

The Full Circle

January 2012



A VIEW FROM THE PEW

The morning after our Advent 4 Christmas pageant, new member Rody Rowe offered this reflection. Rody and his wife, Alice, joined our church this past fall. Rody is a writer and storyteller who worked for many years as a fund-raiser, teacher and motivational speaker for an organization founded by John Wesley.

Merry Christmas!

Kent

Why I Need the Children's Christmas Pageant

Here it was the fourth Sunday of Advent, right on the lip of Christmas and I realized the heart of worship would be the children's Christmas pageant. This meant no preaching. Hummm. I couldn't help but wonder whether I would get what I needed to bring me close to the stable.

I was sitting there having just worked through my usual list for confession, when suddenly, a little girl appropriately named Gabby blasted into the room with exactly what I longed to receive. I realized that Kent and Tara, as good as they are (and they are very good) would tell us, with some eloquence of God's love, but the kids were all about *showing* us. The kids would offer us incarnation, love with skin on.

So Gabby rushed in looking like she was about to explode and then she exploded! Don't dare call her cute! If you were there you would know how completely inadequate such a word was for the Gabby we were given. She was so filled with the excitement and pleasure of God's news—she was, well, the “embodiment of astonishment and joy” and something in my heart fell to its knees. I was all the way home for Christmas and we were just getting started!

Cont'd on page 2



FROM THE PASTOR

After the rush of the holiday season, it is natural to feel a bit let down as all of the celebrations come to an end and we come into the New Year. This is the also time of year when we reflect on how the past year has gone and look forward to the coming year with great anticipation.



Tara Olsen Allen

At the beginning of the New Year, some people go so far as to make resolutions; they will lose weight, be better at staying in touch with loved ones, go to the gym more...

I would like to leave you with this food for thought as we approach the beginning 2012:

This is an interview with Ms. Nadine Stair, 85 years young, on the topic of “If I Had My Life to Live Over”!

“I'd dare to make more mistakes next time.

I'd relax. I would limber up.

I would be sillier than I have been this trip.

I would take fewer things seriously.

I would take more chances.

I would take more trips.

I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers.

I would eat more ice cream and less beans.

I would perhaps have more actual troubles and fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day.

Oh, I've had my moments and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments.

One after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day.

Cont'd. on page 2

From Rody: Cont'd. from page 1

A favorite line of a hymn goes, “lost in wonder, love and praise”—worship at its most powerful captures me this way, and that’s what happened the rest of the morning.

From fifteen feet above us an Erin-angel told us in song to look for angels all around us. I thought, what a beautiful gift is this young woman, but then looking around was given the eyes of grace to see how fine we all looked. Sitting close to me were a whole band of angels, from very small to older girls. One of the older girls had the softening hand of sleep still lingering upon her face, offering a radiance begging to be memorized, taken home for the dark days ahead. So I tried my best.

Then there was Allegra our narrator as confident and gracious as God herself, and Justin in a star costume who deep in his bones knew he was a star-patient and protective, keeping watch over the baby Jesus with a beatific expression on his face. Every once in a while Hannah standing beside him with a star reading love, would exchange a fist bump with him—a sweet bit of affirmation and encouragement. The holy family (David, Joanna and baby Isaac) sat rocking together, a real family with a real baby (thank God!)—taking their jobs sacred-seriously: Dad rocking the little guy who slept, exactly as the script called for, in heavenly peace, throughout the whole production and Mom looking on with a quiet watchfulness. There were Tanner, Emma and Reed who lent their sweet, confident voices so the animals could speak, and the two who worked hardest—mother Kate and her young kingly-attired son Rylan, keeping all of us involved by holding up cue cards so we could *whoosh* for the wind, give the fire *crackle and pop*, and introduce camels, softly clapping along. Finally, when an astonishingly well-behaved and serious gaggle of adolescent boys, our shepherds and Kings, miraculously hit their cues, I watched God take a deep breath and smile.

You probably didn’t know someone played God in the pageant. I only know because my wife roped me into helping her dress the Wise Men beforehand—that’s when I met God. This year, she was played again by Sharry Nyberg. I thought her take on the role was inspired and perfect—just the kind of God I want to believe in.

When I met her at 9:15 a.m. she was tense, but putting up a good front of competence. By 9:30, she was trying her best to hold it together, but only about half the kids who had promised to come had shown up! Would they come and even if they all got here would they hit their cues, know their lines!? She was totally in the role doing what our God has to do all the time—putting together the holy story again using ordinary, arriving-late people just like us to show others they are precious. I loved seeing our Good God through Sharry—stressed, hopeful, wishing only

the best, doing what she could with whomever managed to make it that morning. At 9:45, she asked me, with just a touch of desperateness, to pray for her—and I love this the most—a God that needs our prayers, our love and encouragement!

And, of course, this is still the deal: God calls to each of us saying, **there are parts not taken yet**. I’ve got some costumes that I think will fit you perfectly, and I am willing to rehearse with you and even feed you your cues from offstage. And I am going to suffer some if you don’t show up—it is just the way I AM, because without you my nativity can’t be complete.

I got more than I could ever have imagined on the fourth Sunday of Advent. God ran right down the center aisle of my heart!

Rodolph Rowe

From Tara: Cont'd. from page 1

I’ve been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat and a parachute.

If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter next time.

If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way longer in the fall

I would go to more dances.

I would ride more merry-go-rounds.

I would pick more daisies.”

As you look forward to the coming year, I ask you to reflect on Ms. Nadine’s words and maybe include some of her musings in your own resolutions!

The Peace of Christ be yours at the beginning of the New Year and throughout all time,

Tara

UPCOMING BOARD & COUNCIL DATES	
January	
Boards	January 9
Council	January 10 (2nd Tuesday)
February	
<i>Tuesday February 7</i>	Christian Education, Adult Ministries, Membership and Diaconate meets
<i>Tuesday, February 14</i>	Trustees, Mission & Justice, Stewardship meets
<i>Tuesday, February 28</i>	Council meets

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!



To the Congregation of the First Congregational Church of Bellingham UCC:

Carol and I are grateful for these 50 years of belonging, and for your love and friendship, and for a church environment that has nurtured our faith journeys. We leave with warm feelings and fond memories.

This church has a gift of hospitality and purpose. We leave with this advice:

Never sell yourselves short on what you are able to do.

Do not be timid. Be bold in your love and compassion. Be bold in doing justice. Be bold in wondering and seeking. Be bold in your witness.

God, as usual, is still speaking. God bless all of you!

George and Carol

Lamb

As of December 15, George and Carol have moved to Horizon House, a high-rise retirement community in downtown Seattle. Their new contact info is

Horizon House
900 University Street Apt. 4L
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 206-382-3705

IN THE HOSPITAL?

If you or a loved one is in the hospital or planning to have surgery or a procedure, the pastoral staff wants to know. By law, hospitals cannot voluntarily let clergy know when their members are in the hospital. They must have your permission. So, please let us know if you or someone you love is in the hospital.

WORSHIP

December 24 Christmas Eve

Family Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 pm

A Christmas Eve service is offered with children in mind as we sing songs and retell the story. Special music will be shared by the Family Choir.

Candlelight Service of Lessons, Carols with communion, 10:30 pm

We will observe this Holy Night with a festive service of lessons and carols, holy communion and special music by the Chancel Choir and others.

December 25

Christmas Morning Worship, 10:00 am

This is a child-friendly service as we worship together in community.

We will sing songs and tell stories in a relaxed and worshipful way.

No church school or nursery care during this service.

You are welcome to come in pajamas or comfy clothes.

January 1

New Year's Day Worship, 10:00 am

Celebrate the new calendar year in worship.



HEALING SERVICE will be **Sunday, January 1**. We will 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.

WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Our summer experiment with Wednesday worship has taken off this past fall. We begin with a shared meal at 5:30 pm. People are welcome to join in the meal whenever they are available. Worship begins at 6:30 and ends at 7:15 pm.

We specifically designed this worship to be more child- and family-friendly, so that all are truly welcome. Each service includes communion, music, prayer and a short reflection or meditation. If you have not yet tried this worship, we invite you to come check it out. If you are available to help with meals, please let us know by contacting the church office.

Wednesday Worship happens on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Our next services will be **Wednesdays, January 11 and 25**. Come and join us!

SPIRITUALITY

DRUM CIRCLE

We usually meet the
second Thursday of each month-
We will NOT meet in December
and hope to come back with renewed
enthusiasm in the New Year!

NEXT MEETING-
January 12th at 6:30pm (for instruction)
Or 7:30 pm (for drumming circle)

If you are interested please contact
Tara Olsen Allen at tara@fccb.net
or at the church at 734-3720

Hope you will join us!

CENTERING PRAYER AT FCCB

"Centering Prayer is a simple, no-frills form of meditation in the Christian tradition. Since it was first developed by Christian contemplative monks in the 1970s, it has allowed tens of thousands of practitioners worldwide to "return home," developing an authentically Christian meditation practice which not only delivers the healing and quieting of the mind typical of all meditation paths, but also reconnects directly to Christianity's hidden treasury of mystical and transformational wisdom."

Cynthia Bourgeault

The FCCB Centering Prayer Group meets **every Thursday morning from 10-11 am**. If you have questions please contact Mike Hoffman at mmhoffman-76@hotmail.com or 360-201-4668 or Elizabeth Beglin at elizabethbeglin@gmail.com or 360-319-2164 and we will respond as quickly as we can. All are welcome to join us ~ no experience necessary.



LABYRINTH WALK: The labyrinth is generally in the Chapel available for walking during church office hours (Monday - Thursday 9 am to 5 pm and Friday 9am to 1 pm) and on Sunday mornings. Please join us for our next facilitated walk on **Thursday, January 5 from 6:30 to 8 pm** when our theme will be "Epiphany."

THE MORNING KNITTING GROUP meets the **2nd and 4th Fridays from 10:00 am to noon** in the Fireplace Room. Items worked on include Prayer Shawls, or hats, scarves, and mittens to be distributed by the Opportunity Council through Project Warm-Up, or personal projects. Patterns for the group knitting projects will be available. Our next meeting will be **Friday, January 13th at 10:00 am**. If you have any questions or need additional information contact Sarah Jacobson at 319-5104 or sarahwjacobson@yahoo.com.



Stephen Ministry

At this special time of the year it is good to remember that 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. Do you, or someone you know, have a need for some caring compassion in this period of time? Call one of the Stephen Ministry Leaders.

Our Leaders are: Kathleen McGuinness (733-1251); Tim Shepherd (738-0981), Libby Weiss (756-2062); Kent French (734-3720 x. 103) and Tara Olsen Allen (734-3720 x. 101).

JUSTICE

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY POVERTY ACTION MARCH AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS DRIVE

In response to overwhelming cuts in services the local social service providers and faith communities are organizing a march and essential needs drive on Martin Luther King Day and our church will join in the efforts. Currently many of our county's essential needs cupboards are being depleted due to these hard economic times. They are in serious need of being restocked. This means we need your help to contribute to the Essential Needs Drive. The drive will be gathering items for our local service providers. **Please bring food bank items, diapers and toiletries to church the first three Sundays of January.** On the day of the march we will deliver these items to the County Court House.

The March and Essential Needs drive will honor and celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his unfinished "Poor Peoples Campaign" of 1968.

Please join this permitted march on Jan. 16th at 10:30am at the County Courthouse - 311 Grand Avenue, it will proceed to the Federal Building and then end at the City Municipal Court for the annual Martin Luther King program beginning at 12 noon. *The reason for the march and the drive is a Just Peace issue.* If you have any questions please contact Shantel Rapp at 360-232-4482 or email britelrapp.1@comcast.net

HOT MEALS FOR OCCUPY BELLINGHAM

Would you like to share hospitality and perhaps learn more about the Occupy Movement? Mission and Justice is working with members of the congregation to provide a hot meal once a week to the protesters down at Maritime Heritage Park. If you are interested please see Helen McLeod after church or call 647-5324 or email helenorjohn@comcast.net

EPIPHANY FOOD DONATIONS

January 8 is Epiphany Sunday.

Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Wise Ones' who came bearing gifts for the infant Jesus. Our own younger Wise Ones, Angels and Shepherds will collect gifts for the Bellingham Food Bank from the congregation during worship. So, come with donations to support our local food bank!



GREEN TEAM ANSWER CORNER

Green Team: *My question is about organic foods, which I sometimes buy for their healthiness. But my neighbor said organic methods are also greener for the planet. How is that?*

We went to "Living Well, Living Green in Skagit and Whatcom Counties" (copy in the church library) for an answer. In brief, YES, organic farming helps the planet. Organic farmers eliminate much of the need for fossil fuels by using less machinery, and by using biological pesticides rather than fossil fuel-derived synthetic pesticides. They also reduce soil depletion, a serious problem conventional agriculture faces, with practices such as companion planting, crop rotation, and cover-cropping. And, by getting to know local farmers, you may find small farms using organic methods even though they haven't gone to the expense of certification.

Got a question for the Green Team? Send it to greenteam@fcb.net.

INTERFAITH COALITION

ANNUAL MEETING PROMISES INSPIRATION AND HOPE: Please plan to attend Interfaith Coalition's annual meeting with a friend or two on Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 1110 14th St. in Bellingham. The program will include first-hand accounts of how the homeless housing and health-care services the coalition supports make a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need. Following the program, you'll enjoy refreshments and fellowship with Interfaith friends, and when the evening ends, you'll leave feeling inspired and hopeful.

CABIN FEVER NW PERFORMS WINTER BENEFIT FOR INTERFAITH COALITION: Enjoy an evening of homegrown music when Cabin Fever NW performs a benefit concert for Interfaith Coalition on Friday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. at the Firehouse Performing Arts Center, 1314 Harris Ave. in Bellingham. Tickets cost \$20 each and are available at the door. With banjo and guitar, along with their vocal harmonies, Dianne Wood Bochsler and Tara Caldwell Wolfe, who are Cabin Fever NW, blend musical genres that include folk, bluegrass, pop, alt-country, and blues. The duo won the People's Choice Award at the 2008 Winter Folk Festival in Florence, Ore.

COMMUNITY

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Most Christians are familiar with The Lord's Prayer. While this familiarity may not necessarily breed contempt, it can breed complacency. We will examine the Lord's Prayer and attempt to answer the question "How can we, in 2012, hear and live into the words of this prayer in ways that impact our daily lives?" This will be a five-session, interactive class with an opportunity to deepen our relationship to prayer.

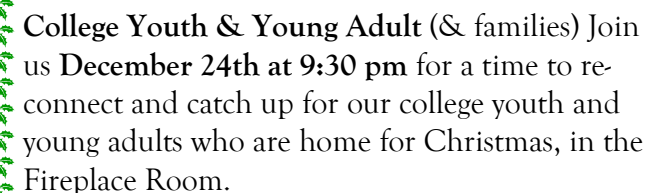
Co-facilitators: Janet Ott and Rody Rowe

Time: 9 - 9:50 am

Sunday mornings: **January 29, February 5, 19, 26, and March 4.**

2011 GIVING: If you want your pledge to show on this year's giving statement, the last deposit will be made on December 30th. Your check must be here by noon that day.

PLEDGE UPDATE: As of December 20, we have received 246 pledges for a total of \$510,500.



College Youth & Young Adult (& families) Join us December 24th at 9:30 pm for a time to reconnect and catch up for our college youth and young adults who are home for Christmas, in the Fireplace Room.

AROUND THE CHURCH

BOOK CLUB: Do you enjoy reading? Why not plan to join the daytime book club which meets the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireplace Room (September - May) The book we will be discussing at our **next meeting on January 3rd** will be "Secrets from the Vinyl Cafe" by Stuart Mclean. For more information contact Kathleen McGuinness at 733-1251.

WEDNESDAY PARISH NURSE HOURS: Our Parish Nurse, Brenda Nicholson holds office hours **Wednesday from 12-2 pm.**

BOARD REPORTS: It's that time of year again! Board Reports for the Annual Report were due **December 21st.** If you have not turned your report in, please do so as soon as possible.

BUDGET HEARINGS: Preparations for this year's budget are going well. Our third Budget Hearing will be **January 8th.**

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS: We are now sending the Church Council Highlights with the FCCB Friday email. Copies of the highlights are also available on the table outside the church office.

ARE YOU MISSING A DISH? There are many leftover dishes from the most recent potluck. Please look in the kitchen to see if your dish is there.

HOLIDAY HOURS: The Church office will be closed for the holiday on **Monday, December 26, Tuesday, December 27th and Monday, January 2, 2012.**

STAFF SCHEDULES: Tara will be out of the office December 25-January 3. Kent will be out of the office January 15-19.

ATTENTION: COLLEGE AGE YOUNG ADULTS! Join us at Honey Moon, 1053 North State St., **Thursday, January 19th from 5 to 7 pm** for Progressive Christian, Company, Conversation and Connection. Come join us for "Com-MOON-ion."

SAVE THE DATE: Campership Fundraiser is January 22nd. More details to follow.

NEED A NAMETAG? If you are a frequent visitor, friend of the church or lost your name tag, you can sign up for a name tag at our Welcome Table in the Narthex. A Membership Board member will be available after church to obtain your info and your name tag will be ready the following week. Please remember to wear your name tag for both worship and coffee hour.

PARKING ON SUNDAYS: As a courtesy to members and visitors 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. If you are willing 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!

WEEKLY EVENTS EMAIL: If you would like to receive the weekly email with information about upcoming church events please make sure the office has your current email address. Contact Kathryn at 734-3720 or office@fccb.net.

FULL CIRCLE SCHEDULE

Deadline	Mailing Date
January 18	January 25

COMMUNITY

INTERESTED IN SERVING ON A BOARD?

If you are a member of FCCB and wish to work with others who share a common interest, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee to see what opportunities await for you. We are currently working to fill a slate of nominees who will be voted upon at our annual meeting in January. There are openings in the following boards & committees:

- Adult Ministries* (concerned with classes, forums, library, fellowship activities)
- Arts in Worship* (concerned with visual arts, music & drama)
- Christian Education* (concerned with church school & youth activities)
- Diaconate* (concerned the spiritual health of our congregation)
- Membership* (concerned with new members, classes & social activities)
- Mission & Justice* (concerned with social justice issues, programs & offerings)
- Stewardship* (works with annual stewardship campaign, time & talent donations)
- Trustees* (concerned with church property and finances)
- Nominating* (draws up a ballot nominating members for board positions yearly)
- Personnel* (works with job descriptions, salaries, working conditions of staff)

Nominating Committee members are: Carol Garguile, Diana Harrison, Sharon Camblin, Vicki Marshall, Pete Rittmueller and Etta Kirk. Please stop by the information table in the social hall and chat with us about these opportunities.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS BOOKS

Please check out our collection of Advent and Christmas books available in the church library.

Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M.

Nouwen: Daily Scripture and Prayers Together with Nouwen's Own Words By Henri J.M. Nouwen

Christmas: Festival of Incarnation By Donald Heinz

The First Christmas By Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan

The Gift of Acabar: A Warm and Shining Message of Inspiration By Og Mandino and Buddy Kaye

The Handmaid and the Carpenter By Elizabeth Berg

In the Beginning: Creation Spirituality for the Days of Advent By Donald Schmidt

Journey Into Christmas By Bess Streeter Aldrich

Joy to the World: Christmas Legends By Ruth Sawyer

Kneeling in Bethlehem By Ann Weems

The Legend of the Christmas Prayer By Brian Morgan

The Mood of Christmas By Howard Thurman

Shepherds Abiding By Jan Karon

Star in the East By Hans Holzer

The Uncluttered Heart: Making Room for God During Advent and Christmas By Beth Richardson

Unplug the Christmas Machine By Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli

The Unsettling Season: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany By Donald J. Shelby

Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas Orbis Books

POINSETTIAS

Given by... In Memory of...

Cheryll & David Blair... our parents, Doug Blair, Marie Blair, Alex Murray, June Murray and sister, Sherry Fagerness
Kelly Follis...my grandmother Kelly Knight Ballinger, my parents, Frank & LaVon Knight
Bill & Marijo Fox...our parents
Carol & Dominic Garguile... Margaret & Lawrence Brewster, Lucy Garguile & Todd Curran
Joyce Gienger... Elias Gienger, Yvonne Pheifer, Stan Erickson & Warner Erickson
Maryann & George Gleason... Glenn & Ila Breakley, John & Dorena Gleason
Mike & Etta Kirk...our parents
Dick & Cherie Little...Mr. & Mrs. Richard Little, Jr. and Mr. & Mrs Ernest Sparks
Fran & Paul Madison...Lloyd & Nancy
Shirley Mahlberg...Douglas Meadows
Bob & Kathi Matthes...our grandparents
Doris Olmstead...Marv Olmstead
The Rapp Family...Abigail Rosetta Rapp
Mike & Linda Rawls...our dads
Wendy Scherrer...Marie & Wendell Wollam
Doug & Tim Shepherd...our Mothers, Nina Shepherd & Margaretta Roberts
Judy Wahlborg... Quentin Wahlborg & Howard Haskell
Richard & Bonnie Wilson...Eve Rice, teacher friend
Linda Wilton...Ethel & Les Wilton
Amy Wolsdorf...my loved ones
Andy & Lynne Yurovchak...Alice & Ernie Johnson, Caroline & Andy Yurovchak

Given by.... In Recognition of...

Doris Olmstead...Alice Olson
Amy Wolsdorf...Mr. & Mrs. Lad Anderson

Purchased as a gift to the church...

Dick & Karlene Cathell
Alice Olson
The Scribners
JoAnn Ward



YOUTH



FROM THE YOUTH COORDINATOR

There are many ways to begin a new year. Last year, I began mine by moving to Bellingham and making a resolution to "make as many new lasting connections as possible". I have accomplished that and exceeded my wildest expectations. God has really been opening some amazing doors for me. I was laid off from a job that wasn't serving me. Because of that, I have more time to dive deeper into my Real Estate work and develop The Tangerine Emporium (a project I am working on). The lay off also allows me more time to devote to youth group. Bellingham is truly a blessed and special place. This year, my commitments lie in settling deeper into this amazing community, this Church, and the Divine plan that God has set forth for me. Each one of you has been so welcoming, so loving, and such a bright example of what it means to be a Christian. I'm talking to YOU too, the youth! Yes, you. Your intrinsic knowing that service equals love, your constant questioning and puzzling over mysteries, and your smiles, games, and laughter really cause me to be thankful to be a part of this church in the way that I am. I am opening my heart to all the blessings that are stored up for me, and I challenge you to do the same! There is an abundance of happiness, a big huge storage bin with YOUR name on it. Open your hearts to the best life that God has stored up for you. When you accept those gifts, you have gifts to give back. May the next months bring you great joy, peace, and love and may you know that you are special and glorious the whole year through.

Reminder: Youth group times remain fixed, unless otherwise noted: *Middle School 5:30-6:45. Snack or meal for both MS & HS 6:45-7:15. High School 7:15-8:30.* I hope to see more participation, ideas, excitement, and community building in the coming year. Don't forget about the National Youth Event for 9th-12th graders. We will begin the journey on July 7. Registration is open now! **If you plan to attend, let Hannah know ASAP.**

January 1st: The Year is New! Let's have fun. Youth groups meet at normal times. What is the biggest goal you have for 2012? We'll be creatively setting our 2012 intentions. Bring your favorite food of 2011 for a potluck-which happens during our overlap snack time at 6:45.

January 8th: Northwest Youth Services Community Service project. Middle School Meet at NWYS 1020 N. State St at 5:30, High School at 6:45. Come prepared to get dirty. Gloves and construction masks will be provided.

January 15th: Winter Wellness! The first wealth is health, so let's talk about living richly! Bring questions, concerns, ideas, recipes, and good conversation. Nutrition, happiness, laughter and exercise is something Hannah has been learning about for a long time. We'll talk about what it means to really feel good all around. Youth groups at normal times. There might be a special guest.

January 22nd: Downtown Scavenger Hunt. Both youth groups meet at the church at 5:30. We'll leave from the church and be exploring Bellingham mostly on foot! More details to come.

January 29th: Art and Creativity Night! Middle School-bring a project you've been working on. It can be anything! There will also be project materials available. High School-we'll be working on a fundraising activity which will involve glue, sparkles, markers, scissors, etc. Expect fun and a good time of togetherness!

CHILDREN

CHURCH SCHOOL GATHERS: On **Sunday, January 8**, the church school children will gather in the Chapel before worship to dress as shepherds, angels and wise ones and prepare to collect our Epiphany gifts of food for the Bellingham Food Bank. Please bring donations of non perishable food. We will then gather in the Social Hall for a time of story and then return to join our families in the Sanctuary for communion.

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE: Once again this year we celebrated the beginning of Advent by sharing a meal, singing carols and building the most amazing gingerbread creations. A big "THANK YOU" to the Board of Christian Education for all their planning and hard work and to our middle school and high school youth and others for their assistance. The meal was delicious and a good time was had by all!

CHRISTMAS PAGAENT: On Sunday, December 18 the church school children Chancel Choir and Mens Chorus from our church participated in a creative retelling of the Christmas story. Much gratitude to all the readers, singers and musicians, those who helped with costumes, stage direction and all who attended and helped to create this wonderful worship service.

EARLY RELEASE CLUB: On **Wednesday, January 11** from **12:30 to 3:30 pm** all middle school youth are invited join others on early release day at the church. Youth will need to bring a brownbag lunch and provide own transportation to and from the church. All youth need to sign up ahead of time and fill out a participation and medical release forms so we know who to expect. For more information contact Sharry Nyberg at sharry@fccb.net or Nancy Fayram at dfayram@yahoo.com.

CHURCH CALENDAR

January 1, Sunday—New Years Day

10:00 AM Worship/Church School
11:30 AM Healing Service
5:30 PM Middle School Youth Group
6:45 PM High School Youth Group

January 2, Monday—Office Closed

January 3, Tuesday

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

January 4, Wednesday

12:00 PM Parish Nurse Hours
5:00 PM Prayer Shawl
7:00 PM Stephen Ministers

January 5, Thursday

10:00 AM Centering Prayer
6:30 PM Labyrinth Walk

January 6, Friday

10:00 AM In Stitches

January 8, Sunday— Epiphany Sunday

10:00 AM High School Church School
10:00 AM Worship/Church School Gathers
11:30 AM Budget Meeting
5:30 PM Middle School Youth Group at NWYS
6:45 PM High School Youth Group at NWYS

January 9, Monday

9:00 AM Shalom Circle
7:00 PM Boards meet

January 10, Tuesday

9:30 AM Discovery Circle
7:00 PM Lettered Streets Meeting
7:00 PM Church Council

January 11, Wednesday—

10:00 AM Willows Worship
12:00 PM Parish Nurse Hours
12:30 PM Early Release Club
5:30 PM Wednesday Meal & Worship

January 12, Thursday

10:00 AM Centering Prayer
1:00 PM Jesus Seminar
6:30 PM Drumming Instruction
7:30 PM Drumming Circle

January 13, Friday

10:00 AM In Stitches |
10:00 AM Daytime Knitting Group

January 14, Saturday

10:00 AM Creative Connections

January 15, Sunday

10:00 AM Worship/Church School
5:30 PM Middle School Youth Group
6:45 PM High School Youth Group

January 16, Monday

9:00 AM Shalom Circle

January 18, Wednesday—Full Circle Deadline

12:00 PM Parish Nurse Hours
5:30 PM Prayer Shawl
7:00 PM Stephen Ministers

January 19, Thursday

10:00 AM Centering Prayer
5:00 PM Honeymoon

January 20, Friday

8:30 AM Men's Breakfast at the Barkley Bob's
10:00 AM In Stitches

January 22, Sunday

10:00 AM Worship
11:30 AM Campership Fundraiser
5:30 PM Middle School and High School YG

January 23, Monday

9:00 AM Shalom Circle

January 25, Wednesday—Full Circle Mailing

12:00 PM Parish Nurse Hours
5:30 PM Wednesday Meal & Worship

January 26, Thursday

10:00 AM Centering Prayer
1:00 PM Jesus Seminar

January 27, Friday

10:00 AM In Stitches
10:00 AM Daytime Knitting Group

January 29, Sunday

9:00 AM Breathing New Life class
10:00 AM Worship/Church School
11:30 AM Annual Meeting
5:30 PM Middle School Youth Group
6:45 PM High School Youth Group

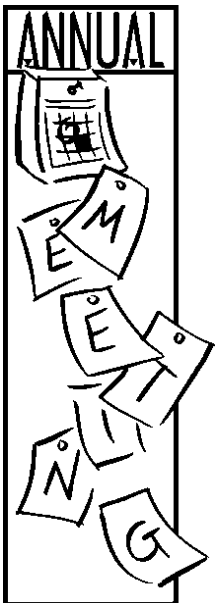
January 30, Monday

9:00 AM Shalom Circle

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

Date: January 2012

Non-Profit Organization
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Permit No. 8



ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to join us for our Annual Meeting, following worship on **Sunday, January 29**, when we will celebrate 2011 and look forward to the good things God has in store for us in 2012. Join us in the Social Hall for a light snack before returning to the Sanctuary for the meeting. Childcare will be provided.



First Congregational Church of Bellingham United Church of Christ

Open & Affirming Congregation
2401 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360.734.3720 Email: office@fccb.net

STAFF DROP-IN HOURS

Our pastoral staff is in and out of the office throughout the week. You are welcome to stop by during their drop-in hours or make an appointment that fits your schedule.

Please call the church office at 734.3720.

Kent—Monday 4-6 pm and Wednesday 12-2 pm.
Tara—Wednesday 3-5 pm, and Thursday 10-12 pm.
Sharry—Monday 11-1 pm and Thursday 3-5 pm.