

Intersections

March 2011

All are welcome

*Sunday school at 9:15,
fellowship time at 10am
& worship at 10:30*



*A newsletter for the Richmond
Church of the Brethren
community*

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March Calendar

*all events at the Richmond CoB
unless otherwise noted*

- 1 Loops of Love at the Unwind Yarn Shop, 5-7 pm
- 2 Senior Breakfast at Friends Fellowship 8:30 am
- 6 Bring food for the Community Food Pantry
- 7 Dinner & Conversation at the McKimmys', 7 pm
- 8 Worship Team, 5:30 pm
- 9 Ash Wednesday 6:15 pm Worship Gathering
Choir practice, 7-8:30 pm
- 13 Hardware Co-op open, 12-4 pm
- 14 Dinner & Conversation at the McKimmys', 7 pm
- 15 Loops of Love at the Unwind Yarn Shop, 5-7 pm
- 16 Choir practice, 7-8:30 pm
- 20 Welcoming Conversations-Cottage Meeting, 2 pm
Children of Abraham, 5 pm
- 21 Dinner & Conversation at the McKimmys', 7 pm
- 22 Pastoral Relations Committee meeting, 7 pm
- 23 Choir practice, 7-8:30 pm
- 24 Worship Team meeting, 6 pm
Pastor Matt out-of-office for Spiritual Renewal Day
- 26 Welcoming Conversations-Cottage Meeting, 10 am
- 28 Dinner & Conversation at the McKimmys', 7 pm
- 29 Welcoming Conversations-Cottage Meeting, 7 pm
- 30 Choir practice, 7-8:30 pm
- 31 Soup Kitchen at St. Paul's, 10 am
Welcoming Conversations-Cottage Meeting, 7 pm

Welcoming Conversations:

Cottage Meetings

The Welcoming Conversations Task Team completed the first phase of discussing sexuality within our congregation with topical conversations and guest speakers. These conversations have been enriching and valuable. Thank you to all who have participated so far, and we invite all who are affiliated with Richmond COB to take part in our next phase.

In the final two weeks of March, there will be multiple cottage meetings held in various homes on four different dates for the purposes of hearing each other's stories and feelings around questions of welcome and sexuality. We will strive to provide an atmosphere that is safe, respectful and prayerful as we continue in our discernment of future steps for our life together.

Each person or family affiliated with the Richmond COB will be contacted soon to find out what time would best suit your schedule for attending one cottage meeting. Each gathering will be facilitated by two persons who may be from the Welcoming Conversations Task Team, our deacon body, or other caring listeners from our congregation.

Cottage Meeting dates to check availability:
Sunday, March 20, 2-4pm
Saturday, March 26, 10-12pm
Tuesday, March 29, 7-9pm
Thursday, March 31, 7-9pm

The Welcoming Conversations Task Team is Todd Reish (convener), Nancy Faus-Mullen, and Travis Poling.

Matt's Musings:

Pulpit Perspectives

Creativity is truly one of the greatest gifts that our Creating God bestows upon humankind. Creativity empowers and inspires us to be co-creators in the emerging new kingdom that Christ proclaimed. It allows us to experience the world through a different lens - not only witnessing what already is, but imagining what yet could be.

As we gather in community we have the chance to be challenged, nurtured, and inspired by each other's creativity. I feel blessed to be a leader in a community that is filled with folks who are vessels of the Creative Spirit that indwells each and every one of us. We are creative musicians and writers, creative thinkers and storytellers, creative problem-solvers, and creative relationship-builders. Yet there's one act of creativity that I witness all the time that might easily go unappreciated or even unnoticed.

At no time is the act and art of creative listening more apparent than on Sunday mornings when we engage with one another in our sermon. Though I am often the one doing most of the speaking I know that our time together is not simply a one-way transfer of information or insight. Instead, our sermons are mutual interactions as each person listens with creativity, making connections and experiencing insights while encountering the Living Word.

The pulpit is a unique vantage point to witness such creative listening. We have many
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CHURCH UPDATES

Matt's Musings contd.

different postures and methods for practicing this art: leaning forward on the edge of the pew; engaging with eye contact, or closing them meditatively to soak in each word; practicing various forms of attention-centering, from doodling to knitting; re-reading the morning's scripture text; reacting with facial expressions; bowing heads in thought and reflection. Just as with any other creative endeavor, we each have to find our own way of listening creatively,.

Yet I know it's happening - for once my portion of the sermon is done and our shared portion begins such varied, creative listening leads to deep storytelling, inspirational meaning-making, and powerful witnessing to the living Word of God. It is an act of Spirit-led communal co-creation that my words alone could never match.

I encourage you to embrace your own practice of creative listening, whatever it might look like. Continue to find ways of sharing this gift with each other. Not only on Sunday mornings, but any time we're in conversation with one another. In doing so we might all draw nearer to the Creative, Listening Spirit as we seek the mind of Christ.

Grace and peace,
-Pastor Matt

Pastor Matt Off March 18-20

As part of our 4/5 time arrangement with Pastor Matt he will occasionally have some extra time off on weekends, in addition to his usual days off. During the month of March Matt will be away Friday the 18th through Sunday the 20th. If you have immediate needs that arise during this time please contact one of our deacons (Amy Ritchie, Mary Eller, Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm) or our ministry team chair (Enten Eller.)

A Note of Thanks

by Nancy Faus Mullen

Al Dodson donated multiple copies of anthems that he had collected while he was a choir director to the Richmond Church of the Brethren choir. We are very grateful to be recipients of a fine choral library of over 20 anthems that Al had boxed up for us. We are sorry that Al did not live to hear and even direct some of his anthems sung by our choir.

Posthumously we say,
"Many thanks, Al! We love you."

Happy March Birthdays and Anniversaries!

7 Teresa Henderson	29 Emma Faus
9 Ruth Spitzer(in memory)	Isabelle Faus
10 Adrienne Lowe	Matt Guynn
17 St. Patrick's Day	Sarah Kinsel
25 Paula Ulrich	Ben Shively
26 Vincent Ekwealor(2000)	31 Alisa Clapp-Itnyre
Elizabeth Keller	Mark Stosberg
27 Kim Shively	Donna Walcott

Congregational Name Task Team

Following up on a theme raised during the congregational "cottage meetings" around the budget, the Ministry Team would like to invite the formation of a group of people interested in exploring our congregation's name, and if we might wish to make it more welcoming. Mark Stosberg is willing to represent the Ministry Team with such a group, so we need just a few more to think about how to get the conversation going. Interested? Please talk to Mark, or Enten (Ministry Team Chair).

Conversations on Baptism and Membership

Would you like to learn more about the meaning and practice of baptism? Are you curious about what it might mean to be a member (or associate member) of our congregation? Are you interested in exploring the history of our church and the Church of the Brethren tradition? Wondering where you fit in as a part of our community? Then plan to come to our upcoming conversations on baptism & membership! Our exact format will depend on the interests and preferences of those who sign up, but anyone is welcome to attend. Whether you're thinking about being baptized or becoming a member of our church, already a member, or just curious about what all this means, everyone is welcome. These gatherings will begin in late March or early April, so contact Pastor Matt soon if you're interested.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

-excerpt from the Breastplate of St. Patrick



CHURCH UPDATES

The Season of Lent Begins

What is Lent? The stuff that you find in the bottom of your pockets or in the clothes dryer? What you did when you let a friend borrow some money or a book? For most people not connected with Catholic or Anglican Christianity, Lent may be a bit unfamiliar.

The season of Lent consists of the 40 days before Easter Sunday, beginning with Ash Wednesday. (For those who may be doing the math and realizing something doesn't add up, traditionally the 6 Sundays during Lent are not counted towards the 40 days.) Some of the ways people observe Lent include an increased emphasis on prayer and repentance, abstaining from certain foods or practices, or taking up another particular Lenten discipline such as special devotions or volunteer work.

Throughout the season of Lent we will be focusing on several of these spiritual practices during our Sunday morning worship gatherings.

Opportunities for Participation

As Lent begins on the 9th of this month, here are a couple ways for you to participate more fully in this season:

Lenten Devotional Book:

Every year, Brethren Press publishes a

small Lenten devotional written by a Church of the Brethren author. This year's devotional, *The Cost of Following Jesus*, is written by J.D. Glick. The following excerpt is from the Brethren Press website:

"Jesus spoke clearly about what awaited him - suffering, betrayal, and death - as his ministry moved from Galilee to Jerusalem. He also knew how costly it was for those choosing to follow him. Join this Lenten journey as we trace the steps Jesus took in his final days. The demands of discipleship are real, but new life - resurrection life - awaits us on Easter morning."

If you would like a copy of this devotional book, please feel free to take one from the stack in the gathering area outside the sanctuary. (There should be enough for one per family.)

Ash Wednesday Gathering:

Recognizing the beginning of the season of Lent by gathering for worship and prayer on Ash Wednesday has been a part of Christian ritual since the 6th century. On Wednesday March 9th at 6:15pm in our sanctuary there will be a simple worship gathering for reflection, repentance, and the traditional imposition of ashes for anyone who is interested. All are welcome to come take part in this time of deep meaning and meditation.

Lenten Worship Series on Spiritual Disciplines

This Lent our Sunday morning worship gatherings will focus on the experiential practices of faith commonly called Spiritual Disciplines. While there are many "classical" disciplines such as meditation, prayer, fasting, service, and worship, there are also many other spiritual practices that renew our souls and deepen our everyday living. Our series will seek to explore a variety of both traditional disciplines and fresh ideas on ways to seek transformation in the way of Christ. We will begin on March 13th with a time of worship incorporating mindful silence, simple musical chants, and reflection on the "noise" of our lives.

Welcome to Our Newest Deacon

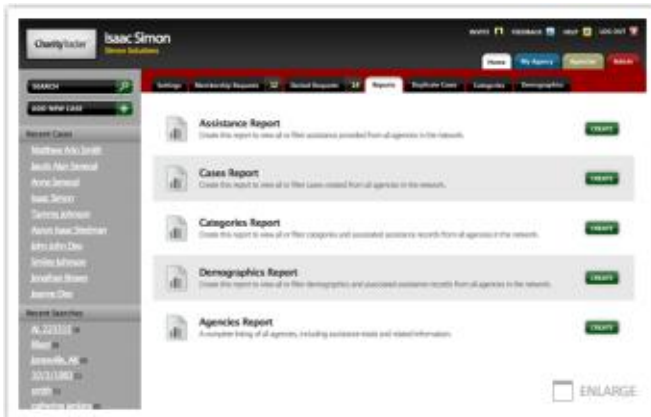
We are excited to share that Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm has agreed to answer the call to be one of our church's deacons. He joins Mary Eller and Amy Ritchie in working with Pastor Matt to help meet the diverse caregiving needs of our congregation.

COMMUNITY COALITION UPDATES

Open Arms Ministries

In January Open Arms saw a huge increase in the numbers of persons requesting rental and rental deposit assistance. We had 86 phone inquiries but only 8 intakes during the month. We had scheduled close to 10 intakes each week, however most were "no-shows." A few were sent to the Trustee's office and refused to work off hours owed to that office. We had 15 requests for rental assistance, 3 of those were homeless. Twenty calls for utility assistance; 5 for food; 3 for medications; and 3 for furniture.

In January Sharlene was in weekly contact with Salvation Army and the trustee to either collaborate for assistance, or to verify or share information regarding legitimacy of needs. If United Way implements the data sharing computer program, Charity Tracker, these tasks *Continued on page 5*



Sample image from www.charitytracker.net

Children of Abraham Monthly Gathering

On Sunday March 20th at 5pm there will be a meeting of the local interfaith group, Children of Abraham hosted by St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 800 N. A Street. There will be a potluck and program. After a time of food and fellowship the group will continue watching the DVD series "The History of God", which gives an overview of the development of the major monotheistic religions throughout history. This month's segment will begin to tell the story of the life and ministry of Jesus.

Bethany Opens a Sabbath Space on March 27-28

In Hebrew scriptures we learn that the sabbath was a time of rest, waiting for God in meditation and prayers, and restoration of right relationship with God, creation, and one another. Throughout Christian history, our forebears turned to Scripture, various forms of individual and communal prayer, and fasting to listen for God's leading and to cease from fear and rancor. In the beginning of our sacred scriptures we read that God establishes the earth and all creation and that it is good. And in the closing book of Revelation we hear again a vision of restored creation where a river flows from the throne of God and the leaves from the tree of life planted by the river are for



the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1-2).

At this moment in our national and denominational life, and taking Jesus seriously, Bethany Seminary is opening a sabbath space for all people beginning on Sunday, March 27, at 5:00 p.m. with a simple fellowship meal and closing on Monday, March 28, by 3:00 p.m. The purpose of our gathering is to remember together that God is our creator, that we belong to God, and that we find our freedom and our joy in reconciliation with God and one another. In these hours together, we will offer experiences of corporate worship, opportunities for various prayer forms in smaller groups, and space for individual meditation, intercession, and reflection.

There is no registration charge for this event, but please register if you plan to attend. Those who wish to eat the Sunday evening meal and the noon lunch are asked to contribute \$5.00 for each meal, payable upon arrival. If you need additional information, please contact the Seminary at 1-800-287-8822 or at <http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/news/sabbathspace>

COMMUNITY COALITION UPDATES

Open Arms Ministries contd.

will be done much more efficiently among OAM partners and agencies.

Other Collaborations

Last month was great for collaborations in other ways as well. Susan Isaacs, Wayne County Trustee spent an afternoon at OAM's office, learning about OAM possibilities and procedures. Susan also chairs the United Way committee that is considering OAM for the Charity Tracker leadership. During the meeting, Susan mentioned the need for another Soap Pantry (in addition to 1 open by The Salvation Army one day/month) and her desire to support such a project. Through Board member Barry Cramer, OAM contacted a local pastor interested in the same. This resulted in a three-way meeting and the decision to support such a pantry ministry together with the Trustee office and Bethesda Ministries.

Recruiting more partner or affiliate congregations

Director Sharlene George and Wayne Copenhaver are visiting pastors originally contacted in 2008 at the inception of Open Arms. Hillcrest Baptist Church is now planning to become a partner congregation. Bethel A.M.E. Church is looking seriously at becoming at least an affiliate with Open Arms. Both of these congregations - as most of

OAM's partners and affiliates - are already providing various services to needy persons and see the value of close collaboration in the process of receiving, verifying, and responding to the many requests for assistance. The visits will continue, including pastors of churches not yet contacted or yet aware of Open Arms' work.

Fundraising

A mailing to 96 physicians and funeral homes regarding OAM's mission has begun to bring in donations. The next mailing will be to private businesses and trucking companies. Individual invitations for larger donations from large corporations will be made before long.

Covering the director's half-time salary

It is critical for OAM partners, affiliates, and other groups and agencies concerned about the needy to realize that First Friends' initial pledge to pay the Open Arms' director's half-time salary for the first two years ends in mid-April 2011. Most granting foundations and organizations do not provide staff salary funding. Grants are being written for other purposes.

The new OAM Development Com. is working on a major fundraising, public event, scheduled in early May at Reid Hospital's Lingle Room. This will include a catered meal, education about Open Arms services, a Silent

Auction, and entertainment. Stay tuned for details. Meanwhile, any donations for this salary cause may be directed to

"Open Arms Ministries,"
P.O. Box 1012
Richmond, IN 47375

clearly designated for "director's salary fund."



The OAM office provides all partners and affiliates with information and advice related to questions arising in their own services to needy. Please don't hesitate to call the office, 962-9100.

Director Sharlene George has recently been asked to join the United Way's Visioning Committee and that committee's Basic Needs subcommittee. This step is another important link in the network of organizations, churches, and agencies collaborating to assist those in need.

- Wayne Copenhaver, for OAM Exec. Com.

COMMUNITY INVITATIONS

March Outreach Emphasis: Girls Inc.

This month's focus is Girls Inc; Karen Poling, RCoB member and Girls Inc. Program Director, shares more:

"Girls Inc. is a non-profit youth-serving organization that works specifically with girls on issues unique to girls. We provide girl-specific programming including anti-bullying (relational aggression), anti-drugs, & science & math. We have concentrated on increasing both 1) the number of girls we serve daily and 2) the number of older girls, to almost double what it was a year ago. By serving more girls we are finally able to offer more age-specific programs.

"I have found lots of big & small rewards working with girls all over Richmond. In many cases it's hard to know when you're making a difference in the lives of the people you work with, but a couple of weeks ago a girl who had been with us in the past came back to visit. When I went up to welcome her, she hugged me and cried because she missed us so much in the time she'd been gone. When I spoke with her mom about coming back, she mentioned how meaningful it was to be able to make friends easily at Girls Inc.--this wasn't so true at school where lots of girl-bullying goes unnoticed. We work hard to make sure that all of our girls find a safe place to develop healthy friendships & self-esteem that they will take with them the rest of their lives."

Center for Congregations--March Events

- 2,3 **RESCHEDULED** - "Congregational Management" with John Wimberly
- 9,10 "Essentials of Church Finance (Part 1)" with Vonna Laue
- 16, 17, 18 "Marketing 101" with June Miller
- 17 "Congregation Management Software Basics" with Nancy Armstrong
- 24 "How to Build the Band" with Greg Graham

Full information at <http://www.centerforcongregations.org/>

