

The Messenger

We discover, explore, embrace
& share God's belovedness

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A person stands on a beach at sunset, their arms outstretched in a gesture of praise or awe. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The person's silhouette is dark against the bright light of the sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

August 2020

Vancouver First United Methodist Church | 401 E. 33rd St., Vancouver, WA 98663

The Floor

is Lava

by Pastor Bruce Smith

Apparently, there is a new Netflix game show where participants play “The Floor is Lava.” You remember that game, right? As a child my sister and I would put cushions, pillows and whatever else we could step on to form a path across the living room and you couldn’t step on the floor or you fell into the lava! Living through this pandemic can sometimes feel like the floor is lava and we are doing the best we can to travers across on whatever we can find. New information comes, new expectations are made, a new event happens and its almost like someone took our pillow away and we are about to fall into the lava.

At the time I am writing this, Clark County is still in “Phase 2” which means we are very limited in how we can physically gather. The church reopening team has formed a plan for small group gatherings in Phase 3. Whenever Clark County becomes approved for Phase 3, we will be able to have some small groups meeting in the building, including a small group on Sunday mornings.

I, like you, am looking forward to when we will be able to meet again, especially in small groups. Small groups have always been the foundation of Methodism

from the very first meetings the Wesley brothers had at Oxford. It is in the small group meeting where they studied scripture, prayed, and supported on another in works of service for their community.

My hope for us in the fall is to keep building on our roots as Methodist to meet in small groups. Some will meet using phones, tablets and computers to “Zoom” in on a video conference call. Others will wear masks and sit six feet apart in a room in the church. Some others might wear masks and meet at a member’s home. In the gathering together we will pray, share something of our experience of God and consider how we are serving Jesus Christ in our community.

It is frustrating to not know the timing of the phases or to be able to set a firm schedule about when we can have larger groups meet for a form of worship. While we keep jumping from one place to another, I am thankful for grace, our knowledge of God’s love and our call to love as we have been loved. Grace is what holds us, grace lifts us, grace will see us through to the other side. ✘

THE FLOOR IS LAVA

Summer Worship Schedule

Happiness & The Gospel

“A Summer of Happiness” Pastor Bruce will be following the Gospel of Matthew and occasionally sharing some insights from the podcast called “The Happiness Lab”

August 2

Text: Matthew 14:13-21

Where the people assumed scarcity, an abundance was provided! How might we benefit from an attitude of generosity?

Happiness episode 1.12 “Grateful Expectations”

August 9

Text: Matthew 14:22-33

Peter momentarily has the vision to get out of the boat and to take a step. The wind comes, what waters rise and he begins to sink, as he sinks he cries out “Lord, save me.” What happens when we lose our sight of God’s work in our life?

Happiness episode 2.6 “Dial D for Distracted”

August 16

Text: Matthew 15:10-28

How do we understand this interaction with Jesus and this woman? This woman’s faith is admired, and her daughter is healed. What can we learn from this exchange?

Happiness episode 2.9 “The War for Kindness”

August 23

Text: Matthew 16:13-20

Peter makes a declaration of faith and he is declared to be the rock on which the church is built. What changes when we make a declaration of faith? Who do you say that He is?

Happiness episode 1.3 “A Silver Lining”

August 30

Text: Matthew 16:21-28

Peter’s rejection would be a stumbling block for God’s grace. Here the disciples are challenged to take up their cross and to follow Jesus.

Happiness episode 2.8 “Demonic Possessions”

Sunday Online
Worship
10 a.m.

AUGUST

Mount St. Helens Eruption Memories

By volunteer storyteller, Debbi Musser

This past May 18th was the 40th anniversary of the catastrophic eruption of Mount St. Helens. I thought it would be interesting to ask a few congregants their memories of that day. Below are their stories.

SCOTT FEMLING:

I was with my family at our fishing cabin on Whidbey Island. The boys slept in the garage. We awoke to the single pane windows shaking violently. The big boom sounded like someone ran full speed into the garage. My mom came running in thinking it was a major rough housing event. She was surprised to find us were still in their sleeping bags and looking a bit confused. They all went outside to check things out.

A neighbor came running over and talking extremely fast. He said that he had heard on the radio that Mount St. Helens had erupted. Whidbey Island just got the noise and shock wave, but the ash went east. My mom called to check on Scott's Uncle Frank who lived adjacent to their Vancouver farm. He heard the explosion and felt the shock waves, but it was not overly dramatic in Vancouver. He had already done their morning chores and they were blissfully eating breakfast, ignorant that anything had occurred until they received the phone call. He went outside to see what he could find.

Yep my Uncle confirmed the giant plume. We packed up to head back to Vancouver. It was an exceptionally long ride home on 1-5 with a detour around the Toutle river. Vancouver eventually received a small amount of ash. Sometimes it was fine as flour and at other times

it was coarse like beach sand. We ran irrigation on the berries and hay to try and wash the ash down. Cutting hay required dust masks and there were magnificent clouds of ash coming out the back of the mower. The abrasive ash caused a lot of equipment damage

APRIL HAMELINK:

I was visiting my mother in Port Orchard. We saw the plume and could not figure out what it could be. We stood out on the front lawn and thought it looked like a cloud from a nuclear explosion. I lived in Seattle at the time and everything was covered in ash including my cats. We used no masks. We just wondered if the apocalypse was upon us.



USGS / Robert Krimmel - Mount St. Helens Eruption, May 18, 1980

GWYN VOLMER:

I was in a Sunday school class taught by Irwin Landerhom. We did not know a thing until we all went outside to drive home. We saw the mountain spewing. Initially we did not receive too much ash. About a week later we actually received quite a bit on the ground. We had friends who had a vacation home on the Toutle river. Luckily, they were not there during the eruption because their home was washed away. Later on, we drove up to Gifford Pinchot out of Chelatchie Prairie and collected pumice rocks and ash.

BRUCE SMITH:

My family and I lived in Rochester at the time. What I remember most about that morning was that I was watching "Kids are People Too" on ABC before heading to church. In the middle of the show an alert started running on the bottom of the screen that Mount St. Helens had exploded. The rest of the day we watched the news and saw the unforgettable images. We were far enough west and north that the first explosion did not bring ash to Rochester. The next day at school we were all abuzz about the explosion and what it if came our direction. Our teachers assured us it was not going to happen as the wind always went east. On Sunday, June 25th there was a second explosion and the wind was going west. We had ash falling before church that morning. I remember it feeling like a dark eerie snowfall. School was cancelled, we wore masks and mom declared it to be the longest summer ever.

ANITA JINKS:

I lived in Lincoln, Nebraska at that time. Several days after the eruption I was in the yard with my toddlers when the sky darkened, and ash fell. My husband came home and swapped us up so we would not breath it. Funny reaction!

DEBBI MUSSER:

We lived in California at that time. Tom and I were camping with our infant daughter at the coast. I remember a fellow camper told us what happened. I remember watching all the catastrophic news once we got home. About a year later my grandparents made a trip to the northwest. They brought us back a jar of ash. I thought it was so cool. Who would have thought then that in 1994 we would move to Vancouver? We have enjoyed witnessing the changes over the years of this magnificent mountain.

ERMA PATTERSON:

We lived in Spokane then and had a lot of ash. It seemed like midnight out and the streetlights came on. We kept getting conflicting advice and wore masks. Car air filters kept getting clogged, schools were closed, everyone stayed home. A little taste then of what is happening now. People did not listen to the scientists then. Did we learn anything? ❄



Lessons in Faith & Love

by Pastor Jim and Carol McGinnis

Thinking about our faith journeys, it is often more about the learning part than the teaching. We have learned so much from our faithful friends at the Pythian Home during the time we share on Sundays.

Rhoda Laws of Vancouver 1st has taken on the spiritual leadership role at Pythian. She is a steadfast person and an inspiration to all. Rhoda leads Bible study, fellowship time and oversees the weekly Sunday 3 p.m. worship service. She asked if we would be interested in sharing time on Sundays with the folks at her congregation at Pythian.

We began a first and third Sunday ministry and have continued for the last five years. We love this service and love the faithful folks that attend. There is a nucleus of about 12 people in attendance: sometimes more, sometimes fewer. We sing, pray, share scripture and a message, celebrate the Lord's Supper, laugh, cry and always learn. These are

great people we are privileged to know! We miss them so much since Covid-19 has kept us away.

We have honored birthdays, the passing of friends, seasons in our church calendar and family stories. We shared Vancouver 1st prayer shawls one Easter Sunday with prayers and tears, held a Service of Healing with more prayers and tears, a Love Feast, memorial services and last year on the weekend before Christmas, we had a big party with food

and drink, laughter, Christmas Carols, dancing from the MOTUS Dance Company of Liz Borromeo Dance, scripture and the Christmas story.

We are so honored to be invited to share in the life of this wonderful community and anxiously await the time when we can return.

Sharing time with our Christian friends is a gift that we treasure. Thanks Pythian! ❄️



August Birthdays

Ginny Sorenson

Carlos Jr Ortega

James Ekeya

Savahna Martin

Jenna Harris

Therese Ford

Doris Marshall

Rebecca Pond

Brian Reigel

Candice McIlvain

Sheena Contreras

Kathryn Peck

Susan Jeffries

Stephanie Holtman

John Kirkpatrick

Heidi Femling

Elizabeth Owen

Cecille Hill

William Owen

Kathleen Highley

Rose Trotter

Kyle Rush

Beverly Thomas

Emily Maaske

Aidric Newman

James Jeffries

Lynn Dineen

Ginabella Sorenson

Nancy Rasmussen

Eri Duarte

Susan Prescott

William Lanegan

Juanita Page

Jordan Harris

Getting to Know our Neighbors

by Mary Lookingbill, Care Team

"We are so so thankful for the masks, and the residents as well! More and more of them are wearing masks and this is keeping us safer, I know it! We are deeply touched by all the kindness of this community, and the residents are as well. - Lori"

The Knights of Pythias Retirement Center (formerly known as the Pythian Home) has become part of First Church's COVID response. Here are some great things to know about this independent living facility.

It is supported as a nonprofit by the Knights of Pythias (not with the Catholic Church). The Knights of Pythias is a fraternal organization established in 1864. Their principles are friendship, charity, and benevolence.

The original building was built in 1923 to provide nursing care for their members. An orphanage was built next door in but was shuttered in the 1960's.

In 1946 the Vancouver Methodist Church (now known as First United Methodist Church) purchased 10 lots from the Pythian Home to be part of our current church sight.

In 1980 a new addition for the Pythian was built. It provided 166 independent living apartments

ranging from a studio apartment to a 2 bedroom. Seniors or those with disabilities are eligible to live there. Small pets are allowed. 50% of the units are subsidized by the Housing of Urban Development (HUD). If one qualifies for this subsidy, their rent equals 30% of their gross annual income.



Lori Staff

Lori, the residence's housing manager focuses on quality of life for the tenants. In addition to an optional noon meal, there are scheduled activities, day trips, holiday celebrations and other community events. Their most senior resident just celebrated his 100th birthday and one of the tenants has lived there for over 20 years!

Since the end of May, First Church has been providing the Pythian residents a delivery of "essentials"- milk, eggs, bread, and fresh fruit. The residents are incredibly grateful and look forward to this healthy food option through August. ✨

August Anniversaries

Kuhn, Glenn & Marty

Delisle, Jared & Emily

Young, Brian & Catherine

Manney, Paul & Sally

Semf, Bob & Wright, Kathy

Wisti, John & Joan

Shaw, Jon & Kate

Gerke, Curtis & Gayle

McKibben, Wilson & Karlene

Page, Gordon & Juanita

Lucas, Bob & Kay

Kays, Noah & Becca

Cavett, Gary & Marion

Peck, Robb & Mary

Moore, Ken & Gayle



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

Conversations & Community

This fall, please consider joining with others in a time of Conversation and Community. Though we don't know when we will back together in the building we can continue to seek fellowship in our unique ways. Specific details will be coming.

September

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo. Available in print or by Kindle. Hosted by Mary Lookingbill, join with others as she explores the topic of racism in America. This three-week ZOOM gathering will challenge us to look at our beliefs and our world in new ways.

October

The Walk Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life by Adam Hamilton. Pastor Bruce will base his sermon series on these spiritual practices which are support our membership vows as United Methodists. In addition to his preaching, a small group ZOOM will be available.

November

Be the Bridge Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation by Latasha Morrison. Pastor Jim McGinnis will explore this Bible study which focuses on our racial disunity and the Christian response.

SUNDAYS

Online Worship Service - 10 a.m.
Youth Sunday School online - 11 a.m.

TUESDAYS

Facebook Live Devotional - 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAYS

M.S. Youth Group online - 1 p.m.
H.S. Youth Group online - 3 p.m.
Church Fellowship online - 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAYS

Facebook Live Devotional - 10 a.m.

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
Trustees Chair | Thomas Musser