



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

October, 2023

Message from Pastor Greg: “Faith to Move Mountains”

I recently hopped on an opportunity to spend a couple days backpacking deep into the beautiful wilds of the nearby North Cascades. The occasion was a “Space for God” retreat led by our friend Mike Neelley (who you likely remember from his occasional guest preaching at CPC). The other four guys and I experienced God’s creative beauty and presence together in that unique setting. This time away brought me several significant insights and encouragements about the nature of God and about following Jesus, and I want to share those with you. One of these insights I already mentioned in a “Cliff’s notes” way at the close of a recent worship service, but I want to flesh it out here in hopes it will move you, too.

Our trek took us up 2,550 feet in elevation gain from where we parked on a dirt road about 8 miles from Glacier, WA, on a trail called Yellow Aster Butte. On Day 2, the mist cleared to reveal a stunning view of both Mt. Baker and Mt. Shuksan. We spent unhurried time that morning gazing straight across to the glacial ice and snow fields on Baker. Our group of guys shared some Scripture reading together, then we each went off for some solo time of prayer. It was during that time that I experienced what I personally yearn for more than anything - the strange warmth of heart that I’ve come to know signals the presence of God’s Holy Spirit. This is a rare experience for me personally, and I know that many people cannot relate to it (others experience the Holy Spirit much more regularly than I do). It was rich, peace-filled time and I find myself in the weeks since praying that God will pour out His presence in that same way for all of us at CPC.

In the wake of this experience, I found myself reflecting on the nature of faith. As I preached recently (September 24), faith is certainly an antidote to fear. But I often find myself thinking that faith is something that I generate by my own power, telling myself to run faster and jump higher spiritually so that my faith will grow. At Yellow Aster Butte, God gave me a different vision. What if faith is given by God and our role is simply to cooperate in receiving it? Jesus said (Matthew 17:20): “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” The tiniest increment of faith on our part can and does have the most impossible impact. Maybe some of you agree with my gripe that “progress” in our life of faith sometimes seems glacially slow, but after my time with God, I think that might be exactly the point. If God can carve the North Cascades by slow-moving sheets of ice floating on the thinnest layer of water (melted ice), maybe even the slightest warming of our hearts will also move mountains.

This Beacon and our weekly Sunday bulletins highlight numerous small ways each of us can join together on the faith-building, mountain-moving journey with Jesus. Come and take part!

Faithfully in Christ,
Pastor Greg



Photo of Mt. Baker By Carol Lawrence

A Merry Heart

By Carol Lawrence

This photo always makes me smile. I hope it gives you a grin as well. Scripture reminds us that our God likes to see us happy:

*A merry heart does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)*

Merriment sounds like medicine worth taking. Staying merry can take some effort in today's world, however, with the daily news bombarding us with fearful world events.

This little lamb has nothing to fear. He lives on my daughter's farm, safe from coyotes, bobcats, and all the many wild predators that lurk in the wilds of northern Whatcom County. He has a watchful shepherd (aka my daughter). And yet, he clearly is fearful and climbs up on his mom's back to feel safe.

We would all like to be merry, but it's easy to be fearful, especially if we read the news. The antidote, of course, is to remember that we, too, have a shepherd:

*Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you.
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

Our shepherd has given us promises, and we know we can rely on them. A favorite hymn reminds us that we are:

*Standing on the promises of Christ, my King,
Through eternal ages let his praises ring;
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God.*

So, the little black lamb stands on his mom for security. We have a better plan – standing on the promises of God.



Adult Education - 9a in the Chapel and on Zoom

CPC's Adult Education Class continues its study and discussion of *In Quest of the Rock: Peter's Transformative Journey with Jesus*, written by our "resident" author Mike Kuhn. Mike writes, "Nowhere in Scripture or in history do we find a more true, beautiful and enduring shaping of the human soul than in Jesus's relationship with Peter." This book will encourage you and allow Jesus to more fully transform your life.

Even if you haven't read the book or the current chapter, please feel free to come and participate. There will be a variety of discussion leaders, and we will be discussing concepts that are larger than just the book, so you will be able to participate.



Hey all you 5th-8th Graders, Middle School Youth Group Kick-Off - October 4th!

5th-8th graders, please join us on Wednesday, October 4th, from 6:30-8:30p for some fun and games! Plus, there will be more information about CPC Youth nights happening this fall.

Questions?

Contact Dave Ruble:
DaveR@cordatachurch.org



Clubhouse Catch-Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - We began "The Miracles of Jesus" (Volume 8 unit 22) of the Gospel Project for Kids the first Sunday in October. In this study unit kids will learn about Jesus' earthly ministry, Jesus's amazing miracles (calming the storm, healing sickness, feeding multitudes), and more. We will see that each miracle was done out of compassion for people, but also to prove that He is the Son of God.

Key Passage: John 1:18

Big Picture Question: Is Jesus God or Human?

Answer: As the son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

October Lessons: Jesus Calmed a Storm (Matthew 8; Mark 4; Luke 8), Jesus Healed and Forgave (Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5), Jesus Healed Sickness (Matthew 9; Mark 5; Luke 8), Jesus Fed Many People (Matthew 15; Mark 8), (Big Truth Session) Jesus' Miracles Prove He Is God (John 14)

Thinking about serving in the Children's Ministry? The next few months in the Kids Clubhouse will be a great time to observe and get plugged in since we will be teaching many familiar Bible stories through November and then switching to Advent lessons leading up to Christmas. Find Children's Ministry Director Bonnie Hollingsworth after worship for more information.

Clubs 4 Kids (C4K) - We are off to an amazing start! We are overjoyed by the many additional kids who have come to the first few Club 4 Kids times! With the increase of participating kiddos, we need a few extra leaders to make sure each kid feels welcome, seen, heard, and appreciated.

Join the Fun - If you like to play games and are available on Thursdays from 4:15-5:45p we'd LOVE to have you join us. Thursdays in C4K is "Game Club" day. On Thursdays after our "check-in" gathering and short snack time, we play a simple yet fun group game, then we bring out board games and puzzles for everyone to play and enjoy. Involvement with Clubs 4 Kids is a sweet and simple way to make a real difference in a child's life! For More information, contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) or Kristin French (Admin@cordatachurch.org).

Open Gym - Sunday, October 15th from 1-3p - Join us for a time of pickleball and games. This is a great opportunity to make connections and build relationships with our neighbors!

If you would like to help, a sign-up sheet is in the foyer. For more information, contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org).

Fall Festival 2023 - Fall has arrived and with it...all the excitement (and preparations) for our annual Fall Festival!!! Happening Friday, October 27th, this year's festival will have a few changes and some new items! We will have the same games and attractions but in new areas of the building and hot dogs will be on the menu this year - roasted on our new commercial roller grill!

Everyone has the opportunity to be an important part of this much-loved and appreciated community event!

Pray-Give-Serve...

Pray: Please keep this event and all its participants in your prayers. As the autumn days become darker, Pray that His light shines in us and through us here at CPC and into our community.

Give/Donate: The red cart is ready in the lobby for your donations of prewrapped/fun-sized Candy, non-food treats, and Duct Tape* for the amazing box maze (*Duck or Gorilla brands).

Serve: Would you believe this event requires a minimum of 30 volunteers to happen?! A general sign-up sheet is on the info table in the lobby. Specific areas to serve include door greeters, game leaders, crafters, set up/clean up helpers, food servers, and rovers/candy ambassadors. Contact Bonnie Hollingsworth to request a specific serving area.

Join us at the decorating and prep party on Wednesday, October 25th, at 6p. Many hands are needed to help transform our building into a autumn wonderland. Snacks will be provided!

The Fall Festival is one of CPC's largest outreach and community-building events of the year. Let's join together to make this one of the best ever!

Fellowship

Fellowship is how we care for one another in Christ. It provides a sense of stability, a sense of belonging, of being needed and of being loved. It's about working together with Jesus to carry out God's will. It allows us to actively participate in pursuing the divine plan alongside Him.

Don't Miss Together Tuesday, Our All-Church Dinner for Adults, on October 10

Together Tuesday is a great time to reunite, get to know newcomers, invite guests, and share stories of the summer. The Fellowship Committee has a delicious "millionaire" spaghetti dinner, including salad, French bread, and pie, and the cost is still a very cheap \$6 each (pay at the door). Dinner is in the Family Life Center, is served at 5:30p, and concludes around 7p.

The program for the event will include singing, prayer, and a presentation on the legacy and vision of Bellingham Christian School by Shawn Cunningham, Head of Schools (see photo of Shawn's recent Sunday visit on page 8). Reservations are helpful, but we allow extra spaces (and food) for anyone who has been unable to sign up in advance. Reserve on the list at the sign-up table in the church foyer, contact the church office at admin@cordatachurch.org or call the front desk during office hours (Monday-Thursday, 10a-2p) at 360-733-8860.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars: Together Tuesday, November 14th.

Join a Small Group

Cordata Church is committed to offering small groups, the opportunities for people to connect at a deeper level, encourage one another, and build friendships with others committed to following Christ. Small groups are essential, because the Christian life is to be lived in community, not in isolation. CPC small groups uniquely suit the participants and can be focused around a dinner group, a discipleship group, a community group, a support group, etc.

Currently there are 13 small groups at CPC. Several are focused on fellowship and study. The Men's Breakfast and Early Birds serve men and women exclusively. Some groups focus on a common health issue and others on a common interest. Many people are in more than one small group.

If you are not already in a Small Group, prayerfully consider it. The Discipleship Committee will have a table in the foyer October 8th – 29th. Take a few minutes to stop by and discover a small group that might interest you.

Mark Your Calendar to Celebrate the Love INC Ministry in Whatcom County

Members of Cordata Church are encouraged to consider attending the annual Love INC Celebration and Fundraiser Friday, November 3rd. During this desert program at the Northwest Baptist Church (6:30p), we will learn more about the mission of this 34-year-old Whatcom County service ministry and meet its new executive director, Kelly Schmidt. We would like to rally a good size Cordata delegation. Interested persons may contact Rich Emerson, (dremers@msn.com), member of the Missions and Outreach Committee.

The Love Inc Call Center receives up to 200 call per month from those with low income who need help, thus, taking the pressure off church offices for referrals. Cordata Church members have been significantly involved with Love INC in the Call Center and in prior years serving in areas such as budget classes and furniture ministry. Recently, Love INC is utilizing what it calls the "Jesus Taxi" and partnering with the organization "We Care" to meet physical needs for clothing, household items, and mattresses.

Take a Look (and Keep Returning)

Look at updated information on Cordata Church-supported missions and missionaries, both local and international. The stories are all posted down the hall to the right of the foyer (behind the Chapel). Look for the new sign created by John and Brenda Risser and see the refreshed bulletin boards prepared by Beverly Race. Thank you John, Brenda, and Beverly.



Fall Work Party - Saturday, October 21, from 10-Noon

Join your CPC family and friends in a fall clean-up of the outside grounds to spruce up our site before Fall festival. The clean-up will be Saturday, October 21 from 10am to noon. Please bring clean-up tools: rakes, 5 gallon buckets, tarps, ets. And, please sign up in the foyer.

Remember: "many hands make light work" and we could use your help! Contact Roger DeSpain (RogerD@cordatachurch.org) or Margret Rudy (MargaretR@cordatachurch.org) for more information.

Fall Prayer Focus

First we want to thank all of you prayer warriors who prayed for the school children and the transition of Bellingham Christian School into our building in September. Everything appears to be going well on that front, and it is uplifting to see God at work in the lives of the people in our building.

Our prayer focus for the month of October will be for CPC staff. We are thankful for each and everyone of them. Please ask God to keep them healthy and give them vitality and pray for their encouragement from the congregation. Also ask that they sense the presence of God in unique ways and experience the amazing love of God.

Linda Black, Worship Elder

Did You Know???

Every week our worship bulletin shares our commitment to be "Rooted in God's word, Growing in Christ, and Branching out to the world". Our ministries and partnerships reflected in the pictures down our long hallway showcase how we are living this out. It only seemed right this year, with Bellingham Christian school and Mosaic Church sharing our facilities, to also share our picture frames so they too could be represented in our branching out and shared ministry experiences.

Take time to check out these pictures along with some pretty pictures of fall color mixed in. You'll be glad you did.

Jackie Schoonover
Visual Arts Committee



Meet CPC's New Worship Director - Sarah Allen

Church and music have always been a part of Sarah Allen's life. Her mother was from a missionary family and throughout Sarah's early years her family regularly attended Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth.

Sarah's music education began when she began taking piano lessons at the age of 6 and continued throughout her elementary, middle, and high school years and into college. Sarah studied music at Samford University in Birmingham, AL, a university rooted in Christian mission where she was a Scholarship Singer performing at various churches in the area. After earning her B.A., Sarah continued her study at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, TX, where she earned two Master of Arts degrees - M.A. in composition and M.A. in music education.

While working on her Master's degree in music education, she served as Director of Children's Music at Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church in Richardson, TX. Then last year, she served as Associate Choir Director at Sachse High School. She also taught both piano and voice lessons privately.

Sarah also composes and arranges both choral and instrumental music, and her compositions are inspired by various topics, including scripture, poetry and life experiences. She has been commissioned to write choral pieces and one special composition was based on a Bible verse for a friend's wedding. For her M.A. in music composition, she drew upon her love of visiting national parks to compose a piece in which the movements were based upon her memories of different rock formations in Arches National Park.

Music was even a part of Sarah's finding the love of her life - her husband Mehrdad Gholami. Mehrdad was finishing his doctorate in woodwind performance at TCU when they met, and he encouraged her as she applied and entered the Master's program. She laughingly relates that on their first date, they only talked about music. When she returned home and was asked by her parents about her date, she could only tell them about their conversations about music. Mehrdad is also interested in music education. While serving as an adjunct professor at The Texas A&M University at Commerce and a sabbatical replacement professor at TCU, he taught music to middle and high school students in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and has already visited schools in Bellingham as a recruitment effort for his new position at Western Washington University.

As Mehrdad was applying for jobs, he and Sarah knew nothing about Bellingham, but they were looking for a change. As they began researching our city, they were stunned by the gorgeous countryside and the weather. Sarah was concerned that if she got too invested in coming to Bellingham, she would be crushed if it didn't work out. However, God seemed to have Bellingham in His plan for Sarah and Mehrdad. In addition to Mehrdad getting a position at WWU, Sarah was offered a teaching job at Carl Cozier Elementary School, and she found our position online. Sarah states that when she went to our website, it felt like home, because it looked like her home church's site.

For fun, Sarah enjoys hiking (and was impressed with the number and variety of hiking trails in our area), running, and spending time with her husband. Sarah and Mehrdad are film buffs, so they were happy to find an independent theater (the Pickford) here, and they enjoy travel, especially road trips to national parks.

When asked what might surprise others to know about her, Sarah replied that in her early years she struggled with dyslexia. When her 3 siblings entered private school, they all passed the entrance exam on the first try. Sarah failed her first attempt but was offered a second opportunity at the end of the summer to retake the test. She studied all summer and passed the test. That hard work early in life was a good lesson that has paid off.

Sarah is excited to be a part of the congregation and is looking forward to getting to know everyone. She has felt very welcomed and has appreciated the kindness and encouragement she has received. Sarah, we're excited to have you as a part of our congregation and look forward to worshiping and singing with you each Sunday.

CPC's Block Party
Getting Ready



We Welcome Our Neighbors



Cordata Scene



Shawn Cunningham
Head of Schools
Bellingham Christian Schools
Speaks to the Congregation

Deacon Sunday

October 15th

After the Worship Service



JOIN THE CHOIR

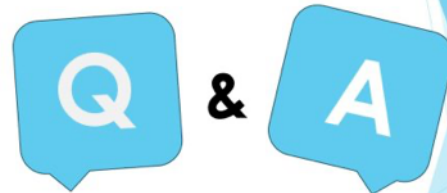
Rehearsals ~ Wednesdays at 7p in the Chapel



Men's Breakfast - Saturday, October 21, 9a

Join us for a time of devotion, fellowship, and a delicious breakfast in CPC's Palm Room.

Got Questions? ~ The CPC Session has answers!



Sunday, October 22nd ~ after the Worship Service



After a summer break, the choir returns to sing in worship. Join us!

Cordata Beacon - a publication of:
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