



# The Full Circle

March 24, 2010



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Some of us may think of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday as grim reminders of the crucifixion and the dark night of the Last Supper, seeing them as unappealing opportunities to spend an hour or so in church contemplating something that, frankly, is a little too dreary for our spiritual enlightenment. I invite us to think a little differently.

On Sunday, we will enter Holy Week, the most sacred days of our Christian year. We begin with Palm Sunday, when with tambourines, finger cymbals, flutes, violins and palm fronds, we will commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We will start the service in the Narthex and Social Hall and exuberantly process in together, remembering the exultant reception of Jesus into the holy city.

The following Sunday we will celebrate Christ's resurrection, opening wide our church doors with a welcoming continental breakfast at 9 a.m. in our Social Hall and culminating in a joyful Easter service in the Sanctuary.

These are the celebratory bookends of Holy Week. But there is a solemn core to the week that is worth pondering, worth experiencing. In our church we will not observe this week as a series of grim, harrowing vigils, but as services that offer us a time to deepen into the memory of Jesus' last days on earth.

On Thursday night we will remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples with a tenebrae service. Tenebrae is Latin for shadows or darkness. We will share communion, just as the disciples did on that night which was full of shadows and betrayal. With Bible verses and song and special music from our Chancel Choir, we will gradually extinguish the candles and the light in the sanctuary, deepening into the shadows. It is a bittersweet service, one that enables us to imagine what it was like for this beloved group on their last night together with their spiritual leader.

On Good Friday, we will remember the seven last words Jesus spoke from the cross, with music, poetry and reflections from members of our congregation. This is the starkest day of the Christian year. It has been called Good throughout the centuries because Christians have recognized it as the day when God's redemptive love broke through in the world. We will observe it as a night of solidarity with Jesus, when he suffered the oppression of a mighty empire, all the while testifying with his life and words to the radical power of God's love.

We might prefer to avert our eyes from the more difficult parts of Jesus' last days on earth, but I believe that in order to experience more fully the cautious expectation of Palm Sunday and the joyous rebirth of Easter, it is important for us to delve into some of the more troubling parts of the Passion story. Celebrating Easter without observing these holy nights is a lot like remembering V-E and V-J days of World War II without remembering the Holocaust or Hiroshima or like remembering the high points of the Civil Rights struggle, without remembering the freedom marches, the counter sit-ins, the fire-hosings and the lynchings. It is important to remember the struggle and pain that lead to triumph and celebration.

One of the traditional images of Easter is a butterfly. We can think of these solemn days of Holy Week as a chrysalis, an incubatory time when we let the story work itself into our hearts and souls, reminding us that joy often follows pain and difficult decisions.

If you have never experienced these services, or if it has been a long time since you have, I encourage you to come for one or both evenings. (If you are a parent with young children, we will have childcare available.) Allow yourself an opportunity to deepen into the spirit of these holy days, to retrace the steps that Jesus walked, and to wait and see if you discover some new truth in yourself about Easter, about what it means to be a spiritual seeker, about what it means to be a follower of Christ.

In faith, Kent

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### **Palm Sunday, March 28 at 10 a.m.**

Holy Week begins as we mark Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. We will make our procession into the Sanctuary with palms, tambourines, hosannas and the Kids' choir.

### **Maundy Thursday, April 1 at 7 p.m.**

With candles, readings and contemplative music with our Chancel Choir, we will commemorate Jesus' last meal with his disciples. Childcare available for 3rd grade and younger.

### **Good Friday, April 2 at 7 p.m.**

In a meditative service of music and poetry, we will reflect together on the seven last words of Jesus. Childcare available for 3rd grade and younger.

### **Easter Sunday, April 4**

**9 a.m.** -- We will gather in joy as a community with a continental breakfast in our Social Hall.

**10 a.m.** -- We will celebrate Christ's resurrection in song, story, tulips and joy. Nursery care will be available.



## 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!

# APRIL

**CALLING ALL MUSICIANS:** We are compiling a list of those willing to share their gifts for worship or other special occasions. Please call or email the church office and let us know what musical gifts you would be willing to share. We're looking for all talents, from percussion to singing to kazoo, harmonica and even bottle band!

### FULL CIRCLE DATES FOR APRIL

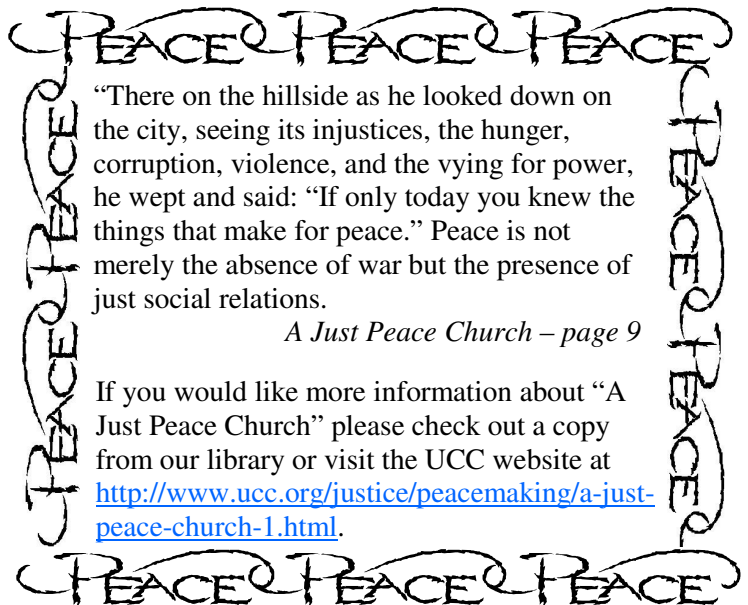
Deadline Date	Mailing Date
April 7	April 14
April 21	April 28

### WANTED: Ushers and Greeters



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!

**FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY!** Help brighten up the Sanctuary by providing flowers for Sunday worship. Please sign up on the Flower Calendar on the workroom door.



“There on the hillside as he looked down on the city, seeing its injustices, the hunger, corruption, violence, and the vying for power, he wept and said: “If only today you knew the things that make for peace.” Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of just social relations.

*A Just Peace Church – page 9*

If you would like more information about “A Just Peace Church” please check out a copy from our library or visit the UCC website at <http://www.ucc.org/justice/peacemaking/a-just-peace-church-1.html>.

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES:** Classes will resume **April 20th** with the topic “Selling Hate: ‘Bible-like’ Hate Messages on T-shirts.”

**LIVING THE QUESTIONS:** This on-going class meets from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings of each month in Room 11. For additional information and/or copies of the pre-session reading material, contact Bob or Pat Styer at 676-2585.

**NEW ORLEANS DISASTERY RECOVERY MISSION TRIP:** On **April 10** fifteen volunteers from our church community will travel to New Orleans to work for the week with the South Central Conference Disaster Recovery of the UCC helping to rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. We will be staying at Little Farms UCC in River Ridge. You will be able to stay connected with us during the trip on our blog <http://fccb.net/rebuild> as we share pictures and stories of our days. We welcome your prayers.

### FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**BOOK CLUB:** The Daytime Book Club meets the first Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireplace Room for refreshments and fellowship followed by a book discussion. The book we will be discussing at our **next meeting on April 6** will be *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. For more information contact Kathleen McGuinness at 733-1251.

**LABYRINTH WALK:** The labyrinth will be available in the Social Hall on **Thursday, April 1** for walking from 6-7 p.m. before the Maundy Thursday service. The labyrinth is also generally in the Chapel available for walking during church office hours (Monday – Thursday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 to 1:00 p.m.) and on Sunday mornings. Please join us for our next facilitated walk on **Thursday, May 6** when our theme will be “Cultivating Our Dreams.”

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

**VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL 2010:** Save the date and plan to join us for an incredible week of VCS **June 21-25**. This year's theme is "Create". Registration is limited to 135 participants and open to children age 4 years to those entering the sixth grade. Registration begins **April 11**. The participating churches who came together in ecumenical fellowship 30 years ago have decided that this will be the last year of Vacation Church School. Please join us for our *best year ever*, as we say good-bye to one of the cornerstone programs of children's ministry in Whatcom County. Watch for more details in the next Full Circle. For Questions contact Sharry at 734-3720.

## YOUTH NEWS

**March 28, 1:00-3:30 p.m.:** It's time again for our monthly community service! Join us at Assumption Church (the tall brick church down the street from FCCB with a tall steeple) as we help out with the Bellingham Community Meal. We will be serving meals to the homeless in our community!

**APRIL 4TH** - No Youth Group! Happy Easter!

**ANGELA NEEDS YOUTH EMAIL ADDRESSES!** Please email [youth@fccb.net](mailto:youth@fccb.net) with your name and email address so Angela can email youth group announcements. Thanks!

**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 8!** The High School Mission Trip Youth are hosting a Dinner Auction. We are looking for donations of items and services to auction. If you would like to donate something, please contact Angela Pahlow at 734-3720, or Martha Serven at 676-8536. Money raised from the event will benefit the Mexico Youth Mission Trip and Esperanza International, [www.esperanzaint.org](http://www.esperanzaint.org). More information about the Dinner Auction is coming soon, so please save the date. Thanks!

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

March 22, 2010

**MSP** approve staff job descriptions as revised by Personnel Committee.

**MSP** approve EMinistry team and Kent pursuing relevant information and costs related to designing a new church web page with report to Council at April meeting.

**MSP** approve considering potential pledge increases in 2-3 months to ensure Savage and new pastor compensation packages are fully funded.

**MSP** approve disbursement of monetary gift to church at Council's discretion with Arts and Worship budget restored (\$1,650) from this gift.

**MSP** approve Homeless Task Force reporting to Church Council.

Board of Mission, Justice & Social Concerns will work with other interested folks in learning about ReSources "Be Cool" campaign and educational opportunities for faith communities to corporately and individually learn how to reduce carbon footprint.

## AROUND THE CHURCH

**THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED** for the Holiday on **April 4th, Easter Monday**.

**CALLING ALL BAKERS!** Whether you are famous for your hot crossed buns, scones, muffins, or sweet bread we'd like to invite you to bake up a storm and join us for a continental breakfast at **9:00 a.m.** Easter morning (April 4) in the Social Hall. The Membership Board will provide coffee, juice, and fresh fruit. Let's begin our joyful celebration of Easter a bit earlier this year!! Look for a sign-up sheet in the Narthex by the Welcome Table or contact the office at 734-3720.



**THE QUILTS** will be changed after the floor in the Social Hall is refinished the week of April 12-17. Call Joan Roley at 734-8041 for information.

**PARKING ON SUNDAYS:** Do you still have plenty of spring in your step? As a courtesy to folks for whom walking has become more difficult, please avoid parking in the disability lot east of the Sanctuary and those spots near the front doors in the lot west of the Sanctuary. (It also is a help to welcome visitors to our church if the lots are not full when they arrive.) If you have the desire to stretch your legs on a Sunday morning, please remember that you are welcome to park in the Bunk's Medical Center lot on Cornwall. Thank you for your help in extending this form of welcome!



**PNC ANNUAL MEETING 2010:** The Pacific Northwest Conference Annual Meeting "Compassion... Communication... Community" will be held in Wenatchee **April 23 -25, 2010**. This annual event is a wonderful opportunity to share our lives and faith connecting with other members of our church and conference family. The gathering will feature conference business, excellent speakers, workshops, wonderful music and meaningful worship. To register, go to [pncucc.org](http://pncucc.org). The early registration deadline is **April 7**. For more information, contact Sharry at 734-3720.

**USED WASHING MACHINE NEEDED:** The Church is in need of a washing machine. If you have a working washing machine you would like to donate, please call the office at 734-3720.



**RUMMAGE SALE:** The Pilgrim Circle Rummage Sale will be on **Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** in the church basement. A special evening event for our church family will be **Thursday, April 29 6 - 8 p.m.** Proceeds from the sale will benefit community and church projects. For further information, call Barb Green 671-7622 or Etta Kirk 733-6745.

## **A Search and Call Update: THE PASTOR SEARCH**

Our reading glasses are getting heavy use as we are, once again, in the midst of pouring through profiles. No surprise that many candidates find this community and FCCB appealing.

And remember those running shoes that we wore most of last spring to keep up with the interviewing and visits with prospective candidates? Well, we are pulling those off the shelf and blowing off the dust, as it looks like our need for them is coming at us. Please keep praying for us. We deeply appreciate your love and support.

## **SPECIAL OFFERING**

On **April 18<sup>th</sup>** we will be collecting a special mission offering for the Interfaith Coalition. The Interfaith Coalition is a partnership of 47 congregations in Whatcom County. We are a part of that 47. Our contributions help Interfaith to provide basic necessities to local people in need, housing for homeless families, access to health care for all, and meaningful social connection to older adults. Together with the other diverse congregations in our community we can make a huge difference. Please remember the Interfaith Coalition on April 18<sup>th</sup>. For more information about Interfaith please see their website at [www.interfaith-coalition.org](http://www.interfaith-coalition.org).

**First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ**  
*An Open & Affirming Congregation*  
2401 Cornwall Avenue  
Bellingham, WA 98225-3414

Date: March 24, 2010

### **CHURCH CALENDAR**

#### **March 29**

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

#### **March 31—**

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*  
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*  
7:00 PM *Stephen Ministers Training*

#### **April 1—Maundy Thursday**

7:00 PM *Worship*  
7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

#### **April 2—Good Friday**

10:00 AM *In Stitches*  
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*  
7:00 PM *Worship*

#### **April 4—Easter**

9:00 AM *Breakfast*  
10:00 AM *Worship*

#### **April 5—OFFICE CLOSED**

#### **April 6**

9:30 AM *Book Club*  
7:00 PM *Pilgrim Circle*

#### **April 7—Full Circle Deadline**

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*  
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*  
6:30 PM *Stephen Ministers Training*  
7:00 PM *Stephen Ministers*

#### **April 8**

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

#### **April 9**

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

#### **April 11**

10:00 AM *Worship/Church School Gathers*  
11:00 AM *Blood Pressure Clinic*

