

The Messenger

We discover, explore, embrace,
& share

God's
belovedness

**EXPRESS
EDITION**

May 2020
Vol. 79 • Issue 5



CONNECTED

We are companions on a spiritual journey, engaging minds,
transforming hearts, and empowering hands to serve
Jesus Christ in our local and global community.



A
Message
from Pastor
Bruce

Somewhere in between

Somewhere in between. Here we are in this liminal space of living between two realities, not fully in the past, not fully into the future. We do not yet know when the “stay at home” order will be lifted or when groups of 50 or more will be able to meet. We are between what we considered normal and whatever the future will bring. As Easter people, we live in between our life now and the anticipation of resurrection life.

The Disciples experienced and feel the immediacy of God’s kingdom. We are invited to anticipate the new reality even while we hold space for others to be safe. For the next several weeks of worship we will be remembering, looking forward and continuing to discover what new life God is bringing us in this moment.



Church Office Note: As of the writing of this newsletter, 4/23/2020, we offer other ways to join in Christian fellowship, including online worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. on Facebook and our YouTube channel.

May Devotional

May 3rd

Epistle Lesson: Acts 2:42-47
All things in common.

For a moment, the followers of Jesus had clarity of God's kingdom. They supported one another, held properties in common and supported one another. They had a unity of understanding who they were in the Kingdom of God.

When was a moment another shared a sign of grace with you?

Who might you share a sign of grace with today?

May 10th Mother's Day

Gospel: John 14:1-14
Do not let your hearts be troubled

Philip asks Jesus to show him the Father, and Jesus declares he and the Father are one. Participation in the means of Grace reveals God's kingdom. How can Philip not yet see it? It's right here. Sometimes in the in between we can't see what is right in front of us.

What helps you to see God's activity in the world more clearly?

How might you show someone else a sign of God's kingdom?

May 17th

New Testament: Acts 17:22-31
In Him we live and move
and have our being

Paul at the Areopagus speaks about "the unknown god." Paul give a witness to the creator in whom "we live and move and have our being." Paul wants to carry others into his vision of the future. How will we compel others to see what we can see?

How would you describe God's work in your life so another can see how you have been saved by grace through faith?

What is your hope for the world as stay at home orders are lifted?

May 24th Aldersgate Day

New Testament: Acts 1:6-14
Is this the time?

Even in the midst of the resurrected Christ some still want to go back to the past and an earthly kingdom. That is not their future. Their future is something else, in God's time, not ours.

Why do some of the followers still want a Messiah to rule like a king on earth?

What helps you to wait for the Lord?



Easter Worship SERIES

In between...

Here and There: The Liminal space of living between two realities, not fully in the past, not fully into the future. Easter people live in between our life now and the anticipation of resurrection life. The Disciples experienced and feel the immediacy of God's kingdom. We are invited to anticipate the new reality even while we hold space for others to be safe.

April 19th

Gospel: John 20:19-31- "Doubting" Thomas.

In the Liminal Space we have doubts, doubts about the future, doubts about the past . . . it is an uncertain time, a time not for judgment, but a time for grace.

April 26th

Gospel: Luke 24:13-3 - Walk to Emmaus

The Liminal space is a journey, we can know we aren't where we used to be but we also have not arrived to the new place, yet sometimes we can get a moment of clarity about what the new space will be like.

May 3rd

Epistle Lesson: Acts 2:42-47- All things in common

For a moment the followers of Jesus had clarity of God's kingdom. They supported one another, held properties in common and supported one another. They had a unity of understanding who they were in the Kingdom of God.

May 10th - Mother's Day

Gospel: John 14:1-14

Philip asks Jesus to show him the Father, and Jesus declares he and the Father are one. Participation in the means of Grace reveals God's kingdom. How can Philip not yet see it? It's right here. Sometimes in the in between we can't see what is right in front of us.

May 17th

New Testament: Acts 17:22-31

Paul at the Areopagus speaks about "the unknown god." Paul declares the creator in whom we live and move and have our being." Paul declares to people who have not been in the same place in the past, but he wants to carry them into his vision of the future. How will we compel others to see what we can see?

May 24th - Aldersgate Day

New Testament: Acts 1:6-14

Even in the midst of the resurrected Christ some still want to go back to the past and an earthly kingdom. That is not their future. Their future is something else, in God's time, not ours.

A Prayer to Honor Mothers

For our Mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love, we pray to you Lord...

For Mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and that their family and friends may support and console them, we pray to you Lord...

For women, though without children of their own, who, like Mothers, have nurtured and cared for us, we pray to you Lord...

Loving God, as a Mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you watch over your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their husbands, sons, daughters, and friends, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Listen 2020

*Be still and know
that I am God....*

Psalm 46:10a

Listen....in the stillness.... God is here, Christ is here, I am here.

Dear God, as I approach you in faith, enfold me within your presence.

Wonderful Savior, as I lay my burden at your feet, let me rest there as well.

Today can be a lonely place Lord; keep me company for a while as I exhale and release the worries, sadness and troubles of today.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid...John 14:27

There, that's better. Back to the quiet, the stillness...God is here, Christ is here, we are here.

Now, I arise, gaze around this room and look outside through my own "window on the world". It's raining. There's a barge being pushed down river, the hummingbirds are visiting, and our azaleas are ready to POP! If the rain slows, there may be a walk happening for two intrepid souls.

What a great big wonderful place! Full of possibility, hope and beauty. Life is good....

Pass it on.

Much love and many blessings
from Pastor Jim and Carol

Memorial Day

United Methodist Book of
Worship #440,
author John Hunter, Scotland

*Offered by Rev. Jim McGinnis
Ret. Naval Officer*

**Observed the last Monday
in May, this day honors
the war dead of the
United States. It was
first celebrated in 1866
in Waterloo New York.**

Almighty God before whom stand the living

and the dead, we your children, whose mortal life
is but a hand's breadth, give thanks to you.

For all those through whom you have blessed our
pilgrimage, whose lives have empowered us, whose
influence is a healing grace, we lift up thankful hearts.

For the dear friends and family members whose faces we
see no more, but whose love is with us forever;

For the teachers and companions of our childhood and youth,
and for the members of our household of faith
who worship you now in heaven;

For those who sacrificed themselves, our brothers and
sisters who have given their lives for the sake of others;

May we hold them all in continual
remembrance and ever think of them as
with you in that city whose gates are not
shut by day and where there is no night.

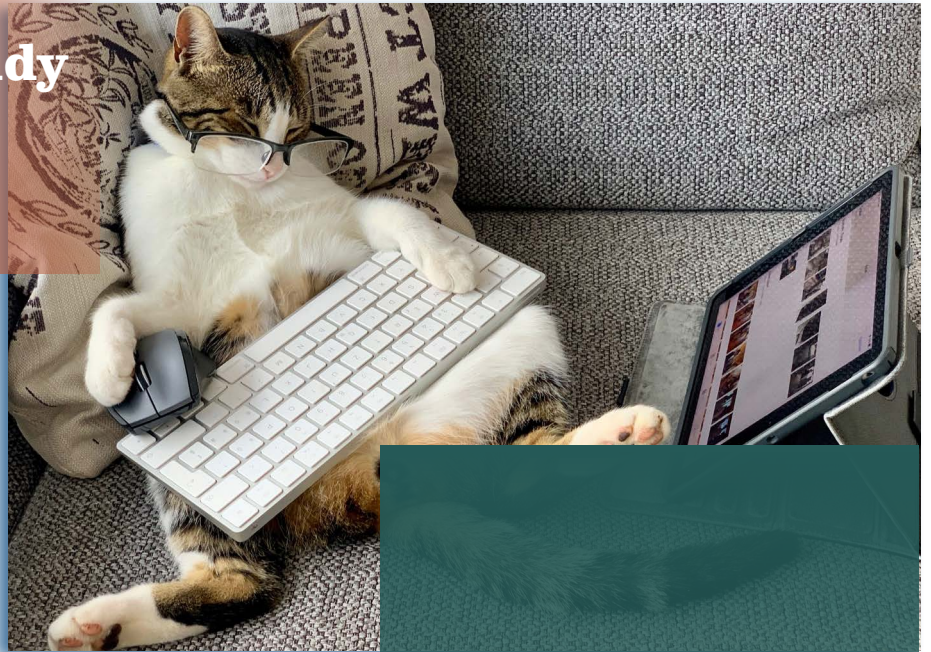
*May we now be dedicated to working for
a world where labor is rewarded, fear
dispelled, and the nations made one.*

*O Lord, save your people and bless your
heritage. Day by day we magnify you, and
worship your name, for ever and ever. Amen.*



Quarantine Bible Study Brings Us Together

By Pastor Kathy Neary



Happy second month of quarantine and social distancing! My emotions, energy levels, and desires for mac n' cheese have fluctuated wildly during this time. Whenever I start feeling sorry for myself, though, I remember that I am not sick, I am not a medical worker putting my life at risk, I have a job and a home, and friends and family who I care for and who care for me. For gosh sakes, we're just being asked to stay at home, not build a nuclear reactor or get into physical shape! One thing I am doing to keep my mind sharp and offer a small distraction to folks is to hold a Bible study by Zoom.

Ten students have been meeting online on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 7 to 8:30 pm to study Paul's letter to the Romans. Now my Bible studies are a bit different from the norm, in keeping with my warped personality. They are not devotional studies in which we read passages and try to find comfort or challenge for the moment. That type of study is very, very important in this time period.

What I do, though, is different. We try to understand as best we can the historical and philosophical setting of the writings, always keeping in mind how different the world is today compared to 2000 years ago. We spend a lot of time parsing out what Paul (in this case) meant when he used words like righteousness. We reconstruct as best we can the social setting for the writings. What has always amazed me in doing this is that we do find connections to our time and situation.

By doing this deep dive into Paul's letter to the Romans, or any scripture, we open our minds to the meanderings of God's Spirit. We are led closer to an understanding of the mystery of Christ. Don't take my word for it though. Ask Anita Jinks or Lyn Rush for their assessment of the study.

I'm thinking we are going to be social distancing for another month, so I'm planning another excursion into a book of the Bible. If you have thoughts on which book you'd like to learn more about, please send them along. I'd love to have another ten people to expose to God's mysterious writings!

Youth News

For nearly a month, the youth of Vancouver First United Methodist Church have virtually gathered in fellowship with Youth Director Justin Nutting via the Internet, through the Zoom virtual meeting site. Justin has said that it turns out to be a fantastic way to get to see the youth and each other while still maintaining their social distancing. "It has been so hard not to see our youth in person, not to shake their hands, play our games in the youth room." The first Zoom meeting, it was both the junior and senior high youth that gathered online together. "They were sure happy to see each other, they started joking around like they haven't missed a day apart," Justin said. "We will continue the zoom youth groups for as long as we can, until we can all meet together in person again."

From the Staff

Amidst the still of a lockdown, work continues behind the scenes of your church. Each day, the staff embodies the spirit of Vancouver First joining forces virtually to make sure we capture the holy spirit that flows through this congregation and deliver that to the masses online and wherever you may get your church news.

Our youth director Justin Nutting meets regularly with the young men and women of our church through the power of the Internet ... of course, they are all up on the technology and are relishing in the time they can get together in Christian fellowship.

The congregational care team of Vancouver First have taken to the phones to continue their outreach to our most fragile souls for uplifting prayers and lending an ear of comfort.

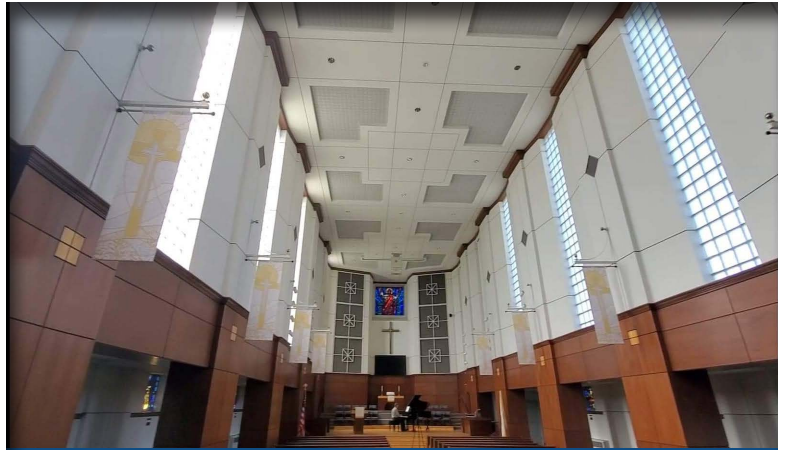
Church Secretary Ginny Sorenson keeps the communication lines flowing, and the people of VanFUMC connected to their church and their people.

Treasurer Michelle Mehl has kept our books, maintains our finances, and is there to pay the bills and keep our even keel.

Work in and around the church campus continues, even while all are away, as Facilities and Program Director Gary Carter helps maintain the property and keep the business of church churning.

In the wee hours of the morning, you can see Scott Hansen keeping our church building sanitized, as we continue to prepare our house of worship for when we gather again.

The staff of VanFUMC want to thank everyone joining us online, through our social media, and for all those that continue in mission with the church through your time, your prayers and your contributions. And we hope to see you soon!



Testify Your Joy! *Lay Leader Evan Hull is enjoying the gift of working his garden and seeing the apple trees in bloom.*



Giving Thanks While in Isolation

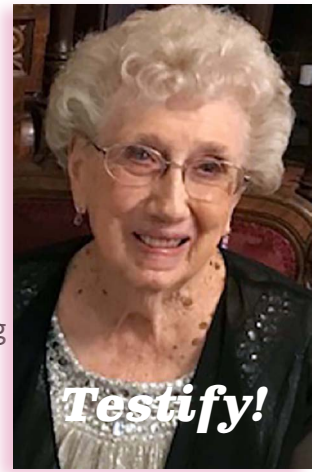
Meet Adeline Bailey

Interviewed by Rev. Mary Lookingbill

Adeline Bailey is a faithful member of First Church and resides at Bridgewood retirement community. She has attends regularly and learned to use the C-VAN transportation when Bridgewood's Sunday shuttle ended this fall. But now, like the rest of her church family, she is following the guidelines of social distancing. Adeline shared that her three meals are delivered to her room each day; no longer does she go to the dining room to eat with friends. No visitors have been allowed to visit, not even immediate family for the past month.

But... she maintains contact with her family and friends via email and the telephone and continues to hold hope for a healthier

tomorrow. And she is grateful. Grateful for those at Bridgewood that are sacrificing for her and the residents to keep them safe from the COVID-19 virus. Grateful that she can sit outside in their garden area while maintaining safe space! Grateful for her son in law Craig who has had some recent health challenges but is continuing to recover. Grateful for her daughter Joann that calls and emails her regularly. Grateful for God who is with her each day and offers hope and assurance for the future. Keep the faith. Pray often. Give thanks. At **102 years** of age, Adeline's witness and faith are an encouragement for us all during this time of isolation and distancing. **Here was her concluding prayer from a recent email:**



"Dear God, You are my light and my salvation. You are my hope. Please come into my heart, forgive all my wrongs and give me Your wonderful gift of eternal life. Help me be an instrument of Your love and cause Your light to shine on others through me." Amen.

Vancouver Methodist Foundation

The Vancouver Methodist Foundation, established in 1969, has given more than \$2.5 million in charitable gifts. The Foundation while connected to our church is a separate charitable entity. Now in its 51st year it has built a trusted relationship for accepting gifts, safely investing those gifts, and for insuring that the bequeaths are honored.

The Foundation is known for its educational scholarships. These scholarships have been given with the underlying value of helping to create potential remedies for bringing social justice into our communities. Mindy Ludolph, a beloved, long-time member of our church, is an example of this Christian generosity. Mindy's gift to the Foundation of her entire house and property has established a new medical scholarship fund. This gift will be used to support students or graduates who pursue a career in the medical profession. We can all celebrate Mindy's life and a blessing that leaves a timeless legacy.



The Vancouver Methodist Foundation is "Blessed to be a blessing to others."
Dean Lookingbill, President

May Birthdays

Allison Owen	James Stewart	Mark Newman
Ann Kaufman	Jayden Ruiz	Matt Eha
Anne Seelye	Judy Dresser	Merril Firestone
Averie Tripp	Julie McCoy-Cox	Michael Mehl
Charles Mickey	Kathleen Horvath	Mildred Benedict
Charles Roe	Kathleen Reigel	Pratibha Kumar
David Hansen	Kathy Peters	Robert Kelly
Dolores Dearborn	Kerrita Mayfield	Spencer Smith
Edward Durgin	Larry Patterson	Sue Worthington
Elisa Haug	Leonard Satterfield	Sydney Potter
Erik Robinson	Logan Femling	Timothy Luke
Erik Rush	Lucy Conway	Willa Curtis
Gary Cavett	Madison Soumokil	William Owen
Ike Ekeya	Marci Hope	

May Anniversaries

Mac & Connie Storey	Larry & Sue Irish
Jim & Shirley Stewart	Ed & Suzanne Waldrop
Gordon & Carolyn Meyer	Gary Lincoln & Shobhna Sagar
Trey & Angie Friauf	Mark & Devon Newman
Dave & Kristi Griffin	Dexter & Traci Mitchel

CONTACTS

Senior Pastor | Rev. Bruce Smith
Program & Facilities Administrator | Gary Carter
Director of Youth Ministries | Justin Nutting
Director of Music Ministries | Thomas Rheingans
Choir Director | Amber Tripp
Nursery Coordinator | Jenifer Walton
Treasurer | Michelle Mehl
Office Administrator | Ginny Sorenson
Maintenance Technician | Scott Hansen
Lay Leaders | Evan Hull & John Gentry
Trustee's Chair | Thomas Musser

Psalm 139:13

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

We give great thanks for all mothers as they raise their sons and daughters with love...and we are grateful for our own mothers who gave us life.



***Happy
Mother's
Day***

Testify Your Joy!

Kathy Wright is usually busy volunteering out in the community. She shares her testimony of gratitude during this change.

"I appreciate how fortunate I've been during the COVID-19 pandemic. I've remained healthy, watched flowers grow, and enrolled in an online photography class. Communicating with friends more frequently and regularly, by sending emails or texts and making phone calls, whether short or long, cheers me up. Calling small business owners who are closed or, if they are open, stopping by to make a purchase, lets them know their business is important to me. Taking time to enjoy these simple pleasures is an unexpected gift for me during this challenging time."