

# The Church Bell

The Newsletter of the

## United Church of Christ, Congregational

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July-August 2011

### GRIST FOR THE MILL

In anticipation of some great conversations this fall about the future of our family of faith, Elaine and I will be preaching this summer about biblical images of the church. We will also be launching a link on our website called "New Dimensions". This section of the website will feature essays by members and friends sharing their own visions and ideas (see below!), as well as some carefully researched creative ministries happening in other communities of faith. Our hope is that all of these ideas will be grist and leaven for our faithful conversations as we continue to find our way into the future – check us out!!

### PLEASE SHARE YOUR VISION – IMAGINE THE CHURCH

We invite each of you to re-imagine the Vermillion UCC by writing an essay. (We suggest a length of 500 words.) Often we rethink institutions when there is a crisis. There is no crisis in our church. In contrast, we have an abundance of good spirit and energy, talent and resources, facilities and land. It is because of this abundance that we ask for your considered opinion about the mission of our church. As you think about our future, you might conclude that the current mission (however you describe it) needs no changing. You might also argue for a completely new vision for our church family. It is up to you. As you write, please try to define what you perceive as the mission of the UCC and how you think that mission can best be served. Please e-mail your essay to [uccv@uccvermillion.org](mailto:uccv@uccvermillion.org) (or bring a hard copy to the church office by July 17<sup>th</sup>).

### JULY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

July 3

"Would You Sign?"

**Romans 6:15-23**

*Communion*

July 10

"This is the Quest"

**I Peter 1:3-16**

July 17

"Teach Your Children Well"

**I Timothy 4:6-16**

July 24

"Destination Deacon"

**1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:9**

July 31

"Gut Feelings"

**Colossians 3:12-17 (KJV)**

### AUGUST WORSHIP SCHEDULE

August 7

Guest Preacher

August 14

"Pay It Forward"

**Hebrews 11: 1-16**

*Communion*

August 21

"Cloud Cover"

**I Corinthians 14 - Selected Verses**

August 28

"The Royal Who"

**James 2:8-17**

## **“Encounters”**

**by Elaine Miller, Assistant Pastor**

Once in awhile someone loans me a have-to-read book that is so wonderful I end up buying my own copy. One such acquisition is entitled, *An Altar in the World: a Geography of Faith*, by Barbara Brown Taylor. I had to have it not because it is a page-turner but because it is a page-lingerer. The depth and wisdom in every paragraph makes me want to read it over and over, allowing her integral observations of life to become a significant path in my faith's journey.

The title of each chapter begins with, “The Practice of.....” I like that for *practice* offers much grace-filled space for growing the sacred within each one of us as we encounter God at many different altars in our world. Some of those altars beg to be recognized as the meeting place for our souls.

Last fall I finally stood before the altar of the backyard flower garden. I had been eyeing it for three summers from afar – the kitchen window. It had not been a garden of my choosing but its brilliant blooms were still lifting their heads towards light in spite of several years of unintentional neglect. It was going to take a lot of hands-in-the-dirt, back-aching-leg-cramping, down-on-my-knees work but it was a task I was now ready to accept. As each stem and bulb was rescued from a certain weedy death, they were prayerfully replanted in hope for another season. My prayers must have been answered for nearly every flagged burrow has produced fresh beauty this spring – with promises of more to come through the summer.

I can't begin to explain why kneeling in the midst of this altar has rescued and renewed my spirit. What I can tell you is it feels holy in that place. May God's grace lift you to light and new life through some of the most heavenly experiences which are to be found right under your feet.

### **FYI, Part 4 – OGM and OCWM**

This is the fourth article on how our church's contributions to OCWM (**O**ur **C**hurch's **W**ider **M**ission) help to fund a range of ministry beyond our local community: Wider Church Ministries (WCM), Local Church Ministries (LCM), Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), and finally, the Office of General Ministries (OGM). The information shared in this month's report comes from Joe Sejnoha, Professor at Mount Marty College, Yankton, a member of the Yankton United Church of Christ, and the S.D. Conference representative to OGM.

“The Office of General Ministries (OGM) is the administrative arm of the United Church of Christ. It has no independent funds of its own such as the endowed funds of WCM, LCM and JWM. It has the responsibility for the day-to-day tasks of the United Church of Christ as a denomination. This is primarily a behind-the-scenes function but is vital to the operation of our church as a whole. What you see when you log onto the [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) website is maintained by people who work for OGM. The magazine, *still Speaking*, is published by the Proclamation, Identity, and Communication (PIC) ministry, again a part of OGM. When you see anything that proclaims the **God is Still Speaking** slogan, you are looking at the results of the work of some OGM staff. Most of the logistics of planning for the biennial meeting of the General Synod, this year hosted in Tampa, Florida from July 1-5, is centered in the OGM office.

Another of OGM's important roles is to work closely with all of the offices and staff within the Church House in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as the resources that support the ministries of those offices. In the past several years, OGM staff have developed job descriptions and evaluation instruments, and consolidated some of the financial reporting processes by implementing policies and procedures that help the national church operate in a fiscally responsible manner. The delegates to General Synod in Tampa will vote on the proposed “Unified Governance Proposal” which continues efforts toward reorganization and further fiscal responsibility.”

Well, that's it in a nutshell! Here is a little reminder...UCC congregations are asked, not required, to contribute to a common fund, OCWM, which is the key means of financial support for the program, administration, and mission work of both the S.D. Conference and the UCC. Just one tenth of the \$10,000 budgeted this year by our church for OCWM is received in support for the ministry offices in Cleveland. It may seem hardly worth it but together we can accomplish far more than we individually might be able to think or imagine. Feel free to contact me with specific questions or thoughts regarding **Our Church's Wider Mission**. Parts one, two and three of “**FYI – OCWM**” are available in our church office. Thanks for reading! ~ Elaine

## **EDEN PROJECT UPDATE**

**North lot:** We transplanted the starts planted at Bible School including pumpkin, cantaloupe, watermelon, cucumbers and squash, and they are taking off with the sunshine. These will be used for LAF in the fall and also be shared with the local food pantry. We thank Elaine and the children for the blessing the plants received during a recent “time with children”. We ask everyone to bring their grass clippings to the pile in the SE corner of this lot, so we can smother the weeds that are also taking off.

**West lot:** The raised vegetable beds are looking good, and we hope to have some produce for the food pantry soon. There are carrots, lettuce, bush beans, tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries and raspberries growing there. The grass is coming in beautifully in the “meadow” area. The west about one-third of the lot was planted to wildflowers; that is currently covered with annual grass and we are keeping it mowed to control the weeds.

**Eden Project night:** We gather each Wednesday night from 6-7 pm and work on projects and chat. We would absolutely **LOVE** your help, as the size of the project is a bit overwhelming at times. We are thankful for the people who have participated in “work night”, for those who gave plants and took on responsibility of a raised bed and for those who helped to shape the lot with soil and hard work; we are truly blessed with a kind and caring community of people. If you would like to be on the church email list to get regular updates on work night, please send your email to [uccv@uccvermillion.org](mailto:uccv@uccvermillion.org). Vicki and Cindy

## **BACKPACK PROGRAM**

The World Service and Social Concerns Board is beginning to make plans to take part in the Welcome Table’s Backpack Program to aid students in acquiring the required school supplies for school for this coming year. As Vermillion schools start in mid-August we hope to have donations and/or supplies to the WSSC before this date. We will again have bags with the grade and a male or female student listed on it for those who wish to purchase supplies. We also will need donations to fill in bags with supplies. The backpacks are provided by the Welcome Table. Look for a sign-up list on the bulletin board in the church basement the last week in July. Donations may be made at any time and sent to the church. Please specify the Backpack Program.

Thanking you in advance, WSSC

## **NOTE FROM THE TRUSTEES**

Thank you for keeping your pledges current, this pledge year is going much better. Since we usually see a slow down in the summer months, we want to remind you to pay your pledges ahead if you will be out of town.

## **WHAT A WEEK!**

Many thanks to all those who helped make our Summer Faith Education School a marvelous success as we celebrated “In the Midst of New Dimensions: We are the Church Together!” Nearly 100 young people and 40 adults were present throughout the week!!! Shepherds and singers, storytellers and servers, dancers and signers, cookies and bakers – all the time and energy donated is deeply appreciated.

## **VERMILLION FOOD PANTRY**

Items needed this summer at the Food Pantry (located at Trinity Church, 816 E. Clark Street):

Jams and Jelly – store items	Cereal – small boxes	Pears - cans
Toothpaste – family size	Mashed Potatoes – large	Peas - cans
Mac N Cheese – 7 oz. sizes	Pancake Mix – all sizes	Tuna Fish
Syrup – .99 cent sizes	Rice Dinner Pouches	Beef Stews
Bath Bars of Hand Soap	Detergent – liquid med.	Shampoo – 8 ozs.
Muffin Mixes – small pouches	Spaghetti Sauce – all sizes	Peaches – cans
Scalloped Potatoes – boxed	Cake Mixes – full sized	Mixed Fruits – cans
Tuna and Hamburger Helper	Any Pasta – 1# and 2# bags	Rice – 1# and 2# bags
Diapers – 2 thru 6 sizes	Motel Shampoos/lotions	

## **VERMILLION COMMUNITY THEATRE**

The Vermillion Community Theatre is excited to present “My Fair Lady”. The performances are at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center on July 8-11. Tickets are available at Nook ‘n Cranny, Davis Pharmacy or at the door.

### JULY CALENDAR

#### Friday, July 1

1:00 pm Baking Bandits (every Friday)

#### Sunday, July 3

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi  
Diaconate  
7:00 pm Unitarian Fellowship

#### Tuesday, July 5

7:00 pm Boy Scouts (every Tuesday)

#### Sunday, July 10

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi

#### Sunday, July 17

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi  
Trustees meeting  
WSSC meeting  
7:00 pm Unitarian Fellowship

#### Sunday, July 24

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi

#### Thursday, July 28

11:30 am PALS

#### Sunday, July 31

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi

### AUGUST CALENDAR

#### Tuesday, August 2

7:00 pm Boy Scouts (every Tuesday)

#### Friday, August 5

1:00 pm Baking Bandits (every Friday)

#### Sunday, August 7

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi  
Diaconate  
7:00 pm Unitarian Fellowship

#### Thursday, August 11

3:30 pm PALS

#### Sunday, August 14

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi

#### Sunday, August 21

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi  
Trustees meeting  
WSSC meeting  
7:00 pm Unitarian Fellowship

#### Sunday, August 28

9:30 am Worship  
10:30 am Coffee Hi