

The Friendly Communicator

May 2023

From the Pastor's Desk. . .

**“In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;
I will not be afraid” Psalm 56:4**

In our culture today, it is so difficult to trust the media and each other.

There is so much dissension, lies, misinformation, corruption, fear, and confusion in our world. As 21st century Christians, we can take a step back, away from distractions and those voices that can immobilize us and prevent us from remembering, hearing, and seeing God among us and within us.

STOP LISTEN REMEMBER

Our trust is in God alone! What that means for us is that we—as Easter people—resurrected people can rely on God. God has all the power, strength, and capacity to hold the whole world in God’s hands. Because of this surety that God offers us, we can transcend our circumstances and live with hope and anxious anticipation that things will work out. This is how we live—trusting in God.

Trust has to do with letting go, surrendering, and releasing our lives, our worries, circumstances, trials, etc. to the powerful hands of God. We can always plan and imagine what is good/better for our circumstances. Yet, God, in God’s infinite wisdom, has the best for us. Approach God with your cares and concerns, then take a step back. Allow God to act in your life as God moves from Good. . . Better. . . Best.

Pastor Gwen

The Friendly Communicator

May 2023

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Bonnie Holl
- 12 Maxine Gapinski
- 14 Nancy Byleen
- 15 Linda Hazard House
- 17 Debra Radakovich
- 20 Brody Oleson
- 23 Peter Radakovich
- 29 Demetrius Hernandez
- 30 Marjorie Burns

If we have inadvertently missed your special day, please accept our apologies, and let the office know so we can change our records.

Camp Tamarack Summer Programming

- Sr High (9-12 grade) June 11-15 | \$275
- Jr High (7/8 grade) June 18-22 | \$275
- Junior (5/6 grade) June 25-29 | \$275
- Middle (3/4 grade) July 9-13 | \$265
- Primary (1/2 grade) July 9-12 | \$220

Sunday Food Collection for MCC

The third Sunday collection on **May 21st** for the Milwaukee Christian Center is canned vegetables and body wash.

Teaching Pastors Forum #4

May 10, 2023 at 12 pm

SPEAKER: Rev. Jason Mack has 20 years of pastoral experience as a church planter, a part of the emerging church movement, and an associate at First Baptist, Madison. He is currently pastor at Underwood Memorial Baptist Church in Wauwatosa and will receive a doctorate in Creative Leadership from Central Seminary in the Spring of 23.

TOPIC: At this Teaching Pastors Forum, Rev. Jason Mack will introduce you to tools and ideas used by Silicon Valley start-ups and Fortune 500 companies. Sometimes called “Design Thinking” and sometimes called “Human Centered Design,” these tools have solved problems as diverse as navigating a computer screen (the mouse) to keeping premature infants warm in impoverished areas. Recently, a small but growing movement of pastors and church leaders has been wondering how these powerful ideas might be applied to the life of the church. Come be part of that movement.

Are you wrestling with a *particularly troublesome problem* in your leadership?

Has your church been stuck in *this one area* you just can’t figure out?

This will be a hands-on, participatory, problem-solving session where we will learn together by doing. **So please come to this session with a problem to work through or a challenge to explore.** We won’t solve it in one hour, but you will leave with some new tools and ideas about how you might solve it.

Visit the link to find out more:

<https://www.abcofwi.org/2023/01/05/teaching-pastors-forum-2023/>

Location: First Baptist—West Allis

The Friendly Communicator May 2023

March 26, 2023 Financial Income Report	
General Receipts	
Envelopes	7,415.00
Loose Offering	80.25
Church School	195.00
Birthday	60.00
Total	\$7,749.25
Miscellaneous Receipts	
Pow Wow	50.00
MMCC donation	200.00
Secret Place	2.00
Postage	0.58
Total	\$252.58
Communion Offering	
Camp Tamarack	370.00
Grand Avenue Club	125.00
Milwaukee Christian Center	125.00
Total	\$620.00
Memorial Fund	
For Karen Sundland	50.00
Total	\$50.00
Mission Offering	
RMMO	40.00
AFC	515.00
WMO	10.00
Total	\$565.00
Deposited Total	\$9,236.83

ABWomen's Picnic

The ABWomen's Picnic will be held at 6 pm, Monday, May 15 at Nancy Byleen's home.

Renew Retreat for Spring Clean Up

May 17 – 20 and June 1 – 4

Formerly known as "Spring Into Camp," Camp Tamarack has reimagined our Spring initiative to prepare for the Summer youth camping season; We are excited to invite you to join us for Renew Retreat: readying camp while reviving, re-grounding, and renewing our spirits in Christ.

In the past, the clean up retreat focused on the physical tasks and labor it takes to bring Camp up to speed; while this will still be the priority each morning, we have added some retreat elements to the afternoon:

Fellowship through song and conversation, Time for reflection by yourself or as a group, Option to join a short, guided stretch/yoga session.

Afternoon free to lean into how God is calling you closer (continuing your assigned work area/project, taking a walk or canoe ride, meditative time with your Bible; relaxation hobbies you brought from home e.g. cross-stich or knitting, reading a book, checkers with a friend, painting, playing music on an instrument, etc.).

Visit the link to register and find out more:
<https://camptamarack.org/2023/03/29/new-retreat-for-spring-clean-up/>

Bible Study

Join us for Bible Study **Tuesdays at 11 AM in person or via the Zoom link:**
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79185392195?pwd=UTfzEja4vvKfEiUwoUoP3HBmAm09ll.1>

The Friendly Communicator

May 2023

Musical Notes **FROM THE DIREKTR**

In a recent article from Pepperdine University, one of their worship leaders stated, "It's not about how good I sing; it's not about performing," Silva said. "It's about spreading the word of God." That is the purpose of music in our worship.

Hymns and songs that are a part of worship gather us together as the body of Christ and focus our minds on what we are doing and who we are worshipping. They invigorate our bodies and help us express our love for Jesus. When we want to pray, music can help empower our prayer and express our thanks more boldly.

While we can praise our God in many ways, music makes a statement that is undeniable. Words that come on the wings of rhythm and melody are hard to ignore.

From a simple tune and simple words (Father, I Adore You) to a complex prayer of faith (Be Thou My Vision), music finds its most perfect purpose in the praise of God.

Mary Schecher

The Friendly Communicator May 2023

Historical Reflections: A Result of Home Missions

As Baptists when we hear the word “missions.” we tend to think about Adoniram and Ann Judson venturing to Burma to work with the local people some 200 years ago. Possibly, some descendants of his actions in Burma now worship in our church facility.

In 1836, the Baptist Home Mission Society sent Elder Richard Griffing to the small settlement of Milwaukee in the Wisconsin Territory, which was on the US frontier. In 1841, Greenfield Baptist Church was founded as a mission church on the frontier.

Home ministries continue. One of the current affiliated organizations of the American Baptist Convention of Wisconsin is Housing Ministries of American Baptists in Wisconsin, a Ministry of Hope and Opportunity. Located in Madison and Milwaukee, it's a ministry of six low-income communities managed by a unique approach to housing. The family housing properties offer large Neighborhood Learning Centers with qualified, professional coordinators and state-of-the-art computer and video recording labs. Program coordinators organize programming for all ages to offer after school enrichment programs, tutoring, gardening, field trips, summer enrichment, computer training, Head-Start and child care services. Karl Byleen is a member of the Board of Trustees.

On March 19, 2023, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel had an article on page 3 that involves one of the sets of apartments, The Green Tree Apartments near Teutonia and Good Hope. Missions at work; a success story follows (sounds like a testimony):



JSONLINE.COM | SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023 | 3A

IMPACT SPANS GENERATIONS

**Vicki Davidson named USA TODAY
Women of the Year honoree for
Wisconsin**

**Vicki Davidson found her village, and now
she gives back to it.**

For 24 years, she's helped hundreds of kids
finish their homework, practice their reading

**Vicki Davidson,
Greentree-Teutonia
Apartments
Community
Learning Center
program director,
is USA TODAY's
Women of the Year
honoree from
Wisconsin for her
tireless work
teaching children
and adults in the
center located in a
low-income
housing complex.**



The Friendly Communicator May 2023

and prepare for life. She's worked with their parents and other adults to complete their high school education and find jobs. She's coordinated with local colleges to build a strong roster of tutors.

Davidson, 65, serves as the program director for the Greentree-Teutonia Apartments Community Learning Center, a welcoming space within a low-income apartment complex in Milwaukee. She's been described as the pulse of the complex's rigorous summer enrichment and after-school programs. Her influence has rippled beyond Greentree and spread across Milwaukee, a city known for stark racial disparities in educational outcomes, employment, income and home ownership. Davidson works on the ground level, moving child by child, with her influence spanning generations. "It is my prayer that every child I poured into reaches back and does the same for others coming up with them and after them," she said.

The apartment complex is one of six in the state overseen by Housing Ministries of American Baptists in Wisconsin. Residents receive housing vouchers, and the waiting list for a one-bedroom apartment is three to four years.



Davidson knows the struggles residents face, because she once was one. Greentree, a nine-acre complex with more than 700 residents, is where she raised her son as a single mother, where she found a community of other mothers, and where she found her calling. "This has been my mantra: I understand. I know," she said. "And I've had them come through here and now I raise their children that are coming to the program, and that gives me joy." It's not unusual for Davidson to get texts from her students: *Hey Miss Vicki, things aren't going well at home. Can you pick me up?* She always replies. She always helps. Davidson's passion for education came from her mother, a teacher who filled her childhood home with books and magazines, like *Ebony* and *Jet*.

Her parents married in 1950 in Alabama, where her father had been prevented from voting because of his race. The day after the wedding, the couple moved to Milwaukee, where her father had a job secured at a factory and later opened a grocery store. He designed and built their house, brick by brick. "Our education came through books," she said. "You may not love reading, but you can love where it can take you."

[This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.] **Who paved the way for you?** My mother, Marie Davidson, her being a teacher and her being a Christian, her just being a hard-working woman. I have not had it as hard as my mother had. But I appreciate everything she and my dad did. We're sitting at the kitchen table doing the homework, we're going over our factors, we're going over our multiplication, we're doing our spelling, while she's cooking cornbread and my dad is working second shift. You have to look at that kind of work ethic and say, how do I do that? And then you just find a way to do what you can do, because she and my father found a way to do that.

What is your proudest moment? The birth of my son. Being a single mother was not easy. (My son) has been my pride and joy ever since. I'm sure most mothers would say that but it kind of ties into what

The Friendly Communicator May 2023

important it is to have your dad. If you don't have the dad, then you have to have someone that's going to stand for you.

What is your definition of courage? To take on whatever comes to you, however the chips may fall. You don't back off of it. You give it the prayer that it needs. And then you just do what you have to do, because God has got you. And even in the worst circumstances, he will give you the courage because that's why we do what we do – for his glory.

Is there a guiding principle or mantra that you tell yourself? Just to give it to God. And I mean, have the faith to know that however it turns out, he is in control and his will is going to be done.

How do you overcome adversity? I really do rely on my faith, because I'm not perfect. I don't get it right all the time. If you were to ask my son, and several of the children that I work with, Ms. Vicki is not perfect, and I've made a mistake or two and I do know that you have to humble yourself. I've gotten better about that over the years.

What advice would you give your younger self? Stay the course. Listen to the people who know more than you do. Because now the same things that I wasn't listening to when my mother and elders were telling me, I'm saying those same things to my son and the same things to the children. And if I knew then what I know now, and if I had someone that would have sat down and talked to me, like I'm able to talk to my son and able to talk to the students here, who knows the possibilities?

You've worked at the Learning Center for 24 years. Why have you done it for so long? I have had other offers and other opportunities over the years, but the truth is, I love the people I serve and I truly enjoy my job. If I can help or encourage a child, a young mother, a single father, our seniors, then that is what I'm here for. I find the encouragement to keep going when Paige, who is 20 now but has been with me since she was a baby, comes from Arizona, where she now lives, to show her boyfriend Greentree "because it was so important to me. It was my second home." And when Sariyah tells me she is going to the Navy when she turned 18 and she wanted me to meet her recruiter, so I would be at ease with her choice. She is now a standout in the Navy, got her associate's degree and has been serving our country for eight years. ... And when Raphiell, who came to us when he was 8 from Chicago's Cabrini- Green Housing Project, graduated from the Milwaukee High School of the Arts. He is a rap artist, musician and now a drummer on several drumlines, including the Milwaukee Bucks, and is in college at Milwaukee Area Technical College and a member of a fraternity.

What makes you hopeful about Milwaukee's future? I'm optimistic because it is my prayer that every child I poured into reaches back and does the same for others coming up with them, and after them. They know my expectation of them is to do great work and be great! I'm counting on the Greentree students, past and present, to pick up the baton and cross the finish line in victory. That will be a huge win for Milwaukee.

This is the 86th of periodic historical articles.

Vicki Davidson gives a student a book bag during a raffle at the Green Tree summer enrichment program's back to school picnic.

