



# STEEPLE NEWS

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Steeple News  
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## LENT

By Interim Sabbatical Pastor Gail Crouch

Lent is a period of time which, more often than not, simply confuses us. We often don't have some of the age-old rituals and expectations that are part of some traditions. I am often asked the question, "What am I supposed to **do** in Lent?"

Traditionally, Lent is a time of self-examination, prayer, fasting, that is observed for forty days until Easter. Lent comes from the Latin term which means to lengthen. It points to the springtime of our year and to the increasing daylight hours which come.

Lent is sometimes difficult for us because images of penitence, ashes and confession are not ones with which we easily identify. Our psychologically oriented society puts more emphasis on self-esteem and feeling good about ourselves than on the difficult aspects of personal failure and sin. But Lent is a good time to examine ourselves, to take stock to see if there are areas in our life where we are out of sync – with others, with God, with ourselves. What relationships need strengthening? What are the issues of forgiveness which are difficult for us? How do I spend time with God each day?

Lent can be a window in time to check out our relationship with God/Jesus/one another in community. It is an inward time with the hope that the results will change our outward behavior. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from our love of God and neighbor. Lent allows us a structured, specific time to begin or renew or continue our inner dialogue with God, remembering to listen more than talk.

But give me specifics, Gail, I can hear some of you saying! What you "do" in Lent is very personal but here are some suggestions.

**\*\*Set aside a period of time each day to sit in prayer. Pray for not just those you love but for those you find difficult to love. Sit in silence and wait for God's voice to**

speak to you. Make your prayer time the first priority in your day!

**\*\*Do some daily Bible reading.** This is often a good time to read through one of the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each have a different emphasis but all tell the story of Jesus, his ministry, and his role as the resurrected Christ in our lives. Immersing yourself in the life and times of Jesus is a holy way to travel through Lent.

**\*\*Embrace silence.** I don't mean you can't talk at all or demand silence around you. It won't work! But as Jesus spent his 40 days in wilderness before beginning his ministry, he was alone, there was a lot of silence. And I believe that something in the silence of those days helped to prepare him for the challenges of his years of ministry. In your silent reflections ponder what you want to do this Lenten season to grow closer to God, to someone else, to the church.

In her book, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, Annie Dillard says the following:

*At a certain point you say to the woods, sea, mountains, the world, now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive. You empty yourself and wait, listening. . . . . The hum of silence is all there is. It is the alpha and the omega. It is God's brooding over the face of the waters; it is the blended note of ten thousand things, the whine of wings. . . . . Distinctions blur. Quit your tents. Pray without ceasing.*

As we walk our Lenten journey together, I hold all of you in prayer, ask you to pray for me, and together for our fragile, beautiful, hurting and God-filled world.

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## REFLECTIONS OF A NEW MEMBER

By Jeff Stilwell

Long an admirer of theologians Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, there was a certain amount of expectation as I attended my first UCC church. What would I find inside, I wondered?

The last year had found me thinking more and more often about finding a church community with whom to grow. Why? Tired, I guess. Tired of not being able to talk about God's love in my life without being labeled an intolerant red-neck. Tired of watching nervous tics develop as I mention the word "Christian" in mixed company. Or, perhaps most importantly of all, tired of sitting on the sidelines as the Gospel is high-jacked by power-drunk merchants of polarization and fear.

I used to drive by Broadview Community United Church of Christ on my way to and from work each day, admiring the building, wondering about that striking banner with the big comma. Always admiring, but never stopping. Always wondering, but never stopping. One day, however, I noticed that Reverend Dan Stern - a man I remembered meeting briefly years ago - was the church's minister. On that day, I decided to stop and see if there was a worship service bulletin outside the building. There was. And in it I found Pastor Dan's prayer language "Creator, Father, Mother..."

"Could it be?" I wondered. "Does he really read Scripture the way I do?"

However, experience has taught that a minister - no matter how charismatic - does not a congregation make. What would I find inside, I wondered?

What did I find? I found this splendid blend. Really. In the newcomers class, a popular topic among us is what of this church appeals to each most. For me, it's the thoughtful and daring honesty of the Adult Spirituality classes on Sunday mornings. Then, too, it's the rich mix of fervent spirituality and enlightened political awareness suffusing the worship. The strong lay leadership, too, I find impressive, as I do the genuinely friendly conversations during coffee hour.

Even though my time here has been short, I can already sense one new truth of my life: I'm glad that I finally did stop wondering and, instead, stopped by.

## BROADVIEW BANTER

By Jennie Bloch-Garcia

Did anyone notice the additional twinkle in our own charming **Pastor Dan**'s eye? It's hard to tell if that comes from the thought of a three month sabbatical or a **new sauna** in his basement. Of course Dan looks forward to the opportunity to reconnect with his spiritual mentor in on his trip to Central America (think: sunny, dry beaches).

Speaking of springy steps, your humble columnist has on good authority that handsome **Andrew Estep** has a new boyfriend. When asked if Andrew could be in love, my anonymous yet reliable source (think: Chris Foss) said, "Of course. That's why he's never home."

Imagine hundreds of parents sitting in a large auditorium to watch a three hour talent show filled with the brimming talents of the students at AE2 elementary school. Could the first act be the belly dancing of a delightful recent addition to Broadview's Sunday morning? Sweet **Lucia Tucker** who has recently been attending church with her adorable father **Todd Tucker**, wowed parents and fellow students alike with her Maori dancing.

If you drive by any popular eatery and gaze upon the huddle of smokers 25 feet away from the door, you will not see **Jan Studyvin**. In the best gossip this month, the silky haired animal rights champion has changed her life and stopped that nasty and health endangering habit of smoking. All of Broadview wishes to congratulate Jan and celebrate this triumph of will power.

Our devoted and charming **Rose Bailey** has reported that her tall, dark, and handsome son **Walter** has recently celebrated his one year anniversary with his girlfriend Jessica. The two attend Vanderbilt University together and, most importantly, Rose likes Jessica, calling her "wonderful with a great sense of humor." (think: She does dishes?)

If you happen to overhear two wildly intelligent men discussing (think: arguing) theology, chances are you've bumped into **Jackson Witmer** and **Bob Squaglia**, who has recently agreed to be his confirmation mentor.

Our lovely stand-in pastor, **Gail Crouch** is a grandmother of three boys. The two oldest (6 and 2) live in Idaho and one lives here. If you happen to see Gail looking a bit exhausted on a Wednesday, it's because she spends Tuesdays babysitting (think: chasing after) her one year old grandson. The friendly pastor also collects giraffes, an animal she admires because of its grace and ability to stick its neck out.



## WHAT'S YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT?

February 2006

Read Greentips online at

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/E7\\_Irv71\\_mbr/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/E7_Irv71_mbr/)

Many of our daily activities affect the environment, but few people have stopped to consider the most important: their personal contribution to global warming. The fossil fuels we burn to satisfy our transportation and energy needs generate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the heat-trapping gas primarily responsible for climate change. In fact, the average American generates 20 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> every year--about the same amount as three new cars!

Several online calculators are available to help you determine your own annual production of CO<sub>2</sub>, or carbon "footprint" (see Related Links). These calculations take into account specific lifestyle choices that add CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere or, in some cases, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> because of climate-friendly actions you may already be taking. As the following strategies suggest, it's not difficult to shrink your carbon footprint.

### Transportation

Each gallon of gasoline burned by a car or truck releases 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

\* Choose the most fuel-efficient vehicle for your needs. If you own more than one vehicle, use the one that gets the worst mileage only when you can fill it with passengers or cargo. And when the time comes to buy a new car or truck, look for the cleanest, most fuel-efficient gasoline, gasoline-electric hybrid, or alternative-fuel model in its class.

\* Drive less. Carpooling two days a week can reduce your annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1,590 pounds. Combining errands into one trip can lower emissions even further.

### Energy Use

In general, every kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity used in your home generates 2.3 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

\* Change a bulb. If every American family replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an energy-saving compact fluorescent bulb, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would drop by more than 90 billion pounds--the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road.

\* Go digital. Replacing a mechanical thermostat with a digital model allows you to save energy by programming your heat to turn on and off at preset times.

\* Look for the Energy Star label. Appliances bearing this label use significantly less electricity than their counterparts.

\* Buy green power. Many utilities give you the option of purchasing electricity generated from renewable resources such as solar and wind energy.

### Other Tips

\* Recycle. Reducing waste in landfills reduces emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and methane (another heat-trapping gas). Recycling also uses less energy than manufacturing new materials.

\* Buy local. Food grown on local farms does not have far to travel, minimizing transportation-related emissions.

By combining energy efficiency and conservation with investments in carbon "offsets" (projects such as reforestation that pull carbon out of the atmosphere), it is possible to eliminate your heat-trapping emissions and achieve a "climate-neutral" lifestyle.

### Related Links:

Common Sense on Climate Change

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/Ed\\_Irv71\\_mb4/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/Ed_Irv71_mb4/)

Climate Star

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/m7\\_Irv71\\_mbc/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/m7_Irv71_mbc/)

EPA--Global Warming Calculator

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/Ep\\_Irv71\\_mbf/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/Ep_Irv71_mbf/)

UCS--Green Power Buying Guide

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/E1\\_Irv71\\_mbX/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/E1_Irv71_mbX/)

Climate Neutral Network

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/m1\\_Irv71\\_mbe/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/m1_Irv71_mbe/)

Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center

[http://ucsaction.org/ct/jd\\_Irv71\\_mbs/](http://ucsaction.org/ct/jd_Irv71_mbs/)

If you received this message from a friend, you can sign up for the Union of Concerned Scientists

[http://ucsaction.org/ucsaction/join.html?r=j7\\_Irv71rzf4E&](http://ucsaction.org/ucsaction/join.html?r=j7_Irv71rzf4E&)

## DEVEN 'DAY' BJÖRN MURTI

**Happy New Year 2006!** I'm glad to have you as a friend, and want to keep you abreast of my treasure chest of activities and thoughts last summer and fall.

**In the Summer**, I flew from my home in Seattle to Chicago. I debated and discussed sustainable future models at the World Future Society Annual Conference [www.wfs.org/2005summary.htm](http://www.wfs.org/2005summary.htm). As intern sous-chef, I learned from my aunt Hema Mowli how to use spices to make south Indian delicacies.

**I have just returned from a three month long trip to India.** Some highlights included: A trip to 4,000' elevation foothills of the grand Himalayas. We could see peaks at 15,000'! The cool white moonlight felt bright as a 10-watt bulb, shining with luster upon the rice paddies!

-For three weeks I learned how nature can heal at the navjivan Nature Cure Center.

-I gave a presentation at the Indian Environmental Association Annual Conference "EnviroVision 2005." The program leaders referred me to lecture about the "Human Relationship to the Environment: Taking Individual Responsibility" at Maharaja Sayajirao University [www.baroda-online.com/city.html](http://www.baroda-online.com/city.html), and at Saint Kabir & Baroda High Schools.

-I wrote an 85 page journal, a near daily account and survey to help process and record the various meanings of my trip.

**I returned on December 18 to the United States with a fresh International outlook on life.**

-I am quite involved with the Swedish Cultural Center. I am taking an "Intermediate Swedish" course to refresh my fluency, singing baritone with the Svea Male Chorus, and learning Viennese Waltz in the Vasa Dance Hall!

### **Day's Current Career Goals:**

I am looking for work that will hopefully give experience in program planning, management, and implementation. This will further empower me for my career direction to work as an organizational consultant/sustainability futurist to help executives and their organizations make profitable the change towards sustainability. An intermediary goal is to develop a career as a researcher/web consultant.

\*\*\*Please keep your ears and eyes open for me\*\*\*

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT CONGREGATIONS

from *Excellent Protestant Churches* by Paul Wilkes

### **#1 A Vibrancy, an excitement about living a Christian life.**

"By this I don't mean some sort of generic happiness, the 'have a good day' school of life. It is far deeper than that, and sometimes far more painful than one might imagine. Excellent churches live on 'the edge,' the creative and holy edge where the New Testament both stipulates and forecasts. Being a Christian is not a leisure-time activity but a high- adventure pursuit. These churches have accepted this challenge, and it brings an excitement to what they do. For each day, each activity, each gathering, each meeting is brimming with possibilities, and these churches want to seize those possibilities. They revel in the challenge. Yet, along with this excitement is a quiet peace, a trust that God walks with them."

### **MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Pepper Gown-Swanson	3/4
Judy Zibbell	3/6
Marianne Vogel	3/7
Sam Wilson	3/10
Charles Cressey	3/11
John Selmar	3/19
Alma Turner	3/20
Walter Thorn	3/20
Christian Thorn	3/22
Ron Liddle	3/23
Luisa Bloch-Garcia	3/27
Jennie Bloch-Garcia	3/28

### **A NEW WOMEN'S GROUP**

Some women in the congregation have expressed an interest in gathering together in a group that would meet in the evening for those unable to come to daytime groups. The exact format will take shape as we sit and talk together about what our needs might be. Women are in different places in their lives and in a variety of transitions. The support we can offer each other is an important part of being a faith community. Come to the church on **Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm** to explore the beginning of such a group. If you have questions, call Pastor Gail at 206-363-1432 or at the church on Wednesday afternoons or Thursday mornings.



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## READINGS

### March 12, 2006

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Trusting God's Promise

Gen 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps 22:23-31

Rom 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

### March 19, 2006

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Living in God's Promise

Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19

1 Cor 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

### March 26, 2006

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

Healing in the Wilderness

One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering

Num 21:4-9; Ps 107:1-3, 17-22

Eph 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

### April 2, 2006

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

On Our Hearts

Jer 31:31-34; Ps 51:1-12 or Ps 119:9-16

Heb 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

### **MOONLIT MARKET AUCTION:**

Broadview's 2nd annual FUNdraising auction will be held April 29.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event please contact co-coordinators, Mo Pomietto or Kay Groves. We are seeking lamps, card tables and large coolers.

### **UCC WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT**

June 22-26<sup>th</sup>, 2006

*Pikes Peak or Bust*

Rocky Mountain Conference UCC invites youth and advisors from all the UCC churches in the 11 western states, to get on the trail to Pikes Peak- 14,110 feet high above the plains of Colorado!

This is a ONCE-in-a-Youth-time -event you'll want to experience!

Contact the Conference office to register.

