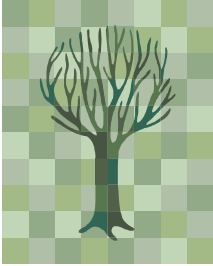


Judson Memorial Baptist Church M e s s e n g e r

A Welcoming and Affirming Congregation

March 2011



From the Pastor

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which is March 9th this year, and ends on the day before Easter, 40 days not including Sundays, which are always considered celebrations of the resurrection. Lent is traditionally a time to prepare for resurrection, setting aside additional time for prayer and reflection.

At our congregational meeting in January we set a goal to “Deepen our spiritual connections as we do the work of the interim.” This Lenten season at Judson will offer many opportunities to do that, including the Marcus Borg series on “What it Means to be Christian” which will be our Adult Education opportunity on Sunday morning, our Wednesday evening gathering for a simple supper and a Taize prayer service, and, of course, our Sunday morning worship focusing on Lenten scriptures with wonderful choir and instrumental music throughout Lent.

An important part of deepening spiritual connections is to commit to being faithful participants in worship. . We hope you and your family will make

an extra effort to attend worship each week, and to attend each of the Holy Week services. It is an important part of our journey together in this interim time.

This year, because of the change in our fiscal year, our stewardship campaign will take place during Lent, culminating with Stewardship Sunday the Sunday after Easter. A traditional Lenten discipline is giving sacrificially of ourselves and our resources which makes this a good time to think about how we respond to God’s generosity.

Another way to observe Lent is by advocating for justice in our communities, our state and our country in a time when budgets are being crafted. We can speak up for maintaining safety net programs for the poorest among us and working for the common good. For advocacy ideas, go to the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition website at www.jrlc.org. This organization is composed of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Islamic Center of Minnesota. Also visit www.sojourners.com for advocacy at the national level.

These are all good ways to deepen our spiritual connections within the congregation, with God, and with our neighbors—doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God.

Grace and peace,

Suzan

Inside This Issue:

Game Night is Back.....	2
Congregational Growth.....	3
Executive Council Notes	4
Change-working for Peace	5
Tree of Life Article	6
Judson Preschool article.....	6
Judson Street Fest	7
Trombone Choir Concert	8
My Green Eyes	8



Judson’s Turn to help with cleanup at Loaves and Fishes Monday, March 28, 2011— 5:45 to 7:00 pm

Cleanup can begin as dishes and trays are brought into dish room. There are not enough trays to go around, so they need to be washed as collected. Cleanup involves scrubbing tables, sweeping floors, doing dishes, etc. Kids need to be supervised in the dish room. Contact Eileen McLaughlin at 612-819-7969 or maceileen@aol.com if you would like to help out.

Welcoming and Affirming *by Jane Ann Nelson*



What insights and challenges could the new Executive Director of the Association of

Welcoming and Affirming Baptist give? A dozen Judsonites discovered the answers when Robin Lunn spoke to us and our guests from University Baptist Church on February 11.

Both Judson and University Baptist have long been “official” AWAB churches. Both have active members of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Both have welcoming vision/mission statements. It’s just “not a

big deal” to either congregation.

But maybe being “welcoming and affirming” could/should be a “big deal.” For the gay teenager in our neighborhood who might be considering suicide because he feels that God rejects him, perhaps our witness could/should be brighter. For other congregations who might be considering whether to become members of AWAB and to declare their witness, perhaps Judson could/should become their mentors. For LGBT seminary students who are weighing the decision to seek ordination, perhaps Judson could/

should become their supporting partners.

And might “welcoming and affirming” be related to more than gay issues? Might we weave them into our discussions of “inclusion” of others? Might we consider what it means to be “welcoming and affirming” in all areas of our community life? How about affirming those with very different political beliefs? or of very different socioeconomic status? or of different age categories? or . . . ? Is it time to make being “welcoming and affirming” a “big deal” again?

THE JUDSON FAMILY GAME NIGHT IS BACK!!

It's time to mark those calendars again for another Intergenerational *Family Game Night!* Bring with you one or two of your *favorite games* and leave the rest up to us. Friends and neighbors welcome, too!

Friday, March 11th
5:30-7:30PM in Judson Hall
Pizza Dinner (suggested donation)
Ice Cream Sundaes
Raffle Prizes!



Join Us Saturday, April 2nd for Alan Newton's Presentation on The Middle East

On Saturday, April 2nd, Rochester-Genesee Executive Minister Alan Newton will be in town to discuss his recent trip to the Middle East and his delegations discussions with Arab leaders around Muslim/Christian relations. Alan traveled throughout the Middle East, including Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and The Palestinian Territories, and was provided access to such dignitaries as the King of Jordan. Throughout, the group discussed the current state of Christian/Muslim relations and what each group needs from each other. This promises to be a fascinating evening.

The presentation will kick off at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall with a potluck dinner, followed by Alan's

presentation in the Ann Judson Room. Joining us will be members from University Baptist Church. Look for additional details in the bulletin and email, and in the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jim Kuether at 612-226-5417 or jkuether@comcast.net



Sanctuary Feeling a Little too Spacious Lately? *By Dottie Brown*

If you have noticed there seem to be more empty spaces in our pews on Sunday mornings than there have been in the past, it's probably because our average attendance has been dropping for the last three years—more than 13% since 2008.

There are as many possible reasons as to why this is so as there are possible solutions. The Growth Committee would like to encourage everyone at Judson to become part of a solution.

Here are a few ideas:

- Look around on Sunday morning and notice who is missing. Checking the nametag board at the back of the sanctuary for names left up there at the end of the service (before people start replacing them!) might jog your memory. Give folks you know who are missing a call or drop them a note—or both. Convey that you miss them and check to make sure they are OK.
- Make the effort to greet newer attendees and visitors before you stop to chat with Judson friends or deal with church business. Introduce yourself, find out a little bit about them, and introduce them to someone else at Judson. If you have trouble thinking of what to say, here are a few suggestions:
 - Is this your first time visiting? What brought you to Judson?
 - Do you live in the neighborhood?
 - How long have you lived in Minnesota? Do you have family here?
 - Have you checked out our website?
- If you have a nametag, wear it, and introduce yourself to people who are already members but whom you do not know well.
- We will start using pew registers again in the near future. When the register comes your way, write your name in it—even if you know everyone on the pew and they know you. Read the names of others sitting in your pew and make a point to greet them after the service if you do not know them well. If you notice someone in the pew in front of you whom you don't know, check out that pew register after the service and greet that person, too.
- We will be using the information we receive from the pew registers to help us reach out to folks who are missing and keep track of whether we are being successful in our efforts to bring members back and keep visitors coming back.

Last, but certainly NOT least, make the extra effort to attend Judson yourself, especially on those Sundays when reading the morning paper or getting some extra work done tempts you to stay at home. We all need each other.

In community we come together to become whole, to learn from and nurture each other, and to become rejuvenated so we can be light in the world.

Interim Process Kicks Off With A Review of Judson's History

At our January business meeting, the congregation approved the five tasks of the interim process as our primary focus goals for the upcoming year. In order for us to understand where we are going as a church and what our vision is for the future of our community of faith, it is critical that we first come to terms with our history, reconciling conflicts and moments when our community was troubled, and celebrating our accomplishments, our ministries and our membership.

Taking advantage of work done as part of our Centennial Celebration and using some techniques developed by Suzan Ireland, the Interim Committee and a team of volunteers that has offered to help with the process, will facilitate some exercises that allow all of us to understand the history of Judson Church, the milestones in the life of the Judson Community, and the place each of us holds in that history.

Over the next couple of weeks, additional information will be coming out in the email and announced at worship during Work of the Church. We look forward to everyone participating in these fun and meaningful exercises.

Your Executive Council Wants You to Know—Pam Joern, Moderator

My friend Kathy teaches English composition at Anoka Community College to immigrant students who need to beef up their English language skills in order to continue their educations. Many of Kathy's students are refugees of war-torn countries, inured to high risk choices and horrendous consequences for mistakes. They are also juggling family, multiple jobs, and school. They miss classes. Sometimes, they fall hopelessly behind. One such student met Kathy in the hallway, desperate over his failing grades. She described his face as full of terror. "I can't fail," he said. "I can't fail." Kathy offered him a gift of grace that would not have occurred to me. "Yes, you can," she said. "You can fail this class. It's no big deal. You can take it again."

She lowered the stakes. She threw out a safety net. And while I smile every time I think of this story, it also reminds me of one of the many reasons I love church. Since I was a child, my church communities have given me a supportive environment where I could try something new, risk failure, although I don't think it would even be called that.

As a teenager, my friend Barbara used to play the organ for Sunday evening services while I played the piano. People chose hymns for an open sing, so we couldn't practice ahead. We made a pact: anything that had more than three sharps we would transpose into flats. This can be done by subtracting from seven—a key with four sharps can be played in a key with three flats—except this wreaks havoc with accidentals. If you don't know what I'm talking about or even if you do, let me say this—Mistakes were made. Still, people sang with

gusto, we were praised, and the only criticism I remember hearing (from our mothers, of course), was that no one would know we hit wrong notes if we didn't make faces at each other.

Here at Judson, I'm allowed to sing in the choir. There's no other place where my thin, reedy alto voice would get to join in on fabulous music like the Ave Maria or the Weatherhead or Mozart Requiems.

A few years ago, I directed Randy Baker and Doug Weatherhead's rock opera, *My Green Eyes*. I will say that Randy and Doug confessed to me, several months in, that they didn't realize I had never directed anything. I thought I had mentioned that, but the point is, no where else am I going to be given the chance to direct an original rock opera.

Now, I'm Moderator. In a year of transition. I've never been a CEO of anything. I've never been President of a club, though I did run for Student Council President in high school. And lost. But here I am, stretching into a new role and feeling, on occasion, not too afraid because what I know is—you will throw out that safety net. You will do what you do which is offer support, appreciate intention and effort, and love me along the way.

Soon, Jim Kuether and his Nominating Committee will be looking for folks to serve during our next fiscal and program year. This will be a critical and exciting time for Judson. While keeping on with our spiritual nurture and community programs, we will also be preparing for new leadership. All that is required of you is a willing heart, an openness to learn, and a good sense of humor. There will be plenty of other people to help you. And like any task, it's way more fun to do in good company. Please, pray and consider

what you might do. Volunteer. Or when asked, say yes.

I have a coaster on my desk that reads: I am fairly certain that given a cape and a nice tiara, I could save the world. This makes me laugh. A cape and a tiara aren't nearly enough, and I'm quite sure I alone can't save even myself. But I do like the idea of empowerment, and that is what I think we give each other in community. I am fairly certain that given great love and compassion, we can save a small corner of the world. I want to be part of that. Don't you?

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE WILL MEET TUESDAY, MARCH 22

The Congregational Care Committee will meet Tuesday, March 22, at 1:30 p.m. in the Ann Judson Room.

By making connections to those on our "Tree of Life" and specifically praying for them, we will continue to work towards accomplishing Judson's goal for this year, "Deepening Our Spiritual Connections."

If you are interested in learning more about our committee, please join us. Visitors are always welcome.

The knitting group will meet at the home of Kathy Urbaniak on Saturday, March 19, at 1 PM.



CHANGE – Working for Peace and Social Justice through Spiritual and Personal Transformation by Joel Hoefle

The peace work that we are involved with is amazing, in part because we have the trust of the ethnic groups.



This trust is rooted in decades of denominational work through HOPE International and former missionaries, not to mention the Adoniram and Ann Judson themselves. By the grace of God, we have been placed in a position where we can help to strategically rekindle opportunities for dialogue. The trust that has been established over the past 197 years by the Baptists is our mainstay for why we are able to be so effective.

A brief description of our approach

The swirling confusion and intractable nature of violent conflicts don't lend themselves to easy answers. But what truly drives one group of people to kill, rape, and enslave another? What allows violent conflicts to stretch on decade after decade, generation after generation?

To resolve conflicts and begin the healing process for those who've been affected by them, we must first understand and accept both the spiritual and the institutional roots of the problems.

Principles of peace and justice take hold by being lived - in people's everyday behaviors and attitudes and through practice in all their primary relationships. Opportunities to recognize understand and internalize behaviors of equality and the related attitudes and practices are essential, particularly if society is to learn to use and successfully uphold these principles over the long term as a system of governance. Space has gradually been expanding for civil society to operate in the oppressed countries of this world.

Our current call to serve, has us working with HOPE International helping to develop processes targeted at spiritual, personal and social transformation. Our group has developed trusted relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders, placing us in a strong position to encourage and support people who are ready for social change.

When we are centered in the true Spirit of God, the way we work and live is truly transformed. The personal spiritual work comes first. Transforming people in their own communities, means changing first how they respond to family members and their neighbors in the community where they live.

Prayer Requests

Pray for spiritual transformation as the foundation for Peace

Pray for the empowerment of women to lead us out of decades of conflict

Pray for the orphanages and the girls at risk on the borders of all nations

How You Can Be Involved

- Prayer
- Becoming knowledgeable about the issues in Myanmar and educating others
- Getting involved with groups to stop Human Trafficking
- Supporting the New Life Center in Northern Thailand
- Coming on a mission work team
- Supporting our work for peace by providing financial support

JUDSON'S TREE OF LIFE

By making connections to those on our "Tree of Life" and specifically praying for them, the Congregational Care Committee will continue to work towards accomplishing Judson's goal for this year, "Deepening our Spiritual Connections." In order to help us with spiritual care and support, we would like Judsonites to fill out the form below and place it in the box at the back of the sanctuary or put it in the offering plate (extra forms will be available next to the box). Information is confidential, but we would like to include the person making the request with the person in need of prayer for the bulletin, And, for the Congregational Care Committee, we would like a short description of the need. Any questions or concerns, contact Kathy Urbaniak, Chair, at (612-825-0950) or email her at: kathyurbaniak@gmail.com. Here is a sample of what the form looks like.

TREE OF LIFE

___Health Concern ___Grief ___Transition ___Celebration ___Homebound

Name of Person _____

Below write Information which will help Congregational Care provide support:

This form submitted by: _____

Relationship _____ Date _____



Our experience at Judson Preschool this year - by Catherine Mandle

We always suspected something was "different" about our son, Jackson (5), but didn't know what it was. After opening up the door for evaluation with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), we learned that he has Asperger's Syndrome on the autism spectrum. This news was scary and relieving all at the same time: scary because it put us on a new path that we didn't yet understand and relieving because it confirmed things that, if we searched our hearts, we already knew.

Our evaluators at MPS offered Jackson placement at Judson Preschool through their Special Education program and we didn't hesitate one moment before signing on. We had heard excellent recommendations about Judson from friends with kids enrolled there prior to the evaluation and knew it would be a perfect spot for our son.

And it is! Jackson is meeting the goals of his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at Judson and he's having a great time doing it. He is mainstreamed in his classroom for the majority of the school day. His learning is supplemented by additional therapy sessions on-site and "Friends Time," a weekly small group where he receives almost one-on-one attention in learning the precious social skills that most of us take for granted.

To say that we are pleased with both our son's improvement and Judson Preschool would be an understatement. This school year has represented a turning point for our son's development that we believe would not have occurred as beautifully had he not been scooped up by the MPS Special Education program and lovingly placed at Judson Preschool.

Jackson's placement at Judson has given him the wings he needs to fly into Kindergarten next year, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Catherine & Dan Mandle

STREET FEST MAY 21: "THANK YOU" *by Wayne Urbaniak*

Planning has begun for this year's Street Fest. So it is not too early to say, "Thank you." THANK YOU...

* ...to all of you who have signed up or told Keith or Betsy Ford that you are willing and able to help at Street Fest this year. (The list is already pretty impressive, and many people have volunteered for some major jobs--more details about those in future "Messengers" and bulletins.)

* ...to all of you who came to the first planning meeting February 22. (We could feel enthusiasm building as we reviewed highlights of the past street fests and planned for this, our ninth one.)

* ...to all of you who plan to be there to help and will be letting Keith or Betsy know that soon. (There are enough opportunities and blessings for everyone, so jump in and join the fun.)



* ...to all of you who have marked your calendars--Street Fest May 21. (Add the times, 10:30-4:30, with set up beginning at 8:00 a.m. and clean up afterwards.)

* ...to all of you who have already begun "passing the word." (We discussed publicity at our planning meeting,

agreeing that the best publicity is "word of mouth"--via tweet and text and Facebook and email and phone call and live conversation and note: "Judson Street Fest May 21: see you there.")

* ...to all of you who have begun praying for this year's Street Fest, thanking God for Judson's significant presence in our community through past street fests and the opportunity to "open our doors" again this year. (The goals of Street Fest are:

1. Building community both within and outside of Judson;
2. Fundraising;
3. Having fun;
4. Introducing ourselves to the people around us.) THANK YOU.

AFGHANISTAN:

Ten years into the U.S. war; An evening with "the bravest woman in Afghanistan"

Malalai Joya

Author of:

A Woman Among Warlords:

The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan who dared to raise her voice. Joya is a human rights activist and outspoken opponent of the U.S. war and occupation of her country.

Friday, April 1, 2011, 7:00 pm

St. Joan of Arc Church

4537 3rd Ave. South in Minneapolis

Ticket price: \$10

What are U.S. tax dollars paying for in Afghanistan? Is the U.S. war and occupation really helping Afghan women?

THINK THREE SUNDAY:

MARCH 20TH!

Please consider bringing three (3) items for the Joyce Food Shelf **on Sunday, March 20th**. There is a list of items needed on the box in the foyer. Place your items in this box or in the baskets at the back of the sanctuary. Monetary donations are also appreciated. Put the money in an offering envelope and designate that it is for Joyce Food Shelf. Thank you for your past support and for your continued support.



THINK THREE on MARCH 20TH!



My Green Eyes

April 16, 2011—7:00 PM at
Judson

Save the date - Saturday, April 16th (the night before Palm Sunday) -

The original cast and pit band will be performing the music from "My Green Eyes", the original rock opera by Doug Weatherhead and Randy Baker, in the sanctuary starting at 7pm. Lyrics will be provided and the audience will be encouraged to sing along!

If you didn't sign up for this event at the church silent auction last fall, the suggested donation is \$10 at the door. This is a fundraiser for Judson, so invite your friends, family and co-workers!

38th Annual Minneapolis Trombone Choir Concert

Sunday, March 20
7:00 p.m. at Judson

Mark your calendars for this wonderful concert featuring over 35 trombones in the choir led by Jim ten Bensel! The guests this year are the Westside Trombone Quartet. A variety of music (classical, contemporary, jazz) will be performed as well as music written and arranged by members of the trombone choir. Jim ten Bensel is the director of the choir. Free will donation at the door (suggested \$15). All proceeds from the concert will go to the Special Music Fund at Judson Church.



The Messenger

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Judson Memorial Baptist Church

Rev. Suzan Ireland, Interim Pastor
sireland@judsonchurch.org

Rev. Kevin Brown, Director of Faith Formation
kbrown@judsonchurch.org

John De Haan, Director of Music
jdehaan@judsonchurch.org

Tracy Canfield, Administrator
info@judsonchurch.org

Office: 612-822-0649
Fax: 612-822-8055
Email: info@judsonchurch.org
Hours: Mon-Thurs, 9 am--5 pm
Friday, 9 am-Noon

Editors: Déadra Moore and this newsletter
prepared by Eileen McLaughlin

Judson Memorial Baptist Church

4101 Harriet Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED