

Everything In Between Stranger & Neighbor March 9, 2025



first congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
timeless worship + modern faith

Vision Statement:

We Are a Nurturing, Beloved Community.
We Are Growing Authentic Christian Faith.
We Are Living Christ-Inspired Action.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

March 9, 2025

10:00 am

PRELUDE

Judy Widrig

WELCOME

Sharon Benton

We love children in worship—their noises and wiggles are welcome, too. There are pillows and a coloring, book, and play area in the front and in the corner near the windows.

Younger kids may enjoy the Narthex play area. Their movements back and forth are a joy for us as they participate fully.

RINGING THE BELL

WE ARE A NURTURING, BELOVED COMMUNITY

WELCOME SONG

“Praise to the God of the In-Between Space”

Praise to the God of the in - be - tween space,
Praise for the peo - ple who wit - ness to more,

teach - ing us all of your lim - it - less grace, and for cre - a - tion that
more than the cer - tain - ties of ei - ther or, liv - ing as signs of a

helps us to grow wild mys - ter - y: past all the bi - na - ry bound - ries we know.
God in one na - ture, and God One in Three.

Text: David Bjorlin. Music: Sally Ann Morris. Text and Music © 2020 GIA Publications, Inc.
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**Rise in body or spirit*

THE STORY

Sharon Benton

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Amelia Bacon

After Time with Children, children may go with Josh to church school in the social hall or remain in the sanctuary as they choose.

*HYMN 309 (black hymnal)

"We Are Your People"

WHITFIELD

Verses 1, 3, 5, 6

CALL TO CONFESSION*

Kris Johnson

One Voice: Our faith tells us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, but you and I know that is often easier said than done. Fortunately for us, prayer can be a tool for transformation. When we are honest before God and each other, we open the door to growth and change. So join me in the prayer of confession. Join me now, so that tomorrow, we will be even better at loving our neighbors as ourselves. Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All Voices: Holy God, you have told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but we get tripped up on logistics. We want to know: who is our neighbor? Do we have to love the stranger? Must we have compassion for our enemy? Forgive our human tendency to create exceptions in the face of love. Rewire our hearts so that we might see the face of a neighbor in every stranger we pass. With hope we pray, amen.

SUNG PRAYER

"Kyrie "

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son. (hum) _____ D.C.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Kris Johnson

One Voice: Family of faith, when we set limits on love,

All Voices: God loves extravagantly.

One Voice: When we forget that we are neighbors,

All Voices: God claims us as God's own.

One Voice: When we judge, hold back, or harm,

All Voices: God surrounds us with grace.

One Voice: There is nothing we can do or leave undone
that could separate us from the love of God.

All Voices: This is the good news of the Gospel. Thanks be to God! Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharon Benton

The Prayer of Jesus

*We invite you to use the language for God that is most comfortable for you:
"Our Creator," "Our Father" or "Our Mother."*

Our Creator

**who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come,

**thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.**

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil,

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power,

and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

*If you have a prayer request you'd like to share confidentially with our pastors,
have added to the confidential prayer list, or spoken aloud in worship,
go to www.fccb.net/contact-us/ to send a message or call the church to talk with a pastor.*

WE ARE GROWING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:25-37

Kris Johnson

New Revised Standard Version

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Kris Johnson

One: For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us:

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Everything In Between Stranger & Neighbor”
with gratitude to Rev. Jeff Chu for his Sanctified Art reflections this week

Sharon Benton

GIFT OF MUSIC

"I Shall Be Released"
by Bob Dylan

Unbroken Circle

WE ARE LIVING CHRIST-INSPIRED ACTION.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERING

Sharon Benton

You may make an offering either in the plates or online.

*Your generosity allows the work of this place nurture beloved community,
grow authentic Christian faith, and live Christ-inspired action. Thank you!*

There are several ways to give: 1) Give at our website, <https://fccb.net/giving/>.

2) Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225.

3) Use the Breeze app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give!

4) Give by text. Text a dollar amount to (360) 205-1297, and set up your account.

5) Scan the QR code on the back cover of the bulletin.

MUSICAL OFFERING

"I Am a Pilgrim"
by Merle Travis

Unbroken Circle

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music: English traditional, arranged by Ralph Vaughn Williams, 1906

I saw a stran - ger on the road in need of help and
I laid there des - perate by the road in need of help and
In our em - brace the mem - o - ry re - turned from E - den's

care No clues to their i - den - ti - ty, just
care As one by one they passed me by, too
dust Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my

6
hu - man flesh laid bare A thought had flut - tered
bu - sy or too scared Then one ap - proached and
kin whom I can trust The ar - ti - fi - cial

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Lent & Easter at First Congregational Church

*Often it seems like we're in the midst of extremes,
but there is so much in between where God meets us.
Come together this Lent to meet God and each other in between.*

Worship with us **every Sunday at 10:00 am**

Special Services ...

Tuesday Taize services, 5:30-6:15 pm in the chapel

Good Friday, **April 18, 7:00 pm**

Palm Sunday, **April 13, 10:00 am**

Easter Sunrise, **April 20, 6:30 am** at Bloedel Donovan Park

Easter Sunday, **April 20, 10:00 am**



*All prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

COVER IMAGE: NEIGHBORS by Steve Prince. Inspired by Luke 10:25-37 Ink on paper.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: *Each individual carries generations within them, made up of billions of people who have occupied this earth before us. We have an individual and collective responsibility to be good stewards (Good Samaritans) of our bodies, neighbors, and communities, rooted in love. Every day we make a dance of life and death—celebrating the entrance and exit of life, the progression of age and maturity, and the expansion of our tent, grafting to people who share our blood and our beliefs.*

Open and Affirming (ONA): As an Open and Affirming congregation believing in a loving God, all people are welcome in this church without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We Try To Use Language which will help people feel included in our worship. Since not everyone is comfortable with the same language, we invite you to amend the words of the service as we sing and pray if they do not adequately express your faith. We invite you to assist us in creating new expressions of our common faith and life together.

Technical Support: If you need help streaming our worship services or connecting in other ways, please let us know.

APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORAL STAFF

Our pastor is available by appointment virtually or in person. Contact her by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255.

Sharon sharon@fccb.net
You can also email our Office Manager
Cydne at office@fccb.net
and she'll pass your message on.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

An Open & Affirming Congregation

2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

Church Office: 360-734-3720

24/7 Emergency Pastoral Care: 360-733-4255

office@fccb.net • www.fccb.net

Facebook: facebook.com/fccbucc

Office Hours: 10:00 am-4:30 pm

PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her
CHURCH SCHOOL COORDINATOR:

Josh Marchand, they/them

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran, she/her

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE:

Kurt Aagard, he/him

BOOKKEEPER: Eric Bowen, he/him

INTERIM MUSIC COORDINATOR:

Dallas Geil, he/him (music@fccb.net)

WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Georgia Drost, she/they

MODERATOR: Diane Cooper-Schick, she/her

VICE MODERATOR: Jordan Sandoval

PAST MODERATOR: Scott Ward, he/him

CLERK: Janet Malley, she/her

TREASURER: Craig Jennings

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