

From the Pastor's Desk

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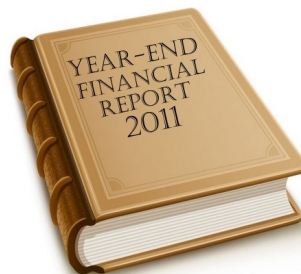
pen not only in our sanctuary but in the cathedral and sanctuary of almighty God's magnificent creation and universe. I remember the words of my dear friend and spiritual mentor, Larry, "I always strive to be the embodiment, i.e. the very persona and peace of Christ to everyone." Let us my dear brothers and sisters wherever we go bring the light of Christ's unconditional love and peace to all we meet. And step by step we become the embodiment of that great text of Isaiah which Jesus proclaimed in the Temple, "I have come that the blind may see, that the prisoners may be released, and the captives set free." And what better month than February where we celebrate the feast of St. Valentine to let our light and love for all humanity and all of God's creatures, and all of God's creation shine forth in our lives and emanate from the very depths of our being.

Rev. Chris Fox

Year-End Financial Report

The year-end Financial Report is available at the back of the church. Or if anyone would like me to, I can mail them a copy if they contact me.

Michael Mader
Treasurer



First Congregational Church

Rev. Christopher Fox, Pastor

February 2012

THE CONGRE'TIONAL RECORD

Church Website: www.waukeganucc.org

From the Pastor's Desk

I wanted to share a reflection with you from my Daily OM Meditational book.

Spreading Your Light - How You Affect Others Daily

As the pace and fullness of modern life serve to isolate us from one another, the contact we do share becomes vastly more significant. We unconsciously absorb each other's energy, adopting the temperament of those with whom we share close quarters, and we find ourselves changed after the briefest encounters. Everything we do or say has the potential to affect not only the individuals we live, work, and play with, but also those we have just met. Although we may never know the impact we have had or the scope of our influence, accepting and understanding that our attitudes and choices will touch others can help us remember to conduct ourselves with grace at all times. When we seek always to be friendly, helpful, and responsive, we effortlessly create an atmosphere around ourselves that is both uplifting and inspiring.

Most people rarely give thought to the effect

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"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

- Martin L. King, Jr.

Black History Month - Black Women in American Culture

From the American Revolution to the present, African American women have played a myriad of critical roles in the making of our nation. Their labor and leadership, their motherhood and patriotism, and their intellect and artistic expression have all enriched both the African American community and the nation at large. In slavery and freedom, their struggles have been at the heart of the human experience, and their triumphs over racism and sexism are a testimonial to our common human spirit.

In American culture today, many know of the accomplishments of a few prominent figures. From Phillis Wheatley, the unlikely American patriot during the Revolutionary War, to Harriet Tubman, the leader of the Underground Railroad from slavery, to Ida B. Wells, the unyielding opponent of lynching, to Rosa Parks, the mother of the modern Civil Rights Movement, black women have been notable for standing against oppression. From Gwendolyn Brooks to Toni Morrison to Rita Dove, they have distinguished themselves in American letters, and in re-

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Treasurer's Report

As of December 31, 2011

<u>Month</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Difference</u>
December	\$5,266.73	\$7,312.68	-\$2,045.95

This statement is on a cash basis and reflects transactions recorded during the calendar month only.

Michael Mader, Treasurer

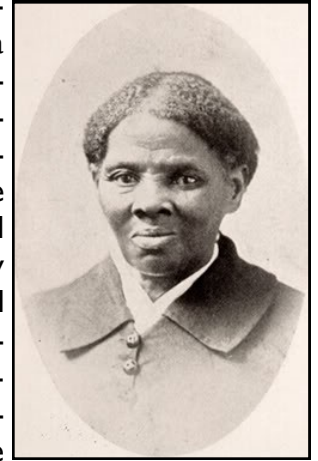


Black History Month - Black Women in American Culture

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cent years they have been recognized as actors and recording artists with Academy Awards and Grammys.

The accomplishments of these exceptional women are the expressions of a vibrant culture in which African American women play a singular role. The labors, struggles, organization, and sacrifices of common women have made possible the prominence of heralded individuals. In churches, community groups, literary societies, sororities, and advocacy organizations, African American women have been the core of organized black life, but here their strivings have often escaped the gaze of the public and hence their history is too little known.



Harriet Tubman

Their story is unique in the annals of American history. Black women were held as slaves and middle-class black women labored while their counterparts were housewives. Subjected to a long history of stereotypes about their sexuality, morality, spirituality, and intellect, African American women have never succumbed to victimhood and have pressed forward to uplift themselves, their families, and their community.

To gain an understanding of the history of African American women is to broaden our understanding of a people and the American nation.

From the Pastor's Desk

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Embracing this attitude and culture of six degrees of separation, we have the capacity as this meditation states to largely effect the quality of other people's lives. We are given this incredible peace and grace from above to share it with the world that others may know the goodness and unconditional love of God and Jesus Christ. The sterility that we are exposed to out in society and public places can be disconcerting, but it can also be an invitation to each of us to know that we have the capacity and calling to bring the fullness of our humanity and Christianity, i.e. our relationship with God and Jesus Christ wherever we go, particularly in the market place where the world's values and stereotypes speak about exclusion, idols, and a desensitizing to the incredible value of each human being and child of God. I love that bumper sticker that we all see pop up sporadically driving down the street, "**Practice Random Acts of Kindness.**" After all one of the hallmarks of the United Church of Christ is our **radical hospitality**. This should hap-

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Soup and Salad Night - Saturday, March 3rd

Save the date! Our next Stewardship Fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, March 3rd at 5:30 PM. We are having a Soup and Salad Night featuring lots of crock pots of homemade soups and several salads and desserts. We will also host our traditional 50/50 raffle and have bingo and prizes.



From the Pastor's Desk

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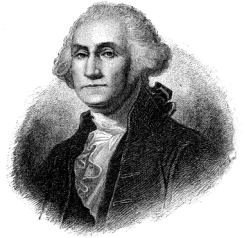
they have had or will have on others. When we take a few moments to contemplate how our individual modes of being affect the people we spend time with each day, we come one step closer to seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. By asking ourselves whether those we encounter walk away feeling appreciated, respected, and liked, we can heighten our awareness of the effect we ultimately have.

Something as simple as a smile given freely can temporarily brighten a person's entire world. Our value-driven conduct may inspire others to consider whether their own lives are reflective of their values. A word of advice can help people see everything in an entirely new fashion, and small gestures of kindness can even prove to those embittered by the world that goodness still exists. By simply being ourselves, we influence others in both subtle and life-altering ways.

To ensure that the effect we have is positive, we must strive to stay true to ourselves while realizing that it is the demeanor we project and not the quality of our wondrous inner landscapes that people see. Thus, as we interact with others, how we behave can be as important as who we are. If we project our passion for life, our warmth, and our tolerance in our facial features, voice, and choice of words, all who enter our circle of influence will leave our presence feeling at peace with themselves and with us.

You never know whose life you are affecting, in a big or small way. Try to remember this as you go out into the world each day.

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February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30 - 8:30 PM Grand Avenue Zen Group <i>Worship Committee</i>	2	3	4
5 10:00 AM Service with Communion <i>Social Potluck after Service</i>	6	7	8 6:30 - 8:30 PM Grand Avenue Zen Group	9	10	11
12 10:00 AM Service	13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 6:30 - 8:30 PM Grand Avenue Zen Group <i>Karen Kerley - Birthday</i>	16	17	18
19 10:00 AM Service with Communion <i>Ministry Council after Service</i>	20 <i>President's Day</i> <i>S. Readdie /R. Omahana - Birthdays</i>	21	22 6:30 - 8:30 PM Grand Avenue Zen Group 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service	23	24	25
26 10:00 AM Service	27	28	29 6:30 - 8:30 PM Grand Avenue Zen Group			

Liturgist

5th - Frances M.

12th - Charles G.

19th - Jim F.

26th - Emily S.

Usher

5th - Jason W.

12th - Patrick G.

19th - Mike M.

26th - Jim F.

Communion

5th - Emily S. & Paula P.

19th - Jason W. &

Patrick G.