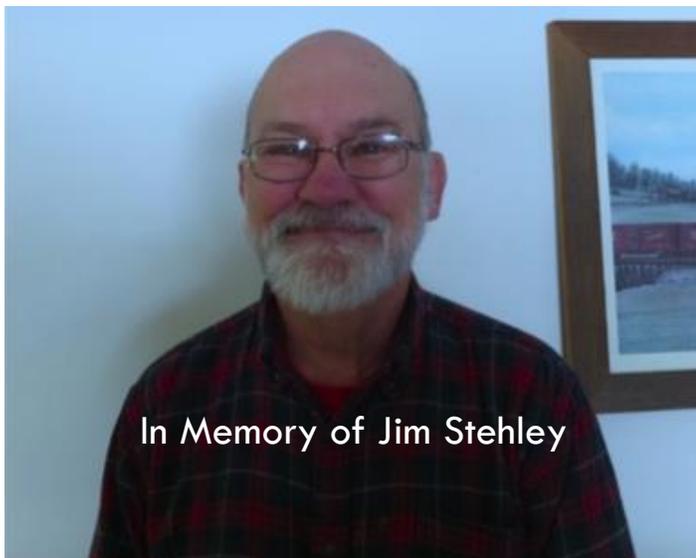


Arbor Covenant News



February 2017
Arbor Covenant Church
Madison Wisconsin

Our Pastor's Corner

An Invitation



Since fall of 2015, we have held many conversations, both formal and informal about Arbor Covenant Church's posture towards our friends, neighbors, and family members in the LGBTQ+ community.

These conversations have focused on our stories and experiences, on scripture's teaching and context, on congregational and denominational discernment, and on our hopes and fears. They have been charitable and constructive, participants have demonstrated both courage and grace, sharing perspectives and welcoming the perspectives of others. They have provided opportunities for input, for listening, and for authentic fellowship as we've asked questions about what it means to be the Christ's body in the world today. We now look to take these conversations to a next step by sharing our thoughts, our commitments and our hopes with our community.

In the weeks to come a writing group will convene to put the character and substance of our conversations and our congregational aspirations on paper. Articulating our posture won't be a simple or insignificant undertaking. It will require humility, sensitivity, and prayer. It will also require as many of our voices as possible.

For any statement to accurately reflect who we are collectively, it will need a broad cross section of our experiences. For it to faithfully communicate our authentic character, it will need to be shaped by voices that see things in different ways, working together to develop a vision for how we feel called to share God's grace and truth with the world.

Jan Gietzel, will be heading this group. Some members of the leadership team will participate. I will play a role, too. I'm hopeful that many of you will join us.

More information about dates and times will be coming soon.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Peter

*note: the writing group's work will ultimately be presented to a congregational meeting for approval.

Covenant Camping



Even though it's still the middle of winter, it's time to start thinking about summer camp!! We are lucky to have TWO great camps, both easily accessible. Covenant Harbor, in Lake Geneva, WI offers overnight and day camps for kids from Kindergarten through high school, including a service camp for high schoolers. Covenant Point, in Iron River, MI offers overnight camps for kids in 2nd grade through high school, as well as trip camps and family camps. What kids in our community are old enough to enjoy a week at camp? What families would love a week away to reconnect? What youth would benefit from intentional service and leadership? There is a place for everyone at camp! Arbor has money set aside in the Randy and Jeannette Levin Camp Fund to help make sure that Arbor kids and families can enjoy camp without having to worry about the financial impact.

Talk to Rachel Woofter for more information, or to get signed up.
Check out the camp websites to learn more about their programs!
Covenant Harbor--<http://covenantharbor.org/>
Covenant Point--<http://www.cpbcc.com/>

Update on the church website and Twitter



A new password protected section has been added to Arbor's website, arborcovenant.org . This feature will exist for us to share the needs and concerns of the church in a secure location. The section is listed under "Past and Present Announcements" subsection "Concerns of the Church" password: arborcovenantcares. Once you have logged in, you will not need the password unless you log out of your browser.



Twitter: Do you use Twitter? Many young people (and even the President) do. Arbor now has a Twitter account and will occasionally post on it. To set up an account, go to twitter.com. Set up an account. Then go to @Arbor Covenant and click on "Following". Now Twitter announcements will come to you!

Memories of Jim Stehley

On February 4, 2017 family and friends of Jim Stehley will gather at Arbor Covenant to remember a father, grandfather, brother, husband and friend. Jim passed away in his McFarland home last week. His obituary can be found at this [link](#).



Jim served faithfully on the Leadership Team at Arbor. Every Sunday he could be found on the north end of the pews at the end of the aisle. But for many at church, Jim was most frequently found in the Community Gardens or tending to the lawn. He loved to prepare the gardens in the spring and then could be seen checking on the progress of the vegetables and flowers as the summer progressed. He loved to visit with those who had garden spaces – always enjoying conversation about different vegetables. And for Jim, the zucchini was always special.

Jim and Gloria raised their three children in McFarland and Jim was especially proud of them. Last year, his son Zach and his wife welcomed

Albert James (Albie) into the family and Jim wasted no time boarding a train to Eugene Oregon to hold his grandson.



Jim loved the annual church canoe trip. He loved to introduce the wonders of nature to young children. This picture was taken last summer after Jim had cooked breakfast for the camp, and we were about to load up to paddle to Ferry Bluff in the background. Jim is on the far left in the back row. We climbed Ferry Bluff, and continued down river for swimming, playing, lunch, and later the landing. Jim has now crossed the river. (Mark Hanson)

In recent months, Jim helped the Turner family by picking up Reba and JD after school and keeping them until their parents finished work. Lissa wrote the following describing this unique friendship:

Many thought Jim was our baby sitter or nanny. He put a kibosh on that right away. He made it clear he cared for the kids; they brought him as much joy as he did them. He was more than a helper or volunteer. He was a mentor and friend to the kids and Josh and me. He provided education and relationship to our family. If you ask Reba about Jim she will say something different than JD. He gave the kids an equal amount of respect as he did me. He was equally genuine and sincere with all of us.

A typical day with Jim and the kids started with a walk home from school. Jim was with the children 3 days a week then we would always connect on Sunday too. He would always have a snack and project for the kids. He would make mowing the lawn or picking up the garage a fun game for the kids. The kids never complained about helping. I'm not even sure they knew they were helping. The kids enjoyed helping him grocery shop, rake and then jump in the leaves, explore the basement and make s'mores in the fire place. Jim often had a scavenger hunt or history lesson with clay for Reba and JD. Reba absolutely loved showing Jim how to use the computer and quiz him on it and him back to her with math facts. He constantly had a wood working project ready to go, fishing or nature lesson, he even spoke in tandem with Reba to her Girl Scouts about bugs. It was amazing seeing 10 third grade girls mesmerized by bugs and Jim's knowledge. The time he spent talking to and with the kids around his kitchen table was priceless. When he came to Reba's birthday we discovered exactly how and why trains interested him, something that he also shared with my Dad. He even had my Sister's ears listening. He always has a train story but hearing him go in depth was so very interesting.

Finally, he was a support to my day. The last 15 min. to hour of everyday day was spent discussing PBS, education, elections, his children and family and my children and family. We often discussed recipes and the mundane parts of my job. He took great interest. He told me of his role and importance of volunteering, helping friends and being a part of the community. It was always so cool for the kids to be a part of the parade, sitting them down to watch, and having them see Jim march in the parade himself. It was not uncommon to see him at any McFarland event. (Lissa Turner)

Leadership Team Report for 1016

Dear Members and Friends,

Two weeks ago (January 22, 2017) we sang the following words from Hymn 511 in the Blue Hymnal:

*Not just in buildings, small and confining,
not in some heaven light years away,
here in this place the new light is shining;
now is God present, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever;
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

These words spoke to me in a very immediate way. They are a summary of how I view our life at Arbor and in God's kingdom on earth, and beyond, given the vastness of what little we know of the universe.

During 2016 we gathered numerous times for conversation about issues that we are facing, including how we gather as people with various identities. Arbor has historically been diverse in many ways from age, to color, to education, to wealth, to church background, to our understanding of scripture...you can name many more. We gathered to consider a timely topic in regards to LGBTQ, sharing our personal experiences with friends, family, co-workers as well as our views. The Leadership Team said it would follow-up on those conversations. It is recommending at the January 29 Annual Meeting that we form a Committee consisting of two members of the Leadership Team and volunteers from the congregation to draft a Congregational Statement on how we feel called to gather "all peoples together" in the face of many diversities and differences. I look forward to seeing what this committee brings back to the Congregation later this spring. And I look beyond that to see what we should say to our community and beyond that demonstrates the "fire of love in our flesh and our bone."

Reaching out to neighbors, friends, colleagues and strangers we encounter always makes sense, but my sense is we, including me, should be less hesitant to share and welcome others into Arbor, as "here in this place the new light is shining." We have experienced some congregation members moving out of the area due to changes in life circumstances such as new grandchildren, retirement, jobs, and some moving on to be with the Lord, and we need more co-workers and fellow journeyers.

This year's annual report is similar to last year's. As noted last year, our information, updates, and discussions in the life of Arbor Covenant Church are provided by the fantastic monthly Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter etc. which are far more current and useable than what could be provided in traditional Annual Reports. Thus, this annual report is limited to the Pastor Peter's report, a few short reports by the Leadership Team and others, and financial information for 2016 and a proposed 2017 budget. We encourage you to fully use and take joy in the Newsletter whether you receive it by email, access it via the Arbor Covenant Church website (www.arborcovenant.org), or request to receive a paper copy.

Webster's first definition of Epiphany is "an appearance or manifestation of God." A second definition notes that Church commemorates at the Epiphany Festival Jesus' Baptism and the visit of the Magi, which reveals that Jesus is the Christ to the gentiles, not just a chosen people. The prayer and hope of the Leadership Team is that Arbor Covenant is a place where we experience the appearance of God in our lives and is a manifestation of God with us.

There is a place or places for everyone at Arbor Covenant to use their gifts. Feel free to contact anyone on the Leadership Team, and Pastor Peter can always help you.

Your Leadership Team,

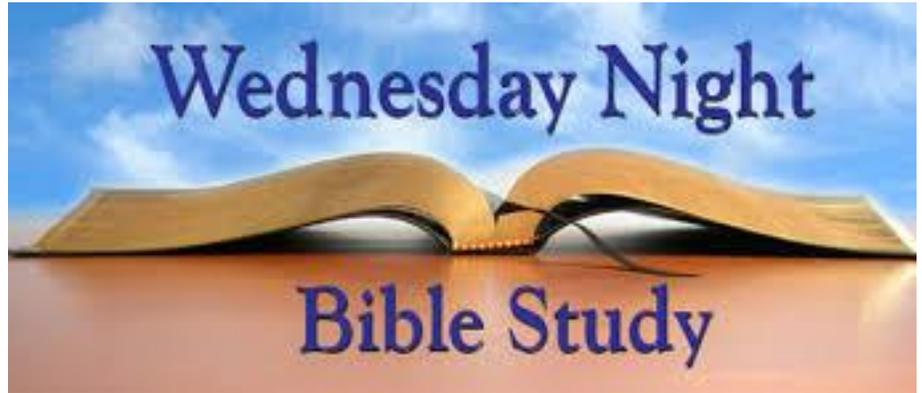
Mark Hanson, Chair
Mike Johnson, Vice-Chair
Rachel Woofter, Secretary
Deb Levin, Treasurer

Pastor Peter Morris
Kristine Brown
Sue Springman
Dan Meyer

Joyce Boggess
Jim Stehley

Midweek Small Group

The midweek small group will be working through a Bible study guide called "Doing Justice, Showing Mercy: Christian Action in Today's World." We invite you to join us if you're interested. We meet most Wednesdays at 7:00. Contact Dan or Deb Meyer for details.



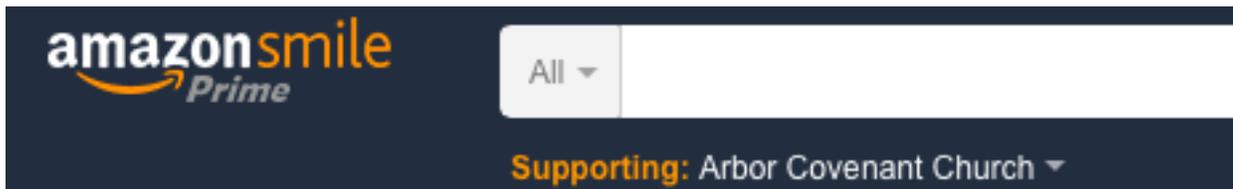
Amazon Smile

Do you shop at Amazon? If you do, you can take advantage of an Amazon program called Smile.

Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you.

“When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com), with the added bonus that **Amazon** will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.”

Simply designate Arbor Covenant Church as your charity – and Amazon will send a portion of your purchase to Arbor.



Parish Notes

February Birthdays

February 3 Charlie Volk
 February 9 Josh Turner
 February 12 Rachel Woofter
 February 14 Lee Fledderjohann
 February 15 Sheri Keillor
 February 16 Kyle Hanson
 February 16 Melina Keillor
 February 17 Carson Hanson
 February 21 Hayden Hanson
 February 23 Emma Keillor

February Anniversary

February 10 Dan and Marijo Kessenich

Good Neighbor Personal Essentials Pantry Item of the Month



Toilet Paper

Place donated items in basket in front hallway.

Prayer Requests

Art Shegonee asks for prayers as he continues to battle physical challenges.

Judy Douglas is still in Hospice at Oak Park Place. Short visits are welcome.

Rod Johnson has returned to Arbor Covenant after a health scare. Praise God for his recovery.

Volunteer Responsibilities

	Host	Nursery	Lay Reader	Projector
February 5	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Joyce Boggess	Jan Gietzel	Debby Meyer
February 12	Debby and Dan Meyer	Amanda Pecotte	Kris Brown	Mark Hanson
February 19	Rachel and Mike Woofter	Deb Levin	Matthew Fledderjohann	Sue Pecotte
February 26	Ann-Britt Keillor and Rod Johnson	Ulrika Swanson	Mark Hanson	Michelle Stachowiak

February 2017 Calendar

			1 7:00 PM Midweek Small Group at Meyers	2	3 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	4
5 9:15 AM Adult Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship Communion Deacon Fund	6	7	8	9 6:30 PM Leadership Team	10 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	11
12 9:15 AM Adult Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	13	14 	15 7:00 PM Midweek Small Group at Meyers	16 10:30 AM Community Meals Program @ Luke House 5:30 PM- 7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	17 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	18
19 9:15 AM Adult Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	20	21	22 7:00 PM Midweek Small Group at Meyers	23	24 4:30-7:30 Homeless Shelter @ Grace Episcopal * 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	25
26 9:15 AM Adult Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	27	28	1 Ash Wednesday	2	3	

*Shelter Volunteers: Ken Lund and Gunnard Swanson