

Ecumenews

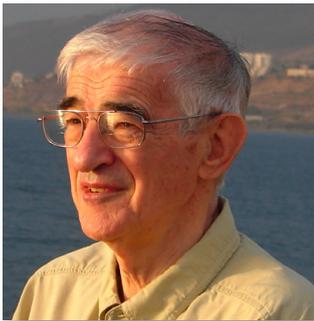
Volume 21
January, 2014



Winter Forum at the Wisconsin Dells

Feb. 21-22, 2014

The ABBA Prayer of Jesus: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer with Dr. John Dominic Crossan



examine the meaning of the Lord's Prayer in its ancient cultural and religious contexts and draw parallels to our contemporary world in order to unpack the meaning of this powerful prayer for Christians today.

John Dominic Crossan is generally regarded as the leading historical Jesus scholar in the world. He is the author of several bestselling books, including *The Historical Jesus*; *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, and

The Birth of Christianity. He is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University.

The Winter Forum is especially tailored to lay leaders and pastors who want to deepen their spirituality and connect with the message of the scriptures in a more profound way.

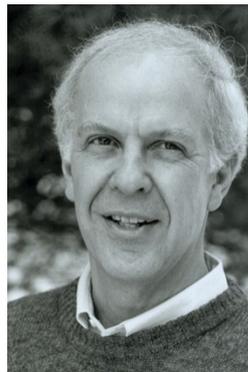
Early bird registration (until Jan 15): \$150. After Jan 15: \$175. Register online at

www.wichurches.org under "Events."

The Winter Forum will be held at a site which houses two congregations: Dells Delton United Methodist Church and Holy Cross Episcopal Church. The venue is easily assessable from I 90/94. The Wisconsin Dells offers a wide range of hotel and water park options. For more information about housing, consult www.wisdells.com. ●

Through four comprehensive lectures beginning Friday evening Feb. 21, and continuing through Saturday afternoon, Dr. Crossan will

Parker Palmer's "Habits of the Heart" Online Learning Opportunity for Wisconsin Clergy



Are you concerned about the divisive climate in Wisconsin's civic life? Do you wonder how you and your congregation can play a constructive role in modeling a more life-giving approach to our differences in both church and the wider culture?

The Wisconsin Council of Churches, Edgewood College and Parker Palmer's Center for Courage and Renewal are piloting an 8-week online learning experience for up to 60 Wisconsin clergy focusing on Palmer's recent book *Healing the Heart of Democracy: How to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*.

Continued on page 2

Ecumenews is a free publication produced two times a year by the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Visit our website at www.wichurches.org.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
United States Postage
PAID
Permit #1 Madison, WI



Ecumenews

Wisconsin Council of Churches
750 Windsor St. Suite 301
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
(608) 837-3108

The Face of Hunger

by Dr. Peter Bakken



As we enter the New Year, Wisconsin is still suffering from the persistent effects of the Great Recession that began in 2008. Although the official unemployment rate is improving, our state still faces a deficit of nearly 147,000 jobs – the number needed to recover those lost in the recession plus those needed to keep up with population growth. In the last five years, the percentage of food insecure households in Wisconsin – those lacking assured access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life –

increased from 9 % to over 11%. At the same time, public assistance programs are being scaled back. In November, the temporary boost to FoodShare benefits (Wisconsin's name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) expired, leaving an estimated 861,000 Wisconsinites, including seniors and veterans, with fewer resources to help stretch their food budgets. Further cuts to SNAP are included in both the Senate and House versions of the Farm Bill, which may have passed by the time this sees print.

What is at stake, of course, are not statistics, but people – members of our congregations and communities, the people who pass us on the street, come to our food pantries and meal sites, and who worship beside us on Sunday mornings.

So what can churches do?

Many churches will have to step up the anti-hunger programs they host or support. Educational resources such as the WCC's *Hunger at Our Doorstep* study-action guides (to be re-released in an updated version early this year) can help congregations learn more about food insecurity and how they can respond to local needs. Congregations can also help persons who may be eligible for programs such as SNAP, but who haven't applied to access the benefits they need. (See, for example, "Senior FoodShare Outreach" under the Quick Links on the WCC webpage, www.wichurches.org).

But one further, important role for churches and people of faith is to make sure that our elected officials and the media do not lose

sight of the very real people behind the statistics, our neighbors in need.

We know the faces of hunger in our communities: the child who cannot concentrate in school because of hunger; the parent working for poverty-level wages and struggling to make ends meet; the senior who has to choose between paying for medicine and buying groceries; and many others. We can tell our legislators and congresspersons how their decisions impact the people in their districts, members of the public they are elected to serve.

As we read in Scripture, "Speak out for those who cannot speak . . . defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9) ●



Peter Bakken is WCC Public Policy Coordinator

...Continued from Page 1

Parker Palmer's "Habits of the Heart" Online Learning Opportunity for Wisconsin Clergy



Beginning the week of March 3rd, the course will include weekly video and print content for individual learning, and small group real-time interactive online discussion circles to explore the practices of congregational ministry utilizing Palmer's "Habits of the Heart." Online learning technology is very user friendly; training and technical assistance is available for anyone who needs it.

Because Lent and Easter are such a busy time of year for pastors, there will be flexibility in engaging the weekly content. (There will be no online discussion circles or material sent during Holy Week.) Several options will be available for the weekly online small group learning circles.

CENTER FOR Courage & Renewal

The 8-week course will conclude with an all-day, face-to-face retreat in Madison with Parker Palmer the week of May 5th reflecting on the experience and exploring the next steps for the practice of ministry utilizing the "Habits of the Heart." The retreat will be open only to those who have actively participated in the small group circles.

Apply early! Since we anticipate the course will be oversubscribed, interested pastors are invited to submit a simple one page application by February 3rd through the Wisconsin Council of Churches website (www.wichurches.org). If accepted, the registration fee is \$100. For applications received after the deadline, the fee is \$125 if accepted.

Continuing education credit is available. Graduate School credit through Edgewood College is available for an additional fee. See the Wisconsin Council of Churches website for more details. ●



Upcoming WCC Events

2014 Washington Island Forum

June 23-27

**TWENTY QUESTIONS:
Why the Church Needs to Ask
More Questions Than It Answers**

Presenters:

Lillian Daniel & Martin B. Copenhaver

Jesus asked eight times as many questions as he answered. And yet, the church is stereotyped in our culture as an institution that believes it has the answers. Could Christians embrace the teaching methods Jesus used and ask more questions than we answer?

Join us for four and a half days of ecumenical worship, plenary presentations, discussions, spiritual renewal, and recreation in an idyllic setting off the coast of Door County.

Tuesday: What questions did Jesus ask?

Wednesday: How do questions extend the conversation?

Thursday: Why does the church answer questions no one is asking?

Friday: How do we follow an inquisitive Savior into the future?



Lillian Daniel is the author of the 2103 book, *When Spiritual*

But Not Religious Is Not Enough: Seeing God in Surprising Places, Even the Church. She has served as senior minister of the First Congregational Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois since 2004.

Martin B. Copenhaver

is author of the 2013 book, *Living Faith while Holding Doubts*. He has been senior pastor of the Wellesley Congregational Church in Massachusetts since 1994 and has been named president-elect of Andover Newton Theological Seminary.



Daniel and Copenhaver coauthored *This Odd and Wondrous Calling and Private Lives of Two Ministers*.

Registration: \$275. Go to www.wichurches.org under "events" for more information and registration details. ●

Healthy Boundaries for Pastors and Other Religious Leaders

Our Spring, 2014 Workshops

Fox Valley:

**Tuesday, April 1, 9 am – 4 pm
First Presbyterian Church, Neenah**

Central Wisconsin:

**Wednesday April 2, 9 am – 4 pm
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Plover**

Led by retired ELCA Pastor and boundaries trainer Rev. Karen Bockelman, this one-day workshop will focus on developing healthy boundaries and sexual ethics for clergy and other religious leaders in a congregational setting.



Topics include: Boundary basics; Rick Factors and Vulnerabilities, Separation Ethics, Mandatory Reporting and Privileged Communication; Social Media; and Congregational Prevention.

Co-sponsored by: ELCA East Central Synod, UCC Wisconsin Conference, Winnebago & John Knox Presbyteries, American Baptist Churches in Wisconsin.

This workshop addresses denominational requirements for clergy boundaries training. A Certificate of Completion will be available to each participant at the conclusion of the workshop.

Early bird registration: \$89. After March 15: \$99. Check with your denominational office about scholarship assistance, which is available in most cases. Registration on-line at www.wichurches.org/events. ●



Our mission is to pray and work together for the unity and renewal of the church and the healing and reconciliation of the world.

*Forming Leaders
Empowering Public Witness
Equipping the Missional Church*

Keep up to date with news and resources from the Wisconsin Council of Churches when you subscribe to ENews by sending your email address to wcoc@wichurches.org or 'Like' us on our new Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilofChurches.





Rev. Scott D. Anderson

Executive Director's Corner

The Future is Now... in Richland Center

Talk to Pastor Larry Engel at Five Points Lutheran Church in Richland County, and he'll tell you an amazing story of healing and transformation.

In days and "culture wars" past, there were two ministerial groups which met in Richland Center, one Evangelical and other Roman

Catholic and Mainline Protestant. As is the case in most communities around this state, each group held separate meetings, and rarely if ever did pastors in one group speak to pastors in the other.

Today those separated groups have ceased to exist and cooperatively have re-formed

as the Richland County Ministerial Association (RCMA) to claim a public role for the churches in that county.

And they don't just meet for fellowship. Together the pastors of the 22-member congregations have started four homeless shelters, a cooperative youth program, a quarterly Community Leaders Forum, a Youth/Family Advisor Program sponsored jointly with the Richland School District, and five community worship events each year. Wow!

Members cooperate where they can and respect the differences and diversity when they cannot.

Parker Palmer recently told me that the most important factor in creating vital organizations is relational trust. The RCMA is a great illustration to behold. These pastors and their congregations also give witness to the unity of Christ's Church in ways that the rest of us can work towards. ●



Please Support WCC's Mission Today and in the Future

TODAY: Make a gift of cash – either by check or by donation on our website www.wichurches.org. Other possible gift options are stock, bonds or other investments or property. Non-financial ways to help is to share this newsletter and our website address with friends and colleagues.

FUTURE: Consider one of the following forms of support: 1) bequest from your estate, 2) name the WCC as beneficiary of an insurance policy, 3) name WCC as beneficiary of a retirement account, 4) gift annuity, or 5) charitable remainder trust. Naming WCC or any charitable organization as beneficiary of a retirement account can provide tax savings. Consulting your tax and/or legal advisors is always an important step.

Please feel free to contact Finance and Fund Development Manager Rich Fluechtling to discuss any of the options. He can be reached by e-mail to rfluechtling@wichurches.org or by phone at 608-837-3108. ●

WCC WELCOMES NEW MEMBER

At the WCC Annual Meeting in December, delegates unanimously received the Armenian Orthodox Church (Oriental) as the 17th member church of the Wisconsin Council of Churches.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2015 Washington Island Forum with John Bell from the Iona Community



June 22-26
Registration opens July 1, 2014.