

YOUTH NEWS

For information, contact Rev. Tammy Martens at tmartens@orucc.org

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Next Year's Youth Mission Trip: ORUCC's Youth Mission trip for next year will be June 16-June 23. Our destination is Newport, Tennessee. We will be working with an organization called Youth Works (www.youthworks.com). We will be joining two other youth groups—one from Alabama and one from North Carolina. Service opportunities include helping with a Kids' Club, working in community gardens, painting, home repairs, etc. We are partnering with the Madison Mennonite Youth Group.

Youth Mission Trip "Post Office": You are invited to send Christmas cards to other members of the church through our annual Holiday Post Office. Cards are 40 cents and proceeds will help support our youth summer mission trip. The post office, run by mission trip participants, will be available Sunday, December 11 & 18 at a table in Friendship Hall. If you bring cards to mail during other times, an envelope will be available for you pay for your cards located in the office. Please be sure to check the post office boxes often for your own mail too! They are located on the table in the Crossing. If you have questions, please contact Tammy Martens, 271-7212, tmartens@orucc.org or Jackie Eveland-Psyck, 233-3139.

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Church host, 5:30 to 8:30, supervise activities or show a movie

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Sunday, January 1st, 2012, clean-up, 7:15 a.m.

Sign-up sheets are now posted in Friendship Hall, or express your interest to Steve Sheets, 845-5667 or im1042@tds.net.



DECEMBER, 2011 ISSUE 1

**"Spiritually
Alive,
Joyfully
Inclusive,
Committed
to Justice."**

Sunday Morning

December 11

10 am worship, Winton Boyd preaching
Handbell Choir

December 18

10 am worship, Winton Boyd preaching
Orchard Ridge Choir

December 24

5 pm Children's Christmas Program directed by Julie Mazer

TRU Function

9 pm Service of Lessons and Carols
Orchard Ridge Choir

December 25

10 am Stories and Songs, Winton Boyd preaching
No 9 am programming

January 1

10 am worship, Winton Boyd preaching
Special music by Dave & Nick Allen

No 9 am programming

Next Newsletters

Published

Dec. 21 and Jan. 4

Articles due:

Information to be included in the newsletter is due the Monday before the above dates by 9:00 a.m. Email items to office@orucc.org, or drop them off at the office.

www.orucc.org

Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ COMMUNION

Ministry of Christian Witness and Services Announces Proposal for Major Mission Gift

INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY JANUARY 8TH AND JANUARY 22 at 9 A.M. AND 11:15 A.M.

The Ministry of Christian Witness was charged at last January's Congregational meeting to lead a decision making process for the disbursement of approximately \$150,000. This 'mission gift' is 10% of expected donations for our 2010 Major Capital Campaign (Seeds for the Next Generation). In November of this year, the Ministry presented its proposal to the Leadership Team, which approved sending this to the congregation for approval at the January 29 Congregational Meeting (held following worship)

The proposal asks ORUCC to fund two projects over the next 4 years.

1. A Joint Proposal by Commonwealth, Joining Forces for Families and the Public Health Department of Dane County

The proposal made jointly by Common Wealth/JFF/PHMDC includes hiring a Housing Community Organizer and creating an accessible Housing Services Center for southwest Madison. The housing organizer will work to organize service providers, faith based communities and residents to share their talents in attacking the root causes of homelessness and improving housing availability in the 5 neighborhoods that make up SW Madison (Orchard Ridge, Meadowood, Park Ridge, Greentree and Prairie Hills). The housing organizer will also gather and coordinate the resources at the Housing Services Center.

The Housing Services Center, to be located on Russett Road in the same building as the local JFF, Children's Service Society and Public Health offices, will be a centralized location where area families can access all of the available resources for housing services. JFF will also make their employment services available in the same space so that job search resources are located in the same location as housing resources.

CWS was impressed with the collaborative nature of this proposal in combination with the vast experience these organizations bring to the table. In addition to Common Wealth, JFF and PHMDC, organizations such as the Early Childhood Initiative, the Meadowood Neighborhood Center, the Children's Service Society, the SW Organizing Committee, the Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Association (and others) have already expressed support for and willingness to be active collaborators in these efforts. We also appreciate the intention to have the Housing Organizing bring together faith communities like ORUCC in efforts to reduce homelessness and increasing overall housing stability in SW Madison. When questioned about ways that members of ORUCC could be involved, the proposal group responded with a wide variety of potential opportunities. Some of the opportunities will be developed through the community organizing and based on a model with proven success called Love Inc., which was created by a coalition of churches that organizes services they can provide to neighbors in crisis. Overall the members of CWS felt that this proposal is the most innovative, with the most potential impact on the quality of life for people in the neighborhoods surrounding our church. Additionally, funding and working on these efforts would move ORUCC toward being more of a "neighborhood church" in terms of our mission, opening up all kinds of opportunities for the use of our building and people.

2. The Road Home

The Road Home proposed that ORUCC sponsor 1 to 7 families in the Second Chance Apartments project. This project provides transitional housing for a family for two years while simultaneously working with the family to help them develop the skills and resources necessary to succeed on their own. The Road Home provides case management services and trains and supervises volunteer mentors to work with the families. The YWCA screens and selects families for the program and collects

Continued on page 2...

Mission Gift continued...

rent payments. These program expenses are paid through contracts with HUD and United Way of Dance County. ORUCC would pay the rent for the apartment for two years, furnish and prepare the apartment and potentially provide 2-3 mentors to work closely with the family. There may also be opportunities for other members of the congregation to help the family, depending on the family needs and desires.

CWS chose to sponsor one family for the Second Chance Apartment project because of the program's proven success in moving families into stable long term housing. We also like the fact that it makes use of other funding sources for case management and that they will work with us to try and locate the family that is chosen near ORUCC. We see this as an opportunity to deeply affect the future of a family, who otherwise would not qualify for housing, by providing them with a stable home for a two year period.

SUNDAYS**Java and Jesus will return in January****Compassion Offering**

Each month our Sunday cash offerings (change and bills) are designated to a worthy mission cause. Each month a different ministry is highlighted. This is a voluntary contribution. For credit on your church statement, on your check write the ministry in the memo line. While this will not count toward your annual pledge, we will acknowledge the contribution on your statement.

The December Compassion Offering will be split between The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Wisconsin Rescue Mission

Since 1902, the **Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross** has enabled the United Church of Christ to provide a financial "safety net" to individuals and families in need. The fund administered by the Pension Boards, provides: Gift checks to low-income retired clergy and their widowed spouses; emergency assistance to clergy in financial need; and funding for pension and health supplementation plans for low income retired clergy and lay employees.

The **Wisconsin Rescue Mission** is open five days a week, serves noon meals, provides free clothing and counseling. The main hot meal is served Sunday following religious services, although no one is required to attend church in order to eat. The number served is a couple dozen during weekdays to more than 100 on Sundays. Some are homeless. Many have mental diseases. A majority seem to have problems with drugs and alcohol. But a number of older people come just to have lunch and be part of a larger group. Rescue Mission is located at 2540 E. Mifflin Street.

Need Volunteers to Fold Newsletter on

December 21: I need a few volunteers to fold the newsletter on Wednesday, December 21 from 12:30 to 1:30 ish. If you can help out please call Debbie at the church office 271-7212 or email office@orucc.org. Thank you.

Tree of Life**Prayers of Concern:**

- For Scott Sneve, who lost his wife Lori Zenke a few years ago, and is struggling with grief.
- For Lynne Panci, a long time office manager at Moon Beach Camp in St. Germain, WI, who is struggling with ovarian cancer.
- For Jeff Pullman-Becker and the entire staff of Pilgrim Center Camp who concludes his 25 year ministry as camp director this week.
- For Liz Feagles who lost her sister Cory last week from complications from diabetes.
- For Sam Stretchberry, as his doctors continue to work on his complicated medical issues.
- For John Gilbert's brother-in-law, Wes, who has inoperable cancer.

Prayers of Joy:

- For the birth of Beth and Dave Myers' grand daughter, Cecilia Ann Shippert-Myers.
- For Maryann Bast's son-in-law who came through surgery successfully.
- For Kasey DeWitt's father, what was thought to be a malignant tumor, turned out to be scar tissue.
- For Deborah Dean-Ware, former ORUCC Associate Pastor, who is concluding her ministry at Lake Edge UCC in Madison, and is moving to Ann Arbor, MI, to be pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd UCC.

**Stewardship Update**

Our 2012 Stewardship drive is progressing well. Thanks to all of you who have pledged. We still need help to cover 2012 operating expenses. We are about 20% away from our goal for covering base expenses and are waiting to hear from 35% of our members... please let us know if you are able to help. In the coming week, a member of the Stewardship Mission Team may be calling those who have not responded. Thank you so much.

Please Note: End of year Contributions to ORUCC:

The general rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. This means that checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2012 **will not** qualify for a charitable contribution deduction in 2011, even if the check is predated to 2011 or was actually written in 2011.

However, checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2011 will be deductible in 2011 even if it is not received until 2012. The church financial books will be closed for 2011 on January 9, 2012. Year-end contribution statements for 2011 will be emailed in January. Those who do not have email, will have statements mailed.

Contribution Statement Summary Box: If you paid your 2011 pledge in 2010, your statement will reflect \$0 paid in the Actual section, because you had already received credit in 2010 for your 2011 pledge for tax purposes. If you have any questions please contact the church office at 271-7212.

Movie Group December 9: This month's movie group gathering will be at the Sheets' home 6362 Goose Lake Drive. Join us about 8:30 for dessert and discussion of your last attended film. Please RSVP, 845-5667 or im1042@tds.net.

Weekly Meditation Group: We meet at the church on Thursday mornings, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., for a shared time of silent meditation and reflections on our spiritual journeys. Contact Helene Nelson (259-2546 or helenehel@aol.com) or Sara Roberts (273-1114 or sarie914@scglobal.net) to learn more about the group.

Women's Breakfast Group: We meet the first Friday of every month at 8:30 a.m. at Copper Top Restaurant off Whitney Way. The informal group is open to all women who enjoy conversation and connecting on many topics. Please join us.

Update: Knitting Group: The knitting & crafts group will meet January 9, the second Monday. Starting in February we will continue to meet the first Monday of each month at 1:30. If you have questions about these groups, please call Sandra Dyar at 271-2409.

Over 55 December 13: Mark your calendar for Over 55 at 11:30 on December 13. The program will be led by Ray Hernandez and will feature the reading of the Nativity story by Ree Hale, John Kruse, Doug Loving and Winton Boyd. Of course there will be singing of Christmas carols accompanied by Marilyn Boyer. The reading will be from the King James version of the Bible, which is observing the quadricentennial of its first publication in 1611.

We will have salads (of course feel free to bring a sandwich), Christmas cookies and ice cream sundaes. Salads will be brought by Char Klossner, Helen Atz, Sandra Dyar, Diane Wensel and Ree Hale. We would like two or three more salads. Christmas cookies will be provided by Ann Avery, Phil Winkel, Karen Falkner, Dorothy Peterson and Marcia Sheets. We need two others to bring cookies. Please call Carolyn Carlson at 273-1114 if you can volunteer.

In the spirit of giving we would like to collect food for the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Food Pantry. Like all good pantries they welcome donations of canned goods, and other non-perishable things like Macaroni and cheese, Hamburger Helper and Rahmen Noodles. The folks at Good Shepherd will be most appreciative.

So plan to come to celebrate with us. Bring a friend and your donations for the food pantry.

Women's Bible Study Christmas Tea December 21: Our Christmas Tea will be held on December 21, hosted by Pat Hale at Oakwood Village. Our Bible Study will resume on January 4th. We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month, and if you have time after the meeting we stuff, fold and label the Communion for mailing. If you have questions call Mary Lou Peterson at 238-2380.

Update: Tuesday Night Adult Bible Study The Bible study group will not meet over Christmas and will reconvene on the third Tuesday, January 17th. The group will revisit Paul's letter to the Hebrews for their winter study.

We meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the church. We read out loud the Bible passage and then discuss it in a format that encourages individual responses and active listening. All contributions are valued, no right or wrong answers. If you have questions contact Sandra Dyar at 271-2409.

Winter Farmer's Market and Breakfast: Madison Christian Community and Orchard Ridge UCC will be co-sponsoring a Winter Farmer's Market and Breakfast at St. Thomas Aquinas, to be held on January 21. In conjunction with this event, the Green Team is looking for interested volunteers to organize a Sunday morning adult education program around food issues, possibly on Sunday, January 8. There are so many issues related to the food we eat such as the economics of food production, our health, the impact on the environment, etc. There won't be time to explore all of these but if you have a particular interest and would like to plan something to educate others, please contact Sara Roberts at 273-1114 by December 1.

Because of You: The Fair Trade Sale on November 20 went wonderfully: there seemed to be a great spirit in the rooms on the part of all involved. Whether you helped organize the event, volunteered for various tasks the day before or day of the sale (almost 40 people did!), sold a product, or shopped, you helped make it a success. THANK YOU ALL.

A few people worked behind the scenes for a couple of months to make it happen. Warm thanks to Bob Ansheles (publicity), Marilyn Arnold (volunteer sign-up), Paul Hinahara (room layout), and Dianne Stevens (vendor contacts).

It's hard to say who benefited the most from this event. Certainly, vendors were happy to sell (a total of almost \$11,000-worth of merchandise); shoppers were happy to find gifts; and the people working on the sale had fun and got to know one another better. But perhaps most important is that many sisters and brothers beyond our walls will have a little better livelihood and greater dignity because of what happened here that day.

Again, warm thanks. Jan Christian and Maryann Bast-Co-chairs

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Ken's Pennings

Is it just me, or are many of us a bit under the weather these days in Wisconsin? After four cloudy gray days, I found myself begging the universe for just a glimpse of sunlight today. I'm thinking I'm not alone in my longing for light. Earlier this morning, my daughter informed me that she and her boyfriend are so frustrated with the cold cloudy weather in Milwaukee that they are talking about a move to Southern California (I reminded her about the smog in southern cal, and how much happier I think she'll be living closer to her family).

Last night, a church friend told me that she has decorated her office at work with Christmas lights. This helps to brighten her spirits on these dark dreary days.

This past weekend, when I shared with some other church friends my struggle with Seasonal Affective Disorder (with the very appropriate acronym, SAD), they recommended I order a light box and start the discipline of light therapy, that is, staring into the box for thirty minutes a day.

Last week, another church friend shared how difficult it is for her to leave for work in the morning in the darkness and return home in the evening in the darkness. She copes with this by meditating on the sacredness of darkness, by remembering that darkness is a gift, as well as the light. She also uses her crock pot a lot more than other times in the year, so that when she enters her dark home each evening, she is greeted by the warm aroma of dinner cooking.

As I reflect on these recent conversations, I guess one of the ways I cope with light deprivation is to talk about it a lot with friends and family members, perhaps in the hope that if I name it out loud it will lose its power over me.

Yes, here in Wisconsin, the days are shorter, the nights are longer. At ORUCC, we pay attention to this by lighting candles of hope, by singing Bernadette Farrell's beautiful hymn "Christ, be our Light" (lyrics below), and by holding a "Longest Night Service" at the church at 7 p.m. (6 p.m. – labyrinth walk), on Thursday, Dec. 22nd. Winton describes the service this way: "This is a service for those of us living through dark times for any reason. We'll note the longest night of the year and our hope for emerging light with prayers, readings, silence, and the music of Taize."

And if the sun ever peeks out from behind the clouds, holler for me! I don't want to miss it!

Christ, be our Light – Bernadette Farrell

Verse 1: Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Chorus: Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Verse 2: Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair. Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice.

Verse 3: Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

Verse 4: Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone.

Verse 5: Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong. Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.

Ken Pennings

Jingle Bell Jazz & More II! Madison Area Concert Handbells cordially invites you to attend Jingle Bell Jazz & More II, directed by Mark Bloedow. **Nancy Evans, a member of Orchard Ridge Church**, is a member of the Madison Area Concert Handbells. Join us on Friday, December 16 or Saturday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m., Middleton Performing Arts Center, 2100 Bristol Street, Middleton.

Tickets available at Orange Tree Imports, Ward-Brodt Music, Metcalfe's Sentry-Hilldale, Cool Beans Coffee Café or at the door. Advance tickets: Adults \$12; Seniors (60+) & Youth (16 & Under) \$9. At the door: Adults \$15; Seniors & Youth \$12. For more information: www.madisonhandbells.org

