

# Congregational Clarion

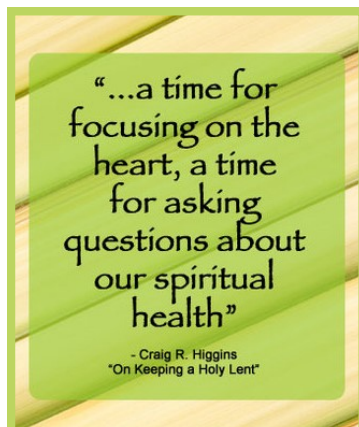
AMERY CONGREGATIONAL UCC



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## During Lent we might ask, “Where is Rev. Schumacher Coming From??”

I was asked after worship on a Sunday long ago to write up an article to describe what kind of Christian I am. This was long before I came to Congregational UCC of Amery. But now, as we are entering into the Season of Lent toward the Cross and Resurrection, now might be a good time to share my thoughts on the subject with you, dear reader. I guess the best way to define my beliefs are known in theological corners of the world as Progressive Christian. First of all, it's NOT a political designation, or a statement of faith, or a creed. It is a WAY of being Christian. It is more a description of how I and other Progressive Christians attempt to celebrate the Christian life. Here are 8 points, briefly:

(You might reflect on these points for yourself as you read along...)

1. **Focus:** The teachings and life of Jesus provide us with a path to God. Jesus is the head of our church. (And personally, I haven't found anyone else who's done it better)
2. **Pluralism:** We recognize that others follow their own paths to God, which are equally true for them. (But for me, as the song says, “Jesus is just alright with me.”)
3. **Communion:** We view the sharing of bread and wine in Jesus' name to represent “an ancient vision of God's feast for all peoples.” (This is distinctly one of our United Church of Christ principles. Remember, this is Christ's table... not ours.)
4. **Inclusivity:** All are welcome to become involved; persons of all genders, sexual orientations, traditions, races, etc. (Jesus never

excluded anyone and neither do we.)

5. **Reciprocity:** How we treat others is the “fullest expression” of our beliefs... in other words, “doing unto others” is how I love God. (One of the reasons I wear a mask is to protect others in case I'm carrying the Covid-19 virus without knowing it.)

6. **Search:** We find more grace in searching for truth than in accepting certainty. We LIVE THE QUESTIONS! (Too often, believing we know all the answers of our faith puts our feet in concrete... we can't move with God's Holy Spirit as well in our lives.)

7. **Community:** We form communities to support each other in our quest for peace, justice, a restored environment, and to provide hope. (A Progressive Christian believes we are stronger together while maintaining our freedom-loving individuality.)

**Cost:** Following Jesus involves a personal investment in “selfless love, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege.” (My life and work choices sometimes are based on whether now is the right time and place to sacrifice myself for a cause... Just like Jesus...)

So, where do you come down on these eight points? I encourage you to contact me to discuss what questions you have about your own way of living your faith... And btw, Lent is the perfect time to do it!

I hope the above description helps. Remember, you don't have to believe everything I believe. We belong to the United Church of Christ, after all. As we move toward the cross of Good Friday, let's be clear about where we stand and who we are in relation to Jesus. And, together we will resurrect on Easter with Jesus Christ. Amen. Blessings,  
Rev. Garth Schumacher



03/01 Claire Ash

03/01 Holly Scott

03/03 Cher Lindberg

03/03 Suzanne Kvam

03/03 Nicholas Silvis

03/03 Sheridan Gallagher

03/03 Breanna Burstad

03/05 Janet Sylvester

03/06 Sandy Welk

03/10 Austin Selvig

03/12 Nyla Anderson

03/13 Kylie Burch

03/13 Andrea Pitchford

03/14 Charlie Russo

03/17 Miki Jo Johnson

03/17 Geraldine Smith

03/18 Beth Mares

03/18 Ruth Shafer

03/20 Mark Kopp

03/20 Danielle Edin

03/21 Jrew Stoeklen

03/22 Caiden Demar

03/22 Lilah Anderson

03/23 John Jackson

03/24 Jada Dunham

03/25 Mike Kohlrusch

03/25 Alexis Rondeau

03/27 Ricky Maukstad

3/28 Jon Springer

## March Fun Facts and Tidbits

Ah, March, in like a lion, out like a lamb, or so the saying goes. That's not the only saying attributed to the moody month. For the Northern Hemisphere, March ushers in spring. That was even true back in the days of the Julian calendar when there were only 10 months and March started off the year. Sayings such as "A bushel of March dust is worth a King's ransom," and "March many weathers," remind us of the swiftly changing and windy weather March brings.

The first three days in March were once considered bad luck. They called them the blind days. No one would plant, enter into an agreement or a journey during these days. In later years, the days came to be assigned to the last three days in March.

Historically, planting and war go hand in hand in March. Named for the Roman god of War, Mars, March became a time when armies began to march again and farmers tilled their soil. While farming and the military have both dramatically changed since Roman times, March and spring still holds a power over both of them.

March is the month of spring and with it come a lot of activity in nature. Birds migrate. Animals begin to mate. (They give us the phrase, "Mad as a March hare," too.) Plants begin to grow. Even the full moon gets involved. The full moon in March is called the Worm Moon. It earns this name because of all the insects beginning to hatch.

## 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 March 3rd:** Homework & Hangout, youth group, dinner and closing worship. Also: video taping for Congo's Got Talent will take place beginning at 6:30pm

**Wednesday March 10th-** Homework & Hangout, youth group, dinner and closing worship.

**Wednesday March 17th:** No school - Spring Break Service & Fun Day! Helping to serve at Feed My Starving Children in the morning and spending the afternoon at Sky Zone. Please be at Congo church by 7:30am. Parent pick up time is 4:30pm

**Wednesday March 24th:** Homework & Hangout, youth group, dinner and closing worship.

**Wednesday March 31st:** - 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.**

**Monday March 1**  
deadline to sign up for  
Congo's Got Talent

### **Saturday March 13**

Ruby's Pantry morning of service. Please meet at the Am Tec parking lot (behind the Amery bus garage) by 7am. Parent pick up time is 10am.

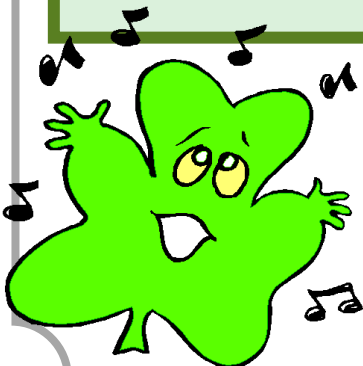
Youth Director Contact  
Information:

**Charlotte Gillen**

715.268.7390; ext. 12

715.338.6929 (cell)

[Youth.ameryucc@gmail.com](mailto:Youth.ameryucc@gmail.com)



**Sunday March 21 - Congo's Got Talent goes viral!**





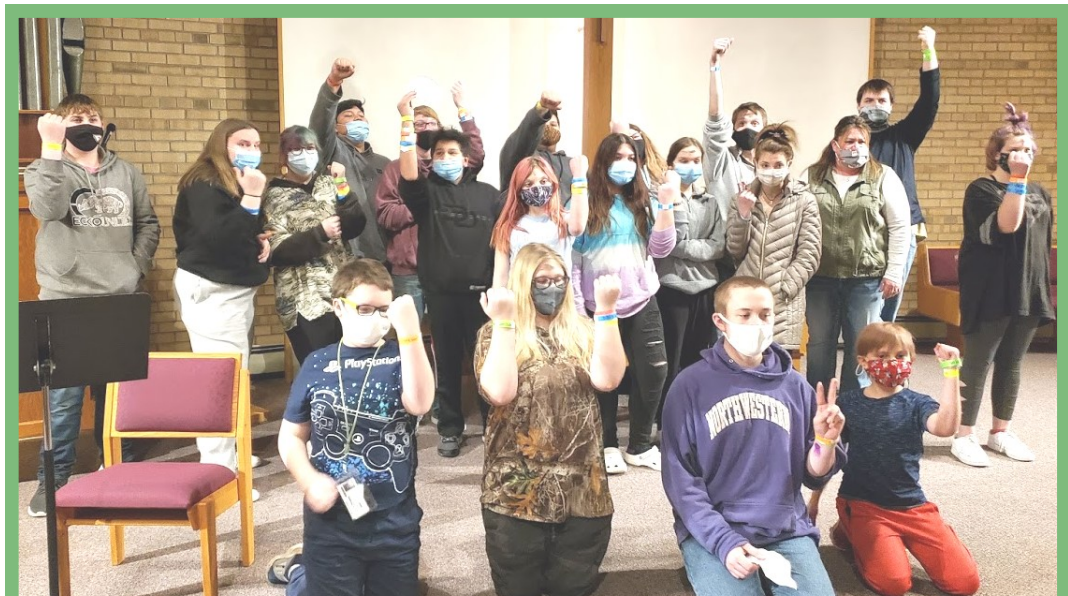
Pastor Garth joined Youth Director, Char Gillen, in leading the service for Ash Wednesday.



Shanon Hayes, Sherry Monson, Gabby and Bella M. blessed us with their musical talents for the Youth Ash Wednesday service.



Kayla places ashes on Tyler's forehead.



The Congo youth wrote names on bracelets as a reminder to pray for these people each day during lent and Holy week.

## Fellow friends and members of the Congregational UCC,A

The church has received a sizeable financial gift to be used for capital improvement or beautification of the church property. The council has discussed how to use this money and they have asked the Trustees to come up with a plan to design and build an outdoor structure & complimentary landscaping in the green space south of the parking lot to enhance our worship service if we choose to hold services outside during the summer months. The Trustees have decided to put together a design team to develop the basic design criteria for the structure. Examples of criteria to be developed would be:

- Should the structure provide overhead protection for the presenters of the service (e.g. band shell) or be large enough to provide cover for the service attendees?
- Should it have open sides or be closed up to some degree to provide a wind barrier?
- Should it be a permanent band shell type structure with the possibility of adding soft sided capacity (such as a tent) to house everyone for a service?
- Do we incorporate the existing fire pit and hardscape into this project or have this as a standalone project?

These are few of the many questions to be considered as we move forward with this exciting project.

The Trustees are looking for a few people who would be excited to be part of a planning committee to work these details out. Please contact Dave Bowman at bikeman25@gmail.com or by phone at 715-268-2062.

### LENTEN BIBLE STUDY ZOOM-LED SERIES

#### "THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS"

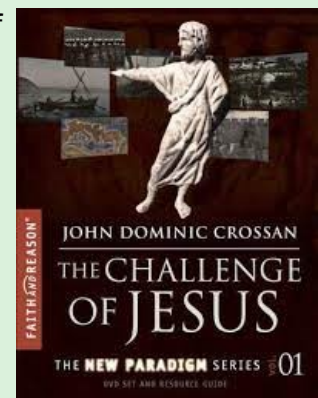
March 3, 10, 17, 24

You are invited to join Rev. Garth Schumacher for the next 5 Wednesdays at 6:30 to study "The Challenge of Jesus." - In The Challenge of Jesus, renowned historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan, presents his life's work exploring the matrix of Jesus' unique time and place. Drawing on scholarly text, excavation and history, Dr. Crossan introduces us to the flesh and blood people who shaped the world into which Jesus was born. In these DVD presentations, we meet a Jesus we've not known before.

Dr. Crossan pinpoints the history and circumstances that helped Jesus' message of nonviolent resistance to evil have such a powerful impact against Imperial Rome. Moving beyond Jesus as an abstract figure of scripture, Dr. Crossan paints us a vivid portrait of Jesus the man. Through it all, the presentation, the Resource Guide, and the included discussion starters and questions help educators and students alike draw their own meaning from Dr. Crossan's presentations.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81513820832?pwd=OU5sUWN4cFhNS0IGWFZyUINTQzI4QT09>





## EASTER LILY MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

The feel of spring is in the air and in the earth; As Easter nears it is time to order the lilies in honor or memory of our loved ones. These tributes will beautify our worship space on Easter morning, whether inside or outdoors this year. The orders are due by March 19th. You may pick up your lilies after the Easter morning worship service or you may donate the lilies to be delivered to some of our homebound friends and Congo members to brighten their rooms.

You may mail the order form with your checks to: Congregational UCC of Amery, 201 Harriman Ave. North, Amery 54001. Or you may drop your orders off at the church office Monday through Friday between the hours of 10am and 2pm.

Thank you and blessings,  
Your Church Lady.

*Easter Lilies for Easter 2021* # of Lilies Ordered \_\_\_\_\_  
Amt. Rec'd \$ \_\_\_\_\_



*For many, the beautiful trumpet-shaped white flowers symbolize purity, virtue, innocence, hope and life – the spiritual essence of Easter.....*

Please Note:

The deadline for ordering your Easter Lilies is Friday, March 19th. The cost of each Easter Lily is \$10.00 and must accompany this order. Please make your check payable to The Congregational Church.

IN MEMORY OF: \_\_\_\_\_

IN HONOR OF: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**The Easter Lilies are yours to distribute as you wish after the 10:00 am Easter Worship Service**



## Council Meeting: February 9, 2021

### (Zoom Meeting)

**ATTENDANCE:** Pastor Garth Schumacher, Sheldon Betzold: Moderator, Sandy Morris: Clerk, Virginia Ormsby: Treasurer, Richard Wooldridge: Financial Secretary, Charlotte Gillen: Youth Director, Barry Tulkki: Diaconate, Emily Russo: Christian Education, Abby Betzold: Congregational Giving, Kate Bevington: Mission and Social Concerns, Rae Wooldridge: Congregational Giving, Julie Smith: Recording Secretary

Pastor Garth opened the meeting with prayer at 6:05 pm.

The Minutes from the previous Council Meeting were discussed and approved.

**TREASURER:** Virginia stated that there is a recent discrepancy on incoming and outgoing funds. She and Chad are working to correct it and to make sure the monies are correctly documented.

**CLERK:** Sandy presented the Clerk's report. She stated there were no changes in membership. The current membership role is at 168.

**YOUTH:** Char reported that the Youth group met every Wednesday in January. She said they created Valentines that were delivered to shut-ins. The Youth group was also able to participate in the "Family Fun Day" of winter activities at the Leonard's home.

**TRUSTEES:** Member of Trustees not present, but Trustees will be meeting on 2/14 and a few topics for their agenda will be given to them.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:** Emily reported that her committee has discussed purchasing a new set of curriculum for Christian Education. She also discussed ideas for the Easter program and options on how it will be presented.

**DIACONATE:** Barry Tulkki stated that his committee did not meet this month, but he opened a discussion on ways to get the Confirmation groups running again.

**CONGREGATIONAL GIVING:** Abby said that giving statements have been sent out to all members and friends of the Congregation.

**MISSION AND SOCIAL CONCERNS:** Kate reported on how her committee had a very successful program to deliver Valentines to many folks in our congregation. She said that our Youth also helped in making several of the Valentines. Most of the Valentines were sent via US Mail, but she also took a group of Valentines to the Memory Care center. She said they brought much happiness and were well received by the residents. Kate also said that she is hoping to organize our church library and create a more "usable library" that encourages people to utilize it more.

**PASTOR REPORT:** Pastor Garth said he would like to continue the Confirmation group meetings via Zoom for spring. The Fall session of Confirmation will (hopefully) resume with in person groups. Pastor Garth explained that he has started a Lenten Bible series for the Wednesday night classes. (Presented in on-line videos).

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Discussions were held regarding in person versus on-line worship services. Several concerns were registered about the current state of COVID-19 and how it is affecting our worship. When spring gets a little closer, we hope to resume Outdoor Worship again. The concept of creating a more permanent outdoor structure in the green space was discussed and ideas will be given to the Trustees to begin gathering ideas. This would help to make outdoor services more enjoyable and something we could do even beyond COVID restrictions time.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Abby and the Congregational Giving Committee has requested that the "Book of Life" be moved from the front narthex to the library. Plans are made to have it updated, but will be kept in the library. In its place in the front lobby/narthex, there will be an interesting book about the history of the our church.. This was discussed and Council said they could move forward with this change. Abby also stated that there have been many requests and a strong demand to bring back the "Block Party". Probably not for 2021, but it may be a good goal for 2022.

Sheldon said the next Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9 at 6:00pm

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Julie E. Smith,  
Recording Secretary



## Prayer of Ignatius

By John Dorhauer -General Minister and  
President of the United Church of Christ  
published Feb 19, 2021

### **I invite you into a season of Lenten discernment.**

Take, Lord, receive.

So begins the prayer of Ignatius of Loyola.

Every year, as Lent rolls around again on the calendar, I find myself rehearsing again the words of his beautiful prayer. It is the prayer of humility – a prayer both of recognizing that, as the Psalmist wrote, The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and of admitting that in the end all we need are God's love and grace.

Here is the prayer in full:

"Take, Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my whole will, all that I have and all that I possess. You gave it all to me, Lord; I give it all back to you. Do with it as you will, according to your good pleasure. Give me your love and your grace; for with this I have all that I need."

I have yet to reach a place of spiritual maturity or fulfillment about which I could say that I have offered back to God all my liberty, memory, understanding, will – all that I have and possess. I repeat the prayer as a Lenten practice as a reminder of pathways I must choose daily. I see this less as an abandonment of the gifts I have been given by God than as a practice of asking what can I do with these gifts that would honor the God whom I have come to know as love.

I don't give away my liberty, I ask what is it I can achieve with it that fulfills God's vision of Shalom. If I claim my liberty as a way of excusing rude or abusive behavior, something we have seen plenty of in these days, then I am not honoring the one in whose image I am created.

I don't give away my will, I choose to substitute

the passions I have for personal glory and

amplification of my accomplishments – things anyone can do with their will – and instead ask myself what the gospel would call me to.

I don't give away my memory, a precious gift that I use to commemorate loved ones, but invite myself to consider how that memory can create within me desire and longing for the way that make for peace in the world.

All that I have and possess can be actualized as an agent for God's will. And anything I have or possess that hinders or inhibits God's will becomes a burden I would be wise to eschew. I once saw a poster that had this quote from Luke T. Johnson: "Anything I have or possess that someone else needs already belongs to them."

Lent for me is about exploring how all that I possess serves the will of God; and how much of what I own actually possesses me and prevents me from responding fully to the call of God to build a just world for all.

My favorite scripture passage is, usually (yeah, it changes at times) Luke 12:32: "Do not live in fear, little flock; it has pleased God to give you the kingdom." I think of that every time I read the final line of this prayer of Ignatius: "Your love and your grace are enough."

How we relate to what we possess can shape our spiritual health and well-being. Lent for me is always a time to evaluate that. Whose needs are being served by what I claim as my gifts from God?

I invite you into a season of Lenten discernment. Do an inventory of your gifts and possessions – and ask yourself which of them can and do help you to build a world of love and justice; which hinder that; and which, if they do hinder, can be used differently for the glory of God.

May your journey bring you new light and peace, more joy and enrichment for the soul, and find you an agent of God's transformative love on this, our journey Into the Mystic.