

# The Full Circle

August 12, 2009



I was part of a church staff retreat years ago. It was billed as a time for building teamwork among disparate personalities with differing assignments, skills and approaches, but as often happens in times of sharing, it became much more.

We covered a lot of ground that day, but one thing has stuck in my mind for all these years since. It wasn't a cornerstone to the day, or a great tool to carry back into the office. It was something a co-worker said in response to a question. The question was along the lines of "what would you choose to do in that situation?" And my co-worker's answer was "I have no choice."

What? What do you mean, you have no choice? went my brain. (Fortunately, only in my brain and not out of my mouth.)

She continued. She had married, planned on being a stay-at-home mom...and then her world had collapsed, as her husband divorced her and she strove to provide for herself and her kids. She felt that she had zero options, only a long slog of unsatisfying work for not enough pay.

I don't remember what the facilitator said next, or where the conversation went, but I remember the desolation of those words, the aridness of "zero options" and "no choice." That stuck with me in the weeks and months ahead, as I tried to imagine what it would feel like to be convinced that I had no options.

I respect her pain and her difficulties – her emotions, her pain is hers to feel and not mine to comment on. But I disagree with her conclusion. We all have choices. All the time. No matter how dire the situation, no matter how bleak, we always have choices. I may be so emotionally swamped that I can't see them right now; I may be so tired that I haven't the strength to imagine any; but there are always choices. "Behold," writes the Deuteronomist, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life." (Deuteronomy 30:19) There are always choices. Maybe not terribly palatable or attractive. Maybe not what your heart desires. But there are always choices.

What I have found is that in those moments where there appear to be no choices, two things may be at work. Either my fear or my anxiety is so great, I cannot find those choices; or someone is working hard to prevent me from seeing other options. Candidates for office are particularly adept at the latter, drawing images with their speeches and comments that paint images so stark or so despairing or so wonderful, that useful discussion about different approaches or different perspectives is drowned. I can also stop up my own ears, with fear that I will never survive or succeed or accomplish what I need or want to do. I can become so anxious, so stirred up, that I cannot see past the stinging nettles of the present situation to what might be, to what I might do or do differently.

Either of those, fear or manipulation, can shut my brain down and can leave me closed off to what is possible.

The next time you are tempted to say that you have no choice – stop for a moment. What are you feeling? Are your emotions running high? Is someone, or are someones, pushing you to feel desperation or to see only one path forward? Know in those moments that something is pushing at you. Take a deep breath. Take a second deep breath. Then look more closely at what is set before you. I guarantee you, there are choices there.

--Pastor Jane



## STAFF & OFFICE SCHEDULES

**SHARRY** will be out of the office on vacation **August 12-17** and **August 20 - September 7th**.

**THE OFFICE** will be closed **August 21st**.



## NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

We are now sending the Full Circle by email. If you signed up to receive it by email and you aren't getting it or you would like to start receiving the Full Circle by email please contact our secretary, Kathryn, at [office@fccb.net](mailto:office@fccb.net).

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

This section has been sent via email to those that receive the newsletter by email.

If you would like to receive the Full Circle by email please contact the office at 734-3720 or at office@fccb.net and let us know!

### SEARCH AND CALL UPDATE

Sometimes, just when the road seems longest, an intersection pops into view. The intersection for Search and Call was the decision to reopen the profile process and continue looking at new applicants. And from that intersection, we have a rewarding amount of traffic. We have received over 25 new profiles, and several of those stand out as possibilities for our church. On July 28 we made the first phone call to a pastor with great preaching skills. We will be making several more calls over the next few weeks.

One pastor had been approached by 5 other churches. After reading our Church Profile and learning we wanted to talk with him, he decided to wait for our conversation before making any big decisions. Pastors are attracted to this church.

When we began the search process last October, we had several steps to take before we began making phone calls. Those steps are behind us, and the process is moving along nicely. We know the traits we want to find in reading profiles, and we are making phone calls as soon as we find someone interesting. We also expect to invite pastors to preach at neutral pulpits soon. In a sense, we are far ahead of where we were last winter. Our enthusiasm runs high, and we continue to hear a Still Speaking Voice assuring us that we will find the one for our church.

Our weekly meetings continue, and as we need to, we will meet more frequently. As a prayer Cheryll introduced us to says, "Our spirit is light; our hope is strong; and our faith is renewed every day."

### FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**DAYTIME BOOK CLUB:** Do you enjoy reading? Why not plan to join the daytime book club which meets the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireplace Room (September – May) for conversation and refreshments, followed by a discussion of the book for the month. The book we will be discussing at our **next meeting on September 4** will be "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter & Sweet" by Jamie Ford.

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

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY** is taking a break and on hiatus as we enjoy the warm days of summer. We will gather once again beginning **September 9th**.

**CREATIVE CONNECTIONS** will be taking a break and not meet in August. Enjoy the wonderful weather and keep working on those projects!



### Stephen Ministry

"I'm feeling confused, lonely, and often very vulnerable - who could I talk with that would really listen to me while I try to sort out the problems and stress in my life." Well, there are Stephen Ministers right here in our congregation who are listening with others, and one of them can listen to you.

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

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

July 27, 2009

Affirmed action to pay Pastor Jane's health and dental insurance for one quarter beyond her service to us as lead pastor.

**MSP** to accept Personnel Committee recommendation to hire Angela Pahlow as Youth Coordinator beginning September 1, 2009.

Search and Call Committee received 14 Ministerial Profiles and scheduled telephone interviews with four candidates.

Plans to retire building debt include a board displayed in the narthex with cards of amounts ranging from \$25 - \$1,000 for people to take, sign, and place in small wooden church. Total of the cards = \$25,000 or more. All-church potluck on September 13 to celebrate conclusion of capital campaigns and debt retirement.

Committee appointed to clarify job description of Church Treasurer; Council will actively seek a person to fill that volunteer role essential for our financial well-being.

Pastoral Relations Committee working hard to define their responsibilities as a feedback conduit between pastors and congregation; raise congregation's awareness of the Committee and its function.

### Financial Report June 30, 2009:

Income YTD	\$257,263.02
Expenses YTD	<u>\$247,489.02</u>
Difference	\$ 9,774.00

### SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 13

Join with others as we celebrate the completion of the nine-year, 3.2 million dollar loan to build a new Sanctuary and renovate the church facility.

One by one, together we have created a tremendous gift for this congregation and the larger community. There will be a potluck at **5:30 p.m.** and a special worship service and program to follow in the Sanctuary. Child care will be provided for young children and babies.

### A NOTE FROM THE ACCOUNTANT

Giving statements were sent out last week. Please take the time to review them for accuracy. It's much easier to correct errors as soon as they happen rather than at the end of the year during tax time. I am in the office on Mondays and Tuesdays or leave a message on ext. 4. Be sure to include your envelope # with your message. Thank you. Denise Hoffman.

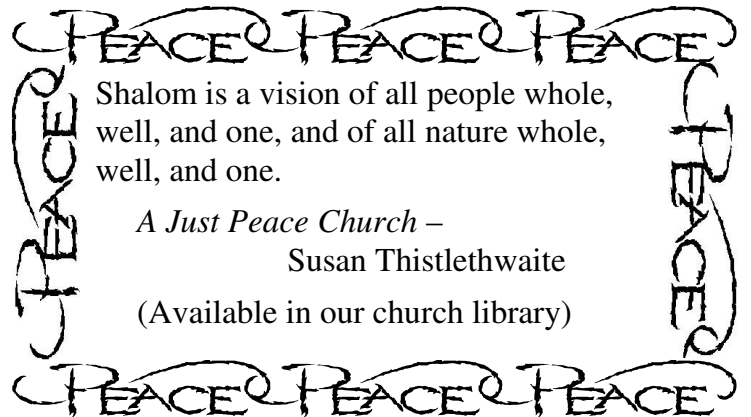
### TRUSTEES MAKE APPEAL FOR TREASURER

The church has an urgent need for a Treasurer. Max Legg will soon be retiring from this post. The volunteer position will require a person interested in and familiar with bookkeeping and accounting practices to oversee the financial affairs of the congregation. Please help us to meet our duty to be fiscally responsible, satisfy State rules of incorporation, and meet a requirement of the church constitution. Please contact the church office if you have questions at office@fccb.net.

### DONATION OPPORTUNITY:

#### Flat Panel LCD Monitors

Have you recently replaced your computer system and are wondering what to do with that extra flat panel LCD monitor? We have the perfect answer...put it to work for the church. The church office is in need of three (3) LCD monitors to replace our aging CRT monitors currently used by our staff. Please contact the church office if you are able to help.



**REMINDER:** If the Stuff in your life is too plentiful, too attached to you, or otherwise being a pain rather than a pleasure, please come join us in **Room 11** on **August 19 at 7 PM**. We're talking about why belongings can get so "sticky" and how we can invite them to move on, or how we can make peace with them. Come, share your own experience, your stories or struggles, gain support and a few tools....and come meet our warthog mascot!

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** It's good for all of us to remember: some among us are very private and choose not to share with the congregation when we are ill or in grief or otherwise burdened. If you know someone who is sick or grieving or otherwise needs a friendly greeting, please let the pastors know. (It is good to hear such news many times rather than not at all.) But please understand if that person chooses to keep their concern or illness private. You can still include them in your prayers: widen your words to encompass the concerns you do not know, or the details you only suspect, and trust that the Holy Spirit will, as Paul wrote, "intercede with sighs too deep for words."  
--Pastor Jane

**LIBRARY ORIENTATION:** We invite you to explore the Biblical literature available in your FCCB library. **September 13th at 11:30 a.m.** is the last in a series of orientations, provided by the Library Committee, that highlight the resources available that offer an analytical approach to understanding the Bible.

**NOTE:** Communion will be celebrated on **August 30** rather than September 6, as we dedicate our new communion ware.

### PRAYER SHAWLS

**REQUESTED:** Arts in Worship asks those who have prayer shawls to consider loaning them to the church for display in the sanctuary in September. Please bring them to the office before September 4, and please make sure to pin a tag with your name and phone number to your shawl.

## PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE QUESTION AND ANSWER

*What is the role of a Pastoral Relations Committee?*

As stated in our Church Constitution, the Pastoral Relations Committee assists the Church Council and the membership by having primary responsibility to:

- Nurture, support and assist our pastors as they deal with the daily challenges and stresses that arise as they direct and lead us into a deeper, broader and improved understanding of God's wisdom, justice, and love; and
- To address and resolve the concerns and conflicts that impact the ability of the pastors to perform the critical missions of the church.

*Have we always had a Pastoral Relations Committee?*

No, we haven't always had a Pastoral Relations Committee. Most UCC churches have Pastoral Relations Committees and the congregation approved the addition of the committee as we moved into the Search and Call process.

*What does a Pastoral Relations Committee do?*

The Pastoral Relations Committee supports and maintains an open relationship between the ordained clergy and members of the congregation. It helps the pastor and members of the congregation share ideas, hopes, dreams and concerns. It gives a framework for dealing with conflict creatively. Pastoral Relations Committee members meet with individual pastors on an every other month basis to review and discuss how the pastor sees the daily challenges of their position, share feedback from the congregation, address queries from the pastor and address issues as they arise.

*Who is on the Pastoral Relations Committee?*

Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee are Sharon Camblin, Chair (Past Moderator), Pete Rittmueller, Moderator, Randy Flowers, Congregational representative, Brian Rapp, Pastoral Representative and Carol Lamb, Pastoral Representative.

*How do I share feedback or a concern?*

Members are open to talking in person, by phone or email. They are very interested in listening!

Optimally, members or friends of the congregation would share feedback directly with the pastors. If they are not willing or able to do so, members or friends would share the feedback with a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). The PRC member brings the feedback to the PRC, including the name of the person. The Committee would communicate the feedback or the concern to the pastor; together they would address the concern, or celebrate the positive feedback. If desired by the congregation, the Committee would respond to the person who shared their reflection.

If the Pastoral Relations Committee or the pastor continues to receive reflections echoing the same concern, the Pastoral Relations Committee will work with the pastor to develop a plan to address the concerns with support for the congregation and the pastor.

If and when the concern remains unresolved, the Pastoral Relations Committee will report to the Church Council on the issue and the process to resolve the issue.

*This sounds like we are doing things differently. Why are we making these changes?*

In Council deliberations over the past two months, we have encountered two problems:

One, anonymous person(s) were raising concerns. This meant the Council was left with knowledge that a person or persons were dissatisfied with pastoral performance, but that the Council had too little information to proceed in addressing those concerns. If we don't know who you are, we can't ask you to clarify what you mean or what you need. Two, the Council struggled with how to address these concerns and realized that even we, as experienced as we are in governance, overlooked the Pastoral Relations Committee as a tool that could help us. If we were missing the opportunity of working with the Pastoral Relations Committee, then it was pretty likely others were as well.

Communication is a critical link within our church community. None of us is very good at addressing complaints we don't hear or we don't understand. Hearing no positive feedback can leave us with a skewed view of our performance, whatever our role. In order to listen well and then move forward in better ways, we all need to express ourselves clearly and honestly and move into true dialogue, so that our journey together can be that much richer. Such direct communication can feel uncomfortable; in the past, for many of us it has not always felt safe. But as a covenanted community, we need to communicate with one another. How else shall we be able to share what the still-speaking God is whispering within us? How else shall we weigh our best path for moving forward?

### Contact information for the Pastoral Relations Committee

	Phone	Email
Sharon Camblin	Hm. 715-0933 Cell 220-3415	<a href="mailto:camblins@comcast.net">camblins@comcast.net</a>
Randy Flowers	Hm. 354-5223	<a href="mailto:rskflowers@comcast.net">rskflowers@comcast.net</a>
Brian Rapp	Hm. 647-2165	<a href="mailto:britelrapp.1@comcast.net">britelrapp.1@comcast.net</a>
Carol Lamb	Hm. 733-8419	<a href="mailto:gslamb@cc.wvu.edu">gslamb@cc.wvu.edu</a>
Pete Rittmueller		<a href="mailto:peteritt@comcast.net">peteritt@comcast.net</a>

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

**CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED:** It takes a congregation to nurture our children and youth on their faith journey. During baptism we commit and promise to be grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles and brothers and sisters to the children of our church family. At this time the Board of Christian Education is currently in need of church school teachers. Opportunities are available to team teach in the **Second/Third grade class, or Fourth/Fifth grade class** for the 2009-2010 church school year. **This is approximately a one Sunday per month commitment.** Are you called to be a team teacher sharing your gifts, planting the seeds of faith? For more information contact Sharry Nyberg 734-3720.

**THANK YOU** to all who supported and prayed for our high school youth and chaperones during their recent mission trip to San Francisco and as they shared their stories during worship on Sunday, August 2.

## YOUTH NEWS

**NEW YOUTH COORDINATOR HIRED...** We welcome Angela Pahlow as our youth coordinator of the middle and high school youth groups. Angela was raised in the United Methodist Church and was very active in her church youth group and has participated in several mission trips. She is a graduate of Western Washington University with a BA in Spanish and a teaching certificate for grades K-12. She spent the last year in Spain teaching English and American culture to youth ages 11-16. In the fall Angela will be returning to Western to work on a Masters in Counseling. She has a passion for working with youth and a variety of experience. Angela brings many gifts to this position and is a welcome addition to our staff. She will be in the office beginning **September 8th**.

Mark your calendars and watch for details as we kick off youth group and welcome Angela on **Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>**.

## ATTENTION COLLEGE STUDENTS

As you prepare to head off to school please call the church 734-3720 or email Sharry at ([sharry@fccb.net](mailto:sharry@fccb.net)) and let us know your new address. This way we will be able to keep you connected to your church family while you are away. Remember to visit the church website [www.fccb.net](http://www.fccb.net) to keep updated on what is happening and to listen to recent sermons.

## AROUND THE CHURCH

**COMMUNITY MEAL:** Come help at the community meal at Assumption on **August 30<sup>th</sup>**. We have the 3 to 5 p.m. shift this month. You can sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex or with Donna Romjue after worship on Sundays.

**CALLING ALL KEYS!** If you have an outdoor or inside key for the church and are no longer using it please return it to the office. Thank you!

**WORSHIP IN THE PARK HELP:** Adult Ministries is seeking help/volunteers for Worship in the Park, **August 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at Cornwall Park. If you would like to help there are sign up sheets in the Narthex: cooking; tables; clean up; set-up; and/or games and activities.

**FAMILY CAMPOUT on Friday August 14<sup>th</sup>** at the group site at Larrabee State Park. Come for overnight, come for s'mores on Friday night. Coffee will be delivered Saturday morning! Sign up at church or just come—5 p.m. Friday to 11 a.m. Saturday. For more information contact Amelia Bacon at 319-6111.

**CALLING ALL FLUTE PLAYERS :** The Flute Choir will share their talent again in worship on **August 30<sup>th</sup>**. All levels of experience are welcome. We will rehearse on **Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>** and again on **Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>** before the worship service. If you are interested in participating, please contact Sharon Camblin (715-0933) or Jerry Couchman (366-5169). As soon as we have an approximate number of flute choir members, we will send out music.

**PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: Tues. Aug. 18 , 5:30 to 6:00 p.m.** in our Chapel. Led by the Rev. Dr. Linda Allen, member of our church and local musician who has been to Palestine. The vigil began in Dec. 2000 and will continue until violence ends and a peace agreement emerges. The prayer vigil is an opportunity for congregations to incorporate the welfare of the people of the Middle East into the heart of their church life.

## AROUND THE COMMUNITY

**GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL GLEANING!** The ancient biblical practice of gleaning, or harvesting the crops that a farmer leaves behind, is still relevant today! Here in Bellingham, Small Potatoes Gleaning Project, now in its ninth season, works with farmers and homeowners to salvage fresh fruits and veggies that would otherwise go to waste. Small Potatoes volunteers pick the surplus produce and deliver it to almost 30 Whatcom County food banks and feeding programs. You can get involved in multiple ways to help Small Potatoes reach its goal of rescuing and distributing 70,000 pounds of food to the hungry of Whatcom County this season. Homeowners with fruit trees or extra garden produce can arrange for Small Potatoes volunteers to harvest the surplus, and Small Potatoes is always looking for new volunteers to help glean. Homeowners with fruits and vegetables to donate and those wishing to volunteer their time should contact Dorothy Mitchell, Small Potatoes Gleaning Project VISTA, at 367-1655 or [doro-thym@bellinghamfoodbank.org](mailto:doro-thym@bellinghamfoodbank.org).

## ENDOWMENT Q & A

**QUESTION:** *I understand that there is an Endowment Fund that provides a \$2,500.00 scholarship to someone studying for a medical or health related vocation. I also understand that this fund will run out of money ultimately. Can I make a gift specifically to this fund?*

**ANSWER:** Yes you can. And yes the fund, at its present value, will ultimately be depleted by the annual awarding of the scholarships.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

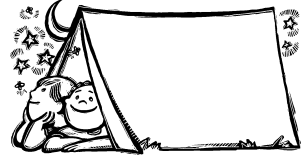
Here are a few events the church will be participating in over the summer. We hope to see you all there! Check upcoming Full Circles for detailed information on these events!

**Church Camp Out** at Larabee State Park on **August 14!**

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

**Celebration Potluck** on **September 13th** at 5:30 p.m.!

**Bellingham CROP Walk** is the afternoon of **October 4!**



### CHURCH CALENDAR

#### **August 17**

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

#### **August 18**

5:30 PM *Prayer Vigil for Middle East Peace*

#### **August 19**

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*  
7:00 PM *What to do about stuff?*

#### **August 20**

7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

#### **August 21—OFFICE CLSOED**

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

#### **August 23**

10:00 AM *Worship in the Park*

#### **August 24**

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

#### **August 25**

6:00 PM *Church School Teacher Orientation*

#### **August 26**

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*

#### **August 27**

1:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

#### **August 28**

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

#### **August 30**

10:00 AM *Worship/ Summer Church School*

*August*