



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

November, 2023

Message from Pastor Greg: "Building Connections"

I just got to witness a slogan in action, a theme come to life. I'm writing this in the hours immediately following CPC's annual Fall Festival, during which we built connections with our Cordata area (and well beyond) neighbors. We aim to let our neighbors know how welcome they are by throwing our church doors open wide and hosting a seasonally themed party throughout the building. We had food, games, crafts, a photo booth, a giant box maze in the Chapel (there has to be a sermon illustration in there somewhere!), and much more. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them..." (Matthew 19:14 NIV) And wow, did they ever! The building was full of kids and families having fun.

Of course, coming into a church building is not the same as coming to Jesus, but it's still a pretty good first step. When several dozen CPCers and friends gathered by the Welcome Desk for a pre-event huddle, we reminded ourselves that each person coming through our doors is made in the image of God, and that we have the privilege of treating them accordingly, no matter what costume or masks they are wearing. Our heartfelt prayer is that anyone and everyone who came to the Fall Festival will be able to make a stronger connection with the God who made us all. Welcoming our neighbors in hospitality and love builds connections not only between us and them, but also between all of us and God.

In light of all this, how fitting that our Generosity Team has named our annual Generosity (Pledge) Campaign "Building Connections." Let's hear a bit more about the Generosity 2023 Campaign, then I'll complete my thoughts on page 2.

Generosity 2023



Summer has turned to Fall and we have set aside October 29th-November 19th to reflect upon the work the Lord is doing among us and what our role in that ministry could be. One essential part of fulfilling the mission and ministry we are called to at Cordata Church is our financial contributions. As you may remember, we started 2023 with a deficit in the budget and lots of hope, prayer, and faith. It has been a year of provision and blessing for our church. Once again we have reason to praise the Lord for His abundance and to thank all of you for your generous hearts and faithful support. This year has seen a real growth in the number of connections and a deepening of relationships both within our congregation and with our neighbors in the

community. We want to continue this momentum and reach out in God's love to those around us.

To continue this meaningful work, it takes all kinds of support. God has been active in this situation, providing Bellingham Christian School as a tenant of portions of the building during the week. What wonderful learning and energy this has generated. Hosting the school will supply a part of the income needed to move forward in God's name. The "Step Up Reach Out" effort this summer was also a wonderful blessing as participants donated over \$60,000, which is set aside for budget shortfalls. We will still need the ongoing generous financial support of our congregation to fulfill our God-given mission and ministry, as we maintain our building, pay our dedicated staff, and reach out to the community. And we rely so thankfully on the many, many hours of dedicated time given by our members and regulars to the glory of God.

We have good, good news to share with each other and with a hurting and discouraged world. Let us continue this important journey together. We are asking each person to consider carefully what level of contribution you can make to our ongoing ministry in 2024. Please take a look at the mailed material, including the 2024 Pledge Card you will be receiving shortly and help us continue "Building Connections" in His name.

The Generosity Team

Greg Ellis, Phyllis Macleod, Ken Gasper, Mike Langey, and Julie Farrow

Continued from Page 1, Message from Pastor Greg: Building Connections

Get it? We build connections with our neighbors in Jesus' name at the Fall Festival. We build connections with each other as we join together in worship and community. We encourage one another to build even deeper connections with God, others, and self in Small Groups. We let God build a stronger connection between our faith and our finances in our annual Pledge Campaign. And in everything, the Spirit of God builds our connection with our Savior. Jesus said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing." (John 15:5-6 MSG) Scripture also says, "in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17 NIV).

Come get connected and stay connected at Cordata!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Greg

World Turned Upside Down

By Carol Lawrence

Well, isn't this a confusing image? Sometimes when I look at it, I wonder if I have it upside down. What is surprising about this image is its location — Death Valley. On my drive to Death Valley, the whole trip had been turned upside down. I had taken wrong turns on the road; I was running late and was annoyed, then, unexpectedly, came rain, bringing wet pavement and poor visibility. The next day, however, was sunny and dry, with that wonderful, crisp, clean feel of the air after rain.



The same rain that had caused danger and discouragement one day created, on the next day, extraordinary sights. I have no idea how many times I would need to experience that sequence of events — something unexpected disrupts my plans, I complain (perhaps vociferously) to God about it and remind Him He loves me so everything should always go my way.

I sometimes suspect God sends disruption into our lives to get our attention, to test our resolve. Paul's journey to preach the gospel of Christ was disrupted many times — by imprisonment, shipwreck, and opposition from jealous local religious leaders. When Paul and Silas preached to the Jews of Thessalonica, some who were envious of their success formed an angry mob and attacked the house where they were staying, calling out:

These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. (Acts 17:6 NKJV)

Paul was not deterred from his mission, nor should we be when we find speed bumps on our path. On my good days, I remember that when our lives feel upside down, we can turn to Scripture, where we read:

*The Lord is good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul who seeks Him.
It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:25-26, NKJV)*

Right now, with war raging in the Middle East and chaos on Capitol Hill, it's easy to feel our world is turned upside down. All we can do is hope and wait and remember that our God is in charge.



Clubhouse Catch-Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse — This month in the Kids Clubhouse is all about “THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS”! Jesus taught like no one else — as One who has authority. Everything Jesus taught revealed what God’s kingdom is like, the kingdom that Jesus had come to establish in full.

Key Passage: John 1:18

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?

Answer: Jesus taught about God and His kingdom and that all Scripture is about Him.

November Lessons: Jesus Taught about Character (Matthew 5),

Jesus Taught about Behavior (Matthew 6), Jesus Taught about God’s Love (Luke 15), Jesus Taught about God’s Kingdom (Matthew 13)

December 3 – First Sunday in Advent (Big Truth Session): We Are Part of God’s Kingdom (Matthew 22; Luke 14)

Do you love telling the Christmas story? We will be taking a break from our chronological Bible study during December for Advent lessons leading up to Christmas Eve. If you love Christmas, come serve in the Kids Clubhouse on Sunday mornings!

Contact Children’s Ministry Director Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) for ways you can participate in creating a memorable Christmas season for our youngest members.

Clubs 4 Kids (C4K) — This program is growing fast! We’ve gone from an average of 10-15 kids to 16-20. These neighborhood kids are fun, full of energy, and open to learning about Jesus. Tuesday is crafts and book club, and Thursday is group and individual game time. Everyone has a good time as trust and confidence increase with each club day. Consistency is key to creating a space where meaningful conversations about the God who loves us and has a plan for each of us can naturally take place. Come make a difference in a child’s life by simply playing some games and actively listening to them share about their day. Please contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) or Kristin French (admin@cordatachurch.org) for more information.



Open Gym November 12th 1-3p — Want to learn how to play pickle ball? Like hanging out and shooting hoops? Come to this month’s “Open Gym” time on Sunday, November 12th. There’s lots to do and new people to meet. See you there!

Fall Festival was a huge success! What a great turn out! ... not only of the community folks in attendance BUT the amazing “mini army” of fantastic volunteers who helped prep, decorate, and serve in the many stations and areas. Many attendees expressed their gratitude and also how wonderful all of the details are — making it a favorite annual event for their families. We served hot dogs this year instead of the usual pizza and they were a hit. Nearly 600 hot dogs were served and probably as many bags of popcorn too! Dave Ruble’s Cardboard Box Maze was incredible as usual. He and his team put it all together in only 3 days!

It’s such a blessing to be able to host this event, to be able to shine the light of Christ through serving and loving on our community. (Turn to pages 6 and 7 to see photos.)

Annual Christmas Eve Ornament — OH MY! Christmas decorations are in every store, and we don’t have our annual ornament design yet. Each year our many talented and crafty people get together to help make the handmade ornaments we give to people who attend our Christmas Eve “One Small Child” interactive Christmas tree decorating service. We always include a heart in the design. Not crafty you say? NO worries - if you have ideas for this year’s ornament, let Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) know, and we can get the Crafty Mc Crafterson team on it.

Adult Education Schedule

This coming Sunday (November 5th) we will be wrapping up our study and discussion of Mike Kuhn's book, *In Quest of the Rock*. As we move towards Christmas, we have special classes coming up.

November 12th — Gordon Terpstra will lead a class on Jesus in the Old Testament

November 19th — There will be no Adult Ed Class due to the Thanksgiving basket preparation and fellowship

November 26-December 17th — *An Unlikely Advent* by Rachel Billups — Expect the **unexpected** this Christmas. This four-week **Advent** study focuses on the experiences of four sets of often overlooked characters in the Nativity.

We hope you will join us in the Chapel or by Zoom at 9a Sunday morning.

Together Tuesday Celebrates Thanksgiving with a Congregational Dinner

Plan to attend the **TOGETHER TUESDAY congregational dinner celebrating Thanksgiving on Tuesday, November 14**. Joining us as the program will be the Kings Men of Song, a long-standing Whatcom County Christian men's chorus based in Lynden. They will bring us their new fall repertoire of praise music under the direction of Gerald Rutgers and piano accompaniment by Laura TeVelde. Our fellowship cooking team will be preparing dinner at a cost of \$6 per person (pay at the door).

The program begins at 5:30p and concludes around 7p. Reservations help us in our planning, so please send an email to the church office (admin@cordatachurch.org) or reserve at the sign-up table in the church foyer.

Two Seasonal Events You Won't Want to Miss

On November 19th, CPC will be joining Mosaic to prepare giveaway baskets for Thanksgiving. CPC will be donating breakfast for everyone preparing the baskets. Things needed are quick breads, yogurt, fruit, hard cooked eggs, orange juice, milk, and coffee. Breakfast will start at 9:30a, and there is no charge. If you are available, please be in the kitchen prior to 9a to drop off donations and help with set-up.

There will also be items that need to be purchased for the baskets themselves. There will be a sign-up sheet in the foyer, but if you need more information, contact Kristin French (admin@cordatachurch.org).

Join in the fun of filling baskets for others and enjoy a light breakfast.

On December 10th, prepare for the holidays by singing your way to the Lord! If you weren't able to come to the outdoor Caroling and Tree Lighting (see page 8), there will be another opportunity to sing your favorite carols. After worship, there will be an old fashioned carol sing in the foyer. Music and song sheets will be provided as well as hot cider to drink. Bring your best voice and willingness to help make a joyful noise celebrating Christ's birth!

November Prayer Focus — Thanksgiving

Psalm 107:31 says,

Let them give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind.

As you ponder all that our Father in Heaven has done for you and Cordata Church this past year, thank Him for all He has done. Thank Him for the miracles, the gifts, and the challenges that He has already helped or will help you get through.

The Worship Committee wishes you a Happy Thanksgiving.

Linda Black, Worship Elder

Cordata Missions Ongoing

Your Missions and Outreach Team continues taking steps to keep us on track as a missional congregation. Recently we were visited by Kate Mott Powell, who is a Campus Christian Fellowship (CCF) representative on the Whatcom Community College (WCC) campus. Jeff Jenkins, another CCF representative, continues his relational ministry with international students and has embarked on the Talk Time gatherings of students at our church. Yet another CFF leader, Goeff Mumley recently spoke at the Men's Breakfast, giving an overview of the campus activities of the Fellowship. Cordata Church has a keen interest in supporting Christian witness on the two college campuses, especially our neighbor WCC, and includes this activity in its budget.

In other efforts, the Missions committee re-affirmed its support of Cordata missionaries Bryan and Thandi Whitlock for their work in Youth With a Mission. They have been witnessing Christ through sports and have been encouraging YWAM activities in southern Africa.

Did you notice the hot dog "rolling" roaster at the Cordata Church Fall Festival? With Missions Committee funding, we helped to purchase this equipment and gave needed support for the Festival outreach effort.

Fall Work Party - Saturday, November 18, from 10a-Noon

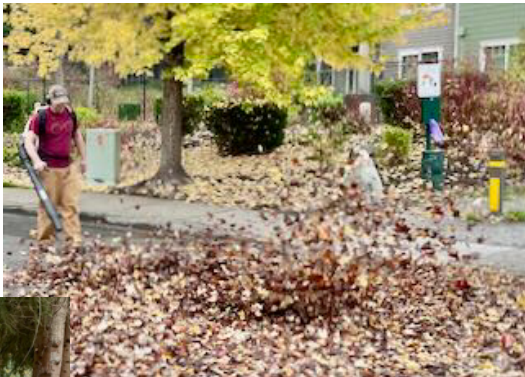
A huge "THANK YOU" to all who helped with the outdoor cleanup and leaf raking in October. Those participating were: Dan Moore; Joel & Suzanne Rautiola; Stan Humphreys & Julie Farrow; Sue Wright; Jim Zander; Ted VanZanden; Eric Weissenborn; Matt, Joshua & Paxton White; Mark MacLeod; Joel Buma; Chris Battershill; Roger DeSpain; & Margaret Rudy. We raked and removed many loads of leaves. As the saying goes: "many hands make light work" and that was very true.

Join us for another Fall cleanup of the outside grounds on Saturday, November 18th from 10a to noon to spruce up our site. Please sign up in the foyer and bring rakes, 5-gallon buckets, and tarps. Remember "many hands make light work" and we could use your help.

For questions or more information, please contact: Roger at rogerd@cordatachurch.org or Margaret at margaretr@cordatachurch.org



More Photos of Cordata Church at Work



Preparing for the Fall Festival



Fall Festival!!!



More Fall Festival Photos!



Save the Date

Sunday, November 12th, 1-3p, Family Life Center, Open Gym — See page 3.

Tuesday, November 14th, 5:30p, Family Life Center, Together Tuesday — See page 4.

Saturday, November 18th, 9a, Palm Room, Men's Breakfast

10a, Work Party — See page 5.

Sunday, November 19th, 9:30a, Family Life Center, Thanksgiving Baskets and Breakfast — See page 4.

Sunday, December 3rd, 4p, Outdoors on Lawn, Caroling and Tree Lighting (see below)

Sunday, December 10th, After Worship, Foyer, Carol Sing — See page 4.

Regularly Occurring Events

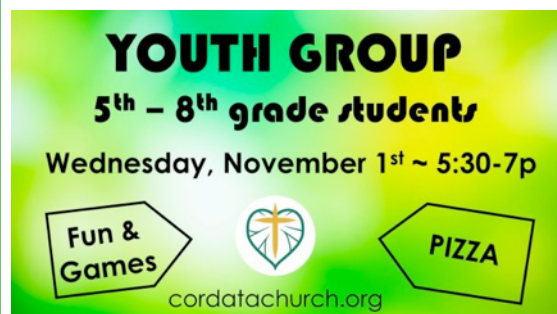
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| Sundays - | 9a, Adult Education Class, Chapel
10:15a, Worship Center, Worship
Kid's Clubhouse, Pre-K thru 5th grade |
| Mondays - | 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Family Life Center |
| Tuesdays - | 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer |
| Wednesdays - | 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Family Life Center
5:30p, Youth Group: 5th-8th Grade Students
7p, Choir Rehearsal, Chapel |
| Thursdays - | 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer |
| Fridays - | 2:30p, Free Groceries, Miracle Food Network |



SAVE THE DATE: December 1 and 2 *The Messiah*

At a recent worship service, Pastor Greg read from Isaiah 9 in his sermon, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Perhaps that sounded familiar to you and made you want to break into song? Those words are the Biblical text of the 12th chorus of George Frederick Handel's famous musical work, *The Messiah*, written in 1741, and now one of the most well-known musical works. The Messiah will be preformed by the Lynden Choral Society at two separate concerts on Friday, December 1, 7p and Saturday, December 2, 2p. Both concerts are free and are at the American Reformed Church, 8868 Northwood Road in Lynden. The renowned soloists are Stephen Rumph, Hannah Wynne, Charles Robert Stephens, and Katie Van Kooten, directed by Austin McCombs, and accompanied by the Starry Night Orchestra.



Shawn Cunningham, Head of Schools, Bellingham Christian School, speaks to Together Tuesday Dinner