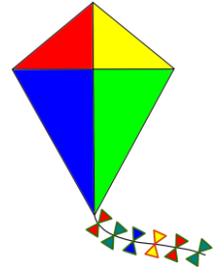


The Messenger



A Newsletter of the
Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ, Inc.

March – April, 2021

Volume 15, Number 6

From the Pastor



(Written on the eve of my last week as your pastor)

I have had my share of goodbyes in my career, thanks to my time in the Navy where rotations to new duty stations was regimented to be about every 3 years.

From time to time during a year, a Command would call for a "Hail and Farewell," a required social where the leadership would make recognition of newcomers and outgoers as they moved in and moved on. Like a revolving door, a Hail and Farewell was where you could wave through the window at those coming and going. It was a time for shipmates to tell stories of shared experience and express thanks for good times together. After gag gifts are exchanged life goes on.

Yes, I've had plenty of "goodbye" experiences. This one coming up, however, is quite different. First of all, I haven't actually had that many farewells in the context of a "civilian" parish, a notably different transition from a military change of duty station. Second, while I do expect to be moving on to something, and I doubt that I have preached my last sermon or served in some capacity in a church, I am aware of a big loss. My ministry will no longer be as deeply relational. Preaching, for instance, will be a different undertaking. Would it be fair to make the analogy that it will be akin to the difference between being the regular teacher of a class and being a substitute?

The best part of preaching for me is the relationship building that can only happen when the preacher is the regular and not the visitor. For certain, there is a valuable perspective that one may provide, preaching as an outsider, but I shall miss getting to know a congregation over years of Sundays and preaching with a more intimate familiarity with the people who will hear me. I am grateful for our time together. I will hold these last 4 years and 3 months precious in my heart.

Continued on page 3

With the departure of the Rev. Peter St. Martin, whose last day is Sunday, February 28, the first act of the church was to gather the members of a "Search and Call" committee. In January and early February they sought out a person to be our "interim" pastor. That pastor, the Rev. Dave Schnepf, begins with us on Monday, March 1 and will be here on Sunday, March 7 to preach for us. Going forward, the committee will begin the process by which a "permanent" pastor will be chosen. The members of your Search and Call Committee are: Dave Baumann, Scott Burdette, Bob Christiansen, Maryann Ludtke, Lindsay Sayles, Ali Schmidt, Kim Sussek, Mike Whiteley, Rhea Whiteley, and Angela Williams.

Welcome our interim pastor,

Rev. Dave Schnepf.

I wish for each of you grace and peace.

I have been called to serve as your interim pastor. I look forward to beginning my time with you as we serve God together. We will become much better acquainted as time goes on; however, the purpose of this first article is to introduce myself to you. In future articles, I will publish ways to communicate with me, and I will share my office schedule.

Like many of you, I grew up in the church. My spiritual formation began in Faith United Church of Christ, which is located in Indianapolis, Indiana. I am a Hoosier by birth. God worked through many different people and several events at Faith church to call me to serve as an ordained minister.

During my senior year in high school, I was placed in-care of the Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Like Jonah I ran from God. I ignored it. Yet God kept calling me back each time.

See Schnepf - page 3

Welcome to the March / April, 2021 Edition of the Messenger. Restrictions, due to Covid-19, are still not allowing us to have in-person services inside our church building. In lieu of “normal” Sunday morning worship an online “Zoom” gathering has been set up.

SUNDAY, 9:30 AM (VIRTUAL SERVICE) Join us as early as 9 AM.

To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser. <https://zoom.us/j/396301165> Password = 365422

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the “JOIN A MEETING”

heading at the top of the webpage.

When prompted, enter:

- Meeting ID: 396 301 165
- Password: 365422

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)

- Call 1-312-626-6799
- and enter when prompted:
 - o Meeting ID: 396 301 165
 - o Password: 365422

Communion on the 1st Sunday of the month

As our Lord told the disciples on the *first* Last Supper, “Do this in remembrance of me,” we have returned to the regular observance of the Sacrament of Communion on the first Sunday of the Month during the 9:30 AM “zoom” service. Yes, it is quite a different experience, as we cannot share the elements. We encourage you to do what you need to do to make the experience meaningful to you. You may want to have elements (grape juice or wine / bread) with you to partake along with Pastor Peter as he breaks the bread, pours the cup and partakes on behalf of us all.

Lectionary Bible Study

This is your opportunity to learn about the Bible scripture for the upcoming Sunday. It is held every Thursday, at 10 AM. Like our “zoom” services, it is a “virtual” event. To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser. <https://zoom.us/j/324446460>

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the “JOIN A MEETING” heading at the top of the webpage.

When prompted, enter:

- Meeting ID: 324 446 460
- Password: 789656

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)

- Call 1-312-626-6799
- and enter when prompted:
 - o Meeting ID: 324 446 460
 - o Password: 789656

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS in a “VIRTUAL” world

We can't pass the collection plate like in a normal church service. But you can still take advantage of your great, God given, opportunity to make an offering. Make checks out to “Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ” OR, if you prefer, just “Genesee Church.” Send them to the church office – GENESEE CHURCH / W306 S5075 Church St. / Mukwonago, WI 53149-9732. Our treasurer, Angela, picks them up on a weekly basis. OR You can mail your check direct to Angela: Angela Williams / W956 Miramar Rd. / East Troy, WI. 53120.

Events Calendar

MARCH - APRIL events

Listed here are the dates of meetings, holidays and events in March and April. All dates are correct at the time of publication. All events are at the Ed. Center, unless otherwise noted. Virtual “Zoom” worship Services are 9:30 AM each Sunday morning. Lectionary Bible study (via “Zoom”) is each Thursday, 10 AM. For “zoom” LINKS see this page.

MARCH

- SU 7** 9:30 AM – Communion during “Zoom” service
One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering
- TU 9** Executive Board – 5 PM (virtual)
- SU 14** Daylight Saving Time (DST) begins
Spring ahead one hour.
- WE 17** **ST. PATRICK'S DAY**
- SA 20** Vernal Equinox (Spring begins)
4:37 AM (CDT)
- SU 21** Deadline for April (special edition) Messenger
- SU 28** **PALM SUNDAY**

APRIL

- TH 1** **MAUNDY THURSDAY**
APRIL FOOLS' DAY
- FR 2** **GOOD FRIDAY**
- SU 4** **EASTER**
- TU 6** Executive Board - 5 PM (virtual)
- SU 18** Deadline for May / June Messenger
- TH 22** **EARTH DAY**

MAY

- SA 1** **MAY DAY**
- SU 2** 9:30 AM – Communion during “Zoom” service

From the Pastor (from page 1)

At my first last Sunday experience, at First Congregational UCC of Cresco, Iowa, the Conference Minister came up at the close of the service and asked for my robe, which I unzipped, shed and handed to him. He returned it to me of course, but after I handed the robe to him, he told the congregation, "Peter St. Martin is no longer your pastor. You may not contact him in that capacity anymore. Don't call him to do weddings or funerals or any other ministerial function. Perhaps you will continue a friendship, but you should not ask him to interject any opinions on future workings of the church. You will call a new pastor who will function in that capacity. You must bond with him or her as you have bonded with Peter over the past few years."

The Conference Minister then turned to me and gave me similar limitations. We can maintain friendships, but in our interchanges, we must both keep a boundary that prevents us from my influencing parish matters. The one who succeeds me deserves that freedom to act, and you must build that pastor/congregation bond that is so vital to the work of the local church.

Due largely to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, this farewell process may seem inadequate. There will be no cake with blue frosting spelling out your best wishes, no final handshakes or hugs of appreciation. I have quipped more than once that my last pastoral act among you will be to shut off the computer, hardly a satisfying or fitting recognition of our time and ministry together.

Nevertheless, the message must still be communicated to you – and to me as well! I will no longer be your pastor. I stated at the announcement of my retirement last fall that, "I am your pastor until I am not." As of March 1st, I am not! Judy and I will not be moving away any time soon, which might make keeping that boundary we must create a little more challenging. We start church shopping in March and will become members of another fellowship. On occasion, we may even socialize with one another as friends, but maintaining the constraints of not talking shop about the community where we were once fellow members. We may see one another at the grocery, at the ballpark or at other wider community spaces. It may be an awkward thing to be un-pastored but it doesn't mean we are un-friended.

I pray that what we have worked on together brings you blessings in your new and fresh relationship with your future pastor. I pray that he or she may help you move beyond any mistakes and errors I have committed while I was serving you. Our parish membership is what has changed, but we are still sisters and brothers in Christ, friends with fond, common experiences. May God bless you all.

Pastor Peter

Schnepf (from page 1)

After high school, I attended the University of Indianapolis. I majored in teaching Social Studies on a secondary level, namely United States Government, Economics and World History. Even while I was a college student, God was training me to be a pastor. For example, one of my world history classes included traveling to Israel to live in various areas of the country on kibbutzim. This greatly added to my understanding of the Scriptures and of the Holy Land. While at the University I lead a mid-week worship service for the students. I found a sense of joy and fulfillment that I have never felt before.

After graduating from the university, I received a scholarship to attend Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. During my four years at Eden, I grew spiritually deeper than ever before in my life. Our academic studies were combined with practical field education in the life of the church.

After completing my studies at Eden, I accepted a call to serve as the pastor of Evangelical UCC in Shelbyville, IN. While attending a reception following a wedding, I sat at the last open chair. It just happened to be across from my future wife, Kristi. Approximately ten months later, we were married on October 8, 1988. Later we were blessed with the birth of our first daughter Abby.

While serving as pastor we focused upon developing a vision and a long-range plan. We discovered that when the children shared their Vacation Bible School program, we had a larger crowd than we did on Easter Sunday. We changed our program and began to grow. Through some lumber brought back from the Persian Gulf War, we built a home and initiated a Habitat for Humanity Program in Shelby County. These were good years.

As our long-range plan was completed, we began to feel a call to move on. Our family landed at Zion UCC located in Louisville, KY. Zion was the mother church of the UCC in Louisville. But preceding my tenure over the previous ten years the church lost at average of 86 members per year. During our second year the congregation experienced slight growth for the first time in several years. While serving Zion we participated in a monthly program for seniors in our community, which offered food, fellowship, and interesting programs.

The years at Zion brought several significant changes to our family. Rachel our second daughter was born. But we also lost, my uncle, my grandfather and my mother over a six-month span of time. These losses made us want to return closer to our family and roots. So, we accepted a call to St. John UCC in Indianapolis.

While serving at St. John, the congregation completed a significant beautiful addition to the building in memory of Rev. William Knack. At the same time, we formed a mission trip to help in the rebuilding of a sanc-

tuary in South Carolina, which had been destroyed by racist arsonists. Another ministry developed was Café at the Corner. We held a free meal on Thursdays open to the public with the purpose of feeding the hungry and providing fellowship to the lonely. While serving at St. John's I taught New Testament Foundations as an adjunct professor at the University of Indianapolis.

During our tenure at St. John's our son Jacob was born. As busy parents of three young children Kristi and I attended many soccer matches, little league baseball games, and swimming events.

When our tenure came to a close we moved to Maryville, IL where I served as the Co-Senior Pastor of St. John's UCC in Collinsville, IL. St John's was a large church of over 1200 members. This was a busy full ministry. While serving there, I led the development of a new contemporary service called Mosaic. Mosaic offered a place for people to offer up the broken pieces in their lives and for God to re-assemble those pieces into a new life, one filled with hope and love.

We left Illinois and headed to Jensen Beach Florida. While serving at Jensen Beach our ministry emphasized the homeless and the vulnerable. We prepared dinners for the homeless who live under the causeways on a weekly basis. We also served the abused children of Hibiscus House through a variety of ministries.

After a ministry of eight years, we left the sunny shores of Jensen to move to Oconomowoc, WI. After five years I find myself feeling a call to transition to a different form of pastoral leadership to Interim ministry. Today our children are grown. Abby and Rachel have married and all three of our children have their own careers and goals. I look forward to beginning this new chapter of my service to our Lord. I ask for your friendship and support as we walk together through this time of transition and discernment.

Blessings, Pastor Dave

e-mail: pastordaveschnepf@gmail.com

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD DAILY

Copies of the devotional booklet: *"The Upper Room"* for March-April, 2021 are available. Call the church office at **262-968-3849** to get your copy. On every page is an inspirational reading and accompanying Bible verse for each day.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY

Now that Haley is no longer cleaning the church / Ed. Center, we are looking for person(s) to step up and clean. Notify the office at **262-968-3849** if you would like to accept this great opportunity, or know of anyone who would be willing to help "Get 'er done."

Notes from the Border

"The people of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses; they allotted the land."

- Joshua 14: 5 (RSV)

It was the spring of 1967. I was 12 years old and in the 7th grade at Hillside School in Genesee village. It was a sunny Friday morning. Soon, everyone in the school, grades 5 – 8, would be boarding a BIG yellow school bus for a field trip to Chicago. It would be the first time I had ever been out of state. Even at a young age, I had a love for maps. On many maps I had seen a straight black line, sometimes solid and sometimes dashed, that showed the border between Wisconsin and Illinois. I knew that the line was just a line on the map. It didn't really exist. Or did it? Until that day I had no way to prove it. Did someone actually paint a black line at the border? As the bus moved down the freeway, I remember seeing the "Welcome to Illinois" sign. But, where was the BIG, black line?

Today, a sunny Saturday afternoon, I am taking a drive along Stateline Road from Highway 120 – just south of Lake Geneva – to the border town of Sharon. Following the road west (on the Wisconsin side) one soon comes to a "T." Turning left, into Illinois, I follow Hillside Road and soon pass the old Hebron-Lynn Cemetery. One then goes right on Nichols Road, which takes you back to the border. From there, State Line Road makes a beeline west, through flat prairie lands. Borderline? Except for one, short stretch of old markings, there is not a single centerline on this narrow road. Dodging BIG potholes, I at last reach U.S. Hwy. 14 and the hamlet of Big Foot. The cluster of homes, mostly on the Illinois side, is a temporary respite from miles of farmsteads. In town, one home sports a large Packers banner – on the Illinois side! Leaving town, the road smoothens out and soon I reach the border community of Sharon, Wisconsin. Going into town, I dine at the Coffee Cup Café and review my findings.

Traveling the "line," I was struck by similarities. Apart from location, farmsteads, homes and even cows look very much the same on both sides of the border. I was also struck by how free and open the border is between Wisconsin and Illinois. Unlike some borders, there are no fences, no checkpoints, no border patrol agents. I also gained a deeper understanding of our tendency, as humans, to want to divide our lands and parcel them out. In 1836, when the Wisconsin Territory was created, it was decided to make the border at 42 ½° N. latitude. That line, which goes down the center of State Line Road, and – in particular – the "Point of Beginning," in Grant County, are the points from which all county lines, town lines and property lines would be measured.

From the dawn of civilization, us humans have been surveying and dividing up the land we live on. The

Egyptians were doing it 4,000 years ago. Once the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan, the land was divided up and allotted to the twelve tribes. Today the concept of land ownership is widespread in many lands all over the globe. Knowing how much land individuals own gives the local government units a basis for generating revenue, through taxation. Owning lands lets the owners develop it and gain a healthy sense of pride and ownership.

Civilization developed when individuals could own a piece of land, or kings could own a small kingdom, and share their produce with others at the marketplace. Unfortunately, being the unsatisfied, sinful humans that we often are, greed entered in and property lines were often challenged, moved or erased. Someone always wanted more of the pie. Throughout history, more wars have been fought over the movement of imaginary black lines, than for any other reason.

Today, 196 nation states, some with great resources and some with very little, claim a piece of the pie we call "Planet Earth." We have seen the round earth from the depths of space. There are no BIG, black lines dividing nation from nation, state from state. All boundaries are arbitrary and imaginary. The "lines" serve to keep us organized. They set apart and identify the pieces of the world we live in.

We can no longer let the "lines" divide us. We have been given a "God's eye" view. We must now see our world from God's perspective. We have "made" the world we live in. God created it! We humans have given



each other ownership of pieces of the world. We are not its true owners. We are just temporary caretakers. God has given us bountiful resources that we might share them in the global marketplace. In God's world there are no BIG, black lines. God owns it all!

Scott Burdette, on the Wisconsin – Illinois border

MESSENGER AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

If you are not receiving your newsletter via e-mail, and you have an e-mail address, send an e-mail to: geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com and the secretary will get you on the e-mail list. Also, let us know if your e-mail address changes by sending an e-mail using your new e-mail address. Thank you for helping us save mailing costs.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS)

Imagine not knowing where your next meal will come from. Imagine the constant fear of political unrest. Imagine working hard to produce crops to feed your family and earn a living. Imagine constantly battling the effects of climate change. Imagine all the obstacles farmers face to get their crops to harvest, and then to market. Then, imagine all these things happening – at once.

In Nicaragua families find it hard to believe that there will come a day when they do not hunger or thirst. For many, food security can seem like an unattainable goal. But through a partnership with many organizations such as: Growing Hope Globally, a respected local organization, and Church World Service, the United Church of Christ is helping families to thrive despite such adversity.

René Bermúdez is working hard to ensure that his family has enough to eat and he has a way to earn a living. René is raising stingless Melipona bees, which produce medicinal honey that he can sell. Through the program, he learned about poultry raising and has started raising chickens – and now has forty hens that produce eggs, plus another 140 that he is preparing to sell.

Like René, several of the families there have lost several harvests to the effects of climate change. Farmers in their community found when it rains too much, the crops die from disease or are washed away. When it doesn't rain enough, they dry up. Either way, farmers lose everything. Your generous gifts through **One Great Hour of Sharing** will help farmers continue to build a sustainable life – without hunger or thirst – as they learn new ways to produce food and income. Please give generously so they will continue to reap the harvest of God's love growing in their communities.

On Sunday, March 7 (and throughout the Sundays of March) we have the opportunity to support One Great Hour of Sharing. Please give an extra, special monetary gift that Sunday. Mark your check or cash envelope, "One Great Hour of Sharing," or simply "OGHS." Thank you for your support.

A FINAL NOTE 🎵

The deadline for the April special edition is Sunday, March 21. The deadline for the May-June, 2021 edition is Sunday, April 18. To submit an article, event information, or to receive your newsletter via e-mail, send e-mail to:

geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com

Articles submitted in person need to be typed or written legibly.

Scott W. Burdette

Puzzle Changers

ACROSS

- 1 Legendary stories
- 6 Uno
- 9 Pig's pad
- 12 Box
- 13 Business VIP
- 14 Pitching stat.
- 15 Church walkway
- 16 Burst of bad temper
- 18 California wine valley
- 19 Make lace
- 20 Epochs
- 21 Caveman's era (2 wds.)
- 24 Concurrence
- 27 Time past
- 30 _____ Witherspoon of "Sweet Home Alabama"
- 31 Had
- 33 And so forth (abbr.)
- 34 Proposed as a candidate
- 38 Renovator
- 40 Pub drinks
- 42 Shade
- 43 Stood up
- 47 Childhood disease
- 49 Golfer _____ Woods
- 50 Bathroom rug
- 51 Tax org.
- 52 _____ eclipse
- 53 Lyric verse
- 54 Compass dir.
- 55 Printing machine

DOWN

- 1 Skim over
- 2 Opera solo
- 3 Struggle for breath
- 4 Books of maps
- 5 Behold
- 6 Gasoline classification
- 7 Tidy up
- 8 Chunk of eternity
- 9 Military rank
- 10 Faithful
- 11 Sweet potatoes
- 17 Children's game
- 19 Actor _____ Hanks
- 22 Adolescents
- 23 Make amends
- 24 Common verb
- 25 Acquire
- 26 Make again
- 28 Goodness!
- 29 Strange
- 32 Soldier
- 35 Additional ones
- 36 Styling foam
- 37 Wrath
- 39 Highway curve
- 40 Military supplies
- 41 Show the way
- 44 Leer
- 45 Oceans
- 46 Miscalculates
- 48 Recline
- 49 Recipe unit (abbr.)

Genesee Church Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	
12						13				14			
15						16				17			
18						19				20			
				21	22				23				
24	25	26								27	28	29	
30									31	32			
33						34	35	36	37				
			38	39									
40	41					42				43	44	45	46
47						48				49			
50						51				52			
53						54				55			

Answers to previous puzzles In January-February Messenger

G	A	S		T	O	E		P	S	A	L	M			
A	R	M		A	P	E		R	O	M	E	O			
L	E	I		P	E	R		C	O	L	A	T	E		
A	N	T	L	E	R			A	B	E	D				
S	A	H	A	R	A			D	E	M	E	A	N		
				P	E	T	E			N	U	D	E		
O	W	E		D	E	N	I	M		S	E	E			
C	O	N	E			S	C	A	M						
T	O	D	A	T	E			I	C	I	E	S	T		
				O	R	E	S			C	H	A	S	T	E
T	U	R	N	S	T	I	L	E			S	E	A		
A	S	S	E	T			V	E	T			E	A	R	
N	E	E	D	Y			E	S	E			S	L	Y	

PALM SUNDAY WORD-DOKU

M		D		N			A	
		Y	D					N
	S				P			
		A		P	U			S
	D						L	
P			S	L		Y		
			N				Y	
L					S	A		
	A			Y		P		M

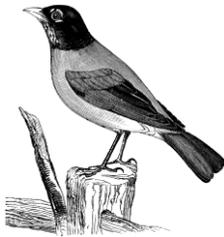
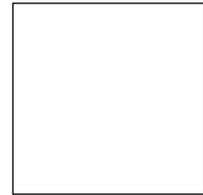
The puzzle at left is filled in like a "Sudoku" puzzle, except you use letters instead of numbers. Fill in the squares so that every row, column and square uses the letters of
P A L M S U N D A Y

Answer to: The Three Snowmen
Amos weighs 78 pounds,
Benjamin weighs 85 pounds,
Charlie weighs 67 pounds.

GENESEE 1ST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, INC.
W306 S5075 CHURCH ST.
MUKWONAGO (GENESEE), WI 53149-9732
262-968-3849 www.geneseechurch.org

NEWSLETTER MAR / APR 2021

TIME VALUE MAIL
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



9:30 AM
Sunday
Virtual Worship
(see Page 2 for LINK)

IN THIS ISSUE

OUR TOP STORY

Welcome our Interim Pastor - Page 1

"From the Pastor" - Page 1

"Zoom" service LINK, Bible Study LINK,
communion, making contributions in a
virtual world, - Page 2

Notes from the Border - Page 4

One Great Hour of Sharing - Page 5

...and more!

Plus:

Puzzle Challenges - Page 6