



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of Cordata Presbyterian Church

March, 2025

Message from Pastor Greg: “Slow Down before We Spring Forward”

Does the subtle turn towards Spring put a spring in your step? Have you noticed more birdsong, the bullfrogs croaking in CPC’s outback pond, and the rhododendron bushes hinting at an imminent outbreak of magnificent color? Maybe your response to these harbingers of Spring is to start Spring cleaning, or to put away Winter coats and haul out your lighter weight sweater, or to start planning what you’d like to do when the real warmer weather arrives in the Summer. I’m here to say a gentle, “Slow down...look before you leap...pray before you proceed.” That’s the spirit of Lent talking, the annual 40-day period culminating in the cross and empty tomb of Holy Week. Some of us might think Lent is not for us (Irrelevant! Too Catholic! Doesn’t fit my busy schedule!), but I’d say the big “Slow down!” of Lent is exactly what we need. Think of Jesus, “setting his face towards Jerusalem.” We see in the pioneer and perfecter of our faith a kind of slowing down to focus on the things of God that are not evident in the frenetic activity of those around him. We are invited to do the same in the season of Lent (a word that literally means “slow” in French!).



Can you and I stop and listen to the invitation to slow down? Or are we too busy? Consider this bit of “slow down” biblical wisdom: *If God doesn’t build the house, the builders only build shacks. If God doesn’t guard the city, the night watchman might as well nap. It’s useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don’t you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?* Psalm 127:1-2 (MSG)

Open to some ideas about how to slow down and listen for God’s voice and direction? Some people enjoy a Lent-themed book such as:

Backyard Pilgrim: Forty Days at Godspeed, by Matt Canlis.

Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects, by Julie Duffield.

The Cultivated Life: From Ceaseless Striving to Receiving Joy, by Susan Phillips.

As you can tell from the titles (available on the usual bookselling websites), all these Lent-themed books invite the reader to slow down. Will you accept the challenge?

Another way to slow down happens together: CPC is about mid-way through our “Resilient Church Project” initiative. We’re pondering together who God has shaped Cordata Church to be and how we are called to follow the Lord’s leading towards future generations of faithful discipleship at CPC. **Please mark your calendars for a chance to let your voice be heard on this, as we plan to gather for a Congregational Conversation after worship on Sunday, March 9th.** (For more information, see page 2.)

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Greg

Hard Headed

By Carol Lawrence

Isn't this an iconic view of our beloved mountain? I took this photo one glorious August day, shortly after the road had been cleared of snow, making it possible to drive all the way up to Artist Point. On a less auspicious day, in deep midwinter, my daughter and I decided to enjoy some outdoor exercise on our mountain. The day was so glorious we didn't really mind the cold. We put on our snowshoes and started out on a beautiful, flat, cross-country ski trail. We felt alive, energized, grateful for the day.



Maybe the view was a little too spectacular. Maybe I was overly absorbed in the beauty of the mountain and the joy of a whole day with my daughter. Landscape photography instructors continually remind us amateurs to turn around, because the best view may be behind us. I do know how to go backward in snowshoes. You can't just walk backward; you have to walk a small circle. I knew that, but without even thinking, I picked up a foot, stepped back, and promptly fell over, hitting my head on a rock buried beneath the snow.

Later, recovering from a mild concussion, I had plenty of time to ponder how careless I had been, not using the knowledge that would have protected me from the fall, and to thank God for His grace, protecting me from what could have been a far more serious outcome. I was reminded how fortunate we are to have a God who protects us, even from ourselves, even when we make careless mistakes. Scripture reminds us, *Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not* (Lamentations 3:22). His unfailing compassion, His grace, comes unrequested, undeserved. But then, that is exactly what grace is. Our best way to thank Him for the grace He gives to us is by giving grace to others, every day, in small ways and large gestures. Amen.

Resilient Church Project Congregational "Roundtables"

Please put Sunday, March 9th, on your calendar! CPC's leadership invites you to join in the Discernment Phase of the Resilient Church Project. We want to hear your ideas and desires for where we go in the future as a congregation and community.

We'll set up 6 or 7 round tables, each with a discussion question. We plan to rotate through all the tables so that each person is able to contribute on all of the questions.

Thank you for participating with us in prayer and discussion. See you there!

Missions Update

Your Missions and Outreach Committee recently approved an annual gift to The Firs Christian Camps and Retreat Center. The campgrounds, as many know, are located on Lake Whatcom with additional conference buildings in the Geneva area of Bellingham and at the Chalet on Mt. Baker. This organization also serves the Bellingham community with a Christ-based After School Adventure programs for younger children held in several locations.

Recently, The Firs Director of Advancement, Tony Neal, spoke to CPC's Men's Breakfast, and several members of CPC represent our church on the The Firs Council. One of their exciting new endeavors is the "Discipleship" program whereby high school graduates live on site year around, helping with ongoing conferences, working on college credits, and preparing for the summer camping season through Bible Study and mentorship. Also, the Firs has completed construction of a "ropes" challenge course and is preparing to offer mountaineering sports activities.

Take a moment to see their website (www.thefirs.org) and the many programs dedicated to the Christian nurture of young people.



Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - We will conclude our journey in the book of Genesis this month. Clubhouse Kids are learning that God's promises are true, and ***He keeps His promises, because He is faithful.*** We can trust God and obey Him knowing He will do what He says.

In Unit 3: **God is in Control**, we will see how God is in control of all things in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of His good plan. We see this in the lives of Jacob, Joseph, and in early April the story of Job. God is a faithful promise-keeper who is always present with His

people despite their difficulties and suffering.

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything? **Answer:** God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

Key Passages: Genesis 50:20

March Lessons: Finish Unit 2: Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22), A Wife for Isaac (Genesis 24-25), Begin Unit 3: Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:27), Jacob Fled from Canaan (Genesis 28:32), Joseph Taken to Egypt (Genesis 37, 39-46, 50)

Lenten Packets for Families - The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th. Lenten Devotional packets for families are available. These packets have scripture reading plans, creative ways to practice praying, fasting, and giving, plus some fun crafts to help the entire family deepen their faith during this time before celebrating Resurrection Sunday. Packets are available to CPC families and will also be available to Miracle Food Network folks.

Palm Sunday & Easter Extras

Coat Drive - Matthew 21:8 says, *Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.* In preparation of our Palm Sunday service, we will be accepting donations of new and used coats, beginning Sunday, March 16th—Sunday, April 13th. Look for a large tote coming soon under the sign-up table area in the foyer.

Easter Sunday Extras! Two activities that help make our Easter Sunday service super special are our preservice pancake breakfast and post service egg hunt. **We are hoping to confirm helpers for these events early this year.** If you love flipping the perfect flapjack or have a talent for finding the perfect hiding spots for Easter eggs, then be sure to add your name to the sign-up sheet in the foyer.

No experience necessary— just a willingness to help serve.

Contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) for information and details on both Palm and Easter Sunday events.

Clubs 4 Kids (C4K) - Lots of "Roses" recently.

Roses are what we call the good things that happen during our "roses and thorns" sharing time at club. We've had some new kids join this past month. One from the townhouses up the block and another from the Pacific Rim Apartments. We've also had some good and meaningful participation from many of the older kids.

Thank you to those who've recently donated to our C4K snack supply! **We still need more donations though.** Donations of snack bars, graham crackers, fruit snacks, cheese sticks, and small oranges/apples are greatly appreciated! (See more photos on page 8.)



Kids Clubhouse Catch Up Continued on Page 4

Kids Clubhouse Catch Up Continued from Page 3

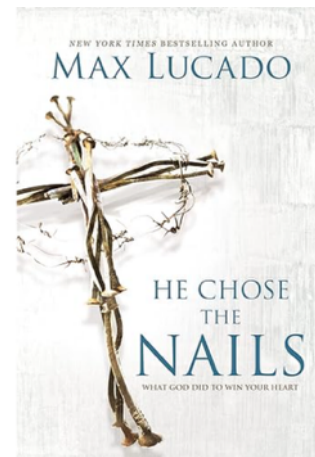
Caring Bags “Thank You” - THANK YOU for your donations of treats and cards! The kids were so excited to get their caring bags. It was especially meaningful to the club and youth group kids! To know that people they rarely (if ever) see, care enough to want to bless them in this sweet way means more than we know.

Adult Education Update

Gordon Terpstra’s highly engaging class, called The Hope of Heaven, ended on March 2nd. So on March 9th, we will offer a Lenten series by Max Lucado called *He Chose the Nails*. “Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. The hill of the cross is rich with the gifts of God’s grace. These were gifts he didn’t have to give, but he chose to do so. They were not covered with wrapping paper but sprinkled with his own blood, on our behalf.”

In this five-session video Bible study, Max Lucado explores the many gifts that Christ provided to us at his crucifixion. These gifts not only include the gift of the cross, but also the gift of the thorns that pierced his brow, the nails that tore his flesh, the seamless robe that he removed for us, as well as the empty tomb where he forever defeated sin and death.

Come join us in the Chapel at 9a as we reflect on Lent and Easter together. The *He Chose the Nails* study includes video teaching, Bible exploration, and group discussion. When we study together, we grow together.



Educating and encouraging the church to be a sanctuary to one another, especially those with mental health challenges and the people who love them. 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 and those who love them feel safe and supported and where they discover a sense of belonging.

Sanctuary Mental Health Zoom Course ~ March 6th – May 1st

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. 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.

Class Schedule: Thursdays, March 6th – May 1st (does not meet on April 16th, Maundy Thursday) 7:00-8:30p on Zoom. All adults interested are invited to attend. Updated and revised course since we last did it together in 2020.

To receive the Zoom link for this class, you must register online. For more information or to register go to <https://sanctuarymentalhealth.org/sanctuary-course/>

Don't Miss Your Chance to Play Table Games

In the Foyer, March 16th, After Coffee Fellowship

Snacks will be available.





Meet CPC's New Choir Accompanist - David Jewkes

Our new choir accompanist, David Jewkes, has had a very interesting and varied life. He grew up in Victoria, British Columbia - Cadboro Bay, specifically on the beach! Because of where his birthday falls on the calendar, he started school when he was 5, and from grades 1-10, he attended a small church school in Victoria (2 rooms, 30 students in total). After graduating at the age of 16 from Milo Academy (a boarding high school in Southern Oregon), he attended Walla Walla College (WWC), graduating with a major in Math and a Religion minor. He chose WWC instead of UC Berkeley because of his love of the pipe organ, kindled at the age of 14 by hearing well-known organist E. Power Biggs in concert.

David was born with an interest in music. His first piano teacher was his mother, followed by his older brother (19 years his senior), then lessons from other teachers both in piano and accordion. He also studied a year of pipe organ at WWC. He has sung in church choirs or college/community chorales from age 6. Most of his playing has been as a church organist and piano accompanist.

Despite his love of music, most of his work life has revolved around teaching Math. After graduating from college, he began his teaching career in Aldergrove, BC. He notes, "I taught Math on chalkboards for 46 years - mostly high school, but all the way from 1st grades through college Calculus (in the Math Department of my alma mater)." At one point in his career, he was also a principal for 5 years. In 2020, he retired, but was lured back into teaching at his first school in Aldergrove (which is how he returned to the Pacific NW from California).

Although he has a son in Olympia and his older brother lives in BC, he has no family in Whatcom County. His younger son is in the US Navy, stationed in North Carolina, and his sister lives in Pennsylvania. However, David has become very interconnected in our county. He serves as President of the Lynden Music Festival, a member of the Performance Committee at the Jansen Art Center (Lynden), the photographer for the Bellingham Chamber Music Society, and a substitute teacher. He is a member of two choirs - Freedom Celebration Singers (Abbotsford, BC) and Bellingham Chamber Chorale. In addition to being the accompanist for the CPC choir, he plays for services at Grace Lutheran Church (Blaine), is the backup organist @ First Christian Reformed Church (Lynden), and in February performed a piano concert at the Schimmel Showcase (Jansen Art Center).

When asked about his free time activities, he responded, "Free time? What's that??" Then he noted that he enjoys sailing (he has 2 sailboats and is a member of the Semiahmoo Yacht Club), photography, working on old cars (he has 10), driving his 280 hp Mini Cooper S at "Track Days", attending car shows and races, attending hockey games (he coached college hockey for 7 years), and meeting new people.

He'd like the church to know that he's very happy to be at CPC, and suggests **for more wonderful music, we should check out the next concert of the Bellingham Chamber Chorale on March 15th and 16th at the Church of the Assumption (go to www.bellinghamchamberchorale.org for tickets). There will also be an April 27th concert with the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra.**

Yes, David has had and still has an interesting, busy life. We're so glad that Sarah Allen told him about our church and this opportunity to serve God through music! Welcome, David!

Spring Landscape Clean Up

Please plan to join in the outdoor spring clean up on April 5th from 9a until 12 noon. Help spruce up the landscaping to get ready for Easter.

Bring rakes, buckets, pruning tools, gloves, lots of energy and come and join the fun. Please let us know you're coming by signing up on the sign-up sheet in the foyer. For any questions, contact Roger DeSpain (RogerD@cordatachurch.org) or Margaret Rudy (MargaretR@cordatachurch.org).

Financial Management Course Coming March 6, 2025

In a recent presentation from Ramsey Solutions, they shared information about households in America. They found that approximately 10% of the households are in what they call the “Struggling Phase”, approximately 80% are in the “Little or No Margin Phase” and approximately 10% are “Excelling”. So, they asked, Who can benefit from financial coaching? Spoiler alert, it’s a trick question. The answer is all the above. Now, each group has different underlying reasons, but Financial Peace University (FPU) includes information on how to get out debt, build an emergency fund, make investments, live and give generously, and much more. The content and format of FPU encourages us to think positively and achieve results. Here are the results that two families shared with me from last year’s FPU.

One couple planned ahead and was able to take a vacation without incurring credit card debt. They were able to come back from the vacation without the stress of wondering how they were going to pay for the trip! Another couple looked at their home mortgage, their only debt. FPU encourages us to pay off our home mortgage as soon as possible. Information from the class and a review of their financial position led them to add \$100 a month to their current payment. For them, this will result in the loan being paid 11 years sooner and their saving thousands of dollars in interest!

So, no matter where you are in your life – needing direction or encouragement, doing OK but wanting to do better, or maybe just looking for validation that you are on the right track—FPU can help you. Please join our FPU class starting March 6, 2025.

There are paper registration forms on the information table in the foyer. You can find more information by clicking on the Interested in Financial Coaching icon on the church website (www.cordatachurch.org). You can also register and pay online at <https://fpu-spring-2025.cheddarup.com>.

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 and the number of reduced-price tuitions is limited and on a first-come basis. This reduced pricing is available through CPC’s Mission & Outreach funding.

Interested in Financial Coaching? CPC has a Class for you! March 6 - May 15, 2025 fpuevents@cordatachurch.org 	For More Information on This Class Send an email to fpuevents@cordatachurch.org Or, talk to Gregg Block, Coordinator for the class
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Hope to see you in this Spring’s FPU class. Gregg Block

Join Us at Together Tuesday, March 11th

So, what's ahead for getting together for Fellowship? Tuesday, March 11th, we'll be gathering for a couple of reasons. First of all, it's time for Together Tuesday, our monthly 5:30p dinner down in the Family Life Center. Special guests are Karen and Ken Gasper with whom we worship on Sundays. The Gaspers' daughter and her family live in Europe, so Karen and Ken go to visit them yearly. On the 11th, they will be sharing photos and travel experiences from London, Oxford, and Bavaria. Additionally, this is our annual St. Patrick's baked potato supper with spuds and all the trimmings, salad, and lots of green delights for dessert. We will need your reservation sign up at the table in the foyer or call the church office (360-733-8860).

Travel and Spuds...doesn't get much better, right?

Look for the Sharing Cart

Do you have good food in your pantry that you can no longer eat? Do you enjoy knitting or making items for others? Does your garden produce more good fruits and vegetables than you can eat? Bring these things to church and share them with the rest of the congregation.

The Sharing Cart is an idea that came from the Missions Committee and is coordinated by Janet Moritz. Janet became interested in helping out after seeing the benefits of a food pantry at her apartment complex. She noted, "It's nice to have a little help with groceries, and really becoming more and more necessary as the price of everything is going up." Also, sharing children's games or toys (if they are in good condition) could be a help to families.

So, look for the cart in the foyer or near the sign-up table. Leave any extras that you have and take anything you can use. Anything that might be used by our neighbors and is not taken on Sunday will be offered on Friday afternoon at the weekly Miracle Food Network.



Fundraising for the March, 2026, Mission Trip to Guatemala Begins March 9th - 16th

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 in 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 gnbuma@hotmail.com, or 360-734-8733, 360-319-1706.

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, 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 off your application, attach a deposit of \$100 for an individual or \$200 for a family made out to "CPC Mission Fund", and drop both off at church or give them to the Bumas.

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

Thanks again for your interest in sending another 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.

Home Hosts Needed for Campus Ministry Student Leaders

SICM (Student Institute of Campus Ministry) is looking for homestay hosts for Christian students who come from campuses across America to participate in the training conference held at Bellingham's Hillcrest Church. There are two conferences, May 17-24, and June 14-21, and hosts are needed for either time or both. Hosting works best if you can accommodate two students. Many conferees have their own transportation so county areas are acceptable. Respond online at nwsicm.org/host or email sicm@ccfministry.com or call 360-676-8612.

Sharing time by your family with these young folks can be great fun and inspirational!

Save the Date

Wednesday, March 5th, 7p, Ash Wednesday Service, St. James Presbyterian Church
Friday, March 6th, 5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center
Sunday, March 9th, After Worship, Resilient Church Project Roundtables, Foyer - See page 2.
Tuesday, March 11th, 5:30p, Together Tuesday, Family Life Center - See page 6.
Saturday, March 15th, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Cedar Room
Sunday, March 16th, After Fellowship, Table Game Day, Foyer
Friday, March 21st, 5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center
Saturday, April 5th, 9a, Outdoor Work Party - See page 5.
Thursday, April 17th, 6p, Maundy Thursday Service
Friday, April 18th, 7:30p, Good Friday Service, First Presbyterian Church
Sunday, April 20th, Easter

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.
7p, Financial Peace University, Until May 15 - See page 7.
Fridays - 2:30p, Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer



Clubs 4 Kids



Cordata Scene

Coffee Fellowship



Scout Sunday

Cordata Beacon - a publication of:
 Cordata Presbyterian Church
 400 Meadowbrook Court, Bellingham,
 WA 98226
 (360) 733-8860 or