

# Congregational Clarion

AMERY CONGREGATIONAL UCC



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## ARE WE IN THE MIDST OF AN APOCALYPSE??

When people hear the word Apocalypse they usually freak! “Oh, my goodness, that must mean the end of the world!” What apocalyptic means is to pull back the veil, to reveal the underbelly of reality. It uses hyperbolic images, stars falling from the sky, the moon turning to blood. The closest thing would be contemporary science fiction, where suddenly you’re placed in an utterly different world, where what you used to call “normal” doesn’t apply anymore. That perfectly describes this COVID-19 event. (Richard Rohr) In my Annual Report I remind everyone how my first sermon in September was about the flow of our lives from “Order, to Disorder, and to Re-Order.” Apocalypse is the disorder phase of our (and our world’s) life flow...

So hear this word Apocalypse rightly—the stories of apocalypse are meant to shock: COVID-19 is an apocalypse, hap-pening to us in our lifetime, that’s leaving us utterly out of control. We’re grasping to retake control, by things like refusing to wear masks and defying boundaries at potential super-spreader events. But we now know in a new way that we can’t totally take control. We can take control of our lives under COVID-19 by re-framing our thoughts through the scriptures that speak of apocalypse... For Instance: Matthew 24:8, hidden there in the middle of the wars and

earthquakes it says, “All this is only the beginning of the birth pangs.” In other words, Apocalypse is for the sake of birth not death. Yet most of us have heard this reading as a threat. Apparently, it’s not. Anything that upsets our normalcy is a threat to the ego and our sense of control, but in the Big Picture, it really isn’t.

Luke 21: Jesus says right in the middle of the catastrophic description: “Your endurance will win you your souls.” Falling apart during an apocalypse is for the sake of renewal, not punishment. Mark 13: Jesus says “Stay awake” four times in the last paragraph (Mark 13:32–37). In other words, “Learn the lesson that this (apocalypse) has to teach you.” It points to everything that we take for granted and says, “Don’t take anything for granted.” An apocalyptic event reframes reality in a radical way by flipping our imagination and moves us toward resurrection (Re-Order)!

As I write this newsletter article, news reports are coming in about India’s massive COVID-19 outbreak and death toll. Michigan has had a large influx of children on ventilators because of the highly transmissible COVID-19 variant from the UK (B.1.1.7.). In India’s case, their President Modi had encouraged large Hindu events that became super-spreaders. In Michigan, parents of young children were encouraged send their kids to school where the new variant was waiting... These absolutely tragic events could have

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05/02	Allan Foxwell	05/15	Elizabeth Leonard
05/02	JoAnn Bjorkman	05/18	Joseph Maukstad
05/02	Wanda Burstad	05/21	Desiree Harris
05/04	Richard Wooldridge	05/22	Barry Eklund
05/06	Mason Henke	05/22	Hayden Leonard
05/09	Darold Niccum	05/23	Madisen Jackson
05/10	Shanon Hayes	05/24	Isabella Moody
05/10	Sheldon Betzold	05/24	Warren Henke
05/13	Breauna Pitchford	05/26	Emily O'Rourke
05/13	John Stoeklen	05/29	Tom Morris
05/14	Kate Bevington	05/31	Joyce Helland
05/15	David Waterman		

### May birth flower—LILY OF THE VALLEY.

There is an ancient German legend about the goddess Ostara (Ėstara). She was a goddess of the sunrise and harbinger of Spring. Ancient Celts associated the lily of the valley exactly with her. In the honor of Ostara, during the Easter (by the way, the Easter still have a name «Ostern» in Germany), young boys and girls dancing around the bonfire, adorned their heads with wreaths of lilies of the valley, which symbolized love and happiness. This event continued as long as the lilies of the valley are not wilted. After, these flowers sacrificed to the goddess Ostara, by throwing them in a bonfire. Commonly known as the May Flower from the Latin "Marius Anthemon" it is no wonder it is the birth flower for May. The Lily of the Valley is symbolic of humility and sweetness and in giving this flower you are telling your loved one that they make your life complete. According to legend, it is believed that when Eve was kicked out of the Garden of Eden where her tears fell, Lily of the Valley bloomed.



## MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



### Golden Age Manor

220 Scholl Street  
Amery, WI 54001  
(715) 268-7107  
Dave Waterman

### Evergreen Village

611 Harriman Avenue  
(715) 268-6640  
Marian Peterson  
Gussie Fennern

### Christian Community Home

2650 65th Ave  
Osceola, WI 54020  
Evelyn Halverson Rm. 217

### Memory Care

215 Birch St. W  
Amery, WI 54001  
Jeanne Murphy  
Bob Holms

### Baldwin Care Center

650 Birch St.  
Baldwin, WI 54002  
Mary Monson Apt. 27

### Riverbend

475 Golfview Lane  
715.268.9949  
Beth Sorensen



# from your YOUTH MINISTER



## Wednesdays:

**Wednesday May 5th** - Homework & Hangout, Dinner, Service Day Making May Day Cards. Our evening will conclude at 7:00pm.

**Wednesday May 12th** - Homework & Hangout, youth group, dinner and closing worship.

**Wednesday May 19th:** Blessing of the Pets! Homework & Hangout, Cookout. Pets Welcome at 5pm. Our evening will conclude around 6:30

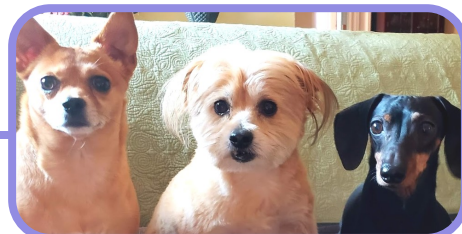
**Wednesday May 26th:** - Homework & Hangout, youth group, dinner and closing worship.

**As a reminder: If your child has a fever, is not feeling well or has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please have them stay home. Thank you.**

To my wonderful church family and friends,

I would like to thank you for taking a chance on me five years ago and allowing me the opportunity to be the Congo Youth Director. Together, with your love and support, we made great things happen! I have enjoyed walking in faith alongside our Congo Kids and am confident that Abby Betzold will do an amazing job as she continues on that journey with them.

God Bless,  
Charlotte Gillen



## **BLESSING OF THE PETS! Wednesday, May 19th Following Homework & Hangout.**

Enjoy a fun evening outdoors with a cook out and special blessing of our pets. Pets may be brought to the church at 5pm. The evening will conclude between 6:30 and 7:00pm

Youth Director Contact Information:

**Charlotte Gillen**

715.268.7390; ext. 12

715.338.6929 (cell)

Youth.ameryucc@gmail.com







Charlotte tasked her youth group to draw a picture representing what the Amery Congregational UCC community looks like to them.

If you look closely at the diversity picture, you will see differences from one half of the person compared to the other. Very interesting concept. The main theme of all the pictures is that all are welcome here.



**May is National Mental Health Awareness month.** Since I help with our Wednesday Congo Youth Group, I would like to talk a bit about teenagers and mental health issues.

Being a teenager is hard as the best of times. They are under stress to be liked, do well in school, get along with family. And, often teens have the additional stress in dealing with sexuality issues. It is very difficult for a teen if he or she is non-binary—often feeling confused, bullied, alone and, perhaps unable to come out to their parents and, sometimes especially, their church family if they have one. As teens, or preteens, go through these physical, emotional, hormonal, sexual, and intellectual transitions, stress about these issues is normal. But if they are feeling extremely depressed, hopeless or not fitting in anywhere, these could be warning signs of a mental health problem. Often these signs are not taken seriously by family and friends. It is easy to think they are just going through “a stage”. But mental health problems are real, painful, and sometimes life threatening. We need to be available to lend a non-



judgmental ear to our youth and direct them to professional help when the situation calls for it.

Our Congo youth have found that youth group is a safe place to talk to the adults there about their stress and their feelings and fears. Several of our teens journal, finding it a safe and private way to record and examine the events in their lives and their feelings or worries. After some of the youth shared parts of their personal journals with me, I came away feeling awed at their ability to express themselves in such an honest and powerful way. When I asked if I could publish their writings without using names, two volunteered because they wanted their messages shared, thinking that it might help others going through the same emotions. Others felt their writing to be too raw and personal. What all these young people have in common, however, is the depth of their anxieties and fears, their honesty in expressing them, and their ability and willingness at self-reflection. Often the youth who suffer the most are the ones who are most sensitive and empathetic. I really see this to be true in the young people

who regularly attend our Congo Youth Group. Each one is dear to me and I sincerely believe that these young people are going to use their talents to make the world a better place.

Below and on the next page are writings from the diaries of two of our Congo youth:

Rae Wooldridge



## RUSH

By Congo Youth Group Member

Sometimes guilt rushes through currents,  
Stronger than I can withstand  
And as I begin to drown,  
I reach for your hand.

But I'm already gone,  
Sunken beneath the surface.  
My emotions withdrawal,  
But I guess they never really served a purpose.

I mean honestly, where have they brought me?  
Because as of right now, it only sees like pain  
and misery.

I feel helpless, in a room full of people how am I  
all alone?  
I feel shaking and chills rushing through my  
bones.

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Maybe it's all figurative, you know? My emotions and  
The pain,  
Or maybe it's just me going slightly insane.

It could be just me, losing my shine—turning off my light.  
But I never really thought I'd lose my fight.  
It's all just so heavy,  
The boulder on my shoulder inching me to let go  
But these are the emotions that never seem to show.

I wish I were still a kid  
So I could run around, play and have fun  
But now I'm worrying about when the depression  
Will finally be done.

I'm screaming, pleading  
What are you not seeing?!  
I'm hurtin, crying,  
It feels like I'm dying!

I feel the rush,  
The lightness in my chest.  
I want to keep fighting,  
I'm trying my best.



## FROM THE JOURNAL OF A CONGO TEEN



"Life will drag you down so much. Even the strongest people may not make it out alive". You would say to me that it's just a phase or that I'll get better,. Everyone always says, "it'll be ok, I'm here for you." but the sad thing is, they never actually are there for you. They say they are, so you feel like you have someone to have and someone to hold on to you. You feel like with them you could go through thick and thin

and still have each other's backs and always be there with them and have so many memories together, but when you go to talk to them because you're not doing the greatest, they either ignore you or they ask why you're telling them and not your real friends. And you were right, you were strong and you did survive, but the thing you were wrong about was that nobody who faces this, this tough battle of our thoughts and emotions ever makes it out alive.

Your job is not to judge.  
Your job is not to figure out if someone deserves something. Your job is to lift the fallen,  
to restore the broken,  
and to heal the hurting.





## Council Meeting: April 13, 2021

**ATTENDANCE:** Sheldon Betzold: Moderator, Sandy Morris: Clerk, Virginia Ormsby: Treasurer, Richard Wooldridge: Financial Secretary, Charlotte Gillen: Youth Director, Barry Tulkki: Diaconate, Abby Betzold: Congregational Giving, Dave Bowman: Trustees, Rae Wooldridge: Congregational Giving, Julie Smith: Recording Secretary

Barry Tulkki lead the opening prayer at 6:02pm..

The minutes from the March Council Meeting were reviewed and approved.

**TREASURER:** Virginia presented the March Treasurers' report. She said that March looked much better than February. The reconciliation of the previous month's discrepancies are being completed. Dave Bowman made a motion to accept the Treasurers' report thru 3/31. Barry Tulkki 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, it was voted on and approved.

**CLERK:** Sandy presented the Clerk's report. She stated the current membership role is at 167.

**YOUTH:** Char reported that the Youth participated in a service day with Ruby's Pantry. On March 21 the fun presentation of "Congo's Got Talent" took place. The Easter Bunny also paid several visits to the Sunday School Kids.

**TRUSTEES:** Dave Bowman reported that the Trustees had not met in the last month, but he had several updates from his committee:

The new flooring has been installed in the conference room (A Big thank-you to Chad Leonard!)

We have a new cleaning service starting this week.

Two groups have approached our church for the use of our parking lot and green space. Master Gardeners of Polk county are having their annual plant sale and wish to use that space. The Amery Women's Club is having an Art sale on June 19. It was discussed and approved to allow each group to use our parking lot and green space for their events.

Also, the topic of possible federal grants were discussed.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:** Emily was unable to attend the Council meeting, but sent an email to Council with the report of her committee's activities:

An update from CE:

- Decided on a new curriculum for the Sunday School Program for Fall 2021; ordered and ready for the Fall!
- Community VBS will be Jun 20-24; more info after the Ministerium meeting on April 15th
- Planning a Start of Summer / End of Sunday school family event for May 23rd; planning is in the works.

**DIACONATE:** Barry Tulkki said his committee has not met this past month.

**CONGREGATIONAL GIVING:** Abby said her committee recently sent out a letter to all members for encouragement and the welcoming of spring.

**MISSION AND SOCIAL CONCERNS:** not present.

**PASTOR REPORT:** Pastor Garth is currently out of town.

**CALENDAR REVIEW:** The monthly church calendar was reviewed. A few additions were made.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The Annual Meeting has been scheduled for May 2, 2021 following worship.

Abby reported from the Pulpit committee that they are compiling and reviewing the surveys about our church needs and pastor selection. The church profile from the Pulpit Committee will hopefully be presented at the annual meeting, May 2. We hope to start requesting and interviewing candidates by June.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Sheldon reported that the use of a safety deposit box at Bremmer bank is being discontinued.

Abby was hoping to schedule a outdoor BBQ to honor our Mission Team. The BBQ would be scheduled for June 13 with a rain date of June 20.

Additional discussions were held regarding plans for outdoor worship.

**Sheldon said the next Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May11 at 6:00pm**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Julie E. Smith, Recording

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been avoided with more thought and caution. My prayer is that we can learn from this apocalypse toward a new wisdom.

This world is not ending, and this newsletter article is not announcing the world's end. I'm hoping that this article encourages us to stay vigilant until we are all out of danger of COVID-19 and its variants. Included in today's newsletter is the "Parish Paper." In it, the author explains ways we can promote more

health in our churches and communities.

Please read it and if you'd like, we can discuss. Apocalypse is the necessary disordering step for re-birth and resurrection. Let us soon be re-born and resurrected into our new world and thrive in the Love of God in Christ. Amen.

Rev. Garth Schumacher, Interim Minister

### May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>25</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service	<b>26</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>27</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>28</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM Homework and Hangout 5:45 PM Youth Dinner followed by Youth Group Lessons and Discussions	<b>29</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>30</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> Annual Meeting Immediately After Worship Service 9:30 AM Christian Ed. Meeting 10:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Communion	<b>3</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>4</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>5</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM Homework and Hangout - Service Night/May Day Baskets	<b>6</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>7</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>8</b> 7:00 AM Youth Service Day, meet at Amtec Parking Lot to help at Ruby's pantry 8:00 AM Ruby's Pantry at Amtec Parking Lot
<b>9</b> 9:00 AM Mission Team Meeting 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:00 AM Trustee Meeting	<b>10</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>11</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:00 PM Council Meeting	<b>12</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM Homework and Hangout 5:45 PM Youth Dinner followed by Youth Group Lessons and Discussions	<b>13</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>14</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> Mother's Day 10:00 AM Worship Service 11:15 AM Congregational Giving Mtg.	<b>17</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>18</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>19</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM Blessings of the Pets! Homework & Hangout at 3:30pm, pets welcome at 5pm. Enjoy Fun cookout and special blessing of our pets.	<b>20</b> 8:15 AM Ministerium 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>21</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> Family Sunday School Party Graduation Sunday 10:00 AM Pentecost Sunday Worship Service	<b>24</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 6:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>25</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>26</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM Homework and Hangout	<b>27</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>28</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 10:00 AM Worship Service	<b>31</b> Memorial Day - Office Closed	<b>1</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>2</b> 10:00 AM Office Open 3:30 PM End of School Boomball Bash	<b>3</b> 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>4</b> Last Day of School 10:00 AM Office Open	<b>5</b>