

Hilltop Highlights

OCTOBER 2009

Laurie Rudel, Pastor
Jeremiah Oliver, Editor



I thought that
being faithful
was about becoming
someone other than who I was,
in other words,
and it was not until
this project failed
that I began to wonder
if my human wholeness
might be more useful to God
than my exhausting goodness.

—Barbara Brown Taylor
Leaving Church

Come, all you who have wandered far from the path,
who have separated yourselves from Love;
A banquet is prepared for you in the heart's Secret Room.

—Psalm 114, *Psalms for Praying*

WOVEN TOGETHER IN LOVE

Dear Friends,

Sometimes interesting combinations of books accumulate in piles on our kitchen counter.

That happened this past week when a new cookbook, *The Foods You Crave*, landed on top of *Feasting On the Word*.

They stayed together for quite sometime as if they were having a conversation between themselves. I would think about moving them but somehow just could not do it.

The *Foods You Crave* is a lovely new cookbook that re-works familiar recipes to use fresh ingredients and healthier oils. Some of the recipes: turkey meatloaf, baked cauliflower with olive oil, salt and nutmeg (quite good!), and pizzas made on corn tortillas with fresh arugula, caramelized sweet onions, and goat cheese, yum!

Feasting on the Word contains my weekly biblical study reading. A relatively new resource, I usually

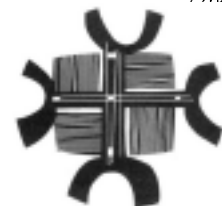
find the various contributors to offer a refreshing take on ancient stories and texts: less doctrine and more application!

So there they are . . . nestled up together, each offering sustenance for body-mind-heart-soul-spirit: food for thought, so to speak, and perhaps something to chew on in the process of thinking and reflection.

Each week when we gather for worship my deepest hope could be contained in a combination of the titles of these two books: that a feast will be spread before us and that our craving to be connected with what authentically feeds us (love of God, love of self, love of neighbor) will be satisfied.

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

THANK YOU!

- Rummage Sale: Juanita Kirkland and Lori Olin-Evans coordinated the event and the other helpers included Vera Baumgartner, Karen Bonnevie, Tom Kirkland, Lori Hutchings, Lydia Scott, Marian Seim, and Edith Stanwood. We collected a little over \$720. Thanks to all of you for your good efforts.
- Vera Baumgartner, Peter Drury, Katie Funke, Angie Gravelle, and Juanita Kirkland will offer care and education for our children this year. This is a wonderful commitment of time and energy. In preparation for classes, Vera has spent countless hours clearing out and cleaning the Sunday School rooms.
- Laura Kitchel has been hard at work updating The QACC Directory. You will be pleased to know it will be finished this month. If you would like a copy mailed to you please let us know.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Peter Drury and Amy Zimmerman, founders of **dzo Strategists**, were featured in a recent supplement of the *Puget Sound Business Journal*. Congratulations, Peter and Amy!
- In October we begin our Christian Education classes for children. Each teacher makes an amazing commitment to prepare their lessons, to offer their gift of teaching, to pray for the children in their care, and to miss their weekly feast of worship on an ongoing basis. This is no small sacrifice. Our job then is to support our teachers, to help out when we can, and to pray for them. Once a month, the older children and our teachers will join us for the entire worship service. It is not a perfect solution to the question of when to hold Christian Education classes but it is one that respects our gifts and graces at this moment in time.
- Pastor Laurie will be away Monday - Wednesday, October 5-7, to attend the Turner Lectures in Yakima. Later in the month she will be on vacation for one week beginning October 19. It will be a "working vacation" as she and Barb finish up a home remodeling project. Laurie returns to the office on Tuesday, October 27.

IN OUR PRAYERS

- Andy Phillips - move to Austin, Texas
- Mike & Peggy Neal - move to El Cerrito, California
- Toriann Straus - move to Texas, then South Korea
- Carolyn Ho & Tristan Spiceland - move to new diplomatic posting to Quito, Ecuador

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Deacons: Virginia Coester, Mary Closson
Gloria & Wayne Dykstra, Laura Kitchel

October 4 - The 18th Sunday after Pentecost
Job 1:1, 2:1-10 and Mark 10:2-16

Elder: Marietta Tower

Coffee Hosts: Alina Rossano, Hutchings

October 11 - The 19th Sunday after Pentecost
Job 23:1-9, 16-17 and Mark 10:17-31

Elder: Juanita Kirkland

Coffee Hosts: Lydia Scott, Kirklands

October 18 - The 20th Sunday after Pentecost
Job 38:1-7 and Mark 10:35-45

Elder: Lori Hutchings

Coffee Hosts: Karen Bonnevie, Towers

October 25 - The 21st Sunday after Pentecost
Job 42:1-6, 10-17 and Mark 10:46-52

Guest Preacher: Valerie Lyson

Elder: Maria Drury

Coffee Hosts: Vera Baumgartner,
Edith Stanwood, Joyce Yoder

PARENTS! BABIES! TODDLERS!

Led by Creative Dance Teacher Alina Rossano in the Fellowship Hall of QACC— **Parents! Babies! Toddlers!** meets on ten Wednesday mornings from **October 7 – 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: \$70, or 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



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.

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

They have completed three of the initial seven sessions: *An Invitation to the Journey*, *Taking the Bible Seriously*, and *Thinking Theologically*. Their next session will be *Stories of Creation*.

A Heart for Children designed a new pattern for worship for the summer months to more effectively include the older children in worship. We will continue to use portions of this modified pattern of worship into the fall.

Christian Education classes begin again on Sunday, October 4. One Sunday a month all ages (other than our youngest ones) will worship together.

A Welcoming Spirit group has identified three broad areas for their work:

- set up a process to effectively welcome and greet all who come to worship on Sunday mornings;
- communicate more clearly the open, hospitable values and vision of our congregation;
- look for ways to create small groups or activities of welcome outside of Sunday morning.

Currently they are working to identify and train a group of people with the natural gift of greeting to welcome all who come on Sunday morning.

GUEST PREACHER OCTOBER 25TH

Valerie Lyson is a native of Washington State, growing up in Spokane and receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington. She earned her Master of Divinity 1988 from Pacific School of Religion, studying part of her time with Laurie Rudel. In July 1989, Valerie was ordained by the Northwest Region of the Christian Church at Seattle’s First Christian Church.

In her 20 years since ordination, Valerie has served as a hospital chaplain, as a pastor, and as a minister of education in Texas, Washington, Missouri, and, most recently, Georgia. She returned this summer to the Seattle area with her 16-year-old daughter, Kaetlin, to be closer to family members.

CHILDREN’S CORNER

Thanks to Kasey Kitchel, David Narro, Hannah Tower and Jacob Tower who served as Jr. Deacons in September.

In addition David, Jacob, Kasey and Meghan Tower also served as readers during worship and Tessa Kitchel played the violin.

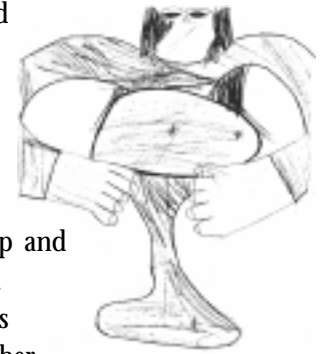
Christian Education Classes began the first Sunday in October.

Study & Service: Kasey Kitchel, Paulina Montiel, David Narro, Hannah Tower, Jacob Tower; Peter Drury, Lead Teacher

Seasons of the Spirit: Jordan Bowles, Tessa Kitchel, Meg Tower, Alivia Wilson; Juanita Kirkland, Lead Teacher

Godly Play: Kelsey Bowles, Megan Bowles Carys Dimmers-King, Cora Drury, Rowan Drury, Molli Evans; Vera Baumgartner and Katie Funke, Lead Teachers

Nursery and PreSchool: Gabriel Dimmers-King Genesis Dimmers-King, Damian Gillespie; Angie Gravelle - Lead Teacher



OCTOBER SERVICE PROJECTS

Sock It to the Homeless – This fall Operation Nightwatch again asks us to collect **new** white socks for the homeless men. Last year they collected over 15,000 pairs!

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.

Please bring your items to church during the month of October. We’ll have a large basket in the Narthex for your donations. Thank you!

ELDERS' MEDITATIONS

I would like to share with you a meditation written by Sue Monk Kidd from the book *Firstlight*, which is a collection of her early inspirational writings.

"My husband and I plodded up the steps of a shelter for the homeless as a gust of wind whisked the last bit of light from the sky. The resident manager ushered us onto a large room lined with a row of cots. I couldn't help but notice a young man in a tattered green suit and a canary-yellow tie moving from cot to cot, person to person, clutching a blue album. "Wanna see my book?" he asked, revealing a gap-toothed grin. No one wanted to look at it. "That's James," the resident manager said. "He's one of a kind. A simpleminded fellow. Can't read or write. But he has a good heart."

After dinner Sandy and I wandered into the lobby. I noticed James in his sunny yellow tie, sitting by himself, absorbed in his scrapbook. I tried to slip by but James was motioning to me. "Wanna see my book?" Reluctantly I joined him on an old vinyl sofa. He slid over so I did not have to sit on a gaping tear. I gazed at his eager, childlike expression, swallowed hard and opened the book he reverently handed me. Inside was a curious collection: a paper napkin from a fast-food restaurant, a bluebird's feather, a church bulletin, a faded birthday card, a pocket calendar...

James told me about each item—how he'd eaten the most delicious meal of his life in the restaurant, how he'd found the feather in Piedmont Park where he shared his afternoons with the birds. The church bulletin had come from a mission where he'd been welcomed. The card was on his cot on his birthday. The calendar was last year's Christmas "gift" from a store clerk. Some pages were inscribed with autographs. "They're all my friends" he said proudly. One signature was from a man who'd helped him find clothes, another from a lady who brought meals.

Gradually I understood. The album represented James's list of blessings. Blessings he read and reread. He reached into the front pocket of his suit and pulled out a stubby pencil. "Would you sign my book?" he asked. I felt the back of my throat tighten. "To my new friend," I wrote, then signed my name and read the words back to him. His gesture in response was so soft I almost missed it. He brushed a finger across my

words, as if caressing the thought. Then he stood up, tucked his album of blessings under his arm and said goodnight."

May we all recognize and appreciate the blessings in our lives with so much awe and grace.

—Marietta Tower
August 23, 2009



How many times have we heard or said that the Lord loves a cheerful giver? or: Give with a grateful heart. But do we sometimes groan when the church asks for money; do we criticize and say, "They (not we), but they are always harping on money?" In the New Testament, giving is a prevalent theme.

I have mentioned before that our checkbooks are a good picture of our lives. We are to be worthy stewards of all the gifts we have received.

A painting contractor, in his local community of Somerset, Pennsylvania, offered to paint a man's house for free. At first, the 80-something homeowner suspected a scam, but after checking on the contractor, he was reassured of the man's honesty and integrity, so he consented. He received a blessing.

His one question to the contractor was, "What church do you go to?" The contractor replied that he donates his company's time, labor and materials twice a year to help someone in need. It's his way of saying thanks to God for bringing him through a number of serious ailments. His only request is that his recipients address their thanks to God for the services he renders.

Jesus himself said that those who see our good deeds should praise our Father in Heaven for what they see in us. God should be the focus of all the good that we are motivated to do, including the fruits of our labors, the offerings we give here—whether it is our time, our talents, or our money. We will receive today's offering.

—Juanita Kirkland
September 6, 2009

ELDERS MEDITATIONS

DANDELIONS are considered second class citizens in the flower community. At a picnic recently I mistook a yellow lawn bowling marker for a dandelion. Our host said, “Ohhhhh, no! There aren’t any dandelions in my yard. My next-door neighbor paid her boys five cents for each yellow puff they picked off my lawn, preventing the seeds from riding the breeze to her lawn.” The kids made a lot of money that day. “What’s wrong with dandelions?” I asked my neighbor. “They look a lot better than dried grass.” Her reply—“They’re weeds.”

Weeds. “Useless moochers” in the garden. Many in number, they use soil and take space needed for more prestigious flowers. They look out of place among dahlias and roses. Once I took a picture of a single dandelion, much to my husband’s disgust. It was at Buchart Gardens in Victoria — one dandelion in a million beautiful flowers — allowed to exist only by accident.

Homeless people are like dandelions. They’re considered moochers—not welcome in the community. They look out of place among the beautiful. They also follow the wind, searching for somewhere to set down roots.

Dandelions have myths about them such as: if a dandelion stays open all night, it will rain the next day; two or three in a wedding bouquet bring prosperity in money, children and health, and it’s bad luck to pick them in a cemetery.

Homeless people have myths about them, too, such as: they want to be homeless, they’re all drug addicts, alcoholics, mentally ill, and they don’t work or want to work.

Dandelions can be useful—as medicine, or as food—the roots for tea; the leaves for salad. In the book 54 Ways to Help the Homeless, Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff says that these people have untapped resources, and that the first step towards finding them is to treat them as we would wish to be treated if we needed assistance—with courtesy and respect.

Aren’t we blessed that Jesus loves us all?

—Lori Hutchings
September 20, 2009

FRIEND TO FRIEND

“Nationally, 6 out of 10 residents in nursing homes never have a visitor.”

Friend to Friend is a non-profit organization that recruits and matches volunteers to visit one-on-one with residents in 300+ nursing and retirement homes in and around the Puget Sound area.

As the Program Director of *Friend to Friend* and the spouse of a 56-year-old nursing home resident who has early-onset Alzheimer’s, I have seen firsthand the continued need for one-on-one volunteers in many nursing and retirement homes. Although we know that family visitations are important, visits by caring friends are just as equally important. We have found that the visit of a friend adds a dimension which enriches and makes a resident’s life more meaningful. These visits can also assure and improve both the mental and physical health of residents as well as give them hope.

“If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Ecclesiastes 4:10 KJV

“Seen it all, done it all, can’t remember most of it.”

Humor goes a long way when visiting the elderly.

Are you interested in visiting someone in a local nursing or retirement home who seldom or never has visitors?

A couple times a month at your convenience is all that is asked. There are many instances where we can share humor with our elderly neighbors.

Call 1-888-FTF-7818 or email marilyn@friendtofriendamerica.org for more information.

—Marilyn Soderquist, Program Director
Website: www.friendtofriendamerica.org

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Friday, 16th – Toni Olin
Saturday, 17th – Marian Seim
Sunday, 18th – Ken Bowles
Monday, 19th – Juanita Kirkland
Wednesday, 21st – Damian Gillespie
Tuesday, 27th – Hannah Tower
Thursday, 29th – Meghan Tower
Friday, 30th – Alivia Wilson, Joyce Yoder

RECONCILIATION OFFERING

RADICAL HOSPITALITY – RECONCILIATION, RELATIONSHIP AND REMEMBRANCE

Every Wednesday evening, members of Central Christian Church in Great Falls, Montana gather for mid-week worship at 7:00 PM much like many of our churches. Their service is affectionately named ROC which is short for Rely on Christ. One would think that ROC refers to the praise band that offers the musical complement to the service. However, in the telling of the experience of both members and participants, this service really embraces its handle. You see, before worship, the community gathers for a meal. This community is inclusive of church members and members of the immediate community located in an urban, downtown setting. Every Wednesday evening, a small group of volunteers gather to prepare a meal for their guests who are sometimes homeless, hungry, un-churched and unfamiliar with the hymn “The Church’s One Foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord.”

Initially, the meal was intended as a potluck for church members who attended Wednesday night service. Community members seeking out a meal were welcome to share the food. Eventually, the meal was intentionally prepared for and served to those members of the community who “lived” nearby as well as church members. This service of outreach to the community would be unlike that provided by the local mission who requires sobriety and cleanliness before a participant would be served a meal. The ROC fellowship meal only requires respect. Participants in the meal are asked to exercise respect for all persons participating in the meal as well as to respect the facility. “This is simple, radical hospitality” Pastor Ron Greene informs me. He is also very keen to remind me that such hospitality does not always model harmony and peace. According to him, members have been known to break up a fight or two since he has been a part of the fellowship. Nevertheless, the fellowship continues and glimpses of grace abound.

Two stories of grace and witness that the power of love at God’s table is able to bring together people from every tribe and every nation come to mind: The



majority of the community members who attend the meal and the subsequent worship are members of the Blackfeet nation. Some of the participants are Chippewa or Cree from the Rocky Boy Reservation. They have family on the Reservations. And yet they find community at Central every Wednesday when they come to have their evening

meal. One evening, a young girl participant enthusiastically approached one of the volunteers before the meal. The girl wanted the volunteer to know that she was celebrating her birthday and that she was honored to have her birthday dinner at Central (with her extended family).

On another occasion, one of the male participants who had been missing for awhile showed up and talked to Pastor Ron. He explained that he had returned to the city to “get clean.” He was beginning a new life of sobriety and he told Pastor Ron that he was looking forward to returning to Central and the ROC fellowship because it was the only place where he knew he would feel safe.

The Rely on Christ dinner fellowship is just one example of Disciple’s living into our identity as a Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racist Church. As Disciples, we understand who hosts each of us at communion tables all over the life of our Church. It is at the Table where we meet Christ again and again and who gives us life through relationship, reconciliation and remembrance. Will you give to The Reconciliation Offering which equips our churches to live into our identity of wholeness, unity and inclusion by offering radical hospitality and affirming the humanity of each member of the whole family of God?

We are “many members (yet) one Table!”

We receive our Reconciliation Offerings on October 4th and October 11th.



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)

Priorities Named for the Coming Year

At a recent meeting of the Transition Team and Executive Committee, we identified and adopted six Mission Plan priorities to address in the coming year. These six are:

- Mission and Sending including Global Missions as an overarching regional focus
- Our commitment to be a Pro-Reconciliation Region and to embrace that commitment in all areas of our regional activity and planning
- Youth Ministries (including the Camping Program and Regional Youth Commission)
- New Church ministries and how better to partner with our new congregations and pastors
- Stewardship as a Spiritual Practice for congregations and Region
- Our physical office needs in light of our mission

Each of these priorities are named and described in our Mission Plan. They were identified as focus areas for the coming year because of their urgency in needing to be addressed (particularly Youth Ministries, stewardship, New Church, and office space) or because of the ways they help focus all of our thinking and ministry in ways that enable us to live out our vision and mission (particularly Mission and Sending and Pro-Reconciliation).

The Transition Team, Regional Board, and a yet-to-be-formed Interim Mission Council will oversee the teams charged with living out these priorities. People interested in these areas will be invited to offer input, participate on planning teams, and help carry out these initiatives. Watch for more information as we move forward into this year and be prepared to step forward and volunteer in the area that calls forth your passion. Our next steps are to identify the roles and tasks for each particular area and begin inviting interested people to participate. Please keep this work in your prayers as we seek to be faithful to the Vision God has provided.

Blessings, *Sandy*

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED...

You are cordially invited to the installation of Rev. Sandra Morgan Messick as Regional Minister and President of the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to be held at

First Christian Church

602 N. Orchard St.

Tacoma, WA 98406

Saturday, October 17, 2009 at 2:00 pm

A reception will follow the service. General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, will be with us at the installation service.

Clergy are invited to robe and wear red stoles.

Each congregation is invited to send a representative to participate in the laying on of hands. If you cannot send a representative, you are invited to send a photo of your congregation or church building and a short written word of welcome to be displayed during the reception.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Hailee Longoria of First Christian Church, Coeur d'Alene, ID who has been named to the General Youth Commission representing the Northwest Region.



NORTHWEST REGION PASTOR DIRECTS HOMELESS CHOIR

A Disciples pastor in the Northwest Region has given a voice to the “voiceless.” Michael Rice-Sauer, minister of Covenant Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Spokane, WA, has formed a choir comprised of homeless and formerly homeless people. Rice-Sauer, who typically goes by the name “Redhawk,” formed the choir a few years ago as a way to get people off of the street, if only for brief periods.

At a recent rehearsal of the “Voiceless,” by which the choir is known, the members helped themselves to donated shoes, clothing and toys. Rice-Sauer led choir practice with “an acoustic guitar, a portable CD player and a camp counselor’s exaggerated mannerisms,” according to the Spokane-based weekly “Pacific Northwest Inlander.”

To read the article, visit: www.inlander.com/content/philanthropy_2009_redhawk_rice_sauer. Redhawk is also the host of a radio talkshow on Air America. Podcasts of “The Deep End” are available on-line at www.covenantchristianspokane.org/deepend.html

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1316 third avenue west • seattle, washington 98119-3312

WALKING WITH MY PEOPLE AND THEIR REVOLUTION



Fr. Cardenal will speak about his life commitment to the poor, to faith and justice and to popular education.
Wednesday, October 7, 7-8:30 PM
Seattle University, Pigott Auditorium

Fr. Cardenal and members of the Seattle University community will discuss the value, opportunities and need to be engaged in our global community.
Thursday, October 8, 3:30-5 PM
Seattle University, Pigott Auditorium

Both events are free and open to the public.

“You learn to read so you can identify the reality in which you live, so that you can become a protagonist of history rather than a spectator.”

—Fr. Fernando Cardenal, S.J.



May Peace
Prevail
On Earth!

— Masahisa Goi

We gather for worship
on Sunday at 10am.