

# Arbor Covenant Church

## Newsletter

Madison WI  
May 2017

**For behold the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. Song of Solomon 2:11-12**

### **The Church's Conversion**

One afternoon on a rooftop patio, Peter had an encounter that changed the way he saw the world. While praying there he fell into a trance and saw in a vision what appeared to be a sheet come down from the sky. On that sheet were all sorts of animals, the sorts of which a kosher-keeping Jew like Peter would never have dreamed of eating. But accompanying this vision, was a voice telling Peter "kill and eat" followed by "what God has made clean, you must not call profane."

This puzzling encounter only began to make sense when representatives from the household of a man named Cornelius arrived. Returning with them to Caesarea, Peter ends up befriending this man who up until then would have been an enemy.

Cornelius was a commander of Roman forces, the same Roman forces that imposed occupation in Israel, the same Roman forces who not long before had put Peter's friend Jesus on a cross to die. Romans were not part of the community of God's people. They were not meant to receive welcome. They were not meant to be included. Instead they were meant to be kept at a distance with suspicion and distrust.

But in the wake of resurrection, something drastically changed for Peter and the whole church. Distinctions that once meant so much began to diminish. Brokenness and bad-feelings were somehow caught up and transformed by God's love. New possibilities for community where there was once none, now became the new reality of resurrection life. Even Romans could find a place in the community of Christ's people. And with this new reality the Church changes forever.

No longer is it a small group of like-minded people with similar backgrounds, now it is something bigger, something more open, something more expansive, something even more welcoming and inclusive. When Peter and the church are converted, when they discover that God truly shows no partiality, they find out that the new community God is creating cannot be contained by what they think is possible or appropriate. Instead they begin to discover that this new community, always following the Spirit's lead, will be constantly evolving, always changing, always expanding and incorporating, always including and welcoming, always stretching, always in the midst of adventure, always moving outside of what was once comfortable towards the limitlessness of grace, always moving beyond what once seemed possible towards the limitlessness of resurrection hope.

What began that afternoon on a rooftop continues today. The Church is still being converted. We are still being stretched by the power of resurrection. Our frontiers are still being expanded. Our expectations are still being surpassed. The shape and scope of community is still evolving and changing as lines that used to divide are erased and boundaries that used to separate are dismantled.

As a result of resurrection, new community happens. And with it comes new partners in our corporate participation in grace, new voices in our articulation of praise, and new gifts expressed in our shared ministry. As the Church continues to be converted to the new possibilities of resurrection let us continue to make room for this new community to grow and evolve even in our congregation.

Pastor Peter Morris

## *Farewell from Gunnard Swanson*

Members and friends of Arbor Covenant Church,

Thank you for the time of farewell in the service of March 5, 2017. Rod asked that I keep it short. I did just that! As expected the emotions of the moment overwhelmed me. This letter will allow me to share much of what I have thought about these past two or three months.

I wish to convey my deepest sense of thanks for the many years I participated in worship and service at Arbor Covenant Church. As a community, you supported me and my family for the years we worshiped with you.

First and foremost I want to thank you for the love you demonstrated during Ulla's illness and passing. Ulla found a family of friends at Arbor. She used her gifts in quietly meaningful ways. She loved Jesus and loved serving in His church. The most profound thing I shall remember about her life and legacy came at the memorial service in Sweden in 2013. Ulla had been gone from Sweden for over thirty years so reflections from her family and friends were mostly predicated on who she was as a teenager and a very young woman. Those who knew her in Bredaryd said the same things as those who knew her in Madison. I pondered those comments and realized that Ulla was grounded in the love of Jesus as a young person in Sweden and over her lifetime she never wavered. She was anchored in her faith at an early age and brought that faith to her home in Madison. Thanks be to God.

Second, I want to commend Arbor for its work with Ulrika and Adrian. I believe they both love Jesus and are children of God. Their lives reflect the upbringing that we as parents instilled in them and the added support that Arbor afforded them in those early formative years. The commitment to youth ministries, Sunday school, the Covenant Point camping ministry, and mission trips helped form who they are today. I believe we together gave them roots to ground them in the Christian faith and wings to fly on their own in ministry to God's people and His church.

Lastly, my heart is filled with joy as I look back on the years I was with you. I am overjoyed with some memories and regretful over others. Through the years, you never wavered in your love and acceptance of me.

I found deep fulfillment in my work with the choir. Together we made wonderful music and, I hope, brought glory to God in our worship. We enhanced worship nearly every Sunday. We enriched the church year with concerts and special programs. We all enjoyed the evenings of music, where we sang those songs that are close to our hearts and deep in our memories. Oh, for the rich musical foundation we built together, singing praises to our Lord and Savior.

Thanks for Rodney Johnson, Eric Lindgren, and Charlene Nelson for the times we shared practicing to bring organ-piano duets to worship on Sundays. We each brought what talents we had and God multiplied those talents over, and over again. Oh, the memories! They linger still.

Work days, Luke House, the homeless shelter, church council, Sunday treats, Sunday school, mission trip. Each of these was my way of saying thank you to God for the goodness he has lavished on me through the years. Each of these was a means to serve God in meaningful ways to give witness to God's desire that we each be a good and faithful servant.

It has been a wonderful thirty-eight years. Time seems to have flown by. I bring with me to Minneapolis memories of each of you. Together, in pairs, in small groups, and in community, we have made Arbor Covenant Church what it is today. We each have played a role in her ministry here in Madison. May God continue to bless each of you. Continue to rely on the moving of the Holy Spirit as this church has done many times in my memory. God is faithful. He is mighty. He is indeed the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Trust in Him and he will continue to do great works amongst His people in Madison, in the surrounding communities, in our nation, and indeed in the world!

Thanks be to God!!  
Gunnard



## Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry Item of the Month

**Dish soap – 14 oz.**

**Please leave your donations in the box in the front hallway. Thank You.**

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE GOOD NEIGHBORS PERSONAL ESSENTIALS PANTRY?**

For five years Arbor Covenant Church has partnered with Memorial United Church of Christ, All Saints Lutheran Church and The Church at Christ Memorial to provide personal and household hygiene products such as toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent, diapers and toothbrushes/tooth paste to our neighbors with low incomes predominantly in the Fitchburg neighborhood and surrounding areas. There are many food pantries in Madison but there are only 3 personal essentials pantries within Madison and the products that we provide are typically not available any place else.

When our guests come through the Fellowship Room door at Arbor Covenant, they are warmly greeted and reminded to take a number from our informational easel. Then they are encouraged to enjoy a cup of great coffee (their words!) and a “goodie” which is usually a muffin from Perkins or one of the sweets that Panera Bread often donates to us. Panera also donates a large amount of fresh bread, rolls and bagels for our guests who are encouraged to take as much as they want every week.

When their number is called they meet with a volunteer who manages a computer that tells the guest what they are eligible for that week and produces a paper menu in whatever language is appropriate. The guest chooses what they need from this menu and another volunteer takes their menu back to the supply room and the order is filled.

In the meantime, our guest is free to go back to the Fellowship room and enjoy more coffee with their neighbors. The room often looks like a mini – United Nations with people who are Hispanic, African American, Muslim, Eastern European, North American, Asian and from many other cultures. People are swapping stories, childcare tips and laughter while seated around the round, white tables.

When their order has been filled, a volunteer brings the bags to them and they are basically ready to go. Our volunteer team is extremely efficient so the whole process generally takes 20-30 minutes or less.

Many volunteers are involved in background activities including accepting deliveries of products from our local wholesaler, Certco and then emptying the large cartons and stocking the shelves. Nancy Baumgardner from Memorial UCC, Robin Cherwinka from All Saints Lutheran Church and Jan Gietzel from Arbor Covenant take care of operations. Nancy is skilled at all the ordering. Robin manages and maintains the website [www.gnpep.net](http://www.gnpep.net) as well as coordinating all the volunteers. Jan is in charge of GNPEP’s financial records and fundraising activities. Many volunteers from all the churches support all the positions that are needed to keep GNPEP running smoothly. Those who have been involved from Arbor include Janis Hanson, Ann-Britt Keillor, Ruth Hallblade, Elrene Lund, Sue Pecotte, Pastor Peter and Susan Corrado. GNPEP is also extremely grateful for its regular financial supporters from Arbor and all the other individuals, churches and organizations that help keep this mission viable.

God has extended his grace to all of us through this work – guests, volunteers, supporters and churches. Please pray that these blessings continue as examples of what it means to care for one another!

## Graduations

### Randy Kessenich



and Dan Kessenich.

Randy will graduate from Verona High School on June 11. He plans to enroll at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point and pursue his interest in musical theater. Since third grade he has been in 32 shows, with musicals being his favorites. Highlights include playing J. Harold Hill (Music Man), Oliver (Oliver), Raoul in Phantom of the Opera and Protaire in Les Miserables. He has also been a part of the Tommy Ensemble through the Overture Center. Randy's parents are Marijo (Levin)

### Brenda Pecotte de Gonzalez



Congratulations to Brenda who is graduating from ATSU-SOMA (A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona). Brenda will receive her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree. She and her husband David will be moving to Peoria Illinois where she will be doing her residency. Brenda's parents are John and Sue Pecotte.

### Memorial Service for Ardeth Lindgren



Ardeth Lindgren, a charter member of this church, passed away on March 30 in Madison. A graveside service was held last month at Lost Grove Cemetery near Lanyon, Iowa, with Pastor Allan Redenius of First Covenant Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa, presiding.

A Memorial Service for Ardeth will be held at Arbor on Saturday June 3 at 11:00 a.m. with Pastors Peter Morris and Rodney Johnson presiding. Visitation will be held at the church from 9:45 a.m. until the time of the service. Lunch will be catered following the service.

Ardeth loved this church and gave her care and concern to many of us. You are invited to join her family and friends on June 3 as we remember a wonderful woman. Praise God for the life of Ardeth Lindgren.

### Covenant Women Booklist

On May 1 Covenant Women met and, after enjoying a delicious salad dinner, discussed their favorite books from last year. Kris Brown compiled a booklet of favorite books submitted by 26 people from the congregation. It is available on the church [website](#). Look under Past and Present Announcements. If you would like a print copy, talk to Kris Brown. Past booklists can also be found on the website.

These booklists include many different genres of books. It is hoped that you will find books that interest you and then talk to the person who recommended the book about your reaction to it.

## Parish Notes

Please remember in prayer

Art Shegonee who underwent back surgery in April.

Judy Douglas who remains in hospice at Oak Park Place. Short visits are welcome.

Dick Lindgren and his family who are grieving the death of Ardeth.

Jim Stehley's family as they grieve his passing.

The families of Mark and Glenn Hanson following the death of their father and grandfather, Emery Hanson.

Nick Fatsis who continues to recover after being in a motorcycle accident more than 18 months ago. Please pray for his continued healing.

### May Birthdays

5/8 Sarah Howard  
5/8 Debby Meyer  
5/24 Janis Hanson  
5/25 John Pecotte

### May Anniversaries

5/22 John and Sue Pecotte  
5/25 Ken and Elrene Lund

	HOST	NURSERY	READER	PROJECTOR
May 7	Janis and Mark Hanson	Joyce Boggess	Mike Johnson	Michelle Stachowiak
May 14	Amanda and Matthew Fledderjohann	Ulrika Swanson	Ruth Hallblade	Chuck Gietzel
May 21	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Deb Levin	Sue Pecotte	Debby Meyer
May 28	Debby and Dan Meyer	Matthew Fledderjohann	Ulrika Swanson	Mark Hanson

## May Calendar

	<b>1</b> 6:00 PM Covenant Women Book night	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 10:00 AM Personal Essentials Pantry	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25AM Gathering Music 10:30 Call to Worship Communion Deacon Offering	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7:00 PM Welcoming Inclusive Statement Committee	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:30 PM Leadership Committee	<b>12</b> 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	<b>13</b> 9:00AM- noon Work day
<b>14</b> 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25AM Gathering Music 10:30 Call to Worship	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	<b>18</b> 10:30AM Community Meals @ Luke House 5:30 PM-7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	<b>19</b> 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25AM Gathering Music 10:30 Call to Worship	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 4:30 AM- 7:00 AM Homeless Shelter 10:00 AM-1:00PM Personal Essentials Pantry	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25AM Gathering Music 10:30 Call to Worship	<b>29</b> <i>Memorial Day</i> 	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Ardeh Lindgren 9:45 AM Visitation 11:00 Memorial Service Lunch

\*Shelter Volunteers: Peter Morris and Dan Meyer