



# Wisconsin Gospellers

## Jan/Feb 2021 Newsletter

### Black Votes Matter By Donna Leet

My first job after college was Executive Director of the YWCA at the University of Wisconsin Madison. In 1965, I was requested by the National Board of the YWCA to direct a Spring Break voter registration project in the black community of Raleigh, NC. The 22 students primarily came from colleges in the Northeastern United States. One student was the son of Cashmere Yost, delegate to the U.N., who called me to give details of the work we had planned and the assurance that we would be safe.

Our mission was to register voters by going house to house in black neighborhoods from 5 to 9 o'clock every evening. When we arrived, I thought things would be in order so that we could get started right away because there had been another group of students in Raleigh the week before. That was not the case, however; they had spent the week getting permits and paperwork done so that the registrations would be accepted and the votes counted. I contacted the local alderman to assist us with the completion of all the red tape so we could get started. This used up valuable time, but we used that time to do some training on how to make contacts effectively and assure that all forms were filled out correctly. After a couple days, we got started with the visits.

While we were working on all of this, a local radio station was running a live call-in program with callers harassing us. They accused us of being Northerners coming down to disrupt their elections, sleep with black women, vote illegally etc. etc. It was awful, and had been going on for days. The students were becoming frightened and so was I. So, I decided that I had to get this stopped for the safety of the students and the credibility of the project. I called the radio host and asked him to please stop taking calls on this topic. There was a long silence, and then he said, "okay." I thanked him and he kept his word. Sometimes you just have to ask for what you want.

About the third evening, we actually started to get out into the community and knock on doors. We found a great deal of fear on the part of potential voters. Some refused for fear of repudiation from employers or friends. However, we did register ~70 new voters. The students were very responsible & helpful when asked to do things. They were committed to doing all they could to assure that black voters were represented in the electoral process.

All during this week, I was being harassed by the Alderman for sexual favors. Every day the offers were different & more & more bold, He thought that I owed him this. I was 24 years old, newly married, my husband was in Basic Training in San Antonio. I had no interest whatsoever in this 50-something man. He kept insisting I go with him to Washington D.C. for the weekend. Finally, I agreed he should pick me up—about 2 hours after my plane left for Wisconsin!

When I got home, I got harassing phone calls after the Madison paper published an article about the Project. I finally called the police and was told to click the receiver twice very quickly, then say, "Officer, this is the call to trace for the police." That worked; even though it does nothing, it scared them off. I still do this to get rid of unwanted calls sometimes. Later, I served a two-year term representing on the National Board of the YWCA in New York City, representing student leadership.





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### “This is the Day” for another virtual performance!

Martin and the leadership team have picked out the next song for virtual recording “This is the Day” is an upbeat song for Easter and springtime. This expanded ministry is possible thanks to Martin and Simon’s tireless work, and by a Catalyst Grant from the Wisconsin Conference.

Please help us invite participation from more Gossellers, local congregations, and partners in New York & Germany.

**Packers Fans!** Our soloist KC has updated his Packer’s playoff anthem, [“The Glory Has Returned.”](#) Check it out on our Facebook page!

### Jan 9th - Discussion of Courage & Calling

During our regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Zoom fellowship, we broke into small groups to discuss reactions to short readings from *The Impossible Will Take a Little While*, edited by Paul Loeb. For many, it was a first chance to learn about Rosa Park’s life *before* she sat down on the bus. Others found comfort in John Lewis’ story about holding up the walls of America’s house during storms. And in at least one group, persons shared reactions to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s criticism of White Moderates in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”



These conversations aren’t easy, but they *are* part of the Gossellers’ mission & UCC theology. Jesus teaches us to practice seeing and hearing one another as we are *right now*, in this time and place. Each and every one of us is a beloved child of God, beautifully imperfect (imperfectly beautiful?) and fully able to hear God’s call—if we are brave enough to pay attention!

### Devotional for Epiphany

In a world where so many things are pulling at our lives, we often forget the day of Epiphany. Hence, our devotion today is adapted from Steve Garnaas-Holmes’ “Unfolding Light” reflection:

*It has now been revealed  
that the Gentiles have become fellow heirs,  
members of the same body, and sharers in the  
promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

—Ephesians 3.5-6

Epiphany is the celebration of the revealing of God in Christ to all the world, represented by the magi from another country, practitioners of another religion. The “Gentiles” are those who are not like us, people of a different way.

(Let us pray)

God, help me to reveal your love, to all,  
to shine with your light, and light alone—  
especially to those who are not like me,  
to those of a different way.

Those I disagree with, those I abhor,  
are members of the same body.  
It is to them I am to reveal your love  
and shine with your light.

Shine in me,  
God of love and light,  
shine in me. (Amen)

Steve Garnaas-Holmes  
[Unfolding Light](#)





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

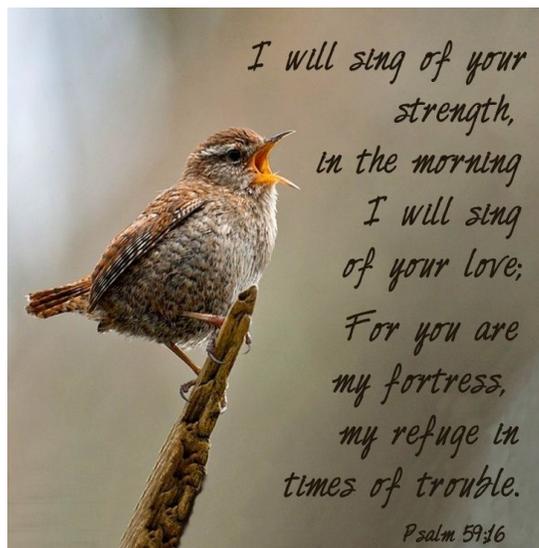
**Vision Statement:** A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Thru Spring 2021	<b>All gatherings online due to COVID-19 pandemic</b>		
<b>Jan. 9</b>	11am - 1pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday rehearsal/fellowship	 Watch for invite from <a href="mailto:wisconsingossellers@gmail.com">wisconsingossellers@gmail.com</a>  Check your spam/junk mail, just in case!!	Come learn about our 2nd virtual choir song: "This is the Day!"
<b>Feb. 13</b>	11am - 1pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday rehearsal/fellowship		Martin will provide notes about dynamics, breathing, etc.
<b>Feb. 27</b>	<b>TBD</b>		<b>LT members will be in Zoom to answer questions</b>
<b>Mar. 12</b>	11am - 1pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday rehearsal/fellowship		Last-minute Q & A about recording, Screencastify.
<b>Apr. 11</b>	11am - 1pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday rehearsal/fellowship		Easter is April 4th!

### Music-based assignment

Learn "This is the Day!"

If you need music, links to voice parts, or other support, *please ask!*



### Mission-based assignment

Invite 1 person from your local congregation or community to learn "This is the Day" with you. Then follow up & support them!