

# 1 Congo Comments

MAY 2011

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## *ReMarks...*

*April showers bring May flowers...*

Spring. It seems to happen overnight, almost without our being aware of the miraculous changes taking place all around us.

Spring. It happens without our forcing it, manipulating it, or directing it in any way.

Spring. It happens with regularity, clarity, dependability and strength – despite the harshest, longest winters.

Like the resurrection, spring brings miraculous changes, beyond our imaginings or control, with a consistent power that transfigures us with renewal and rebirth. Spring.

God, our Creator, the Ultimate Gardener, has planted seeds of change within us – within our hearts and within our lives. Bundles of potential new life are abundant – the seeds have been passed down to us through generations of faithful women and men whose lives have decorated the world like the lilies of the field. The seeds of faith have been planted for this precise moment, to burst into bloom in this time, in this place, which are so needed in this world.

God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, pours upon us the overflowing streams of grace. Like the thunderstorms that will be recurring events for us over the next few months, the torrents of grace wash the streets and sidewalks of our lives – pathways – refreshing the earth, renewing life around and within us. While the crucifixion and passion strike panic in our hearts like a nearby clap of thunder at midnight, the dawn brings the gentle, calm peace of a bright new day. Like Easter. As a colleague phrased it, *Life is not ours to control, but to enjoy.*

God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, radiates in and through our lives, perhaps not unlike the warm spring sun drying the tears of a rainstorm. It's been said that in the husk of a seed the energy is stored until it's needed to break out of the shell and push outward toward life. The Spirit gives us the power, the energy, the courage, the vitality, the faith to move from death to abundant life. We can count on this. Like spring.

Faith happens, beyond our imaginings or control. Like spring.

*...May flowers bring June bugs.*

Grace and Peace,

*Rev. Mark*

**BIRTHDAYS**

02 – Andy Nustad  
 03 – Hannah Kuether, Dan Thornby  
 04 – Kate Rolf  
 06 – Susan Nicks  
 07 – Samantha Vareberg  
 14 – Kyle Anderson, Aggie Masten  
 17 – Helen Hammond  
 18 – Mark Johnson, Dick Wilson  
 19 – Larry Werkman  
 20 – Shawna Vareberg  
 22 – Dylan Walter  
 24 – Alison Atchia  
 27 – Janet Whitcomb  
 28 – Alex Nustad  
 30 – Marissa Pederson  
 31 – Linda Brockmann

**FRIENDSHIP TIME**

01 – Miriam & Dave Moen,  
 Mary & Jack Ault  
 08 – Maxine & Bob Nelson  
 15 – Sally & George Oja, Millie  
 Gildersleeve  
 22 – Nancy & Alan Swedberg, Jamie &  
 Dave Marks Erickson  
 29 – Collene & Bill Bares, Sarah Ruppel

**USHERS**

01 & 08 – Matt Casey & Andy Nustad  
 15 & 22 – Sharon & Jim Sinclair  
 29 – Marv & Judy Enslin

**GREETERS**

01 & 08 – Claire & Dick Wilson  
 15 & 22 – Gini & Gary Kleingartner  
 29 – Mitsy & Matt Casey

**FLOWERS**

01 – Bev Bahl in Memory of Ken,  
 Elizabeth & Bob Wernli  
 08 – Gini & Gary Kleingartner  
 15 – Kyle Anderson in Honor of the  
 Youth of the Church  
 22 – Roma & John Jacoby in Memory  
 of Fred & Jessie Kee  
 29 –

**COURTESY GROUP**

**Leaders for May & June: Sally & George Oja, Kay Hartness, Darlene Eberhardt**

**Guidelines for Courtesy Group members**

1. Every local church member and family is assigned to a Courtesy Group.
2. You serve two consecutive months of the year.
3. Your group leaders will contact you to provide food or service in case of a funeral, wedding or special event that falls within your designated months.
4. You will be asked to take a turn serving Sunday Friendship Hour.

**(Assignments will be mailed to you prior to the month you serve.)**

## MAY CHURCH HAPPENINGS

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB will meet Saturday, May 7, at 8:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn. Come & bring a friend!

LADIES' COFFEE GROUP will meet on Saturday, May 14, at 9:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn. Come for good conversation and fellowship.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY will not meet again until September. Have a great summer!



### YOUTH SUNDAY

Join us for **Youth Sunday** on May 8. Children of all ages will help lead worship and students and teachers will be recognized. Thanks to all who are involved in the planning, as well as to everyone who will be here to join in the celebration.

### MISSION STATEMENT FORUM

Following worship on May 8 the Church Council will hold a "Forum" to discuss and clarify a proposed Mission Statement. This Mission Statement was written following the "Hopes and Dreams" conversations that took place in February. Your input and involvement are important. You are warmly invited to be present.

### DESSERT AUCTION

The Board for Congregational Life will sponsor the annual Dessert Auction on May 15<sup>th</sup> during Friendship Time. You are invited to bring a dessert "disguised" in a decorated box or wrapping to be auctioned off. The proceeds of the auction will benefit the Lakes Crisis and Resource Center for client services & supplies. Dave Perlmutter will be our auctioneer. You won't want to miss it!

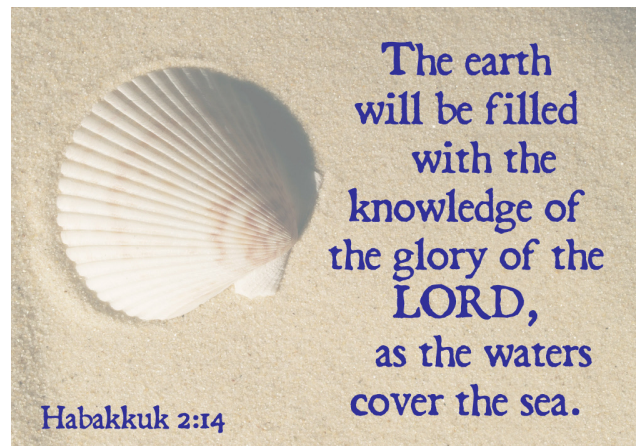
## **The Wellbriety Movement: Journey of Forgiveness**

For the first time, in this 72-minute documentary film entitled, **The Wellbriety Movement: Journey of Forgiveness**, the story of Indian boarding schools is told by grassroots Native people in their own voices. For the first time, the emotional impact of Native intergenerational trauma is being expressed outside Indian communities. This moving documentary is the story told by the previously silent voices of Native people. This film is recognized by many as the gateway to forgiveness and healing of the boarding school era. The cultural destruction by almost 100 years of forced education didn't end when the last boarding school closed its doors in the late 1960's. It continues to this day in every Native community. "Where is our Schindler's List, where is our Anne Frank?" asks a voice in this powerful documentary. They begin in this video, through numerous on-screen appearances of boarding school survivors, speaking out for the first time.

You are warmly invited to attend a free viewing of this important film, which will be shown in our Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening, May 31. Marlin Farley, Founder and President of Black Stone Consulting and Training, will be present to introduce the film and lead a discussion following the showing. Mr. Farley is also the owner of Painted Sky Production, and a film producer and director. Mr. Farley and Don Coyhis produced and directed this documentary. Please plan on experiencing this documentary, and please contact Rev. Mark if you have any questions.

### **JUMP 2012**

It's spring. Time to plant some seeds... Preliminary plans are being made for another mission trip to Jamaica in February 2012. We're thinking about a group of approximately ten men from this congregation. A number of individuals have already expressed interest in going on this type of trip. If you're interested in learning more about this opportunity, I'd love to talk with you.



~ Dave Perlmutter

## DATES FOR ALTAR FLOWERS AVAILABLE

There was a good response to the request to sign up for Altar Flowers right after the first of the year, however, there are some blank dates, as follows:

May 29  
June 26

September 25  
October 16, 23, 30

If you would like to provide flowers for any of these dates, there is a sign-up list on the bulletin board across from the office, or call me. Donna Bursik, 847-7502.

### BOOK CORNER

By Sally Oja

*Meeting Jesus for the First Time*

By Marcus Borg

Biography



Marcus J. Borg is Canon Theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Oregon. He was Hundere Chair of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University until his retirement in 2007. Borg is the author of nineteen books, including the best selling *The Heart of Christianity*, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, and the novel *Putting Away Childish Things*. He was an active member of the Jesus Seminar when it focused on the historical Jesus, and he has been chair of the Historical Jesus section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Editorial comment by **Alan Jones**

Borg liberates 'Jesus' from the rigidity of fundamentalism and the aridity of intellectualism. He also graciously liberates readers from the shackles of what many have thought they were *supposed* to believe about Jesus if they were to remain Christians. . . . What a relief to see Jesus in a totally new light.

Reader comment

What I love about Borg is his ability to make you think about WHY you believe the things you do and recognize that further evaluation is necessary. His writings educate me without threatening my core beliefs. I feel more strongly about my beliefs after reading this book.

## THANKS TO YOU...

**From Erica Johnson:** *Dear Congregational Family, Thank you all for your very thoughtful & generous Valentines gifts. As you know, any food gift is always appreciated while attending college. Hope all is well at the church & hope to visit very soon!*

**From Kiely Todd Roska, Development Coordinator, CUE Seminaries of the UCC:** *Thank you for your support of Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries! CUE Seminaries provide a vital ministry in the UCC by training and equipping leaders for ministry with individuals, congregations, and in the wider world. Each seminary strengthens the life of the church by enlivening critical reflection on faith, and supporting bold Christian discipleship. Each school is a vibrant, caring, and challenging place in which to pursue theological education and lay theological education programs and continuing education. Thank you for supporting theological education as part of your ministry.*

**From the Becker County Food Pantry:** *Thank you for the \$1,582.00 donation to the Pantry. We greatly appreciate your support!*

### **JUMP BRUNCH:**

On Sunday, April 3, this year's **Confirmation Class**, along with their **mentors** and chef **Dave Perlmutter** held a French Toast Brunch after worship. Through their efforts and your generosity, \$470.94 was raised for J.U.M.P. Thanks to all!

### **GOOD FRIDAY:**

This year's Ecumenical Good Friday service was a meaningful worship experience in many ways. I extend my sincere appreciation to all who helped make it so ~ in particular, my thanks for your generosity. The night's offering totaled \$616 dollars, which was split equally between the Becker County Food Pantry and Food for the Poor, Inc. Thank you! ~ Rev. Mark

### **EASTER FLOWERS:**

Thanks to **Anne Anderson, Donna & Paul Bursik, Gini & Gary Kleingartner, Roma Jacoby, Sally & George Oja, Mary & Walt Kulberg, Carol & Mike Nustad, Kate & Roger Rolf, Kay Hartness** and **Casey Roper** for the beautiful flowers that graced our sanctuary at Easter!

## What's the Financial Temperature?

	March	Year to Date
General Offering	\$ 7,985.00	\$ 37,250.00
Loose Offering	71.00	349.24
Shop & Save/We Care	0.00	364.64
Labels for Learning	\$ 0.00	0.00
MnKota Recycling	20.24	20.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,076.24</b>	<b>\$ 37,984.12</b>
<b>Expenses Paid</b>	<b>\$ 20,061.98</b>	<b>\$ 40,804.34</b>



### Commentary:

Please review the above numbers. I am told that there has been recovery; but we need to continue to remind ourselves that the quarterly month-end obligations do require cash flow. Hopefully, we can all address these needs appropriately.

Spring is upon us, though it has been a bit testing. The good news is that snow removal expenditures should cease and the fuel needs should reach minimal use for a few months. We should and can rejoice!

Watch for a "Special of the Month" food product emphasis for the Food Shelf. The Board for Stewardship has received approval from Council to begin a collection facility of a monthly most needed food/product for distribution. Fran & Phil Johnson will be communicating with the Food Shelf administration to determine the needs and delivery of the recommended items. It may be soups, it may be beans, it may be cake mixes, etc. We will await further announcement and guidance. Thank you, Fran & Phil, for suggesting this important addition to our outreach extension.

**"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."  
Matthew 6:21 (Stewardship, 2011)**

Marv Enslin, Board for Stewardship

### **SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal

10:00 a.m. Worship with Nursery Care

10:15 a.m. Sunday School      11:00 a.m. Friendship Time

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 to 12:00 noon on Mon., Tues., Wed.**

(Call ahead if you need to enter the church at another time. 218-847-4609)

Rev. Mark Kuether

Melinda Cloose

Mitsy Casey, 847-6502

Renee Holm, 334-3141

Leonard Bailey, 847-7348/Sue Dahring, 847-0453

Shar Legenhausen, 847-5118

Minister

Church Secretary

Music Director

Organist/Custodian

Financial Secretary

Treasurer