

Arbor Covenant Newsletter

Madison Wisconsin



March 2017

T.N.D. (Temporarily Not Dirt)

Recently I have been accused of excessive navel-gazing. It's a criticism received from multiple well-intentioned, caring people in multiple informal contexts. And it's not wrong.

I'll admit it, whether it's because of my increasingly-cemented status as a middle-age-person or some of the drastic (and wonderful) changes that I've experienced in the last few years, I've been spending more time reflecting on my life. I find myself more than ever considering my beliefs, my values, my identity, my ever-evolving and expanding list of foibles and faults along with strengths and qualities I'm grateful to possess.

Somebody told me it's part of being your in 30's. I don't doubt that, but I also suspect it's an activity that we end up revisiting from time to time, no matter our age, or status of life. There are probably times when it's useful and others it is less so.

While paralyzing self-criticism, servile self-aggrandizement, and ceaseless preoccupation with our situations and attributes is decidedly unhelpful, a little self-examination from time to time is worthwhile, particularly when that self-examination, guided by grace, leads to growth, renewal, and most importantly reconciliation. These are good things to pursue, especially when we consider that we are only temporarily not dirt.

Ken Lund recently told me about a button pinned to his office door that reads, T.N.D.. The initials stand for temporarily not dirt — a reminder to all of us that our physical bodies are only fleeting, impermanent containers for the life that we live. As a sentiment, T.N.D. is a useful reminder of our mortality, of the fact that we are finite creatures, that someday we will die, that our earthly journey will end, that to dust we will return and a new leg of our journey will one day begin.

In that new journey, we will come to know and experience in their fullness the priorities and hopes of God. This is the good news of God's salvation. But in the meantime, in the temporary time, when we are not dirt, we have the opportunity to seek and embody those same priorities and hopes.

Lent is a season set apart, at least in part, for self-examination, when we might seek those things that are gospel imperatives and truly worth our energy and engagement. It's a time to reflect on our lives, on our health and our wholeness — relationally, emotionally, spiritually. It's a chance to examine our well-being, to consider ways that unresolved conflicts may have led to simmering, consuming resentment, ways disappointment may have mutated into toxic cynicism, how pain or a perceived threat may have become engrossing fear.

During lent we are tasked with doing the work of self-discovery, with engaging a practice or practices that might reveal to us more of who we are than we might normally be willing to notice or able to see. It's a season for healthy, appropriate navel-gazing that has an eye on living into the vision God sets out for God's people.

This might sound tiring and intimidating and even dreadful. But here's the thing, no matter what you uncover, no matter what you find out, nothing will change God's love for you. As my former seminary professor John Weborg says, "we can't discover anything about ourselves that Christ has not already redeemed."

So do the work, examining yourself, navel-gaze a bit, knowing that you are the recipient of grace and goodness.

Pastor Peter Morris

Gunnard Swanson Farewell

Please plan to join the church community on March 5 as we say goodbye to our good friend Gunnard Swanson. Gunnard is moving to Golden Valley MN to join the [Covenant Village of Golden Valley](#). We will recognize Gunnard during the service as well as during the fellowship time following the service.

Gunnard and his late wife Ulla have been a part of this congregation for many years. Their children Ulrika and Adrian were baptized and confirmed in our church. It would be impossible to list all of the ways that Gunnard has contributed to our church. Most will know him because of his musical gifts which he has generously shared through the years. He served as choir director and pianist for more years than we can remember! He served on the Church Council. But Gunnard also faithfully helped in ministries of the church including Youth Groups and church historian. He has actively participated in the Sunday Study Group. He always enjoyed visiting people who were sick or in need of cheering up. And then there are the “unofficial” ways that Gunnard participates – joining friends at the symphony, taking a young person to lunch, actively participating in Vasa (the Swedish heritage group), and inviting others to join him for lunch or ice cream at Culvers.



The good news is that Gunnard will return – often we hope. Daughter Ulrika still lives here as does his sister and brother. We can all look forward to hearing him play the piano again and tell us all about his new adventures.

God bless you Gunnard as you move forward. We will miss you but know that you will always be with us in spirit.

METANOIA MEALS

LENT 2017

Arbor has traditionally had a Lenten study series. This year we will begin with a soup supper at 6:00 pm on Wednesdays and continue into a time of reflection and study time that will conclude by 7:30.

If you would like to help with the soup supper, please talk to Pastor Peter as soon as possible.

There will be a second time of study on Saturday mornings at 11:00 am at Pastor Peter's home. It will begin on March 11. This is primarily intended for families with young children who cannot attend on Wednesday evenings. If you are interested in participating, please talk to Pastor Peter.

met-a-noi-a

noun

a change of mind; a reorienting journey; the *transformative* process and implications of wrapping your head around a new idea. Often happening as a result of an encounter with the Kingdom of God.

Historically Lent has been associated with repentance. It's the religious season for sober and often somber reflection on our regrets, faults and misgivings, when we pray for the grace and resolve to live more holy lives. But repentance isn't merely about remorse, regret, and resolve. More accurately it's about something bigger, something more holistic, something more fundamental, something more central to who we are at our core and how we see and live in the world.

A fuller understanding of repentance isn't centered merely on guilt and contrition, instead it is in the orbit of comprehensive renewal. The Greek word translated as repentance, *metanoia*, points to the fullness of the biblical concept. The literal meaning is a change of mind, but it implies the transformational process occurring when new understanding reorients a person's entire life, wresting them from old assumptions and leading them to new perspectives and a new way of living.

During Lent we will gather for conversations on the topic of metanoia. In the first two gatherings we will study and react to stories and movements in scriptures that illustrate the comprehensive, disruptive, reorienting and ultimately life-giving process of metanoia that happens in the lives of God's people when they encounter God's grace. We will then spend a few more weeks engaging foundational elements of the Christian story, examining if there are transformational invitations for us to respond to. As we reflect on these themes we will ask metanoia questions that may reshape our understanding and ultimately transform our lives.

Ash Wednesday

March 1, 7PM

A service of confession, pardon, and encouragement that will include the imposition of ashes.

Week 1

March 8, 6:00-7:30PM

Biblical Repentance/Metanoia Part I

Week 2

March 15, 6:00-7:30PM

Biblical Repentance/Metanoia Part II

Week 3

March 22, 6:00-7:30PM

Trinity

Metanoia Question:

What if the Trinity isn't only a mystery about the character/nature of God but also a mystery descriptive of thriving life and community?

Week 4

March 29, 6:00-7:30PM

Mortality

Metanoia Question:

The exhortation on Ash Wednesday is, "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Repent and believe the gospel." Is there good news in our mortality?

Week 5**April 5, 6:00-7:30PM**

Resurrection

Metanoia Question:

What if Resurrection isn't merely a quantitative descriptor of the duration of life after death, but a qualitative descriptor for life now?

Holy Week**Maundy Thursday**

April 13, 7:00PM

A service of story and table, tracing the events of Holy Week.

Easter Sunday**April 16, 10:25AM**

A service of celebration and resurrection hope.

Housewarming Party

On April 2nd, the women of the church are invited to a party celebrating Ulrika Swanson and her move to her new home. Ulrika has been a faithful member of Arbor since she was born. In March, her father Gunnard will be moving to the Covenant retirement home in Golden Valley MN. The family home has been sold and thus Ulrika will be moving. Several women in the church want to take this opportunity to celebrate Ulrika for her faithful membership in Arbor where she has participated in so many ways. Women of the church will be receiving more information soon but the date has been set. Plan to attend!! It will be fun!!

**Covenant Camping**

Early Bird Registration for camp ends on March 15! 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! Let's get them signed up now and take advantage of the discount for registering early!

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.cpbc.com/>

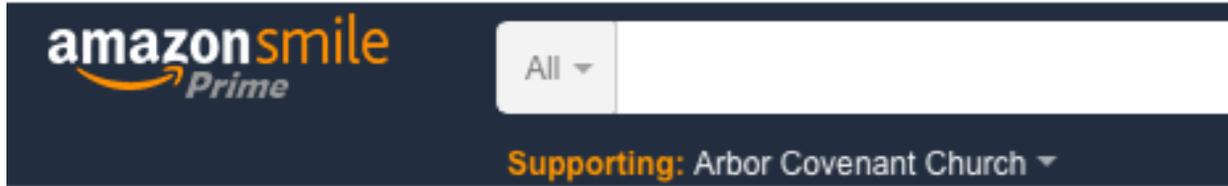
**The Next Step**

Within the next two weeks, a new committee will meet for the first time to begin to draft an inclusive statement on how we welcome people to a life in Christ and in the Arbor Congregation. This is the next step after our series of discussions last year regarding the LGBTQ community. An important part of our background is that we can accept there will be differences of opinion (a Covenant Affirmation), and be followers of Jesus. When complete, the draft will be reviewed by the Leadership Team and when approved, presented to the congregation for approval. Members of this committee include Pastor Peter, Pastor Rod, Leadership Team members Rachel Woofter and Sue Springman, other Arbor members and friends Ann-Britt Keillor, Jan Gietzel and Hannah Lund. If you wish to join this committee, please contact Jan.



Jan Gietzel

Chair



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

Rather than shop at amazon.com, you will need to shop at smile.amazon.com. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience

Simply designate Arbor Covenant Church as your charity – and Amazon will send a portion (0.5%) of your purchase to Arbor.

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.



The Value of Coffee, Muffins and a Smile

Providing personal and household hygiene products to our neighbors in need is the primary mission of the Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry. Those of us who volunteer each Friday realize that there is an additional crucial mission. It involves coffee, muffins, a smile, a warm welcome, respect for every human being and truly being a neighbor who shares joy, sadness, concern and the ups and downs of life with others.

Just this last week, one of our guests shared that she loves to come to our pantry because she feels so welcome and the pastries (donated by Panera Bread) are so good. She related that many of the pantries she has experienced are generous in providing products, for which she is grateful, but are somewhat short on generosity of spirit. She also related that she hadn't come to GNPEP for about three months because she was doing pretty well and didn't want to take the products that others might need more – from my viewpoint a truly generous spirit.

GNPEP is truly appreciative of the generosity of spirit that all of you who support the Pantry show with your donations of money, product and volunteer time. By allowing this mission to thrive for 4 ½ years, God shares his bountiful grace through each one of you. Thank you!

Jan Gietzel
GNPEP Volunteer

Covenant Women Book Discussion



For more than a decade (2004-2017) Covenant Women has been sponsoring a Book Discussion in the spring. We will once again be doing this in April. While the exact date is not yet finalized, it is not too early to begin collecting your list of recommended books.

Kris Brown is accepting recommendations at any time. Simply send her an email (kristinelbrown@yahoo.com) with a title, author and short description of the book. If you do not include a description, Kris will find one for you. Some people recommend one book and some recommend many more. All genres of books are welcome.

Kris will compile a booklet of the recommended books and distribute them to those who attend the Covenant Women book discussion. The document will also be available on the church website. Extra paper copies are also available. For many, this booklet provides a reading list for many months to come. It also allows people to talk with each other about their favorite books and authors.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to share your favorite books and then to read some great books that your Arbor friends are recommending.



Community Meals

For many years, Arbor has been participating in the Community Meals Program at Luke House in Madison. Once a month, we provide lunch for anyone in the community. It is an opportunity for us to share a meal. Church members provide the meal each month and then serve it at Luke House.

There are many ways to help in this ministry:

The food provided includes bananas, milk, salad, casseroles, bread, and cake for dessert.

You can also donate money so that some of these items can be purchased.

The food can be left at church if you are not planning to serve.

You can come and serve even if you aren't bringing food.

You can sign up to substitute when someone is not going to be able to participate.

At this time, we are remaking the schedule – both for what people are bringing and who is serving. If you are interested in being part of this important ministry, please talk to Pastor Peter or Deb Levin. We encourage everyone to find a way to be involved.



We have put a pause on Children's Church since about the end of January. After about three years of operation of Children's Church rotating four teachers, we want to assess and reimagine what youth ministry might look like, and then choose a course. We have initiated some conversations on this topic and will be convening a meeting on this subject at the end of March.

Some of the ideas and/or questions that have been mentioned include:

- Should we continue with the one-room school concept on Sunday morning during the worship service or look at other models?
- Might we engage one teacher on Sunday morning for the children? This could be a compensated position.
- Should we consider a twice a month Friday evening (or Saturday sometime) Children's program that would include music, other activities, and a light meal? Parents might enjoy a couple of hours free.
- Might an intern from North Park be available to serve as staff for Youth Ministry and Worship activities?
- What collaboration might we have with these activities and the Early Childhood Learning Center that Joyce Boggess works with?
- How do we reach out to Arbor Hills Neighborhood Youth as well as Creek Day Care youth?

As we consider these and other options, we are also aware that we have a couple of children ready to begin Confirmation studies. And we now have several children that are old enough to attend camp at Covenant Point and Harbor Camps. Rachel Woofter is the Camp Booster and we have the Randy and Jeannette Levin Camp Fund to support children as needed.

We will be resuming Children's Church on Sunday mornings for most Sunday's in March. Please contact Pastor Peter or Mark Hanson for more information and stay tuned for announcements regarding meetings on this topic.

Mark Hanson

Prayer Concerns

Please remember Judy Douglas in your prayers. She continues to live at Oak Park Place. The address is on the bulletin board in the fellowship room. Short visits are welcome.

March Birthdays

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

Personal Essentials Pantry

Item of the Month



Liquid dish soap - 12 oz.

Volunteer Responsibilities

	Host	Nursery	Lay Reader	Projector
March 5	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Debby Meyer	Jan Gietzel	Chuck Gietzel
March 12	Jan and Chuck Gietzel	Matthew Fledderjohann	Michelle Stachowiak	Debby Meyer
March 19	Kris and Phil Brown	Elrene Lund	Ann-Britt Keillor	Mark Hanson
March 26	Elrene and Ken Lund	Joyce Boggess	Ulrika Swanson	Sue Pecotte
April 2	Deb Levin and Michelle Stachowiak	Deb Levin	Debby Meyer	Michelle Stachowiak

March 2017

			<p>1 Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm Service</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 10:00 am-1:00 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 9:15 am Adult Study Group 10:25 am Gathering Music 10:30 am Call to Worship Communion Deacon Fund After church- Farewell party for Gunnard Swanson</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 6:00-7:30 pm Lenten supper and discussion</p>	<p>9 6:30 pm Leadership Team</p>	<p>10 10:00 am-1:00 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>11 11:00 am Lenten Melanoia Brunch</p>
<p>12  9:15 am Adult Study Group 10:25 am Gathering Music 10:30 am Call to Worship</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 6:00-7:30 pm Lenten supper and discussion EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION FOR CAMP ENDS</p>	<p>16 10:30 Community Meals Program @Luke House 5:30 pm-7:30 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>17 10:00 am-1:00 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>18 11:00 am Lenten Melanoia Brunch</p>
<p>19 9:15 am Adult Study Group 10:25 am Gathering Music 10:30am Call to Worship</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 6:00-7:30 pm Lenten supper and discussion</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 4:30 am-7:00 am Homeless Shelter @ Grace Episcopal 10:00 am-1:00 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>25 11:00 am Lenten Melanoia Brunch</p>
<p>26 9:15 am Adult Study Group 10:25 am Gathering Music 10:30 am Call to Worship</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 6:00-7:30 pm Lenten supper and discussion</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 10:00 am-1:00 pm Personal Essentials Pantry</p>	<p>1</p>