



Arbor Covenant Church Newsletter

Madison WI

July 2017

A Summer of Dysfunction

As we gather for worship in the coming weeks, we will be reading a series of stories from the book of Genesis. Chronicling the lives of the patriarchs and matriarchs of the faith, they will give tell to the lives of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers. All these stories converge to form the foundations of the biblical narrative, they coalesce to fashion the footings of God's story of redemptive, restorative love, laying the framework God's people have used to understand their identity and their vocation as people of faith.

But even as they all contribute to this beautiful tale of salvation, they are — in and of themselves — pretty messed up. There are certainly instances when protagonists demonstrate courage and grace, but by and large these are principally stories of brokenness and betrayal, stories of rivalry and deception, stories of disregard and dysfunction.

This set of stories starts with Abraham and Sarah and their treatment of Hagar and Ishmael, when they enlisted Hagar, without her consent, to bare a child with Abraham. That child, Ishmael, would later be sent away with his mother forced to endure on their own in an unforgiving wilderness. It will then include the harrowing story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his other son Isaac. And then things go on to include the tangled sibling rivalry between Esau and Jacob, and then Jacob's cumbersome, conniving relationship with his father-in-law Laban and Laban's daughters Leah and Rachel. And after that we'll get to the story of some brothers whose disdain for their brother Joseph compelled them to cast him off to danger and near certain death.

All these stories are messy and untidy. They are all filled with brokenness and estrangement. They are saturated with treachery — relationships strained and severed, as parents play favorites and brothers turn on each other.

Our general custom at Arbor at the conclusion of reading scripture is for the reader to say "The Word of the Lord," and the congregation to respond with "Thanks be to God." But when reading stories like these it can feel difficult to arrive at that response. It can be hard to feel thankful about a story where a birthright is stolen or a daughter is treated like a bargaining chip or a brother is left for dead

But maybe there is something about these stories that might inspire some thanksgiving. Maybe the mere fact that none of this brokenness is glossed over or denied is a good thing. In the Bible, skeletons don't remain in closets nor do secrets remain hidden, instead the messy truth is told in a way that ultimately offers liberation and hope.

In scripture, the people of God's brokenness doesn't disqualify them from playing a part in God's redemptive work. People aren't made ineligible because of their guilt, they aren't measured merely by their shameful deeds but are

offered transformative love that can absorb even the most painful memories into a story that reshapes their life and ultimately reshapes all of creation.

And if scripture works this way, with honesty about brokenness and dysfunction, maybe we can too. Maybe scripture's honesty can free us from some of the shame we feel when we recognize that our stories aren't perfect, that we too bare some painful wounds and some traumatic memories. Maybe we can begin to realize that our brokenness isn't an issue unique to us, that it doesn't need to make us feel as isolated or as lonely as it sometimes can. And when we think of how God includes so much hurt into a story that is ultimately about redemption, maybe we can rejoice in the truth that none of our dysfunction or our shame or our brokenness disqualifies us from receiving or playing a part in God's transformative love.

Pastor Peter Morris.

Summer Schedule Changes



There will be no Children's Church until after Labor Day. The Sunday Study Group will not be meeting until after Labor Day. The Wednesday Study Group will also not meet until the fall.

July 30 –Covenant Harbor Bible Camp Sunday



This year we will be trying something new. On July 30 we will be joining worship at Lake Geneva Bible Camp and then enjoying a picnic lunch, spending time visiting and playing on the shore of beautiful Lake Geneva. Rev. Dr. David Kersten, Vice President of Church Relations and Dean of the North Park

Theological Seminary will be preaching. More details will follow. Carpooling will be available to those who wish to share a ride.

Pastor Peter also plans to offer a **worship service at Arbor** that morning. So if you are unable to join the group at Covenant Harbor, please plan to worship at Arbor as usual.

Week of August 14 -Vacation Bible School –

Theme: This little light of mine

Future events – we will be gathering information



Mallards Baseball Game - no definite date. Last year we went on July 15 weekend. Talk to Pastor Peter if interested.



Canoe Trip – Tentative plan is July 21-22. EVERYONE is welcome.
Talk to Mark Hanson if interested.



Covenant Point Triathlon - August 5-6 weekend. See Pastor Peter or Rachel Woofert if interested in participating. You can participate as a team or as an individual.



Pontoon Boat trip –Mark has found an operator. We will pick a date soon and let you know.



Olbrich Gardens – We may plan a walk around the beautiful Olbrich Garden later this summer.

Musical Possibilities – submitted by Ulrika Swanson

If you're looking for something to do the evening of July 3 or 4 and don't mind driving a bit, you're welcome to come enjoy a free outdoor concert by the Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra!



July 3rd: Janesville's Courthouse Park at 6:30 PM (no rain location)

July 4th: Beloit's Riverside Park at 7:30 PM, fireworks to follow (rain location is Telfer Park)

Zoo Trip

Seventeen Arbor people gathered at the Vilas Zoo in June. It was a warm but beautiful day. After visiting the animals, we ate lunch.



Zoo Visitors – Rachel and Will, Ann-Britt, Peter, Linda, Theo, and Tom, Joyce and 6 wonderful kids from her day care center.

Not pictured: Dawn and Sedona, Kris Brown (photographer)

Kids visiting with Bucky



Checking out the aquatic life

Will and Theo checking out the zoo.



Church business

Congregational Meeting –

Leadership Team Elections. Mark Hanson and Kris Brown were reelected to the Leadership Team and Jan Gietzel was elected to the seat left empty by Jim Stehley's death. Thank you to Mike Johnson who will be going off the Leadership Team.

Youth Ministry - Arbor will be developing a part time youth ministry position starting at VBS in August. See Peter or Mark if you're willing to help draft the position description. The congregation approved a contract position at the June meeting. We plan to take that up at the July Leadership Team Meeting. Note also the VBS dates and to see Joyce to volunteer.

Christian Community Statement - The membership unanimously approved the Christian Community Statement. It is now posted on our church website. Thanks to Jan Gietzel who served as chairperson of the group and to those who served on the committee. (Sue Springman, Pastor Peter Morris, Hannah Lund, Ann-Britt Keillor, Rachel Woofter, Rod Johnson).

Parish Notes

Prayer Request from Sue Pecotte –

Jeff Eicher - He is our neighbor's brother who survived cancer about 20 years ago, but suffered some heart damage due to the drugs that were used. On July 18, he will undergo extensive surgery to repair and replace damage that was done to his heart. He is 51. He is very optimistic and is looking forward to 20 more years. There will be about 3 months of recovery that he asks for prayer as well.

Tom Collins has asked for prayers and contacts. He is largely confined to his home now and truly appreciates contact with all friends.

Judy Douglas – Judy has recently felt better. She is still at Oak Park Place East. She loves mail and short phone calls.

July Birthdays

July 12 - Phil Brown
 July 15 - Trudy Nordling
 July 19 - Anika Simmons
 July 25 - Seaira Goettler
 July 26 - Karen Pecotte
 July 28 - Kris Brown
 July 28 - Amanda Fledderjohann
 July 31 - Nancy McDuff

July Anniversaries

July 20 – Kris and Phil Brown
 July 31 – Ruth and Dale Hallblade

**Personal Essentials Pantry
 Item of the Month**

Shampoo 12 oz.
**Please leave donations in box in front
 hallway. Thank you**

Volunteer Responsibilities

	Host	Nursery	Lay Reader	Projector
July 2	Ruth and Dale Hallblade	Amanda Pecotte	Mike Johnson	Mark Hanson
July 9	Janis and Mark Hanson	Matthew Fledderjohann	Ruth Hallblade	Sue Pecotte
July 16	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Ulrika Swanson	Ulrika Swanson	Michelle Stachowiak
July 23	Debby and Dan Meyer	Deb Levin	Mark Hanson	Chuck Gietzel
July 30	Elrene and Ken Lund	Joyce Boggess	Jan Gietzel	Debby Meyer

July Calendar

2 10:25am Gathering Music 10:30 am Worship Communion Deacon Offering	3	4 	5	6	7 10:00 am Personal Essentials Pantry	8
9 10:25am Gathering Music 10:30 am Worship	10	11	12	13 6:30 pm Leadership Team	14 10:00 am Personal Essentials Pantry	15
16 10:25am Gathering Music 10:30 am Worship	17	18	19	20 10:30 am Community Meals @ Luke House 5:30-7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	21 10:00 am Personal Essentials Pantry Canoe Trip	22
23 10:25am Gathering Music 10:30 am Worship	24	25	26	27	28 10:00 am Personal Essentials Pantry 4:30-7:30 am Homeless shelter @ Grace Episcopal	29
30 Worship at Covenant Harbor ACC Worship 10:30 am Worship	31				(Shelter volunteers: Doug Keillor and Ken Lund)	