

The Full Circle

February 2011

FROM THE PASTORS



Kent French

A friend recently directed me to ship-of-fools.com, a website that began as a foundering student magazine in Britain in the late 1970s and developed its current name when it re-emerged on April Fools Day, 1998.

Its editor and designer, Simon Jenkins, explains the site: “Our aim is to help Christians be self-critical and honest about the failings of Christianity, as we believe honesty can only strengthen faith.”

So far, my favorite section of the site is called “Mystery Worshipper.” Mystery Worshipers are volunteer critics “who visit churches of all denominations worldwide, leaving a calling card in the collection plate and posting a first-timer’s impression of services.”

Here’s the list of questions that Mystery Worshipers answer. (I’ve highlighted those I find most interesting.):

- What was the name of the service?
- How full was the building?
- Did anyone welcome you personally?
- Was your pew comfortable?
- How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere?
- What were the exact opening words of the service?
- What books did the congregation use during the service?
- What musical instruments were played?
- **Did anything distract you?**
- Was the worship stiff-upper-lip, happy clappy, or what?
- Exactly how long was the sermon?
- On a scale of 1-10, how good was the preacher?
- **In a nutshell, what was the sermon about?**
- **Which part of the service was like being in heaven?**
- **And which part was like being in... er... the other place?**
- **What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost?**
- How would you describe the after-service coffee?
- How would you feel about making this church your regular (where 10 = ecstatic, 0 = terminal)?
- **Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?**
- **What one thing will you remember about all this in seven days' time?**

Well, my goodness! February is already here! The days are getting longer and the weather warmer.

February brings with it that holiday of holidays, Valentine’s Day. Truthfully, I have never been a huge fan of Valentine’s Day. I have always been a fan of saying “I love you” all year ‘round, not just on one specific day. Given that this holiday happens during the month of February, it gives me cause to pause and consider the idea of love.



Tara Olsen Allen

I am always amazed at how sharing love has the power to transform our lives. In my life, in my theology, God is love and sharing God’s love with each other means being Christ to one another.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” (– 1 John 4:7-12)

I encourage each of us to consider what that means in our lives- how are we Christ to one another?

On this Valentine’s Day, in addition to telling those around you that you love them, I ask you to consider how it is that God’s love has transformed you.

Given that each and every one of us has special gifts to offer, consider how has God’s love worked through you and transformed the lives of others?

Do we allow God’s love into our hearts?

Do we let ourselves be changed by the amazing things Christ can do in our lives?

Do we ever think about this stuff?

I hope we can all take some time this February to consider what our special purpose is and how we can share God’s transforming love with the world.

In Christ’s Love,

Tara

I hope you read the list of questions and immediately wonder how people might respond to these questions on a random visit to First Congregational, Bellingham. At what point in our Sunday morning experience will people best catch a glimpse of heaven? When is it hell? What about the church made you glad to be a Christian, or want to become one? Do people remember anything about the sermon or the service that they'll take with them down the road? Did anyone help them when they were lost?

As I read the reviews, I am tempted to visit some of these churches. I'd go to Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Colorado Springs just for the great coffee, lemonade and donuts and the happy, welcoming reception. I would make a pilgrimage to the Lowndes County Courthouse in Hayneville, Alabama, for the moving and provocative liturgy honoring the martyrs of a 1964 civil rights struggle in their town. I would like to visit Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Saint Paul to check out Pastor Jim Erlandson's beautiful chanting of the liturgy and fine preaching. The next time I'm near Westcliffe, Colorado, I want to stop in at the Sunday Evening Round Up, full of cowboys and cowgirls and a Cowboy Bible, and learn more about "the church that horses around."

Of course, I can do some of that research right here in Bellingham. I would like to visit some of the mid-week services at St. Paul's Episcopal, since I still love much of the liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer. (I know there are some former and closet Episcopalians among us who feel the same). I think it's important for us to visit Christ the King and Cornwall Avenue to find out why so many people are drawn to that style of worship. My hunch is that there's a deeper reason at work than praise bands and Power-Point sermons.

This past year, we have given a lot of attention to worship. As soon as I arrived, our pastoral staff started meeting weekly with our choir director, Debbie Brown, to plan and develop some intentionality about our services. During the Lenten series, we had an evening devoted to worship, our Diaconate held a June retreat to discuss worship and has another planned for early February, and on October 31, we held a lively open forum about the nature of our worship.


Worship is the most concentrated activity of our church life. It is the one time each week when a critical mass of us come together and hopefully, it sets the tone for the week ahead. We need to step back and ask, "What is the reason for worship and what are we trying to do in it?" I think the Ship-of-Fools questions are right that it has to do with glimpsing the kingdom of heaven. The next question for us is "How do we make sure that heaven's gates are open wide enough that others can enter in, as well?"

Some of us come to worship thinking that the congregation is the audience, the worship leaders are the performers and God is the prompter. Søren Kierkegaard famously noted that actually, the congregation is doing the performing, the worship leaders are the prompters and God alone is the audience. This begs the question of each of us, "What am

I doing to prepare for my worship each Sunday?" and "How am I reflecting on it afterwards?"

I encourage all of us to look over the questions of the "Mystery Worshipper" and begin asking how are we making this experience open and available to other people. How are we clearing the way so that God's realm may exist among us "on earth as it is in heaven"?

In faith,
Kent



ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to join us for our Annual Meeting, following worship on **Sunday, January 30**, when we will celebrate 2010 and look forward to the good things God has in store for us in 2011. Join us in the Social Hall of a light snack before returning to the Sanctuary for the meeting. Childcare will be provided.

UPCOMING VOTE AT ANNUAL MEETING

Members at the Annual Meeting will be asked to vote on the following change to our constitution: Article VI, Section 2 does not stipulate only members can vote to Call a Pastor. This is inconsistent with other portions of the Constitution. Therefore, Church Council proposes that we amend Article VI, Section 2, adding a phrase "A favorable majority of MEMBERS present" vote to call a pastor.

ANNUAL REPORT: Pick up your copy of the 2010 Annual Report today!

NEW STEPHEN LEADERS TO BE COMMISSIONED

On **Sunday, February 6th**, we, as a congregation will be seeing Kent, our pastor, and Tim Shepherd, a trained Stephen Minister, off to Anaheim, CA to begin their training to become Stephen Minister Leaders. They will return on Saturday February 12th. On **Sunday, February 13th** they will be commissioned as part of the worship service that morning.

We send them off with our love and best wishes and ask that everyone keep these special people, dates and purposes in your hearts and prayers. This is one of the ways we have of being sure that the Stephen Ministry program in this congregation continues to grow and expand.



Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is YOUR ministry. It is an important way we at First Congregational Church care for one another. If you are going through a difficult time, consider having a Stephen Minister. If you know someone else who is facing difficulties, suggest that they request a Stephen Minister. Make use of it. Stephen Ministry belongs to you! Contact a Stephen Minister or Leader.

If you or someone you know has need of this ministry call one of the Leaders:
Libby Weiss (756-2062); Donna Romjue (752-1747); Kathleen McGuinness (733-1251); Bob and Pat Styer (676-2585)

NEW BOOKS IN THE FCCB LIBRARY

On display on the book cart

McKibben, Bill. *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*. New York: Times Books, 2010.

Moll, Rob. *The Art of Dying: Living Fully into the Life to Come*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books, 2010.

Mortenson, Greg, and David O. Relin. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Fight Terrorism and Build Nations One School at a Time*. New York: Viking, 2006.

Pinnock, Clark H. *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Rasmussen, Larry L. *Earth Community Earth Ethics*. Ecology and justice. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1996.

Root, Andrew. *The Children of Divorce: The Loss of Family As the Loss of Being*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2010.

Ruden, Sarah. *Paul Among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2010.

Skinner, Matthew L. *The Trial Narratives: Conflict, Power, and Identity in the New Testament*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

Volf, Miroslav & Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal. *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor*. Eerdmans. 2009.

Wallace, Mark I. *Green Christianity: Five Ways to a Sustainable Future*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.

Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan. *The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture*. Brewster, Mass: Paraclete Press, 2010.

Wiman, Christian. *Every Riven Thing*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks*. England: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

WORSHIP HELP



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.

BELL RINGERS: Do you have a desire to ring the church bell? We invite those of all ages to sign up to ring the bell. The sign up sheet is on the workroom door.



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!



SHALOM CIRCLE

What are you doing Monday mornings from 9 am – 10 am? Would you like to participate in a circle of prayer? Each Monday, Shalom Circle gathers in the Fireplace Room for one hour of sharing, caring and prayer. You are welcome to join this circle any time. For further information call Cheryl Blair (733-0966).

AROUND THE COMMUNITY

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY IN WHATCOM COUNTY will break ground on an Apostle's Build project this spring. Local churches will be working together to fund and build a home for a low-income family. If you are interested in helping with this project, or if you if you would like to learn more, please contact Emily Wagnitz-Tracy at emily_wagnitz@hotmail.com, or 360.380.0473.

WE NEED YOU TO COMPLETE THE TEAM!

We are almost at the goal of 100 people who are willing and able to serve on our church boards for 2011. We only need seven more folks to complete the team of those who enjoy working together toward the goals of FCCB. Here is the countdown:

3 people to join Stewardship 3 people to join Adult Ministries
1 person to join Diaconate

Please contact Etta Kirk on the Nominating Committee at 733-6745 or eakirk@msn.com or call the church office to volunteer and join this team. You'll love it!

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

On Celebration Sunday, October 24th, we gratefully received 19 new members into the life of our congregation. Here are two more in this issue.

Terra Schmidt is a new mother and a dentist in Fairhaven. She and her husband, Andy, welcomed son Noah into their lives last April and are adjusting to keeping up with his schedule. Terra is a native of the northwest and graduate of the University of Washington. She enjoys dancing and yoga and getting outside for skiing, cycling and hiking.

Andy Schmidt did graduate work in Seattle and discovered the lure of Western Washington. After a brief return to work in his home community in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, he and wife Terra came to Bellingham for his Orthodontics practice. He usually has a big smile, carrying his young son, Noah. Andy likes to be very active outdoors - golfing, hiking, skiing, cycling and participating in an occasional weekend race.

ARE YOU CURIOUS?

Are you curious about what others thought of Tony Robinson's book, *Transforming Congregational Culture*? Are you curious about what others believe is the purpose for this church?

Satisfy that curiosity by joining others in small group discussions between *February 10th and 24th*. Small groups will meet at the church and in neighborhood homes to discuss both the ideas in the book and where we believe God is calling our church. Summaries of the discussions will provide a beginning place for the Leadership Retreat on **February 26th**.

Specific dates, times, and places will be on a sign-up board in the Narthex. Many of the meetings will have childcare. Plan to sign-up to share your ideas and find out what others in our congregation are thinking.

Drumming Circle

Our Drumming Circle continues to be a rousing, spirit-filled, contemplative time together.

Please join us to experience the ancient ritual of drumming again on Thursday evening,

February 10 at 7 pm.

You don't need any experience, you don't even need a drum. You just need the curiosity, and the courage to try!

We meet the second Thursday of each month.

If you are interested please contact Tara at tara@fccb.net or call 734-3720.

Please come join us!

GOT BLANKETS, BOOTS OR BACKPACKS IN YOUR BASEMENT?

FCCB's Homelessness Task Force is joining hands with the Opportunity Council and Project Homeless Connect to provide needed supplies for the homeless of our area. These supplies will be distributed at Project Homeless Connect on **March 3, 2011**. Haggan is collecting hats, coats, scarves and gloves. We (and several other area churches) will be collecting the following: BLANKETS; BOOTS; UNDERWEAR (both long and regular); BACKPACKS (large is best); TENTS; TOWELS; SOCKS. Items can be used but in good, clean condition with the exception of underwear which should be new. Pilgrim, Discovery and Esther Circles will be helping to collect, organize and store the donations until delivery on **March 2nd**. Please bring your donations to the big marked boxes in the Narthex. QUESTIONS? Contact Margie Kimberley (671-3698 or margie@kimberleymail.com)

GREEN TEAM NOTES

Since forming on 10-10-10, the Green Team has been actively looking for new ways to care for God's creation. Of the many ideas we are working on, we have two to report on.

As the Green Team joins with everyone in discerning our mission in the coming years we have been asking ourselves individually and collectively how we might become better stewards of the earth and how that might help us to connect with our humanity and to God in a deeper way. One of the paths we have begun exploring is the possibility of putting solar panels on the roof of our church.

We've taken the first steps of this process by gathering bids from three local companies and having an energy audit of the church done so that we can accurately assess our energy usage. We are also looking at how

best to take advantage of the financial incentives available to us in 2011 through the state of Washington. We'll keep you posted. We are starting with small steps while we dream large. As the Psalmist sang out "O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." May we step forward into our dream of becoming better stewards of our planet.

Learn more about the value of the Green Team in February. We are putting together an information series on three Wednesday evenings that will explore a faith-based approach to improving the health of our planet on a global, national and local level. We will feature film, speakers and discussion on **February 9, 16, and 23**. Look for more information in the Sunday bulletins. Childcare will be provided.

11TH ANNUAL BELLINGHAM HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL – February 17-26, 2011

Come and experience informative and inspirational films about human rights issues from around the world. Get involved - make a difference. Most films will be showing at the Fairhaven College Auditorium, WWU at 7pm. However some films will be shown at the Pickford, Sehome High School, Bellingham High School, Bellingham Technical College, and Lummi Youth Academy. Mission and Justice will provide more information on films, times and locations at our Just Peace table in the Narthex.

FULL CIRCLE SCHEDULE

Deadline:	Mailing Date:
February 16	February 23

PNC NEWS

The latest edition of the Pacific NW Conference News is online: You can find it at the Conference's website www.pnuc.org or at <http://www.thefigtree.org/pncnews/pncnews.html>.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

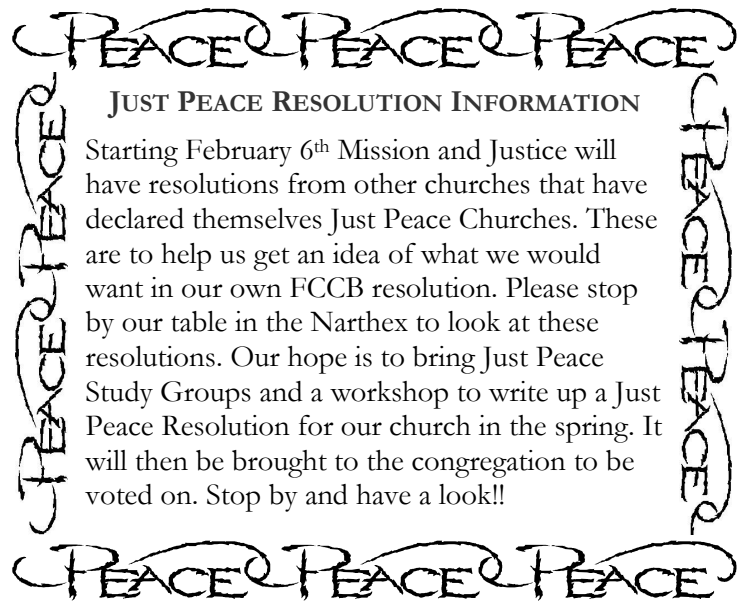
PENNIES FOR PEACE: The church school community is continuing to collect pennies for Pennies for Peace this year. We thank you for your support as with each penny we make a difference in the lives of school children in Pakistan and Afghanistan!

CHURCH SCHOOL GATHERS: On **Sunday February 6**, following "Time with Children" the church school community will gather in the Social Hall to create valentines to send to our homebound members and college youth. If you have a college youth in your family or know some one who is homebound who would appreciate a valentine, please email Sharry (sharry@fccb.net) their current MAILING address so we may send them a valentine and let them know we are thinking of them. We will return to join our families in the Sanctuary for communion.

HEALING PRAYER: On the first Sunday of each month, we hold a healing prayer service in the Chapel directly after the worship service. You are welcome to enter this time of quiet and music to pray silently or to write a prayer. A pastor will be available to pray with you and, if you wish, offer an anointing with oil. The next Healing Service will be **February 6**.



HANDBELLS We are excited about the *four—octave set of handbells* we bought on eBay in November. We have received a number of gifts towards their purchase and we have a balance of \$3500. We are offering people an opportunity to help pay off the balance. Look for the donation board which will be displayed in the Narthex on **January 30th** and please consider helping as you are able. Plans are being made by our choir directors to form both children and adult choirs. We hope you will consider joining in to make heavenly music with our new bells!



JUST PEACE RESOLUTION INFORMATION

Starting February 6th Mission and Justice will have resolutions from other churches that have declared themselves Just Peace Churches. These are to help us get an idea of what we would want in our own FCCB resolution. Please stop by our table in the Narthex to look at these resolutions. Our hope is to bring Just Peace Study Groups and a workshop to write up a Just Peace Resolution for our church in the spring. It will then be brought to the congregation to be voted on. Stop by and have a look!!

YOUTH WANTED TO SERVE AS ACOLYTES:

Middle and High School students are invited to serve as an acolyte on Sunday mornings to light the Candle of Life. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the office door. It's a simple yet important way to participate in worship. The head usher will show you exactly what to do. Questions? Call Julia Ritchie 676-0791 (Diaconate member).

YOUTH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

January 30: Popcorn and Movie Night! Join us in the youth room for some exciting discussion!

February 6: Super Bowl Weekend. There will be no youth group in the evening. We will be assembling sub sandwiches before church and selling them afterwards.

February 12: Youth & Families are invited to Movie Night at FCCB at 6:30 pm.

February 13: Faith discussion and games

February 20: Mid-winter break: no youth group

February 27: Service Project: We will help make hygiene kits for the homeless in our community!

High School Mission Trip News: This summer we will be going to Yakima, WA to work with Habitat for Humanity. If you are currently in grades 9-12 and are interested in the trip, please see Angela, Tara, or Andrew for more information!

SUPER BOWL SUB SALES

The high school youth will once again be selling sub sandwiches for Super Bowl Sunday! They will be taking pre-orders on **January 30** and selling the subs on **February 6!** The subs are \$6 and come with chips and a drink.

Our Whole Lives

This winter, the board of Christian Education at FCCB is thrilled to offer *Our Whole Lives*, sexuality education for grades 10-12.

Parents, educators and communities all face the challenge of creating environments that support and nurture sexual health. Developed by the UCC and Unitarian Universalists, *Our Whole Lives* is sexuality education in the context of caring, compassion, respect and justice.

The purpose of *Our Whole Lives* is to help participants make informed, responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips them with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but also uses a faith-based approach to help participants clarify their values, build

interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, social, and political aspects of sexuality. Unlike the sex education offered in school, *Our Whole Lives* takes place in a church setting with trained leaders who provide a safe space for youth to explore these challenging issues and develop strategies for healthy decision-making.

Beginning in March, Pastor Tara Olsen Allen and Robert Guthrie will be leading *Our Whole Lives* for high school students in the 10th grade and above. On **Wednesday, February 2nd at 7:00pm** Tara and Robert will be leading an information session to explain the program to parents.

Reverend Olsen Allen has had tremendous success with OWL programs for adolescents in Maine. She knows first-hand how students emerge from the program with knowledge, strength and a moral framework to make the best decisions.

Join us this February to learn about the program.

INTERFAITH NOTES

THANK YOU FROM INTERFAITH COALITION

Dear Members of First Congregational Church

Thank you for your generous gift of \$1,250 to Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County. Your donation helps to provide housing and health care to some of the most vulnerable families and individuals in our community. With your assistance and caring, they can make strides toward overcoming the circumstances of their complex lives. That's the difference having a warm home, case management, and access to medical, dental and behavioral-health care can make in a person's life. Without these basic necessities, being homeless or being in poor health leaves little reserves for turning around one's life.

Additionally, your gift offers hope and promise to people in need. As one dad told us about living in Interfaith Family Housing, "We understand living here is not a fix for the rest of our lives, but it's a big help in getting us where we want to be. It's a blessing to have people believe in us."

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in our work.

May God's peace and joy be with you this New Year,

Laura DeRose Harker
Executive Director

INTERFAITH COALITION CHOIR FESTIVAL

Please plan to attend Interfaith Coalition's Choir Festival on **Saturday, Feb.12 at 1:00 pm** Our church choir will be performing with eleven other choirs. Choirs will sing individually as well as in a combined choir of over 250 voices. Each year, the Interfaith Coalition choir festival offers an opportunity for singers and audience alike to rejoice in the voices of our many faith traditions. This year will be especially joyous as we celebrate Interfaith Coalition's 30 year history of collaboration in our community. The concert, to be held at Assumption Catholic Church, 2116 Cornwall Ave. in Bellingham, is free with an offering to benefit Interfaith Coalition programs.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING CHRISTMAS BRIGHT FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

More families than ever before requested assistance this year through Interfaith Coalition's Holiday Gifts Program, which links families in need with sponsors like First Congregational Church. With our congregation's participation, 98 families, including the families at Womencare Shelter, had a holiday to celebrate with their children.

"Beyond this joy, your gifts conveyed your caring and offered a tremendous sense of relief to parents, many of whom expressed doubt that there'd be a Christmas for their children this year," said Laura DeRose Harker, Interfaith's executive director. "Thank you for your heartwarming generosity and holiday cheer."

PLAN TO ATTEND INTERFAITH'S MARCH 26 AUCTION, "ROOTS RUN DEEP IN THE GARDEN OF HOPE"

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend Interfaith Coalition's **March 26** auction, "Roots Run Deep in the Garden of Hope," recognizing 30 years of service to our neighbors in need. Tickets for the auction and sit-down dinner at the Lakeway Inn & Conference Center in Bellingham cost \$40 each and are available through the Interfaith Coalition office, **734-3983**, or from Margie Kimberley, who represents our church on the coalition board. The auction, begins at 5:30 p.m., is Interfaith Coalition's largest fundraising event of the year, raising one-third of the coalition's annual income to support programs that provide housing to families who are homeless and health care to all in need.

Also, Interfaith Coalition is gratefully accepting sponsorships and donations to the auction. If your business can help underwrite the auction or if you have a service, getaway home, or other sought-after item that may contribute to the success and enjoyment of this fun event, please call Interfaith Coalition at **734-3983**.

AROUND THE CHURCH

COMMUNITY MEAL: Our next Community Meal will be on **Jan. 30th**. Our shift runs from **1:00 - 3:15 pm**. Duties will include serving the food and the beverages as well as clearing, resetting and wiping down the tables. Sign up on the Bulletin Board under Community Meal or see Donna Romjue to volunteer or for more information.

FOOD BANK FOOD FIRST SUNDAY: Food First Sunday is **Sunday, February 6th**. Please bring your non-perishable food or monetary donations on Sunday. A cash donation allows the Food Bank to purchase perishable food items like milk.

BOOK CLUB: All women who enjoy reading are invited to join the Daytime Book Club which meets the first Tuesday of each month at **9:30 a.m.** (Sept. – May) in the Fireplace Room for fellowship and refreshments, followed by a discussion of the book for the month. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, February 8** when the book topic will be *The Zoo Keeper's Wife* by **Diane Ackerman**. Please plan to join the group and pick up a list of current book selections for the year in the office book club mailbox.

NEW ORLEANS MISSION TRIP 2011: Our adult mission group will be traveling to New Orleans **April 30 – May 7** this year to once again work with the UCC Disaster, Recovery and Relief and the South Central Conference. We will have the opportunity to be “Bearers of Hope” and a presence that demonstrates God’s companionship as the people and communities of New Orleans are empowered to rebuild their lives and move back into their homes. If you are interested in joining our group this year please contact Sharry Nyberg (sharry@fccb.net, 734-3720 ext.102) asap to sign up or for more information. Group size limited to 20. Our group will be gathering in the future to share stories of last springs trip, make plans to participate in a local mission day and learn details of this years trip.



LABYRINTH WALK: The labyrinth is 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, February 3** when our theme will be “an Open Heart.”

SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday February 3rd at 9 a.m.—*Silk Painting Classes Start*

Back by popular demand Kristen Gilje is teaching one day workshops on silk painting in February here at our church. There are five dates to choose from: **Feb 2, 3, 10, 12, and 19**. Cost is \$70 including supplies and times are **9:00 to 4:00 pm**. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex and you may invite a friend if you wish. Each class is limited to 15 students. Later in the spring the Arts in Worship Board will organize some classes and creative time with Kristen to make silk banners for our Sanctuary for those who have basic silk painting skills.

Thursday, February 10th at 7 pm—*Drumming Circle*

Our Drumming Circle continues to be a rousing, spirit-filled, contemplative time together. Please join us to experience the ancient ritual of drumming. If you are interested please contact Tara at tara@fccb.net or at the church via 734-3720.

Saturday, February 12th at 6:30 pm—*Movie Night*

Mission and Justice would like to invite you to the showing of *“On a Wing and a Prayer”*. This documentary follows Monem Salam, a local Muslim-American man on a quest to obtain a pilots license in the aftermath of 9/11. This movie reveals a funny, loveable, altogether human Muslim-American as he pursues the American dream against tides of negative public perception. There will be discussion time with Monem after the show. Please join us in the **Social Hall, Feb 12th at 6:30pm**. Childcare will be provided.

Sunday, February 13th—*Discovery Circle Bake Sale*

Rev up your taste buds and warm up your wallets! The annual Valentine Bake Sale is almost here. On **Sunday, February 13**, you can sample goodies created by the renowned cooks of Discovery Circle. Enjoy these sweet treats with your coffee after church and take some home for later. Shop our dazzling display of cakes, cookies, candy and pastries and know that your generous donations help a variety of local agencies supported by Discovery Circle.

Friday, February 25—*Comfort Foods Potluck & Talent Show*

On **Friday, February 25 at 6 pm**, the Membership Board will host our annual Comfort Foods Potluck, followed by the Talent Show featuring our amazing church members. Everyone is invited to attend this fun night. If you would like to "entertain" us, please sign up on the poster in the Narthex. All are invited to bring their favorite "comfort food" for the potluck that will take place before the show. Most families have those special casseroles, side dishes, or tasty desserts that are favorite requests. This is your chance to share these yummy dishes with your church family. Come join us for this wonderful winter evening. Please sign up in the Narthex.

Friday, February 27th at 9 a.m.—*Campership Breakfast*

It’s time again for the Annual Campership Breakfast! Come enjoy fresh baked cinnamon rolls and fruit before church on **Sunday, February 27**. Breakfast will be served from **9:00-9:50 a.m.** Money raised will support scholarships for our youth and families attending camp.

Sunday, March 6th at 7 pm—*Art Appreciation & Desert Potluck*

The Arts in Worship Board invites and encourages all friends and members to participate in a social evening of sharing of our personal religious, spiritual, or inspirational art pieces which we choose to hang on our walls or display in our personal spaces in a “Show & Tell” format. Along with tables for your dessert contribution, we will provide table display space for your art items and your printed story of the piece (who, what, when, where and why it inspires you.)”

In order to calculate needed display table space we will have a sign-up sheet in the Narthex to indicate numbers of art pieces to plan for.

“**All art is sacred.**” Dr. Jeff Graham, former FCCB member



**First Congregational Church of Bellingham
United Church of Christ**

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

Date: February 2011

CHURCH CALENDAR

January 31

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*

February 1

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

February 2

9:00 AM *Silk Painting*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *Stephen Ministers*
7:00 PM *OWL Meeting*

February 3

9:00 AM *Silk Painting*
6:30 PM *Labyrinth Walk*
7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

February 4

10:00 AM *In Stitches*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*

February 5

9:00 AM *Diaconate Retreat*
2:00 PM *Joy Jesters*

February 6

10:00 AM *Worship/Church
School Gathers*
11:00 AM *Healing Service*

February 7

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*

February 8

9:30 AM *Discovery Circle*
1:30 PM *Living the
Questions*

February 9

4:00 PM *Exercise Group*
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*
7:00 PM *Green Team*
7:00 PM *OWL Orientation*

February 10

9:00 AM *Silk Painting*
1:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*
7:00 PM *Drumming Circle*

February 11

4:00 PM *Exercise Group*

February 12

9:00 AM *Silk Painting*
6:30 PM *Movie Night*

February 13

10:00 AM *High School CS*
10:00 AM *Worship/Church
School*
11:00 AM *Blood Pressure
Clinic*
11:15 AM *Inquirers Class*
6:30 PM *High School &
Middle School YG*

February 14

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *Board Meetings*

February 15

7:00 PM *Contemporary
Issues*

February 16

4:00 PM *Exercise Group*
5:00 PM *Prayer Shawl*
6:00 PM *SM Potluck*
7:00 PM *Green Team*

February 17

7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

February 18

8:30 AM *Men's Breakfast*
10:00 AM *In Stitches*
4:00 PM *Exercise Group*

February 19

8 9:00 AM *Silk Painting*