



## Pizza and Making Connections

*by Rev. Jane Anderson*

Wonderful connections and re-connections have been made around the Conference over this past month as together the wider church has hosted 22 Meet and Greets around the state from Eau Claire to Sheboygan, Osseo to Waukesha. What a joyful way to be church—eating pizza and sharing in conversation! About 350 people joined in this marvelous opportunity to get better acquainted with our new Associate Conference Ministers—Revs. Joanne Thomson, Rob MacDougall and Jane Anderson—and to hear the ways they are reaching out to resource our clergy, churches and associations. Our Conference Minister, Rev. Franz Rigert, was able to be present for many of these gatherings as well, giving you the opportunity to get better acquainted with him.



Participants and pizza at New Hope UCC in Jackson



Rev. Jane Anderson and pastor Jim Hill at New Hope UCC in Jackson

At these get-togethers participants heard what's new in the Conference, and shared the hopes, dreams and concerns for our common life. Throughout these regional meetings we heard a genuine appreciation for the Conference reaching out to make connections with clergy and church members. We further heard that many people had felt a bit of a disconnect between the local church and wider church for some time. Gatherings such as these brought renewed hope that we can reestablish vital covenantal relationships.

We shared how committed we are as a conference to building structures and support to better resource one another in the local church. We are exploring this idea

with our clergy and our associational leaders. We will then begin to explore this objective with local church leaders and begin to identify structures that will help support one another in the local church.

Furthermore, we talked about the new ways we are establishing coaching relationships with our clergy and with our churches, who are seeking to make shifts in their ministry, enabling them to adapt better to being church in the present and poised for a future of continuing changing culture. You will hear more about this in the months to come from Rev. Tisha Brown who is heading up this endeavor with Franz.

We look forward to seeing you and working alongside you in ministry. Please know what a joy and privilege it is to serve you in the Conference. We look forward to many more opportunities to get better acquainted and do the ministry that God calls us to together.

Blessings,

Rev. Jane Anderson



Rev. Joanne Thomson  
and pastor Lex  
Liberatore at Orchard  
Ridge UCC in  
Madison

*The pizza for the meet and greet meetings was largely provided by the national UCC as a reward for having a 4-year average return rate of 80% or higher for annual Yearbook forms for local churches. Thanks, national! And thanks to all the congregations who return these forms: you are appreciated.*