

WORDS FROM THE WELL

October 2009

Volume 1:7



“Words from the Well” is a monthly newsletter from the Women at the Well United Methodist Church, a United Methodist Congregation in the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, Mitchellville IA. We have grown in leaps and bounds since our consecration almost 3 years ago and we have big plans for ourselves. The sky is the limit and the Lord is guiding our way.

COME AND SEE, OCTOBER 1 & 2

WOMEN AT THE WELL is a congregation modeled after similar congregations in other prisons. The idea was conceived and implemented by the ELCA – Evangelical Lutheran Church of America – to bring mainline congregations directly into prisons and provide offenders the opportunity, not just to attend services, but to be part of a congregation.

WOMEN AT THE WELL is the 12th such congregation created. We began in 2006 after the United Methodist Church and ICIW worked with Prison Congregations of America to make this happen. Prison Congregations of America continues to work with churches and prisons across the country to spread this opportunity to offenders everywhere.

As part of their work, they invite interested prisons and churches to participate in “Come and See” events with congregations already in existence. On October 1 & 2, we are honored to host those attending the “Come and See” event. This will include time for our Outside Council members to meet with the people attending, and they will hear from Pastor Arnette and Ms Bagby about the benefits of a congregation to both the offenders and the prison. Those visiting will join us in worship on Thursday, October 1, to learn about how the model works and get to know us and how we worship. Join us in making them feel welcome!



FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN:



“Come and See!” is the theme for our visitors this first week of October. We are so blessed to welcome visitors from across the country who hope to establish congregations like ours in the prisons of their states. But “Come and See!” is a great theme for the whole month of October.

Of course, we want others in ICIW to “Come and See” what Women at the Well is all about. Remember to invite people with your words, but also remember that your behavior needs to be “inviting” all the time. People look at you and judge what all Christians are like based on what they see. A friend of mine has a sign in her home that reminds, “You are the only Bible some people will ever read!”

“Come and See,” in October, what the printed Bible has to say to you! The last week of the month, we will mark All Saints’ Day. The church sets this day aside to remember the saints who went before us, to showed us how to live the life that God calls us to live. We will have a special service of healing and especially invite persons who have lost a loved one in the past year. We will thank God for healing, thank God for the assurance of life, thank God for the lives of those whose lives have touched ours. Thanks be to God!

Special Autumn Thanks!

Pastor Arnette was invited to preach and speak last month at Delhi and Buck Creek, Mason City Wesley, and Perry/Rippey/Fairview United Methodist Churches, and at Des Moines' Church Women United. Thanks for your hospitality and the gifts that were sent to the Women at the Well and the Stepping Out closet!

Visitors at the Well in September, for Thursday night worship, included: Bishop Julius Trimble and Racelder Granberry Trimble, along with the appointive cabinet, and members of the Outside Church Council, Polk City, Maple Grove, and Des Moines New Hope United Methodist Churches. We are so grateful for the visitors who bless our worship and pray that they are also blessed. If you or your congregation would like to arrange a visit or ask Pastor Arnette to preach, contact:

Women At the Well Prison Congregation
2300 E 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50316
515-266-0805(office)
515-822-4599 (cell)
womenatthewell@iaumc.org

CURRENT NEEDS IN THE STEPPING OUT CLOSET!

New bras	zip-lock bags
New underwear	cotton balls
Blue jeans	African American hair products
Sneakers	winter coats
Body wash	
Hair brushes	Hand/Body lotion

GAP SISTERS PRAYER GROUP

Inspired by Ezekiel 22:30 – standing in the gap, interceding in prayer on behalf of each other, our families and our friends. Supporting each other with encouragement and prayer. No matter the length or manner of our journey, we all need love and prayer. EVERYONE is welcome- No sign up is required.



NEW SISTERS BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Arnette has started a new study on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 about the Lord's Prayer.

OCTOBER OFFERINGS

Our congregations' offerings this month go to:



The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination. Many of the women at ICIW have received help and support from the Salvation Army, and they continue to be a resource in many communities.

You can tell more about a person by what he says about others than you can by what others say about him---Leo Aikman

GOD'S LOVE BIBLE STUDY

Greg and Debbie Scholz come the first Friday night of each month to each this study. At the moment we are concentrating on 1 John and the love that God has for us and all of His children. There is no sign up required- only an interest for the Lord.



WHAT'S IT LIKE?

A woman was asked by a coworker, "What is it like to be a Christian?"



The coworker replied, "It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washed all the dirt off of you. Then He cuts off the top and scoops put all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate and greed. Then he carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.

CHURCH COUNCIL

All who attend services on Thursday nights are welcome to participate in the Inside Church Council. Meetings are held twice a month. All persons interested in leading the Women at the Well congregation are invited to attend.

Meetings are open to everyone.



A Bible that is falling apart is generally owned by someone who isn't



OUR LOGO represents our unique congregation and situation. The base of the figure is the universal **symbol for woman**, a circle with a cross beneath it.

The symbol of the cross needs no explanation. Here, it also supports the **crown of thorns** with which so many of us identify in our own life situations. The thorns might also remind you of the razor wire that surrounds the lives of the women as we worship and live together here. The heart at the center represents the **well of "living water,"** God's love for us in Jesus. It also represents the **hearts of United Methodists of Iowa** and others who support this congregation through their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service. The design is a gift from a graphic artist who is also United Methodist, and was inspired by art submitted by the women of ICIW.

"The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

From John 4- the story of the woman at the well

WOMEN AT THE WELL CHOIR

Wednesdays the choir meets in the Sanctuary from 7-8 to go



over Thursday evening worship music. There is NO sign up but in order to robe up on Thursday- you must attend rehearsal on Wednesday. Please be

in prayer for a permanent choir director!

Faith

I had faith as a child. In my early teens, I was baptized Mormon and a nice family picked me up for service every week as my family did not attend church. I fell away from God for many years. Then, some Jehovah Witnesses started ministering to me at my house while my husband was at work. He wouldn't allow me to attend church. Through their encouragement, I sought out a local church for my young daughter to participate in. The pastor of that church has open arms and ministered to my family in many supportive ways over the years. I eventually divorced and was more active in the church. I helped teach Sunday school, vacation bible school and helped at church camp. My faith was developing nicely until I relocated to Iowa City and failed to seek out a church family. I once again strayed. I was aware of my failing life and chose to move back to SW Iowa so my family could help me. I allowed my guilt of betraying God to keep me from seeking a church family. My fear of people knowing about my drug addiction kept me in isolation. My denial of the severity of my problems kept me physically, emotionally, mentally and most of all spiritually sick.

My faith today is much deeper than ever before. I have taken this time as an opportunity to reconnect with God. I have discovered the unconditional and forgiving love of our Savior Jesus Christ through my tragedy of incarceration. Genesis 50:20b "...you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." I have truly been saved and found freedom through my faith walk as it is today and for this I am very grateful.

Deuteronomy 23:5b "...but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you." I believe I will survive all that life presents me with and become a better person from all experiences, good and bad, as long as I put my trust in God and give my problems to Him. He is my strength. Psalm 46:11 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." I pray that I will have an open heart, open eyes and open ears so that I may be able to see all the blessings that the Lord has for me. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." I trust Jesus. Therefore, I am able to endure and flourish.



God Bless- Angel L.

† † † † † VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH † † † † †

Dorothy Johnson

"Our own personal *ROCK STAR* " is our loving title for Dorothy. She is kind enough to share her musical gifts and talents on the piano in our services every Thursday evening. On Wednesdays, she is here to play for choir practice and then

again on Thursdays for our weekly service. She is a gem to us and we so appreciate her commitment to us. Having a talented and generous pianist makes all the difference in our choir which is constantly growing. Dorothy is also active in her church with the United Methodist Women's group at Mitchellville United Methodist Church, and shares her faith with us through her prayers and music and the blessing of her presence. Thanks, Dorothy! Rock on!

Here are the readings and Sermon topics for this month:

October 1 – Job 1:1;2:1-10 Psalm 26 Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12 Mark 10:14-16

Jesus invites us to come “as little children” to be owners of all that God promises

October 8 – Job 23:1-9, 16-17 Psalm 22:1-15 Hebrews 4:12-16 Mark 10:17-31

Jesus talks about how easily we let money and possessions rule – and the risk that put us at!

October 15 – Job 38:1-7 Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c Hebrews 5: 1-10 Mark 10:35-45

Even Jesus' closest friends jockey for power and position. How does Jesus respond?

October 22 – Job 42:1-6, 10-17 Psalm 34:1-8 Hebrews 7: 23-28 Mark 10:46-52

Jesus heals a blind man

October 29 – Isaiah 25:6-9 Psalm 24 Revelations 21:1-6a John 11:32-44

The story of Jesus grieving the loss of a friend, and overcoming even Death!

We hope you will follow along with the reading in your own Bible, discuss them with others, and bring your ideas to worship.

BLESSED

Blessed are they who are pleasant to live with,
Blessed are they who sing in the morning;
Whose faces have smiles for their early adorning.
Who come down to breakfast companioned by cheer,
Who don't dwell on troubles or entertain fear,
Whose eyes smile forth bravely, whose lips curve to say,
Life, I salute you, good morrow, new day!
Blessed are they who are pleasant to live with
Blessed are they who treat one another
Through merely a sister, a father or brother,
With the same courtesy they would extend
To a casual acquaintance or a dearly loved friend;
Who choose for the telling encouraging things,
Who coke back the bitter, sharp word that stings.
Who bestow love on others throughout the long day, pleasant to live with.

