



A United Church of Christ/
United Methodist Church
& a LGBTQIA
Welcoming Congregation

UCUP

June Newsletter 2020

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.



BEEP, HONK, YELL & WAVE!



IT'S A GRADUATION PARADE IN HONOR OF
Addy Harding

GRADUATING FROM CURTIS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL & TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SATURDAY | JUNE 6, 2020 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

The McQuillan-Harding Residence | 3336 Greenwood Ave W. | University Place, WA
Drive by to show your love and support! Enjoy curbside treats and favors!

Adrienne Harding is graduating from Curtis Senior High School on June 5th and Tacoma Community College on June 20th. While earning her Associate's Transfer degree, she focused on pre-nursing classes. Addy will be attending Pacific Lutheran University in the fall to study nursing.

National Day of Mourning and Lament for 100,000 deaths related to COVID-19

Monday June 1st - 6:00pm UCUP church parking lot

Please find information on this event on page 3

Did you miss a worship?



If you missed worship in the past 6 weeks, or you want to listen to any portion again, you can still find the music, liturgy, and sermon recordings on our website. Go to UCUP.org The most recent worship service can be found by clicking the home slider. For older previous worship services, click on the sermon link. YouTube links are available for the past 6 weeks. If you think your friends or family would like to check out our church, this is a great way to introduce them to UCUP. Thank you to all of our recording contributors - musicians (the Small Family Singers, AJ, Don, Stuart, Neva & Wes, and Jeff), our liturgists, and to our producers - (Tom, Don, Kelly, and Neva) for their valiant efforts.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

REIMAGINING AND REBUILDING

Summer is nearly upon us, and we are still living under the uncertainties and limitations of the COVID-19 virus. Washington Governor Jay Inslee has just issued updated guidelines for church gatherings, but as I write this message, Pierce County is still in Phase 1 of the virus response, with shelter-at-home orders remaining in place. The leaders in the conference offices of both the United Methodist Church and United Church of Christ are urging continued caution as we consider our plans for reopening.

Working under the guidance of the board, I have formed an ad hoc committee of our church leaders to review and discuss the details of a phased reopening for our church. The Greater Northwest Area office of the United Methodist Church has published a comprehensive set of requirements and recommendations for local churches to follow as we step through this process. We have also received helpful guidance from the U.C.C. Look for more information and details in the coming weeks as we complete our plan.



The title of the Methodist guidebook is, "Reimagining Life Together." The theme of "reimagining" is helpful as we consider how we can continue to be church in the era of COVID-19. Here's an excerpt from the guidebook's introduction:

As we contemplate coming out of the time of "stay at home" and isolation we are entering a world none of us could have imagined. We must take this opportunity to rethink what it means to be the followers of Christ, to be those on the Way. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community (from Life Together).

As we reenter life together, we must allow for our dream or memory of community to fade to make room for love to emerge in new and different ways. The task we have is to reimagine church and all we are and do so that we can be what God dreams us to be. After all, church isn't a building; it isn't doors or a steeple. Church is people in ministry and service. If we can't do this ministry in the ways we have in the past, we will find new ways to do it. We will find a way. Our imaginations can show us what is possible.

God doesn't need our worship; God wants our worshipful lives. God doesn't need our memories of community; God wants us to reimagine how we love and thereby create community. Our challenge is to love in new and innovative ways as we reimagine what church is, what community is, in this new reality.

How do you reimagine United Church in University Place? In the next couple of weeks we'll be sending out a short survey to invite you to consider this and other questions that will inform our reopening plan. We recognize that the practices of our local church will be impacted in large ways and small for at least the next year. We are fortunate to be a congregation that is both creative and resilient in how we approach the coming months. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, your creativity, and your patience as we REIMAGINE our life together in this church community.

Marilyn Thompson,
President

From Our Pastor

National Day of Mourning and Lament for 100,000 deaths related to COVID-19

Monday June 1st - 6:00pm UCUP church parking lot

This week the United States surpassed the grim mark of 100,000 deaths due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The **National Council of Churches** and **Sojourners**, along with other national partners, including **Faith Action Network**, are calling on people from all faith traditions to transcend our divisions by lamenting, mourning, and honoring the loss of our brothers and sisters across the nation due to COVID-19; to acknowledge the unequal suffering of older people and people of color; to pray together for the healing of the nation; and to recommit ourselves to the difficult work ahead.

As a church we will join in this invitation during our Pentecost worship by offering a prayer of lament for those who have died. On **Monday, June 1st, from 6:00-6:15pm**, we will gather in the parking to walk the winding path that will hold over 100 symbolic LED tea lights, in a visual ceremony in memory of the loved ones lost to COVID-19. Or simply drive to the church, but stay in your car at a safe distance, to be in solidarity to grieve and honor those who have died from COVID-19. Please be mindful that the church **will NOT be open** for use for restrooms. We will maintain safe physical distancing of at least 6 feet, and masks are recommended.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the Episcopal church offered these words, "Let this tragic moment not pass without us honoring the many among us who have lost their lives or lost their loved ones and commanding them and ourselves to God's love and peace."

From Jim Wallis of Sojourners: "*The grim milestone of 100,000 dead Americans coincides with a time that is sacred to all three Abrahamic faiths. Muslims have just finished celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the end of Ramadan; Jews will celebrate the feast of Shavuot May 28-30; and Christians will celebrate Pentecost on May 31. It seems appropriate that people in churches, synagogues and mosques recognize this moment and not let it pass without us honoring those who have lost their lives and their families. This is a time of lamenting and mourning, and it's a time to come together.*"

"A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit Among the People of God."

*God of all power and love, we give thanks for your unfailing presence and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss.
Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.
Revive us to live as Christ's body in the world:
a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors,
bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit.
Wherever and however we gather, unite us in common prayer and send us in common
mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.*



Historian and author Diana Butler Bass offers these thoughts in her Pentecost Sermon. These are timely words.

Pentecost is the noisiest of all Christian holy days—a party, the “birthday of the church”. We hear rushing wind, tongues of fire, and cacophonous crowds. We re-enact Acts 2 in multiple languages, reminding us that God sent humankind a gift—the spirit with its promise of peace and portents of salvus for the healing of the earth. But this week, names:

A man, panting, running, and fighting for his life.
A man crying out, “I can’t breathe; I can’t breathe...” and, then, no breath.
A thousand names in print takes our breath away.
100,000 stopped breathing.
A celebration, a birthday? No thank you.

I feel like we are being strangled, the life choked from us—disbelief, sorrow, fear, rage. Violence in the streets, jails, and cages at our border, targeting black and brown men, women, and children; a virus stalking us all, turning familiar comforts into threats. We are hunted and haunted by guns and germs, prejudice and plague. And the victims mount. Each with a name, some known only to God. From a single name to the many to myriads, this unholy litany of grief. 3

Pentecost is no party this year. Indeed, this feast falls on the eve of a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, June 1st. Silence, more than shouting this year. Mourning, not celebration.

Of all the Pentecost texts, this alternative offered by the lectionary, a single verse—1 Corinthians 12:13—spoke most deeply my heart: *For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

Paul speaks about what it means to be baptized and to live in the Spirit. We are in one Spirit, with one body, he insists. We all drink the same Spirit. This echoes Galatians 3:27-28:

“As many of you are were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female: for you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 3:27-28 has long been one of my favorite bits of Paul. The words have been referred to as Paul's finest writing, his best religious vision and poetry, and the lens through which the whole of Pauline theology should be read. For centuries, Christians have drawn inspiration from them for causes of justice including abolition, economic reform, and women's rights. Galatians 3:28 is Paul's rallying cry to overcome divisions of race, class, and gender, poetically and theologically interwoven with baptism, proclaiming justice as heart of life in Christ.

Like most readers, I have attributed their lyrical and political power to Paul. However, New Testament scholar Stephen Patterson has recently offered a far more provocative understanding of the origin of these words in his book *The Forgotten Creed: Christianity's Original Struggle against Bigotry, Slavery, and Sexism*. Paul, he insists, was not their author. Paul was quoting them from an older source. With close historical detail, reconstructing and comparing texts, Patterson argues that these words were the very first Christian creed. Paul was quoting an ancient liturgy dating from the earliest years of the Jesus movement, recited by the first baptized, a *credo* that went something like this:

For you are all children of God in the Spirit. There is no Jew or Greek, There is no slave or free, There is no male and female; For you are all one in the Spirit.

Patterson goes on to say: “If you are interested in the origins of Christianity, in those first 10-20 years when the memory of Jesus was still fresh, before Paul came along and made his distinctive impact on the Jesus movement... In the earliest years of the Jesus movement it was repeated again and again by people who were baptized as followers of Jesus.”

And he continues, pointing out that this forgotten creed:...is a statement of convictions of the Jesus people. It is not a statement about God, or about the mysteries of Christ. It is about people and who they are, really. In baptism, they were committed to giving up old identities falsely acquired on the basis of baseless assumptions—Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—and declared themselves to be children of God.

Of course, it is our “baseless assumptions” that made this week, these weeks, all the sorrows of human history, so unbearable. We assume we are better because, as our own president recently said, that “good bloodlines” make some smarter, more deserving. That breeding and wealth and blood entail status, naming some as superior and consigning others to less-than, less than privileged, less than human. This is the baseless assumption of Cain, that his offering was better than his brother's, that he deserved more than Abel. Our baseless assumptions have dogged us since exile from Eden, we have almost forgotten how baseless they are.

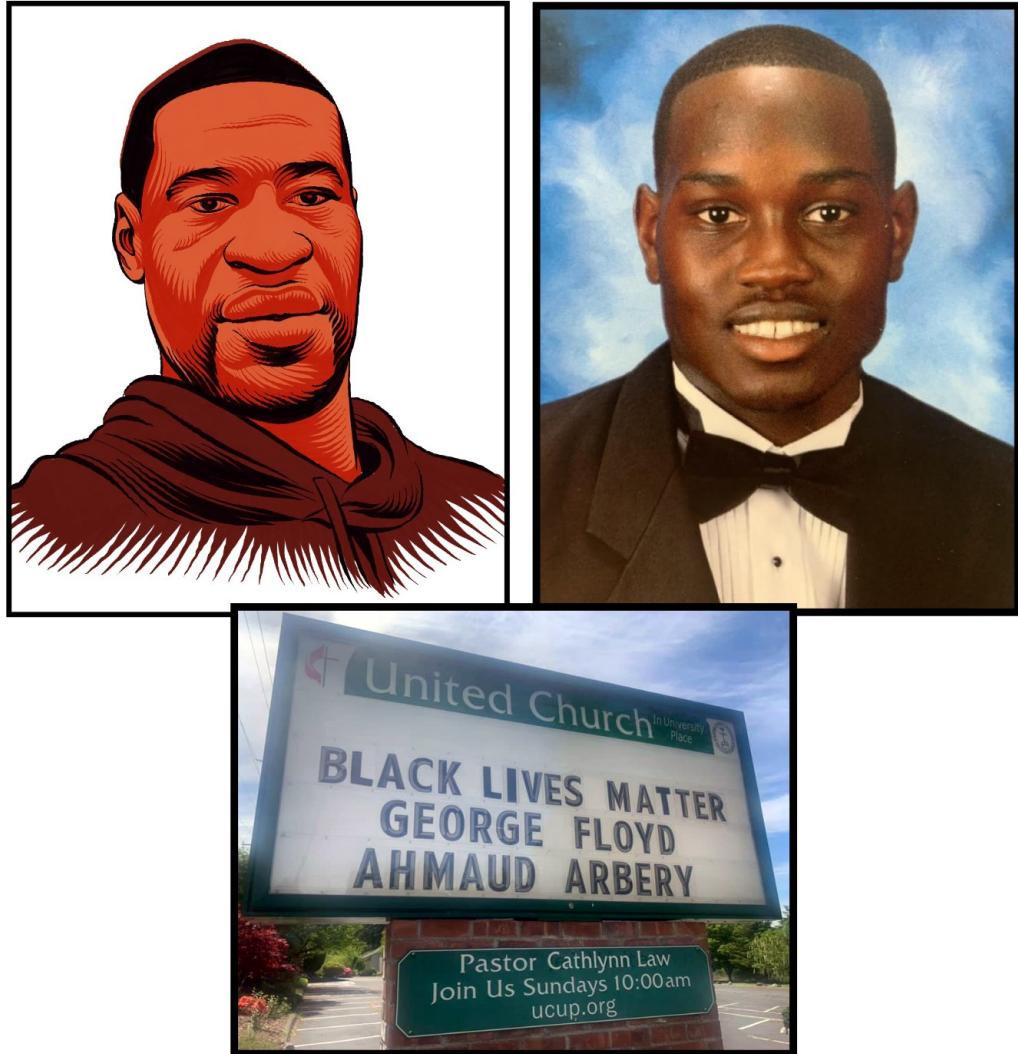
Pentecost burns away those baseless assumptions in a fire from heaven. The Spirit incinerates our old identities—herited status from our ancestors, our senses of innate superiority or inferiority, our privilege or poverty, freedom or bondage, the roles assigned to us by biology. Yet, this baptism leaves us not as ash. For the baptism of fire is followed by the more mundane one, the baptism of water. Fire is quickly followed by the flow, the pouring out of Spirit, the living water. We are washed, refreshed, and remade. We drink of one Spirit and find a new identity: Child of God.

WE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD

We are named, each with our individual names, and with that familial name: Child of God. We have names. We share a name. We are fully one with each other. The ancient baptismal creed marked that new identity as neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. As Patterson points out, it proclaimed "a world in which...female slaves could be leaders of free men, where foreigners and native born stood with equal power and equal rights. 'You are all one' signifies *solidarity*."

Our names are our individual beauty, uniqueness. And *our Name* is our solidarity. Pentecost this year is not as much party as protest. To name is to mourn the loss of individuals with gifts and loves. But Pentecost calls us to take another step beyond our personal laments and to be found together in a shared name – child of God. In this relation, Pentecost emerges as human solidarity. We stand together, in the same family, the same name, with and for and (even) as victims of the violence sadly endemic in this broken world. We are all Ahmaud, we are all George, we are all the thousand, we all the 100,000. What happens to one, happens to us all. We are not separate, not really. The fire of God has burned into the world, reducing to ash all division. A new human family has been born: sons and daughters dare to prophesy; old and young dream dreams; and slaves, men and women alike, announce God's justice in the world. You are *all* children of God.

May we live in the reality of Pentecost. Even now. Especially now, children of God.

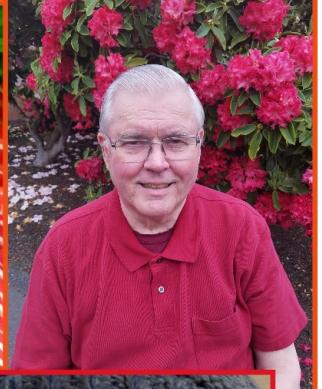
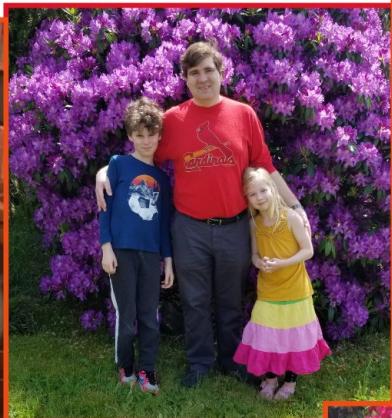


A Prayer for Pentecost:

*Spirit of truth: guide us into all the truth;
consume the lies that shroud the world in hate;
pray in us with sighs too deep for words;
and let the victim's voice ring out with hope for a new world;
through Jesus Christ, who goes to the right hand of God. Amen.*

(from Steven Shakespeare, Prayers for an Inclusive Church)

PENTECOST SPIRIT





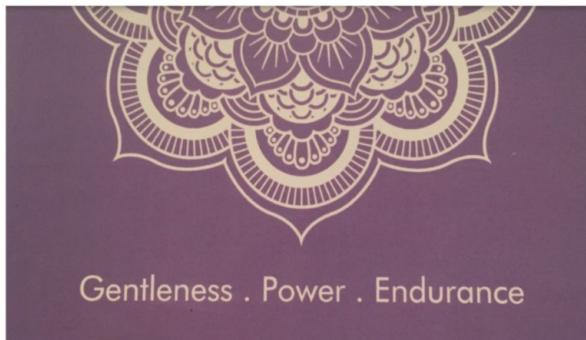
FREE FACE MASKS AVAILABLE

Several UCUP members have been sewing cloth face masks for members and friends of the church. Masks are available in both child and adult sizes. If you need a mask, please send an email to the church office, or contact Marilyn Thompson.

Thanks to Cathi Cline, Dorothy McCuistion, and Marilyn Thompson for sewing the masks.

June YOGA

From your home, office or outdoor space.
40-minute Zoom gathering



Wednesdays

2:00 to 2:40 p.m.

Thursdays

6:30 to 7:10 p.m.

Contact Judy Theirry by phone/text at
240-994-8572

or email jthierry84@gmail.com
for a zoom link



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COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new coronavirus.

It can cause mild illness, like a cold, or severe illness, like pneumonia.
No treatment or vaccine exists.

Symptoms



If you have these symptoms, stay home and call your healthcare provider.

At high risk for severe illness



Prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Learn more and stay updated at tpchd.org/coronavirus.

Protect your health.



Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Scrub for 20 seconds.



Cover your coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue or your elbow.



Don't touch your face or cloth mask with unwashed hands. Wash your hands first.



Avoid contact with sick people. When you're sick, stay home and away from others.



Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

No matter who you are,
Or where you are on life's journey, **you're**
Welcome here.



Calling all UCUP members all ages!

**WANT TO WRITE A PERSONAL NOTE
ENCOURAGING A WOMAN TO VOTE?**

Contact Judy Thierry 240-994-8572 or Dorothy McCuiston dorothymcc@nventure.com if you'd like 1-10 cards to complete. We'll collect them at the end of June and return them to MomsRising.org for mailing.

Peace & Justice committee

**FAITH
ACTION
NETWORK**

A Partnership for the Common Good

On June 7, at 3:00 PM, Faith Action Network is hosting its spring summit for the Western Washington region (it might only be the Puget Sound region, as they have a separate Vancouver region). It will be held on Zoom, and I have already registered. Registration for the event is free, and everyone is welcome. You may find out more about registering by going to fanwa.org or by phoning me.

Spring summits are held each year for the purpose of proposing and discussing ideas for the next legislative session as well as to celebrate the victories from the past year in the legislature. We members of FAN have had a lot to celebrate these past two years, so this may take some significant time, but we still have much work to do. Addressing income inequality, racism, our legal system, and poverty and homelessness requires more work. We also have to guard against backsliding as a result of the pandemic. Please consider attending and sharing your ideas.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Brown

JOYS & CONCERNS

We want to send our condolences to Angie Wolle's sister Starr, to Angie and Pastor Cathy, on the death of Starr's husband, Charles who passed away on May 23nd. The four of them have shared a house for the last 4+ years.

CONGRATULATIONS to Addy Harding! She's graduating from Curtis High School this month. She will be attending PLU this fall.

This Social Distancing makes it harder to keep in touch with everyone, but I would encourage you, if possible, to join one of the Zoom meetings – you'll learn all kinds of information...last Wednesday I learned that Nancy Davis' 23 year-old grandson, Rhys can speak 3 languages, English, Spanish and Hebrew AND now he's learning Korean! I also learned that this plant, horse tail, that we call a weed, has been around since the age of the dinosaurs! It's good to visit, share, and keep in touch. If you can't join a Zoom meeting (or even if you can) reach out via the phone or a note to someone in the congregation that you've been missing...and send Mary Jones a birthday card, she's going to be 97 on the 9th.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS



- 1-RUTH CANNON
- 2-BEN SMALL
- 3-WES BERRY - 10
- 9-MARY JONES
- 18-SHIRLEY PAULSON
- 22-FRAN CASH
- DON MORGAN
- KAY SHABEN
- 24-LAURA GIDDINGS
- 30-CINDI BODIE
- HARRY GARRISON



JOIN US!
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10AM
FOR OUR LIVE ZOOM WORSHIP
SERVICE!

