



Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

August, 2026

Message from Pastor Greg: *God at Work*

In my view, the only unfortunate by-product of my recent summer vacation was that dreadful feeling that I should be working, even though I am supposed to take time off. Sure, I got to observe some Sabbath rest, spend time with my dear family, and reconnect with God, self, and others. But still—shouldn't I be doing something to earn my keep? I think this is a common feeling among serious Christians—we can too easily fall into the trap of believing either (a) God won't accept us unless we are working hard for the Kingdom or (b) we are duty bound to work all the time in appreciation for all that God has done for us. At the root of either belief lies the assumption that it's entirely up to us faithful followers of Jesus to make God's Kingdom happen. But what if instead of rolling up our shirt-sleeves so much (even when we are supposed to be taking a holy rest), we take the *Bible* seriously and realize that God is at work, and so the pressure is off of us (at least a little bit)?



Here are just two of many similar passages from Scripture that sound this theme: *the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...* (Hebrews 4:12) and 28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary...* In other words, God is actively at work in the world. Some (Deists) believe that God set everything up in the distant past but is now removed from Creation, instead allowing the world to run on its own natural properties. More common is the purely secular belief that the universe simply happened on its own and that there is no such thing as a living God. But we Christians—at least when we are thinking and acting biblically—believe that the living God was, is, and always shall be actively involved in human affairs. Consider the evidence at Cordata that appeared since I returned from vacation:

- An unprompted ministry: I learned that 25 women gathered recently to plan a new women's ministry. Nobody asked me, the Pastor, whether they should or even could launch a new ministry...to which I say: Praise God! Pastors dream about this kind of grass roots, Spirit-inspired ministry happening without any prompting other than God growing a desire for it among God's people.

- An answer to prayer: God led a Cordata neighbor and his teenage nephew who have no prior connection to the church to come over and do a couple days of heavy labor to beautify our grounds, which we sometimes struggle to keep up with in the growing season.

- Guests without advertising: God brought a surprising number of guests to worship this past Sunday—a couple newly arrived in town; a family planning also enroll their pre-K daughter at Bellingham Christian School, and a young family we know from the neighborhood who have become familiar faces at Fun in the Sun.

- Sermon rescue: When I had writer's block while putting together my Sunday sermon, I took a break to listen to my morning devotional app (Pray As You Go) and voila! The very passage I needed to bring the sermon to finish it well was the featured text for the day.

That's my experience and testimony. How about you? Where do you see God at work? Tell somebody about it! Let God's active presence and power guide your life and fill your prayers.

Faithfully together in Christ,
Pastor Greg

Trespassers

By Carol Lawrence

Many benefits are claimed for composting. The U.S. Composting Council advises that composting can help prevent soil erosion (a key factor in my steep garden) and promote healthier plant growth, also important in my small garden where plants that outgrow their allotted space may face the death penalty.

I had to chuckle at this sign in a community garden in Victoria, B.C., and, of course, I never set foot inside the fence. Fortunately, our God operates on a different legal system than this gardener. He has other ways of dealing with us when we trespass. The version of the Lord's Prayer I learned as a child used the wording *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*. And, of course, we can be grateful He does forgive, because we do all trespass.

Through His word, God gives us guidance about trespasses to avoid. Exodus 20 tells us we shall not murder, bear false witness, steal, etc. The particular variety of trespass I'm struggling with just now is covetousness. I've never coveted my neighbor's donkey, for example, so I'm ok with that one. But then we get to the part *or anything that is your neighbor's*. There is one thing my neighbor has that I do truly covet – shoulder muscles! How much easier my garden work would be if I had powerful shoulder muscles. Moving those landscape rocks would pose no challenge at all. Alas, shoulder muscles are one blessing God chose to give to others, but not me. Of course I'm grateful for the blessings he has given me, but still...those rocks aren't going to move themselves.

Most likely, next winter I will covet warm sunshine, or maybe I'll move on to a more substantive form of trespass. But I will continue to be thankful we serve a God of grace and will continue to pray for forgiveness. And I'll try to remember, with Scripture:

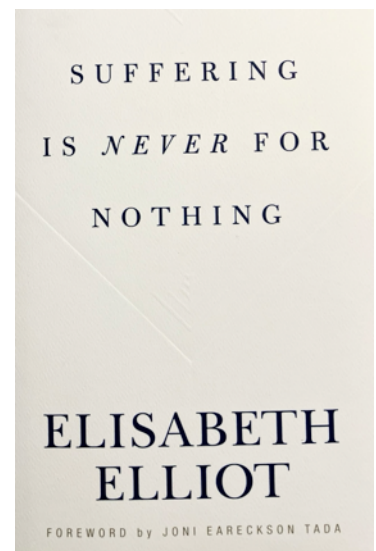
*For the Lord God is a sun and shield
The Lord will give grace and glory;
No good thing will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)*



Booklovers Book Club to Meet on August 28th

Book Club will meet at Carol Lawrence's house on August 28th at 1p to talk about the book *Suffering is Never for Nothing*, by Elisabeth Elliott, with a foreword by Joni Eareckson Tada. It's a short little book, just 105 pages, but it addresses an important concern for all Christians – why does a loving God allow (or send?) us to endure pain and heartbreak. The author has first-hand experience with this tough issue – she is the widow of Jim Elliot, who was murdered by an indigenous tribe while serving as a foreign missionary in the Amazon rainforest. Her writing style is very down-to-earth and readable as she recounts how she learned to find gratitude in the midst of suffering.

The book is available at the Bellingham Public Library in hardback, eBook, and audio formats and from Amazon in hardback, audiobook, audio CD, and Kindle formats. Everyone is welcome to come to the gathering and join the discussion of this book that addresses an important faith issue. For more information, contact Carol Lawrence at cmlawren@gmail.com.





CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

CPC Kids Clubhouse - The July lessons in the book of Daniel were very engaging, full of wonderful examples for how kids can stand strong in their faith as they face whatever “lion” comes up in their own lives. Now the time of captivity is over! After 70 years, God is bringing His people home to Judah. They will face many challenges, but the first thing they do is rebuild the alter so they can worship God faithfully.

August lessons will be full of hope and faith. Let the rebuilding begin!

Hope at Home (Unit 17) Sunday Clubhouse Kids will hear how through the prophet Zechariah, God spoke a message of hope to His people about what would happen in the future. The people rebuild the temple so that they would have a place to worship God. Years later in Persia, God used Esther to save His people through her bravery and sacrifice. August wraps up with Nehemiah rebuilding the wall - in record time!

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 25:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke?

ANSWER: Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah

August Lessons: Rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 4–6; Haggai 1–2); The Prophet Zechariah (Zechariah); Esther Saved Her People (Esther); The Walls Rebuilt (Nehemiah 1–6)

Fun in the Sun 2026! The Bible Road Trip “Tent-Bus” has been traveling on our Route 66 (Books of the *Bible*) without any engine failures or flat tires! Only a few bumps in the road...the Weather! Excessive wind and rain this summer has done its best to dampen our fun BUT has not been successful! On the wet and windy days, we’ve just moved the entire program under the breezeway and covered area outside the main doors. The weather did catch us off guard once though. The forecast said it wouldn’t rain until 6p, so we set up on the grass as usual (though it was rather cold). Unfortunately, the rain came pounding down about 40 minutes into our fun. While we did lose some kids who ran home, the majority ran into our Tent-Bus, eager to hear the day’s *Bible* story! Not sure how much anyone will remember of the actual story (they were trying to keep their teeth from chattering while wrapped in fleece blankets), but they will never forget the experience!

We’ve been having a ton of fun zooming through the Bible. We’ve covered highlights of the entire Old Testament in these first 10 Road Trip lesson times! Good thing there aren’t speeding tickets on our tour. We began the New Testament books the last week in July. (See page 7 for more photos.)

One of the biggest blessings to come from this unique ministry is that we’ve added to our Sunday Morning Clubhouse group! A couple of boys from the neighborhood have started coming to church on Sundays after enjoying their time last year and again this summer at Fun in the Sun.

HUGE THANKS to the many CPC volunteers who’ve come help make FITS the best time ever! Having multiple helpers makes everything run so much smoother and helps to create that special relaxed and fun atmosphere.

There are only 6 more times to have Fun in the Sun. Our *Bible* book tour wraps up on Thursday, August 20th...don’t miss the fun! **We have a need for extra helpers for the first two weeks of August (8/6, 8/11, & 8/13) when three of our key leaders will be out of town. For more information contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) ASAP.**



CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up continues from page 3.

Blessing of the Backpacks & Back to School BINGO! Sunday, August 23rd will include a special time during service when we pray over and bless all students, teachers, and other academic leaders as they prepare for the new school year. This is a perfect time to invite friends and families whose lives revolve around the school year calendar rhythm. Added bonus...

Back to School BINGO is back! We've had this free family fun event a few times before, BUT this time it is in combination with Blessing of the Backpacks! By inviting folks to both special events, we hope to meet/greet more of the parents/families of the kids who attend our programs. Immediately after service, the Youth and Children's leaders will host lunch (burrito bowls), briefly go over our Children's and Youth programs, introduce our leaders, update program paperwork, AND the best part... play Bingo for "end of summer" and "new school supplies" related prizes!

Back to School BINGO isn't just for those with kids, everyone at CPC is welcome to attend!

Annual Neighborhood Block Party - Sunday, September 13th, from 12-2p - This is that super fun yearly event when we here at CPC get to use our abundant gifts of hospitality! We fire up the grill and have a great time engaging with one another and especially with our Cordata neighbors! Be sure to invite your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers for this fun time of free food, lawn games, music, and more! PLUS come learn about many community resources while walking through the aisle of information tables.

There are many ways to use your giftings...we need burger flippers, brownie bakers, veggie slicers, table talkers (chatting up our visiting folks), folks on the set up and clean up crew. More information to come... be sure to read your weekly bulletins and look for the sign-up sheet in the foyer and/or contact Bonnie Hollingsworth (BonnieH@cordatachurch.org) for more details.

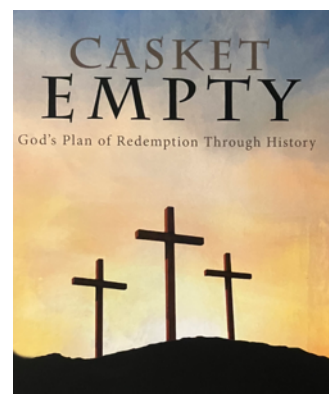
Clubs 4 Kids - With the new school year upon us, we are getting ready to shift from our outside Fun in the Sun program to our inside after-school program. This well attended time of crafts, games, snack and relationship-building is a blessing to all who participate. Please be in prayer for this ministry which resumes Tuesday, September 8th.

Growing Faith Class to Resume on September 13th with *Casket Empty*

The Growing Faith Class (Adult Education) will begin again on September 13th (the Sunday after the Labor Day weekend) with *Casket Empty*. This fall the class, taught again by Carol Lawrence and Gordon Terpstra, will focus on the New Testament as the culmination of God's redemptive story begun in the Old Testament.

All are welcome to join us in this study at 9a in the Chapel, even if you did not participate in the Old Testament class last spring. New Christians and new church members are especially welcome.

Books will be available in early August, so you'll have plenty of time to acquire one, and maybe even start reading!



Next Lunch Bunch on August 23rd

Getting together for lunch after Worship is a wonderful way to extend the time of fellowship and eat a wonderful lunch without having to clean up the kitchen! Merely go to the Information Table, choose one of the three restaurants, and sign up!

On the 23rd, you will easily have time to greet your friends, have coffee and a cookie, then head to the restaurant.

Join us!



A New Women's Ministry - Daughters of Grace

Daughters of Grace is a new Cordata women's ministry created for every woman in every season of life. Whether you're new to church, deeply rooted in faith, young, seasoned, married, single, a mom, or not — you belong here.

As we share our heart, our mission, and our motto, we invite you to help shape what this ministry becomes. The Daughters of Grace team is Julie Farrow, Sue Moore, Sue Wright, Kaela Ruble, and Amy Black.

Our Motto - Faith to Grow, Hearts to Serve, Women United in Christ.

This is the heartbeat of Daughters of Grace.

We are women who want to grow deeper in faith.

We are women who want to serve with purpose.

And we are women who want to stand united — across generations, experiences, and backgrounds — in Christ.

Our Mission - To cultivate Christ-centered community where women of every age and life stage grow spiritually, build meaningful relationships, and support one another through the joys and challenges of life.

This ministry is not meant to be a program you attend. It is meant to be a community you belong to — a place where you are seen, valued, supported, and encouraged.

Why Daughters of Grace? (Ephesians 2:8–9) - The name Daughters of Grace comes directly from the truth found in Ephesians 2:8–9, which tells us that we are saved by grace, through faith, and not by our own works. This ministry is built on that foundation. We are here because God has poured out His grace on us, freely and generously. And because we are daughters of grace, we can come together without comparison, competition, or pressure. We can show up imperfect, in process, learning, growing, and still fully loved. This ministry exists to help women live from that grace — to grow in faith, to serve from gratitude, and to walk together as women united in Christ.

Our First Year: Monthly Events for All Women - For our first year, we want to create one monthly event that is open to women of all ages. These events will be simple, welcoming, and designed to help us connect, grow, and build community.

Some ideas include: Painting and Sip (non-alcoholic, creative fellowship); A Women's Tea; "Speed Dating" for Connections and Mentoring; Movie Night; Workshops on faith, life skills, or emotional health, etc. as requested; Guest Speakers; Crafting Nights; One-Day Retreats; Collaboration with other local churches for shared events or retreats. These events will help us build relationships, discover gifts, and create a rhythm of connection throughout the year.

Sharing Your Gifts - The July 9th *Our Daily Bread* devotional focused on sharing our spiritual gifts — the unique ways God equips each of us to serve the body of Christ. This devotional reminds us that:

- Every believer has at least one spiritual gift.
- No gift is too small or insignificant.
- The church becomes healthy when everyone contributes.
- We are called to use our gifts to serve one another in love.

God doesn't give us gifts to hide them — He gives them so we can bless others.

This ministry is not built around a few women doing everything. It is built around all of us bringing our gifts — encouragement, teaching, prayer, hospitality, creativity, leadership, compassion, organization, listening, mentoring. Your gift matters. Your passion matters. Your experience matters. Your presence matters.

Invitation to Participate - We will have another Cookies and Conversation after church on August 30th. Please plan to attend and share in the development of this ministry.

Youth Group Summer Hangout - August 19th, 5:30-7p

Students in grades 5th - 10th are invited to a Youth Group Hangout on August 19th. where there will be fellowship, fun, and food. Contact Andrew Souza-Lewis at andrewsl@cordatachurch.org if you'd like more information or have any questions. Come & bring a friend!



Prayer After Worship: A Ministry of Presence

Life brings us to worship in all kinds of states—sometimes we walk in weighed down by worry, grief, or uncertainty, and other times we arrive overflowing with gratitude and joy. Wherever you find yourself, you don't have to carry it alone. Scripture reminds us to *cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you* (1 Peter 5:7), and to come before the Lord with thanksgiving in every season, trusting that he hears us fully in both our struggles and our celebrations.

Prayer is one of the deepest gifts we've been given as believers—a chance to bring our whole selves, hurts and hopes alike, into the presence of a God who listens with love. It's easy to think we need to have the right words, or that our concerns aren't significant enough to bring before the Lord. But prayer was never meant to be a performance; it's simply an act of trust, a way of drawing near to the One who already knows our hearts.

That's why the Worship Committee would like to make sure this opportunity is visible and available to our whole congregation. If you'd like someone to pray with you after service, you're warmly invited to reach out to Rob Gibbs or Jayme Fergoda. They or another person from the committee would be honored to stand alongside you in prayer, whatever you're carrying—whether it's a burden you've been holding quietly or a blessing you want to give thanks for out loud.

You don't need a special reason, a crisis, or a perfectly worded prayer to take part. Just a willing heart is enough. Come as you are, and let's bring it to the Lord together—because none of us were meant to walk this journey alone.

Interested in Financial Coaching?

- NEW Virtual Class starts 9/3/26
- Check out the material at the information table



FINANCIAL PEACE STARTS HERE



Take control of your money with Financial Peace University! This nine-week class uses biblical wisdom and common sense to help you tackle budgeting, pay off debt, and invest for your future! Together we'll walk through God's ways of handling money so we can experience freedom with our finances.

You can sign up by scanning the qr-code, browsing to the Interested in Financial Coaching icon on the Cordatachurch.org website or from the material at the CPC information table.

Class is being offered 100% virtually. You will watch a video online on your own during the week and then join a Zoom meeting each Thursday night for 9 weeks. The Zoom meeting starts 9/3/26 at 6:30p for 45 to 60 minutes. The last class is 11/5/26. The cost is \$50, but if purchased separately it is more than \$120. We have a limited number of \$50, reduced-price bundles on the first-come basis.

Since the class is virtual, this could be an opportunity to share this invite with an adult child, grandchild, or friend.

Please contact Gregg Block with any questions.

We Remember Curry Miles (March 2, 1937 - June 8, 2026)



Editor's Note: For those who were unable to attend the wonderful celebration of life for Curry, here is the brief overview of his life from the program.

Curry Ward Miles, 89, passed away peacefully at home in Bellingham, Washington, on June 8, 2026, surrounded by Barbara, his beloved wife, and their family. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 2, 1937, Curry attended the University of Kansas and later earned architectural credentials through the American Institute of Architects and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. He spent his professional life in the Kansas City area and was co-owner of Frashier/Miles Architects.

From an early age, Curry had a gift for art and design. In high school art class, he met Barbara, the love of his life. They married in 1958 and shared nearly sixty-eight years of devotion, partnership, and family life. Together they raised four children and built a home marked by faith, love, and steadiness. Those who knew Curry remember his thoughtful advice, patient encouragement, warm smile, and deep kindness.

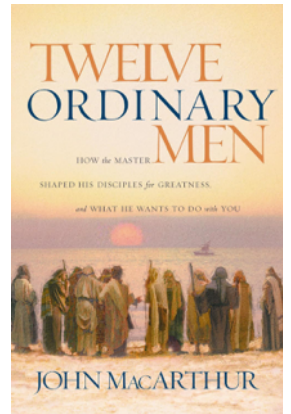
Curry's Christian faith was the foundation of his life. He loved studying Scripture, serving others, and being an active member of his church communities. Over the years he worshiped at St. George's Episcopal Church, All Saints Episcopal Church, and Christ Episcopal Church in the Kansas City area, and later at St. Brendan's Anglican Church and Cordata Presbyterian Church in Bellingham. He is lovingly remembered by Barbara; his children Elizabeth Miles-Mead (Kevin), Lisa Miles Bunkowski (Bryan), David Miles (Alexa), and Andrew Miles (Lara); his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and his sisters Kathaleen Miles and Margaret Hulstine. His legacy of faith, love, and quiet generosity lives on in all who knew him.



In the Readers' Corner - Suzanne Rautiola

After starting to view the TV series *The Chosen*, I found a book in CPC's library that helped me deepen my understanding of these special but ordinary men. It is John MacArthur's book, *Twelve Ordinary Men*. This book was first published over 40 years ago, has gone through a number of revisions, and provides an overview of what is presented in the *Bible* about each disciple's qualities, their lives together, and their impact. Although he occasionally references material drawn from historians of that time, MacArthur mostly relies on the insights provided in the *Bible*. He notes, the disciples *were not outstanding because of any natural talents or intellectual abilities. On the contrary, they were all too prone to mistakes, misstatements, wrong attitudes, lapses of faith, and bitter failure—no one more so than the leader of the group, Peter...Yet with all their faults and character flaws - as remarkably ordinary as they were - these men carried on a ministry after Jesus' ascension that left an indelible impact on the world.*

MacArthur's writing style is engaging and down-to-earth, enriching my *Bible* study and what has been visually depicted on television, and is a good foundation for the New Testament *Casket Empty* study in the fall (see page 4). It is available at Amazon.com where you will also find a workbook for additional thought and study.



Outdoor Work Party - Saturday, August 29th, from 9a - Noon

Plan to join us on Saturday, August 29th, at 9a to help spruce up the CPC grounds for the Block Party. If you have rakes, tarps, 5-gallon buckets, weeding tools, gloves, etc., please bring them.

Sign up in the foyer so that we will have an idea how many will attend. If you have any questions, contact Doug Cowgill.

Remember our motto: "Many hands make light work."

Cordata Scene -
Fun in the Sun &
Sometimes Fun in the Rain



Save the Date

Saturday, August 1st, 11a, Celebration of Life Service for Chuck Kingsford-Smith, Worship Center

Saturday, August 8th, 9a, Men's Breakfast, Ungers' Pavilion

Wednesday, August 19th, 5:30-7p, Youth Group Hangout - See page 6.

Sunday, August 23rd, During Worship, Blessing of the Backpacks - See page 4.

After Worship, Back to School Bingo! - See page 4.

After Worship, Lunch Bunch - See page 4.

Friday, August 28th, 1p, Booklovers Book Club, Carol Lawrence's Home - See page 2.

Saturday, August 29th, 9a, Outdoor Work Party - See page 7.

Sunday, August 30th, After Worship, Cookies & Conversation - Women's Ministry - See page 5.

Sunday, September 13th, After Worship, Block Party - See page 4.

Regularly Occurring Events

Sundays - 9a, Adult Education Class, Chapel - Resumes September 13th; see page 4.

10:30a, Worship, Worship Center

10:45a, CPC Kids Clubhouse/Sunday School

After Worship, Coffee Fellowship, Foyer

Mondays - 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel

Tuesdays - 1p, Fun in the Sun, Church Lawn - Ends August 18th; see page 3.

4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer - Resumes September 8th; see page 4.

Wednesdays - 9a, Weekly Prayer Group, Zoom - Contact Admin@cordatachurch.org for link.

2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel

Thursdays - 1p, Fun in the Sun, Church Lawn - Ends August 20th; see page 3.

4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Foyer - Resumes September 10th; see page 4.

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



**The Session and their guests wish to thank Tim and Kris Unger
for hosting their annual, summer BBQ.**