



Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

www.churchwomenunited-madison.net

C.W.U. Newsletter April, 2015 No. 8

**May Friendship Day
Friday, May 1, 2015**

Journey of the Caregiver

**Guest Speaker
Cherie Milton
Agrace Hospice**

10:30 Annual Meeting

11:30 Lunch

12:15 Journey of the Caregiver

**Wellspring United Methodist Church
5702 South Hill Drive, Madison**

Luncheon:

Please RSVP by April 24

to Marlene Lippert, 838-3563,

And send check made out to CWU

to Marleen,

6329 Scandia Lane, McFarland 53558

May Celebration

We will celebrate on May 1 as we gather at Wellspring United Methodist Church, 5702 South Hill Drive, for May Friendship Day. Our theme, Journey of the Caregiver, recognizes that "caregiving is a task entrusted to us by God. As women, we care for others throughout our lives: from children and youth, to our spouses and significant others, to our parents and grandparents. The committee, knowing the tasks of caregivers and their inability sometimes to care for themselves, recognizes a need of love and respite for our caregiving sisters (and brothers). This May Friendship Day Celebration is for all people who struggle with their calling of caring for the needs of others. Caregiving can be a lonely place... How can we provide support for our sisters in Christ who give of their own lives in order to care for

the needs of others? ...how can we help to lighten the burden of caregivers and join them on their journey?" We are fortunate to have a guest speaker from Agrace Hospice, who will enhance the worship service with information and perspective. Our annual meeting will begin the day's activities, followed by a luncheon both tasty and friendly, allowing for renewing friendships and meeting other church women. Cost is \$8. Please RSVP by April 24 to Marlene Lippert, 838-3563, and send a check made out to CWU to Marleen, 6329 Scandia Lane, McFarland 53558.

April Forum

The April forum was a perfect springboard for the May Celebration. Our speaker was Charlie Daniel, Diversity Coordinator of the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin (ADAW) headquartered here in Madison. And our location gave positive reinforcement to supporting people in their journeys through life. Martha Nack, a chaplain at Oakwood, welcomed us to Oakwood Village University Woods, a Lutheran provider of Christian spiritual care that welcomes all and accepts people as they are, encouraging people to remain connected to their own faith communities as well as providing support and a rich variety of programs and activities. They provide independent living, skilled nursing, memory care, and assisted living--aging in place with spiritual support.

Some 30 people came out for the program, including some new faces, and Charlie Daniel enjoyed learning about her audience's experiences as she told us about her retirement job at ADAW. She took the position when she retired, and it's been one of the most rewarding jobs she's ever had.

Alzheimer's is a silent epidemic, that has been in the closet far too long. It's not a mental illness, it is a disease like cancer or heart disease. Her message:

don't be afraid. As we age, we lose some of our memory. Just as we clear out memory on our computers to make room for more information, so does our brain. With Alzheimer's, people remember long-time events, but can't remember what they had for breakfast.

What is dementia, what is Alzheimer's, what can we do? Charlie asked us to remember four things: yellow, automobile, apple, Frank Sinatra without writing them down [I did write them down]. She then listed myths about aging. Memory impairment is a part of aging. NO. You can't do anything about memory loss. False. Take notes. Write things down on the calendar. There's nothing wrong with writing things down. You can't tell normal memory changes from Alzheimer's. You CAN. Taking longer to remember names is normal. One of the main sets of people who can tell changes are your church family, your pastor. Singing, remembering hymns, while forgetting other things, is a connection that may remain for acute memory loss people. Women who work in the church are particularly good choices to visit those with this disease. Don't ask questions. Make a statement.

Dementia is a symptom of Alzheimer's. And it can be hard to be a caregiver. It is especially hard for African American caregivers. They die earlier than other groups. Stress and shortage of money play a major part. There is \$100 million in lost wages a year by people who stay home to provide care. Sundown is a condition where the sufferer is up all night walking around. Caregivers lose sleep, plus spend the day on the tasks of daily living. Good news for Madison. A clinic is opening in Madison for Sundown sufferers and their caregivers.

MCI, Mild Cognitive Impairment, leads to Alzheimer's. Mary Kay Baum has MCI and will donate her brain to science when she dies. She is able to function, has a history of doing things, and even has a new hobby, photography. MCI has four stages: beginning, mild, moderate, severe, followed by end of life.

Symptoms of dementia can result from other things besides the disease itself. Urinary tract infections, medicine, can cause them. Testing is important, including for your own peace of mind. UW has tests for Alzheimer's, Lewy Body disease, frontal lobe

dementia. Dean Clinic is conducting tests. Charlie can arrange for free testing for Alzheimer's. You can reach her at 517 North Segoe Road, Suite 301, Madison 53705, www.alz.wisc.org, charlie.daniel@alz.wisc.org, 608-232-3400.

What you can do is to keep active, exercise, eat a balanced diet, do challenging things like crossword puzzles, stay engaged with people. If you have hearing loss, ask people to speak up. Speaking to the many 70's people in the audience: If you've lived this long, you're doing fine. It takes 5-10 years to develop Alzheimer's. And if you get this disease in your 80's, so what? And it is not proven that Alzheimer's is hereditary.

A major problem: the cost to families. Society is not prepared to pick up costs. People divorce after 50 years of marriage in order to preserve income, because they can't afford the cost of support. Then Charlie asked us to name the 4 things she had mentioned earlier. She was impressed because people called them out in the order in which she gave them, concluding that we were an on-the-ball group [I didn't say anything]. She gave us a bag full of informational brochures to send us on our way. There is a monthly family Caregiver Education Series, 5:30-7:00 p.m. May 11 it will meet at the Central Library on West Mifflin Street. Information on Clinical Core, a group of volunteers in the ADRC who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, early memory loss (MCI) or who are cognitively healthy and over age 65, who take part in yearly study visits. Crossing Bridges discussion group for people with mild memory impairment and their families. Caregiver Support Groups. Meeting of Minds: a memory enhancement program for people with mild memory impairment. These 10 to twelve-week sessions take place three times per year.

Ten tips for a Brain-Healthy Lifestyle. Exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, take care of your heart, challenge your brain, get quality sleep, manage stress, treat depression, connect with others, think positive, have a purpose.

If any of these programs interest you, you can get more information from Charlie at the address and contacts listed earlier.

Ecumenical Action

Gloria announced the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice invitation to Fight for \$15 national action on 4/15/15, starting at the Taco Bell on East Washington at 11:30 am and moving to Library Mall, State Street at 2 pm.

Advocacy Day at the Capitol is Wednesday, April 29, from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. People of Faith United for Justice, 8:30 am Registration and Refreshments, 9:30 Morning Plenary Issue Briefing at Bethel Lutheran and First UMC, noon lunch, 2 pm Legislative Visits at Capitol, 4 pm Advocacy Day Concludes. Registration and lunch, \$25/person by April 15, \$35 after the 15th (lunch not guaranteed). Mail to WCC, 750 Windsor Street, Ste. 301, Sun Prairie, WI 53590 or register online at www.wichurches.org under "Events"

Ecumenical Choir

We will practice April 24 from 12:00 Noon to 1:30 P.M. at Bethany UMC, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison, WI 53705, third floor choir room.