

# The Ponderings of Pastor Beth

Dear Members and Friends,

Each week as I prepare for Sunday's sermon and prayerfully study the upcoming scripture, I am doing "**exegesis.**" I am attempting to hear what God might be saying to us through the ancient words. Although I may be alone in my office (or elsewhere) as I do this work, I never do it alone. God speaks through Bible commentaries (online or those big, heavy books on my shelf), fellow colleagues, the experiences you all share as well as your prayers and thoughts, news events, and my life experiences.

I have been trained in seminary to "hear" the scripture as much as possible in the **context** in which it was written. You might hear me say during the sermon, "In Jesus' day" or "In biblical times" and this helps us remember the culture and practices back then which may be very different than today's.

One thing I try to avoid (although we are not perfect as pastors) is "eisegesis." Unlike exegesis which attempts to "lift" God's voice from the scripture, eisegesis is me trying to see my message in the scripture. **Problematic, right?**

Unfortunately the Bible was once again used in a manner in which it was never intended. Attorney General Sessions applied eisegesis to a Romans passage to justify the abhorrent practice of separating children from their parents at the border. The verse he used was "**cherry picked**" and the fuller context of the Romans passage was ignored. This is not only an improper use of our sacred scripture as Christians but also **dangerous.**

There are countless full passages in the Bible which tell of our call as people of faith. Many of them come back to this central tenet: "**Love God and Love One Another.**"

There are few things that cause more harm than to children than separating them from their parents. The trauma this creates is not something they outgrow but rather something they will likely negatively impact them for the rest of their lives.

As we worship together this July, may we come together to hear the scriptures and "exegete" them together—listening to all the ways **God is "stillspeaking" to us** through them. Let us also pray for and do even more than pray for our young ones at the border and their parents. Have you told your representative yet how you feel on this issue—especially as a Christian?

*Pastor Beth*

 ("Friend" me on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com): Beth Abbott)

## The Ponderings of...Our 'Pridefesters'!

...No, your eye-sight isn't failing you! This is a **bonus edition** of Ponderings!

The second weekend every June on the Summerfest grounds is **Pridefest**. For many years, the UCC and other progressive denominations have shared a booth to be in solidarity with the **LGBT community**.

This year four of our members—Tanya Brown, Kathy Immel, Stephanie Pischke, and Amy Wheelock-Brodzik—volunteered at the booth inviting people to have their picture taken at the photo booth or to receive a blessing from a **UCC** clergy person.

As you might imagine with four individuals, there were four different reactions and experiences. All seemed to share the sentiment that it was a **joy** to witness and be a part of a community, at least for a part of one weekend, where all could truly be who they are, dress in the way they desire to dress, and essentially be “free” from the trappings of the “outside” world.

Some in the group wondered if **blessing** people of the LGBT community was the best vehicle for creating an experience of God's love. Blessing is a powerful practice in the church but it has also been used as a weapon to condemn or “fix” or “change” individuals and groups. We don't doubt for a second the intention, wholeheartedness, and genuine love the clergy likely conveyed in their blessings but some have wondered if offering blessings is too vulnerable or too easily misconstrued. However, 500 people were “**Blessed at Pridefest**” so maybe the genuine intentionality around the blessings created a trusting enough environment.

How might we as the church continue to share this **message of God loves all and welcomes all**? How might we continue to get the word out about our church and about the United Church of Christ? **How about starting with your neighbor? The person you meet at the grocery store?** Start the conversation. See what happens. Share God's love.

*Pastor Beth*

 (“Friend” me on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com): Beth Abbott)



**Pastor Beth's June Ministry Highlights:**

- **Our Outdoor/Indoor Clean Up Day** on June 3 allowed us to get a lot of tasks accomplished in a short amount of time. A big thank you to all who helped and for the **Jeff & Amy** for providing the lunch.
- **June 10's Fun Day** had a slight damper to it due to the rain (cancelling our annual kickball game). Our youngest disciples had fun though playing games inside. We had a great baseball tailgate-themed potluck complete with several "carnival" treats including a popcorn maker, nachos, and snow cones! Wow! Thanks **Steve Pantaleo** for sharing with us.
- Our first **campfire worship** of the summer, on Thurs. June 14, got off to a great start. We had beautiful weather, 10 kids present blowing bubbles and having a fun time, and our pudgy pies were well-received! See you next time on July 12!
- All the men in worship on Father's Day received a cookie. Thank you, **Pam Rossi**, for providing them!

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**Summer Prayer Partners**

If you have a summer "**Prayer Partner**," keep in touch as you are able. You'll receive monthly reminders to touch base but certainly contact each other as frequently as you desire.

Enjoy getting to know one another and enriching your prayer life.

**Five Practices Team**  
**Session #5: Extravagant Generosity**

Our team will meet on Wed. July 25 5:30-8 PM with our facilitator Jeanne Mantsch, lay leader at First Congregational UCC in Port Washington. We're looking forward to another powerful night of deeply engaging in conversations about our reading, questioning what might be possible, eating dinner together, and discerning where God is calling us!

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**You Are Invited!**



**Worship on Sunday, August 26**  
**9:30 AM**  
**Grant Park Picnic Area 5A**

Save the date and join us for worship in the park!  
Snacks and yard games to follow.

Check your mail/email in July for a formal invitation.

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**Panera Bagels, Coffee & Communion...July 1**

Meet us in Fellowship Hall on Sun. July 1 as we share breakfast and communion while worshipping together. This has become a well-enjoyed part of our summer together, so we hope you can join us! There will be a "pray-ground" for our youngest disciples to play with quiet toys and activities.

## Ice Cream Social



**Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from 4-8 PM**

South Milwaukee Municipal Band  
plays at 7 PM

We'll need raffle baskets and ice cream servers as well as clean up and set up help. Deadline for the baskets is Sunday July 22nd.

We'll also need volunteers to make Sloppy Joes (recipe will be provided).

Sign-up sheets will be posted. Please see Janet Mierendorf for questions.

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**Sharing Sunday: July 15**  
*(third Sunday of each month)*



### **Suggested Items: Peanut Butter & Canned Tuna**

Your donations will be collected during children's time and shared with our neighbors in greater need through Human Concerns.

Thank you for your generosity!

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**Rummage Sale date has been set!**  
**Saturday, October 20th.**

**More information to come.**

## Thank you for your summer offerings!



We greatly appreciate your diligence in "catching up" or "paying ahead" when you go on vacation or are gone from Sunday worship. It truly helps us.

Egiving is always an option for your summer giving and beyond. Grab a form in the narthex or on our website and start anytime!

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### **Campfire Worship Returns This Summer!**



Join us on our front lawn at church 6:30-7:30 PM on the second Thursday of the summer months.

(Note new day: Thursdays instead of Wednesdays)

'Camp'-Themed Campfires:

**Thurs. July 12** Marvelous Manna: How God Provides

**Thurs. Aug. 9** Dirty Feet: Washing Jesus' Feet

Pudgy pies & other camp treats to follow our informal worship! Bring lawn chairs or "sleeping bags" as blankets. Invite friends. Kid-friendly!

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### **South Milwaukee**

#### **Free Community Dinner**

**111 N. Chicago Ave., South Milwaukee**

Located in First Congregational United Church of Christ Building

**3rd Thursday of each month 6:30 PM**



Enter by parking lot door.

## Sunday Kids' Camp (Summer Sunday School!)



Nearly every Sunday in summer, we will offer a summer version of Sunday School called Sunday Kids' Camp. After children's time, our youngest disciples (Sunday School age and up) will leave worship to join in fun, very active Bible activities.

Sunday Kids' Camp starts in Fellowship Hall (check out the tent!) where the Bible story of the day will be read. Then kids will head outside (weather pending) to move their bodies and further live into the lessons of the stories.

Kids should wear play clothes and shoes and lather in sunscreen prior. Water bottles, sunglasses/hats, etc. are encouraged.

**July 8 & 15** Ultimate Campfire: Moses & the Burning Bush

**July 22 & 29** Marvelous Manna: How God Provides

**Aug. 5 & 12** Camping in the Wilderness with Jesus

**Aug. 19 & Sept. 2** Dirty Feet! Washing Jesus' Feet

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### Noisy Offering Collection

Our 'Soup Kettle' Noisy Offering on **Sun. July 8** (the second Sunday of each summer month) will support **Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)** which is the lifeline of the Wisconsin Conference and the United Church of Christ. We already collected \$35.40 on June 10.

## Grow in Faith with Lay Academy

Lay Academy is a ministry of transformation and faith formation offered by the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. Participants dive into scripture, explore theology, consider God's presence in their lives and discover fresh ways to speak about and live out their faith in their day to day lives.

Registration is open now through July 31, 2018, for the next cycle of classes, which will begin on Saturday, August 18 and continue with additional two-day weekend sessions in September, November, January, March and April. For more detailed information, go to [www.wcucc.org/layacademy](http://www.wcucc.org/layacademy) or talk to Pastor Beth.

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### Our Monthly Potbelly's Fundraiser



Our 3rd Tues. of the month fundraiser at Potbelly's in Oak Creek (in strip mall between Chick-fil-A & Five Guys) from 5-8 PM continues **Tues. July 17.**

Show a paper voucher (see table in narthex every Sunday prior), our facebook page Potbelly's post from your phone, the voucher posted on our website, or at least mention "St. Luke's." Encourage friends to join us the tasty fundraiser!

## July Birthdays



Ken Hicks	7/1
Erwin Lackner	7/2
Laurie Boucher	7/5
Mike Schack	7/8
Janet Mierendorf	7/12
Jennifer Lopez	7/13
Amy Wampole	7/17
Russ Swanson	7/18
Bev Voelkel	7/20
Steve Hansen	7/26
Stephanie Pischke	7/27
Tanya Brown	7/29

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## July Anniversaries



Erin & Matt Wood	7/3
Ron & Jill Petrus	7/15
Tom & Marilyn Garlie	7/16

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### **‘Like’ Our *St. Luke’s United Church of Christ* Facebook Page!**

Find St. Luke’s United Church of Christ (see picture with communion cup) and ‘check in’ when you’re worshipping! Join us and invite friends to follow us.

## Do You Receive Our Weekly Congregational Emails?

Typically every Friday, Pastor Beth sends out a brief email to the congregation about what to expect on Sunday morning and any announcements. If you’d like to receive the email, let her know:

[stlukesuccpastor1@gmail.com](mailto:stlukesuccpastor1@gmail.com). If you

haven’t yet updated your contact information to that new email address, please do that as well. Tired of the weekly email? Feel free to “unsubscribe” at any point by sending an email. No explanation needed.

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### **Church Contacts:**

Pastor Beth’s Office Hours:

Tues., Thurs., Fri. 9 AM – 4 PM

Church: (414) 762-8260

Website: [stlukesucc.us](http://stlukesucc.us)

Pastor Beth’s email:

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Pastor Beth’s cell (920) 207-3889

Office Administrator Jennifer’s email:

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