



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

UCUP

2021

February Newsletter

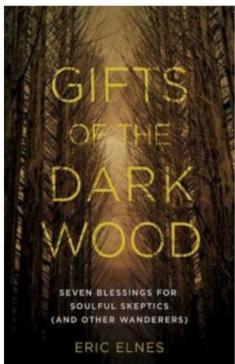
HELP
THANKS
WOW
THE THREE
ESSENTIAL PRAYERS
ANNE
LAMOTT

HELP, THANKS, WOW! Three week worship series January 31-February 14

The next three weeks we will explore three essential prayers contemporary spiritual writer, Anne Lamott, explores in a book she wrote called **“Help, Thanks, Wow!”** Lamott suggests that even if we surrender it all to the Creator, we might still be "crabby optimists" who are fed up and appalled by the injustices and tragedies in our lives and in our times **and yet** are not willing to give up our reliance upon divine grace.

"I've heard people say that God is the gift of desperation, and there's a lot to be said for having really reached a bottom where you've run out of good ideas, or plans for everybody else's behavior; or how to save and fix and rescue; or just get out of a huge mess, possibly of your own creation. And when you're done, you may take a long, quavering breath and say, 'Help.' Help is the hardest prayer, because you have to admit defeat — you have to surrender, which is the hardest thing any of us do, ever. A lot of the time we don't know when we're surrendering that we're actually, at the same time, establishing connection ... to a power greater than ourselves — or something in the next concentric circle out whose name is not *me*. So, that to me is where help begins."

We will follow our prayer for Help, with Gratitude and Praise for our Divine Creator. Join us for worship on zoom.



Worship Theme for Lent - “Gifts of the Dark Wood”

The liturgical season of Lent invites us on a journey with Jesus to the cross. This year during Lent our worship and sermon series will be based on a book written by Eric Elnes, **Gifts of the Dark Wood: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics and other Wanderers.**

The experience of waking up in the Dark Wood – a place of failure, emptiness, uncertainty, temptation, and loss – is an unavoidable part of being human. But while the Dark Wood is commonly understood as a place to be feared and avoided, it is one of the surest places to meet God and encounter Divine Presence. According to the ancients, spiritual awakening is not something that presents itself in the absence of struggle, but deep in the heart of it. During our Lenten Journey, we will explore those times in our lives when we feel disillusioned, afraid, or lost, and explore how God's presence remains with us, providing opportunities for new growth and transformation.

This series is about "seeing life through new eyes, recognizing that experiences of failure, emptiness, and uncertainty are as critical for finding our way through life as they are unavoidable." We might even find spiritual clues in the "dark wood" providing insight to our calling or life path, perhaps even the seedbed of spiritual awakening to the fullness of life.

We start the journey on **Ash Wednesday, 2/17 - 6:30pm on zoom.** LENT IS COMING, but we can't get our ash in church. Not this year. But we can dig our hands into the good earth and bring a bit of earth into our homes for the ritual of marking ourselves as belonging to God and belonging to the earth as we enter the ritual for Ash Wednesday.

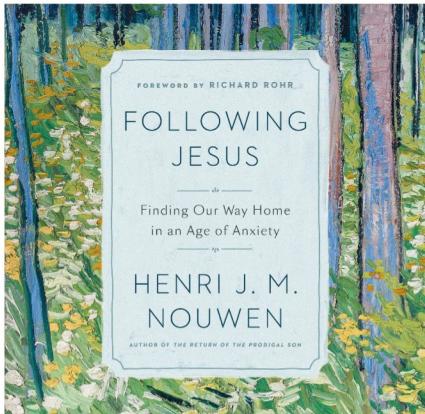
There are gifts to be found in the Dark Wood if we embrace them...

Lent 1 - 2/21	Temptation can help us know our true path.
Lent 2 - 2/28	Uncertainty can help us let go of our fear of the unknown.
Lent 3 - 3/7	Thunderstruck moments can offer insight.
Lent 4 - 3/14	Getting lost invites us to heighten our awareness.
Lent 5 - 3/21	Emptiness can leave room for new possibilities.
Palm Sunday - 3/28	Reaching out to other "misfits" on the journey enriches our experience of life and love as we recognize that God is with us.

(continued on next page)

(continued from front page)

Could these wilderness feelings be our greatest spiritual assets – inviting us to probe, question, discover, and awaken to a new fullness of life? Join us on a Lenten journey to explore how life's struggles can be the seedbed for spiritual awakening. More information will be forthcoming about Holy Week and Easter as we discover the Gifts of the Dark Wood in journeying with Jesus on our Lenten Journey to Easter, the day of Resurrection and Hope.



Adult Spiritual Formation Book Study for Lent

Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety

by Henri Nouwen

Wednesday evenings on zoom
February 24th-March 24th at 6:30pm

At one of the lowest points in Henri Nouwen's life, he gave a series of lectures on the importance of following Jesus in an age of anxiety. Drawn from those talks, this new book **Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety** reveals what sustained Nouwen to remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus and led him to become an icon of compassion and vulnerability. He writes about calling and purpose, fear and hope. Without minimizing the anxieties, fears, and brokenness that touch down in every reader's story, Nouwen gently leads the way into a life that centers on Jesus and engulfs the follower with God's love, a sense of belonging, and a purpose that endures. Nouwen offers warm, insightful, practical habits to help readers navigate the narrow, sometimes arduous, but ultimately fulfilling road of conviction and faith.

Join Angie Wolle & Tanya Sorenson on zoom on Wednesday nights during Lent. Amazon is currently offering this book for \$5 on kindle.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

With Gratitude for Servant Hearts

“... to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” Ephesians 4:12



Hearts and love deserve year-round celebration, but we give them special attention in February, as we mark Valentine's Day. As we step into a new program year with the church, my heart is filled with gratitude for all the church members who continue to be present through challenging circumstances, joining in worship and working to carry out our mission. We have a church full of servant hearts.

At our annual meeting and charge conference on Jan. 20 (on ZOOM, of course!), we honored several faithful church volunteers who have completed their terms of office:

Dawn Foreman concluded more than ten years with the Finance Committee, serving for many of those years as Assistant Financial Secretary. For many Sundays, while most of us were enjoying cookies and coffee during fellowship time, Dawn could be found back in the church office, counting and recording the collection plate. She is moving to another committee in 2021.

Vic Bode has completed his three-year term as a trustee. He brought a clear and thoughtful voice to our board, and we appreciate his service. Vic will continue to serve as our UMC Lay Leader.

Laura Giddings has served as the chair of the Staff Parish Relations committee for three years. We don't always see the work that SPR does, but its role is vital in providing a sounding board to our staff members and in providing a bridge between the staff and church members. Laura is moving to the Finance Committee in 2021 and will serve as Assistant Financial Secretary.

Tom Milligan has served as chair and committee of one for the Communications Committee for the past year. We are grateful for his work, creativity, and good ideas.

At our annual meeting, the congregation elected the officers and trustees for the new year. Appointments for most committee chairs and UCC and UMC delegates were also announced. We are grateful that most officers and committee chairs are continuing for another year. With all of the challenges and modified programs associated with COVID-19, it will help us maintain continuity as we move into 2021, still carrying out much of our work on a virtual platform. Our 2021 officers are listed below.

In our worship services on Jan. 17 and 24, we heard from six church members who shared how they have answered the call with servant hearts, to follow Jesus and serve through their work and vocations. Special thanks to Pamela Maddess, Chris Berry, Judy Thierry, Dawn Foreman, Angie Wolle, and Kathleen Kenna for sharing their stories and leading by their examples.

We still have much work to do in 2021 as we navigate continued COVID restrictions and the stages of reopening safely. Thanks to all who approach these tasks with love, servant hearts, and good humor. Your lights shine brightly at United Church in U.P.!

With heartfelt gratitude,
Marilyn Thompson,
President

ANNUAL MEETING AND CHARGE CONFERENCE RE-CAP

The Annual Meeting and Charge Conference of United Church in University Place was held on January 20th on ZOOM. United Methodist District Superintendent Rev. Derek Nakano participated in the meeting and shared reflections that highlighted the significance of the inauguration events that had taken place earlier in the day. Rev. Cathy Law also spoke and reported on the past year.

The following actions were taken by the congregation:

- ✓ Voted to accept the slate of officers presented by the Nominations Committee.
- ✓ Voted to accept the Membership Report. Our membership remained steady through the "COVID Year," and we ended 2020 with 102 members, down only one from 2019.
- ✓ Voted to accept the 2021 budget, as recommended by the board. The approved budget of **\$196,276.72** is up from the 2020 budget of \$191,438, and includes salary increases for the staff. With reduced expenses and increased income over budget, the church ended 2020 with adjusted net income of \$6,307.

2021 Officers

President	Marilyn Thompson
Vice President	Tanya Sorenson
Secretary	Kay Shaben
Treasurer	Cathi Cline
Financial Secretary	Don Thompson
Asst. Financial Secretary	Laura Giddings

Trustees:

Trustee 1 (2019-2021)	Tom Milligan
Trustee 2 (2020-2022)	Robert Brown
Trustee 3 (2021-2023)	Pamela Maddess

The Current President and Past President also serve as trustees.



TACOMA
COMMUNITYHOUSE

I am still collecting calendars, note pads, and cards that you might receive as free gifts from charities, etc. They can be placed in a plastic bag at the church in the same bin that food is dropped off for the food bank.

I take them to Tacoma Community House for the staff and students. TCH is still open for business--mostly on-line, but you can schedule an appointment to see a staff member in person.

Last week, I dropped off several at the "Tiny Houses" at the First Christian Church. At that time, they had eight houses (of 40) occupied.

Thank you,
Kay Shaben

JOYS & CONCERNS

long retirement.

Our condolences to Cindi Bodie on the death of her brother Lonny and to Joyce Demarest on the death of her sister Jean.....Pat Mail and Tom Milligan give thanks for successful cataract surgery and we ask for prayers of healing for Traci Drake, recovering from emergency surgery on the 22nd.....Cindi Bodie asks prayers that the boys, Jimmy and Jeremiah, will be home after the February 5th court date.....Susan Kelly asks for prayers as she deals with health problems.....Please keep all of them in your prayers....along with all of our shut-ins, some just because of the COVID-19.

On January 17th and the 24th; during the message time of the service, we heard from Pamela Maddess, Chris Berry, Judy Thierry, Dawn Foreman, Kathleen Kenna (all the way from California) and Angie Wolle talking about their work/vocation.....we want to thank them for sharing and for their work, past, present and further. Think I'm going to go reread Mr. Rogers.

Continue to keep Pastor Cathy, Jeff Andersen and the team that works to put the Sunday ZOOM service on (Neva sitting in the cold church library, working as ZOOM host when the power was out in her area of UP on the 24th) and other ZOOM meetings and those that watch after the building known as United Church, in your prayers.

REMEMBER to wear your mask and if you're able, get the vaccine shot –



PRAYER IS POWERFUL & PRAYER WORKS

If you have a little time each day to pray for our church family, their families, our State, Nation and World, and our pets, join the UCUP Prayer Chain. Just let Pat Mail know your email address and ask to be added to the prayer chain. Quick, easy and meaningful. Email to mail.pat48@gmail.com





Peace and Justice will have it's first meeting of 2021: Wednesday, February 3 at 1:30 PM on Zoom

Our working group welcomes new participants and energy. Please let Dorothy McCuistion know if you are interested in joining us: dorothymcc@nenvture.com

Family Housing Network **THANK YOU LETTER**

All of us at CCS/Family Housing Network want to send you a very heartfelt thank you for supporting our clients at Christmas. Because of your generosity we were able to deliver gift cards to over 90 families, consisting of 309 individuals and including our veteran families and singles. We know that 2020 was a very tough year for all of us and Christmas was no exception. Thanks so much for bending and flexing with our non-traditional request of purchasing gift cards instead of gifts. We did hear from a lot of our families that they were excited to shop with their gift cards, and that shopping made them feel good as they didn't have to worry about not having the money to do it...

Sincerely, The Christmas Elves – Patti, Penny, Maira, Kristy and the rest of the staff at FHN.

Anticipating if you can, into Christmas of 2021, UCUP will be gifting with both wrapped presents AND family gift cards. This year we were able to provide to three families \$50 for each person combined into a one large family gift card. **THANKS** for your generosity this Christmas season.

Judy T on behalf of P&J



"ONE IN SEVEN"

During our zoom Christmas Eve service our designated charity was the Emergency Food Network. Your collective generosity means that EFN will have an additional **\$1,525** as they coordinate and serve people in need of basic foodstuffs, canned and dry goods, fresh produce and protein.

According to a 2018 Health Department report, one in seven people in Washington state lacks access to food sufficient for a healthy and active lifestyle. In Pierce County, about 1.3 million visits are made to food pantries and meal sites every year. More than half of these visits to emergency food programs are on behalf of children and seniors. The Annual Hunger Walk is also being planned for 2021.

P&J

FROM THE GREENING ACTIVITY GROUP, SUBMITTED BY ROGER MARTIN

While we Greenies have not been holding meetings since the pandemic started, we still keep in touch with what is going on in the Tideflats and attempt to remain connected and keeping ourselves and people in government better informed. This month, there was a “listening meeting” of the Tacoma Planning Commission, as presented by representatives of three interest groups. The purpose of the meeting was for the Planning Commission to listen to concerns from the community about possibly making the temporary regulations about development of the Tideflats permanent. The three groups were separated into Environmental, Neighborhood, and Business interests.

Spokespersons were there by invitation, and those of us simply monitoring on Zoom were kept muted. There were some questions from the Planning Commission at the end of the meeting, but no questions were allowed, even on Chat, from the people who were simply observing on Zoom. Greening did respond to a request for comments to the Planning Commission prior to the start of this, and to another, preparatory meeting. We did submit comments, principally dealing with the apparent total ignorance of all local regulators of the science that argues against having an LNG facility, or any other facility with hazardous materials, to be built on the Tideflats. Accordingly, there is a question as to why nobody in any regulatory or advisory organization below the state level and dealing with development of the Tideflats, appears to have had an academic degree in Geology, Geophysics, or Oceanography.

Shortly after the meeting, a member of the Lakewood City Council and also a member of the Tideflats Advisory Committee asked me to let him know what the concern was at the meeting over the pollution of the South Tacoma Aquifer System from chemical spills from businesses that sit on top of the Aquifer in a zone designated as Heavy Industrial. The Aquifer supplies drinking water to South Tacoma and some adjacent communities.

Subsequently, my newly placed Pierce County Councilmember has contacted me about what concerns I might want to discuss, and I was to have a telecon or Zoomacon with her the week of the January 24th.



Stay healthy. Stay green.

OUR NARROWS COOP PRESCHOOL UPDATE:



We welcome Kelly Fiori who is cochair with Aimee Crawford for The Narrows Coop Preschool. She and her family moved from the east coast to the South Sound in 2017. The unique Narrows Coop and early childhood developmental programming as afforded by the Bates Technical College program and Narrow's teachers was completely new to her. Since October the outdoor classes have seen no cases of COVID transmission within the school. While a small microcosm Narrows provides us with doable practices that keep all of us safe. Kelly states: “Any suspected exposure (outside of school grounds) has been treated seriously with a 2-week quarantine from school. Additionally, families who traveled or gathered with extended family during the holidays also quarantined for 2 weeks as a precaution before returning to school. We are fortunate that our members are very willing to be responsible! On site, we continue to follow distancing procedures during drop-off, pick-up, and class time with increased hand washing and cleaning protocols to further reduce risk. All adults must be masked, and children are strongly encouraged to wear masks at all times if possible. We haven't received any pushback on this.”

Narrows follows the UP School District's calendar and is classified as a daycare and not bound to the same guidelines regarding class size as schools. Narrows enrollment has continued at below 50% in the two younger classes, and at 75% for the Pre-K class. If allowed by UCUP to return to indoor programming they will follow the recommended 35 sq. ft. per child. Parent training sessions are a mainstay ensuring that everyone understands the classroom protocols.

Financially, they have been operating at a loss this year. Kelly notes they are “thankful for savings to fall back on from strong enrollment and fundraising over the past few years prior to COVID. We are appreciative of the reduction in rent you've offered us through the end of the school year to assist us through these lean times!”

Early childhood programming is measured in golden minutes and hours.

Submitted by Judy Thierry, UCUP/Narrows liaison

FACILITIES UPDATE



Even though we haven't been meeting in the church building there are still maintenance, modifications and repairs that are being made. Currently we are having the furnaces serving the sanctuary, narthex and fellowship hall modified so that we will have more fresh air in the sanctuary during services, and eliminate heating air from the outside when the building is not in use, to keep a minimum inside temperature to prevent mold and freezing. In addition, an exhaust fan was added on the roof to improve the air quality in the sanctuary when it's being used, increasing the amount of fresh air provided by the HVAC system by 71%.



Repairs were made to the roof as a result of leaks we've had in the narthex and the worship supply closet in the back of the sanctuary. This involved resealing downspout scupper boxes. We also had moss removed from the sanctuary roof, and treated it to help prevent moss from coming back.



Grandparents' Rights of Washington State
Grandchildren are the dots that connect generation to generation...

GRANDPARENTS' VISITATION RIGHTS RCW 26.11.020

Reminder about grandparent's visitation. Pat and Bob founded Grandparents' Rights of Washington State and worked for over eleven and a half years to get a grandparents' visitation rights law passed in this state. We were the only state that had no legal recourse for good and loving grandparents who have been unreasonably kept from visiting their beloved grandchildren. We have a law now on the books to give grandparents' some recourse if refused visitation by the parents. Let me be very clear, we are not taking a fit parents' rights away, far from it. We just want to give the grandparents, but most importantly the grandchildren, the right to have that loving and wonderful grandchild/grandparent relationship that many have had. It is not easy, and the onus is on the grandparents to prove that they unreasonably can't see their grandchildren. They have to prove that visitation is in the child's best interest or the child is likely to suffer harm or a substantial risk of harm if visitation is denied. And, the grandparents have to have had a sustained and substantial relationship with the child or children.

Out of our over one thousand members we have had some successes in court and some not so good. But again, before there was no recourse and no help, now there is.

If you or anyone you know is in this position, please have them contact us at www.grandparentsrightsofwashingtonstate.org or wagrows@gmail.com or Pat or Bob Rudolph at (253) 232-8927. All communications are confidential for the safety and security of both parties.



VISUALS FOR OUR WORSHIP

One of the slides featuring stained glass as we "journeyed" with choral music by Kathryn Thomasen's "I want to walk as a child in the light," included the Peace Window at the United Nations, by Marc Chagall.

Museums, art galleries, architecture, cathedral websites like at the National Cathedral, UNICEF, newspaper articles, stock photos and Wikipedia can help characterize our journey of faith.

HEALTH CORNER



COVID19 VACCINE – Got a SMARTPHONE? You can register after you get your shot!

CDC will help you track your response to the vaccine through a simple monitoring application with TEXT messages. This way you can be reminded of when your booster dose is due, self-monitor local and systemic side effects and clinically important adverse events (<1:100,000) all of which support our protocol driven public health data collection during the roll out of our life saving vaccines. You will receive texts at day 0, 1-7, weekly thru day 42, then 3, 6 and 12 months.

Live v-safe support:

Available Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET

Call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY 888-232-6348

Since we still don't know enough about transmission post vaccination (this is being studied), please continue to:

**>> MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING. MASK UP. GOOD HAND WASHING.
>> STAY HOME IF YOU ARE ILL. IT'S NOT TO LATE TO GET A FLU SHOT AS THE SEASON EXTENDS THROUGH MARCH MOST YEARS – 6 MONTHS AND OLDER!**

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
A Partnership for the Common Good

2021 Interfaith Advocacy Day

Thursday February 11

I reached out to Faith Action Network last week asking if they could give some updated information about our Interfaith Action Day on February 11. This was the response:

Thanks for getting people ready for IFAD! Here's the latest blurb we shared in the E-News:

Registration for IFAD on February 11 is open! This is our annual interfaith day in Olympia, and this year because we will gather online we have the opportunity to welcome more people than ever from all across the state! No long bus rides, no worry about snow on the pass! Let's make sure each of 49 legislative districts in our state is represented.

We need you to sign up this week so we can do our best to secure virtual appointments with your legislators. You can expect the same elements you've come to appreciate during the course of the IFAD day, 9am-1pm: information sessions, greetings from elected officials, workshops on bills on our agenda, and legislative district caucuses. Legislator appointments will take place in the afternoon of 2/11 or the following day 2/12, as available. **Please register** at fanwa.org and stay tuned for more information.

We will have a very similar structure to the in-person events in years past, but the legislator meetings will happen between 12-5PM Thursday or anytime Friday. The caucus meeting will happen as part of the morning session on Thursday, so that will be important for the district advocates to meet together, and then they will regroup at the legislator meetings online. I've reached out to the support team at the legislature, and they are not clear whether these meetings will be primarily through Zoom or another platform, so as we make those appointments this week we'll start to have a better sense of whether they all use the same platform and can relay that info. The sooner people sign up, the better, so we can give legislators a sense of how many people to expect from each district.

Let me know if you need any more info!

The above sentence ends what they wrote to me. If you need more information, stay in touch, but do register for this important citizen lobbying day .

Respectfully submitted,
Robert M. Brown