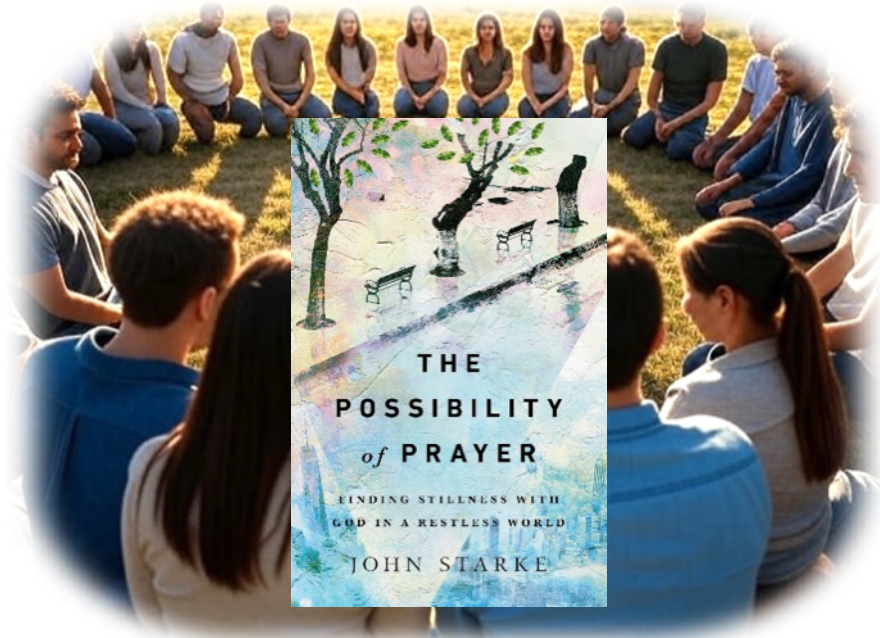




# Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

July, 2025



## Message from Pastor Greg: *Unexplored Possibilities*

Has anyone noticed we're talking a lot about prayer lately? Why is that? The further we go forward following Jesus on this journey of faith together, the more I become convinced that the default setting for many of us (me included) is to try to do things on our own. In terms of living out our faith, "this go-it-alone" habit of ours can certainly feel fruitless and lonely. Jesus explicitly says, *Apart from me, you can do nothing.* (John 15:5) One of the most important learnings coming into focus as we continue our exploration of resiliency (through our two-year Resilient Church Initiative) is that for us to do anything resilient or worthwhile means doing those things in communion with the living God. As the angel Gabriel said to Mary, *With God, nothing is impossible.*

And here is where prayer comes in. The primary mode the *Bible* gives us to act in tandem with God is through prayer. This is why we're exploring the Lord's Prayer in detail during the current summer sermon series and why we're encouraging all CPCers to read and study *The Possibility of Prayer* by John Starke (see display in the foyer and page 4 for more information). Starke reminds us that God's essential character is personal and relational and that God is intimately available through prayer. As Psalm 16 says, *I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.* And, *In your presence [Lord], there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* The spatial logic of that is a bit confusing, but it clearly spells intimacy. As Starke says, *Christ is at my right hand, I am at his. One is for confidence, the other for joy.*

The point is: God is much, much closer and available than we think; and our life of faith and work of ministry together can become infinitely more satisfying, hope-filled, and joyful than it is. All we need is to start acting on the Lord's invitation. It is the Jesus way. Let's lean in and see what happens.

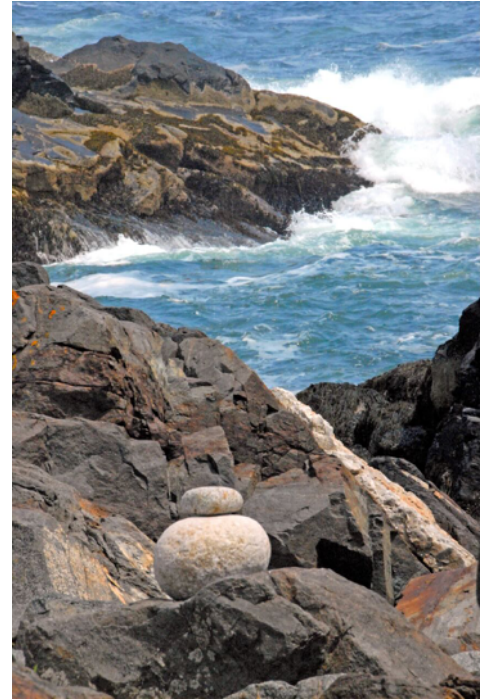
Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Greg

## ***Our Solid Rock*** By Carol Lawrence

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
My shield and the horn of my salvation. (2 Samuel 22:2b,3)*

It bears saying more than once. He is our rock. It's no mystery why one of my favorite hymns includes the refrain *On Christ the solid Rock I stand*. The rock in this photo is on the coast of Maine. It looks tiny in the context of the rugged coast and crashing surf, just as we may feel small and vulnerable in today's challenging world. The dangers posed by Maine's rocky coast are real. The state has 3,500 miles of coastline and more than 2,000 islands. Its commercial fishing industry supports an estimated 33,000 jobs and provides us all with those delicious Maine lobsters. But it is a dangerous industry. On average, fatal accidents are 100 times more common among fishermen than the average in other industries.

Even those of us who are landlubbers live today in dangerous times. It's very easy to fall into fear and worry as we hear the news of our world. And yet, we do know where to go for comfort. Scripture reminds us, *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and staff they comfort me.* (Psalm 23:4) In a later verse of that old hymn we find the memorable line, *When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.* Amen



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## **No Summer Slow Down for CPC Missions & Outreach**

Our committee is skipping its July meeting, but our directed activities continue onward. Some of us had a chance last month to hear from Doug Robertson, director of the Whatcom Miracle Food Network, regarding prospects for continuation of food deliveries in the coming months. The program is threatened by rising building and operational costs and declining grant funding. Your committee is continuing its regular support for this program and will prayerfully strive to see how individuals may help.

The Committee also voted to send a one-time gift to Whatcom County World Relief for their one Sunday in June funding campaign. This resettlement organization has suffered recently from unexpected Federal cutbacks and needs extraordinary help.

Summer always presents opportunities to see our out-of-country ministry partners. Just last Sunday we were visited by Bryan and Thande Whitlock who are home from South Africa to visit their parents. This month we are anticipating the homecoming of Karen Erickson who has been serving a Christian school in Amman, Jordan.

In mid August, we will welcome Jessica and Zac Gosda, who will soon thereafter leave for assignment in North Africa. Jessica is the granddaughter of our former Birchwood Pres pastor and his wife, Tim and Karen Lann. We will be setting aside an after-worship visit time in the Chapel so stay tuned for the announcement.

The idea of CPC hosting an English Language Learners class in the fall for our non-native English speakers in the neighborhood is still in the feasibility and planning stage. A team of folks have already been gathering suggestions from representatives of the Meridian School District, Whatcom World Relief, and the Whatcom Literacy Council. Of late, there has also emerged a request for us to accommodate the Goodwill Digital Literacy Bus which serves many of the same newcomers to our area. Those who have been exploring this outreach and service possibility include Sharon Chang, Jackie Schoonover, and Carol Lawrence. If you have interest, be sure to let one of these people know.





## CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

**CPC Kids Clubhouse** - We will be moving onto The Gospel Project For Kids Unit 6: *God Guides His People* in July.

We've been wandering with the Israelites as they learn how to be God's people. We recently built our very own tabernacle (decorated canopy tent) in our classroom.

Heading into July lessons, we will follow God's people as they continue their wilderness journey, failing to believe in His promise to work for their good by giving them the land of Canaan. This month will have stories of disobedience, grumbling, doubting, and complaining plus sadly saying farewell to Moses. BUT the next generation will get a new leader—Joshua—who will lead them into the promised land!

**Big Picture Question:** Why should we obey God?

**Answer:** We should obey, God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.

**Key Passage:** Romans 8:28

**July Lessons:** The People Grumbled (Numbers 11–12), The People Doubted (Numbers 13–14), The People Complained (Numbers 16; 20–21) Moses' Farewell (Deuteronomy 31–34)

**Welcome 2025 Summer Intern Violet Taylor!** Violet Taylor has join the team! She is a WWU student and worked for YMCA after school program this past school year. We are very happy she is here! Her first week was a doozy. There was lots of packing and moving to do of two of our CPC classroom spaces to make room for Mosaic Church and BCS's library. She jumped right in lifting and transporting large and heavy items into the storage container. Then if that wasn't enough for the first week, we had lots of preparations for Fun in the Sun (FITS) which included gathering many items and organizing supplies, THEN prepping for and helping the Sunday kids build a makeshift tabernacle in the classroom! It's been quite an adventure so far, and she's remained positive and up for every task thrown her way. She'll be an asset to our programs, and we are excited to have her on board. Be sure to say hello and give her the fabulous CPC welcome.



**Fun in the Sun 2025** - There may not have been much actual SUN the first week of FITS, BUT we had plenty of FUN! The first two days saw record numbers of kids in attendance! Even on the very gray and cold "June-uary" type day, kids were eager to join the fun, make unique crafts, and play the themed group games. Kids were very attentive and seem excited to learn all about the Fruits of the Spirit. We even have a FITS mascot— a tomato plant named Bob! (More photos on page 9.)



**EXTRA HELPERS NEEDED** - The Sunday Morning Clubhouse is in need of some leader help in early August. Children's Director Bonnie will be out on medical leave for two Sundays to care for her mother post hip replacement surgery. We will have our summer intern but still need a second person in the class to help tell the story and help with classroom management. The dates we need extra help are Sunday, Aug 3rd and 10th.

We could also use a few extra folks to help make Fun in the Sun run smoothly. Thanks to Suzanne Rautiloa who has offered to step into the storyteller role while Bonnie is away! However, this switch leaves a hole in the Lemonade Tent. So, if you like to have fun and are a welcoming presence, be sure to sign up to help at Fun in the Sun on July 31st and August 5th & 7th!

Please contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) if you are available to help.

## Summer Discipleship Plans

The Discipleship Committee is eager to delve into our summer read, *The Possibility of Prayer: Finding Stillness with God in a Restless World*, by John Starke. We hope you have picked up a copy of the book which you can find in the foyer.

For our Adult Education class, we will be discussing this book for the month of July. We want to share ideas and support each other as we learn how to find more joy and fulfillment in prayer. As we encourage one another we believe our relationship with Jesus will deepen and our discipleship individually and as a congregation will flourish.

June 29th — Chapters 1-3; July 6th — chapters 4-6; July 13th — chapters 7-9; July 20th — chapters 10-12. If needed, a final 'catch up' will be held on July 29th.

We will take a break for the month of August and resume Adult Education classes in September. However, sometime in August we are planning to suggest that people who have read the book gather in various locations for "Cordata North, South, East and West Summer Coffee and Dessert". This hopefully will provide an opportunity for anyone that hasn't been able to share on Sunday mornings in Adult ED but is interested in deepening their walk with the Lord to gather for encouragement and fellowship as they discuss how they are using the ideas around prayer in the book to enhance their walk with God.

We hope you will join us in class on Sunday mornings at 9a in the Chapel or for Coffee and Dessert in August (more information will be provided in July).

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## Thank you!

A huge thank you to the ten volunteers who came together in questionable weather to clean up the outside grounds. We were lucky in that the rain stopped shortly before 9a, and we got a substantial amount of weeding and trimming done. Those helping were: Roger & Barb DeSpain, Doug & Carol Cowgill, Joel & Suzanne Rautiola, Kristin French, Dale Kreider, Jim Zander, and Margaret Rudy.

Our next outdoor clean up is scheduled for Saturday, July 26th. Come and join in the fun, and help clean up our landscape. If you have them, please bring a 5 gallon bucket, rake, weeding tools, tarp, pruning tools, etc. Let us know you're coming by signing up in the foyer.

Hope to see on the 26th.



More Photos on Page 9.




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## Unsung Heroes - The Weekday Welcome Desk Volunteers

If you visit or call our church during the week, you will be greeted by a friendly, helpful Welcome Desk Volunteer — Carol Erickson (pictured), Carol Anderson, Lynne McCutchen, Steve Slee, Vicki Phillips, Carol Wallace, Margaret Rudy, or Cindy Gibbs. Many of us may not know of their service, but they volunteer faithfully so that CPC does not have to employ a receptionist. They also help staff members with small tasks that can be performed at the desk. While all of our shifts are currently filled, we do need substitutes from time to time. If

you have two hours you can spare (10a to noon or noon to 2p) occasionally, please contact Kristin French (admin@cordatachurch.org).





## Meet Melissa and Tony Huang

Melissa is a native Californian, born and raised in Sacramento. Tony, born in Taiwan, grew up in Bellingham and attended Carl Cozier Elementary, Whatcom Middle School, and Sehome High School. Melissa studied Business at Sacramento State University and worked for the State of California, Dept. of Finance as an auditor. Tony attended the University of Washington and studied Chemical Engineering. After college, he worked for Procter and Gamble, managing operations in Sacramento. They met at Melissa's home church, the Chinese Community Church in Sacramento.

After Tony received his MBA from Columbia University, they got married and moved to the Bay Area, first to Fremont and then Orinda. Melissa continued to work for the State of California in the Dept. of Public Health in Administration at Berkeley and Richmond. Tony worked for Clorox in Financial and Accounting Departments in Oakland. They were blessed with two children. Sadly, Brandon passed away unexpectedly at 20 from cardiomyopathy. Rachel is currently working in Redmond and living in Seattle.

After careers of 30+ years, Melissa and Tony retired and moved to Bellingham in 2017 to be closer to Tony's parents. They both enjoy walking around the neighborhood (give them a wave or a honk if you see them), getting together with neighbors and friends, spending time with Tony's dad, traveling, and cruising. As a point of trivia, they were one of the first Americans to be confirmed with COVID as they sailed on the Diamond Princess when the craziness started! They also enjoy musical theater and drive to Seattle periodically to attend shows with their daughter and her boyfriend. Pre-pandemic, they both volunteered at the Bellingham Food Bank sorting produce collected from retailers for distribution. Currently, they volunteer at St. Joseph's Hospital as "Floats" twice a week. Their responsibilities include picking up specimens for analysis at the lab, delivering units of blood, food trays, and flowers, etc.

Melissa and Tony attended the Bellingham Chinese Christian Church with Tony's parents when they came to Bellingham where the worship was conducted in Mandarin and translated to English. Since neither of them were fluent in Mandarin, they decided to look for an English-speaking church. Judy Tsai, a close friend of Tony's parents, had shared CPC's church bulletin with them, and they started by listening to the CPC's worship service on YouTube. They enjoyed the messages from Pastor Greg and the worship service and decided to attend in person, starting occasionally in 2023. On their first day at CPC, they recalled how warmly Cindy Gibbs greeted and welcomed them. During "Passing of the Peace", they continued to be welcomed by the congregation and were pleasantly surprised, to see Barb Mills DeSpain! Unbeknown to Melissa and Tony, they had purchased Barb's home when they moved to Bellingham and had met Barb at Starbucks a few months prior to attending CPC. God has such miraculous plans for us! Melissa and Tony became regular attendees of CPC in 2024 and became affirmed members that March. Praise the Lord!

Since becoming members of CPC, they have enjoyed getting to know others and participate in areas such as the Cookie Baking Ministry, Fun in the Sun, and ushering. They feel blessed to be a part of CPC's family.



**Zoe & Gwen Ellis along with their mom, Maggie, and the Praise Band share their musical gifts.**

## Share Your Musical Gifts during Worship

As many of you know our beloved choir will be taking a break this summer. If you would like to share your musical gifts vocally and/or instrumentally with the congregation during the offering time this summer, please contact Jayme Fergoda at 360/961-7548 or email [jaymefergoda@gmail.com](mailto:jaymefergoda@gmail.com) for more information.

Thank you!



## This is my Church

Let the community know where you worship with Cordata apparel. T-shirts (\$15), crew (\$20) and hoodie (\$25) sweatshirts and golf shirts (\$20), in gray, white, and green. You can order them after Sunday services in the church foyer July 6, 13, 20 and 27. Cash or Check Only. Delivery in 2 weeks.

### THIS is my CHURCH

We believe CPC folks will want to wear these shirts especially for events such as the Cordata Neighborhood Ice Cream Social, the Block Party, and the Fall Festival. Here is the line up: T-shirts, crew and hoodie sweatshirts, and golf shirts, S-XXL in gray, white and green. **All sizes, \$15-\$25.** We're taking your requests after Sunday services in the church foyer July 6, 13, 20, and 27. Two weeks for delivery; Cash or check only!

	<p>T-Shirts \$15 in white, gray or green with full logo or pocket logo. S-XXL</p>
	<p>Hoodies \$25 in white, gray or green with full logo or pocket logo. S-XXL</p>
	<p>Sweat Shirts \$20 in white, gray or green with full logo or pocket logo. S-XXL</p>
	<p>Golf Shirts \$20 in white, gray or green with pocket logo. S-XXL</p>



## We Remember and Celebrate the Life of...

In June, we celebrated the life of Stephen Andrew Greene, Stephen L. Hagan, and Frank Monroe Phillips. For those unable to attend these services, in this issue of the *Beacon*, I am reprinting the obituary of Steve Greene and photos of Steve Hagan (no obituary was available). In the July *Beacon*, I will reprint the obituary of Frank Phillips.

Suzanne Rautiola, Editor, *Beacon*



### Stephen A. Greene

On April 18, 2025, Stephen "Steve" Andrew Greene, a follower of Jesus, finished the race well. He will be forever remembered by his beloved wife, Wendy; his children, Luke, Jack, and Elizabeth; and his grandchildren, Elijah, Lydia, Nolan, and Ivy.

Steve was born and raised in Northern California and had a "no quit" attitude that led him to many jobs and careers all over the West Coast. He once disassembled a church and then reassembled it in a new location. This included saving and straightening the nails. His career was marked by dedication and hard work. Steve taught himself to become an energy engineer and went on to manage major projects at Bangor Submarine Base and the Hanford Nuclear Facility.

He had a deep love for anything around water. Sailing was his greatest passion. He loved restoring sail boats and then testing their seaworthiness in Puget Sound. He also enjoyed the peace of fishing and being near the sea. When his draft number was called during the Vietnam War, Steve chose to enlist in the U.S. Navy just weeks after turning 18. He served two tours as a Seabee, deploying with the Marines to build bases in combat zones. Through this, he became a highly skilled craftsman, a talent he would carry with him throughout his life.

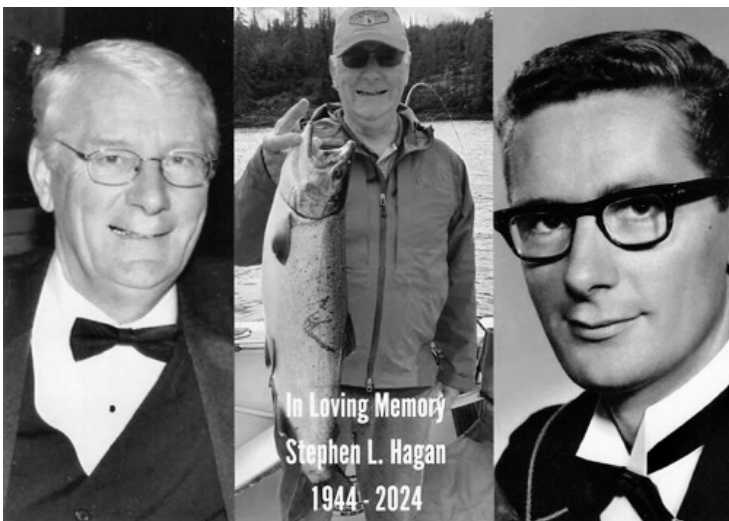
Even in retirement, Steve continued to serve others. He worked with Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, training staff in HVAC systems and facilities management. Later, he dedicated his time to volunteering at local food banks, always finding ways to give back to his community.

A lesser-known joy of Steve's was square dancing—something in which he took genuine delight that brought out his fun-loving side.

Steve's quiet faith, resourcefulness, and love for his family defined his life. He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Steve's memory to: The Bellingham Food Banks, 1824 Ellis St., Bellingham, WA 98225 or The Ferndale Food Bank, 1671 Main St., Ferndale, WA 98248.

### Stephen L. Hagan



### We celebrate Carol & Ted Van Zanden's 60th wedding anniversary.



## Cordata Scene



**We honor Graduates in Worship**  
**College: Ellie Hollingsworth - Not Pictured**  
**High School: Josh Ruble, Athena Hodges,**  
**& Maria Castillo**



**Our Worship, Fellowship Lunch & Congregational Meeting**



**We thank and say "Goodbye" to Linda Black, CPC Elder for Worship.**



**Clubs 4 Kids ends for the summer.**



## Save the Date

**Monday, July 7th - Friday, July 11th, 3:00 - 4:45p, Good News Club - 5 Day Camp - See below.**

**Sunday, July 13th, After Coffee Fellowship, Table Game Day, Foyer**

**Saturday, July 19th, Noon, Men's BBQ & Cornhole Contest, Unger's Pavilion**

**Saturday, July 26th, 9a, Landscape Work Party - See page 5.**

### Regularly Occurring Events

- Sundays -** 9a, Adult Education Class, Chapel,  
10:30a, Worship, Worship Center  
10:45a, CPC Kids Clubhouse/Sunday School - See page 3.  
After Worship, Coffee Fellowship, Foyer
- Mondays -** 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel
- Tuesdays -** 1p, Fun in the Sun, Church Lawn - 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), 3rd Wednesday
- Thursdays -** 1p, Fun in the Sun, Church Lawn - See page 3.
- Fridays -** 2:30p, Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer

**Cordata Beacon - a publication  
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(360) 733-8860 or  
beacon@cordatachurch.org**

### CEF's 5-Day Club - July 7th-11th from 3-4:45p

Child Evangelism Fellowship will host a FREE 5-Day Club for children 5-11 years old, July 7th-11th from 3-4:45p. This year's theme is "Discovering Jesus". Stop in after Fun in the Sun for a double dip of fun!

More yardwork photos.



### More Fun in the Sun!

