



# The Viewpoint

News From the Forest Grove United  
Church of Christ

December 2020

## Waiting For The Light To Shine: Creating Something New!

*Isaiah 60:1*

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”*

It’s night! Advent is a season of waiting in the darkness in contemplation and reflection. On the Christian calendar it marks a time of waiting in the dark for new life and new light to emerge! It’s always darkest before the dawn! In the events leading up to the birth of Christ, we see a world in chaos where the people suffer under the boots of corrupt rulers like Herod coming for the first-born. In this time of shadow, the people of God wait for a messiah to be born to them, a new life, a new hope, and a new light.

Welcoming new life and new light in shadowy and uncertain times requires that we be creative and that we imagine. During Advent we can practice visioning like the Prophet Isaiah who comforts a people locked in hopelessness and despair with the news that they will see a great light. It’s during the season of Advent that we practice embracing the possibility of transformation and new life for all creation. Doing this requires that we be creative!

That’s why my Advent preaching series this season is focusing on the four paths of “Creation spirituality” outlined by the theologian Matthew Fox, who coined the term. Creation Spirituality is rooted in the idea that all creation bears the imprint of the divine. It teaches us that our story begins with original blessing and the goodness of the Earth, and Creation, and that the divine dwells within all things, and also transcends all things. We experience the divine moving within and through creation as Love. During Advent we wait for that Love to incarnate again in a new way, to be born again in a new way, to bring the new healing and transformation for which the soul yearns so deeply.

Creation Spirituality offers us four paths or practices that can help us embrace the yearning during Advent. The paths teach us how creation and creativity reveal the very life and soul of the universe, the very life of God. We align with that creative power and grow our own soul in all the ways we allow ourselves to be creative and embrace possibilities. Throughout the four weeks of Advent we are helping each other envision ways of hoping in the face of hopelessness,

waging true peace in a world in conflict, allowing joy to not be obscured by pain, and making room for Love to transform us. These are all creative practices that we are exploring together.

I recently attended a meeting with the Justice and Witness team for our Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Elizabeth Simson Durant, our conference's minister for Justice and Witness, invited us into a creative prayer practice where we were invited to answer the question, "What kind of world do you want to live in?" Each person had the chance to offer, in a word, their own idea of what healing and wholeness for our world might look like. It's during Advent, a period of uncertainty and waiting in the dark that we also remember how each of us are blessed with the power to offer a piece of the light. When we each offer a piece of the light, we brighten the world together, with each other, and with our God, the "light of all people," who is coming into the world. Christmas is coming! Til then, let's stay creative and be each others' night vision.

In Christ' Love, Pastor Brendan

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## Advent Prayer Stations

The Advent Season is among us! Pastor Brendan and Kristy would like to invite the congregation to participate in our Advent Prayer Stations. Brendan and Kristy have set up an interactive station for people to come participate and enjoy. Each week there will be a new theme that will be presented. The station will be set up outside the main doors, leading to the sanctuary, found on the corner of 21st and College Way. There will be clean individual materials set out for participants to use. The station will be available **Monday-Thursday, 10 AM-6PM beginning on November 30**. Come on by whenever it is convenient for you!



Blessings to you this Advent Season!

## Journey to the manger



Forest Grove UCC invites you to make a Christmas Eve pilgrimage. From 3-11 pm on Christmas Eve, the sanctuary of the church will be decorated with festive decor, nativity sets, and filled with candlelight. We will have recordings of community members offering sacred music for the holiday projected on the walls. All those looking to honor Christmas are invited to enjoy a contemplative moment in a sacred

space. Masks and physically distancing will be practiced. There will be a doorkeeper to welcome people and ensure we only have 6 people in the building at a time. Visitors will be given a candle as a gift to carry the light out with them.

Merry Christmas!

## Giving Tree 2020

This year we are collaborating with Community Action Organization to share the love of Jesus Christ through our Giving Tree Christmas Gift project, benefiting 25 children from the Head Start Program.



**Gift tags:** We will have one gift tag for each child, and the tag contains the child's name and the gifts requested for them. You can purchase gifts on your own or join up with family and friends who want to share in the project. Gift tags will be available to pick up in the entry by church office beginning the week of November 30 from 10AM to 3:00 PM, Monday-Thursday.

**The Process:** All items purchased for the children can be wrapped or placed in gift bags. Please securely attach the gift-tag to the bag to identify it for delivery. You are welcome to place a greeting card in the bag. Thank you.

**The Due Date:** Completed wrapped gifts with **"Gift Tag"** attached, **are due no later than Tuesday, December 15.**

Your gifts bless and encourage the hearts of the recipients. Thank you for bringing this tangible expression of God's love to the lives of the people in our care!!!

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## 2020 Advent Meditations Booklet

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to write meditations for our Advent booklet. The booklet will be available in PDF format in time for Advent and we will email this information to everyone. It will also be available for viewing on our website.

### **NEW—Please join us for Virtual Fellowship Hours during Advent!**

Michael Colvin and Susan Shepard are so excited to be hosting our virtual fellowship hour. We will start this Sunday, Nov. 29, and our gathering will begin at 11AM, but the room will be open about 10:50am. We can hardly wait to see friendly faces and hear your voices. It has been too long! Here's the Zoom link inviting everyone who'd like to join in:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81437926497?pwd=SW05LzhDMDJINzkrR3I1blA2V2FFdz09>.

### **NEW: Zoom Office Hours**

Covid strikes again so there is no indoor dining for a little while and meeting Pastor Brendan at Bella Donna's on Wednesday afternoons will be put on hold for now. Brendan will still be hosting "virtual coffee/tea public office hours via zoom. If you would like to join Pastor Brendan for Wednesday afternoon conversation you can just click on this zoom link anytime between 3-5pm on Wednesday afternoons.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82823541111?pwd=eVdsazg5MzFiZStVUnUxY3I4Tnp0UT09>

## Caring for Our Community Auction was a Big Success!



This year's auction almost didn't happen. It felt too daunting. But with encouragement (Elena!), we decided to go forward. We had already been using Auctria, which is a cloud-based bidding and auction management solution designed for small and midsize nonprofits, so we were able to just expand on its capabilities. Enter Michael Colvin and Blake Timm—without them, it really wouldn't have happened!

Thank you, everyone, for helping us make lemonade out of lemons!

- ♥ Blake Timm - MC and creator of the YouTube Live
- ♥ Michael Colvin - technical support
- ♥ Deva Harris-Williams - magic with the items
- ♥ Sheila Harter - community donations and our Director of Fun. Really!
- ♥ Jane Romig - benevolence recipient liaison and bearer of treats
- ♥ Elena Parker - all kinds of support - emails, phone calls, greeter
- ♥ Geneva Houx - decorations
- ♥ John Davis - moving and shaking
- ♥ Tori Eaton, Holly and Sherri Vann - advertising
- ♥ Bonnie McDowell - item entry and putting all the pieces of the puzzle together
- ♥ Our congregation and friends for your amazing support! We appreciate all your donations, purchases, love, prayers and encouragement.

Our gross funds raised are currently at \$19,000, with only about \$700 in expenses. Far beyond expectations!

Our hearts go out in sincere gratitude to you all for such a successful event.

— **Bonnie McDowell and Deva Harris Williams, Auction Coordinators**

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## Auction Feedback

Thank you, all, for “attending” this year’s new, virtual auction! We’d love your feedback:

1. Did you have any trouble getting registered? If so, what tips would have made it easier for you?
2. What was your favorite thing(s) about this year’s auction?
3. What was your least favorite thing(s) about this year’s auction?
4. Do you prefer to shop online or in person?
5. If next year allows, would you like a hybrid auction, where items are available online and we also have a party with food, drink, music and Live Auction? Or would you prefer to go back to the old all-in-person method?



## ‘Stories of Ann by Ruby Peregrine’

A long time ago, but still a long time after Harvey Clark and Tabitha Brown, there was a little girl named Ruby who crossed the plains in a covered wagon. She loved everything she saw along the way: mountains and valleys, trees and streams. She loved the stories people told along the way, stories read from the Bible. When they settled in Eugene, Ruby loved going to church: just being in God’s house, the people, the singing, the stories. One Sunday, her teacher told a story and then said, “Now children, what this story tells us is that if you pray with all your heart and all your soul, God will give you whatever you want.” Ruby’s hand shot up, “That doesn’t mean whatever we want, does it?” “Ruby,” snapped the teacher, “I said what I said and I meant what I said!”

Ruby went home thinking some big thoughts. After some time, she picked up a large dishtowel from the kitchen, slipped outside, and climbed up a tree stump her father had levelled off.

That stump, maybe 6-10 feet high, made a really good spot for looking out over the valley, for reading, or for thinking big thoughts. After some time, Ruby put her little hands together and prayed, “God, I would ever so much like to fly, even if just this once!” Then she stood up, tied the dishtowel around her neck, stretched her arms out ... and took off.

Nothing got broken except Ruby’s pride. Stomping into the house, she deposited the briefly-used ‘cape’ and went to her room. ‘Well,’ she thought to herself, ‘that wasn’t my fault! If I hadn’t prayed with all my heart and all my soul, I wouldn’t have jumped.’ She thought of everything she saw from the stump: the field and trees, how she felt the breeze. “Well, since God created all that, I think God could let me fly if that seemed the right thing to do, so it wasn’t God’s fault either. Hmmm, that leaves one possibility.”

Ruby grew up loving God and learning. She received her Master’s Degree in Religious Education at Boston University, taught in Portland schools and then at Pacific. She was appointed Professor of Religious Education in 1953 and continued working full time six years beyond Emeritus standing. She was in charge of our Learning Community for many, many years. When I started coming to our church, many many years ago, I would come across boxes of pinecones, rocks and what-nots Ruby had collected. I visited Ruby often, she lived up on Watercrest, and she would share stories over a cup of soup. She called them ‘Stories of Ann.’ I typed them up for her... a long time ago. There’s a copy in the narthex at church if you’d like to read more. Oh, at her memorial service in 1985, we sang the hymn ‘For the Beauty of the Earth.’ You see, being outside, witnessing God’s world, is one way, even now, we can draw the circle wide, wider still, within ourselves.

— Sandy Freeman, on behalf of 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Team

## **Poinsettias during Advent are in Memory or Honor of the following loved ones.**

- ♥ Sue Thompson Armentrout in memory of Ann & Floyd Thompson & Fred Armentrout
- ♥ Elaine Bohlmeier in memory of Del Bohlmeier.
- ♥ Ann and Russ Dondero in honor of their granddaughter, Lavanya
- ♥ Laura & Jerry Frye in memory of our parents Helen and Dean James; Betty & Dale Clapshaw and Susanne Frye
- ♥ Steve & Cleata Hibbs in memory of Robin Hibbs and James McGreer
- ♥ Geneva & James Houx in memory of Olivia Petersen and Doris Houx Kirkpatrick
- ♥ Dick Lane in memory of Ruby Lane
- ♥ Beverly Maughan in memory of my parents, Marlin and Bettie Aschinger
- ♥ Elena Parker in memory of Ruby Lane; in memory of my father, Theodore Raymond Parker; and in honor of my mother, Helen Marie Parker
- ♥ Jane Romig in memory of Jason Romig and Edith & Don Watrous
- ♥ Yvonne Stacey in memory of Allan Stacey
- ♥ Pat & Pete Truax in memory of Mr. and Mrs. James P. York; Dr. and Mrs. Harmon J. Truax, and Ann Truax
- ♥ Pat & Pete Truax in honor of Erin Ruth Truax, Sydney Karin Truax, and Jacob Owen York
- ♥ Wendy White in memory of her mother, Caroline Schaertl; her father, Wendell Ray; and dear friend, Darrel Brady
- ♥ Bonnie McDowell and Phil Zapf in memory of Kay Zapf and Marge Wilson.



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## **New: We welcome you to "Ask Sophia!"**

We All love Children's Moments and we're starting to do the children's moment a bit differently, and we really want the kids and the congregation to be able to engage! You've heard of "stump the pastor, right?" Well this is sort of like that. In the coming weeks we are going to have a very special visit from Sophia the Holy Spirit dove herself! Sophia is eager to hear all the questions the kids might have about Advent, the Christmas season, God, faith, life, church, or any other thought or wonderment that might be on their minds, and she will answer these to the best of her ability! Adults and kids at heart are also welcome to submit thoughts and questions although kids' questions will be prioritized! Please email your questions for Sophia to [kristy@fgucc.org](mailto:kristy@fgucc.org). Kristy will be co-hosting our "Ask Sophia" interview series for the Children's Moment in the coming weeks!



## Joys, Concerns & Prayer Requests

- **New**—Alice Hoskins' daughter-in-law, Kathy was just diagnosed with COVID-19. Her son, Brian Fleskes also has COVID-19. Alice asks for prayers for Brian, Kathy and their family. Thank you!
- **New**— Elaine Foy requested prayers for Benjamine Foy who is going to be spending Thanksgiving and Christmas alone at the Lemore Naval Air station on lockdown. Prayers for Benjamine and Elaine and the whole family. Thank you!
- Update on Ruth Holznagel—We received a message from Hans very recently letting us know Ruth continues to make good strides in her recovery. She can write a little with her right hand now and on Thanksgiving Day she took a couple of steps supported by a special, tall walker and 2 therapists, but real steps nonetheless. Good progress! She is reading emails on her iPad and can sometimes respond briefly. She will appreciate continued contact through cards and letters as she adjusts to her new home. Her address is Judson Park Health Center, 2181 Ambleside Dr., Room. A603, Cleveland, OH 44106.
- Prayers for the Spears family—James is recovering from a broken arm, and Patricia's mother is adjusting to home care following recent surgery.
- Please remember Dick and Stephanie Lind as they continue navigating the journey with Dick's prostate cancer. Dick is now recovering from recent surgery.



**Continued Prayers**—Prayers of healing and comfort for all who have ongoing concerns, including Winnie Beu, Carol Benner, Marcia Bickford, Bob Browning, Ann and Russ Dondero, Paul and Stephanie Edwards, Lillian Gimre, Max Groszmann, Lois Johnston, Christine & Richard Kidd, Carlene Krueger, Jobina Lacock, Jean & Bob Nixon, Yvonne Stacey, Holly & Sherri Vann and their family, Tom Wallsted, Betty Wedell, and any other friends and family of our church, not named here.

**How to get on the prayer chain**—Are you or someone you know in need of extra prayer support? Our church has a confidential prayer chain ministry. If you'd like to be added to this prayer chain, please contact the church office or Sandy Mueller at [fguccpray@gmail.com](mailto:fguccpray@gmail.com). Thank you!

**Sharing prayers in worship**—If you would like your personal prayer concerns shared with the community during our on-line worship service on Sunday mornings, please submit them to Brendan via email at [brendan@fgucc.org](mailto:brendan@fgucc.org) by Friday at 6pm with the title "prayer request" in the subject line. You can also text him prayer requests at 401-318-2447 by Friday at the same time.

**Prayer Shawls**—Do you, or someone you know, need a prayer shawl? Please call Elena in the church office to make a request at 503-357-9121 or [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org). The Prayer Shawls are such a wonderful gift—A gift from the heart that touches the hearts of others.

**Prayer Shawl Knitting**—Please join us for knitting this month via Zoom on **Wednesdays, December 2 and 16 from 2-4PM**. The link to Zoom will be sent to everyone in the prayer shawl knitting group via email. If you'd like to participate, please call or email Elena.

## Best wishes to all of you celebrating birthdays in December:

Chris Karge-Moritz—1  
Lexi Karge-Moritz—1  
Eric Canon—2  
Ken Prickett—2  
Faith Brown—5  
Sheila Harter—5  
Madeline Burk—6  
Patricia Spears—7  
Myra Beeler—12  
Barbara Strain—18  
Joana Jones—18



Jerry Frye—19  
Isaiah Lawrence—21  
Nikaya Frye—22  
Jeannine Murrell—22  
Carol Brown—24  
Carol Olson—24  
Emily Thursam—24  
Kyle Hoekstra—24  
Kathy Heisler—28  
Susan Shepard—28



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## Can & Bottle Collection is up and running successfully.



We are collecting all empty cans and bottles again for the FGUCC youth ministry. Due to COVID and other safety restrictions that come with returning cans and bottles, we have set up an account with the BottleDrop Center. Our account makes it more efficient and easy to donate. If you have cans or bottles to donate you need to do the following:

1. Come to the church to pick up your blue bags. (All cans and bottles need to go in the blue bag in order for it to go towards our church account.)
2. Blue bags are requested to weigh no more than 15 pounds. Please make sure to not fill more than half of your bag with glass bottles since they are so much heavier.
3. Once you have filled your blue bag you can return the bag to the church or you may return it directly to the BottleDrop Center in Forest Grove. If you are returning it directly to the center, the bags can be delivered to the Drop Box outside of the BottleDrop building. Each bag has a sticker on it with a barcode specifically for our church. You will need to scan the barcode to unlock the drop box door, and then just drop the bag inside.

Thank you everyone, for your enthusiastic response to date! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to let us know.

Kristy Haines, Coordinator of Spiritual Formation ([kristy@fgucc.org](mailto:kristy@fgucc.org))

## Budget 2021 is Under Construction

It is budgeting time for 2021, and this is a friendly reminder to return your Pledge Card for 2021 if you have not turned it in to date. Pledges are a vital part of our planning for the next year. This is a great time to offer generous support for the future of this church!

Thank you -- your help with this is very much appreciated.

—FGUCC Stewardship Team



## Pledges and Contributions



Thank you all for continuing to keep your pledges current during this time. If you normally make contributions or pay your pledge by check, please continue using this method. (Mail checks to FGUCC at P.O. Box 265, Forest Grove, OR 97116.) You can sign up for electronic giving with Vanco, which is a very simple option and setup, and fees are very low (let us know if you'd like more information). You can use PayPal on our church's website at [www.fgucc.org](http://www.fgucc.org).

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Elena at [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org) or (503) 357-9121.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

## Community Blessing Coat Rack is Back!

The coat rack is back up for this winter! The rack is at the Main Street entrance of FGUCC under cover behind the Blessing Box. We are accepting donations of coats, gloves and scarves.

*If you need one, take One – If you can, leave one.*



## We are being called to serve the unhoused

"Open Door," is a day center for our unhoused neighbors in Cornelius that provides morning coffee, a mid-day meal, showers, a place to rest, and other services on a daily basis. They are very much in need of volunteers! Please contact Jeff Shapiro at 503-707-9308 for more information about how and when to volunteer. Thank you!

## Warm Blankets Needed for the Unhoused!

Open Door is in need of blanket donations for our unhoused brothers and sisters as colder weather has arrived. Donations can be dropped off at church or directly to Open Door, M-F from 3-5. Questions, please call or email Elena at (503) 357-9121, [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org). Thank you!



## Shelter Update

**Introduction:** Shawn Cardwell is the new director of the Coalition on Rural Housing Insecurity, previously known as Winter Shelter. Shawn takes over for Celeste Goulding, who secured a \$40,000/year 3-year grant from the City of Forest Grove to expand the program. Shawn is a Cornelius native and graduate of Pacific University with a bachelor's degree in music and mathematics and a Master's of Arts in Teaching degree. He has taught math in K-12 schools and at the college level and served as a pastor to churches in Beaverton and Kansas City. He and his wife Laura returned to the area 18 months ago after 10 years in Kansas City, MO. They now reside in Shawn's grandparents' home with a view of the Coast Range foothills just outside of Forest Grove. He has been an adjunct instructor in the Math Department and the College of Education at Pacific University; Laura is a full time professor of economics at PCC Rock Creek.

**From Shawn:** I had just begun volunteering with Winter Shelter last March when the painful decision was made to end the shelter season early as the coronavirus pandemic began to hit Oregon. When Brian Schimmel (President of the Forest Grove Foundation who now sponsors our organization) approached me about stepping into the position of director of the newly formed Coalition on Rural Housing Insecurity, I knew I had very big shoes to try to grow into. Celeste Goulding has been instrumental in developing the Winter Shelter into a highly regarded model for compassionate care for our most vulnerable and marginalized community members. Celeste secured funding to expand the program's reach beyond seasonal shelter to long-term solutions that reduce and, ultimately, eliminate chronic homelessness in our community. While that goal can feel daunting, I believe that, collectively, we have the resources to achieve it and I am heartened by the generous support of so many, including the Forest Grove UCC, for our mission.

I've spent the past several months taking a deep dive into the Coalition's history, operations and mission. Celeste, Brian, Michael Terhorst, shelter volunteers and former shelter guests have been invaluable sources of institutional knowledge. Currently, we are operating on a dual track: Do all we can to address immediate needs while developing our capacity to create long-term solutions.

In the category of immediate needs, we have worked with local partners, including Washington County, Community Action, and Project Homeless Connect to help provide 90 to 120-day hotel vouchers to our houseless friends. A grant from the Community Action Organization has enabled us to hire part-time outreach workers, including a former shelter guest, to connect with people living outdoors to refer them to the voucher program and other local resources as well as to provide food, clothing and other basic needs.

Our efforts received a big boost recently when Washington County awarded the Coalition \$100,000 in federal CARES Act funds. Receiving this grant is a huge vote of confidence in the Coalition's capacity to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve. I look forward to updating you as we develop plans to grow into an entity that moves us closer to the goal of ending homelessness in western Washington County.

By Karen Torry

PS: The Homeless Outreach contact info is (503) 662-8433 and [OutreachFG@gmail.com](mailto:OutreachFG@gmail.com)

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## Would you like to participate in worship?



We continue to miss our congregation's presence and participation in worship, and your involvement would be very appreciated at this time! You are encouraged to record videos of yourselves delivering children's messages, giving the invitation to offering, reading the scripture passage, or providing special music (singing or instrumental). If you're called to enrich our worship services in this way, please

contact Elena, Kristy or Pastor Brendan for more information and to coordinate for the coming Sunday.

## Option for participation in worship

During Phase 1 we continue to offer the opportunity for people to come in to church during the week (Mondays and Tuesdays only) for Kristy to record scripture readings, music etc. If this option appeals to you, please let us know so we can coordinate timing. Otherwise, just send your recording(s) to Kristy by Wednesday mornings at 10AM, so she can edit these into our worship service (kristy@fgucc.org). Thank you!

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## The Christmas Fund 2020

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically.

In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

**Please consider giving to the Christmas Fund online this year at [www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org)**

**Thank you for your support of this very important All-Church Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ.**



# **Forest Grove UCC Staff**

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## **Director of Children's Choirs**

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## **Director of Jubilate Handbell Choir**

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