



The Full Circle

October 14, 2009



This is a bit of housekeeping.

Some have asked: “So...Search & Call has found a candidate for Lead Pastor for us. What happens next?”

Here is the plan:

First, our Candidate, the Rev. Kent French, will be with us from Wednesday, October 21 through Sunday, October 25. During those first four days, he will be around and about here, meeting with different groups, answering different questions and learning about FCCB. (For dates and times when you can connect with him, please see page 3.)

Then, on Sunday, October 25, Kent will lead us in worship and preach. At the end of worship, he will leave the premises to go enjoy (or pretend to enjoy) a cup of coffee or tea while we discuss his candidacy. (Waiting can be nervous work!) Once the discussion appears complete, we will vote by paper ballot; the ballots will be gathered and counted; and Kent will be called to come back to the Sanctuary. (And if the ballots totaled equal yes, and he says yes, then we are going to celebrate!)

Now, for some differently-centered musing:

Although you may not have seen many signs or heard much discussion, there is a ballot measure this election that affects you. It is Referendum 71. A “yes” vote changes nothing: the domestic partnership protections that have been put in place remain in place. A “no” vote would overturn those protections.

You may read that last part and think: “But I’m not in a domestic partnership. How does that affect me?” It affects you in multiple ways. First, you know – whether you are aware of it or not – couples who choose not to marry because of complications involving estates, divorce settlements or child support agreements. Couples who choose not to marry because doing so means that one, or both, will receive reduced Social Security benefits. Couples who cannot marry for other reasons and yet still desire, as all couples do, to be able to visit one another in the hospital, to care for one another’s children, to be there in all ways possible for and with one another.

Second: any time a group – any group – decides that this one gets these rights or advantages, and this one doesn’t, that group is discriminating. The one we follow, Jesus, had a lot to say about justice, especially for those who lived at the margins and weren’t the ones at the table making the decisions. As Christians, we need to be concerned, and aware, when one group or another seeks to convince us that a group of folk don’t matter, or haven’t worth equal to another.

Please be sure to vote on November 3.

--Pastor Jane



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.

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!



Church Council Highlights September 28, 2009

Search and Call announced the candidacy of Rev. Kent French for Lead Pastor on Sunday, Sept. 27. Positive response from congregation. Rev. French's candidating sermon will be **Sunday, October 25**. There will be multiple opportunities to meet him in the days prior to the 25th. According to our Constitution, a simple majority vote is required for a Call.

MSP to accept Total Financial Package for Rev. Kent French's Terms of Call with the addition of \$500 to Professional Expenses. TFP=\$100,500 (total cost to church)

MSP to extend Rev. Savage Frieze's contract to open-ended.

September 13 dinner and celebration successful – **NO DEBT REMAINS**

Trustees will make recommendation for use of excess money collected for retiring the debt (app. \$14,000)

Job description for Treasurer completed and in review process.

2010 Budget Committee will meet again soon. Congregational budget update planned for Sunday, November 1.

Stewardship Campaign begins October 11 and concludes with Celebration Sunday on November 8.

Organization and Constitution Committee appointed.

Membership Board seeking ways to bring people together in small groups to build excitement and community. If you have ideas, please contact Bruce Camblin or any Board member.

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.

DAYTIME BOOK CLUB: The book we will be discussing at our **next meeting on November 3** will be *The Nine* by Jeffery Toobin. For more information contact Kathleen McGuinness 733-1251.



Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers are named after St. Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early Christian church. He was the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to care for the needs of people in the Christian community as recorded in Acts 6. Stephen Ministers are trained to provide Christian care giving.

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

INVITATION TO CONGREGATION

*You are cordially invited to attend worship
on **Sunday, October 25, 2009 at 10 a.m.**
for the candidating sermon of Rev. Kent French
Candidate for Lead Pastor
of First Congregational Church - Bellingham
Congregational meeting will be held immediately following worship to vote on
calling Rev. Kent French as Lead Pastor*

Kent's Upcoming Visit – Oct 21-25, 2009

The Search and Call committee has created a schedule of gatherings that will provide opportunities to meet, share food with, ask questions of, sing with, and start to get to know Kent and Robert. We hope you will partake in as many as you are able.

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, 10/21

9 am – Moderator/Vice Moderator Breakfast
11 am – Search and Call Blessing
12 pm - All Women's Luncheon
3 pm - Long-Term Members' Tea
5:30 pm - Prayer Shawl Ministry
7 pm - Stephen Ministry

Thursday, 10/22

11 am - Open Forum –Brown Bag Q&A
1 pm - Jesus Seminar
3 pm - Parish Visitors
7 pm - Open Forum – Q&A (childcare available)

Friday, 10/23

8:30 am –Men's Fellowship Breakfast
10 am – In Stitches
10:30 am - FCCB Staff Meeting
6 pm - Family Pizza and Game Night with Singing

Saturday, 10/24

10 am - Council, Boards, Committees

Sunday, 10/25

10 am – Worship
11 am – Congregational Meeting: Vote
11:30 am – Reception

The Search and Call Process

Throughout this year-long process of discernment, the Search and Call Committee has attempted to keep you informed of our process and progress with Full Circle articles and frequent announcements on Sunday mornings. Some of you may still have questions as to how we ended up with this ONE person! Here's a bit of an explanation:

Using our church's profile, our church's visioning process and our conversations with staff and lay leadership as a guide, we combed through over one hundred ministerial profiles and visited with many candidates. As you would expect following months of this, certain particulars surfaced to guide us further, and our process became cleaner and more stream-lined.

When a profile resonated with us, we talked at length as to why and decided whether to conduct a phone interview. We used SKYPE to facilitate our phone interviews asking candidates about 15 questions covering mission, worship, christian education, administration, etc . A few sample questions are below – perhaps try answering some yourself:

- Tell us what theologians, philosophers, thinkers, writers have most helped to shape your faith and ministry.
- Tell us about your experience with two different pastoral visits – one that left you feeling satisfied and why, and one that left you feeling dissatisfied and why.
- Regarding worship, how do you balance creativity with tradition?
- Tell us about two risks you took in worship, one that worked and one that did not work so well.
- What are you passionately curious about?
- How do you live out the prophetic role of a pastor in your ministry?

If we remained excited post-interview, we asked the candidate to make sermons available to us and contacted their phone references. Often, there were follow up emails, and occasionally even an extra phone conversation with the entire committee. If all these pieces still spelled F-I-T for FCCB, then we took the big step of scheduling a visit to a neutral pulpit. The visit preceding the actual neutral pulpit was filled with dinners, chats, Q&A's, and opportunities to seek information about any pieces of concern that anyone might be having.

This all might sound a bit formulaic. Some of it was. But when a candidate sparked our emotions, tweaked our souls, opened our hearts or brought us to wonder, we slowed down to talk, listen, pray and discern with even greater carefulness. We wanted to be unanimously beside ourselves about the candidate to whom we would extend a call. This was the case with Rev. Kent French. And are we ever grateful to God!!

For your further understanding, we are putting a display on the bulletin board in the narthex with more detailed information. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact a Search and Call Committee member.

Discovery, Esther, and Pilgrim Circles cordially invite all women of the church to meet and have lunch with Rev. Kent French on **Wednesday, October 21**, at noon in the Social Hall. A salad luncheon will be served. Please sign up in the Narthex if you plan to attend. This is a great opportunity to enjoy lunch together and get to know Rev. French, our candidate for Lead Pastor.

CLASSES STARTING IN THE FALL

LIVING THE QUESTIONS: Wondering how current Bible scholars and ministers are confronting ancient questions about faith, Jesus, truth and other mysteries? Join us for "Living the Questions," 20-minute DVD presentations, followed then by 40-minute discussions. Each presentation stands alone, so feel free to join us! We meet the **2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7 p.m.** in Room 11.

FAITH AND (CONTEMPORARY) ISSUES: We next meet on **October 20 at 7 p.m.** in room 11 to discuss how our faith influences our choices. We will begin by focusing on Luke 12:13-21. Please come join us for thoughtful and provocative conversation!

STUFF: We all have it. Some of us wonder what to do with it. Some of us harbor hopes of what our partners might do with theirs. Come join us for further conversation, strategy and laughter on **November 11 at 7 p.m.** in room 12/14 *(Please note: this is a schedule change.)*



The Board of Adult Ministries at First Congregational Church of Bellingham is sponsoring a series of hour programs on the topic of Homelessness in Whatcom County and in the state. A series of speakers from a variety of organizations will give presentations on this pervasive problem and answer questions from the audience. The Board would like to invite the wider community to join in the discussion of this important issue. The second program is listed below. There is no charge or donation for attending.

Sunday, November 15th in the FCCB Sanctuary at 11:20 a.m.

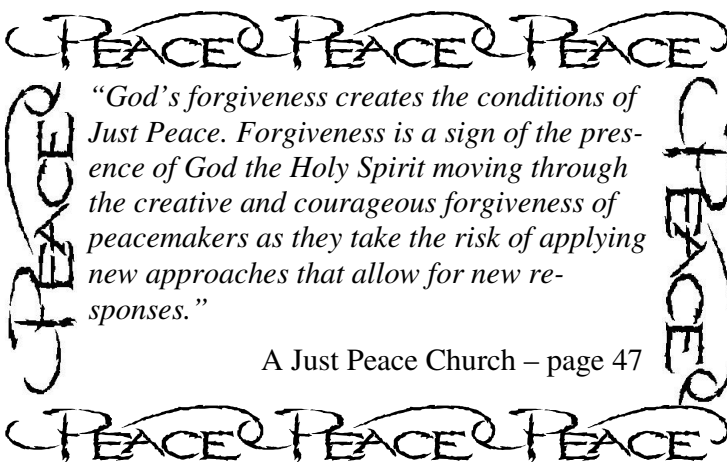
Speaker: Page Chance, Program Coordinator for LAW Advocates Homeless Disability Advocacy program. The mission of the program is to provide outreach, education, and access to disability benefits for community members who are entitled to and experiencing homelessness. The majority of individuals Page serves are chronically homeless and unable to work because of serious mental illness. In May 2009, Page was honored by the Whatcom County Bar Association for her "tireless work in helping the homeless and disabled members of our community to increase access to public entitlements, such as Medicaid." Page graduated from WWU and the University of San Diego paralegal program. She has worked as a paralegal in Bellingham since 1984, and has been employed with LAW Advocates since 2007.

If you would like to volunteer for Interfaith Coalition's severe weather shelters there are two training sessions - **November 12 at 7 p.m. and November 18 at 7:30 p.m.** Call Interfaith for more info, 734-3938.

INTERFAITH'S WINTER COAT DRIVE: Join us for Interfaith Coalition's annual winter coat drive. This successful program brings warm coats to people in need throughout the county. Please bring clean, good quality winter coats, hats, gloves and mittens to the worship services this month. Children's coats are especially needed. We will be collecting coats here October 4, 11 and 18. **Sunday, October 18 is the last Sunday to bring in items.** Many people appreciate this program because they don't have to spend their limited income on a coat or go without one through the winter. Thanks for sharing the warmth!


A NEW AUTHOR AMONG US!

Adult Ministries invites you to a short reception for FCCB member, Lisa Iversen, MSW, LCSW on **Sunday, October 18th** after worship, in the Mt. Baker Room. Lisa will share information about her new publication, *Ancestral Blueprints: Revealing Invisible Truths in America's Soul*. Refreshments will be served and you will have an opportunity to hear Lisa's story and look at her book.



A Just Peace Church – page 47

WANTED: Ushers and Greeters
Something new!



Sign up for ushering and greeting in the coming months by going to the sign up sheet in the Sarthex. Diaconate members will send reminders and instructions to those who request them. Look for our display!

Ushers & Greeters

This year the Board of Stewardship has continued to work at enlarging the recognized scope of stewardship to include committed effort as well as committed funding. Everyday activity done in service and for the love of others is also stewardship. Committed effort in service, one by one by one, compounds to great effect and this is the vital one circle, the core strength of our church community.

Commitment to service is one side of this coin. It is now October and our focus flips. We have an obligation to ask for money and shirk not. So, please give generously when you fill out your pledge card for 2010! Find just a few more dollars and add them to your pledge! Our life in community, its stability and the potential of what it might become, depends on it.

Thank you. We have enjoyed this past year now begin our look forward to the next!

Board of Stewardship, 2009

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

2009-10 CHURCH SCHOOL: On Sunday, September 13 our fall church school schedule began for children in Pre School through Middle School. Children report to church school following "Time with Children." Please follow the footsteps on the walls downstairs to find your child's classroom. To insure we have correct information for all children and youth please fill out a 2009-10 registration form for your child(ren) available in your child's classroom or on the table between Rooms 32 & 34.

CHURCH SCHOOL MISSION PROJECT: The Boards of Christian Education and Mission Justice Social Concerns invite you to join the church school community by participating in this year's mission project "Pennies for Peace." This service learning program is designed to broaden cultural horizons while teaching the capacity of mission, stewardship and philanthropy. Pennies collected will go to help purchase supplies and support schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A large jar will be in the Narthex as well as milk jugs in the church school classrooms to collect pennies during the church school year. We can make the world a more peaceful place one penny at a time. Watch for more information about this project in upcoming Full Circles.

CHILDREN'S SABBATH: Please plan to join us on **Sunday, October 18** for worship as the Church School community leads worship. All grades will be participating in the service. Special music will be provided by the Kids Choir and Male Chorus. Come support our amazing children and youth as they share their gifts!

YOUTH NEWS

Sunday, 10/18/2009

Middle School: We are going bowling at 20th Century Bowling Alley, 1411 N. State Street! Meet at the bowling alley at 4:30 p.m. Please bring \$2 for shoe rental. Lane rental is covered.

High School: Eat and be merry at our progressive dinner! Each course is at a different house, just to mix it up! Please meet at the church at 6:12 p.m. to carpool to the houses.

Sunday, 10/25/2009

Middle School and High School Together! Get into your Halloween spirit and join us as we trick-or-treat for the food bank in the neighborhood by our church. Please dress warmly and bring a bag if you have one. Meet at the church at 6:30 p.m.

DIACONATE NEWS

Want to explore serving on Diaconate? We have several vacancies and invite you to join us to see if this is a way you would like to participate in the work of the church.

What do we do? Diaconate members contribute to a "Ministry of Welcome" by arranging for ushers and greeters; they assist in preparing and presiding at communion; and they cooperate with our pastors in organizing special services that minister to the spiritual interests of the church.

Please contact Julia Ritchie (676-0791) or Barbara Mathers-Schmidt (319-8184) to learn more about Diaconate and consider volunteering.

IN SUPPORT OF REFERENDUM 71

The Mission Justice and Social Concerns Board endorses the approval of Referendum 71. A "yes" vote on Referendum 71 ratifies the Washington State Legislature's recent passage of Senate Bill 5688 which grants the same rights, responsibilities and obligations that legally married spouses enjoy, to state-registered and senior-aged domestic partners.

Our Church has considered the issue of equal rights for over a decade, resulting in our ONA Resolution in 1999, and our amendment to the resolution in 2008. On November 3, 2009 voters in Washington State will cast ballots on Referendum 71, which asks voters to approve or disapprove the 2008 legislature's bill noted above. The Mission Justice and Social Concerns Board encourages your support of this referendum as a reflection of the work we have engaged in as a community concerned with equal rights for all.

Join us **Sunday, October 18th** after worship for a discussion on Referendum 71.

AROUND THE CHURCH

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Sunday, November 1st after worship. We will be looking at the Budget for 2010 as well as getting an update on the 2009 budget.

PLEDGE ENVELOPE NOTE: As the Fall Pledge Campaign begins, you will have the opportunity to check on your pledge card whether you would like to receive offering envelopes. These envelopes can function as a reminder to pay your pledge; they can ensure we have your correct giving number; but they also mean an expense for the church. Please mark clearly on your card whether you would like giving envelopes. Thank you!

WE WANT YOUR QUILTS! We'll be changing the quilts hanging in the Social Hall on November 1st. If you have a quilt you would like to share for the next 3 to 4 months drop them by the office before the 1st. Contact Joan Roley at 734-8041.

COMMUNITY MEAL: Come help at the community meal at Assumption on **October 25**. You can sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex or with Donna Romjue after worship on Sundays.

FLU SEASON COMING EARLY: From various reports, this year's flu season is starting early. Combined with fears about the H1N1 virus, it prompts us all to remember to take precautions: get a flu shot; wash your hands often and carefully; stay home if you're feeling sick. (For further information about immunizations, please see the poster on the Parish Nurse bulletin board in the Narthex.) As we gather in community to worship, sing, pray and study, let's work to prevent adding "share germs" to the list of what we share together!

AROUND THE COMMUNITY

PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE in the Middle East: Sunday, October 18 at 5:30 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church, 910 14th Street.

A CONVERSATION CAFÉ: MJSC invites you to "*Building Interfaith Relationships: Breaking the Ice*" a Conversation Café intended to build bridges of goodwill through dialogue on **Wednesday, November 4 at 7 p.m.** here at FCCB. It is hosted by The Whatcom Interfaith Group (TWIG), a project of the Whatcom Peace & Justice Center and Buddhist Peace Fellowship. It is the mission of TWIG to affirm commonalities among religions and to create a safe environment in which to explore and appreciate differences. All who come in the spirit of goodwill are welcome. For more information contact: 360-734-0217 or WhatcomPJC@fidalgo.net.

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CHURCH CALENDAR

October 19

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

October 20

7:00 PM Faith & Contemporary Issues

October 21

12:00 PM Women's Luncheon
3:00 PM Long Term Members Tea (offsite)
5:00 PM Exercise Group
5:00 PM Prayer Shawl
7:00 PM Stephen Ministers

October 22

11:00 AM Open Forum- Brown Bag Lunch
1:00 PM Jesus Seminar
3:00 PM Parish Visitors
7:00 PM Open Forum—Q&A

October 23

8:30 AM Men's Breakfast (offsite)
10:00 AM In Stitches
5:00 PM Exercise Group
6:00 PM Family Pizza & Game Night

October 24

10:00 AM Council, Boards & Committees with Kent

October 25

10:00 AM Worship/Church School
11:00 AM Congregational Meeting
11:30 AM Reception

October 26

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

October 27

7:00 PM Living the Questions

October 28

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

October 30

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

November 1

10:00 AM Worship/Church School Gathers
11:00 AM Congregational Meeting—Budget update

