



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of Cordata Presbyterian Church

April, 2026



Message from Pastor Greg: *Showing Up*

We've all heard the saying that "90% of life is just showing up." There is something to this common wisdom – our presence and participation is arguably the most important ingredient in a life of deep and meaningful relationships. One of the most frequent, heartfelt satisfactions I hear from people near the very end of their lives is "I was there for those I loved." At memorials, we often hear a matching tribute from loved ones: "He always showed up for his friends/kids/grandkids." "She was always just there for us." Showing up for people really matters.

As we journey together this week through Palm Sunday, Maundy ("Love One Another") Thursday, Good Friday, and finally Easter, ponder the profound ways in which God shows up in the person of Jesus. Beyond the miracle of Jesus' incarnation, on top of the wisdom and compassion of his teaching and the amazing nature of his miracles, here is a Savior and Lord who shows up for those he loves...100% of the time. That is to say: Jesus shows up for all of us (*For God so loved the world (all of humanity), that he gave his only son...*) He showed up consistently throughout his life, from his advent as a baby to his ministry as a man to his "follow me" calling of disciples, and all the way through "*It is finished*" on the cross. This Son of God showed up in the most profound way possible, as the sacrificial lamb of Passover. This is the one Son of Man (the *Bible's* name for "human being") who always showed up for God and for the people around him. And then, God showed up for us all by raising Jesus from death to eternal life. And God shows up for us today, sustaining the world and calling each of us to *Come and follow me*.

So two questions: (1) "Where do you see God showing up?" This day or week or year have you noticed ways in which God has shown up in your life or in the world? This season of Lent and Holy Week is a time when we may be more alert than usual to signs of God at work. Coming out of the darkness of winter or the darkness of world news, maybe we are most aware right now of our need for God. Fear not! God will always show up (though never in exactly the way we expect). And (2) "How are you and I responding?" When we see or hear God showing up in our lives in various ways, do we take note or do we ignore it, maybe dismissing the encounter as coincidence? This is a time of year when people who feel like they are missing something are more likely to come to church. Does that describe you or someone you know? Maybe it's time to just show up. And to be prepared to help others, since our calling is to show up not only for ourselves but also for people who are seeking God. How are you showing up today?

Together in Christ,
Pastor Greg



Upright

By Carol Lawrence

These trees are Black Spruce, a relatively small species of evergreen, dwarfed by the majestic Western Red Cedars and Hemlocks familiar to those of us in Washington State. Black Spruce rarely reach more than 50 feet tall and are sometimes called ‘drunken spruce’, because they often appear to be leaning drunkenly. Trust me, they haven’t been to the nearest tavern. They grow in the waterlogged permafrost of Alaska’s interior. Unfortunately, in certain areas, the permafrost is no longer so permanent. As it melts, the ground becomes soggy, roads collapse, and the trees lean in various directions.

I grew up in Rhode Island, founded by the Puritan theologian Roger Williams. The early Puritans were strong advocates for freedom of religion and separation of church and state. They also believed in ethical treatment of Native Americans. In fact, the land that became the State of Rhode Island was purchased, rather than seized, from the local Narragansett tribe.

Puritanism, of course, is the movement from which we get the term puritanical, because of the group’s belief in strict discipline and upright living. I love the term upright. It sounds so perfectly unarguable. And it’s a term found often in Scripture:

*For the Lord is righteous,
He loves justice,
The upright will see His face. (Psalm 11:7)*

Also, Solomon tells us:

*He holds success in store for the upright,
He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
for He guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones. (Proverbs 2:7)*

As in this photo (you can guess which mountain that is in the far distance), clouds and fog often obscure our view, but we can rely on our God to keep us upright, if we just stay close to Him and listen to His wisdom.

Booklovers Book Club to Meet Friday, April 24th

The Book Club will meet on Friday afternoon, April 24th, at 1p at Carol Lawrence’s house to discuss the book *The Will of God as a Way of Life: How to Make Every Decision with Peace and Confidence*, by Jerry Sittser, professor emeritus of theology at Whitworth University. The online reviews portray the book as theologically sound as well very practical and readable. The book is available new and used from Amazon. Anyone who would like to participate is welcome.

For more information, contact Carol at cmlawren@gmail.com.



CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - Last month we learned how the Kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah. Sadly, both were led by mostly bad kings. We put up a poster of all the kings of both kingdoms and how they ranked. Everyone was amazed that out of 40 kings only a handful were ranked as “good” with the majority being listed as “bad”, “wicked”, “awful”, and “the worst”.

April begins with Resurrection Sunday!

There will be **NO SUNDAY MORNING CLUBHOUSE on EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5th**. (Kids will remain in service, but we will have activities in the Chapel for extra wiggly kids.) We resume our normal Sunday Morning Clubhouse time on April 12th with unit 14 - **The Northern Kingdom**. This study continues in the book of 2 Kings and includes the Prophets Elisha, Jonah, and Hosea. We’ll learn how the Northern Kingdom continued to worship idols and how God provided prophets to warn His people to turn away from their sin. In the Jonah lesson we’ll see that while Nineveh repented and was spared God’s judgment, the nation of Israel refused to worship God alone.

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 13:4

Big Picture Question: Why do Christians continue to sin?

Answer: Christians continue to sin, because we still have a sin nature, but when Jesus returns, He will make us sinless like Him.

April Lessons: Elisha the Prophet (2 Kings 2; 4–5); Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh (Jonah); Hosea, Prophet to Israel (Hosea)

CPC Easter Celebration!

It’s the MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR! Easter at Cordata!

We will be hosting our traditional pancake breakfast prior to service and our egg hunt following the service. We had an Egg-ceptional amount of donations this year! Huge thanks go to our amazing Welcome Desk volunteers who have spent the past month sorting and filling hundreds of plastic eggs in preparation for our annual egg hunt. This fun event has become a big neighborhood favorite.

Kids will remain in the main service for this family friendly time of worship which includes a somewhat new tradition of flowering the cross. The Chapel area will be set up with activities for any kids who need a space to get their wiggles out.

Invites to celebrate at CPC have gone out via social media and with colorful postcards. Everything is ready and we are looking forward to celebrating our risen King!

Clubs 4 Kids - Spring is finally here and with it come spring-themed crafts and activities!

Club has been going great. The “roses and thorns” sharing time (especially with the older kids) has taken on deeper purpose with opportunities to ask questions about faith. The preteen/teens questions about baptism and Christianity in general have led to extra-long and meaningful group breakout sessions.

Along with learning all about Jesus’ last week on earth through the use of Resurrection Eggs and the book *Benjamin’s Box*, we also learned the real reason for celebrating St. Patrick’s Day. We celebrated St. Patrick’s Day by making individual, trinity, shamrock crafts, eating fresh baked Irish Soda Bread, and playing a game which told the amazing true story of Maewyn Succat (aka St. Patrick). For extra fun we also used a “leprechaun name generator” to create funny name tags. After dropping off a bunch of kids, a neighborhood mom loved this idea and stayed to make silly name tags for the rest of her family to wear later that night. (More Clubs 4 Kids photos on page 6.)



CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up Continues on page 4

CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up Continued from page 3

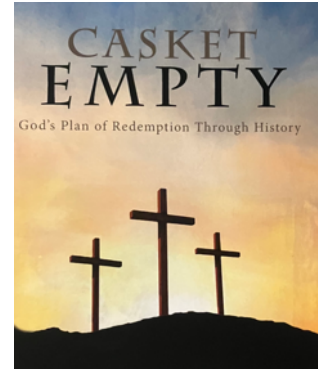
NO C4K on MAUNDY THURSDAY (April 2nd) or during **SPRING BREAK** (April 6th -10th). Clubs 4 Kids resumes on Tuesday, April 14th.

Getting Ready for FUN in the SUN! We have a theme for the summer! Fun in the Sun will be going on a "Road Trip – Route 66". This theme will deliver a complete overview of the entire Bible – all 66 books. It's going to be super fun. If you are feeling the tug to join us this summer, please contact Bonnie Hollingsworth about ways to help make this summer the best ever!

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 April the class will continue through the period of Kings, when God's kingdom remains divided, but prophets foretell that the two kingdoms (Judah and Israel) will eventually be united. 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, under the Adult Education page.

Please note that the class will not meet on April 5, Easter Sunday.



Fellowship News

Easter will soon be here! This is a special time for Christians, because our Savior died so that we might live forever. And, to begin the celebration, we will be sitting down in the Family Life Center from 9:30a until 10:20a to enjoy breakfast together. The menu will be pancakes, yogurts, frittatas, blueberries, oranges, bananas, juices, coffee, and tea enjoyed with a double helping of friendship. You can sign up in the foyer to help prepare the food or coffee, serve food, bring part of the meal, or clean up after. Don't miss it!

Remember to sign up in the foyer to serve coffee and cookies after worship. This is such a necessary part of getting to know one another and put a smile on everyone's face. (If you need assistance or instruction, Carol Anderson will be happy to help.)

Save the date - April 14th, for Together Tuesday at 5:30p, featuring Geoff Mumley from Campus Christian Ministries (CCF). Geoff Mumley is the Director of CCF and will share the joys and challenges of coordinating and guiding campus ministry at Whatcom Community College, Western Washington University, and Skagit Valley College. Cordata Pres supports CCF by providing space for a bi-monthly dinner called "Talk Time" and through Missions and Outreach.

Sign up in the foyer to let us know that you are coming and bring a friend or neighbor to enjoy a hot meal of roasted pork loin, potatoes, green salad, and dessert for only \$7.00. This is truly a time to get to know someone at your table while enjoying being with other like-minded people. It's always surprising how many shared connections come up during our conversations.

Here's another date to jot on your calendar – **May 12th – another Together Tuesday** featuring the Showstoppers from Bellingham High School. Since it'll be near Cinco de Mayo, we will be serving Mexican cuisine. Once again, sign up and bring a friend.

While you're baking your next batch of cookies, why not set aside a couple of dozen for the coffee fellowship after worship each Sunday. Please mark the date, your name, and type of cookie on the labels, available in the foyer on the sign-up table. Your cookies are most appreciated!

The annual Church Picnic and Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting will be held this year in June. (*The date and place is yet to be determined, so stay tuned.*) Don't bring a thing but your happy selves. We've planned fried chicken and all of the trimmings for a scrumptious lunch. At the meeting, we will hear about the progress that is continuing throughout our church ministries. This is an exciting time in our church life!!!

Kah-len (Hello) from Guatemala! The 2026 Mission Group has Returned!

There were a few obstacles we had to face the day we left Bellingham, but with God's help, we arrived safely in Guatemala. The first day we rested and visited several artisans in the area of San Cristobal and watched them weave and create beautiful fabric items. For the rest of the week, we divided up in groups. A few went to villages that needed latrines (7 were completed). The rest of us went to a public school not far from the Shekinah Center (where we slept) and helped 70 kids practice their English. In the meantime, we learned some Spanish from them! We also stayed for recess and played games—the bubbles were their favorite. The afternoons were spent at the village of Chisiram in the mountains about 30 minutes away on a rough dirt road.

Vacation Bible School was from 2-4:30p after their regular school time. The kids waited at the front door of the church an hour ahead of time every day! They were so excited and happy we were there. About 55 kids heard Bible stories, played games, had a prayer time, learned Bible verses and songs for the day, and did crafts that went with the theme of the day.

The VBS program covered:

Day 1—God is creator of everything and it is for a purpose and good.

Day 2—Each of us is uniquely made by God and deeply loved.

Day 3—God's laws are given out of love to guide, protect and help us live in joy and safety.

Day 4—Salvation from sin is a gift given to each of us freely from Jesus.

Day 5—God has given each of us unique gifts and a plan for our lives to know Him.

The VBS was spoken/written in Spanish with some Pokomchi used when our "mom helpers" saw their kids not listening! 🙄 The day of VBS ended with a large snack that we prepared at the Shekinah Center and brought with us. We all loved the hugs and interactions with the kids, and it was so hard to say goodbye to them.

At the end of the stay, we headed to Antigua for two nights and a time to sightsee. Five of us took a one-hour flight to see Tikal, an ancient Mayan city in northern Guatemala. Others climbed a volcano in search of lava and a view. The rest explored Antigua and all its sights.

We have all returned with stories and insights from our stay in Guatemala and are eager to share with you. But, this mission trip wouldn't have been possible without God's blessings and your support of prayers and financial gifts through fundraisers and donations. Everyone on the team is thankful for what you have given to the group in order for the mission trip to happen. **Gracias!** (More photos on page 6.)



Cordata Scene



More Guatemala Mission Trip Photos

We thank CPC's March landscape clean-up crew!



KingsMen of Song serenade Together Tuesday



Mario Day at Clubs 4 Kids



Decorating Eggs at Clubs 4 Kids

Thank You!

Thank you Cordata Pres for lending me the two walkers (both a 2-wheeled and a 4-wheeled version) as I recovered from a knee replacement surgery in February. They really helped me stay on top of my physical therapy exercises and avoid falls.

John Risser

Thank You!

I want to thank everyone for their caring concern and prayers over these last few weeks. I especially appreciate the prayers for Ken during this difficult time. I've received many cards and calls, and one day I looked around my house and there were all these people visiting me. It was such a special gift! Through it all I've felt the presence of the Lord. Thank you again!

Kathleen Hunter

RESILIENT CHURCH PROJECT – What We’ve Learned

It’s taken almost 2 years for the CPC Resilient Church Project Team to gather enough information about our church to prepare it move forward in strength. The Team has worked with Whitworth University and 7 other churches nationwide to submit an application for a \$10,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment Foundation as seed money for specific church initiatives.

Here’s what we learned:

- Cordata Church is “holding its own” for a church of its size, but the right steps can help strengthen it.
- The church has a better understanding of the neighborhoods it serves and what their interests may be.
- Better external communications can help create new opportunities for the church and its neighbors.

These external communications are its “front door”.

- The church needs professional guidance to build a communications strategy for the future.
- The Resilient Church Team has met via Zoom with professional website developers and clients to explain our church’s needs and what those professionals can offer.
- CPC wants to be focused on: 1) manageable technology, 2) appropriate content that tells the story of our church and its people in words, pictures, and video, and 3) attractive, inviting design.
- The Team is finalizing its grant application to submit for Session approval in April and submission to Whitworth University/Lilly Endowment Foundation by May 1.

What else?

- Improved external communication is a BIG part of the project’s attention, but it not the only thing.
- Cordata is not simply interested in “attenders” or even “members”. Its interest is to develop disciples for Christ. To that end, CPC will begin to develop plans for “pathways” for those disciples, helping them understand their “best fit” for serving the Lord inside and outside the church.
- The “pathways” initiative is an important step for meeting the needs of our community and our church and will be undertaken largely without cost.

More?

- A position of Elder for Resilience was added to Session to represent the project to church leadership.
- Session began a discussion about potential changes in CPC committee and leadership structures to better address contemporary church challenges.

More details about the grant and what it will provide for Cordata Church should be known in May.

Resilient Church Team

Your Missions & Outreach Team at Work

Since the start of 2026, your CPC Missions & Outreach Team has been actively encouraging many different ministry partners and services to neighbors in the name of Christ. A few highlights during this period include prayer and financial support for our Guatemala Mission Team, receiving of Evangeline Bentley’s report on her 2025 mission trip to an Alaskan village, and a conversation with Kevin Riley, commissioned pastor at the Mt. Baker Presbyterian Church about his church’s efforts to help with flood relief to their neighbors in Concrete, WA.

We’ve been busy, too, keeping up to date with many leadership changes and service projects planned for the coming months. We have sent along our best wishes to Karen Erickson who finished her teaching work in Jordan last year and is leaving formal mission work for employment in Seattle. We have welcomed two new workers with World Relief in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, Robbie Watson and TJ Morris. Both have previously been active in international, refugee-related ministries. This local organization is stepping up its endeavor to involve churches in the care and help to new immigrants in our community.

At the March CPC Men’s Breakfast, we got acquainted with Stevie Cairne, who stepped in to coordinate the gospel sharing activities of Campus Christian Fellowship on our nearby campus of Whatcom Community College. Stevie shared the exciting development of small Christ-following groups meeting in the WCC

Your Missions & Outreach Team at Work Continues on page 8.

Rainy Days by Gregg Block

Do you get stressed by unexpected bills? Life happens. Paraphrasing Proverbs 21:20 tells us - *The wise store up resources; fools spend everything.* That's pretty blunt. **"You must gain control over your money or the lack of it will forever control you."** – Dave Ramsey. Creating a Rainy Day Fund will help!

Studies show that more than 50% (some studies say 60%) of American families do not have enough saved to cover an unexpected \$1,000 emergency. Some 30% do not have any savings. We have become a paycheck-to-paycheck nation. When those emergency expenses pop up, we get stressed, we struggle, we resort to a credit card that has a 20 to 30 % interest rate. **"Ever notice that when you are broke, everything is an emergency?"** – Dave Ramsey.

Did you have a grandparent or other relative that talked about a "rainy day fund". We all should have a rainy day or emergency fund of 3 to 6 months of living expenses.

Why an emergency fund?

An emergency fund prepares us for the unexpected.

An emergency fund protects us from debt.

An emergency fund gives us peace of mind.

How large should our emergency fund be?

The amount should be based on our monthly living expenses. If we are budgeting and tracking our expenses monthly, we have the information to easily determine the monthly amount needed.

How many months do we need? – Ramsey Solutions recommends the following general guidelines:

Three months of expenses if: You are single with no dependents or You are married and each of you has a stable income.

Six months of expenses if: You are married with a single income or You are a single parent or Your job is seasonal or Someone in your home is chronically ill or You or your spouse is self-employed, works on commission, or has a highly irregular income.

These are guidelines, some folks may find a longer period of time is better for their situation.

Where to keep your emergency fund?

The most important thing is that the fund is liquid, secure, and accessible. It is insurance, not an investment.

Some places to put your emergency fund:

A simple savings account connected to your checking account.

A money market account that comes with a debit card or check-writing privileges.

A high-yield savings account that pays a higher interest rate and allows you to transfer money quickly and directly to your checking account.

It is important to live within our means and to set aside a portion of our income or resources for future use, creating a buffer against unforeseen events. **Having money set aside, just in case, gives us so much peace of mind.**

Your Missions & Outreach Team Continued from page 7.

dormitory.

After finalizing the monthly allocations for our regular 12 "legacy" partnerships, the CPC committee embarked on our periodic effort to meet special mission needs through allocation of one-time gifts. Approved thus far for this year are the following recipients:

- Childcare World Wide (based in Lynden) for the support of African high school student Felix Kasozi
- Skookum Kids in Bellingham for their programs for children needing emergency shelter and foster care
- The Firs Christian Campgrounds at Lake Whatcom
- Whitworth University scholarship for a student from our area
- Mike Neeley's ministry of Church Without Walls
- Evangeline Bentley for her return mission trip to Alaska this coming summer
- Supplement to our CPC middle school youth program to pay for food served mid-week

All of this financial support is made possible through the 10% of our Cordata Church tithes and offerings set aside for Missions and Outreach.

Save the Date

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

Sunday, April 12th, After Coffee Fellowship, Table Game Day, Foyer

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

Saturday, April 18th, 8a, Men's Breakfast, Palm Room

Friday, April 24th, 1p, Booklovers Book Club, Carol Lawrence's Home - See page 2.

Tuesday, May 12th, 5:30p, Together Tuesday, Family Life Center - See page 4.

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 pages 3-4.
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 pages 3-4.

7p, The Chosen, Chapel - Does Not Meet April 2nd or May 7th

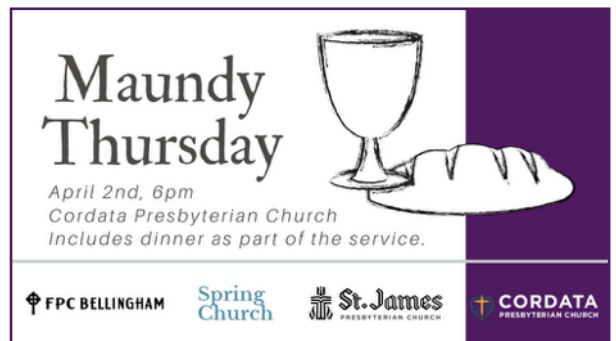
Fridays - 2:30p, Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer

5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center - April 17th.

Cordata Beacon - a publication of:
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beacon@cordatachurch.org



Join us for
Table Game Day
April 12th, After Coffee
Light snack will be provided or
bring a snack to share.



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



The CHOSEN SEASON 2
View the second season with neighbors and friends.
Thursday evenings at 7p - Starting March 12th - mid May
Cordata Church | 400 Meadowbrook Court
For more information: admin@cordatachurch.org or 360.733.8860



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