



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

September, 2025



Message from Pastor Greg: *Loneliness and The Church*

Dan Sanford and I recently sat down with Boris Borisov, a very interesting guy. He has a decade of urban planning experience. He now pastors a congregation about our size (in Spokane, WA). And he is one of the talented consultants we have met through CPC's Resilient Church Initiative, which you've been hearing so much about. Boris led us through a fascinating conversation about Urban Design, Loneliness & the Church. Here is some of what we learned:

Did you know that our country is in the midst of a loneliness epidemic? Pastor Boris isn't the only keen observer to notice this troublesome trend. The U.S. Surgeon General has issued a health advisory naming loneliness as a public health epidemic. Statistics bear the conclusion out: in recent surveys, 50-60% of adults report loneliness; among Gen-Z (18-25 year olds), almost two-thirds are lonely.

Boris observes that single-use property zoning contributes to more time solo in cars for commuting and many other life activities, all of which contribute to loneliness. Persistent loneliness leads to poorer health by increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and dementia! What can we do about this profound problem (aside from changing urban design to increase interactivity)? That's where we see the Church come in.

The Church is ideally placed to serve as connector. In ways both actual and metaphorical, we can be those who "set the table" to bring others out of loneliness and into community. Boris mentions two key concepts for how the Church can achieve this: *liminality* and *communitas* (doesn't everything sound better in Latin?!). "Liminality" is the "in-between" places of transition and uncertainty where norms tend to loosen and learning and identity can be reshaped. "Communitas" is a deep bond the between brothers and sisters (think, for example of the early Church in Acts 2); *communitas* emerges when people face hardship and mission together, resulting in high trust, shared risk, and share purpose.

CPC is a place where *liminality* and *communitas* are cultivated, and we want to be this way even more. How and when? We have such an opportunity this coming Sunday as we invite "all comers" to our Neighborhood Block Party. We will have to move outside the comfort of our church walls into our parking lot, thereby entering liminal space and engaging with strangers (some of whom will seem strange to us). Risking comfort and familiarity in our shared Mission as God's people to offer hospitality for Jesus' sake will make us grow in faith and favor with God. As we break out the burgers and welcoming smiles, we can expect to encounter Jesus where and when we least expect to. Won't you come on out for some food, fun, *liminality*, and *communitas*? (See pages 3 and 4 for more information.)

Together in Christ,
Pastor Greg



Peace By Carol Lawrence

What a peaceful scene. The lake is smooth as glass. The trees are still. All is quiet. How lucky we are to live near Lake Padden. What a cherished little oasis of peace it is, close at hand, open to all, free of charge. When I'm there, I feel that I've escaped, if only briefly, the chaos we see all around us in today's world.

Where do you go to find peace? Those who have been reading my essays know I seek peace by spending time in nature, preferably on the water, paddle in hand. The peace I find there is welcome, but deep in my heart I know it is only a brief respite from the world's chaos.

When I get beyond absorbing temporary peaceful moments and expressing gratitude for them, I have many questions about peace. What is peace? Why do we want it? Why do we not have it? Once again, I'm indulging in my annoying habit of asking questions without providing answers. Any answer I can think of seems woefully inadequate. Peace usually suggests absence of bad stuff – safety from war, violence, crime, freedom from worries. We want it, because it feels good. It's certainly more pleasurable than wrestling with life's challenges. And we know a brief respite doesn't make the trials go away.

Perhaps a more satisfying answer can come as we ponder the third question. When we do not have peace, it may be that we have forgotten where to look. Why do I need a reminder to go to Scripture? The prophet Isaiah tells us:

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is fixed on you,
Because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)*

So, we know that peace can come from trusting God. But still, we forget to go there. I'm going to propose a solution both obvious and ridiculous. Ask God for help. It can't hurt to have a chat with Him about the fact that we seem unable to do what we know we need to do. He knows that, of course, but I think He still likes to hear us say it out loud. And of course, He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us:

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you;
not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your
heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)*

Notice Jesus says *My peace*. That's the key. The peace He gives is so much more powerful and lasting than the temporary glow from a morning on the lake.

Peace of Christ be with you.



CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - Last month the Sunday Clubhouse kids learned of the many Israelite victories with Joshua leading the way. Some mistakes (with heavy consequences) were made, many kings were conquered, and miraculously, God made the sun stand still to help the Israelites win a big battle. With a farewell to Joshua, we now move into the time of Judges.

We begin unit 8 "God is Gracious" in September. Lessons will cover Israel's rebellion and attacks from neighboring tribes. Kids will see how God graciously raised up judges who would rescue His people from their enemies. While these judges only provided temporary help, they reminded God's people that He would one day provide a perfect Judge to rescue His people from the power of sin.

Big Picture Question: What is repentance?

Answer: Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Key Passage: 2 Chronicles 7:14

September Lessons: First Judges (Judges 3), Deborah Led Israel (Judges 4–5), Gideon Led Israel (Judges 6–8), Samson and the Philistines (Judges 13–16)

Fun in the Sun 2025 (F.I.T.S.) - WHAT A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER! Attendance at this unique ministry was the highest so far in the history of F.I.T.S. We also had many new families and kids come regularly. Our 9-week study of Galatians 5:22-23 – The Fruits of the Spirit definitely produced some real fruit. Many positive memories were made through acting out Bible stories, unique crafts, fun games, and interesting object lessons. A huge thank you goes out to the many awesome CPC folks who volunteered their time to help build relationships with our neighbors. What a way to make a difference! You are SO Appreciated! See photos below and on page 8.

CPC Block Party - It's that time already! The Annual Cordata Neighborhood Block Party is happening Sunday, September 7th from noon-2p! Invite your families, friends, and coworkers for this time of free food, lawn games, music, and more! PLUS learn about many community resources including the return of the English Language Classes that CPC will be facilitating this fall. We also have some new attractions this year to add to the fun. This event is a perfect opportunity for our congregation to be the hands and feet of Jesus. So show that welcoming smile, put on that hospitality hat, and engage our neighbors in friendly sincere conversation.

Rain or Shine - we'll have a great time!

Clubs 4 Kids - Our after-school program – Clubs 4 Kids resumes Tuesday, September 9th. Tuesday's time focuses on books and crafts while Thursdays are all about table and board games. Please consider sharing an afternoon (or two) helping make connections with these special kiddos. Club time is 4:30p. The kids are often hungry after school and your donations of lemonade and snack items are greatly appreciated.





Welcome Andrew & Jamile Souza Lewis to CPC!

This month our church is receiving our new Director of Worship Music and Director of Youth Ministry, Andrew Souza Lewis (a shared family name with his wife, Jamile; in Brazil surnames are passed down the maternal line). Andrew and Jamile (pronounced like "jah mee lee") moved to the Pacific Northwest just this summer after an extended period in Brazil where Jamile was awaiting immigration documents.

Andrew's home has been in Snohomish where he has been a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Snohomish. He moved to Brazil after serving first as a Bible study leader and pastoral advocate for Tierra Nueva in Burlington, WA, and then with a similar assignment with youth and families in Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

While in Brazil, Andrew worked as a non-profit webpage designer and an online instructor in Spanish and acoustic guitar. Regarding his work at CPC, Andrew reports, "I am especially passionate about growing discipleship in a community that seeks to pursue Jesus together."

Andrew is currently sponsored by his home church in the inquiry process toward pastoral ordination with the Northwest Coast Presbytery and our CPC Elder Dan Sanford has been serving as his commissioner liaison.

A graduate of Whitworth University in the field of Spanish and Cross-Cultural studies, Andrew participated in the Central America Study Program, a transformative experience of study and service providing Andrew a chance to become more fluent in Spanish.

Andrew achieved his Masters in Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary where he was awarded the Thomas and Alma Neale World Mission and Evangelism Award for Speech Communication in Ministry. He has also studied with the University of Central America in the areas of Latin American theology and ministry to migrants.

By next month the couple plan to be residing in Bow. Jamile is continuing to gain fluency in English, finishing her studies as an undergraduate in Theology, and looking for ways she may serve. The two really enjoy international travel together and earlier this year had an opportunity to visit and connect with an exciting street ministry in Berlin, Germany.

Let's give Andrew and Jamile a warm, CPC welcome!

Fellowship News

CPC's Neighborhood Block Party is September 7th after worship. Why not lend a hand and get involved in the warm hospitality that our church is known for? Hands will be welcome on Saturday to prepare the food - come to the kitchen at 10a. Just do one thing to help or stay as long as you like. Many hands lighten the load. Or, how about helping set up and serve the food on Sunday? And, there's always clean-up after the party. Please sign up to help at the event table in the foyer. Or, for more information contact, Carol Anderson at CarolA@cordatachurch.org or Bonnie Hollingsworth at BonnieH@cordatachurch.org.

September 16th at 5:30p will be our first Together Tuesday. The cost of the meal is \$7.00 and will reflect cuisine from Israel. But the most important item is that Pastor Greg will give an insight into his travels with other clergymen to the Holy Land. You don't want to miss this. Be sure to sign up soon. We want you to get a full plate of delicious foods.

Save the date for Together Tuesday, October 14th - Dancing for Joy!

Together Tuesday is a great way to have a wonderful meal, enjoy an interesting program, but best of all not to feel lonely by being surrounded by friends. Please join us!

ESL Class News

Sometimes asking a question gives you an answer that leads you down a path you hadn't considered. Such was the case when our church asked the Meridian School District, "Are there ways we can partner with you?" The answer was, "Would you be willing to host an English as a Second Language (ESL) class as you did in years past?" Well, what could we say but "YES" - to providing a resource that would double the opportunities for families within the Meridian School District, "YES" - to supporting the immigrant population in our neighborhood, and "YES" - to being known as a good neighbor!

So under the leadership of Dan Sanford, Missions & Outreach Elder, we began meeting individually and collectively with resources within our community to see what we could pull together. Sharon Chang, who worships at CPC, was recommended to us by Whatcom Community College's ESL program as a qualified and gifted teacher. Jackie Schoonover and Carol Lawrence volunteered to be class helpers. And then in researching what resources were out there, we began to discover new friends who were willing to come alongside us with support and encouragement. For example, the ESL program of the Meridian School District (MSD) will help promote our class to MSD families and help with class registration. We were offered sage advice on working with immigrants from World Relief and Refugee Resettlement. And, Goodwill gifted us with resources to enable us to offer digital learning.

Our free ESL class will begin October 7 and meet on Tuesday night for 8 weeks at the church, 5-6p. Please join us in praying students will be interested to come. Pray we will be able to build good relationships with our class members. Representatives from both the Meridian School District and Goodwill will be hosting tables at our Block Party on September 7th. Please stop by and say hello to them and thank them for their generous support of our class. We are also thankful for the support of our Missions & Outreach Committee and Karen Erickson, who gave us valuable insights into Russian and Ukraine cultures.

Jackie Schoonover

Goodwill Gift for ESL

A special thank you to our new friends at Goodwill who gave our English as a Second Language class, (which will begin in the fall) a gift in kind of 8 Chrome Books and 5 Surface Pro iPads to use for digital learning. This gift will be a great resource for our ESL students!

In addition, Goodwill was kind enough to share a free link to the Bellingham Public Library who subscribes to North Star Digital Literacy, a program of Literacy Minnesota. This program gives online, self-guided modules to assess the ability of students to perform tasks on computers and online and will be a perfect vehicle for using our gifts. Students will be able to save each area they accomplish and use them for resumes, etc.

Goodwill itself has programs that specialize in job seeking and higher education. We plan to refer to their programs potential students who are interested, and Goodwill in turn will refer students who want to improve their English to us.

CPC Receives a New Riding Lawn Mower

Ted and Carol Van Zanden presented a John Deere riding lawn mower to CPC in August. CPC's old riding mower had grown very tired after a decade of use. We are so lucky and grateful that Ted had two mowers and only needs one, so they donated their second mower to CPC! A big thanks to Ted and Carol!

Roger DeSpain



Ted with our soon-to-be-retired riding mower

You are invited to join a book club! ~ First Gathering September 19th

Have you ever wondered why Muslims make annual pilgrimages to Mecca? What could it have to do with Christians? The new book club hosted by Carol Lawrence will read and discuss *Abraham, A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*, which answers these questions and more. The author, Bruce Feiler, describes his travels to the locations of the major events in Abraham's life and his conversations with Islamic, Jewish, and Christian faith leaders. It's easy to see why the book is a *New York Times* Best Seller. Feiler's writing style is simple and engaging. Spoiler alert - he comes to the hopeful conclusion that despite our differences, the three major faith traditions have much in common.

The first gathering of the book club will be on Friday, September 19th, 3:30-5p at Carol's house. If you are interested, but that time does not work for you, let Carol know at cmlawren@gmail.com. The book is available at the Bellingham Public Library, and Amazon has it in paperback, Kindle, and audiobook formats. BTW, the book is not just for women - Carol loaned it to her best (male) friend, and he can't put it down!

New Opportunity Proposed to See and Discuss *The Chosen*

The Chosen is an American Christian historical television series created, written, and directed by Dallas Jenkins about the life and ministry of Jesus. Primarily set in Judea and Galilee in the first century, the series depicts Jesus' life through the eyes of the people who interacted with him - his apostles and disciples, Jewish religious leaders, Roman government and military officials, and ordinary people.

The following statement airs at the start of Episode 1: "*The Chosen* is based on the true stories of the gospels of Jesus Christ. Some locations and timelines have been combined or condensed. Backstories and some characters or dialogue have been added.

However, all biblical and historical context and any artistic imagination are designed to support the truth and intention of the Scriptures. Viewers are encouraged to read the gospels.

The original names, locations and phrases have been transliterated into English for anything spoken."

We will meet weekly in the Chapel to read Bible passages relevant to each night's episode, watch an episode together, and have a short (30 minute) discussion afterward. The hope is to begin in late September with the aim of finishing the first season just before Thanksgiving. If there is sufficient interest, we will continue with Season 2 after the new year. While Tuesday evenings from 7-8:40p has been proposed, the organizers are open to considering other evenings.

If you are interested in helping and/or attending, please contact John Risser.

Thank you!

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who came out on a beautiful August morning to clean up around the church for the Block Party. We had many hands and completed our tasks before 12 noon. Those helping were: Joel and Suzanne Rautiola; Jeff Crnich; John Risser; Grace Griffin; Julie Farrow; Roger and Barb DeSpain; Dale Kreider; Doug Cowgill; Dan Moore; Jim Zander; Pastor Greg; Joel, Jordan, Josh, Alice, and Noah Buma; Kristin French; Don Milsop; and Margaret Rudy.

Our next outdoor work party is scheduled for Saturday, September 27th at 9a. Please plan to join us as we get our grounds ready for Fall. Please bring rakes, tarps, blower, weeding tools, etc. Remember many hands make light work.



More photos
on
page 9.

Do You Want to Go on the 2026 Guatemala Mission Trip?

Still thinking about joining the Guatemala Mission Team for March 2026? **The dates for the trip will be March 7-18, 2026. The final deadline for the applications is September 5th** along with a deposit (details below). This will hold your spot in the group (6-15 people).

Applications can be filled out online at the www.hopeofpokomchi.org website and then printed out (the "Medical Condition" section doesn't work correctly so that needs to be filled out by hand after printing the application). Also, the section on COVID vaccinations is no longer required. On the website, click on: Help Change Lives, Team Trips, Download, Application Forms. Print off your application, attach a deposit of \$100 (individual) or \$200 (family) made out to "CPC Mission Fund" and drop off your application and deposit at the church or give to Nina or Gary Buma. The deadline again is September 5. If you have any questions, contact Team Leaders: Gary Buma (360-734-8733) or Nina Buma (360-319-1706) gnbuma@hotmail.com.

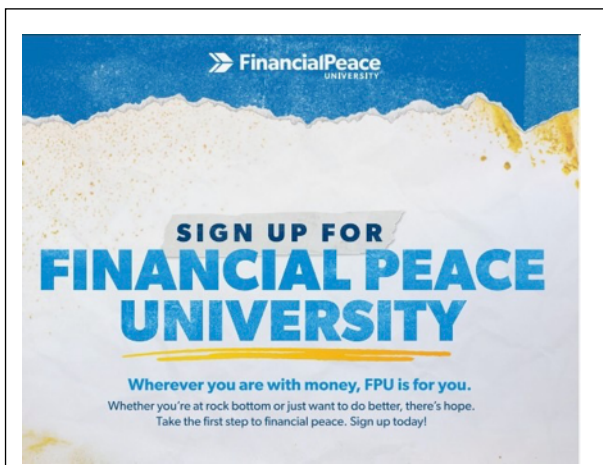
We already have a great group rate for round trip airfare (\$500) for the first 12 people who sign up. In order to get this rate, we need a minimum of 10 people to commit to this trip.

Each person who commits to going will have a personal cost of approximately \$1500, but it will be less depending on the amount of fundraising that we do. The CPC Mission Committee will help with such things as the cost of the project materials we will use in Guatemala (approximately 1/3 of the cost), and the mission trip members will be doing some fundraising which helps with their individual costs. We've already had one fundraiser last April (sold Butter Braids) and raised about \$400. Our next fundraiser will be in early December selling Christmas swags, wreaths, and greenery centerpieces. Those who have committed to going on the mission are expected to help out with these fundraisers. We also welcome anyone else to join in the fun even if you can't go to Guatemala! If you have any great fundraising ideas, let us know!

A couple of anonymous donors have graciously offered to sponsor 2-3 people who would like to go on this mission trip but can't afford it (partially or fully). If you'd like to inquire about this, attach a note on your application when you submit it.

We are thankful that another team will be sent to Guatemala and would appreciate your prayers for the core group of people who are committed and eager to continue with their planning and fundraising, as well as, the entire team that God calls to Guatemala.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY



Classes will start on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:30p via an online Zoom meeting. Last class will be November 13, 2025.

Once a week for nine weeks, you'll watch an online video lesson at home (each one is about an hour long). Then we will meet online via Zoom for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, and a FPU Coordinator will lead discussions and activities that drive each lesson home.

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.

For more information on FPU check out Cordata Church's website (www.cordatachurch.org) or the information table in the church foyer. If you have questions, please reach out to Gregg Block.

Cordata Church Scene - Fun in the Sun



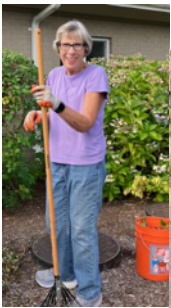
Blessing of the Backpacks



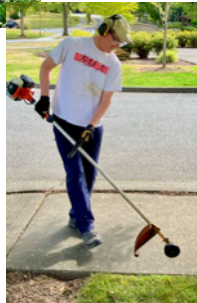
Installation and Ordination of Elders and Deacons



Installed for Second Term as Elder: Joel Rautiola and Julie Farrow
 Installed for First Term as Deacon: Michelle McCladdie and Jeff Crnich
 Ordained & Installed for First Term as Deacon: Glenna Allbritton
 Installed for First Term as Elder: Carol Anderson (Fellowship), Mike Langey (Resiliency), and Rob Gibbs (Worship)



August Yard Work
Volunteers



We're thankful for everyone who
serves on our Worship Team -
especially during the summer!

Save the Date

Wednesday, September 3rd, 7p, Choir Rehearsal Resumes, Chapel

Sunday, September 7th, 12 noon-2p, Block Party, Outdoors - See pages 1, 3 and 4.

Tuesday, September 9th, 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids Resumes, Foyer - See page 3.

Sunday, September 14th, 9a, Adult Education Class Resumes, Chapel - See below.

After Coffee Fellowship, Table Game Day, Church Foyer

Tuesday, September 16th, 5:30p, Together Tuesday, Family Life Center - See page 4.

Wednesday, September 17th, 5:30p, Youth Group Kick Off

Thursday, September 18th, 6:30p, Financial Peace University Resumes, Via Zoom - See page 7.

Friday, September 19th, 3:30p, New Book Club, Home of Carol Lawrence - See page 6.

Saturday, September 20th, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Palm Room

Saturday, September 27th, 9a, Outdoor Work Party, Church Grounds - See page 6.

Sunday, October 5th, After Worship, Explore Cordata Church - See below.

Tuesday, October 7th, 5p, English as a Second Language Class Begins - See page 5.

Sunday, October 12th, After Worship, Explore Cordata Church - See below.

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

Sunday, October 19th, After Worship, Explore Cordata Church - See below.

Regularly Occurring Events

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sundays - | 9a, <u>Adult Education Class, Chapel</u>
10:30a, <u>Worship, Worship Center</u>
10:45a, <u>CPC Kids Clubhouse/Sunday School</u> - See page 3.
<u>After Worship, Coffee Fellowship, Foyer</u> |
| Mondays - | 2p, <u>Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel</u> |
| Tuesdays - | 4:30p, <u>Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer</u> - See page 3. |
| Wednesdays - | 9a, <u>Weekly Prayer Group, Zoom</u> - Contact Admin@cordatachurch.org for link.
2p, <u>Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel</u>
5:30p, <u>Youth Group (5th to 8th Grade), 3rd Wednesday</u>
7p, <u>Choir Rehearsal, Chapel</u> |
| Thursdays - | 4:30p, <u>Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer</u> - See page 3. |
| Fridays - | 2:30p, <u>Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer</u>
3:30p, <u>Book Club, Home of Carol Lawrence</u> |

Adult Education

Adult Ed will resume in the Chapel at 9a on Sunday, September 14th. We will be discussing Christian apologetics, using a video by Wes Hoff, an expert in the field from Canada Apologetics, to fuel our discussion. Hopefully these classes will help us be ready to answer questions our unbelieving friends and family may have.

Please join us for fellowship, sharing, and learning more about following Jesus.

Explore CPC - October 5th, 12th, & 19th

Newer attendees and folks seeking ways to become more connected with CPC are encouraged to consider joining our 3-part series called *Explore*. These meetings will occur three Sundays in October after worship with lunch and childcare included.

Get answers to questions such as:

- How do we organize leadership for different areas of ministry?
- What are some of the opportunities for folks to become connected?
- What are the fundamentals of our faith in practice?
- Why might I consider formal church membership?

For more information contact either Julie Farrow at JulieF@cordatachurch.org or Dan Sanford at DanS@cordatachurch.org.

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