



The Full Circle

June 10, 2009



As many of you know, in the last two weeks my husband and I moved his father up from Eugene, Oregon to a retirement place in Monroe. Tom's dad (and his mom, who passed away in 2006) moved into their house in 1959. Its walls contain more than drywall and paint: there are stories woven into its structure. There is also a lot of stuff: papers and books and odd photos with no clue as to who's pictured. (Don't we all have those?)

It's another season in life, when we move not because we want to, but because "it's time": time for someone else to fuss over the lawn, the erratic plumbing, the weird crack that has appeared in the downstairs wall.

This June, there may be new seasons cropping up in your life: children growing older, more sophisticated, moving on to new interests or new educational challenges; parents changing and needing something different from us than they did before; our own bodies changing, our work shifting, our interests moving to new places. These kinds of crops do not come with much of an instruction booklet. There are no extension classes on what kind of fertilizer works best for an interior "garden" turning 30 or 50 or 70. There are plenty of self-help books available, but sometimes they describe the author's experience way more effectively than they speak to yours. This is ground we get to till alone.

Well, not quite alone.

Each of us treads our own path, not quite like any other's...but God walks with us each step of the way, even if God must sometimes puzzle at what we choose to plant in ourselves, or how we choose to nourish ourselves. This may seem obvious, especially when things are relatively calm or we're handling things fairly well. But it is less obvious when our well-ordered lives are mown down with the unexpected, the unwelcome or the "where did THAT come from?!" phenomena. All this to say the very simple and the very important: we can't know what will come. For all our planning and all our hoping, surprise – welcome and not – will be ours. Fortunately for us, God's company is ours as well. It is good to know that we can (metaphorically) put out our hands, and know that God takes them and walks with us, into the surprises, the disappointments, the unexpected turns...and into the papers, the books and the photos of unnamed people.

Wishing you comfort and comforting along your own challenging furrows,

Pastor Jane



COMPUTER GLITCH HELP

Recently the church office has experienced several computer issues that have crippled communications with the church membership as a whole; eMinistry is asking for help to grow our pool of experts. If you have or you know someone who has technical/computer abilities, please contact either Matt Ringstad (671-9080), Rob Olason (647-1306), Brian Rapp (647-2165), or Vince Brown (656-5571) to discuss how you can help shape the future of eMinistry.

THIS SECTION HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR PRIVACY.

SEARCH AND CALL UPDATE

The Search and Call committee continues to fulfill the commission set by the congregation - to prayerfully discern and invite pastoral candidates who will fit the needs of our church. We have met with one candidate and watched that candidate preach at a neutral pulpit. And we have another with whom we are meeting in the middle of June. Three candidates with whom we wanted to speak recently accepted positions at other churches, churches which have been in the Search process for much longer than we have. While we are disappointed to "lose" these candidates, we are encouraged that the candidates we see as strong are also valued by other congregations: we have good taste. We continue to be grateful to the congregation for your prayerful support, and we continue to listen to God's voice, your concerns, and our best judgment as we follow this path.

Submitted by David Fayram

UCC GENERAL SYNOD TO MEET

The biennial meeting of the United Church of Christ will be held June 26-30 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. On the agenda are such items as the nomination of a new General Minister and President (Rev. Geoffrey Black, currently Conference Minister in the New York Conference); progress reports on previous General Synod resolutions; bylaws changes to reflect alternative paths to ordination; and other potential changes. You can follow proposed resolutions and discussions at the website, ucc.org. (As always, votes at General Synod do not dictate to UCC churches and members, but rather provoke the rest of us to study, consideration and, potentially, action.)

MJSC QUOTE OF THE MONTH

As it discerns what a Just Peace Church is:
"The voices of the children deprived of bread are the voice of God confronting the stewards for their unjust management."
from A Just Peace Church.

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

Fill the Sanctuary with life and color. We need people to provide flowers for worship services. The sign up calendar is on the office workroom door.

"LOVE HEALS"

As a "thank you" to First Congregational Church for the support of their family, Gwen Hunter and her children Aeden and Irene are offering to the church a portion of funds raised by a compilation of Tom Hunter songs (including "Coming Home"), newly released on CD called "Love Heals." (Gwen has asked that these profits go to sustain food programs which have been traditionally supported by the church.) To purchase a copy of this new CD, please see Sharry Nyberg.



Stephen Ministry

Whatever you did for the least of these... you did for me...

We have many opportunities to respond to Jesus' great love by showing that love to others. Stephen Ministry is one way our congregation shows that love to people who have needs for care.

To learn more, contact one of our Stephen Leaders: *Donna Romjue* (752-1747) *Libby Weiss* (756-2062) and *Pat Styer* (676-2585).

BOOK REVIEWS

These books are located on the Book Cart in the Library

Begbie, Jeremy S. Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music. Baker, 2007.
A profoundly creative, wonderfully engaging reflection on the encounter of theology and music. Impressive for its thoughtfulness, theological depth, and balance. Offers a robust theology of creativity and worship. Begbie's book is as good a way as any to discover afresh how faith comes through hearing. Excerpted from *Christianity Today*, Oct. 16, 2008.

Main, Darren. Hearts and Minds: Talking to Christians About Homosexuality. Findhorn, 2008.
The author provides a sincere and wide-ranging book on Christian faith and homosexuality. He aspires to help others understand the convictions of conservative Christians who believe that homosexuality is condemned by Jesus. Although Main cannot exhibit the moral authority of John Shelby Spong or the learning of John Boswell, he writes with engaging clarity and accessibility. Excerpted from *Library Journal*, Oct. 1, 2008.

Piver, Susan, ed. Quiet Mind: A Beginner's Guide to Meditation. Shambhala, 2008.
This slim volume is a collective insight of six noted teachers of meditation in the Buddhist tradition. There is a remarkable unity in the simplicity and focus of these brief essays. A clear and brief introduction to meditation, with accompanying CD. Excerpted from *Library Journal*, Oct. 1, 2008.

Raymo, Chet. When God is Gone, Everything is Holy: The Making of a Religious Naturalist. Sorin, 2008.
Raymo is one of the most articulate and subtly elegant contemporary writers on science and spirit. He offers a new kind of spirituality in the light of empirical science. He writes candidly of his Catholic upbringing and his current agnosticism, poised in "the portal between knowledge and mystery, between the commonplace and the divine". Excerpted from *Library Journal*, Oct. 1, 2008.

Sanneh, Lamin O. Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity. Oxford, 2008.
Global sweep and academic depth. A masterful piece demonstrating the development of global Christianity. Sanneh shows missions as the complex story of missionaries and the national movements that missionaries set in motion, in all its warts and glory. Excerpted from *Christianity Today*, Oct. 16, 2008.



FROM THE LIBRARY



Library Orientation: Resources for the Study of the Bible

Are you interested in books *about* the Bible? How do you make sense of all the different books? What are the major themes? Why is John's Gospel different from the other three? What is the Lost Gospel of Q? How do you put it all together? These are all questions about understanding the nature of the Biblical literature.

We invite you to explore the Biblical literature available in your FCCB library. The Library Committee will provide a series of orientations that will highlight the resources available that offer an analytical approach to understanding the Bible. We will look at the "big picture" texts as well as texts that provide analysis of individual passages, including a method for Bible Study.

Sessions will be in the library. Since the library is small, each session will be limited to a maximum of six people. We will offer three sessions. They will be on **July 12, August 9th and September 13th at 11:30 a.m.** following church services.

Please sign up on the sign-up sheet posted on the Bulletin Board on Committees.

Robin & Neal

OFFICE NOTE

When special donations are collected please ask a staff member to secure the money in the safe. To safe guard the money please don't leave it on any staff member's desk.

STAFF SCHEDULES

SHARRY'S SCHEDULE: Sharry will be in and out of the office for the next few weeks preparing for Vacation Church School. Sharry will be out of the office the entire week of Vacation Church School, **June 22nd—26th.** Sharry will be back in the office on June 29th.

SAVAGE'S VACATION: Savage will be on vacation from **June 19th—28th.** He will be back in the office on Monday June 29th.

YOUTH COORDINATOR NEEDED

Do you like working with middle and high school youth? We currently have an opening for a youth coordinator beginning August 1. This person will plan and lead activities with both the middle and high school youth groups, as a part of supporting the youth as they explore their faith questions. They will also lead the youth on their annual summer mission trip and coordinate fund-raising efforts with the youth and their families for the trip. The job is salaried at 20 hours per week and is a one year commitment. A strong, supportive and fun staff along with a welcoming church community will help guide this experience. This position requires someone with skills in the areas of leadership, decision making, organization, and human relations, combined with a love for young people. If interested in finding out more about this position, please contact Sharry Nyberg at 734-3720 or sharry@fccb.net or Thirza Zagelow at 734-4977.

ONE BY ONE BY ONE...A FULL CIRCLE

“We are here to open a space that Love can enter and be more known, more apparent, more understood.”

This quote from “The Knowing Heart, A Sufi Path of Transformation,” expresses the nature of stewardship. Building on the work of past stewards, the Stewardship Board has chosen as a theme for 2009, “**One by One by One...A Full Circle**”.

We have chosen a circle to illustrate the nature and necessity of stewardship to sustain our community through active compassion for self and for others. We will illustrate this activity by suspending a large hoop from the ceiling in the Fellowship Hall which will be used to memorialize, with individual markers, active compassion throughout the year.

We plan to recognize some of the events that have already occurred this year by making appropriate markers. Staff, church boards, clubs, circles and individual congregants are invited to add markers on the hoop to reflect activities and events throughout the year which are done as the body of Christ. One by one by one we will place them on the hoop and come to see who we are.

In addition, we will do some familiar and not so familiar activities to continue to re-define stewardship as encompassing and inclusive as we build towards the fall pledge campaign. We plan to do a “Profiles and Pictures” reader board in the Narthex and a “scrap” book of stewardship for 2009.

By creating a visual display of the ministry of the church throughout the year, we hope members will celebrate the fruit of the current year and anticipate and seed the next, and accept the implication of One by One by One... A Full Circle.

The Board of Stewardship 2009

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CENTERING PRAYER: Please join us the **2nd and 4th Thursdays** of each month at **7 p.m.** in the Sanctuary for centering prayer.



SUMMER LABYRINTH WALKS: The labyrinth is an ancient spiritual tool, a walking meditation, a path of prayer. People come to the labyrinth to heal, to be spiritually enriched, to seek peace or insight. The labyrinth can be a transformational tool, opening us to change in our spirit, in our minds, in our bodies. You are invited to join Brenda Nicholson, Sharry Nyberg and Bobbi Virta, Certified Labyrinth Facilitators, the first Thursday of each month from **6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** to walk the labyrinth. Upcoming walks and themes include: **July 2** “Honoring the Fire Within,” **August 6** “A Pleasing Relationship,” and **September 3** “Nourished by Prayer.” Please join us, the labyrinth is waiting for you. For more information contact Sharry Nyberg at 734-3720.

ENDOWMENT Q & A

QUESTION: *My wife and I have land that we no longer wish to own. It has appreciated in value. What is the benefit to us of giving that land to the church?*

ANSWER: Generally, assets that have appreciated may be given to the church with the owner not liable for taxes on the appreciation. Please check with your attorney.

QUESTION: *I would like to give the church my house at such a time as I no longer want to own it. What would happen to my house when the church owns it?*

ANSWER: The Trustees would consult with you regarding various options to see what would be most suitable to you and the church.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



IT'S NOT TOO LATE to volunteer for **Vacation Church School 2009 "Rooted in Faith"** June 22-26. Help is needed: preparing and painting murals the week before, setting up tents June 21, assisting in the kitchen or with crafts the week of VCS and taking down tents at the conclusion of our week. To volunteer call Sharry Nyberg 734-3720.

SUMMER CHURCH SCHOOL: began **Sunday, June 7** for children in Pre School through Fifth grade. The Pre School class will meet in Room 24 with Lisa Vaughn, Kindergarten – Second grade in Room 34 with Emily Marsh and Third –Fifth grade in Room 11 with Irene Willis. Middle School youth are invited to join their families in worship for the summer. Please greet and welcome our summer church school teachers when you see them.

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS are needed to assist Erin Schick (our Nursery Attendant) in the Nursery/ Toddler room on Sunday mornings during the summer. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with the babies and toddlers in our congregation. Please sign up for a Sunday outside Room 33.

CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED: The Board of Christian Education is currently recruiting teachers for the 2009-10 church school year. Opportunities are available to teach and share your gifts with the children and youth of our congregation as a church school team teacher: in the **Pre School class, Second/Third grade class, or Fourth/Fifth grade class.** The board invites you to explore the ways you are called be involved in the exciting year to come. For more information contact Sharry Nyberg 734-3720.



YOUTH NEWS

HIGH SCHOOL



Sunday, June 14: 4 p.m.-6 p.m.— Bowling
We will meet at 21st Century Bowling for our annual bowl-off! Bring \$5 for shoes and lanes (if you are unable to provide \$5, we will cover you)

Sunday, June 21: 6 p.m.-8 p.m.—"School's Out For Summer Picnic" at Marine Park
Yea, school's out and it is the First Official day of Summer! Come on down to Marine Park. Feel free to bring snacks, frisbees and friends.

Sunday, June 28: 6 p.m.-8 p.m.—Art Project
Have you seen that new circle thing hanging from the ceiling of the social hall? Do you want to know what it is all about? Even if you haven't seen it, come to youth group tonight and we will put together an art project for the whole congregation!

Wednesday, July 1: 3 p.m.-7 p.m.—Picnic Party at the Jensen Farm!
Mark your calendars. Details coming soon!

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sunday, June 14: 4 p.m.-6 p.m.—Bowling
We will meet at 21st Century Bowling for a bowl-off! Bring \$5 for shoes and lanes (if you are unable to provide \$5, we will cover you)

Sunday, June 21: 4 p.m.-6 p.m.—"School's Out For Summer Picnic" at Marine Park
Yea, school's out and it is the First Official day of Summer! Come on down to Marine Park. Feel free to bring snacks, frisbees and friends.

Wednesday, July 1: 3 p.m.- 7 p.m.— Picnic Party at the Jensen Farm!
Mark your calendars. Details coming soon!



★ **2009 Graduates:** Is someone in your family graduating from a college or technical school this year? If so, please contact the church office with the name of your family member, school and degree earned so we recognize them in an upcoming Full Circle. ★



AROUND THE CHURCH

WE WANT YOUR QUILTS! We will be changing out the quilts in the Social Hall at the end of June. If you have a quilt you would like to share with the church for a few months please bring it by the office as soon as possible. Questions, contact Joan Roley at 734-8041.

HOW WOULD YOU INTRODUCE GOD? Pastor Jane asked this question in order to prompt members and friends of First Congregational to write their own "What I Believe" statements, just as she asked the Confirmands to do. At press time, she had received 11 such statements: some shorter, some longer, all heartfelt and carefully crafted. On Sunday June 14, these statements will be on display, and Pastor Jane's sermon will deal with a portion of what she believes...and why all these statements matter. Great thanks to all who took on the challenge of writing down something to reflect the What You Believe that you carry in your heart and in your soul. (As the Confirmands can tell you, it is not easy work!)

PLEASE NOTE: the outside door by the church office will be locked during the worship service on Sunday mornings to help guarantee the safety of our children and teachers in the classrooms. (The panic bars will still allow easy exiting.) We have experienced a visitor entering by that door who lingered by the classrooms in a way that sparked some concern. If you have any questions about this choice, please ask any member of Church Council, Pastor Jane, Pastor Savage or Sharry.

AROUND THE COMMUNITY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The Whatcom Interfaith Group (TWIG), a project of the Whatcom Peace & Justice Center and Buddhist Peace Fellowship, will host the Three Interfaith Amigos on **Wednesday, September 2nd.** This event is co-sponsored by Village Books. Rabbi Ted Falcon, Sheikh Jamal Rahman, and Pastor Don Mackenzie are the authors of a new book entitled, 'Getting to the Heart of Interfaith: The Eye-opening, Hope-filled Friendship of a Pastor, a Rabbi and a Sheikh.' They will speak at **7 p.m.** at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church. (Rev. Dr. Don Mackenzie is a UCC pastor, recently retired as Head of Staff from University UCC in Seattle.)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Here are a few events the church will be participating in over the summer. We hope to see you all there! Check upcoming Full Circles for detailed information on these events!

Church Camp Out at Larabee State Park on August 14!

Worship in the Park – at Cornwall Park – on August 23!

Bellingham CROP Walk is the afternoon of October 4!

CHURCH CALENDAR

June 15

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*

June 17

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*

June 18

7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

June 19

10:00 AM *In Stitches*
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*

June 21

10:00 AM *Worship/Summer Church School*
4:00 PM *Middle School YG at Marine Park*
6:00 PM *High School YG at Marine Park*

June 22

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *Church Council*

June 24

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*

June 25

1:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*
7:00 PM *Centering Prayer*

June 26

10:00 AM *In Stitches*
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*

June 28

10:00 AM *Worship/ Summer Church School*
6:00 PM *High School YG*

