. When she starts back at work, I will begin taking four weeks at home with Theodore on paternity leave.

While I'm on leave, others will be leading worship and filling the pulpit, and congregational members like Ann-Britt Keillor and Gunnard Swanson will continue to offer support to those in need of a visit or someone with whom to speak. Aside from time away visiting Tamsin's family the week after Easter, I will be local. I anticipate worshipping alongside you on Sundays and will be available to respond to critical pastoral care situations should they arise.

I am grateful to Arbor Covenant for giving me and my family this opportunity. It is a blessing. Tamsin, Theodore, and I thank you.

Pastor Peter Morris

Memorial Donations

Over the last fifty years, many of our former members and friends have left memorials to the church when they have passed. Most of the time, they have not given funds for a particular item or project but have urged the church to use them where needed. Sometimes, a relative has been asked if there is a specific thing that would honor their loved one and represent something that was of importance to them.

At the Annual Meeting in January, there was a brief discussion of Memorial Donations including the need to account for the gifts in a separate line item in the budget. The Leadership Team has decided to explore the giving of memorials in more depth. Should donors be encouraged to designate how they would like their gifts to be used? Should we maintain a list of possible suggestions for use and share those with the entire congregation? This list could include improvements to the sanctuary and other parts of the building or ideas for supporting worship programs or local missions.

When Arbor receives a memorial gift we could honor that person in the newsletter both by sharing their relationship with Arbor and possibly why they were motivated to leave a gift.

Kris Brown agreed to look into these topics. If you have ideas that you would like to share, please let Kris know either in church or through email. kristinelbrown@yahoo.com

Mortgage Pre-Payment

At the annual meeting in January, a motion to pre-pay \$20,000 to reduce our mortgage was passed. This has now been done. We thank God for those who have faithfully supported this church over the years.

Thursday night Small Group

This group is taking a month off so that people can attend the Wednesday night Lenten Services. They will restart on March 31 at the Meyer's home at 7 p.m.

Denominational and Central Conference Meetings

Every year our denomination and the Central Conference, of which we are a member, have annual meetings. Church members are invited to serve as delegates if interested.

This year the dates and locations for the conferences are as follows

Central Conference Iron Mountain Michigan April 28-30, 2016 Gunnard Swanson will be a delegate.

National Denomination Phoenix, Arizona June 23-25, 2016. Sue Pecotte has volunteered to serve as a delegate.

Others may serve as delegates. Please speak with Pastor Peter or Mark Hanson if you would like to serve as a delegate.

“Why Don’t They Just Go Get Another One Off the Shelf?”

A logical question from Arbor’s own J.D. Turner who with his mother, Lissa, and sister, Reba, volunteers every other week to unload and organize products that are delivered weekly to the Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry from Certco Wholesale Foods. The kids and Lissa work diligently to line up products on the shelves so that it is easy to pick orders placed by our guests at the Pantry every Friday morning from 10 am to 1 pm and the third Thursday evening of the month from 5:30-7:30 pm.

So, how would you answer J.D.’s question about a roll of toilet paper? We are all accustomed to “getting another one off the shelf” without a thought about how this might not be true for everyone. Would you talk about financial needs and poverty? Would you discuss God’s commandment to love your neighbor? Would you share how God provides opportunities to share with our neighbors the wealth of spiritual and worldly goods with which we have been blessed?

Since the GNPEP started its mission on October 12, 2012 to provide personal and household hygiene products to our neighbors who have lost jobs, suffered major health problems or endured chronic poverty, we have served hundreds of families both in our immediate neighborhood and beyond.

WHY is the Pantry important?

Unfortunately, food stamps don’t cover personal essential items, nor do local food pantries regularly stock these items. Just imagine trying to get your baby ready for daycare without diapers, preparing for an interview without deodorant, or sending your children to school without clean clothes. GNPEP products account for 25-30% of the average grocery bill. These products mean more money can be used for food and other necessities.

WHO can use the pantry?

PEP is available to ALL individuals and families in need. The services are free; you don't have to be registered with any agency; there's no huge pile of paperwork to be filled out. If you are at or below the federally-approved DCFS income limits, you're eligible for help from the Pantry. You're welcome whether you're a single adult, a household of adults or a household with kids. We operate on the concept of grace and turn no one away.

Many of you are aware that there is literally no overhead in the Pantry operation. Arbor and three other churches provide support both financially and by providing volunteers. Individuals, including some who have relied on GNPEP’s support themselves, make donations and/or dedicate hours every week to make sure the mission continues. All money raised from churches, businesses, organizations and individuals is only used to buy the products that are provided to our guests.

Thanks go to Creek Day School for their cheerful support even when the Fellowship Room is overflowing with people and conversation. And to Renee, their cook extraordinaire who always does our dishes when we aren’t looking. A true generous spirit!

Covenant Women has generously provided coffee throughout the years and so many of our guests thank us for that coffee and warmth provided each week.

More thanks go to our friend, Bill, and the restaurant Panera who weekly provide us with loads and loads of tasty breads and bagels that our guests can take home with them to enjoy as a special treat.

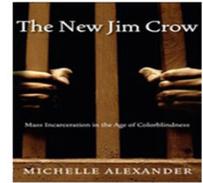
Thanks to Sue Pecotte for her individual fund-raising by offering her quilts for sale at our church, All Saints Lutheran and Memorial UCC churches.

Thank you to all of you that have helped us continue this mission. You have blessed the lives of thousands of people who you will, most likely, never meet. Even so, know that the impact of your gifts has been great!

By Jan Gietzel

The Good Neighbor Personal Essentials Item of the Month is Toilet Paper. Donations should be left in the bin in the narthex. Thank you to all who have donated faithfully.

Book Discussion – Tuesday May 17 – The New Jim Crow



The third book discussion for this year will focus on *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander.

This book has been very well received and widely discussed. This book was highly recommended by several women who attended last year's book recommendations night.

Amazon's review says,

"Once in a great while a book comes along that changes the way we see the world and helps to fuel a nationwide social movement. The New Jim Crow is such a book. Praised by Harvard Law professor Lani Guinier as "brave and bold," this book directly challenges the notion that the election of Barack Obama signals a new era of colorblindness. With dazzling candor, legal scholar Michelle Alexander argues that "we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it." By targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control—relegating millions to a permanent second-class status—even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness. In the words of Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and CEO of the NAACP, this book is a "call to action."

Called "stunning" by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Levering Lewis, "invaluable" by the Daily Kos, "explosive" by Kirkus, and "profoundly necessary" by the Miami Herald, this updated and revised paperback edition of The New Jim Crow, now with a foreword by Cornel West, is a must-read for all people of conscience.

The Publisher's Weekly Review says:

Contrary to the rosy picture of race embodied in Barack Obama's political success and Oprah Winfrey's financial success, legal scholar Alexander argues vigorously and persuasively that [w]e have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it. Jim Crow and legal racial segregation has been replaced by mass incarceration as a system of social control (More African Americans are under correctional control today... than were enslaved in 1850). Alexander reviews American racial history from the colonies to the Clinton administration, delineating its transformation into the war on drugs. She offers an acute analysis of the effect of this mass incarceration upon former inmates who will be discriminated against, legally, for the rest of their lives, denied employment, housing, education, and public benefits. Most provocatively, she reveals how both the move toward colorblindness and affirmative action may blur our vision of injustice: most Americans know and don't know the truth about mass incarceration—but her carefully researched, deeply engaging, and thoroughly readable book should change that

It is our hope that we have a large diverse group to discuss it – Our discussion will certainly be improved by more people who have different experiences to bring to the conversation. Please consider carefully this invitation to be part of an important discussion. And please invite friends who would like to join the discussion. While this book is not faith-based, we as people of faith can benefit greatly from reading this book and discussing it with others in our community.

Chuck and Jan Gietzel have once again invited us to their condo for this meeting. It is centrally located at 360 W. Washington Avenue, Unit 402.. The meeting will take place on Tuesday May 17 at 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

Our three book discussions since the fall have been well-attended and though provoking. If you would like to have them continue next fall, please talk with Kris Brown or Jan Gietzel. We also would like ideas for books to discuss.

It has been suggested that we read faith-based books – and that is certainly a possibility. If you have ideas about specific recommended books, please let Kris or Jan know.

The Annual Covenant Women Book Discussion will take place April 13. We also will be assembling a list of recommended books from everyone in the church who wishes to contribute. Please send your recommendations to Kris Brown <krsitnelbrown@yahoo.com> – If you would like to write a brief annotation, that would be wonderful. If not, we'll find something online. We welcome any kind of book – fiction, non-fiction, any genre.

We don't yet know where we will meet – but please save the date and start your list.

This is a wonderful tradition at Arbor. Previous copies of the list can be found on the church website www.arborcovenant.org under resources.

Introducing

Michelle Anna Stachowiak



Our church nursery continues to grow. And now our little boys have a little girl to show them how to behave.

Michelle Anna Stachowiak was born at St. Mary's Hospital on February 14 at 7:55 PM. She weighed 5 lbs 10 oz . Her proud parents are Daniel and Michelle. Her new grandparents are Sue and John Pecotte. And her proud Great Aunties are Deb Levin and Marijo Kessenich, And let's not forget Aunts Amanda and Karen Pecotte who, according to Sue, got to hold Michelle before Sue.

Of course the Levin family is large and there are many many more family members who will gladly hold this precious little one.

Welcome to this world little Michelle. Your church family is excited to meet you. God's Richest Blessings on you and your family.

Members and Friends of Arbor,

Thank you so much for the baby shower and showering of gifts you gave us in anticipation of the birth of Michelle. Your generosity, love, and support as we journey into parenthood are truly a blessing!

Thank you and God's Blessings to each of you,

Daniel and Michelle (& Michelle) Stachowiak

Welcome Ari Kinson Brown

Kris and Phil Brown are thrilled to welcome a new grandson, Ari Kinson Brown to their family. Ari is the son of Peter and Abbey Brown and the little brother of Grover. The family live in Cleveland Ohio. Ari was born on February 27 and weighed 8 lbs.9 oz.



Congratulations Erika and Jordan!!

Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson are very happy to announce the engagement of their daughter Erika Hanson to Jordan Doll. They got engaged on the top of Mount Doom (Mount Ruapehu) in New Zealand. Erika works as a microbiologist at the State Hygiene Lab on Henry Mall while Jordan works as a project manager at Epic Systems in Verona.

Wedding plans have not been set yet.

Congratulations Erika and Jordan!!

March Birthdays

March 1	Ken Lund
March 7	Lindsey Lund
March 18	Randy Kessenich
March 25	Deb Levin

Anniversaries

None that we know of

Volunteer Responsibilities

Date	Host	Nursery	Children's Church	Lay Reader	Projector
March 6	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Susan Corrado	Lissa Turner	Ann-Britt Keillor	Mark Hanson
March 13	Amanda and Matthew Fledderjohann	Ulrika Swanson	Fabio Mora	Kris Brown	Susan Corrado
March 20	Jan and Chuck Gietzel	Debby Meyer	Ruth Hallblade	Gunnard Swanson	Michelle Stachowiak
March 27	Ruth and Dale Hallblade	Amanda Pecotte	Joyce Boggess	Matthew Fledderjohann	Chuck Gietzel
April 3	Deb Levin and Marijo Kessenich	Ulrika Swanson	Mark Hanson	Michelle Stachowiak	Debby Meyer

Soon you will be receiving an email inviting you to help prepare meals for Michelle and Daniel Stachowiak following the birth of their new baby. It will be organized around the MealTrain Application online. Because Michelle and Daniel live in DeForest, it will be possible to leave a meal at church so that it can be transported to their home. If you do bring a meal to church, please tell Sue Pecotte or Amanda Fledderjohann so that the meal gets delivered.

Meals are always appreciated by those who have special events as well as extenuating circumstances. Thanks to Amanda Fledderjohann for organizing us for this important ministry. If you have questions about how to participate, please see Amanda.

March 2016 Calendar

		1	2 6:00 PM-7:30 PM Lenten Supper and Service	3	4 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	5
March 6 9:15 Sunday Small Group 10:25 Gathering Music 10:30 Worship Communion Deacon Fund Offering	7	8	9 6:00 PM-7:30 PM Lenten Supper and Service	10 6:30 PM Leadership Team	11 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	12
March 13 9:15 Sunday Small Group 10:25 Gathering Music 10:30 Worship	14	15	16 6:00 PM-7:30 PM Lenten Supper and Service	17 10:30 AM- Community Meals @Luke House 5:30 PM- 7:30PM Personal Essentials Pantry	18 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	19
March 20 Palm Sunday 9:15 Sunday Small Group 10:25Gathering Music 10:30 Worship 	21	22	23	24  7:00 PM Maundy Thursday service	25 Good Friday 4:30 AM-7:00 AM Homeless Shelter @ Grace Episcopal (Glenn and Mark Hanson) 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry 	26
March 27 Easter Sunday  9:00 Easter Breakfast 10:25 Gathering Music 10:30 Worship Children's Easter Egg Hunt	28	29	30	31 7:00 PM Small Group @ Meyers	April 1 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	2