



Woodside World

CHURCHNEWS of CONGREGATION and COMMUNITY

Rev. Dr. Deborah DeMars Conrad, Pastor

FROM THE PASTOR...

(Dear Woodsiders: It's been a tiresome week, and I'm a little testy. This isn't really about you, but I wondered if it may express what some of you are feeling. And maybe it will be about us one day when the disaster is elsewhere and we are inclined to "help.")

I don't have time to make you feel good.

That phrase has been in my head over and over again these past several days.

Let's be clear: I'm not the one most harmed or most burdened by this state-created water emergency. All of Flint is affected – "traumatized" is the word used by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, and I think that's right. Some people are burdened by the daily trek to get water; some are burdened by the inordinate time now involved in normal daily tasks; some are burdened by the fear and worry for their kids or what symptoms may appear in their own lives; some are burdened by the additional costs. Many, many people have added to their own daily burden the work of telling neighbors, looking for gaps in the immediate distribution of water and info, trying to organize a community response to the obscenity and unrighteousness that has been inflicted on us.

This is no small thing. Ninety thousand people have something new to worry about.

And people outside Flint want to help. Maybe they are painfully aware of how this is an American failing (Flint is only the first or most extreme victim of a politics that has been insidiously taking over our country for decades.) Maybe they are people of faith or they're paying something forward. Whatever the reason, people want to help.

Great. Help. But that phrase runs through my mind: I don't have time to make you feel good.

If you need your photo taken with a truck of water bottles you delivered, please don't ask me. If you need some evidence of the nice thing you've done, please don't ask me. If you have some notion that I'm keeping a list somewhere of every thoughtful gesture and you'll shortly see your name in print, please let that go. And for God's sake, if you think you "get it"

though you live hundreds of miles away in a completely different reality, please don't come here and judge us. I don't have time to make you feel good. And there's every possibility that you're pissing me off.

I know. It's not my best side. But in all fairness, it isn't yours either. Christianity all too often lives out just enough generosity to let itself off a moral hook of some kind, and then goes back to business as usual, without ever considering how to make generosity less necessary. Liberal Christianity is often the worst, assuming it knows best, that it has all the answers, that it can "fix" whatever is wrong. You're not helping. In fact, you're as bad as the state legislature that took away our meaningful vote by its emergency manager law. You're as bad as the Christians over the centuries who colonized so many countries and forced assimilation. We don't need you trying to take over right now; we don't need you telling us how to be Flint. We do need you asking questions, offering to join in what we're doing, listening to folks on the ground here who have been living with this for way longer than you've been hearing it on the news. Help, yes. But first, please pay attention.

There is a lot that can come out of this mess. Maybe in a city of 25 percent unemployment, people will get paid to work in recovery-associated work; maybe schools will get nurses once again; maybe Senator Stabenow will somehow fulfill her pledge to get a grocery store back in the city; maybe democracy will be restored and the people of Flint will once again govern ourselves. Maybe we'll even reconsider a deadly national agenda that allowed this to happen. Maybe. But that all takes time, so I don't have time to make you feel good.

Dr. Hanna-Attisha said last night that we can work on turning lemons into lemonade. Perhaps that's true. But to make lemonade, you need more than lemons. You need water.

With you on a confounding journey,

-pastor deb

FAITH EXPLORATION CLASSES FOR ADULTS

- ◆ *Living Our Faith in the World* class led by Jay Cummings.
- ◆ Linda Angus leads a discussion of the weekly lectionary (the readings we'll hear in worship)
- ◆ Carol Higgins' group is starting a new book to discuss. They are reading *God Not One: eight religions that run the world* by Stephen Prothero. Check in the office if you need a copy.

CALL TO MEETING—On Jan 31, we convene a special meeting at 12:50 pm to vote on the proposed changes to our By-Laws. Proposed revisions are available in the office.

MORE NEW MEMBERS

Fresh from the glow of January baptisms, we are planning for new members again at Easter!

If you're interested in joining Woodside Church, you are welcome to sit in on informational classes with Pastor Deb. We'll gather Sundays at 9:30 am, for 5 weeks of Lent (beginning Feb 14). See you then!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A CRAFTER'S GROUP? We're gauging interest for a once- or twice-monthly gathering at church. Whatever your craft, sign up at the table by the office with day and time preference.

WATER UPDATE—If you need a filter, or if it is time to replace the cartridge, (water running slowly is a good indicator) call the church office. If you need water, take what you need from the table in the lobby.

WATER ON THE WEB — we've now created a page on our website for all thing related to water, including Woodside's response. This will certainly grow as more information gets shared. Bookmark the page, and like us on facebook. Two great ways to stay up to date.

NEW YARD SIGNS—We will be ordering some different yard signs soon. If you have an old one, keep the metal frame and we can give you the new sign to attach. We'll let you know when they arrive.

THIS WEEK AT WOODSIDE 1/31 - 2/6

SUNDAY:

1/31 9:30 am **Adult Classes**
11 am Worship

Coffee and Conversation hosted by the Finance Committee

MONDAY:

2/1 Office Closed
7 pm Chime Choir

TUESDAY:

2/2 5:30 pm Daybreak Meeting

WEDNESDAY:

2/3 6:30 pm Women's Folk Choir
7:30 pm Chancel Choir

THURSDAY:

2/4 7 pm Daybreak Worship

URBANSPIRIT INTRO AND VISIT

Interested in knowing more about UrbanSpirit and Pastor Deb's "other" work in poverty education?

The weekend retreat and info session we planned for Louisville has been rescheduled for April 1-3.

Pastor Deb and Campbell Lovett, our conference minister, will lead this fact-finding time, including worship with a UCC congregation in Louisville.



Cost is \$50 (includes all lodging and meals; transportation to Louisville is your own responsibility, but carpooling is possible) and registration is required. Look for brochures on the table, or ask deb.

Want to know more about UrbanSpirit? Check the web: www.urbanspirit.org.

PREVENTING DIABETES— A free informational meeting 5:30-6:30 Tue, Feb 2, at U of M-Flint Rec Center. Sign up at www.nktm.org/dpp.

WELCOME OUR NEW TENANT/NEIGHBOR:

The Flint Democracy Defense League is setting up its water response operations in room 101, so we'll be seeing them regularly at Woodside!