

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



The United Church of Christ

February 2008

FROM THE PASTOR



Friends in Christ:

“Lent is not tidy,” writes Peter Mazar. “Days grow longer (the word ‘Lent’ comes from ‘lengthen’), the ground thaws, and the next thing we know, everything is filthy. Our windows need washing, our temples need cleansing, the earth itself needs a good bath. The English names for these months come from ancient words that reflect the need to roll up our sleeves this season: February (‘purification’) and March (‘the spirit of war’). Good names. Winter doesn’t leave without blustery battles that push things over and mess things up and even break things.”

Lent is a time of repentance and reconciliation. We face ourselves, we face our neighbors, we face our God and recognize that our relationships and our lives are not what they should be. The language of Lent does not stay neatly within the walls of our church. The war in Iraq calls us to be agents of reconciliation between nations. Our own broken relationships cry out for reconciliation as well. And our broken lives tell us that we, too, need a time of repentance, a time of turning. We seek to turn in new directions. We seek to return to God

and to our true selves, in the hope that, as the Shaker hymn puts it, “by turning, turning, we come round right.”

Through our acts of repentance and reconciliation, Lent ultimately becomes a time of renewal. We sometimes speak of Lent as a journey. And so, at its end on Maundy Thursday (March 20 this year) we should expect to find ourselves somewhere different from where we started. Spiritual growth, spiritual discovery, spiritual renewal will happen only if we start and continue to walk along the path.

This year, I invite you to begin this journey of renewal by joining others as we worship God on Ash Wednesday, February 6, at 7:00 p.m.

As the days ahead unfold, use them as opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal.

Peace,

February Calendar

- Feb. 5, Tue. Diaconate/Trustees
- Feb. 6, Wed. Ash Wednesday; Pancake Supper
 at 5:30PM; Worship Service 7PM
- Feb. 12, Tue. Board of Christian Ed.;
 Mission Bd.
- Feb. 17 > Feb. 23 Homeless Shelter Overflow
- Feb. 26, Tue. Church Council

THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY—A Group Study for Lent.

On **five Wednesday evenings during Lent**, beginning on **February 13**, Bill will be leading a study of Marcus Borg's *The Heart of Christianity* and its companion volume *Living the Heart of Christianity*. Looking at the book, scripture, and our lives, we'll explore, faith, the Bible, God, and Jesus as we deepen and renew our sense of faith in a time of change. Please sign up for these sessions in Rockwood Hall or call the church office to let Bill know that you'll be there. If there is an interest at the end of Lent, the study can be extended for six more sessions.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

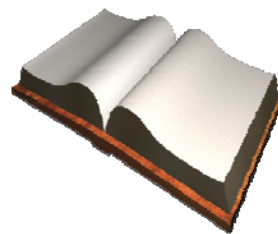
Dear Friends,

Our Church School year is off to a great start learning about The Boy's Lunch (feeding the 5000). If you're not familiar with the curriculum we're using—PowerXpress—it's a rotation curriculum that includes a variety of learning preferences. It has something to appeal to and facilitate learning for all students. Ask me about it and I'll be glad to talk your ear off.

Easter comes early in 2008. Mark your calendar for our annual Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner, which will be held on February 6th, with serving beginning at 5:30 PM continuing until 6:30 PM and ending with a short service at 7 PM.

Another "happening" to put on your calendar is our Lent Event that will be held on March 2nd. We had such a good response to our Advent Event that we've decided to gather together again after church on the 2nd for a light lunch, Easter projects, and a short worship service. I hope to see you all there!

I will be gone from February 15th through the 26th. If you have questions or concerns about the Christian Education Program that need to be addressed during this time, please contact the Chair of the Board of Christian Education, Diane Olson.

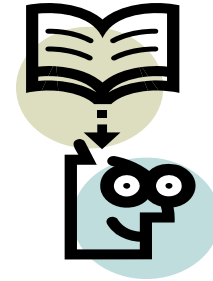


Edie Roberts

Library News

The Freedom Writers Diary

By Erin Gruwell



The Freedom Writers Diary, also a major motion picture, is the story of how a teacher, Erin Gruwell, and 150 teens used writing to change themselves and the world around them. The book contains entries from the students' own diaries and a narrative text by their teacher.

At Wilson High School in Long Beach CA., Erin Gruwell confronted a room of “unteachable, at risk” students after one of them had written a note with an ugly racial caricature. She compared their attitudes to the sort of thing that led to the Holocaust. As a result, she and the students undertook a study of the books *Anne Frank, the Diary of a Young Girl* and *Zlata's Diary, a Child's Life in Sarajevo*. The students learned to see the parallels in these books to their own lives, recording their thoughts and feeling in diaries.

They called themselves “The Freedom Writers” in homage to the civil rights activists “The Freedom Riders”.

Judy Doorenbos

Church Seeks Suggestions for Mission Gift

The mission board is thrilled to announce that an anonymous party has recently given \$100,000 for our church to spend on local and regional outreach. The donor hopes the money will allow our congregation to make a significant impact in our community while raising awareness of our church and its mission. Now the task is for us to decide exactly how to spend the gift. Do you know of a service program that our sponsorship could either launch or sustain? Are you aware of an organization, a neighborhood or even a family that could benefit from timely financial assistance? The mission board is collecting suggestions that they can discuss during their February meeting. The ideas can involve any portion of the total gift. If you have a plan for how to best use this money, please contact either Reverend Lovin or the Mission Board. Our patron suggests that if we use the funding well, we may receive further donations. A gift of this size affords us an opportunity to impact the community in a manner that is worthy of our creed and our tradition. In honor of that same legacy, the mission board looks to its congregation for leadership.

Knitters and Potential Knitters:

Please consider joining the Iowa City Hospice shawl knitting group on Wednesday night, Feb. 13, 6:30-8:30 pm. at Melrose Meadows (350 Dublin Drive). The goal this year is to produce one shawl for each of their 500 anticipated patients. If you are a beginner, we will be happy to get you started. If you need a pattern, come get one. If you are just curious, come schmooze. Call Jane Murphy 351-9079 with questions or for a ride.

Learn about Chicago Theological Seminary!

Sunday, Feb. 10

9:15 - 10:05

Rob Leveridge will be leading an adult education session on CTS, the UCC Seminary where he and Donna Goodnow have prepared for Christian ministry.

The Congregational Church of Iowa City financially supports Seminary education. Come learn what it takes to prepare religious leaders for the Church and the world, and discover the many ways Chicago is on the cutting edge of progressive, justice-oriented ministry. Hope to see you there! Contact Rob Leveridge with questions: 351-1282; rleveridge@ctschicago.edu


Chicago Theological Seminary

MEET ANOTHER LOVIN—Bill's brother, Robin W. Lovin, professor of Christian Ethics at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, will be in Iowa City on the weekend of **February 17**. Rob is the author of two books about the 20th century theologian Rienhold Niebuhr. **On Sunday morning at 9:15 he will lead the Adult Education class in thinking about "Niebuhr Now."** As he is also a contributing editor of the *Christian Century* he will also be leading the February meeting of our *Christian Century* discussion group.

“Children and young people are still in a very difficult situation,” said UNICEF’s Senior Policy Advisor on HIV and AIDS, Tom Franklin, noting that “2.1 million children under 15 are living with HIV. In 2006, there were 380,000 deaths among children under 15. The number of orphans has gone up to 15 million, and of those 12 million are in Africa. We have to make sure that all vulnerable children get into school, that all vulnerable children have access to health care. And we have to help the elderly caregivers, the families and the communities, that are helping these children,” he added.

“The needs are urgent. The goals are ambitious. And with our collective effort, they are also reachable,” UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman said at the launch, describing the four key result areas of the campaign:

Prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV; by 2010, offer appropriate services to 80 per cent of women in need

Provide paediatric treatment; by 2010, provide either antiretroviral treatment or cotrimoxazole, or both, to 80 per cent of children in need

Prevent infection among adolescents and young people; by 2010, reduce the percentage of young people living with HIV by 25 per cent globally.

Protect and support children affected by HIV/AIDS; by 2010, reach 80 per cent of children most in need of public support and services.

“We are well into the third decade of a scourge that has expanded exponentially beyond a small specific group to almost every corner of the globe,” Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in a special World AIDS Day message. “Whilst in some areas, incidence may have turned, prevalence continues to rise and will do so for a long time – more young people will be infected, more orphans will occur. “It is the time for compassionate leadership that recognizes that the voiceless are often those who suffer most. Who can they turn to if their leaders do not listen and heed their cries?” Archbishop Tutu asked.

Children are missing clean, safe water and sanitation, and adequate nutrition: *A monthly donation of \$20 can feed a child orphaned by AIDS in China.*

Children are missing health services: *\$37 can cover the monthly hygiene and sanitation costs of a day-care centre for HIV-positive children in the Ukraine*

Children are missing education: *\$100 can provide a year's worth of school materials, and daily hot meals, for two children orphaned by AIDS in Malawi.*

Children are missing the chance to start life free of HIV: *In Guatemala, \$375 can provide the entire range of services to an HIV-positive woman to prevent transmission of HIV from herself to her infant.*

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
30 North Clinton Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700

Non-Profit
Organization
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February 2008

HOW TO CONTACT US

Monday—Friday.....9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Phone: 319-337-4301

E-mail:

Office Manager.....uccicsec@uccic.org

Financial Sec.....donna.goodnow@gmail.com

Christian Ed. Dir.....uccicce@uccic.org

Visit our Web Site:

www.uccic.org

Sunday Schedule

9:15 a.m. Education

10:15 a.m. Worship

11:15 a.m. Fellowship

Our Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lovin

Music Director: Richard Bloesch

Organist: Bill Crouch

Christian Ed: Edie Roberts

Nursery Care: Julianna Stewart

Custodians: Nicole & Eddy Ghummm

Office Manager: Phil Jamieson

Parking Information

Parking is available evenings and all day Sunday at the IMU or North Hall Parking Ramps. Ask your usher for a voucher (or get one from the church office).