



The Full Circle

November 11, 2009



Next Steps:

“We’ve called Kent French to be our new lead pastor: now what happens?”

Kent and Robert are back on the east coast, beginning to pack and also saying good-bye to family and friends. Kent is scheduled to begin work here on January 18. I will end my work with you on January 10. We’ll celebrate with a great party after worship, and then I will be gone, so you can bond more fully and completely with Kent.

The Conference takes this transition very seriously, as do I and other clergy. I am not allowed contact with you (outside of receiving the newsletter) for one full year after Kent begins. This gives Kent the opportunity to really get to know who you are and what you’re dreaming, without any interference from me about how I think about you all or how I perceive your future. Having once been a new-to-a-church pastor, I appreciate how important that is, that my predecessor got out of the way, so the new could grow and flourish. So even though I will miss you, and will wonder what you’re up to, for one whole year you won’t hear from me. (But don’t ever think that that means you’re not still in my heart.)

“Can we contact Kent?”

Kent is eager to be here and be a part of us. He will be in touch with us by newsletter articles and maybe even a blog on our website. But he is not yet on staff or on payroll. It isn’t fair for us to ask him to begin work before he’s really here. So, please hold your questions or ideas, or share them with Savage or the Search and Call Committee.

Beating Swords:

There was a brief news story this past week, about a new US Navy warship arriving in New York City. Named for that city, it contains metal taken from the wreckage of the World Trade Center. Family members of those who died September 11, 2001 called it “a way to honor [the emergency workers and others.]” And that’s true. It is a way to honor someone, to take something wrecked or ruined and give it new life, a new use. But the use that was chosen was to make another weapon. To, essentially, answer violence with violence.

Now, I did not lose a family member on September 11. Those weren’t my friends’ names that have been read aloud at memorial services or services of remembrance. But if I had; if those had been my friends’ names; then I like to think that this is one memorial that would sadden me, rather than comfort me. We follow a man who taught that we are not to answer violence with violence, whether that violence is aimed at me as an individual, or at my family, or my community. We are to turn the other cheek; to walk the extra mile; to use our creative ingenuity to answer violence with non-violence. (Matthew 5:39-42) It doesn’t mean we don’t pursue justice. It does mean we find paths to justice that do not involve weapons.

As you think about Veterans’ Day – about Armistice Day, when the First World War ended with silent reflection at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month – think about how you might begin, or continue, the work of answering violence with creativity and imagination; with respect for the other; with an insistence on justice that doesn’t rely or fall back on attack or oppression. We are a resurrection people. Surely we can find ways to new life rather than sticking with the old roads of destruction.

--Pastor Jane

A BIG THANK-YOU FROM SEARCH AND CALL

We are so deeply grateful for all the support and effort that so many of you contributed in preparation for and during the week of Kent and Robert’s visit.

We leaned on the guidance and goodness of Pastors Jane and Savage throughout this process, but especially so during the week preceding Kent’s candidating sermon. We know this required added responsibilities in a time of high emotion for the church as well as for both of them, and we deeply appreciate the gracious and giving way they walked beside us through it all.

Our dear staff went above and beyond, thinking of extra ways they could help. Setting up for (and breaking down) so many gatherings, thinking through a myriad of details, and always having a smile made it all run so smoothly!

So many of you organized luncheons, made coffee, baked cookies, set out goodies, cleaned up afterward, or offered a hug, a warm word, or a “thanks so much.”

All of that and so much more made it a great week, made the wait and the work worth it, gave deeper meaning to “church family”, and taught us, once again, about faith and love.

You have blessed us over and over again!

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!



ENDOWMENT Q & A

QUESTION: *How much of a given Endowment Fund can be spent each year?*

ANSWER: The church has directed that 4% of the **interest** of a fund shall be dispersed each year. Earnings above 4% are reinvested.

(This is a correction from the last issue.)

FROM TRUSTEES

This is a reminder from the Board of Trustees regarding the placement of extra chairs in the Sanctuary. Our building occupancy permit from the city allows us to seat 445 in the Sanctuary. This means we are not allowed to add any chairs on the main floor or the balcony. We are however allowed to add extra seating in the Narthex as long as we allow clear access to the doors.

We have determined that we can safely add 42 chairs, 21 on each side, 3 rows of 7 on a side in the Narthex.

Allowing safe exit in case of an emergency is our top priority.

GET YOUR PHOTO TAKEN!

Help Kent get to know us! We will be gathering family photos together to help Kent get to know our congregation. Photos will be taken **November 15, 22 and 29th** after worship.

UPDATING THE CHURCH DIRECTORY

We are in the process of updating the church directory. If you have any changes to your contact information please email the church at office@fccb.net. We will have copies of the directory out in the Narthex to be corrected **November 15, 22 and 29**. Please look at them and make sure to mark any changes to your information. Thanks!

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CENTERING PRAYER: Due to the holidays Centering Prayer will next meet on **December 10 at 7 p.m.** in the Sanctuary.

DAYTIME BOOK CLUB: The book we will be discussing at our next meeting on **December 1** will be *Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Shaffer and Barrows. The group will gather at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Kathleen McGuinness for holiday treats and book discussion. For more information contact Kathleen McGuinness at 733-1251.

BROWN BAG GAME NIGHT: Join us for a night of fun and games on **Friday, November 20th from 6 to 9 p.m.** in the Social Hall. Bring dinner for you and your family and your favorite game. *(Due to the Thanksgiving holiday we are meeting one week earlier.)*



Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers are active among more than 100 Protestant denominations around the world, including more than 9,000 individual congregations in the United States alone. That's a great deal of "being there" and non-judgmental listening—and you can experience these too!

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

Pastoral Relations Committee Report

On November 1, the Pastoral Relations Committee reported to the congregation on the congregational feedback process that has been in place for Savage Frieze. The members of the Pastoral Relations Committee are:

Randy Flowers, Congregational representative
Brian Rapp, Pastor representative/advocate
Pete Ritmueller, Moderator
Savage Frieze, Pastor
Sharon Camblin, Past Moderator and Chair

A second Pastoral Relations Committee with Carol Lamb rather than Brian Rapp as pastoral representative provides support for Jane.

What does the Pastoral Relations Committee do?

The Pastoral Relations Committee is a standing committee that seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. It is our role 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. The process builds a framework in which conflict can be dealt with creatively to meet the goals of professional growth and well-being of the pastor and the promotion of mutual ministry between the pastor and the congregation.

(While most UCC churches have long-standing pastoral relations committees, ours was developed and approved as part of the preparation for the 2007 Search and Call process. We are indebted to those like Etta Kirk who worked so hard to have this process in place.)

Why did the Pastoral Relations Committee ask for feedback from the congregation?

The Church Leadership realized, subsequent to the July Church Council meeting, that we had stumbled in regards to feedback for/to Savage. Frankly, we had missed an opportunity to value and use our own Pastoral Relations Committee process. The Pastoral Relations Committee, including Savage, proposed to the Church Council that we encourage the larger congregation to play a role in the feedback process. The Church Council Leadership concurred and we came to you in August to elicit comments as part of trying to make feedback from the congregation transparent.

What has the Pastoral Relations Committee done?

Since August, the Pastoral Relations Committee has met with Savage on a regular basis to pray together, reflect on the feedback, set mutual expectations for change and growth, develop a plan of support, and review progress on both growth and support. We have received direct feedback in conversation and writing from over 25 people. Most was positive and some was critical. All of the feedback was constructive and was shared directly with Savage identifying the people involved. Savage has also received informal feedback from many more people.

We have reported on the process to the Church Council. By conference guidelines and our own constitutional guidelines, all of the Pastoral Relations Committee meetings **are confidential**, as are the Executive Session meetings of the Church Council where we made progress reports.

What happens next?

The Pastoral Relations Committee continues to meet with both pastors on a regular basis to provide a safe environment in which to address their concerns and those of the congregation. The Pastoral Relations Committee does not evaluate the pastors. Evaluation is a Church Council responsibility. We continue to talk with the pastors about congregational expectations, professional growth, and support.

This has been a learning experience for all of us and we deeply appreciate the congregational engagement in the process. If we are to be in covenant with our pastors, provide constructive and caring feedback, deal with conflict in a positive way, and nurture, support, and assist our pastors, **we all need to learn new skills.** This is just the beginning of a process that will be in place for the congregation and pastors, present and future. Pete Rittmueller will chair the Pastoral Relations Committee for Kent French and Savage Frieze after the Annual Meeting as immediate past moderator. Randy Flowers will continue his two-year term as the congregational representative. Rev. French will have the opportunity as he gets to know the congregation to select a pastoral representative.

A Thank You to Savage Frieze

We want to recognize that **throughout this process**, Savage has acted with the utmost grace and courage. This has been a challenging endeavor to be the first pastor to receive direct, public feedback from the congregation. We deeply appreciate his willingness to work alongside of us and be an active partner in the process.

If You Have Questions or Additional Feedback

Feedback is best shared directly with the pastors. The Pastoral Relations Committee is always happy to talk with members of the congregation concerning the process or to help with feedback to the pastors. If you have questions or feedback, please let one of us know.

Sharon Camblin 715-0933
Randy Flowers
Brian Rapp
Carol Lamb
Pete Rittmueller

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peteritt@comcast.net



ARE YOU WILLING TO ASSIST THE CHURCH'S FUNCTION/OPERATION?

The Nominating Committee is recruiting to fill upcoming Board vacancies for the coming year (up to 3 year terms.) There are 9 boards of members who give essential direction to the programs and operation of your church. Please give consideration in serving the ministry of Christ in this manner. Contact the church office, Etta Kirk, Bill Fox, Liz Herdman, Diana Harrison or Fred Wepprecht for details.



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: The next meeting is **November 17 at 7 p.m.** Come join us as we delve more deeply into Luke 12:13-21 and consider what message(s) for today this story, and the surrounding text, has to offer us.

HOMELESSNESS SERIES

The Board of Adult Ministries 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 requested 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 such benefits and experiencing homelessness. The majority of individuals Page serves are chronically homeless and unable to work because of serious mental illness.

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 Narthex. Diaconate members will send reminders and instructions to those who request them. Look for our display!

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.

HEALTH CARE: What The American System Is Not and What The Canadian System Is with Dr. Harry Herdman and Marguerite Shepherd in the Mt. Baker Room **November 22nd** after worship.

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR INTERFAITH COALITION

On Sunday, Nov. 22, members of our congregation will have the opportunity to demonstrate their support of the work we do through Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County. The offering will support the coalition’s programs that provide housing for homeless families and health care for all in need.

The coalition’s 45 member congregations, plus St. Joseph Hospital, pool financial and volunteer resources to support and maintain a network of nine homes and apartments that provide shelter, safety, hope and case-management support to homeless families in our community. In addition, contributions support the amazing work being done at the Interfaith Community Health Center, a clinic for low-income people of all ages. Your donation will help people of all ages and from all walks of life receive the medical, dental and behavioral-health care they need.

This is a challenging time we’re living through, and the needs of homeless families and people without health insurance are especially pronounced at this time of year, when temperatures are dropping and illnesses are widespread. As you might expect, we’re seeing more families and individuals in need of housing and health care.

We share with you these words of gratitude from two families who have benefited from your support:

“Staying at Interfaith Family Housing helped me out a lot. It gave a place for my children to be safe and warm, and it gives people the will to keep on going. From the bottom of our hearts, ‘Thank you.’”

“The Interfaith Community Health Center has been of so much help to me when I really needed it - not only with affordable rates, but also with a consistent underlying kindness which seems to be a quality in your staff. Without Interfaith I don’t know what I would do.”

Please give generously this month to support our neighbors in need through Interfaith Coalition’s programs.

INTERFAITH COALITION COAT DRIVE A WARM SUCCESS



This fall, we provided winter coats to a greater number of people in need in Whatcom County. Thank you for donating a winter coat and bringing some much needed warmth to others this fall. Coats were distributed by volunteers to our neighbors in need. We appreciate your commitment to this program and are humbled to experience the gratitude in words or expressions of those who benefit from your efforts.

Thank you and warm wishes this Thanksgiving season,
Laura DeRose Harker, Executive Director

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

PENNIES FOR PEACE: The church school community invites you to join them in collecting pennies for "Pennies for Peace" during the church school year. Money raised will be sent to help support building schools and purchasing school supplies in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The power of a penny in the United States has little worth, but in Pakistan and Afghanistan 1 penny buys a pencil, 2 pennies an eraser, 15 pennies a notebook, \$2 – \$3 provides a teachers salary for a day, \$20 a students' school supplies for one year, \$600 one teacher's annual salary, \$5000 support for an existing school for one year and \$50,000 one school building and support for up to five years. Together we can make a difference one penny at a time!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Advent Happenings December 6:

Christmas Presence (11:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

Following worship ALL are invited to join in the fun as we gather to celebrate the beginning of Advent sharing a simple meal, music and the creation of amazing gingerbread houses.

December 13:

Parents Afternoon Out (11:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

Parents are invited to take a break, have some lunch or do a little shopping while children (Pre School through Fifth Grade) enjoy a pizza lunch, story and craft with the Board of Christian Education. Nursery care will be provided for children 3 and under.

December 20: Christmas Pageant (during worship)

A creative retelling of the Christmas story. No prior rehearsal so there is a part for every child and adult that would like to participate. Watch for more details in the next Full Circle.

CHURCH TREASURER NEEDED

Please contact Pete Rittmueller or a member of Trustees.

YOUTH NEWS

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grade 6-8):

We've got some fun things happening in November!

November 13-14: We're having a lock-in! Bring your sleeping bag and be ready for games and fun all evening! 8:00 p.m. Friday evening through 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

November 22, 3:00 p.m.: We're going to Creativitea in Fairhaven. Whether you want to paint pottery or fuse glass, we'll have a great time! Bring \$10-15 to pay for your piece. Talk to Angela Pahlow (youth coordinator) if the money's a problem and she can get you covered.

HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12):

Here's what's going on in youth group for November!

November 15: Photo Scavenger Hunt! Come dressed comfortably and ready for a good time. (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

November 22: Pie Auction! It's our first fundraiser for the Tijuana mission trip and will be a great time! (11:15 a.m.)

November 29: Movie Night! We'll watch the documentary *Call Me Malcolm*, which is the story of a transsexual person's life experiences. We'll discuss it over popcorn. Hope to see you!

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!! We are going on a Midwinter Retreat to Pilgrim Firs!!!

Middle School: **January 8-10, 2010**

High School: **January 15-17, 2010**

More details soon to follow in the upcoming editions of The Full Circle!

PIE AUCTION! November 22, 11:15 a.m. The high school youth are hosting a pie auction to raise money for their summer mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico. It's the Sunday before Thanksgiving so you can support the youth AND get your holiday pie!

AROUND THE CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: As of **Monday, November 9th** we have received 134 pledges totaling \$273,580.

BOARD REPORTS for the Annual Report are due to Kathryn by **December 9th!**

REMEMBER! Wash your hands! (It's flu season.)

PLEDGE ENVELOPE NOTE: It's pledge card time. On your pledge card is the opportunity to say, "yes, I'd like pledge envelopes!" or "no, I don't use them." Pledge envelopes are an expense to the church. If they help you remember to contribute, then please mark "yes." If you don't use them, please be sure to mark "no" on your card...and know that your choice helps us to be a little more "green." Thank you!

AROUND THE COMMUNITY

GIVING THANKS: There will be a community-wide ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve worship service held at St. James Presbyterian (910 14th St.) on **Wednesday, November 25 at 7:30 p.m.** Come begin your time of gratitude and celebration with a moment of worship, scripture and song.

2ND ANNUAL MULTI-FAITH ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY MARKET: On **Sunday, November 22 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.** at Bloedel-Donovan Park, you have the opportunity to make a difference and do your holiday shopping all at the same time! Multiple worshipping communities are sponsoring an **Alternative Holiday Market**, featuring the options of buying fair trade goods or donating to local and global charities. Come, do a little shopping for a gift that gives more than once!

FROM THE LIBRARY—NEW BOOKS ON FAMILIES AND PARENTING

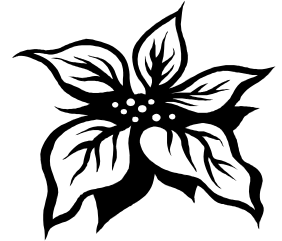
Popov, Linda Kavelin, Dan Popov and John Kavelin. The Family Virtues Guide: Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves. Plume, 1997.

Linda Kavelin Popov, a psychotherapist, has culled 52 universal virtues from the world's religions, one for each week of the year. The result is a workbook for the moral education of children that transcends differences of religion or culture. Each week, the book suggests, a family should gather to discuss a different virtue from the book, such as love, generosity, or patience, and the parents then emphasize the virtue for the following days, capitalizing on appropriate moments for education. (Excerpted from the book)

Thomas, Gary L. Sacred Parenting: How Raising Children Shapes our Souls. Zondervan, 2005.

The author believes parenting is spiritually formative. His fresh insights and conversational style make this ideal reading for parents interested in reflection, rather than a "how-to" manual. He mixes personal stories, Scripture, and excerpts of other parenting works, to make his points. Thomas invites parents to "purify ourselves, to use the process of raising kids to perfect holiness, and to do this consistently, every day, out of reverence for God." (Excerpted from a book review in *Christianity Today*, May 2004)

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM



I/We (name): _____ would like to purchase
(#) _____ poinsettia(s) at \$ 8.00 each to decorate the church for Advent.

_____ Purchased as a gift to the church

_____ Purchased in Memory of: _____

_____ Purchased in Recognition of: _____

If you wish to take your poinsettia, please do so after worship on Dec. 27.

Please return this order form with payment (cash or checks written to "FCCB: Poinsettias") by **Wednesday, December 2nd** to the Church Office or by mailing to: First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225.

CHURCH CALENDAR

November 16

9:00 AM Shalom Circle

4:00 PM Exercise Group

November 17

7:00 PM Faith & Contemporary Issues

November 18

4:00 PM Exercise Group

5:00 PM Prayer Shawl

7:00 PM Stephen Ministers

November 19

1:00 PM Jesus Seminar

7:00 PM Jesus Seminar

November 20

10:00 AM In Stitches

4:00 PM Exercise Group

6:00 PM Brown Bag Game Night

November 22

10:00 AM Worship/Church School

11:00 AM Pie Auction

11:00 AM Photos taken

3:00 PM Middle School YG @ Creativitea

November 23

9:00 AM Shalom Circle

4:00 PM Exercise Group

7:00 PM Church Council

November 24

7:00 PM Living the Questions

November 25

4:00 PM Exercise Group

November 26—OFFICE CLOSED: Thanksgiving

November 27—OFFICE CLSOED

November 29—1st Sunday in Advent

10:00 AM Worship/Church School Gathers

11:00 AM Advent Book Sale

6:30 PM High School YG—Movie Night

