

Newsletter
Arbor Covenant Church
Madison Wisconsin
February 2018

Ash Wednesday and Lent

February 14th is Ash Wednesday. It marks the beginning of Lent — the 40-day season of prayer and reflection that leads to our celebration of resurrection on Easter Sunday. During those seven or so weeks the Church is invited to consider the state of its spiritual life through communal and individual practices of prayer and self-examination. It's a time of discernment and growth, when we are summoned to offer our intention and our consent to the work God is doing in our lives and in the world. There are many expressions and practices God's people have used to engage God during lent. From journaling, to fasting, to retreats, to reading a daily devotion, the list of possibilities is long and fruitful. The aim is quite simply to create space for us to connect or deepen our connection with the God who pursues each of us.



As we think about creating this space perhaps our intention will be as simple as noticing grace or extending gratitude. Maybe we may want to commit some time and energy to grow deeper in our relationships and our self-awareness. Or maybe we just want to ask yourself a couple of questions over the course of the day to encourage us to consciously see the world with eyes of faith or to live out of our hope rather than our cynicism.

We will gather the evening of the 14th at 7pm to sing and pray and worship together. We'll be reminded that night of our mortality and our need for God's grace through the imposition of ashes, we'll also have some time to discuss together ways we might encounter God this Lent. Before we leave, I will introduce some experiential prayer practices that will be included in our Sunday worship services during the Lenten Season.

I hope that you will join us.

Pastor Peter Morris



In Memory of Mike Johnson

Arbor Covenant member Michael Johnson (January 3, 1951-January 15, 2018) passed away in Madison Wisconsin.

Mike was born in Detroit Michigan. His parents were Edward and Flora Shivers Johnson. His mother, a sister Catherine and a brother Steve preceded him in death.

In the mid 1980s he moved to Madison Wisconsin where he enrolled in educational courses in Real Estate and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Mike treasured his very special friendship with Shirley Drunasky. He worked for Renaissance Realty, a company owned by Shirley, as a sales associate. He then worked for the Town of Madison as the deputy Building Inspector from 1987-1991. During that time Mike and Shirley planned to start a glass glazing business (Glass Max LLC). They opened for business in 1994. Mike received his journeyman glazier license. Their company worked on such large projects as Monona Terrace, the Overture Center, Miller Park, the Kohl Center and Lambeau Field. In 2002 he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and closed the business in 2006.

Mike has been a longtime member of Arbor. Many knew him because he served as an usher and greeted them at church each week. But Mike was engaged in every aspect of the church. He served several terms on the Church Leadership Team, frequently as Vice Chair. He was a committed volunteer at Luke House and argued strongly when people questioned whether Arbor could still continue to participate in the program. He was a faithful volunteer at Leopold School when Arbor was participating in their volunteer group. He has served as a volunteer at the Homeless Shelter and the Personal Essentials Pantry. He was always willing to help with church upkeep projects.

In his Bible, Mike left the following meditation: "My God, I surrender my life, my will, and my love to you this day. I offer the day to you and hope it is worthy of your love. Please direct and protect my family and their families as well as all friends. Direct and protect those whom I resent and help me forgive them. Help all in need of solace and friendship. May my family and friends stay in good health, and may I do my best work with efficiency, intelligence, patience, tolerance, and energy. I am so grateful to You for my many blessings."

Rest in peace, Mike. You will be missed.

Written by Joyce Boggess; modified by Kris Brown

The Season of Lent - and Easter

Ash Wednesday - February 14 - Service at Arbor at 7:00 PM

Sundays in Lent - February 18, 25 March 4, 11, 18

March 25- Palm Sunday

March 29 - Maundy Thursday

March 30 - Good Friday

March 31- Easter Sunday

Plans for mid-week meetings during Lent are still forming. Details will be available very soon. Plan to join together with others as we pray and prepare for Easter.



Annual Meeting -

The Annual Meeting of the Church was held on January 28th following worship. The suggested budget was adopted. A few new items of business include the following:

1. New boiler. The church boiler is more than 50 years old and original to the building. While the problems have been minor, the plumbing company has informed us that they can no longer get parts to service it. It has been decided that the boiler will be replaced this summer after getting several bids. The bill will be paid with savings and therefore is not reflected in the budget.
2. Worship and Music Coordinator – The Leadership Team proposed that we hire a part time Worship and Music Coordinator to work with the Pastor and the Worship Team to expand and enhance our worship services. A job description has been written. It was suggested that this person may also participate in youth activities such as Fun Fridays and Vacation Bible School. This proposal passed.
3. Roger Springman asked to amend the budget to include %500 for a mission trip. He believes that these trips are important for those who attend and for our public image as a people who give to others. This was passed.
4. Upcoming meetings: April 26 Central Conference Meeting Glen Ellyn Illinois
June 21-23 Denomination Annual Meeting in Minneapolis MN
See Pastor Peter or Mark Hanson if you are interested in being a delegate.

Reports from the Pastor, the Chair, and the Children's Ministry Coordinator follow/

Please plan to become involved in the many opportunities for worship, outreach, and education in 2018

Annual Report - Report from Minister

Within the narrative ark of the Hebrew Scripture the Psalms serve as the up-and-down chronicling of human experience. As they outline how God's people responded to their creator, they provide a spiritual and emotional testimony to the high and lows of life, plumbing the depths of suffering associated with war and exile and loss, while also giving voice to the joys and contentment of settled rest and realized prosperity. It's been said that while turning through the pages of the Psalms you will, without fail, encounter something that connects to your emotional experience — whether painful or jubilant. No human emotion is left out.

Reflecting on 2017, both the sadness and joy of our life together find resonance in the Psalms' witness. As we mourn the passing of dear friends who died this year the words of Psalm 90 reverberate with our experience: "A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by or like a watch in the night. Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death....Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love..."

Perhaps this Psalm or others that recognize the reality of sadness, give us language as we grieve the deaths of congregational mainstays and beloved companions. Jim Stehley, Ardeth Lindgren, Dale Hallblade, Rev. Rodney Johnson, and Mike Johnson each in their own significant ways contributed to the life of our church, offering us friendship, sharing with us their gifts and passions, dispensing wisdom and leadership. The sting of their loss does not subside quickly, but God's covenant promise is to remain faithful, to abide with us, to persist in loving kindness "that we may" once again "sing for joy and be glad all our days..."

Having said goodbye to so many significant friends has made the last year acutely difficult. But amidst the tears there have been other significant occurrences; occasions and developments that signal the steadfastness of God's faithfulness and portend the possibility of new beginnings. These happening draw on the language and imagery of Psalm 126, — dreamers dreaming, mouths filled with laughter, restored hope creating new channels through which God's love can flow in and through God's community. Critically at Arbor, we have established a renewed children's ministry with a revitalized commitment to children's church on Sundays and a new monthly program on Friday nights. (It is a blessing to our congregation and our community that Rachel Woofter has taken on the leadership role in this area of ministry.)

But reasons for hope go beyond programs. After a series of discussions and a season of discernment, Arbor Covenant adopted a congregational statement that articulates the aspirations and the ethos of our community. It's a statement that reflects the depth of God's grace and the width of diversity in God's people. It goes on to extend a welcome to all and express our congregational hope for unity that defies regrettable human divisions and gathers around God's limitless, inexhaustible grace.

The statement gives language to the sort of congregation Arbor has always strived to be while providing a reminder that we have a journey ahead that requires shared effort and mutual reliance on the Spirit to move us in new directions, among new neighbors and new friends. In so doing, it compels us to remember that there are always new opportunities for faithfulness, always new opportunities to extend hospitality, always new opportunities for inclusion and transformation. Always new opportunities for hope.

In concluding this report, I want to share my gratitude and thanks to you — the members and friends of Arbor Covenant Church. Through your grace, love, and generosity God is working in and around our community. As God's work continues, let us all be filled with joy and hopefulness by the possibilities.

Grace & Peace,
Rev. Peter Morris

Annual Report - Report from the Chair of the Leadership Team

Dear Members and Friends,

Philemon is an extraordinary book in the New Testament. It's very short, about the length of this report and incredibly bold.

Imagine the prospects for the early church with one of its leaders Paul sitting in chains in prison in Rome. He's waiting for the trial he requested as a Roman citizen. And as he waits he's writing letters to various churches scattered in what is now Greece and Turkey. These letters are about problems and challenges in the scattered churches, and how followers of Jesus are called to live in the emerging church. Eventually these letters become a large portion of the New Testament.

A call to inclusiveness in the church is one of the striking themes in this letter. It's being carried by a runaway slave who is part of Paul's support group. The letter is addressed to his former slave master (Philemon) and a woman thought to be Philemon's wife who are now the leaders of a church. The church is meeting in their home. Paul is asking that the former slave, Onesimus, be welcomed no longer as a slave but as a fellow worker in the church. We don't have a first-hand account of how this played out, but the fact that two other letters Onesimus was carrying reached their destinations and are books in the New Testament indicate that Philemon responded to God's leading.

2017 was a year of discernment and action in response to God's calling for Arbor Covenant. At our June Congregational meeting, we adopted a Congregational Statement on how we feel called to gather "all peoples together" in following the lead of Jesus. We continued our work in social media and initiated more work in children's ministry. Building on that, the proposed annual budget for 2018 says it's a season for bold work at Arbor including the addition of worship team support with more musician support and more varied music. The Leadership Team feels this is important enough that we are recommending that we reach into our cash reserves if necessary to fund these activities and contract positions. And if they bear fruit, perhaps the cash reserves will not be needed to cover the budget deficit we are planning in the annual budget. We are not in chains, but this is about bold movement.

As I said in last year's annual report, 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." Let's be bold.

This report and other parts of this year's annual report are brief as 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 2017 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.

There are 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.

Mark Hanson
Chair

Leadership Team

Mark Hanson, Chair
Joyce Boggess, Vice-Chair
Sue Springman

Pastor Peter Morris
Rachel Woofter, Secretary
Kris Brown

Deb Levin, Treasurer
Dan Meyer
Jan Gietzel

Annual Report - Report from Christian's Ministry Leader

This was a year of growth for Children's Ministry at Arbor, both in number of regularly involved kids, and program opportunities for children. Hiring a dedicated Children's Ministry Leader helped make this possible. Major focuses for the year were VBS, Christmas & Easter programs (much thanks to Miss Joyce for those three events), Children's Church, new Friday night programming, and revising opportunities for kids on Sunday mornings.

There were about 30 students ages 2-10 present for VBS, most of whom came from Fountain of Life. A handful of high school volunteers helped the program run successfully. The theme for the week was "Let Your Light Shine," and students learned how we can share God's love with the world. Miss Joyce oversaw VBS, with volunteers from both churches helping.

This fall, we started a monthly Friday night program, set up in the same format as VBS (dinner, a group story & message time, and craft/game time). Each month, students learned about a fruit of the spirit. Beginning in October, we have had an attendance of 13, 10, and 8 students at each of our gatherings so far. Most students are from the Arbor community, though a few from Fountain of Life have attended.

Children's Church is continuing for preschool & kindergarten aged kids. There is an average attendance of 1-2 kids each Sunday. We began a new curriculum this Advent, which uses the lectionary text for the Sunday as the lesson basis for students. This, combined with a few changes on Sunday mornings has the goal of involving our kids more in the service and life of the church.

On Sunday mornings, kids now stay for the first Bible reading and children's message and return for the final hymn. In addition, there are options for kids to participate in communion on those Sundays, and activity bags for both younger and older students are regularly updated to match the reading and lesson for the day.

-Rachel Woofter, Children's Ministry Leader



How to pick a devotional resource

As a new Christian I learned that the best way to start and center my day was to have a Quiet Time (what Inter - Varsity Christian Fellowship called it) or a devotional. In college I had access to lots of devotional options and used many of them. As I moved away from college my options changed but I mostly found good resources. Over the last few years I have used a number of resources and thought I'd share my two regulars.

When I am in my normal routine I enjoy the Evangelical Covenant Church daily guide (available at Arbor) the Covenant Home Altar. I like that they use the regular scripture readings that Pastor Peter focuses on in Sunday sermon and that they use many different writers for the devotional. That is often my easy go-to option.

I've found a new favorite resource for Advent and Lent from the Biola University in California through their Center for Christianity Culture and the Arts. What I love about this devotional series is how wide and rich it is. Every day has a scripture, poem, and devotional as you might expect but also a work of art to view and music selection to hear. You can sign up for daily emails here (cccs.biola.edu/lent),

I hope this helps in your daily devotional time.

Debby Meyer

Covenant Women

The Spring Celebration for Covenant women will take place March 16 and 17 in Rockford. If you would like to go or would like to have more information, please see Joyce Boggess or Ruth Hallblade.

A vertical graphic on the left side of the flyer features a stylized tree with colorful branches in shades of orange, green, and blue. A butterfly is perched on one of the branches. The background is a light, textured grey.

God Takes Great *Delight* in You.

Zephaniah 3:17

Join us March 16 & 17 Spring Celebration

First Covenant Church 316 Wood Road, Rockford, Illinois
Friday night: Supper at 5:45 followed by Showtime at 6:45
Saturday: Registration begins at 8:15 A.M.
Worship service begins at 9:00 A.M.

Join us Friday night, March 16 for a light supper and the movie, "War Room". Registration begins at 5:30 P.M. with supper being served from 5:45 P.M. -6:45. P.M. Showtime begins at 6:45 P.M. with a couple of surprises to follow!

Saturday registration begins at 8:15 A.M. A continental breakfast will be available. Worship service begins at 9:00 A.M. with our speaker Rev. Ginny Ahrens and worship leader Sheri Ruiz.

The day will also include two workshop sessions with many options to choose from, a catered lunch, business meeting, installation of new officers, and a closing service. An offering will be taken.

Projects: The first project for this year is Freedom House, a domestic abuse treatment center, in Princeton, Illinois. One of the ways to help in their ministry is to provide laundry soap, toilet paper, and paper towels. For the second project in one of our hands-on workshops we will be making emergency kits for women. **We need donations** of the following items: small cosmetic bags, packet tissues, tampons and pads, travel size shampoos and conditioners, and other toiletries, band aids, and snack bars. We will be collecting these items at the Spring Celebration.

For more information you can contact
Laurie Schwalm at 815-670- 4701
or e-mail Lois Miller at loismiller12345@yahoo.com.

Early Registration \$40
(ends February 21)

Group Rate Registration \$35
(for 10 or more registering at the same time,
ends February 21)

Registration \$50
(after February 21 must be postmarked by March 7)

Please complete a registration form for **each** participant.

Speaker: Rev. Ginny Ahrens currently serves as the Associate Pastor of Children's Ministry at First Covenant in Rockford. She received a B.A. in Christian Ministries from Oak Hills Christian College and a MA in Christian Formation from North Park Seminary. She was ordained through the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2017 and has been on staff at First Covenant Church since 2004. Ginny and her husband Dave are the parents of two daughters, Rachel and Hannah.

Worship: Sheri Ruiz is the worship leader at First Covenant in Rockford.

Hotel Reservations can be made at the Hampton Inn, 615 Clark Drive, Rockford, Illinois. To get the group discount be sure to mention "Women Ministries of the Central Conference Spring Celebration" when making reservations.

Children's Ministry



Stay tuned for more information about a camp night in March! Covenant Point Bible camp is hoping to visit Arbor and spend time celebrating their camping ministry! Everyone--young kids and old kids--will be invited to come hear about the great work going on at our camps, and how we can get involved. Start thinking now about who in your circles would enjoy this fun experience at church, and who might enjoy time at camp this summer!



We need some additional volunteers for the nursery. What a wonderful opportunity to spend some time with little ones. If you would like to help in the nursery occasionally, please talk to Deb Levin. Thank you for your consideration.



Pray for our children as they learn about God.
Pray for their parents who have the responsibility for raising them in the church.
Pray for our volunteers who devote their time to teaching the children about God's love.

Friday Fun Night

Arbor Covenant Church

February 2

5:30-7:00 pm

For kids **ages 4-11**

February's theme:

PATIENCE

Enjoy a Friday evening while your kids explore their Christian faith in a safe environment!

Dinner provided



On the first Friday of each month, we explore the Fruit of the Spirit with a Bible story, songs, games, and crafts.



Questions?

Rachel Wooffer
Children's Ministry Leader
rachel.wooffer@gmail.com
(414) 416-8210

Arbor Covenant Church

2509 McDivitt Rd
Madison, WI 53713
(608) 271-1955



Parish Notes

Late breaking news!! On January 30, Deb and Dan Meyer welcomed twin grandsons, **James and Finn Meyer**. Their parents are Laura and Seth Meyer and they live in DePere Wisconsin. They have an older brother William (3) and a sister Joy (1).

The boys arrived seven weeks early. They were each between 4-5 lbs. and are healthy. They are currently in the NICU at the hospital. Deb and Dan ask for prayers for growth and development so they can come home to the family, Deb and Dan are in DePere to help the family.



Paul Kent's father, John, passed away in Pewaukee on December 31, 2017. Please remember Paul, Peggy, and their family as they grieve. Attached is the link to [Mr. Kent's obituary](#) in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

*Good Neighbor Personal Essentials
Pantry
Item of the Month*

*Inexpensive Disposable
Women's Razors*

February Birthdays

February 3 Charles Volk
 February 12 Rachel Woofter
 February 14 Lee Fledderjohann
 February 15 Sheri Keillor

February Anniversaries

February 10 Dan and Marijo Kessenich

Volunteer Responsibilities

	Hosts	Nursery	Children's Church	Reader	Projector
February 4	Ann-Britt Keillor and Ulrika Swanson	Deb Levin	Ruth Hallblade	Elrene Lund	Mark Hanson
February 11	Debby and Dan Meyer	Amanda Pecotte	Peter Morris	Mark Hanson	Sue Pecotte
February 18	Deb McGill and Glenn Hanson	Joyce Boggess	Mark Hanson	Kris Brown	Michelle Stachowiak
February 25	Joyce Boggess and Mary Keehn	Ulrika Swanson	Matthew Fledderjohann	Jan Gietzel	Chuck Gietzel

February 2018

				1 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	2 10:00 AM-noon Personal Essentials Pantry 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM Fun Friday	3
4 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship Communion Deacon Fund	5	6	7	8 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	9 10:00 AM-noon Personal Essentials Pantry	10
11 9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	12	13 6:30 PM Leadership Team	14  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">7:00 PM Worship Service</div>	15 10:30 AM Community Meals at Luke House 5:30 PM- 7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	16 10:00 AM-noon Personal Essentials Pantry	17
18  9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	19	20	21	22 7:00 PM Small Group at Meyers	23 4:30 AM-7:30 AM Homeless Shelter at Grace Episcopal * 10:00 AM-noon Personal Essentials Pantry	24
25  9:15 AM Sunday Study Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	26	27	28	1	2	3

* Shelter Volunteers: Ken Lund and Dan Meyer