



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

UCUP

September Newsletter 2020

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

HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST IBRAM X. KENDI



BOOK STUDY WEDNESDAY NIGHTS September 9, 16, 23, 30 6-7:30pm

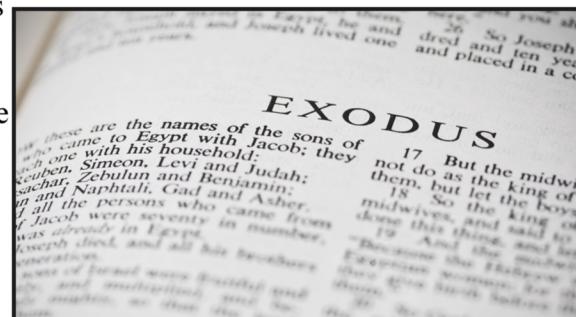
Over 30 people participated in a four-week study using Robin Diangelo's book White Fragility: Why it's so hard for White People to Talk About Racism. With the most recent events in Kenosha, WI, it is clear that we need to continue this

important deeper personal and communal work. Join Nora de Sandoval, presenter, and Angie Wolle, convener for four Wednesday nights in September as we read through Ibram X. Kendi's book, How to be an Antiracist. We will be welcoming a few neighborhood guests to our study on zoom as well. They just happened to drive by our reader board advertising the class, or were invited by friends through word of mouth. This issue clearly goes beyond our church walls and is touching a core place in people's lives. We anticipate you will be able to attend all four weeks of the class. Please email Pastor Cathy to let us know you are interested and so we can send the zoom link to you.

WORSHIP in SEPTEMBER- NOVEMBER: *Journeying through the Wilderness (a pandemic parallel)*

During July and August we witnessed family dysfunction, jealousy, rivalry, favoritism, manipulation, and reconciliation a few times over as recorded in the book of Genesis. We closed the book of Genesis with a stellar reading from Genesis 41-50 divided amongst a "baker's dozen" of liturgists in the congregation. It was a risk to have so many readers in separate households with all the potential glitches on zoom. Someone said, "Honestly, I didn't think it would work... but it did, it really did. I thought of people sitting around fires, telling this story aloud before any of it was written down... and how the more things change the more they stay the same. It's an electronic fire, and we can't see or smell each other, but here we are again with this old story." What a lovely reflection.

We now turn the page to the next book of the Bible as we journey through the wilderness with the people of God as recorded in the book of Exodus. Here is the coming line up.



- 8/30 Exodus 1. Midwifery civil disobedience of Shiprah & Puah preceding the birth of Moses
- 9/6 Exodus 3. Moses turns aside in beholding the Burning Bush and asks God's name.
"I am who I am". Communion Sunday - bring your elements to your worship space.
- 9/13 Exodus 14. An oppressed people defy Pharaoh and cross the Red Sea
- 9/20 Exodus 16. Manna in the Wilderness
- 9/27 Exodus 17. Water from a Rock
- 10/4 World Communion Sunday
- 10/11 Virtual Blessing of the Animals (start sending Pastor Cathy photos of your animals)
- 10/18- 11/22 Stewardship and Celebrating our 50th Anniversary (more details to come)
- 11/1 All Saints Day

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I have always loved this time of year and the ritual of going back to school and returning to a more regular schedule of work and daily routines. Long after I was no longer a student, I still felt the urge to find something new to wear, straighten up my desk at work, and replenish office supplies. Now, even in retirement, I enjoy a pass through the school supply aisle at the store. As we collected school supplies for the Family Housing Network, I was delighted to have a reason to shop that aisle and buy several boxes of crayons!! And yet, as with just about everything else in our lives, this special "back to school" time is altered this year. Kids still need supplies for their remote studies, but it's not the same, is it? It feels like we're packing a backpack, with nowhere to go.

As most of you know, Don and I spend a lot of time on the hiking trails, so packing a backpack is a very familiar undertaking. Filling the pack with all the essentials, planning for lunch and snacks, and reviewing the guidebooks and maps are all part of the happy anticipation of a new adventure. I can tell you, it's extremely disappointing to complete all of these preparations, to be packed and ready to go, only to have the trip cancelled by weather, illness, or any other circumstance. It's happened, and the carefully assembled backpack sits at the top of the stair, a tangible symbol of disappointment and lost opportunity.

In my experience, those cancelled hiking trips have only represented a day or two of adventure cut short. I can only imagine the disappointment and loss that students feel as they grapple with the suspension of in-person learning and return to their computer screens for remote instruction. We all feel the disappointment and disruption of interrupted work and cancelled programs, social gatherings, and church. Many are facing the loss of jobs and uncertain income.

It's hard -- very hard, but hope lives in the experiences of our church community over these past six months. We miss worship in our beautiful sanctuary, we miss the live music, we miss the in-person fellowship, and we miss the hugs. And yet, who could have predicted the warmth of sharing and caring that is taking place on our virtual platforms? We continue to gather every Sunday for worship, we are uplifted by lovely music and photos, we reach out to one another through prayer, and we learn through thoughtful scripture readings, sermons, and study. There's no substitute for the hugs and the in-person exchanges of smiles, but we have found a depth of caring and expression of love that sustains us. Love -- God's love -- will always find a way.

So keep those backpacks ready, at the top of the stair, and we'll travel together through this strange and unpredictable time.

With Hope and Love,

Marilyn Thompson,
President



From Our Pastor

Readerboard Evangelism

This pandemic has so many twists and turns. We've always known that personal word of mouth is our best evangelism tool for inviting people to our church. But who knew that our Reader Board and our Facebook page would continue to go viral with our messages to encourage people, in a fun way, to do their part to tamp down this pandemic.

Joyce Demarest reminded me that a well known Curtis Jr. High teacher would sometimes call and talk to Rev. Pierce Johnson in the 1970's about what was on the sign. The teacher thought it was great to have something on the sign that would/should make people think. We have kept up the tradition.

I was contacted Wednesday morning via our Facebook page to do an interview with Q13 news a little later in the day. Our church was highlighted in the 4pm AND the 5pm news with an almost 3-minute clip of doing our part to keep the pandemic at bay. It was great to hear a few responses from our neighbors. Here's the print version of the article.

UNIVERSITY PLACE, Wash. - A church just outside of Tacoma wants to know if people are, "practicing safe six." Six feet of social distancing that is. The United Church in University Place uses its outdoor readerboard to remind people to keep their distance and wear a mask to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

There is a lot of traffic and foot traffic right in front of the readerboard. Law said the congregation thought it would be a simple yet effective way to share messages about coronavirus prevention. "Have fun with our neighborhood, as well as getting those important messages across," said Pastor Cathlynn.

Several people were outdoors, Wednesday, walking, running and riding bikes near the church. "Everybody's friendly. There's a guy jogging down here. Everybody is walking their dogs," said James Floss, a neighbor walking his dog.

The message on the readerboard reads, "Thou shalt not COVID thy neighbor's life. Wear thy mask."

Neighbors said they pass the UCUP church sign every day and some think it brings a light-hearted message to these uncertain times.

"I think it's great. It inspires us," said Floss.

"They've had interesting stuff for years. They always try to make it relevant to what's going on," said neighbor Samuel Robinson. "I think it's good to take things seriously, but lighten up about it a bit. I think people respond to that better."

Law said the board has been a fun way to share messaging about safe and healthy practices beyond the people in the congregation. Throughout the pandemic, the church has been posting several fun quotes about COVID-19 on the board and sharing on social media. Some messages were considered a little risqué by people in the area.

"'Practicing safe six? Masking for a friend.' So, a double entendre, a little wordplay there," said Law, explaining one of the quotes on the sign.

The Tacoma Pierce County Health Department said the board and its message is the kind of awareness it would like to see in more communities. The office has been sharing a couple of the church's posts on social media, gaining several hundreds of likes.

"While we do not want the virus to go viral, it's okay for our reader board to go viral," said Law.

As the church prepares for another fun message, Law said she hopes those passing by will take heed to the meaning behind the words. "We all need to do our part to keep the pandemic at bay," said Law. "It's part of the greater common good for our public health."

Officials at the health department said they are looking for more community partners to share messages on coronavirus prevention. The department created a trusted messenger campaign and is encouraging the public to get involved.

"We're working with respected people and organizations in Pierce County who want to have some fun on social media amplifying our posts. We've had everyone from politicians to coaches to the Tacoma Rainiers join us," said Dale Phelps, a communications specialist for the health department.

Those who would like to learn more about the campaign send an email to communications@tpchd.org.



FORUM ON “THE PRISON WITHIN”

Sunday, September 13th - 11:30am following worship on zoom



One of our newer members, Anthea Karanasos is recommending a very timely and relevant call-to-action film titled The Prison Within, just released on August 25th. The Prison Within is the 2020 recipient of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival's Social Justice Award for Documentary Film and an Official Selection at several 2020 film festivals including Harlem International Film Festival, American Black Film Festival, Act Human Rights Film Festival, and more. Anthea's friend Katherin Hervey is the writer/director/producer and asked Anthea to serve in a consultant role based on Anthea's college research in the fields of Prison Industrial Complex and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Katherin, and others, will join us on zoom, following worship, to talk about the documentary and field any questions. What a fantastic opportunity this is. You may even want to invite your friends. Make sure to watch the film.

Here is a description from Katherin Hervey: Calls for police reform grow louder and political divisions are growing stronger. "The Prison Within" offers a powerful and thoughtful alternative to our current systems of justice. Through the crushing stories of survivors of violent crimes and men incarcerated for murder, viewers witness redemption and healing inside San Quentin prison. "The Prison Within" takes viewers on a profound exploration of the unmet needs of victims, the vulnerable, and the marginalized within our criminal justice system. The film expands on the inherent injustices of the racially-charged United States legislations that Ava DuVernay's groundbreaking "13th" laid bare for global audiences. This film goes beyond why and how the system is inadequate, deftly exposing the torment experienced by people on both sides of prison walls. Through personal stories illustrative of the systemic injustices that perpetuate cycles of violence and trauma, this film lays a path to heal and reconcile our notions of justice.

Please watch this important film prior to the forum with the writer/director/producer Katherin Hervey. \$5 to rent. \$13 to purchase. **LINK TO FILM:** <http://ow.ly/WdDy50B8zvh>



Here is a description from the website: <https://theprisonwithin.org/>

Prisoners incarcerated for murder inside San Quentin Prison transcend the barriers of the punitive prison system by working with victims of violent crime to unearth the root cause of their own violence. Each character undergoes a radical transformation revealing how every human being, on both sides of the wall, can break out of their own personal prisons to stop the cycle of violence.

The Prison Within exposes the devastating impact untreated trauma has on individuals and communities through the powerful stories of survivors of violent crimes and prisoners incarcerated for murder in San Quentin prison. The prisoners and survivors come together and participate in the Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG)—an innovative restorative justice program enabling prisoners to discover how the trauma they've experienced contributed to their criminality and to understand the impact their crimes have on their victims. Together, the prisoners and survivors confront and expose the pain, shame, and rage caused by the extreme trauma they've experienced throughout their lives.

We are asking the audience to set aside what they think they know about incarcerated people. Most people in prison are first a victim. Anger and violence stems from untreated trauma. When our justice system excludes the notion of rehabilitation, it necessarily perpetuates the cycle of violence by failing to address trauma. And the fallout from untreated trauma ultimately affects the entire community. This film serves as an example of how all people can change, how we can evolve as a community, and the power of connecting to the humanity in others, even those who have committed harm.

The Prison Within is narrated by Hill Harper (The Good Doctor, Homeland, CSI:NY, Covert Affairs) and author of Letters to an Incarcerated Brother, which speaks to the current mass incarceration crisis. Director Katherin Hervey, a former Los Angeles Public Defender and volunteer prison college instructor, is the first filmmaker to gain access to chronicle these intimate and revealing sessions inside San Quentin Prison.

Join us for a live virtual discussion with the filmmakers of the award-winning documentary

THE PRISON WITHIN

Sunday, Sept 13th @ 11:30am

Available to rent / buy now on
Amazon, iTunes, YouTube, GooglePlay

DIRECTOR / PRODUCER
Katherin Hervey

PRODUCER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Erin Kenway

** featuring a special Q & A with documentary subjects **

TROY WILLIAMS

MICHAEL NELSON

SAM JOHNSON, SR.

JOYS & CONCERNS

CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES to Cecelia Schilling and Addison Sims, married August 6th in her parents backyard....to Laura Balcom who has a new job.

Our condolences to Elizabeth Scherman on the death of her brother Bing, who died recently from a brain tumor...please keep her and her family in your prayers...and continue remembering Pastor Cathy and Angie Wolle (Cathy's oldest brother died last month) and Kathi Hiyane-Brown and Robert Brown and all of us at United Church on the loss of George (Papa) on August 2nd.

Please include in your prayers Emma Berry and her Mom, Neva Laurie-Berry, both recovering from a virus (NOT COVID-19)...all teachers and students as a new and different kind of school year starts...Kathleen Kenna and Hadi Dadashian and Kim and all those suffering from the bad air, caused by fires, in California.

WELCOME HOME, AJ! Our thanks to your father (who came all the way from Kansas) for helping you to move back. We're very thankful that United Church will be a part of your 'new chapter'.....and WELCOME to Beth Tanner! Beth is new to the area and to UCUP's ZOOM services...and maybe to the choir when they are allowed to gather and sing again.

Thank you Pastor Cathy for holding us together in this strange time...to you and the crew, that changes from week to week, that put the Sunday ZOOM service together – including the 'baker's dozen' that read the scripture on the 23rd...Thank you to all that say 'yes' when Pastor Cathy asks for your help.

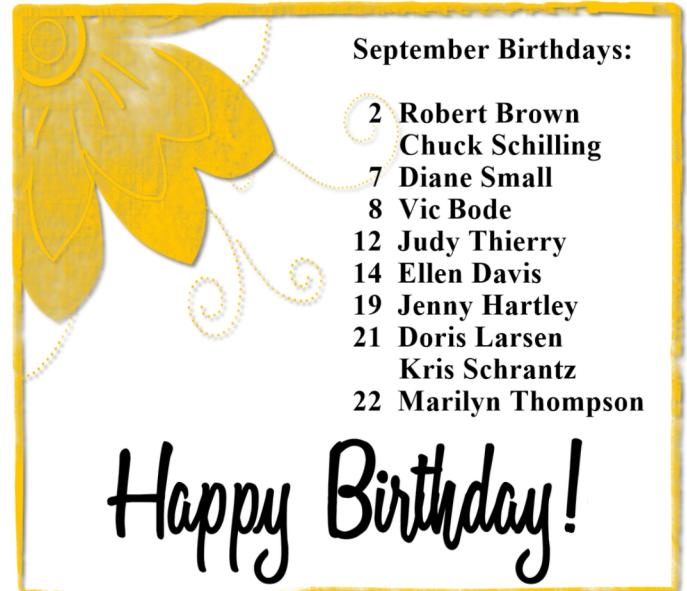
Remember, reach out to those that can't get out at all or someone you haven't seen or heard from for awhile, wash your hands often and WEAR YOUR MASK! Thank you, Allison, for the prayer for the masks and mask makers.



Announcing Mr. and Mrs. Sims!

Cecelia and Addison were married in a small ceremony with family on August 5th, 2020. They are both thrilled to have jobs in the Franklin Pierce School District as elementary school teachers starting this fall; Addison will teach 2nd grade and Cecelia will teach Kindergarten.

Well-wishes are the best gift; however, if you wish to send an item they are registered at:
<https://www.amazon.com/wedding/share/sims>.





Peace and Justice continues our work in new ways during the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who donated school supplies to Family Housing Network families in August. Considering that we're not physically coming to church, we gathered a generous collection of paper, pens, crayons, backpacks and many other items kids need to start the school year. A special thank you to Kay Shaben for the 24 backpacks and Judy Thierry for delivering all of our donations to FHN.

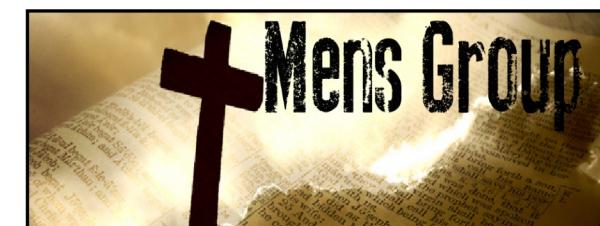
With the need for basics such as food increasing, in August we gave additional benevolence gifts to the Emergency Food Network and My Sister's Pantry (\$150 each).



Some organizations, like EFN, are short of volunteers as their usual cohort of seniors are more likely to be staying home. If you are able, or you know of someone able to perform volunteer work, contact EFN or your favorite charity to see how you can help.

The Pierce County non-profits we support are all adapting to the new way of doing things. Check out their websites to see what they are doing from virtual fund raisers to Zoom programs. Here are examples of ways to help without leaving home: AID Northwest, which serves immigrant detainees, has created an art bank to collect arts and crafts supplies for those being detained. It's been approved by ICE officials and has been very popular with detainees. Supplies are mailed to AID Northwest and then delivered to the detention center. L'Arche has needs for folks willing to make phone calls or video visits with their core members--or you can pay for a meal from Gallucci's to give a home's cooks a night off. You don't have to feel helpless--you can help!

Please remember that we have our ongoing collection of primarily single-serving food items for My Sister's Pantry. Drop your donations in the box by the church front door. Thanks to Kay Shaben for delivering our donations regularly.



Starting September 15th, the Men's Discussion Group will begin meeting by Zoom on the *third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 - 8pm*. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Davis.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

It's quick and easy.
It's safe and secure.
There's still time.

EVERYONE COUNTS

Visit <https://2020census.gov>

**United States
Census
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Fourth Sunday Forum: The Collision of Climate Change and Covid September 27th

The Greening Activity Group has been largely silent since spring. However, we're halfway through summer, so it's about when the times, they are a-changin'.

On September 27th, Greening plans on hosting a Fourth Sunday Forum with Doctor Barak Gale. Now living rather locally, he graduated from MIT, where he studied thermodynamics. He also is a past Board President of the Washington Wilderness Coalition. Subjects we expect him to discuss include changes in headgear, changes in climate, some images from the Mountaineers, talk about thermodynamic engineering, statistical curves of Covid-19 and (my own favorite: IPCC [UN global-warming] scenarios, and some "realistic strategies to flatten the curves."

By the end of September, we will probably have more questions to ask, as we will have witnessed the fires in California and the hurricane and tidal surge from Down South.

We are really glad to have heard about Dr Gale through the Lions Club, and even more glad he has volunteered to share some time with us.

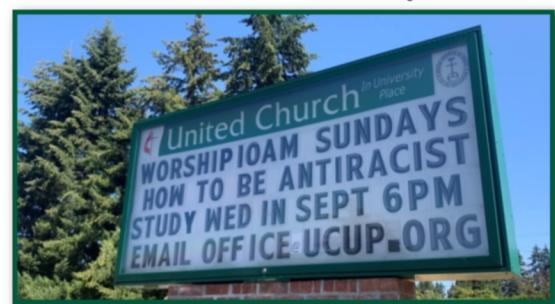
Submitted by Roger T. Martin

Zoom Sunday School!



Physically apart but together with love!
Addy and Judy virtually teaching Jeremiah, Sophie and Emma

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



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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

UNITED CHURCH IN UNIVERSITY PLACE
3912 GRANDVIEW DRIVE WEST
UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA. 98466

Vol. 41 No. 9

September 1, 2020

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