



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of Cordata Presbyterian Church

March, 2026



Message from Pastor Greg: *Caught in the Current?*

Are you caught in the current yet? I don't mean the 24/7, never-ending cycle of current events. But instead, the 40-day season of Lent, which leads believers into Holy Week and Easter. Like a river current tugging at a fallen leaf, this Lent season has the capacity to carry us along in God's loving presence towards a deeper faith or, as the song says, *a closer walk with Thee*. I've been pleased to hear how the simple daily readings I have been emailing weekly to the congregation have caught some of us in this current. Here's a sample, reflecting on Matthew 5:13-16. (Excerpt from *Presbyterian Outlook* Lent Devotional 2026.)

Jesus tells his followers, "You are the salt of the earth." It's a simple phrase but a profound metaphor. Salt adds flavor. It preserves what might otherwise spoil. It keeps things fresh. And we don't need much — a small pinch can change everything.

Matthew's church needed that reminder. They were a small, struggling congregation trying — with mixed results — to live an alternative way of life amid a teeming, fast-changing world that neither appreciated nor understood them. Jesus' words offered both encouragement and commission: You may feel small, but you matter. A little salt goes a long way.

The author, Teri McDowell Ott, goes on to ask us:

Where have you seen the quiet work of the church — or your own small actions — make a difference in someone's life? How might you add a little more salt or light this week?

I love these questions, because I do see the quiet work of the church making a difference in the lives of others. I see it in the tending of small groups, the weekly distribution of free food, the formative support of children on four different days each week, and leadership teams making caring decisions for the future of our wonderful community of faith, and more. How would you answer Ott's questions?

And do your answers help you realize that we are caught up in something God is doing that is much bigger than ourselves but that we are nevertheless an essential part? Lord, give us eyes to see how we can be your "salt and light" and confident hopeful strength to act on that vision. Carry us in your loving current as we go through our days.

Together in Christ, Pastor Greg

Forever Green

By Carol Lawrence



It's no mystery why I use a lot of green paint. Living out here in the Evergreen State, I find great joy walking out in our magnificent forests. This particular forest is on Cape Flattery, the farthest northwest point in the continental United States. Part of the reason I love this view is the bent and leaning evergreen tree that looks like it could fall off its cliff at any moment and be broken to pieces by the rocks and waves below. Obviously, though, it has persisted and survived on that precarious spot.

The tree is likely not worried about falling into the sea; it is just doing what it needs to do to survive. There's wisdom in that. There's a long list of things that we worry about, often needlessly: What will happen? Can I handle the task before me? What to cook for dinner? (The Internet can give me thousands of recipes.) Health concerns? (There is a major medical center, and a team of specialist doctors who know my medical history, just 2 miles from my house.) Lives of my children? (They all have good educations and stable jobs.) There are plenty of things we humans can worry about, if we choose to.

One of my favorite songs is an 18th century American spiritual, which repeats the refrain *The Lord will provide*. There are many modern versions of the song, but when we sang this in my childhood Sunday School class, we were told its title is *Confidence*. How meaningful! The lyrics I recall include:

*Though troubles assail us and dangers affright...
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The promise assures us, "The Lord will provide".*

Simple but true. The reason we can have confidence is that, as Christians, we know the Lord will provide. The source of our worry is our failure to remember that our Lord cares for us and will provide whatever we need to accomplish the tasks He sets for us. Scripture reminds us:

*For the Lord will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught. (Proverbs 3:26)*

This is good news for hikers on the trail to Cape Flattery, which is rocky and full of tree roots. There are lots of opportunities for our feet to be caught, but the view at the end of the trail is magnificent. Quite the metaphor for our Christian life. Our trail may be fraught with dangers, but the view at the end is magnificent.

Ash Wednesday
February 18th, 7pm
St. James Presbyterian

Maundy Thursday
April 2nd, 6pm
Cordata Presbyterian

Tenebrae
April 3rd, 7:30pm
First Presbyterian

Lenten Pilgrimage

2026










CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - We just completed learning about King Solomon's wisdom and accomplishments in the Sunday Morning Kids Clubhouse. Now we'll learn how Solomon's unfaithfulness to God led to a divided and troubled kingdom.



Learning About the Building of Solomon's Temple

We begin a new study volume this month: Volume 5 - **DIVISION AND DEFIANCE** - This 13-week study will reveal the many warnings God's people received—warnings to seek repentance from their sinful, idolatrous ways and turn to God. Because God is holy, good, and loving, He promised a new covenant for His people: one forever written on their hearts.

In March's study unit: **A Troubled Kingdom**, we will be introduced to the prophet Elijah and how God demonstrated His presence, power, and preeminence as the one true God.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there?

ANSWER: There is only one true God who alone deserves worship.

March Lessons: The Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 11–13), Evil Kings (1 Kings 14–15; 2 Chronicles 12–13), Elijah Confronted Ahab (1 Kings 18–19), The Reign of Ahab (1 Kings 20–22; 2 Kings 1)

**Special Palm Sunday Lesson: "A Rock Concert"*

Getting groovy - Beginning in January, we added a fun and physical challenge to the start of our Sunday Clubhouse time. Each month we challenge ourselves to complete (the sometimes tricky) dance moves to a worship song. This helps everyone in getting the "wiggles" out and helps everyone to focus as we begin our lesson. *Teacher Bonnie is increasingly thankful for her new hip!

Lenten Devotional - Family Lenten packets went out to our CPC families and a lot of our Clubs 4 Kids. The packets include multiple Lenten resources: a choice of a daily or twice-per-week devotional, a fun scratch off Lent countdown calendar, and a Pray/Fast/Give game cube craft. A scripture countdown paper chain craft is also available. Families are encouraged to choose which of these resources works best for their family. It's not too late to begin utilizing one or all of the items to enhance your spiritual walk as we journey closer to Easter Sunday. Packets are available at the Welcome Desk.

CPC Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt Preparations - Our special Easter Sunday service is April 5th! We will be hosting our traditional pancake breakfast prior to service and our egg hunt following the service.

Please consider donating your time and/or supplies for this celebration. Egg hunt supplies: Plastic eggs and "individually wrapped" candy or small toys are greatly appreciated and can be placed in the red wagon in the foyer now until April 2nd.

A serving signup for helping at the breakfast and needed breakfast items will be available soon. Contact Bonnie Hollingsworth for more details.

Clubs 4 Kids (C4K) - THANK YOU to everyone who has donated snacks for C4K!!! We are set for a while. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. The additional Valentines treats were awesome! We were able to put together over 20 Valentine treat bags for our regular Club kids. They were thrilled to receive these special treats.

Along with the usual fun crafts and games we enjoy during Club time, we are focusing on the true reason why we celebrate Easter. Beginning on February 19th and continuing through Holy Thursday, the kids are participating in a fun



Celebrating Tortilla Chip Day Painting Tortillas

CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up Continued from Page 3

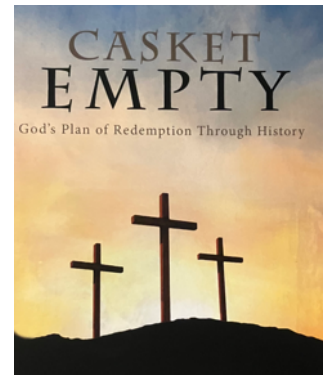
way to learn the Easter story. Each week the kids find two of twelve “Resurrection Eggs” that we hide somewhere in the foyer. Each egg has a part of the Holy Week story. After hearing that part of His story, the kids then put an item relating to that scripture into their own treasure box. They will take their boxes home on Holy Thursday. Using their boxes and the scripture story cards, they will be able to share the story of Jesus’ last week on earth, his death on the cross, and most importantly his resurrection with their families and friends. The kids have recently shown increased curiosity about what it means to be a Christian. Our group times have been filled with interesting questions about faith, baptism, and deeper interest about Jesus. (More photos on page 7.)

CARING BAGS THANKS - The CPC kids LOVED their treat bags! Thank you so much to everyone who added special notes and candies to our Caring Bags. Receiving a caring bag really means a lot, especially to the Hobi girls. They haven’t been able to attend in person due to health concerns. Knowing they are missed, cared about, and prayed over is a huge comfort and blessing.

Adult Education Continues the Study of *Casket Empty*

The Adult Education class *Casket Empty* continues its study of God’s plan for redemption from Creation to Revelation. In January the class focus was Genesis, covering Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Noah and in February on Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. In March the emphasis will be on Joshua as he leads the Israelites into the Promised Land and the establishment of the kings, including the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, who rule over a united kingdom, then Rehoboam who listens to unwise counsel that leads to the division of the kingdom.

The class, led by Gordon Terpstra and Carol Lawrence, meets in the Chapel on Sunday mornings at 9a. **All are welcome, even if you have not participated in earlier classes.** Videos from all classes are available on the church website (www.cordatachurch.org), under the Adult Education page.



First Together Tuesday of 2026 - March 10th at 5:30p

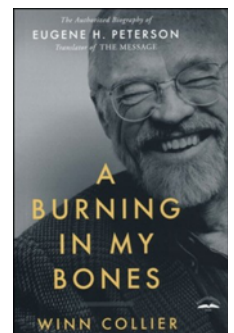
Join us for first Together Tuesday dinner of 2026 on March 10th at 5:30p in the Family Life Center. After a delicious lasagna dinner, there will be an uplifting program of music provided by the KingsMen of Song, a Christian men’s group representing many different churches in Whatcom County. CPC’s Stan Humphreys is one of the singers. The KingsMen are returning to us with a new repertoire of hymns of faith. They are always an inspirational highlight of our CPC family dinners.

Dinner starts at 5:30p, and costs \$7 per person. This is a great opportunity to reach out and invite a guest. Please make a reservation on the sign-up sheet in the foyer so we can plan accordingly, and join us for good food, fellowship, and an uplifting evening of music!

Also, save the date for next month’s Together Tuesday dinner on April 14th when Geoff Mumley from Campus Christian Fellowship will be our speaker.

Booklovers Book Club to Meet Friday, March 27th

The Booklovers Book Club will meet on Friday afternoon, March 27, at 1p at Carol Lawrence’s house to discuss the book *A Burning in my Bones*, by Winn Collier. The book is an authorized biography of Eugene H. Petersen, the translator of *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. Anyone who would like to attend is welcome. For more information, contact Carol at cmlawren@gmail.com.





Resuming Thursday, March 12th – SEASON 2 of *The Chosen*

Whether or not you attended last fall’s Season 1, consider joining the weekly viewings and group discussions of Season 2 of *The Chosen*, starting March 12th. It’s easy to catch up, so don’t hesitate to join if you weren’t part of the last group. (Episodes from Season 1 can be sent upon request.)

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.

And remember – this is also an excellent opportunity to invite a friend! John Risser and Rob Gibbs will be leading the sessions on Thursday evenings starting March 12th, from 7 to 8:30p in the Chapel, so speak to one of us if you’re interested in joining... or just show up. And like last time, popcorn will be served!

Whitworth Student from Lynden Receives CPC Scholarship

Recently your Missions team renewed its scholarship gift to Whitworth University in Spokane, and we have received word of this year’s recipient. Jared McCrory, class of 2028, hails from Lynden and is now in his second year and majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He writes to us, “I learned so much about God in my classes last year, and I’m learning just as much if not even more now as a Campus Ministry Coordinator. I am so grateful that I could come to this school since it has been so good for me. I am sure it was God’s way of drawing me closer to Him.”



Jared’s career goal is to do some form of machine or robotics engineering, because he likes working with moving parts and creating, coding, and designing remote control. He sent us this message: “Thank you so much for your kindness. I am grateful that you were willing to let the result of your hard work be a gift to me so I can continue to have the meaningful college experience that Whitworth offers.”

Celebration of Life Service for Steve Slee

Thursday, March 12th, at 1p

Reception to follow in the Foyer

Join us for Table Game Day

March 8th, After Coffee

Light snack will be provided or
bring a snack to share.



For Cordata, The Future is Now

After nearly two years of introspection and exploration, Cordata's Resilient Church Project Team unveiled recommendations for the church's near-future goals. It happened at a luncheon gathering of 35 interested congregants following services on February 15th.

As part of Whitworth University's Office of Church Engagement, CPC's Team sponsored and participated in retreats, open forums, personal interviews, on-line seminars and workshops, readings, and monthly team meetings.

Here are its recommendations for future church initiatives:

- Develop digital communications to help the church reach disconnected neighbors so they can grow and serve as followers of Jesus.
- For those reached, create a pathway for discipleship through church familiarization, training, leadership development, volunteer involvement and ongoing Christian education.

These recommendations will be developed into a grant application to Whitworth's Office of Church Engagement. If approved, a grant of \$10,000 will be provided by the Lilly Endowment Inc. Foundation to be used as start-up funding. The grant application will be submitted by May 1. Announcement of the award is scheduled for late June. CPC would have two years to use the funds.

There is significant interest and expectation about what this initiative will mean for the church, as provided in comments by those who participated in the February 15 gathering. Here are some:

- Happy we are re-thinking the church to meet contemporary needs
- Glad we are open to moving forward in uncharted territory
- Hopefully this will result in being more outward focused instead of bettering ourselves
- God is bringing us along, but we need to work as a team with strong leadership to present our church to the outside world
- Work on ourselves in sharing our faith with others

Updated information on the grant application and work by the Resilient Church Project Team will be provided in upcoming *Beacon* editions.

Resilient Church Project Team

Hosts Needed for College Ministry Leaders

Each year our church families have an opportunity to meet and host new Christian friends who arrive in Bellingham for the Student Institute for Campus Ministry (SICM). These students come from all over the US to spend an intensive week learning how to be ministry leaders on their college campuses. This conference is linked to the work at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College of Campus Christian Fellowship which is supported by CPC.

Conference planners are looking for hosts who are able to house at least two students and provide some meals for either May 16th-23rd and/or June 13th-20th. The conference planners are expecting an exceptionally large registration this year, so there will need to be more home hosts.

To indicate your interest to serve, you can contact: **Tiara Johnson** who is the SICM Administrator at sicm@ccfministry.com or 360.676.8612, talk to Dan Sanford at Cordata, or sign up in the church foyer.

Outdoor Cleanup Saturday, March 28th, 9a - Noon

Plan to join us for our first Spring cleanup of the season as we get our outside area ready for Easter. If the weather is adverse, we will reschedule a week later.

Please bring rakes, tarps, 5-gallon buckets, weeding tools, gloves, etc., if you have them.

Remember: "many hands make light work."

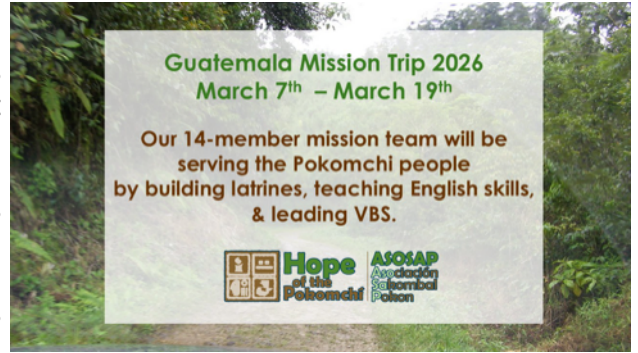
Sign up in the foyer so we will have an idea of how many will attend. Any questions? Contact Doug Cowgill.



THANK YOU from the Guatemala Mission Team

If you have donated much-needed supplies for the Guatemala Mission Team's trip, THANK YOU! Coloring books and crayons will be utilized in VBS, vitamins will be given out as needed to patients at the health posts, nearly 1,000 toothbrushes were donated to help the team as they teach dental hygiene, and the team is taking supplies for teachers including pencils, notebooks, construction paper, glue, etc.

Thank you for supporting the Guatemala Mission Team! Please continue to support them by praying for the team as they serve the Lord and the Pokomchi people.



Cordata Scene - Clubs 4 Kids



Cloud & Rain-Making Experiments for Weather Person Day

Tortilla Art for Tortilla Chip Day & Valentine Banners



Creating Kindness Clips



Scout Sunday



Leader Kalani Snyder & Scouts Read Opening Scripture



EXPLORE
Cordata Church



Informational Class:
March 8th, 15th, & 22nd

Addressing Debt by Gregg Block

Debt – Are you carrying credit card balances and paying high interest rates? These rates are now over 20% and sometimes over 30% per annum. Make this the year to get out of debt.

What is Debt?

Debt is a financial obligation where one party (the debtor) owes money, goods, or services to another (the creditor), usually requiring repayment of the original amount (principal) plus interest. It is used to purchase items immediately while paying over time. (Immediate gratification is a contentment issue, more on that in a later article.)

Issues with Debt:

Debt can cause severe financial, emotional, and physical stress while limiting your financial freedom and ability to invest in your future. The Bible teaches **Avoid debt**: Debt is seen as a form of slavery to the lender. **Proverbs 22:7**: *The borrower is slave to the lender.* There are over 2300 verses in the Bible about money and finances. You will not find a verse that speaks favorably of debt. **Here's the truth about debt: It robs you of your greatest wealth-building tool—your income.** Debt is all about paying off the past—using this month's income to cover something you bought last month, last year, or even longer ago. You can't move forward like that. **Debt always equals risk.**

How to pay off debt:

Use the **Debt Snowball method** to pay off debt. Debt Snowball is a debt repayment strategy where you pay off your debts in order from the smallest balance to the largest, regardless of their interest rates.

The core idea is to build **motivation** and **momentum** through quick wins (paying off small debts fast), which helps you stick with the plan until all debts are cleared.

How the Debt Snowball Method Works (Step-by-Step)

1. **List all your debts:** Gather all your debt information (credit cards, personal loans, student loans, car loans, medical bills, etc.), excluding your mortgage.
2. **Order by balance:** Arrange the debts from the smallest total balance to the largest balance.
3. **Pay minimums on all but the smallest:** Make the minimum monthly payment on all debts except for the one with the smallest balance.
4. **Attack the smallest debt:** Put as much extra money as possible toward the smallest debt until it is completely paid off.
5. **"Snowball" the payment:** Once the first debt is gone, take the entire amount you were paying on it (both the minimum payment and any extra money) and add it to the minimum payment of the next-smallest debt.
6. **Repeat:** Continue this process for each subsequent debt until you are completely debt-free.

There are other methods to pay off debt such as the "Debt Avalanche" where you pay off debt by highest interest rate first. While this technically results in the lowest total payments, many people fail with this method because they do not see progress and give up. The Ramsey Solutions team always reminds us that finances are 80% behavior and 20% knowledge. They have found the Debt Snowball method better builds momentum and changes behavior and results in getting out of debt. Per Ramsey, the average household pays off \$5,300 in debt within their first 90 days of following their plan. Most are out of debt in two years.

With respect to **Home Mortgage** debt, look to make extra principal payments. A 13th principal payment per year can reduce your mortgage term by about 5 to 6 years. Do not make extra principal payments until you have paid off all other debt and are saving for retirement.

There may be debts, such as IRS debt, that need to be addressed differently. The above material is general in nature. Please contact a tax or financial advisor for personalized financial information.

Save the Date

- Sunday, March 8th, After Worship, Explore Cordata Pres
After Coffee Fellowship, Table Game Day, Foyer - See page 5.**
- Tuesday, March 10th, 5:30p, Together Tuesday, Family Life Center - See page 4.**
- Thursday, March 12th, 1p, Celebration of Life Service for Steve Slee - See page 5.
7p, The Chosen Returns, Chapel - See page 5.**
- Sunday, March 15th, After Worship, Explore Cordata Pres**
- Saturday, March 21st, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Palm Room**
- Sunday, March 22nd, After Worship, Explore Cordata Pres**
- Friday, March 27th, 1p, Booklovers Book Club, Carol Lawrence's Home - See page 4.**
- Saturday, March 28th, 9a-Noon, Outdoor Work Party - See page 6.**
- Thursday, April 2nd, 6p, Maundy Thursday, CPC Foyer - See below.**
- Friday, April 3rd, 7:30p, Tenebrae, First Presbyterian Church - See below.**
- Sunday, April 5th, Easter Sunday - See page 3.
9:30a, Pancake Breakfast, Family Life Center
10:30a, Worship
After Worship, Egg Hunt**

Cordata Beacon - a publication of:
Cordata Presbyterian Church
400 Meadowbrook Court, Bellingham,
WA 98226

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 - 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer - See page 3.
5p, English as a Second Language**
- 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)
7p, Choir Rehearsal, Chapel**
- Thursdays - 4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer - See page 3.
7p, The Chosen, Chapel - Does Not Meet April 2nd or May 7th**
- Fridays - 2:30p, Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer
5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center - March 6th and 20th.**



Commissioning of CPC's 2026 Guatemala Mission Team



Maundy Thursday

April 2nd, 6pm
Cordata Presbyterian Church
Includes dinner as part of the service.

FPC BELLINGHAM
 Spring Church
 St. James PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 CORDATA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tenebrae

April 3rd, 7:30pm
First Presbyterian Church
Godly Play Children's Program
Childcare for ages 3 & under

FPC BELLINGHAM
 Spring Church
 St. James PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 CORDATA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH