

# Hilltop Highlights

SEPTEMBER 2011

Laurie Rudel, Pastor  
Jeremiah Oliver, Editor



How many gifts

and graces You

have given me!

How many favors You

have fed me

from your hand!

I look for your love

in all directions,

then suddenly its blessing

burns in me.

—Rabia Al-Adawiyya  
translated by Andrew Harvey

## WOVEN TOGETHER IN LOVE

Dear Friends,

I'm not quite sure how an entire congregation keeps a secret but I was stunned on Sunday, August 7, when our joint worship service with Findlay Street Christian Church included a surprise celebration of our twenty years of ministry together!

What I received on that day was a deep outpouring of love and affection that filled with me with gratitude that you all are my peeps—my people—whom I have been given to shepherd and love for this particular time and place.

When we began our work together twenty years ago this July none of us who began together at that time could possibly have imagined how much our lives and our congregation would change.

Twenty years ago there was no natural light in the sanctuary and anyone who stood outside the building hoping to catch a glimpse of what went on inside would have looked in vain.

Twenty years ago the church office was a quiet, rather dull place to work. Children did not come and go each day. There was no sound of laughter or play or singing.

Twenty years ago the church did not have a computer or printer, let alone the internet. We did have a

small table-top copier that slowly churned out single-sided copies and needed frequent repair calls.

Twenty years ago I was filled with dreams and visions but had precious little practical experience with which to bring those dreams to fruition.

Today our sanctuary is filled with light.

Today the sound of children (along with many other groups) fills the church with vitality and energy.

Today our office equipment is mostly up-to-date.

Today it is not my dreams and visions but rather our collective dreams and visions that fill this place with hope.

So thank you dear church, thank you for a grand celebration!

Thank you for the gift of a beautiful art quilt created by Larkin Van Horn.

Thank you for your financial gift.

But most important, thank you for the gift of yourselves, for your generous hearts, for your intention to grow in love, for saying “yes” again and again and again to follow the call of God into unexpected places.

blessings + peace,

*Laurie*



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## THANK YOU!

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- To everyone who helped out with the surprise celebration on August 7 and especially to: Vera Baumgartner, Karen Bonnevie, Peter and Maria Drury, Lori Hutchings, Juanita Kirkland, Laura and Devin Kitchel, Valerie Lyson, Lori Olin Evans, Alina Rossano, Barb Scamman, Lyida Scott, and Edith Stanwood.
- Findlay Street Christian Church, the church of Pastor Laurie's ordination, brought beautiful flowers to the celebration and we thank The Rev. Sandy Messick, Regional Minister for her presence and her words that morning.
- Juanita Kirkland served as worship leader for the month of August.
- Ruth and John Jewell, along with Mary Wieneke have volunteered to serve as new coffee hosts. With the addition of this team we now have coffee hosts serving once every eight weeks. We do still have one team that could use an extra pair of hands. If you would like to help please let Pastor Laurie know.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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- Andera Vaught and her husband, Anthony Rossano, will be moving to California in October. We will miss Andrea and her children Zola and Ansel. We plan to have a time to formally wish them well on their new journey at the end of September.
- Pastor Laurie will be on vacation the week following Labor Day to do some painting chores around the house. She returns to the office on Tuesday, September 13.

## IN THE MAIL

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Dear QACC,

I just wanted to share with you that worship on Sunday, August 7th, was probably the best worship experience we've had in years! The preaching faithfully and creatively illuminated the gospel, the music was lively and fitting, and the hospitality was so authentic! It was just beautiful to have Cora sit with us and befriend Annika so easily and fully. Annika is usually quite shy and apprehensive, but she just went right off to play with her new friends without any fear.

I think you should bottle what you've got going there and share it with the whole church! It's very special and very rare! Thank you! Wish we could be with you every Sunday!

—Kara Markell

## PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

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**Worship Leader:** Kate Sweet

**Deacons:** Lori Olin-Evans, Edith Stanwood,  
Mary Wieneke

**September 4** - The 12th Sunday after Pentecost

**Elder:** Lori Hutchings

**Coffee Hosts:** Lori Olin-Evans, Laura and Devin Kitchel

**September 11** - The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

**Elder:** Peter Drury

**Coffee Hosts:** Peter and Maria Drury,  
Alina Rossano

**September 18** - The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

**Elder:** Marietta Tower

**Coffee Hosts:** Tom and Juanita Kirkland,  
Tom Baker and Kat Robinson

**September 25** - The 15th Sunday after Pentecost

**Elder:** Devin Kitchel

**Coffee Hosts:** Ruth and John Jewell,  
Mary Wieneke

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### Coffee Hosts Next Month

**October 2:** Vera Baumgartner, Edith Stanwood

**October 9:** Martha Dimmers and Stephen King, Barb Scamman and Laurie Rudel, Rose Scamman

**October 16:** Ken and Cheri Bowles, Lori and John Hutchings

**October 23:** Karen Bonnevie, Michael and Marietta Tower

**October 30:** Lori Olin-Evans, Laura and Devin Kitchel

## WELCOME OUR GUEST PREACHER

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On Sunday, September 11, please welcome our guest preacher, Justin Umbright. Justin is a seminarian at Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry and a member of All Pilgrims Christian Church.

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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1st - Angie Gravelle

18th - Lori Hutchings

4th - Tessa Kitchel

21st - Robert Pohl

7th - Jeffrey Freeman

25th - Wayne Dykstra

10th - Maggie Ridgeway

## TURNER MEMORIAL LECTURES

Each fall the Northwest Regional Christian Church hosts a lecture series. This year the Turner Memorial Lectures take place from October 10-12, 2011, at Englewood Christian Church in Yakima.



The theme of the Turner Lectures will be *What Would Jesus DEconstruct? Postmodernism meets the Church* and features author and theologian John D. Caputo.

In a series of lectures Caputo will ask the questions “What would Jesus deconstruct?” He intends to carefully unpack the “what,” the “would,” the “Jesus,” and the “deconstruct” in his question, to uncover what is really happening in the Church—or what should be!—namely, the Kingdom of God, an unruly rule that results when we release what’s going on in the name of God. When we are able to do that, then the name of God becomes the name of a deed, not a doctrine.

John D. Caputo describes himself as a hybrid philosopher/theologian, bringing philosophical questions to bear on religion and theology while letting theology and religion push back. This approach forces philosophers to think about the strange and haunting narratives in Scripture. He is a distinguished writer and scholar and has held endowed chairs in both philosophy and religion before his recent retirement.

Caputo enjoys presenting the arcane ideas of the academy to wider audiences. This includes frequent interaction with the “Emergent Church,” which he values as a loosely organized cluster of front-line groups where abstract ideas meet reality.

The result of crossing all these wires—between philosophy and theology, between the academy and the pews—gets us closer to what is really going on in religion and theology, closer to what is “happening” there. Doing that, getting at what’s happening in something, Caputo claims, is what the “deconstruction” of something is. So contrary to popular impressions, deconstruction does not raze a structure (like religion, art, or the university) to the ground, but releases its inner energies, lets it breathe, and allows it to reinvent itself.

Anyone is welcome to attend these lectures. If you would like more information please talk with Pastor Laurie or go to the Region’s website:

[www.disciplesnw.org/whathappening/turnerlectures.html](http://www.disciplesnw.org/whathappening/turnerlectures.html)

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

On Sunday, September 18, we gather back from the scattering of summer.

In worship that morning we will have a special service to recognize our children and teachers.



Bibles will be given to the older elementary children and church school classes will begin after worship.

Our classes include:

- **Godly Play** for our youngest children with Vera Baumgartner
- **Seasons of the Spirit** for younger elementary children with Tom Kirkland and Lori Hutchings
- **Seeds of Knowledge** for our older elementary and Jr. High kids with Peter Drury and Jacob Tower

Emily Pierce will continue to provide child care during worship for those children first grade and under. In addition we hope to hire one more teacher who will work with Emily to provide child care during church and with Vera during Godly Play.

faithful - hopeful - loving  
*Share the light*

Our fall stewardship emphasis begins

Sunday, October 16 with four

**Sundays of Sharing**

and culminates in a

**Pancake Breakfast**

prepared by our children and youth

after worship on

Sunday, November 6.

Save the date!

## INTRODUCING OUR INTERN PASTORS

My name is Ruth Jewell and I will be one of the intern pastors for the next 9 months here at Queen Anne. I am in my final year at School of the Theology and Ministry, Seattle University and my spiritual journey to this point has taken many turns, some good, and some bad, but, each time I have been led to a new doorway within. Every time I get a new view of the greater picture of whom I am and who God is. There are many more doorways to be opened so I am very certain that the journey isn't over yet, and never will be.



Two of my favorite scriptures are major guideposts on my own spiritual journey and ministerial call; first of all there is Micah 6:8. This is a scripture straight out of my childhood, because this was the ending of my father's evening table prayer. I come from a Disciple background and this was a favorite of my Dad's. When I have a difficult time deciding what to do this scripture usually pops into my head. And while it doesn't give answers to my problems it often points me in the right direction.

The second scripture is Mark 10:46-52, which is the story of blind Bartimaeus. For me Bartimaeus is the ultimate role model for not giving up. It takes faith to keep calling when you don't know if anyone is listening. My favorite line in the scripture and the one most important for me is once Bartimaeus could see he "followed Jesus along the road." That is where I am at this moment, I am following, I don't know where I'm going, and I haven't anything to carry with me, but I'm going.

What does all this mean for our journey together? Well it means, together, you and I will discover some new things and re-member some old. It means that I am being given the opportunity to learn from you, and you have the opportunity to learn from me. One of my intentions is to invite you into new ways of spiritual formation and that may be uncomfortable for awhile but I hope you and I will learn from the experience and reveal new ways to view the kingdom of God. Amen.

—Ruth Jewell



The summer of 2009 was the start of a new season in my life. That June, I married my college sweetheart Nathan. Two weeks later, we packed up a big yellow Penske truck and left Madison, WI, the home I had known all my life. We travelled almost 2,000 miles to our new home in Seattle, where I would start as a graduate student in the counseling program at The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology (formerly known as Mars Hill Graduate School). Committing to move across the country was just one of the first steps in saying 'yes' to my desire and to God's invitation.

For years I had had this strange feeling that I wanted to "do something in ministry." As I allowed myself to let go of my fear and actually listen to this desire, I found God gently wooing me into the call to pastoral ministry. What started as a small, rather scary seed-of-a-thought blossomed, and I switched into the Master of Divinity program. Two years later, I have continued to embrace a growing sense of God's invitation, especially as I am also learning by God's grace how to embrace my own humanity, with all of its glorious beauty and its deep wounds. Although I am not sure exactly what this call to ministry will look like in its fruition, I am thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to see how it will grow in our lives together over this next year.

—Kate Sweet

## MORE IN THE MAIL

*In August, through a generous donation,*

*QACC helped co-sponsor a concert of children's music...*

Dear Generous People of Faith,

On behalf of Family Promise of Seattle, I am deeply grateful to your faith community for your generous sponsorship of the "Why Not Sea Monsters?" benefit concert on Friday evening, Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>. Your sponsorship enabled the donations we received that evening—over \$1000—to go directly to the work of Family Promise and helping homeless families and children.

Moreover, your help in spreading the word of this event planted the seeds of awareness about Family Promise in our community. Thanks to you, flyers were posted and church bulletin inserts were placed throughout the Seattle metro area; through e-mails, website listings, media coverage (including *ParentMap Magazine* and the *West Seattle Blog*), and many Facebook postings, countless numbers of people in the Seattle area have now heard about the work of Family Promise who were previously unaware. We believe this awareness in our generous community will bear much fruit in the coming months.

To top it all off, it was a great evening of music and fun for families! Watch a video here: <http://westseattleblog.com/2011/08/video-justin-roberts-helps-family-promise-raise-more-than-1k>

Our sincerest thanks,

Rev. Katy Lloyd, *Concert Coordinator*

## REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

### The ~~Lazy~~ Crazy Days of Summer

Some of you may have noticed you didn't receive a Northwest Passage in July. Maybe some of you were too busy to notice. Amber and I had every intention of sending out a newsletter but somehow the month slipped away. Between General Assembly, vacations, and the start of camp season, suddenly we find ourselves here on August 1. So, here is your July-August edition of the Northwest Passage. There's lots happening around and about, and much to celebrate in the region and beyond.

One thing I am celebrating is transformation in so many of our congregations. Just prior to the General Assembly, our General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, contacted all regional ministers asking for the number of transforming congregations in each region. The first question to come back was "How do you define a transforming congregation?" It's a very good question because each congregation is unique. I understand a transforming congregation to be one that is seriously wrestling with our changed cultural context and willing to re-imagine ministry and mission for this new time and place. It involves a changing culture within the congregation, a willingness to let go of what was and might have worked in the past, and a sense of adventure and openness to experience God and engage our communities in new and significant ways. Within our region, some congregations are experiencing transformation through Journey of Discovery, some through New Beginnings, and others through their own self-designed and led processes. And some are experiencing transformation without an intentional effort but simply through a renewed sense of living out the gospel within their communities. However it is happening, it was exciting to me to go through our list of congregations and take note of the number that are pursuing or experiencing transformation in some way (over 50% of our congregations by my count, and probably more). This is news to celebrate, not only for these congregations, but for our region and the communities in which we live and are.

Blessings,  
Sandy Messick  
*Regional Minister*

## WEEK OF COMPASSION

*Tim Shenk is a communications officer with Church World Service, one of Week of Compassion's trusted implementing partners. He is currently on assignment in Kenya, reporting on the drought that is ravaging East Africa. He sends this report:*



As you drive east from Nairobi, the Kenyan countryside becomes progressively drier. Long grass becomes yellow and eventually disappears. Bare, reddish soil is all you can see. This is the East African drought, a vast disaster stretching across Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and beyond. Two years with scarcely any rain has withered fields and pastures, putting more than 12 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

In Kaikungu, a rural community of about 6,500 people in the Mwingi district, Eastern province, spiky green sisal plants are about the only crop that survives. In normal years, farmers grow plenty of peas, corn, beans and sorghum, but the drought has forced the community to seek food aid.

Nevertheless, local farmers are working hard to become self-sufficient. Since 2007, humanitarian workers from Week of Compassion partner Church World Service and the Anglican Church of Kenya have been helping the community build structures to capture and store water. These include a borehole well, two concrete tanks filled from a hilltop water catchment and six "sand dams," which hold water in seasonal streambeds under a thick layer of sand.

If not for these water points, life in the community would be far more difficult. Local people walk anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to fetch water, instead of the grueling, daylong treks people make in other drought-affected areas. Water has made it possible for some families to grow vegetable gardens and to keep a few livestock long into the drought.

On August 15, 250 local people gathered in Kaikungu to dig silt out of the sand dams, restoring their capacity to hold water. To support this work and meet immediate needs, Church World Service and the Anglican Church of Kenya provided packages of corn, beans, salt and cooking oil to each participant. The food will last their families about a week, and weekly distributions are planned for the next five months.

The next rains should come in October, with another six months until crops can be harvested. These seasonal rains cannot come too early for the millions of people in this region who depend on rainwater for subsistence.

Want to help respond to the famine in East Africa? Join our movement of Courageous Compassion at:

<https://npo.networkforgood.org/Donate/Donate.aspx?npoSubscriptionId=2980>

## ALSO IN THE MAIL

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Dear Laurie,

Congratulations on twenty years of ministry at QACC! I remember attending your ordination, wondering if you knew what you were getting into. You seemed so inexperienced, so naïve standing there in that white robe. Had your eclectic education equipped you for the hard work that lay before you? I was a little fearful that the church might just eat you up and spit you out.

Not to worry. You pulled yourself up to the full stature of your pip-squeak height and showed us all what you were made of. You not only stood up for yourself, you stood up for a church that you knew could be more prayerful, more generous, more grace-filled, more beautiful, more outwardly focused. Then you led your congregation to become part of that church.

In the early years at Queen Anne Christian Church, you came to me with questions. You were

eager to learn. So I taught you about congregational dynamics, about strategic planning, about stewardship. But somewhere in there, the tide shifted and you became my teacher.

You taught me how to live as a deeply rooted Christian in the midst of a multi-faith world. You taught me the power of clarity. You taught me that my body is not separate from my spirit. You taught me that the truth would indeed make me free and you helped me find my own voice.

Somehow you seem much taller now, serving as a respected leader, not only in the congregation but in the Region and in the denomination. Thank you for all you have been and all that you will become. Your grace and wisdom bless us all.

To God Be the Glory,  
Ruth Fletcher

*Regional Minister of the Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ) in Montana*

**queen anne christian church** (disciples of christ)

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Our approach  
to gratefulness has to be  
big enough to embrace  
all the difficulties  
of the world.

—Brother David Steindl-Rast

We gather for worship  
on Sunday at 10am.