



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

February, 2025

Message from Pastor Greg: “Reflections on the Annual Meeting”

Our annual congregational meeting on the last Sunday of every January gives us a yearly snapshot of congregational life and health. In this way, we take a look together at our finances and ministry each year to get an idea of where we are now and where the Lord is leading us next. We had a good turnout for this year’s meeting on January 26th. Many thanks to our Fellowship Team for serving up a healthy and tasty lunch and to everyone at CPC for your faithful labors year-round. By God’s grace, we have much mission & ministry to celebrate at Cordata. Here is a recap to emphasize key learnings from this year’s meeting:

For starters, we observed many encouraging signs of congregational health. One way to see that is through the numbers organizations ordinarily review at annual meetings. Our Treasurer/Finance Elder Mike Cullum had the good notion to look at the numbers through the lens of 5-year trends. Here’s what stood out to me:

- **Membership turnaround.** After **declining** an average of 6.55% per year each year from 2020-2023, our membership numbers **increased** 8% in 2024.
- **Regular giving steady.** In spite of the overall decrease in membership, CPC’s regular giving (“tithes and offerings”) remained remarkably steady in amount from 2020 through 2024. The Lord has faithfully made us generous and steady in our regular giving. Faithful regular giving is a key marker of health, since your tithes and offerings provide the large majority of our financial resources for Cordata’s mission and ministry.
- **Special giving extends our reach.** Some individuals have also been able to contribute special offerings in addition to regular tithes and offerings. This “special giving” has enabled us to extend mission and ministry resources beyond those provided by the adopted budget to pay for important items such as having a youth intern, paying down our mortgage debt early, and replacing aging HVAC systems.
- **Many ministries under one roof.** Our building-sharing partnerships, especially with Bellingham Christian School, but also Mosaic Church and several others, continues to bless all the Christian organizations that operate under our roof. We anticipate this mutually beneficial partnering relationship will continue in the years ahead, providing an important source of additional revenue for CPC’s mission and ministry. The Lord is answering CPC’s long-held prayer for God to “fill the building to capacity” with a variety of ministries that honor Jesus Christ and point people to Him.
- **Lower mortgage debt and healthy reserves.** All the above has resulted in a faster than expected reduction of our mortgage debt to about \$500,000 and gives us a healthy balance in our reserve savings.
- **2025 Budget leans forward in faith.** Encouraged by the faithfulness of both God and our congregation, our Session has adopted a 2025 Budget that “leans into” the year ahead. We are humbly and confidently asking the Lord and CPCers to continue favoring the important mission and ministry we have been called to.

My hope in writing this recap is that anyone who reads this will be encouraged, curious enough to dive into the Annual Report (contact Kristin at Admin@cordatachurch.org if you need an extra copy), and committed enough to mark your calendars for a congregational “Resilient Church” gathering on March 9th. (Stay tuned for more details.)

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Greg





“Fog”

By Carol Lawrence

Here in Bellingham, we’ve had some very lovely, foggy mornings recently. My photographer’s heart is charmed when a strip of low fog highlights the evergreen forest on the mountains, or when sunrise sends shafts of light through the fog. When I took this photo, I was on a photo trek down the Oregon coast. Several times I encountered an elderly couple, on a similar itinerary. They had travelled many miles to enjoy warm summer sunshine on the beautiful Pacific Ocean and were disappointed by the persistent fog. I found it beautiful and captured some nice moody photos.

Cancer patients are well acquainted with a different type of fog. While I was in the throes of immunotherapy, with massive brain fog, I yearned for the mental clarity I had previously enjoyed. It seems to be human nature to want everything to be clear and simple. We want to understand things immediately, without the need for serious mental effort, without waiting for clarification.

This is especially true regarding Bible study. Why do I have to work so hard to figure out what a particular verse is saying? Sometimes the words are clear, but the underlying meaning is not, and the implications for my daily life far from obvious. Of course, this is part of God’s plan. And, as with so many things, it’s for our own good. If God gave us a quick easy explanation, we might see only the most superficial aspects of what He is telling us. By making us wait, and insisting that we think more deeply, He forces us to focus on the more powerful, eternal meaning, rather than the immediate, worldly message. As Scripture tells us:

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Corinthians 13:12

Whitworth Scholarship Supported for 2025

The Mission and Outreach committee has again approved a \$1,000 Cordata Presbyterian Church student scholarship for Whitworth University. The university will seek to assign this year's fund to a student from our area, and we will receive news about this later this spring.

Noa Lovegren, a Kinesiology senior from Everson, was last year's recipient. Noa has written to us that after graduation she hopes to continue graduate studies in occupational therapy. She would like to work in a parasports clinic and do mission work in orphanages working with infants and young children. She credits the growth of her Christian faith to the mentoring of a Whitworth theology professor who taught her in a class called The Life and Teaching of Jesus.

She writes to Cordata, “I went into my first year knowing I wouldn’t be able to afford going another year. And yet, with this scholarship, I have been able to come back! It has been such an incredible opportunity for me to see God’s present and loving hand in my life working through generous, kind people like you!”

To learn more about Noa’s testimony and ambitions, you might like to take a look at her entire letter posted on the bulletin board in Mission Hall.





CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - We continue studying the big stories from Genesis this month. The main take-a-ways in January were all about the consequences of sin. Still in Volume 1, we move onto UNIT 2: GOD MADE A PROMISE the second Sunday in February.

Key Passages: Psalm 100:5

Big Picture Question: Does God keep His promises?

Answer: Yes, God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

February Lessons:

Finish Unit 1: The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)

Start Unit 2: Abram Followed God (Genesis 11–13), God's Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12; 15; 17), Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22)

Clubs 4 Kids (C4K) - C4K could use your support and time!

Club had to be cancelled a few times in January due to a shortness of leaders. With the number of kids coming on a regular basis, we've found we really need a minimum of three leaders to accommodate and accomplish all we have planned. Club might only be one hour twice per week (4:30-5:30p Tuesday and Thursday), but it has a huge, positive impact on our neighbor kids. If you like Valentine's crafts and fun games, pray about joining our C4K team this February. (More C4K photos below.)

Our snack supply is running low. Donations of snack bars, graham crackers, fruit snacks, cheese sticks, and small oranges/apples are greatly appreciated!

Caring Bags - It's that time of year again when we get the opportunity to show our CPC kids and neighborhood kids that we care about them. The caring bags will be in the foyer ready for your notes of encouragement, prayers, traditional Valentines, and small treats. A list of names will be available if you'd like to personalize your items. Your card and treats will be accepted for most of the month. We will pass them out to the kids the last week of the month.



Adult Education - "The Hope Of Heaven"

Jesus has opened up Heaven for us through His cross. Heaven is our firm hope it is where we will be after death, all because of His matchless grace at Calvary. What a hope!! But what do we really know of that future home that we are destined for? After all, none of us has ever been there yet. Whatever we know is only what the Scriptures have revealed. But it is more than you think! Beginning on Sunday, February 2, and proceeding for 5 Sundays, retired Pastor Gordon Terpstra will offer a class titled "The Hope Of Heaven."

On February 2nd we introduced the course beginning with a discussion of some of the questions of Heaven that we wonder about. On this first day we concluded by opening up what Jesus taught about Heaven in John 14: 1-6. This was all just an introduction, and if you missed it, do not worry, but join us whenever you are able.

On February 9th we will zero in on what is NOT there, what is NOT in Heaven. Some of this will surprise you! Mostly we will open chapters in the book of Revelation on this Sunday.

On February 16th we will do the opposite and zero in on what IS there. Again, mostly from the book of Revelation but not exclusively so.

On February 23rd we will focus on the BIG thing, the ONE most vital truth of Heaven that makes Heaven Heaven. What is that? That GOD IS THERE! The really big deal of Heaven is the PRESENCE OF GOD...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One whole class just on that! The Presence of the Father, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit...THAT is the big deal!

Finally, on **March 2nd** we will uncover a really, really surprising truth that many Christians minimize or are unaware of. Namely, that Heaven is A NEW EARTH! A New Creation, a New Earth, with mountains and oceans and forests and animals and solidity!

Hope to see you there! In the class, but also in Heaven!

Gordon

The Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ

Are you interested in learning more about how to participate in God's healing ministry in our day? If so, Presbyterian Reform Ministries International (PRMI) is offering a live, online (Zoom) course called "The Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ". PRMI teaching is based on the healing ministry of Jesus and the apostles as the model for all types of healing ministry today. They do this through sound theology and practical application. Dates and times are: 6-9p, February 18th-21st and 8:30a-12:30p Saturday, February 22nd.

If you're interested in finding out more, go to prmi.org/events/ and scroll down the page for Dunamis Essentials #4: The Healing Ministry of Jesus— Online.

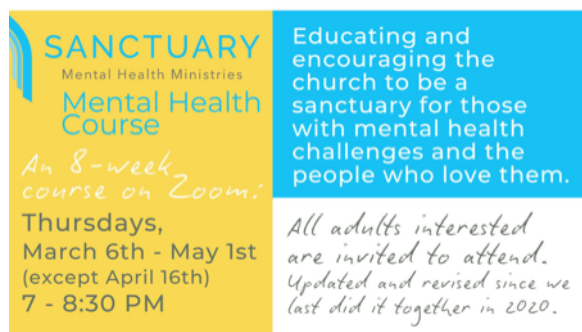
Linda Black, Worship Elder

"Explore Cordata" is Coming this Month!

If you are new to Cordata Presbyterian Church, you will want to join in on a 2-3 week series called "Exploring Cordata". February 16th and 23rd will cover any of your questions and general information about Cordata Pres and a tour of the building. On March 2nd, any of those who attend Explore Cordata and are interested in membership to Cordata Pres will have a special session when you will meet leaders in the congregation and find out more about membership.

Please let Dan Sanford (DanS@cordatachurch.org), Julie Farrow (JulieF@cordatachurch.org), Kristin French (Admin@cordatachurch.org) or Pastor Greg (GregE@cordatachurch.org) know if you are interested. (There's also a sign-up in the foyer.)

We're certainly interested in knowing more about you!



One in four people will be affected by a mental health challenge at some point in their lives yet the stigma surrounding these experiences often prevents faith communities from responding compassionately and effectively. The Sanctuary Mental Health Course was created to help churches like ours become a sanctuary – a place where individuals living with mental health challenges feel safe and supported, and discover a sense of belonging. Each of the eight-week sessions explores key mental health topics and draws upon the insights of mental health professionals, church leaders, and people with lived experience.

Cordata Pres is joining with other churches in our area to host this Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries Course, starting in March. All adults are invited to attend. This course requires no prior mental health training or expertise; it is for anyone interested in learning and growing together so that we may become a sanctuary for one another, especially those dealing with mental health challenges.

For more information about the course go to <https://sanctuarymentalhealth.org/sanctuary-course/>. For information as to how to get a link to the course, contact Barbara Sanford (sanford11@earthlink.net) or the church office (Admin@cordatachurch.org).

Coffee...Tea???

Cordata Pres offers a good time for sharing and caring over coffee or tea after each Sunday worship. How do we do it? What makes it special? What's the reason for it?

Almost every Sunday, a special person takes a journey to the kitchen to make a big green container of coffee. Then that special person carts that container down the long hallway to the foyer just as church is getting out. They check to see that there are cups, sugar, half&half, and napkins. Then that wonderful special person cheerfully hands out cups of coffee/tea to those who are lining up.

Now the good time for fellowship starts—"hi" and "howdy" to those you already know, introductions to those who are new, help carrying cups for somebody who needs help, hugs, and connections of all kinds. This is the time we fulfill Scripture—encouraging and showing care to brothers and sisters in Christ.

Would you consider serving in this fellowship ministry? We are happy to show you how it is done. Sign up at the table in the foyer to make/serve coffee, or contact Barbara Sanford (sanford11@earthlink.net) or the CPC office (Admin@cordatachurch.org) to be given a lesson in how to become a special coffee person!! Simple lessons are available...and what a special person you will be!!



Table Game Day

**Sunday, February 16th
After Coffee Fellowship**

**Join us for a few hours
to play your favorite table game
and enjoy some light snacks!**

Cookie Baking Ministry

**February 22nd
10a - 1p**

**Join us in this
yummy ministry!**



2026 Guatemala Mission Trip

Thanks to those of you who came to the Guatemala Mission Trip meeting in January to see what all the excitement is about! There was a lot of interest for a trip planned to go to the Pokomchi people in March 2026. If you were unable to attend or have questions, please contact Gary or Nina Buma at 360-734-8733 or 360-319-1706 or at gnbuma@hotmail.com.

Applications are now being accepted to hold your spot in the group (6-16 individuals). The deadline to submit applications is September 5th, but the sooner you sign up, the sooner airfare and other details can be decided. Applications can be filled out online at the hopeofpokomchi.org website (click on: Help Change Lives, Team Trips, Download, Application Forms). Print your application, attach a deposit of \$100 for an individual or \$200 for a family made out to "CPC Mission Fund", and drop it off at church or give it to Nina or Gary Buma.

Fundraising for this trip begins in March, starting with a butterbraid sale from March 9th-16th at church. These yummy Butter Braids have been sold at church in the past, along with Puffins and cookie dough. Puffins are like a Butter Braid but in individual portions of 12 so that you can bake them separately. The pastries come frozen and will be available for pick up on April 13th (Sunday) in time for Easter/Mother's Day. Butter Braids and Puffins sell for \$15, cookie dough (scored for individual cookies) for \$16. Look for a table in the foyer after the church service.

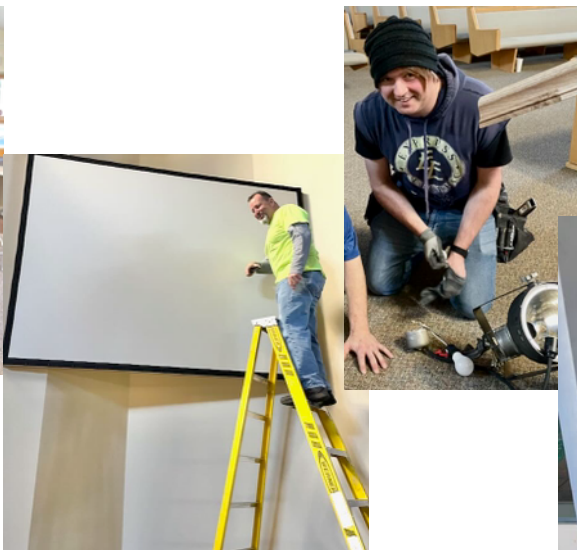
Thanks again for your interest in sending another mission team to the Pokomchi in Guatemala! We appreciate your prayers for those who are making the decision to go with us and prayers for the fundraising that needs to take place.

Thank You to All Our Facilities Volunteers!

A big "THANK YOU" to all who worked on our facilities projects in January. There was a 3-day work party January 18th-20th that included the following staff member and volunteers: Chris Battershill, Gary and Joel Buma, Jake Larson, John Risser, and Roger DeSpain. With the use of a rental lift, 7 lights were replaced and mapping the electrical circuit to the spot lights in the Worship Center was accomplished. This allowed us to use spot lights the last couple of Sundays that had not been turned on for 5 plus years, providing brighter lighting conditions in the Worship Center. Also, 2 parking lot lights were replaced. Another issue that was addressed by John Risser was glare on our Worship Center screens.

Finally, on another occasion we oversaw the installation of new ADA doors at the front entrance to our church. This has been very much needed upgrade for our church members.

Again, "thank you" to all who worked so hard on these projects!



See more photos
on page 8.



Resilient Church Update

After a break for the holidays, the Resilient Church Project is now quickly moving forward. As a reminder, this is a 2-year project, with 3 phases. We completed the “Discover” phase in December and are now into the “Discern” phase.

A short definition of a “resilient church” is a church that “understands its cultural context and adapts creatively to new circumstances to serve the gospel of Jesus.” As Pastor Greg says, “A church is resilient if it’s here for the next generation.” In brief — it’s about the future.

How the congregation has been involved so far:

- 15 members recorded their observations of church events throughout the fall.
- Other members were interviewed by our Resilient Church fellow, Olivia.
- Olivia participated with congregation members and staff in various church events and recorded her observations in field notes.
- All of this information was synthesized by our Sociology faculty consultant at Whitworth University. The church has now received the “Discovery Report” from Whitworth.
- The Resilient Church Task Force shared the Discovery Report with elders and deacons on February 1st to gain their insights and perspectives on next steps for the project.

What’s next:

- On March 9th, we’ll hold “round tables” for the entire congregation to learn about the Report and to help guide our next actions. We want to expand the conversation, and we want your participation and your ideas!
- We’ll have another Whitworth consultant to assist us to assess the demographics of our community and how those may impact our decisions.
- The task force leadership team will continue to have regular Zoom meetings and an in-person retreat with the other churches in our cohort. These can yield new and creative ideas for us.
- Following those events, we’ll continue to have discussions with all who are interested to discern how we can best take advantage of our church’s strengths to serve the gospel as we move into the future.
- We’ll have an opportunity to design an initiative for this purpose which could earn a \$10,000 grant.

If you have questions, please contact any member of the Task Force: Dan Sanford (Lead), Sue Wright, Stephanie Kuhn, Rich Emerson, Barbara Sanford, Mike Langey, and Pastor Greg.

Financial Peace University Q&A February 9th in the Chapel

Cordata is offering Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace Classes starting March 6th. On Sunday, February 9th after worship, there will be a brief question and answer time in the Chapel about the course.

No matter where you are on your financial journey or your need to understand your personal finances, this course will help you. It will run from March 6th to May 15th, 2025. We will be using a new format where you watch an online video at home during the week, then meet at CPC each Thursday evening at 7p for 45 minutes of activities and to get your questions answered. More information, including registration can be found at cordatachurch.org. (A paper copy of the registration form is on the information table.) The cost of the class is \$50.

So, grab a coffee and cookie, and stop by if you want to learn more about the class from Gregg Block or email him at fpuevents@cordatachurch.org.



Save the Date

Sunday, February 9th, 11:45p, Financial Peace University Question & Answer, Chapel - See page 7.

Saturday, February 15th, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Cedar Room

Sunday, February 16th, After Fellowship, Table Game Day, Foyer

12 noon, Explore Cordata, Chapel - See page 5.

Thursday, February 20th, 1p, Celebration of Life Service for Anne Slee, Worship Center

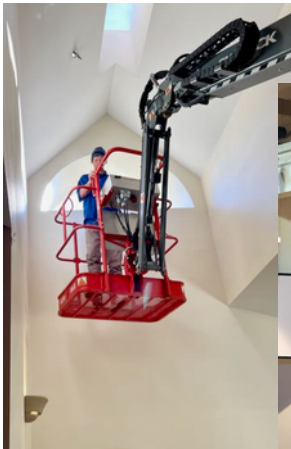
Friday, February 21st, 5p, CFF Talk Time, Family Life Center

Saturday, February 22nd, 10a - 1p, Cookie Baking Ministry, CPC Kitchen

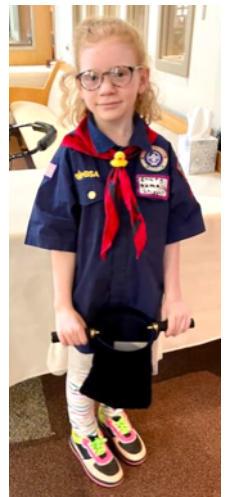
Sunday, February 23rd, 12 noon, Explore Cordata, Chapel - See page 5.

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, Foyer



**More photos of
our high flying,
hard working
facilities team.**



**Scouts help with
collection of offering.**

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