

 FROM THE
PASTORS



Kent French

On Sunday, May 29, I offered a sermon about our "Unknown God."

It was Memorial Day weekend, the morning of the Ski to Sea race and as expected, a low-attendance Sunday. Since then, the sermon has still been working on me and I offer some of its main points as a summertime challenge. (The text was the story of Paul in the Areopagus [Acts 17:16-34]. You can also listen to the sermon on our facebook page.)

My concern is that for too many of us, the God we talk about in worship is largely unknown to us, because we keep God in an abstract, distant and continually unfamiliar place. We cannot speak authentically about our experience of God outside of church, because we take too little time to think about or experience God in our lives. (See Tara's article in the next column.)

One of the surprising things for Tara and me in moving to Whatcom County is that the religious choice here seems to be between conservative Christianity or no religion. There's not much acknowledgement of the nuances or differences between those two choices.

There is also downright hostility toward Christianity and, as in many places in our country, general ignorance about the advances in Protestant theology over the past 300 years. I've noticed this in the stories you have told me about friends and neighbors who are anti-Christian, as well as in my own conversations with members of the community.

Frankly, I find this attitude shocking and I think it requires that we who consider ourselves liberal or progressive Christians step up and speak up. I am tired of the tepid approach that members of the UCC and other

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Be still and know that I am God...
Have leisure and know that I am
God...Take Sabbath and know that I am
God...



Tara Olsen Allen

These sentences are all interpretive variations on the same scripture; Psalm 46. This is a beloved scripture by many. However, for those of us who have a difficult time slowing down or taking Sabbath, this scripture can challenge us.

As we enter into the summer season, with its promised warmth and brighter days, there is a certain expectation that I hear from many people that "things will slow down." Well, if you notice, all of the translations in the scripture above require that the listener actual DO something in order to know God's presence- we are told by the psalmist that we need to BE still, HAVE leisure, and actively TAKE Sabbath. There is an intentionality in these statements; it is not simply that things will slow down, but you have to take certain actions in order for this to happen.

As I look at my summer schedule, I realize I am one of the worst culprits of just expecting that things will slow down. I have scheduled very little Sabbath time in the summer season; very little time to play in the warmth and the sun. How then, am I expected, or are we, expected to get to know God? If we do not allow ourselves the room to be still, have leisure or take Sabbath we run the risk of being too busy to let God in.

For some of us, this is a defense mechanism. We are nervous to slow down because we are not sure we want to hear what God might be saying to us. We do not want to have leisure because we are afraid our friends or colleagues might think we are lazy or not working hard enough. We do not take a Sabbath because we are "supposed" to be

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denominations take of backing down, shutting up or ceding the floor when other, louder, more exclusive, more limiting interpretations of Christianity hold forth.

I wonder if sometimes we are more concerned about not offending people than we are about speaking our truth.

If we really believe in a still-speaking God, then we need to be talking to other people about that God. If we really believe that God welcomes us no matter who we are or where we are on life's journey, we need to talk about that God. If we really believe that God is open and affirming, we need to talk about that God. We need to talk about this God in a strong voice. Compassionately. Often.

Rather than let other people define what we believe, we need to become strong enough in our convictions that we are willing to demonstrate, in word and deed, what God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit mean to us. And if we're not yet convinced, then we need to be willing to wonder aloud about these things with thoughtful conversation partners.

The very future of the Church depends on our willingness to engage about these issues of our faith, as does the future of Christianity and the future of our congregation.

So here's my challenge to you: this summer, I urge all of us to talk with *at least* two people about what God means to us. They should be people with whom we do not share a household. They can be strangers or friends or relatives, but we need to have substantive conversations. We should also be willing to solicit and listen to our conversations partners' thoughts on God. Make the conversations exchanges; not arguments. If the other person gets aggressive or argumentative, don't fall for the bait. Just acknowledge their point of view, and say, "That's very interesting, but I see it differently" or "Tell me more..." and then, "Thank you for sharing that with me."

If you'd like some help, then I suggest some Bible passages for inspiration (Psalm 23, 1 Corinthians 13, almost anything in the Gospels or Acts, Genesis 1 and 2 come immediately to mind). They can tell you a lot about the God we believe in. You can also come see your pastors in office hours or by appointment to ask for our encouragement.

I pray that you will take on this challenge, for the sake of our shared faith. Why? Because the future of progressive Christianity depends on it.

I look forward to hearing about your results.

In faith,
Kent

busy all of the time; this is what our culture expects of us. Hmm, well maybe it is time to embrace this counter-cultural notion of having leisure. Maybe the summer is the time to experiment with being still and maybe if you are lucky, you will get to know God a little bit better!

In her book, "May I have This Dance?" Joyce Rupp offers the following, "Leisure is more than just not doing anything. It is intentionally enjoying life without having to be functional or productive...We can fish or dance or plant tomatoes or watch a sunset without worrying about how many fish we catch or whether the tomatoes will ripen in time. We simply enjoy the process..."

This summer, I pray for each of you:

- A chance to be less productive
- Time to be more leisurely
- Let yourself be a bit freer
- Focus on wonder
- Let yourself enjoy the playground of God and let God dance and take delight in you and in your world.

Blessings & Peace to you,
Tara

FULL CIRCLE SCHEDULE	
Deadline	Mailing Date
August 17	August 24
September 21	September 28

A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY HAS COME TO THE FCCB DRUMMING CIRCLE!

When we gathered in April, we were fortunate to have Karen Thomas join us, a woman with quite a bit of previous drumming experience. Karen has offered to do an hour of instruction before we have the drumming circle. I am so excited about this and hope you will join us if you would like further instruction on the varying techniques in drumming.

So, mark your calendars!

Our NEXT drumming circle will happen this Thursday July 14 at 7:00 pm

If you would like more instruction in drumming, please join us in the Sanctuary at 6:00 pm with Karen.

We do want to honor her time and so, if you could bring a monetary donation (suggested \$5 per person) to support her that would be most helpful.

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!

THANK YOU FROM THE FRIENDS OF MAHER
The Friends of Maher, Bellingham would like to thank the First Congregational Church of Bellingham for hosting a wonderful evening with Sister Lucy Kurien of Pune, India. With a special thank you to the staff and the boards of Adult Ministries and Mission Justice for their sponsorship. Sister Lucy warmed all of our hearts with her down-to-earth humor and amazing journey to bring love and healing to traumatized women and children at Maher Ashram in India. It is no wonder that she is compared to Mother Theresa in her dedication to caring for those in such desperate need. Sister Lucy enjoyed her conversations at FCCB and was especially grateful for the time she was able to spend with women from the Womencare Shelter, Lydia Place, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services and Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic the next morning at the church. Friendships were begun over these two days and hopefully a lasting dialogue on how we all can help create communities of healing and love. Thank you again for welcoming this interfaith journey into our lives.

Friends of Maher, Bellingham: Jillian Froebe, Elizabeth Kerwin, Paula Brown, Shirley Osterhaus and Krista Hunter

A THANK YOU TO THE LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

As the landscape chair, the comments often come to me as to how wonderful the grounds are looking. So I thought it time to pass on a big thank you to the many hands (and backs) that have made for light[er] work.: Rod McKenzie and his grandson Connor, Ruth Flucke, Bob Matthes, Jerry Couchman, Barb Storms, Nancy Hart, Helen McLeod, Sarah Jacobson, Bette Keller, Keith Craswell, Meril Davenport and her crew Tim, Eliza and Emma, Paul and Bobbie Jensen, Mike Kirk, Joanne Kotjan, Bill Fox, Marcia Leister, Roger and Dorothy Shimer, Fred Wepprecht, Kay Porter, Sherry Pryde, Marty Sandoval and the mission trip youth, Allegra Ritchie, Mallory Sandoval, Erin Schick, and Brian Hoffman, and Dominic Garguile – thanks for your kind words and especially for the blow torch. And thanks as well to Steve Kimberley and the board of Trustees for their faith and support. No doubt I've missed someone – my apologies.

Krista Hunter



Stephen Ministry

Feeling all alone or down? Our Stephen Ministry can help. Stephen Ministers will walk with you through your troubles and be there for you when you need them. They are available for "big" or "little" crisis. Contact one of our Stephen Leaders to learn more about having a Stephen Minister.

Our leaders are: Libby Weiss (756-2062); Kathleen McGuinness (733-1251); and Tim Shepherd (738-0981)

NAME TAG UPDATE

It's been several months since we've begun our new name tag system and with it's success, we needed a new name tag holder. The Membership Board would like to thank Kent and his former church for emailing us pictures of their name tag holder. Bob Matthes was able to design and build a system that is similar and, thanks to him, we have the beautiful result in the Narthex. Our new holder is almost full, so plans are under way to install another one in the Narthex. Please keep in mind that name tags are easy to request at our Welcome Table. We encourage everyone associated with FCCB to wear a name tag as a gesture of care and welcome. Thanks to all who have embraced this change. A member of our Board is available every Sunday at the Welcome Table if you have any questions.

LEARN, GROW, AND SERVE

BY BECOMING A STEPHEN MINISTER

Do you have gifts for caring, encouragement, and listening? If so, please prayerfully consider becoming a Stephen Minister. Trained Stephen Ministers provide emotional and spiritual support and care to people who are going through a difficult time. The FCCB Stephen Ministry Leadership team is beginning the recruiting process for our next 50 hour training series scheduled to begin in January 2012. Ministry ("Job") Descriptions as well as applications are available on the Welcome Table in the Narthex as well as on the table outside the church office. Please feel free to take a look at these and to ask one of our Stephen Ministers or Leaders about this program. We're the ones wearing the blue nametags on Sunday! Thank you!

THE JESUS SEMINAR STUDY GROUP WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN US DURING THE MONTH OF JULY.

We will meet on July 14 and July 28 from 1:00-3:00 pm in room 11 downstairs in the church. On July 14 we will watch a DVD of Karen Armstrong giving an address entitled, *Suggestions for a Second Axial Age*. This address was given at the Spring Meeting of Westar Institute in 2001. In this address, Karen looks at the experience of transcendence as it was conceived and expressed in all of the great world religions during the Axial Age of antiquity (c.700-200 BCE). Karen examines the various ways transcendence was understood in later generations and discusses the modern dilemma of faith, asking whether we are now in the throes of a Second Axial Age. Karen is the author of: *The History of God; The Great Transformation; The Battle for God*. Karen has also written extensively on Mohammad, Islam and the Buddha.

On July 28, from 1:00-3:00 pm in room 11, we will watch a DVD of Marcus Borg giving a lecture to the Spring meeting of Westar Institute in 2008. The title of Marcus' lecture is: *The Study of Jesus and Christian Adult Theological Re-Education Today*. Marcus suggests that the scholarly study of Jesus provides a rich opportunity to do adult theological re-education in this time of change and conflict in the churches of North America. It can lead to a rediscovery of how to read the gospels and the Bible in a persuasive and compelling way, how to think of the character and passion of God, and what it means for American Christians today to follow Jesus.

DINING IN FAITH

Dining in Faith has been a popular activity over the years in First Congregational Church. It provides an opportunity for groups of people to get acquainted and re-acquainted over a meal in a host home. After a short hiatus, Dining in Faith has been revisited, and 40 people met on June 3rd in five homes around Bellingham for a potluck meal and conversation. We will continue this activity quarterly by choosing an evening and asking interested people to sign up and indicate whether they would be willing to host the activity in their home. There will be an opportunity to choose to dine with other adults or with intergenerational groups.

The Board of Adult Ministries sponsors this event in the life of our church. We encourage new members and visitors to participate. Save the date of Friday, September 9th for the next Dining in Faith. A sign-up sheet will be available during August and participants will be randomly assigned to hosts. Participants will be notified the first week of September.

Mark your calendar now for this delightful event.

WORSHIP NOTES



HEALING SERVICE will be Sunday, July 3rd. 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 Stephen Minister will be available to pray with you.



GOOOOOOOOOOD MORNING BELLINGHAM! That's right you heard it. Worship has been moved to 9 am for July 3rd to September 4th. Diaconate made this decision based on feedback from the congregation.

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP: Join us for Wednesday Worship, this summer - a new experiment in worshipping at FCCB. Family-friendly, musically adventurous, shorter, with Communion every time. All are welcome to join us on Wednesdays, July 13 and August 17 in the Sanctuary from 6:30-7:15 pm. We will share a light meal following the service.

SPECIAL JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE is being planned for 9 am on Sunday August 14, 2011 at First Congregational Church. We will be uniting in worship again this summer with the congregation of United Church of Ferndale in our Sanctuary. Potluck to follow in the Social Hall. Sponsoring boards are Adult Ministries and Diaconate. Interested in volunteering? Contact Krista Hunter at 312-1291 or ruddyduck@earthlink.net

WORSHIP JULY 31—Harry Huff, Minister of Music at Old South Congregational Church (UCC) in Boston, will join us once again in worship on Sunday, July 31.

SAVE THE DATE!

Harry Huff and Kent French for

An Evening of Song

a concert to benefit
Interfaith Coalition and
Northwest Youth Services

Sunday, July 31
6:30 pm

Doors open at 6pm.
Admission is free.

A free-will donations will be collected.
Dessert reception to follow.

CHURCH CALENDAR

July 1

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

July 3—Bob Rieke preaching

9:00 AM *Worship/Summer Church School*
10:00 AM *Healing Service*

July 4—OFFICE CLOSED

July 6

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *For the Bible Tells Me So—Showing*

July 7

6:30 PM *Labyrinth Walk*
7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

July 8

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

July 10

9:00 AM *Worship/Summer Church School*
10:00 AM *Parish Nurse Office Hours*

July 11

9:00 AM *Shalom Circle*
5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *Board Meetings*

July 13

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
6:30 PM *Wednesday Worship*

July 14

1:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*
7:00 PM *Drumming Circle*

July 15

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

July 17

9:00 AM *Worship/Summer Church School*

July 18

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

July 20

5:00 PM *Exercise Group*
7:00 PM *Stephen Ministers*
7:30 PM *Stephen Leaders*

July 21

7:00 PM *Jesus Seminar*

July 22

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

July 24—Andrew Holcom preaching

9:00 PM *Worship/Summer Church School*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES!



John Alexander Blair, son of David & Cheryll Blair, graduated from University of Washington, Foster School of Business, with his MBA.

Emily Johanna Booth, daughter of Terri Briant Booth & Ken Booth, graduated from Western Washington University, summa cum laude, with a B.A. in English and a minor in History. She is applying at UBC and other universities for a post-graduate degree in Library, Archival, and Informational Studies.

Amy Bozorth, graduated from Western Washington University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology with a concentration in Archaeology.

Leann Marie Conley, fiancé of Andrew Holcom, graduated from Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, with a Master of Music in Choral Conducting.

Dr. Nicole Marshall, daughter of Ken & Vicky Marshall, Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, completed a fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) in Portland. Nicole also earned a Master of Science degree in Clinical Research. Nicole has been hired as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at OHSU, and will be involved in research, teaching, and clinical medicine.

Tiffany Mathewson, daughter of Tom & Sandie Mathewson, graduated from San Francisco Academy of Art University with a Bachelor degree in Fine Art Photography.

Katrina Mathewson, daughter of Tom & Sandie Mathewson, graduated from Chapman University with a degree in Screenwriting.

Angela Pahlow, graduated from Western Washington University with a Masters of Education in Counseling.

Carly Thomas, daughter of Cy & Lynn Lindberg, graduated from the University of San Francisco with a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

WHAT IS THE PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE?

The Pastoral Relations Committee is a relatively new committee in this church.

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.

The PRC 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 Pastoral Relations Committee meets with both pastors on a regular basis to provide a safe environment in which to address their needs and the concerns of the congregation. The PRC does not do performance reviews. Reviews are the responsibility of the Church Council. We dialogue with the pastors about their personal growth and well-being, along with congregational expectations.

This continues to be 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, caring feedback, and deal with conflict in a positive way, we all need to learn new skills in these arenas.

Ideally, your feedback is best shared directly with the pastors. They welcome your input. The Pastoral Relations Committee is always happy to support members of the congregation with this process.

If you have questions or feedback, please let one of us know.

Janet Ott, Chair	739-0098	coach@janetott.com
Marijo Fox		marijofox@yahoo.com
Pete Rittmueller		rittmuellerl@eesconsulting.com
Anna Hall Evans		annaandmurphy@hotmail.com
Cheryl Smith		themssmiths@yahoo.com

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

SUMMER CHURCH SCHOOL: Our summer church school program began last week for children Pre School through Fifth Grade. The Pre School class will meet in Room 24 with teacher Lisa Vaughn and the Kindergarten–Fifth grade class will meet in Room 12/14 with Cynthia Pottle. Shannon McGuinness our summer K-5 teacher will begin next Sunday. Nursery Care is available in Room 31/33 for children 3 and under.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL: For almost 30 years our church participated in a wonderful ecumenical vacation church school with other congregations in our community. Last June at the end of our VCS week the planning team, participants and volunteers said goodbye to this program to make space for a new program to be birthed. This was a bittersweet decision and after long and thoughtful conversations it was decided this was the time to put closure to the program and allow space for new energy and programming. This is an exciting time as our Board of Christian Education is currently in the beginning process of dreaming and planning the future of our Vacation Church School. Watch for more information to come.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN: This summer the church school community will begin creating a vegetable garden (on the D street side of the church) in raised beds as one of their summer church school projects. If you are interested in helping with the project please contact Krista Hunter at 312-1291, Matt Ringstad at 671-9080 or Sharry at 734-3720 for more information.

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS are needed to assist Erin Schick (our Nursery Attendant) in the Nursery/Toddler room on Sunday mornings during the months of July and August. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with the babies and toddlers in our congregation. Please sign up for a Sunday outside Room 33.

YOUTH COORDINATOR POSITION

An Interview Team has been assembled of Middle School and High School young people, parents, and staff to get together with candidates who are interested in the Youth Coordinator position here at FCCB. We will keep you updated with the progress of the search and if you have any questions or comments, or know of someone who is interested in applying for the position, please get in touch with Tara at tara@fccb.net or call the church office. Please pray for this process and that we will find the right person for the job!
Thank you, Tara

YOUTH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

June 26 at 6–8 pm: *Cookout and Closure*



It has been such a fabulous year, so let's celebrate with a party! Barbeque at Andrew's house in the York Neighborhood (1626 Iron St., the one with the 3 story tree net!) Food will be provided, but feel free to bring your own fixin's to barbeque.

BRINGING IT HOME: CONSTRUCTION AS FAITH PRACTICE

In the spirit of ministry, the youth of First Congregational Church of Bellingham are going across the state for our annual mission trip. Last summer we participated in an inter-generational mission to Tijuana, Mexico with Esperanza International, where we used concrete blocks and heavy buckets to pray together with our brothers and sisters in the south. Many in our group had their eyes opened, again and for the first time, to the reality of poverty and to the joy that abides in the heart regardless.

Though it may at first seem benign spiritually, building a home is a deep and sincere practice of the Christian faith. A home inherently contains the qualities of love and support, of comfort and refuge, qualities which are central to our spiritual practice. When we are invited to participate in building the home of another, we are called to channel the Spirit in ourselves as blessings on that home, to be agents of that peace. As we pour foundations and construct walls, we imbed prayers for those who will reside within.

This year we head to Yakima to work with Habitat for Humanity to build in a different way, for different people, in different circumstances, yet in truth we go to do the same thing: to pray. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers July 10th to the 16th as we take your love out into the world.

The Youth Ministry Team

UPCOMING BOARD & COUNCIL DATES

July

Boards	July 11
Council	No Meeting

August

Boards	August 8
Council	August 23

Moment of Witness: Sharing God's Blessings

by Robin Williams

I came to the First Congregational Church of Bellingham with my family when I was five years old. My parents brought me. They decided to make this our church home. I went to church school and learned stories from the Bible and we built a house like Jesus and Mary and Joseph probably lived in. My mother sang in the choir. My father taught church school. We went to family potlucks and sang wonderful funny songs. My faith was born and it grew. I went to youth group, attended church conferences, went to church camp, sang more wonderful songs, met more wonderful people, and my faith quietly grew more. My faith was a gift from God learned from all these experiences.

I left childhood and Bellingham and attended a different church and experienced more of the world. I returned to Bellingham and returned to my church home. Happily, several of the old familiar people were still part of the church family at the First Congregation Church and the building still felt like home. It was the same God still living there who had accompanied me on my travels and who goes with me and all of us wherever we are on life's journey.

I feel blessed to have received the gift of faith and to have had it born and raised by the church family of the

First Congregational Church of Bellingham. I feel blessed to have received friendship, fellowship, comfort and care from my church family here. I feel blessed to be able to share my friendship, fellowship, comfort and care with others in the community. I have grown up to teach Sunday School, help with youth group, serve on boards, help with meals and do whatever I can to return the love and care I receive here. I admire the extraordinary Christians I meet at the First Congregational Church. I consider myself a very ordinary Christian but I am grateful to be part of this body of people who work so hard to make the world a more grace-filled, just and peaceful place. I am happy to contribute in whatever small ways I can to further God's purpose of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

I am currently on the Stewardship Board here at church and our theme for this year is Sharing God's Blessings. The theme is derived from 2 Corinthians 9:8, which says "*And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.*" I thank you all for the countless blessings this congregation has provided in my life and I urge you to consider the blessings you have to offer in the future—we are God's blessings to each other.

AROUND THE CHURCH

FOOD BANK FOOD FIRST SUNDAY: Food First Sunday is Sunday, July 3. 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. In August Food First Sunday is August 7th.

OFFICE CLOSED: The office will be closed for the holiday on July 4th.

STAFF SCHEDULES: Kent is on vacation until June 30. Kent & Tara will represent us at UCC General Synod in Tampa July 1-5. Sharry will be on vacation the month of July. Denise will be gone June 29–July 10. All check requests must be in by June 27th.

PRAYER VIGIL: The next Prayer Vigil for Peace in the Middle East will be at First Church Christ, Scientist on July 18th at 5:30 pm.

SUMMER MUSIC: If you have a talent to share, please consider doing so during Sunday worship services this summer. Contact Kay Marsh for details at katherinelmarsh@yahoo.com.

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.

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.

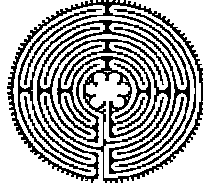
PARKING ON SUNDAYS: As a courtesy to members and visitors for whom walking has become more difficult, please avoid parking in the disability lot east of the sanctuary and those spots near the front doors in the lot west of the sanctuary. If you are willing to stretch your legs on a Sunday morning, please 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!

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



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 September 6 will be “Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter” by Tom Franklin.

LABYRINTH WALK: The labyrinth is generally in the Chapel available for walking during church office hours (Monday – Thursday 9:00 to 5:00 pm and Friday 9:00 to 1:00 pm) and on Sunday mornings. Please join us for our next facilitated walk on Thursday, July 7 when our theme will be “Chosen Journeys.” The Labyrinth is taking a break so there will not be a walk in August.



THE COMMUNITY MEAL: This month’s community meal will be served on May 29. Our shift is 1:00–3:15 pm. We will be serving juice and coffee, washing dishes and clearing and resetting tables. Sign up on the bulletin board or see Donna Romjue for more information on this and future meals.

CENTERING PRAYER: Please join us this summer for Centering Prayer on Thursday mornings from 9:45 to 10:15 am in the Sanctuary. Contact Mike Hoffman at mmhoffman-76@hotmail.com.

SUNDAY PREACHING SCHEDULE

July 3–Bob Reike

July 10–Tara

July 17–Kent

July 24–Andrew Holcom

July 31–Kent

YOU’RE INVITED!

You are invited to a special showing of the film *For the Bible Tells Me So* on July 6th at 7pm in the Social Hall. This award winning film is about the intersection of Christianity and homosexuality as seen through the eyes of five Christian families each with a gay son or daughter. Member Heather McKendry is bringing this film to FCCB and will be facilitating a discussion following the film with Pastor Kent French. There will be refreshments and information available from organizations here in Whatcom County with outreach to the LGBT community. Please come show your support as we deepen our awareness as an open affirming church. This event is open to the public.

THANK YOU FROM INTERFAITH COALITION

Dear Members of First Congregational Church:

Thank you for your generous gifts of over \$3,000 to Interfaith Coalition through the special offering. Your contributions help us to provide shelter and case management in nine units of housing to families who are homeless in Whatcom County. It also provides support to Interfaith Community Health Center for medical and dental care services to individuals and families without medical insurance.

We appreciate your generosity and compassion for our neighbors in need, whose numbers continue to grow with the mounting economic challenges many face today. Please know that your contributions are working to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

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 important part in our ministries.

In God’s love,

Laura DeRose Harker
Executive Director

HANDY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Interfaith Coalition relies on volunteers to maintain their nine Interfaith Family Housing units, which provide shelter and case management support to local homeless families. There are many opportunities for volunteers to keep these houses in tip-top shape. Interfaith is developing a list of volunteers that they can call on for occasional help. IF you are interested in volunteering, please contact Margie Kimberley (671-3698) or the Interfaith Coalition office (734-3983) . What a great opportunity to share you skills and your love!

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

Date: July/August 2011

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Bellingham, WA 98226
Permit No. 8

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP SURVEY

It is our desire to meet the needs of all of the people who attend FCCB. We would truly appreciate your time to fill out a survey on children in worship. We are always striving to become better at how we serve our congregation.

By taking a few minutes to complete the online survey or filling it out on Sunday (and it placing in the offering plate) you are giving the church boards and our staff valuable information.

Thank you so much for your help.

To visit the online survey please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/childreninworship>.



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

PASTORS' OFFICE HOURS

Our Pastors are happy to schedule appointments with you. Please call 734-3720. You can also drop by during their office hours.

Kent's office hours are Monday, 4-6 pm and Wednesday, 11-1 pm. Tara's office hours are Wednesday 3-5 pm, and Thursday 10-12 pm.