

Hilltop Highlights

NOVEMBER 2009

Laurie Rudel, Pastor
Jeremiah Oliver, Editor



Show Thy grace
upon us in the moment
of our greatest need,
protect us from ourselves,
and allow us to be
a beacon of light
rather than a dark cloud
for the ambience
that surrounds us.
Only with Thy aid
can we create
that peace within
and harmony with
the outer environment,
both natural and social,
for which our souls yearn.

—Seyyed Hossein Nasr
*Talking to God: Portrait of
a World at Prayer* (anthology)

We give thanks to You, who are the Source of Love;
whose Light shines forth throughout the universe!
Come, awaken our hearts that we might do your Work;
For, without You, we can do nothing; 'tis your Love that loves through us.
—Psalm 107, *Psalms for Praying*

WOVEN TOGETHER IN LOVE

Dear Friends,

Over the past few months I have been reading *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in the Midst of Plenty* by Roger Thurow and Scott Kilman, journalists for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Thurow and Kilman write with clarity and passion about the reality of world hunger which effects over one billion people.

They show how particular agricultural policies of the United States undermine the success of small farmers around the world. It is a disturbing book.

As a country, we might believe that we are generous when we ship grains around the world, and sometimes we are, but that is not always the case. Sometimes our excess grains weaken the local agricultural economy—after all, who can compete with excess “free” grains that our farmers are paid to produce?

It is a complex situation and it invites us to look deeply at our assumptions about standards of living for ourselves and for others. Thurow and Kilman write:

This book tells the story of the squandered promise of the Green Revolution and the neglect that brought hunger and famine into the twenty-first Century. It is the story of Africa, and the missed opportunities, the folly and the good intentions gone bad that have left its agricultural potential largely unrealized, its people hungrier than ever before, and the entire world aching for more and cheaper food.

It explains how subsidies and food aid are going awry, how geopolitics determine

that some countries should bloom and others should starve, how wars and megalomania are strangling African agriculture, how markets are failing, how warnings are unheeded, how the present crisis is engulfing us.

This is also the story of the new movement to reclaim the revolution's lost promise and restore its momentum...

We don't promote one brand of politics over another, unless it is the politics of common sense and doing what is right for the poorest of the poor.

We don't favor one religion over another. The major beliefs all command their followers to feed the hungry. If we bring any personal baggage to this issue it is that we are journalists. Although newspaper reporters are often viewed as a cynical bunch, in truth we are a profession of optimists. We believe that finding the solution to a problem often begins with people reading about it. We trust that reasonable people will feel compelled to act. So we write.

I highly recommend this book to you.

As we enter the season of Thanksgiving and await the feasts that will grace many of our tables it is also good to open our eyes to the needs of the world, not out of a sense of guilt that paralyzes, but rather out of awareness and out of love for our neighbor who would like exactly the same opportunities that we ourselves would want to have.

May peace prevail on earth, and may all beings be well fed and secure—

Blessings + Peace, *Laurie*



queen anne christian church

(disciples of christ)

1316 third avenue west • seattle, washington 98119-3312

phone: 206-282-8062

email: qacc@seanet.com

web: www.qaccweb.org

QACC SINGERS!

Come add your voice as the Choir and members of The Esoterics sing together in worship on Sunday, November 22nd.



The Choir will meet for rehearsal at 9AM on Sunday, November 15th and 22nd, to prepare a simple, beautiful anthem.

THANK YOU!

- Laura Kitchel put together our new Directory.
- Devin Kitchel keeps the light bulbs burning.
- Tom Kirkland schedules our building use with grace, ease, and hospitality.
- Vera Baumgartner purchases all our paper supplies and keeps things well stocked.
- Peter Drury led the opening of worship on October 25th while Pastor Laurie was on vacation.
- All Saints Day worship: Alina Rossano offered her gift of dance; Maria Drury, John Hutchings, Lori Hutchings, and Mary Wieneke added their gift of music; Julia Field brought her storytelling gifts to Children's Time.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Hope Strong is back in Seattle after an amazing trip to India. She is now working for The Ark providing home health care and taking classes in preparation for nursing school.
- Andy Phillips sends his love from Austin, Texas!
- Martha Dimmers, Barb Scamman, and Joyce Yoder along with seven others participated in an All Saints Day SoulCollage Retreat facilitated by Julia Field and Pastor Laurie.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sunday, 1st – Bernice Evans
Saturday, 7th – Cheri Bowles
Wednesday, 11th – Matthew Nickle
Thursday, 12th – Sandy Messick
Saturday, 14th – Jeremiah Oliver
Saturday, 21st – Maurice Baumgartner

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Deacons: Cherie & Ken Bowles, John Hutchings, Tom Kirkland

November 8 - The 22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Mark 12:28-34

Elder: Devin Kitchel

Coffee Hosts: Bowles, Hutchings

November 15 - The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost
Mark 12:38-44

Elder: Marietta Tower

Coffee Hosts: Kitchels, Gillespies

November 22 - The Last Sunday after Pentecost
Psalm 126 and Matthew 6:25-33

Elder: Lori Hutchings

Coffee Hosts: Alina Rossano, Drurys

Stone Soup Sunday

Hanging of the Greens

November 29 - The First Sunday of Advent
Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Luke 21:25-36

Elder: Maria Drury

Coffee Hosts: Lydia Scott, Kirklands

IN OUR PRAYERS

- Susie Allen — stroke, currently in rehabilitation

STONE SOUP POTLUCK & HANGING OF THE GREENS—NOVEMBER 22

Plan to stay following worship on Sunday, November 22nd, when we will create “Stone Soup” together for our potluck lunch.



Everyone is invited to bring a vegetable to add to the soup pot (the older children will cook the “stone soup” during worship), contribute a potluck item (bread, salad, dessert, drinks—see the sign-up sheet in the narthex), and bring at least one can of soup for the Ballard Food Bank.

After lunch we'll have some Christmas crafts for children of all ages, snowflake cutting, and hanging the greens in the sanctuary.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Godly Play Class—

Debbie Campbell of Bethany Presbyterian Church described Godly Play in this way: Sacred, Slow, Structured, Stories, Scriptures, Safe, Silence, Simplicity. Our 3 to 6 year old children are experiencing these very words in their class each Sunday. You cannot help but feel the **Sacredness** in the classroom—we are privileged to have a space with beautiful stained glass windows. **Slow**—plenty of time, no need to hurry. **Structure**—the children know what to expect. **Stories**—with the children sitting in a circle, the storyteller focuses the children's attention on the Bible story with material laid out on a felt underlay & later reads the story from the **Scripture**. Our room is a **safe**, and yes, sometimes a **silent** space!

—Katie Funke & Vera Baumgartner

The Second and Third graders are a delight. We have four capable girls along with the occasional visitor.

Our curriculum is *Seasons of the Spirit*. It follows the same lectionary that Pastor Laurie uses in the worship services.

We hear the stories of Jesus ministry from the gospel of Mark as do you.

On Sunday, October 25th we made heart-shaped eye glasses so we could see through the "eyes of love," as did the blind Bartimaeus. When he was healed and could see he followed Jesus. We discussed what we will be like if we too, follow Jesus Christ.

We have outstanding children in this congregation!
—Juanita Kirkland



The 4th to 7th grade Sunday School class has chosen a name: "Seeds of Knowledge." (We also have an unofficial name, but you'll have to ask one of us to find out!)

When asked in a recent class, "What would we want to learn in *Seeds of Knowledge?*"

Fairly spontaneously, four students readily gave these answers as if they were the most natural thing in the world:

1. We'd like to learn more about *God*.
2. We'd like to learn more about the *Bible*.
3. We'd like to learn more about *global problems* and how to solve them.
4. We'd like to learn more about *local needs* and how to help.

This conversation was inspiration for my week! I wish you all could have been there.

Please go out of your way to check in with the young learners in our midst. They have great questions, impressive answers, and big hearts.
—Peter Drury

PARENTS! BABIES! TODDLERS!

Led by Creative Dance Teacher Alina Rossano in the Fellowship Hall of QACC— **Parents!**

Babies! Toddlers! meets on Wednesday mornings through **December 16, 2009**

(no class on Nov. 25th)

Nurturing Baby: 10-10:45 am

- Ages 2 months to toddling

Parent/Toddler: 11-11:45 am

- Ages toddling to 3 years



Suggested donation: drop-in at \$9 per session
New students first class free!

Nannies and care givers are always welcome.

You can register by phone: 206.546.3997
or by email: alinar@earthlink.net



MEETINGS & GATHERINGS



Tuesday, Nov. 3 – *Growing & Deepening our Faith*

Core Values Task Group: 7pm, Kirkland's home

Thursday, Nov. 5 – *Elders* 7pm, Lounge

Sunday, Nov. 15 – **Choir:** 9am

Sunday, Nov. 15 – *A Welcoming Spirit Core*

Values Task Group: after worship, Sanctuary

Wed., Nov. 18 – **AdMinistry Team:** 7:30PM, Lounge

Sunday, Nov. 22 – **Choir:** 9am

Sunday, Nov. 22 – **Stone Soup Potluck & Hanging of the Greens:** after worship

ELDERS' MEDITATIONS

Our core value task group, “**Growing and Deepening Faith**,” met this past week. We are going through a program called “**Living the Questions**,” where each meeting we watch a DVD and answer a series of discussion questions. In this last session one of the speakers on the DVD asserted that the only way to worship God is by living fully and by loving wastefully. Those words rang true in my soul and I am making an effort to live each day by them. Live fully and love wastefully; it is such a simple yet accurate summation of what I think are the two keys to living a good Christian life—being present and loving others without regards to whether they “deserve” it or not, or if you even like them.

When I tried to imagine people I know who live fully and love wastefully I noticed that most of the people that came to mind were children. Children live in this way without thinking about it, and then it seems to get harder as we get older. In the summer, when my children were worshiping with us, one day at communion time my youngest child Meghan went up to the plate and broke off a huge chunk of bread with her eyes huge with appreciation. Her older sister Hannah hissed at her that it was too big and I have to admit my instinct was to restrain her as well, but after watching her joy at eating the communion bread I realized that there is nothing wrong with enjoying the feast that God has laid before us—in fact I bet God rather likes it. We should approach everything in our lives with the same enthusiasm and appreciation. As I get older I feel my natural inclination being to draw myself in tighter and tighter in an effort to make sure that I get everything done and keep my household running smoothly, which keeps me very focused on my human existence and separated from my relationship with God. Once again, my tendency towards perfectionism rears its ugly head. There are actually times when my first reaction to a request to read a book to one of my children or to snuggle with them at bedtime is a deep sigh. I don't think it's possible for me to live fully or love wastefully if I am so focused on my own life and my own schedule and getting everything done “right.”

It is a slow process to open myself up and change my outlook from one of tight efficiency to one of appreciation and expansive loving, but at least I have started down that road. Yet again my children are serving as my role models and I am honored to live with such good teachers. What

would this place look like if we each lived our lives to the fullest and loved with abandon, like our children?

—Marietta Tower, *October 4, 2009*

This summer, a sign at the Farmer's Market advertising Fresh Vashon Strawberries gave me a “blast from the past”—all the way back to June 1967. My heart was set on buying contact lenses before starting high school; I had three months to earn \$167.00. In those days ironing and baby-sitting yielded 50 cents an hour, so in the quest for more cash I picked strawberries at Vashon Island Farms. The pay was a dollar a flat, or ten boxes. If you picked ten flats or 100 boxes in a day, the farmer paid a dollar bonus. I never earned less than \$11.00 a day.

Workers from Seattle had to be at the Fauntleroy dock at 6:30AM. Our special ferry was a small, rickety, old wooden boat with no cafeteria or vending machines—how annoying! The pickers included a group of rowdy boys who were often in trouble with Vi, our supervisor. She was short, skinny, old, wrinkled, and mean. Our rides to the Island usually featured the sound of her yelling at the rowdy boys, and the smell of the cigarettes she chain-smoked.

On arrival, we boarded an old school bus for a ten-minute drive to the fields. It was hard work, kneeling in the dirt, bending over in the hot sun. Each person was assigned a row to pick, and it had to be finished and inspected before starting another. At 4:00PM, we stopped and loaded crates of berries onto the ferry, for sale in Seattle.

One afternoon I sat outside on deck, resting and enjoying the cool breeze as we glided across the water. Suddenly there was a disturbance at the back of the boat. There was a loud splash, yelling, then the rowdy boys ran past with Vi in pursuit. The splash resulted from crates of strawberries being pushed overboard. The captain didn't stop the boat—there was no point. With a “glug, glug, glug,” the crates disappeared, one by one.

Leaning on the railing, we watched the red berries bobbing up and down in the green sea. Some of the others were snickering because the rowdy boys had pulled a fast one on Vi, but I was indignant. The lost harvest didn't belong to me; the day's wages were still in my pocket—but those drowned strawberries represented eight hours of

ELDERS MEDITATIONS

my time and effort wasted. What an insult!

Though I laughed out loud at the memory of my reaction, it brought to mind a question: If we ignore or disregard the Word of God, is He indignant? If we don't get around to reading God's Word, does He consider His time and effort wasted?

Eric Meyer wrote an article that can be found on the internet, titled "Is God Disappointed in Me?" The main point is: When we think, "How could God not be disappointed in me?" when considering our sins and failures, this negative attitude only results in the following:

1. It belittles His grace, because God's grace is abounding. If we didn't fall short we would not need it.
2. It discounts His glory by making God look more like us. We have expectations of others and are disappointed when they are not lived up to. God has no expectations because He already knows everything that has happened and will happen. God looks on the heart, forgives and loves unconditionally.
3. It diminishes our sinfulness by believing that certain behavior will earn God's approval, when it is our faith that makes it possible to please God. Meyer states that when we do things for God, the reason He is joyful is because HE LOVES US.

—Lori Hutchings, *October 18, 2009*

TURKEY JOKES

Asked to write a composition entitled, "What I'm thankful for on Thanksgiving," little Timothy wrote, "I am thankful that I'm not a turkey."

What did the turkeys sing on Thanksgiving Day?
God save the kin.

What did the turkey say to the man who tried to shoot it?
Liberty, Equality and Bad aim for all.

What are the feathers on a turkey's wings called?
Turkey feathers

What kind of music did the Pilgrims like?
Plymouth Rock

Which side of the turkey has the most feathers?
The outside

In the scripture from Mark 12, we come face to face with what our faith commands us to do. We cannot hear it enough. We are "to love the ONE GOD with all our heart, all our soul, with all our mind and all our strength. The scribe had asked Jesus what commandment was the greatest, and He quoted from the Hebrew scriptures of his day, from Deuteronomy 6. He, however, added a second part: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is the stickler for me! Who is my neighbor??

Yes, it is not so hard to gather socks for men who are homeless, sick, and alone. And I have always had a concern for the Church of Mary Magdalene which ministers to homeless women. Partly, that is because of getting acquainted with its founder, Jean Kim, who worked tirelessly for women who had no home and walked the streets of Seattle. I was introduced to Jean in the apartment of Margery Dockstader, a former missionary lady of strong faith, strong opinions, and little means. She lived to serve and to love the oppressed. She is gone now.

I read recently that the Church of Mary Magdalene will lose their church home. It is the dream of Jean Kim and others that somehow they will find a permanent building to have a place to women to worship, to eat, to shower—a place to feel safe and get off the streets for a while each day. We will learn more about them in the coming weeks.

However, my point is that I fear that I do not walk my talk and am not willing to really experience firsthand the raw needs of my fellow men. Do I feel deeply enough for others? Am I willing to step out of my comfort zone?? Difficult questions to answer! Let us ponder our whole area of stewardship.

—Juanita Kirkland, *November 1, 2009*

IN THE MAIL

Dear Queen Anne Christian Church,

We wanted to let you know how touched we were by the beautiful card and the cake and that incredible gift. You were all so generous with us.

You have all welcomed us so completely and we feel so blessed to be a part of this church.

Thank you all for your love, support, thoughts and prayers.

All our love,

Wayne and Gloria Dykstra

THANKSGIVING OFFERING TO SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION

In November, congregations throughout the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be collecting a Thanksgiving Offering. The offering directly benefits our 14 colleges/universities and 7 seminaries, divinity houses, and theological foundations. Minkook Um, a theological student supported by Disciples Seminary Foundation, recently remarked, "I am empowered to study for ministry. Your gifts to the Thanksgiving Offering make it possible for students like me to attend seminary."

Disciples Seminary Foundation (DSF) serves God through the formation and support of emerging theological leaders on the West coast for diverse Christian communities. DSF's ministry is made possible through faithful gifts to Disciples Mission Fund.

On November 8 and November 15, Disciples will be asked to contribute to this special offering. Your generosity for Disciples Mission Fund will support leader development through Disciples higher education institutions.

THANKSGIVING OFFERING THANK YOU!

By Nancy Brink

For nearly 30 years I have sat where you are now sitting, in a chair or pew in worship in a Disciples' church. As a pastor I promoted generosity for all of our special offerings, for each one offers a unique opportunity to make a difference in a Disciples' ministry somewhere.

But this Thanksgiving I am sitting in a different chair in my office as Director of Church Relations at Chapman University in Orange, CA. And I am even more passionate about this giving opportunity. Every dollar raised for the Thanksgiving Offering goes to build up our colleges, seminaries, and divinity houses.

Let me tell you what that means specifically at Chapman. I lead a student ministry program for about 100 Disciples and UCC students. We not only seek to keep these students church-connected during their college years, we give them training and experience in worship, leadership, and organization that will help them be ready to offer skilled service as congregational lay leaders. Your gifts to the Thanksgiving Offering cover the costs for fall and spring retreats, weekly worship, mission and service trips, and pastoral care and spiritual mentoring.

Most of our students are not headed to seminary but to jobs in communities like yours. They come from all over the country to get a first rate education. According to US News and World Report, Chapman is a top-tier western

U.S. university and is listed as a strong up-and-coming university. We emphasize study abroad and seek to graduate students with a strong identity as ethical and productive global citizens. Because we have extra scholarship help for Disciples youth, we are able to attract excellent students from all across the United States and Canada.

Each of our colleges has their unique strengths. All of us are committed to helping our beloved children move into adulthood with a strong and vital connection to the church. In addition to writing a check, I hope that you encourage your high school youth to consider attending one of our Disciples' schools. You can find information and links to all of the Disciples' schools at helmdisciples.org. Please give generously to the Thanksgiving Offering—and help Disciples' students THRIVE!

MUSICIANS AMONG US

Kasey and Tessa Kitchel are both singing with the Whittier Elementary School Choir at Benaroya Hall on Friday, November 6, in *Symphony of the Superhero*.

The performance is a benefit for Children's Hospital and begins with a raffle and silent auction at 7:00pm. The concert starts at 8:00pm.

Here is a link learn more about the event: www.thesymphonyguild.org

Symphony of the Superhero explores our culture's fascination with superheroes and their plights. With over 280 performers, this concert of massive scale will enchant and intrigue the audience with a full orchestra, four choirs, a Brazilian band, a bell choir, and guest musicians including DJ Cut Chemist, Lili Haydn, and Natalie Dungey.

Hosted and narrated by Seattle native composer Mateo Messina, this unique style of concert brings hundreds of performers together to create sights and sounds that enthrall and delight audiences. Come discover why Benaroya Hall fills year after year to witness the magic of Mateo's symphonies. Join us for a night of fun, a night filled with purpose, a night to remember.



NEWS FROM OUR REGIONAL CHURCH

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY...

Rev. Sandy Messick

(A continuing series of articles reflecting on the Objectives outlined in our Regional Mission Plan)

Our First Common Table Gathering...

On Saturday, October 17 at First Christian, Tacoma, we held our first Common Table Gathering as part of living into our new structure and vision for the Region. The Common Table is not a committee but an event and what an event it was! On Friday evening the Regional Board convened to address the business of the region. The focus was largely on working through and approving the budget for 2010. Saturday morning, the board, Interim Mission Council and interested participants gathered to focus on the mission of the region. Transition team members, Jo Gustafson and Wahhab Baldwin, led us in opening worship that challenged us to listen for God's word through scripture, silence, conversation, prayer, and song. We were invited to listen with the heart for the voice of God speaking through scripture after setting aside the voices of cynicism, judgment and fear. The worship was inviting and enriching and opened the way for the conversation to follow.

Regional Moderator, Cheryl Williams, and Interim Mission Council Moderator, Edie Rice-Sauer, then led conversation about the new structure for the region and what the Mission Council and Common Table might be. After the presentation, there was time for conversation. We shared our hopes and visions for where this new structure might lead in terms of mission, ministry, and community. We also named the potential losses as we move into new ways of being together.

We then turned to the specific focus areas for our life together in the coming months. We heard reports from those beginning to work on Youth Ministries, Stewardship, Mission and Sending, Pro-Reconciliation, New Church Ministries, and Regional Office Space. Again, there was opportunity for conversation as we asked questions, shared some ideas, and began to name the connections between the different focus areas.

We closed the morning session by returning to worship and celebrating God's presence in our midst.

Lunch provided the opportunity for fellowship and connecting with others from across the region. The day

was capped off by worship in the afternoon as we celebrated the official beginning of our ministry together with my installation as Regional Minister and President. It was a joyous day and I've heard many positive responses and hopes from our first Common Table event and great anticipation for our next gathering as regional community of communities.

During the Installation service, the congregation was invited to write their prayers for my ministry and/or for the Northwest Region. Those prayers were later presented to me to hold and carry on behalf of the region. After the service, I spent time in prayer with each card asking God to bless both the prayer and the one who offered the prayer. When those prayers were written on the cards, they were individual prayers, but as I hold them for us in common, they become our shared prayers. Please know, I will continue to hold those prayers in the coming months and year and add to them the prayers we will adopt together as we live forward into God's vision for this region and our life together.

Blessings, *Sandy*

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the Northwest Regional Christian Church currently has connections with seven seminarians in Chicago, Fort Worth, and Seattle? As school begins this fall we ask that you would keep these students in your own prayers and within the prayers of your congregation. We give thanks for these students, for their passion and their commitment to serve the church. Guiding them through an in-care process during the years of their study is a privilege and an honor for us. We thank Laurie Rudel, the denominational representative and liturgical coordinator for Disciple students at the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry for collecting the bios and photos of these students. You can read more about each one at:

<http://www.disciplesnw.org/ourwork/commissiononministry.html>

Faithfully yours,
The Commission on Ministry

CORE VALUES TASK GROUPS

Our Core Values Task Groups continue to meet, and with each meeting they gain strength and confidence in the living out of their core value.

A Heart for Children has identified particular Sundays throughout the church where we will all be in worship together.

Our winter inter-generational worship Sundays takes place the Fourth Sunday of Advent—December 20, the First Sunday after Christmas—December 27, and Epiphany Sunday—January 3. We hope to involve the children in singing during the opening of worship in Advent and want to create a Christmas pageant to be held on January 3.

A Welcoming Spirit group has identified a group of folk to be trained as greeters. The greeter training takes place Sunday, November 15, from 11:30 - 12:30 and will be led by Peter Drury and Pastor Laurie. Child care will be provided.

Growing and Deepening our Faith continues to preview the video series “Living the Questions” which they hope to offer to the church at the beginning of the new year.

They have now completed four of the initial seven sessions: *An Invitation to the Journey*, *Taking the Bible Seriously*, *Thinking Theologically*, and *Stories of Creation*.

NOVEMBER SERVICE PROJECTS

Church of Mary Magdalene – Each Christmas the staff at Church of Mary Magdalene work to secure donations of \$15 to be used to purchase new shoes for the homeless and low-income women they serve. We have asked for 40 tags for new shoes.

In the next week we'll have a display in the Fellowship Hall along with a shoe box for your donations.

We'll also be working the families of The Children's Workshop and Parent, Baby, Toddler Class along with members of The Esoterics for their assistance with this project.

Soap for Hope—AAA and KOMO Newsradio are kicking off their 2nd annual Soap for Hope toiletry item donation.

Acceptable donations include sample or regular size, **unopened**: shampoo, conditioner, soap, body wash, shaving cream, razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes and deodorant. There is a large basket in the Narthex for your donations.

Sock It to the Homeless—Thanks to everyone who contributed new white socks for the homeless men of Operation Nightwatch. QACC collected over 130 pairs! So far Nightwatch has collected 8,000 pairs would love have 25,000 by the end of the year. Keep those socks coming.

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1316 third avenue west • seattle, washington 98119-3312



Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands, because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy — because we will always want to have something else or something more.

—Brother David Steindl-Rast

We gather for worship
on Sunday at 10am.