



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

December, 2024

Message from Pastor Greg: “Waiting”

The most distinguished theologian of the 20th Century, Karl Barth, observed that Christians live “between the times.” That is, we live in between Christ coming the first time in the flesh of Jesus’ Incarnation and the second time of Christ coming in the great and terrible Day of the Lord when the sheep will be separated from the goats and God’s faithful will receive their heavenly reward. Living between the times is a challenge. Though we have had the taste of God’s salvation through Jesus, our Emmanuel (“God with us”), we also sing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” as we yearn for God to set things aright. Living between the times requires quite a lot of waiting. This Advent, we will explore the theme of waiting...how long must we wait for the Lord to act in particular situations? What if we wait patiently and “nothing happens”? What are we supposed to do while we are waiting? These are some of the questions we’ll tackle during Advent. And we already got a good sneak preview of one answer to these questions from Paul’s first letter to the church in Thessalonica: we are to *“rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances....”*

Below are a few of the things CPCers are giving thanks for in all circumstances (from the “Thank you, Lord” cards we filled out in worship on the Sunday before Thanksgiving).

The Popular: “For faith.” “For a loving, welcoming church that preaches and loves Jesus.” “For _NAME_.” (Many of YOUR individual names were listed on cards.) “For our Savior, Jesus Christ.” “Family, friends, and pets.” “Safety.” “Freedom (to worship and vote).” “The Choir.” “Community.” “Beauty of where we live.”

The Poignant: “Life!” “Grace.” “Joy.” “Forgiveness.” “For NOT always giving me what I want.” “For middle school youth who show up (for CPC youth group) twice a month; and the good challenge they bring.” “The courage to follow Jesus...and wisdom to support my faith.” “Hope.”

The Holy: “Hymns and praise songs.” “My wonderful Savior, who loves me.” “The Lord’s promises and presence.” “Salvation.” “Delivery from crippling anxiety.” “God’s mercy.”

The Surprising: “Too many things to list on this little card!” “Origami.” “Spellcheck.” “Trees and rain.” “Roommates.” “Rainbows.” “PBS.” “For waking this morning with 2 dogs in bed(!)” “Dance.” “Clean clothes.”

We CPCers sure are a thankful bunch! What else would you add to this list as we wait together through Advent.

Waiting thankfully together in Christ,
Pastor Greg



On the Run

By Carol Lawrence

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
(Colossians 3:2)

Why is this young bison running? He lives in Grand Tetons National Park, where there are no lions. Hunting is not allowed, so humans are no threat. I was there with my photographer friends. We carried lots of camera gear, but no firearms. This guy was running along the road where we were parked. A short distance ahead, a huge older male bison was standing in the middle of the road, snorting and stamping his feet. If there was any danger, it was to the photographers, not the young bison. He appeared to be an adolescent, so I'm guessing he was just running for the fun of it. He's building his muscles, as well as just plain enjoying himself.



Why do we humans run? Marathoners run for the high of it. Less ambitious runners may run for the health benefits or the simple joy of exercise. Today I'm resisting the temptation to run to the mall to catch a last Black Friday bargain. Later today I will run to Costco to pick up the ingredients for my favorite Sunday morning breakfast of scrambled eggs and avocado toast.

But then, I'll quit running for a few precious hours. On Sunday morning, for two whole hours I'll put aside all running. Instead, I'll soak up some precious calm, first in the Adult Education hour, then the worship service, just listening quietly, absorbing God's presence. It's very empowering. I highly recommend it.

It can take a conscious effort to seek out quiet, especially this time of the year when there are so many special events that come just once a year. The Bible gives clear instructions on this point, however. Remember the story of Mary and Martha? When Jesus visited their house, Martha complained to him that Mary was leaving the chores to her. Jesus's response was unambiguous:

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
(Luke 10:41,42)

Yes, that's the lesson for the season. We choose the best part when we give up running, and simply stay calm, listening for His voice, doing the one thing that is needed. Our great God will not shout at us. He does not snort and stamp His feet, but in His quiet way, He stands over us just like that massive male bison protected his herd. What do we need to worry about?

Year End and New Year Gifts

As we approach the end of the calendar year and the start of a new year, many people take this opportunity to reflect on their finances for the past year and make plans for the coming year. Timing any special donations and gifts can be part of maximizing the benefits and minimizing tax impacts. For those who are thinking about some special giving, we are offering up a list highlighting some gifts that would be very helpful in the coming year. Realizing that some of these amounts are significant, we encourage you to consider giving a "share" towards one or give an amount designated for "most needed" use.

Computer(s)	\$ 1,500 each
Drum Kit	\$ 8,000
Replace Outdoor Security Camera	\$ 5,000
Replace sodium bulbs at front of church building with LED	\$ 5,000
Sound System Repairs	\$40,000
HVAC/Furnaces	\$50,000

The continued faithful generosity of this congregation is a beautiful response to the great gifts we have received from our Lord. Whether God moves some to extra giving or instead helps us figure out other creative means to meet these needs, we give the glory to God, who provides what we need when we need it.

In Thanks, The Generosity Team



Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - Christmas Time is here! Sunday Morning Clubhouse will have the unique opportunity to learn about Jesus' second coming AND his miraculous birth! We wrap up the 3-year Genesis to Revelation with two, kid-friendly lessons from the book of Revelation, then finish the month with Advent lessons and crafts.

Unit 36: The Church's Hope - As the church continues the mission Jesus gave, it does so with the hope that one day Jesus will return to make all things new and put an end to sin and death once and for all.

On that day, Jesus will fully usher in God's kingdom as all of His followers enjoy being with Him and one another as part of a new heaven and earth.

Key Passages: Psalm 34:17

Big Picture Question: What is the hope of the church? **Answer:** The church looks forward to Jesus' return when He will make all things new.

December Lessons: Jesus Is Worthy of Worship (Revelation 4–5), Jesus Will Return One Day (Revelation 19–20), Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth (Isaiah 7, 9, 11; Micah 5), Jesus is Our Greatest Gift (Matthew 1; Luke 2), The Wise Men Visit Jesus (Matthew 2)

Advent Family Devotional - "Family Advent Box" kits are ready for pick up! Filled with daily and or monthly devotionals and activities, plus some fun, easy-to-do crafts (including supplies), these kits will help your families develop meaningful devotion time during the holiday season. Come get yours at the Welcome Desk.

Clubs 4 Kids - December will have fun games, crafts, and lessons on the true meaning of Christmas. We are also partnering with Good News Club for a special Christmas Party on December 11th. (See photos page 9.)

Operation Christmas Child RECAP - Over 60 boxes were created by CPC folks! The boxes were prayed over and delivered to the processing place! Many folks took empty boxes at the Fall Festival plus many more over the past few weeks. Many cute little dresses were also made for Operation Christmas Child (OCC). We gave them to Bellingham Christian School for their OCC packing party. They were thrilled to have them!

CHRISTMAS AT CORDATA PRES.*:

Caroling at Cordata - December 1st was our annual "Carols, Cocoa, & Candy Canes" event. We sang in the Christmas season as we gathered (and stayed) at the roundabout in front of the church to usher in the Christmas season with carols, treats, and some added fun activities.

Christmas Cookie Decorating - Love decorating cookies, but don't want the hassle of messing up your kitchen? Then come to CPC on Saturday, December 21st, from 1-3p. We will be decorating sugar cookies premade by our CPC Cookie Ministry Team. These cookies will be served at our Christmas Eve service social time on December 24th. But not all the cookies are for the attendees of Christmas Eve... Decorators will get to keep some for themselves too.

Christmas Eve Keepsake Ornament - Supplies are ready for this year's commemorative ornament. If you are interested in helping create these special keepsake ornaments, please contact Bonnie Hollingsworth at BonnieH@cordatachurch.org.

New Year's Eve Party - After the success of last year's first, family-friendly New Year's Eve countdown party (East Coast Time), we have it on the calendar to do again this year December 31st, 6-9p.

*A special December "calendar of events" flyer is available for you to invite your friends and family members to all our Christmas at Cordata Pres. Events!

CPC Missions & Outreach Team Seeks Helpers

“Sharing Table” - Your Missions & Outreach Team would like to institute a “sharing table” to be available in the foyer on Sunday mornings. The sharing table might contain food items, newly knitted caps, or even children’s games to be shared with others. We need a volunteer to wheel a cart out each Sunday and put it back, taking care of any perishable food items if necessary. For more information contact, Dan Sanford, Elder for Missions & Outreach, at DanS@cordatachurch.org.

Talk Time - This ministry for international students takes place in the CPC Family Life Center on Friday evenings. American hosts from several churches participate as conversationalists building friendships in the name of Christ. Leader of this event, Jeff Jenkins, is a member of the Campus Christian Fellowship team supported, in part, by our church. Ideally, one or two members of CPC could join him in this fellowship (and dinner) with community college students from around the world. If you think you might enjoy this group, contact Dan Sanford, Elder for Missions & Outreach, at DanS@cordatachurch.org.

Mission Trip to Guatemala, 2026

Are you looking for a way to be God’s “hands and feet” in showing His love to those in need plus helping to improve their basic living conditions?

Our church has financially supported the Hope of the Pokomchi in Guatemala and have sent many teams over the years to help with building water cisterns or projects like cook stoves or latrines to help the daily lives of the Pokomchi people. Our next opportunity to go and serve in Guatemala will be March 2026.

Back in January of this year, we asked that you pray about your participation in this mission—whether it is praying for the team, supporting the team financially, and/or joining the team going to Guatemala. God has provided a great core of people who have expressed an interest in going! But, what about you?! We are looking for more people who are willing to get their hands dirty working alongside others on the CPC team and the Pokomchi receiving this help, those who want to be immersed in the Pokomchi village life, and those who want to make a difference in the lives of people who are seeing God’s love in action.

If you are interested in finding out more about this mission trip, come to an informational meeting January 12, 2025, at 11:45a after worship in the Chapel. It will be a time for learning about the Pokomchi; hearing about the costs of the trip, fundraising ideas, projects the group may do while in the villages; and getting answers to questions about what to expect if you go. We hope you will be praying about coming with us!

If you have any questions right now, call or email us: Nina Buma 360-319-1706, Gary Buma 360-734-8733, gnbuma@hotmail.com.

A Time of Giving for CPC Members

November was a month of extraordinary giving by members of our congregation. Early in the month the Missions & Outreach Committee ran its traditional winter clothing drive. This was concluded with the the help of Rich Emerson who transported boxes of coats, hats, and gloves to the Interfaith Coalition office, Bellingham.

Mid-month we finalized the collection of Operation Christmas Child gift boxes for poor children around the world. CPC folks donated over 50 boxes filled with small toys, toiletries, and crafts for distribution by Samaritan’s Purse. Bonnie Hollingsworth, Carol Lawrence, and Shawna Young headed up the drive for these gifts. Then the Young family jumped in to deliver the items to the Whatcom collection center at Emmanuel Bible Church.

Thanksgiving Sunday a large crowd joined Mosaic Church in the Family Life Center to start the process of packing Thanksgiving dinner boxes for 75 families! There were many examples of folks giving generously and sacrificially so that recipients might have the ingredients to prepare amazing dinners for the holiday. Many thanks to members of the Missions Committee and others who helped to complete the “still needed” list, bought gift cards, and delivered the boxes.



Heard the other day in the halls at CPC:

"I AM SO DISAPPOINTED! WE ONLY GOT TO SING TWO VERSES OF MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS CAROL IN WORSHIP, *Oh Little Town of Bethlehem*...AND NOW I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR FOR MORE..."

Stop right there, friend!! Sunday, December 15th, is our chance to sing that carol and 8 others (with more verses), right after worship in the foyer! And, not only YOU are invited, but any of your family, friends, visitors, children, grandmas, and grandpas! We have three people playing these seasonal hymns, and a group of singers to lead the way. In addition, there will be rewards of cider available for all!!

Yes, CPC's famous **Christmas Carol Hymn Sing--December 15th just following worship!**

And for your calendar or your refrigerator door: In case you missed the announcement at the November "Together Tuesday" dinner, here's the schedule for the next few months where we meet during the daytime so we don't have to contend with potential crummy weather in the dark 😊

- **December 15th** (Sunday) - Christmas Carol Hymn Sing, in the foyer right after worship
- **January 5th** - Cordata Goes Out for Lunch. Sign up to join others for a lunch out--usually in groups of 4-6 so you can get acquainted with others, try out a local restaurant, invite someone new to join you!
- **January 12th** - Table Game Day returns after worship in the foyer!
- **February 2nd** - Invite a friend or someone new to join you at Out for Lunch--right after worship. There will be groups of 4-6 so it's easy to chat and have a meal together.
- **March 11** - Back to to our regular Tuesday evening schedule for Together Tuesday.

Resilient Church Project Update

We're completing the "Discovery" phase of the Resilient Church project and preparing to begin the "Discernment" phase. We learned from our faculty consultant at Whitworth that CPC provided more data for analysis than any other church in our cohort! (Thank you again to our "journal writers" and to all who were interviewed by our project fellow, Olivia.)

While awaiting the observations and analysis from our consultant, the Task Force has continued to explore ideas that are emerging from the Zoom meetings among all the churches in the cohort, as well as the readings we've been doing.

Because we want this project to reflect the thoughts and vision of our entire congregation, the team is planning to have two activities in the New Year to share the information we've received and to allow us to hear from many others.

In early February, we'll have a special gathering of Elders and Deacons for discussions regarding next steps at this stage of the project. We'll also share the findings and analysis from our Whitworth consultant with the entire congregation, and we plan after-worship coffee hour "roundtables" for all who would like to participate.

These two activities will kick off the "Discernment" phase of the project. The Task Force leadership team is very encouraged about the Lord's leading and the potential for CPC to be used mightily for His kingdom in the coming months and years.

If you have questions or comments about the Resilient Church Project, please share those with any member of the Task Force: Dan Sanford (Lead), Stephanie Kuhn, Rich Emerson, Barbara Sanford, Mike Langey, or Pastor Greg Ellis.

Book Sale

Carol Van Zanden, long time member of CPC and teacher has published a wonderful book! It tells the story of her grandson picking berries with his Grandpa and a special friend, and baking the berries into a pie with his Grandma. Carol is a retired Home Economics and kindergarten teacher who combined her love of family and photography to create books for her grandchildren, sharing their adventures. She is now able to reach a wider audience with this publication. The book is titled *Four and Twenty Blackberries Baked in Jadon's Pie*, and it even comes with a recipe for the pie.

Carol is graciously donating any monies from the sale of this book at church to CPC. She gives thanks to the Lord for having everything come together to allow her to publish her first book - a long time wish come true. Stop by and see Carol and this fun book before and after the services on December 1st, 8th, and 15th. What a great Christmas gift this would be for the young ones in your life.

Thank you Carol and CONGRATULATIONS!

“What If God Had Voicemail?”

Submitted by Gordon Terpstra (He is not the author; the author is unknown.)

We have all learned to live with “Voice Mail” as a necessary part of modern life. But have you ever wondered, “What if God decided to install voice mail when we pray?” Imagine praying and hearing this:

“Thank you for calling My Father’s house. Please select one of the following options.

Press 1 for Requests.

Press 2 for Thanksgiving.

Press 3 for Complaints.

Press 4 for All Other Inquiries.”

What if God used the familiar excuse....

“I’m sorry, all of our angels are busy helping other sinners right now. However, your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received, so please stay on the line.”

Can you imagine getting these kinds of responses as you call God in prayer?

“If you would like to speak to:

Gabriel, Press 1

Michael, Press 2

For a directory of other angels, Press 3

If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while holding, Press 4.

To find out if a loved one has been assigned to Heaven, Press 5, enter his or her Social Security number, then press the pound key.”

“For reservations at ‘My Father’s House’, please enter “J-O-H-N followed by 3-1-6.”

“For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, and where Noah’s ark is, please wait until you arrive here.”

“Our computers show that you have already prayed once today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.”

“This office is closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday. Please pray again on Monday after 9:30 AM. If you need emergency assistance when this office is closed, contact your local pastor.”

Thank God He does NOT have Voicemail, and He listens when we pray!!!! (Author Unknown)



Table Game Day

Cordata Scene



Lighthouse Mission CEO Hans Erchinger-Davis Speaks at Together Tuesday



A CPC Send-off to Sarah Allen



Decorating and Packing Boxes for Thanksgiving Dinners



Financial Management Course Coming

Cordata's Missions and Outreach Committee has arranged for the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University (FPU) class to be held for our church and the local community.

Cordata successfully offered the FPU classes last Spring, 2024, and 16 people from 9 different families participated. We will be using a different format this time designed to make it easier for people to attend. Each participant will have online access to the Ramsey weekly videos and will watch the video at their own pace during the week. We will then get together weekly for 30 to 45 minutes to go over FPU activities and answer questions.

Classes will start on Thursday March 6, 2025, at 7p at Cordata Presbyterian Church. At our first meeting we will hand out workbooks and verify your access to the online videos. Starting 7p, Thursday, March 13, 2025, we will meet weekly in person for 30 to 45 minutes in the church Cedar Room to go over activities and answer questions from that week's video that you watched at home. Last class will be May 15, 2025. There will be no class Thursday April 17, 2025 (Maundy Thursday).

The cost of the class is \$50 per family (you &/or spouse). If cost is an issue, please pay what you can. A minimum payment of \$25 is required. Class size & the number of reduced-price tuition is limited and on a first come basis.

In addition to the in-person classes, participants receive 1 year access to the video lessons, a hard copy workbook, access to EveryDollar Premium budgeting app for 1 year, group financial coaching via scheduled zoom meeting, and access to 20+ free audio books. Our Cordata committee secured bundled pricing & financial support to offer these items. This bundle is valued over \$170 if purchased individually from Ramsey Solutions.

No matter where you are on your financial journey or your need to understand your personal finances, this course can be highly beneficial. FPU graduates learn to manage their money from Christian-based values often achieving freedom from debt.

For more info on this class, send an email to fpuevents@cordatachurch.org or talk to Gregg Block, Coordinator for the class.

You can find more information by clicking on the Interested in *Financial Coaching?* icon on the CPC website (www.cordatachurch.org). You will also find a link to a pdf registration form that you can print.

You can also register & pay on online at
<https://fpu-spring-2025.cheddarup.com>



Gregg is a member of the Cordata Missions Committee. This will be the 2nd FPU class Gregg leads here and previously led multiple Dave Ramsey & Crown Financial Ministry classes at his Illinois home church before relocating to CPC.

In Financial Peace University, you'll learn how to:

- Take control of your money
- Attack debt with a vengeance and pay it off fast
- Save for emergencies
- Choose the right insurance plans
- Invest wisely and build wealth
- Give generously (the best part)

Applying the Christian-based values you learn with FPU changes lives. I am excited to be part of the FPU experience for our church community. – Gregg Block

Save the Date

Friday, December 6th, 5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center - See page 4.

Wednesday, December 11th, 4:30p, Christmas Party for Children and Young Adults (5-23 years old), Foyer - See page 3.

Sunday, December 15th, After Fellowship, Christmas Carol Hymn Sing, Foyer - See page 5.

Saturday, December 21st, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Cedar Room.

1-3p, Cookie Decorating Party, CPC Kitchen - See page 3.

Tuesday, December 24th, 4:30p, Christmas Eve Fellowship, Foyer.

5:00p, Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Service, Worship Center.

Tuesday, December 31st, 6-9p, New Year's Eve Party, Family Life Center - See page 3.

Sunday, January 5th, After Fellowship, Cordata Goes Out to Lunch - See page 4.

Sunday, January 12th, After Fellowship, Table Game Day - See page 4.

Regularly Occurring Events

- Sundays -** 9a, Adult Education Class, Chapel
 10:30a, Worship, Worship Center
 10:45a, Kids Clubhouse/Sunday School - See page 3.
 After Worship, Coffee Fellowship
- Mondays -** 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel
- Tuesdays -** 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer - See page 3.
- Wednesdays -** 9a, Weekly Prayer Group, Zoom - Contact admin@cordatachurch.org for link.
 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel
 5:30p, Youth Group (5th to 8th Grade), 1st and 3rd Wednesday
 7:00p, Choir, Chapel
- Thursdays -** 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer - See page 3.
- Fridays -** 2:30p, Free Groceries, Miracle Food Network



Clubs 4 Kids



A Work Party "THANK YOU!"

A huge THANK YOU! to all the congregants who helped with our last 2024 outdoor cleanup on November 9th. We did a lot of leaf blowing, raking, and hauling leaves to the back property line. Those helping were: Gary Buma, Jim Zander, Jim Boyles, Dale Kreider, Doug and Carol Cowgill, Bob Gilda, Dan Moore, Roger DeSpain, and Margaret Rudy. The saying "many hands make light work" was very true that cool November morning. Thanks again.

Adult Education Sunday, 9a, Chapel

Come join us in December as Mike Kuhn continues to teach us about the Trinity, using the book *Delighting in the Trinity* by Michael Reeves. This 6-week class will take place for the first 3 weeks of December and then for the first 3 weeks of January.

The fourth week of December will be full of people sharing their favorite Christmas traditions.

There is so much richness in our seeking to know God more fully during this Advent season.