



Wisconsin Gossellers June 2019 Newsletter

Recent Immigration Detention Incident - Prayers needed!

Betty Rendón is a student pastor at Emaus Lutheran Church in Racine and a doctoral student at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. On May 15, Betty's daughter was driving her five-year-old to school in Chicago when she was stopped by ICE officers. The officers arrested and handcuffed her, despite her protests that she is legally protected by DACA. An agent drove the car home, where Betty's husband, Carlos, was leaving for work. The agents shouted at him in English (clearly not His native tongue, and ordered him to unlock the door. As ICE vehicles converged on the house, the officers entered, weapons drawn.

Betty, still in her pajamas, was also handcuffed. Officers searched the house and found a visiting cousin, who had fled into the basement. He too was handcuffed. The officers then allowed Betty to call the grandchild's other grandparents so that they could come collect her. Betty seized this opportunity to alert the congregation at Emaus Lutheran in Racine.



Betty's daughter was eventually released from custody and reunited with her daughter; there was, after all, no legal reason for her arrest. Betty, Carlos and the cousin were taken to a detention facility in downtown Kenosha, where they were strip-searched and processed. In the meantime, because the home was left unlocked, robbers entered and ransacked it. A neighbor called police, who documented the robbery.

Before fleeing to the United States, Betty was the director of a school in a war-torn region of Colombia. Guerrillas attacked her school, assaulting several teachers. Although her asylum application was denied by U.S. officials, the subsequent federal deportation order was never executed. It is not clear why ICE decided to enforce the order at this time.

- Adapted from the WI Council of Churches

Bishop Paul Erickson (Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA) adds,

"Many have asked what they can do to be supportive. One simple but powerful gesture would be to send a note to Betty and/or her husband Carlos at the detention center. Note: All messages are read by ICE staff prior to reaching detainees..."

Please send all correspondence to: Emaus ELCA, 1925 Summit Avenue, Racine, WI 53404

It will be forwarded to Betty and Carlos, who have been moved from Kenosha to another location (Mail sent to the Kenosha Center will be returned to sender.)

Let us also remember, pray, and seek justice for others who have sought peace and safety in our country. They, too, must be treated with the respect and compassion due to them as fellow children of God and neighbors whom Jesus calls us to love.

Peter Bakken
Coordinator for Public Policy
Wisconsin Council of Churches



Mission Statement: To bridge cultural divides and touch souls through the transformative power of gospel music

Vision Statement: A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

As I have been practicing "Witness" (the song, not necessarily the command), it begins to dawn on me that this witness thing is not just another "should" — not a dreadful obligation.

The call to witness is an invitation — an opportunity to join the sacred celebration.

If I don't attend the party,

God's good news will continue to be loudly celebrated without me — yes celebrated by the whole of creation.

I am not an essential component.

I am an invitee.

If I don't attend the party as a witness, it's not God's loss; it's mine.

I am the one who is left out,

I am the one who misses the celebration and the chance to dance and shout for joy.

I am the one left behind, caught sitting on the porta potty as the parade moves on.

...I want to sing this song by memory so well that it becomes automatic.

Then, when singing

I can allow myself to join the celebration, feel the energy, and find myself shouting for joy.

Then, I too, will be

A WITNESS

- Don Tubesing



Put on your travelin' shoes!

The U.C.C. has conferences across the United States (below left). The *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD) is also organized in conferences (*Landeskirchen*). See above.

20+ WI Gospellers will visit the German *Landeskirchen* of Rheinland, Hesse/Nassau & Mitteldeutschland in the coming weeks. Others will explore new places and people--or return to old favorites--a bit closer to home.

Whatever your summer plans may be, consider traveling in a spirit of pilgrimage. Add a mantra or prayer to your packing list! John O'Donohue's blessing works for all kinds of journeys:

May you travel in an awakened way,
Gathered wisely into your inner ground;

That you may not waste the invitations

Which wait along the way to transform you.





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<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch by</u>	<u>Notes</u>
June 24- July 12	Updates via email	Germany Several locations	N/A	Updates via email
Sun Aug 18	9am warmup 10am Service 11:30am Picnic	Folk Song Farm (Faith UCC picnic) 4811 Pioneer Rd., Richfield, WI	Faith UCC	Worship service & family day = invite your family! *Over night stay available
Sat Sept 14	10am-3pm rehearsal	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd Neenah, WI 54956	sopranos	Rehearsal
Sat Oct 12	10am-3pm rehearsal 3pm concert?	First Congregational UCC 1405 State Road 67 Plymouth, WI 53073	altos	Rehearsal And Concert
Sat Nov 9 - Sun Nov 10	10am-3pm Rehearsal 10am Worship	Grace Congregational UCC 2801 Garfield St, Two Rivers, WI 54241	men	Rehearsal Concert/Worship *Over night stay available
Sat Dec 14th	10am-3pm rehearsal & 3pm concert?	Madison Christian Community 7118 Old Sauk Rd, Madison, WI 53717	sopranos	Rehearsal And concert?
Sat Jan 11th	10am-3pm 3pm concert	Cedar Ridge 113 Cedar Ridge Dr West Bend WI 53095	Cedar Ridge	Rehearsal/ workshop & Concert

? = still tentative and could change. Stay tuned! Will be updated at a later date or via email.

***Over night stay available = Let the Leadership team know if you need a place to stay**