

Woodside World

CHURCH NEWS of CONGREGATION and COMMUNITY

Woodside Church is a progressive Christian community committed to nurturing freedom, honesty and diversity, where members and friends live Jesus' way of social justice.

Rev. Dr. Deborah DeMars Conrad, Pastor

Anne Oper, Office Manager

FROM THE PASTOR

Each fall for these past 3 years, Woodside's Board of Directors and I have gone on retreat together, in part to get to know each other and how we function together. It matters to understand who's on your team and what they need and what makes them tick. Group activities, shared meals, worship and singing. It makes us a better team.

But we also go away to get to know Woodside, to listen to the voice of God as best we can, to reflect together on who we are together and where we believe we are being called.

So, we went away for not quite 48 hours. In the midst of 160 acres of quiet on Crystal Lake, we listened. More than doughnuts and funny stories (although there were surely those), we listened to each other's hopes and fears and joys and griefs, held each other's hearts and shared deep conversations, the kind of conversations you just can't have in 90-minute meetings once a month.

And here's what I heard: Woodside is burning with the fire of God's own Spirit.

If you've been around a while, you may remember that Woodside has a lengthy mission statement, a full page description of our self-perception and our place in the Flint community. Last year, we started boiling it down. This weekend, we shortened it, sharpened it, shaped it into a memorable and powerful statement of who we are:

Woodside Church is a progressive Christian community committed to nurturing freedom, honesty and diversity, where members and friends live Jesus' way of social justice.

And if that seems too long, if we're afraid we won't get it exactly right, maybe just these 3 phrases are enough:

Progressive Christian community:

Every word claims something. We default toward welcome and openness. We lean toward Jesus, though we may all understand that differently. We are beloved community.

Freedom, honesty and diversity:

Each word promises something we know others will find here. We have no delusions or desires about making others believe any particular thing; we reject deceptions that may tell us life

is easy, that heaven is far away, that God is just one thing, can only be known one way; and we embrace a congregation as rich and broad as God's imagination.

Live Jesus' way of social justice:

This is the bottom line, perhaps, the allegiance we are dying to pledge. We do our best, and we imagine a world where all people are doing their best, to make a world work for everyone else. It was what Jesus died pursuing. It is the resurrection story.

You're going to be seeing this new statement; it will become our calling card. Maybe you'll remember it, and be able to share it when someone asks you "what is Woodside about?" When it is engraved onto our collective community heart, it will become our congregational GPS, helping us discern the direction of our future.

Speaking of future, there's something else. This Sunday, I hope you'll notice our altar. For a year or so, we've been adorning this table with objects and artifacts that help us think, that speak to our hopes and dreams, that remind us of who God is and who we are in the presence of God.

So, on our retreat, each board member was given the assignment (and \$5) to bring a gift to "the future Woodside." Here's what we gathered:

a lighthouse, since we are to be a beacon;

a glass ring in the style of our Flag of Humanity;

a music stand, symbolic of the song that will ever be our worship;

written treatises on community, our reminder of our commitments to justice;

a "sacred cow," to challenge our human inclination to value the wrong things;

a rock, a solid rock, a rock of ages, with a message of humility and joy;

a honey dipper, to remind us of the sweetness of beloved community;

and finally, a figurine of a rabbit and its tiny offspring,

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THIS MONTH AT WOODSIDE 9/25 - 10/1

SUN: 9/25 11 am Worship
then, coffee & Conversation
 12:30 pm Inquiry class with *Lunch and childcare*

MON: 9/26 Office Closed

TUE: 9/27 6 pm Personell Committee
 7 pm Worship Team

SAT: 10/1 8 am Flint Neighborhood United

NEWS AND NOTES

THINKING OF MEMBERSHIP?

An Inquirers' Class will be held after worship beginning on Sun, Sept 25, 12:30-2 pm.

This 3-part series includes lunch and childcare. **Call the office to sign up so we can count on lunch quantities and childcare helpers.**

You don't have to join just because you attended the class, but if you're thinking of becoming a member, this is how it happens.

We will be receiving those who wish to become members Sun, Nov 6, during worship.

MINISTRY TO THE DIRECTIONALLY CHALLENGED

The Michigan Conference UCC Annual Meeting will be at Woodside Oct 14-15, which means there will be a lot of guests in our building who don't know where stuff is.

If you have the spiritual gift of being nice to people, (we know not everyone does), we need you as greeters and ushers, for a couple of hours or for the whole weekend, to help folks find their way. Please call the office to sign up and let us know when you can be here.

If you'd rather attend than usher, you can do that! The Conference is 8:30 am to 6 pm Fri, Oct 14 (then dinner at the Mott Event Center) and 8:45 am to 4 pm, Sat, Oct 15. To register [go here](#). Deadline to register is Oct 7.

ALSO THIS!

Annie Oper, our office manager, has purchased a home in Flint, which she has named "821 square feet of cuteness." (Hard to put all that on a placard, however.) She will be tending to some readiness tasks, and hopes to move out of her apartment and into the house by the middle of October. She'd love you to stop by the office for pictures and details. There will be a party at some point! Please note: because of this momentous event, (and to facilitate the prep work), the office will be closed this Friday.

Congrats, Annie!

We are informed...*Jean Munro's* surgery has been postponed.

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one giving and one receiving flowers. Close up, it's impossible to say which is giving and which is receiving, and seems perhaps an apt symbol of what is possible when we tend to a new generation of church. We will be a gift to some future offspring, but surely that offspring will also be a gift to us now. Hmmm.

What would your gift be? This altar will be in place for a couple of weeks. Perhaps there's something you'd like to add. What would be your hope, your gift to Woodside 2020? Bring it along and put it on the altar.

Then, let's add a match, just to remind us of the fire that we are. Light and heat, to a world in need of both.

We have a great board. The leaders you've chosen are the right leaders for this moment in the congregation's life together. I trust their leadership, and I hope you will thank them for their passion, vision and courage.

I am thankful for them. And I am thankful for you.

With you on the journey,

pastor deb

THOSE PESKY PEW PADS.

You know the ones. You might call them "attendance registers" or sign-in sheets, or whatever, and not to be confused with the "pew cushions," the pew pads are an important tool in our ministry here.

An important tool in our ministry.

First, these are a perfect way to report any change of address, email, or phone number so we can make sure you keep getting news, like this Woodside World. If you don't receive it today, please sign the pew pad, and we'll make sure for next time.

Another somewhat important reason for the pew pads is for attendance-keeping. According to our bylaws, voting members are those who worship at least 6 times a year. (We count from from May 1 to April 30.) This is the only way the office has of keeping track of your attendance and our voting roster. Help us keep you current.

Finally, and perhaps most important, this is how we greet new people. Sometimes we might think "everyone knows me and knows that I am here," but here at Woodside we receive a fairly constant gift of new people; passing the pew pad along the row helps us get to know each other. If you sign it, perhaps the stranger next to you will too, and then you know someone new and interesting, and we have a way to be in touch.

See you Sunday! Don't forget to sign in!